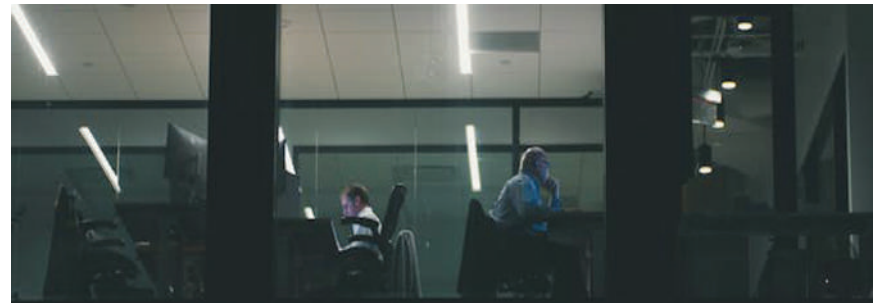




## Three Basic Questions - Letter to Filipino BC To: Filipino Canadian Community & Cultural Society of BC (Filipino BC) & RJ Aquino **PAGE 2**

### **BINI to play at Coachella's Mojave stage** **PAGE 7**

### **Sleepless: Filipinos most likely to do night shifts in Canada** **PAGES 12-13**



### **Eraserheads "Combo On The Run" this Saturday, April 11, at the iconic Rio Theatre,** **PAGE 11**



### **Arnel Pineda in divorce storm: Adultery claims shake singer amid Journey's farewell tour** **PAGE 4**



### **Angelica Panganiban says comeback 'worth it'** **PAGE 5**



### **Bianca Gonzalez wants media to hold back on luxury price posts** **PAGE 17**



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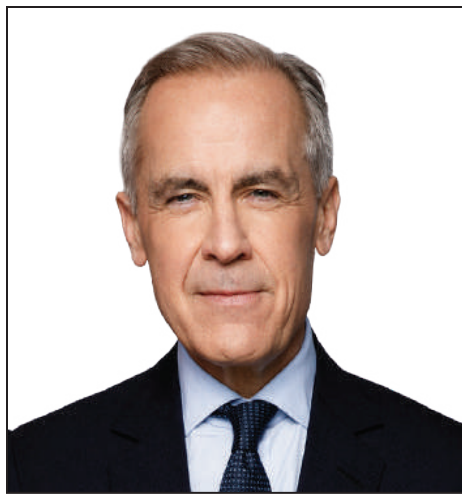
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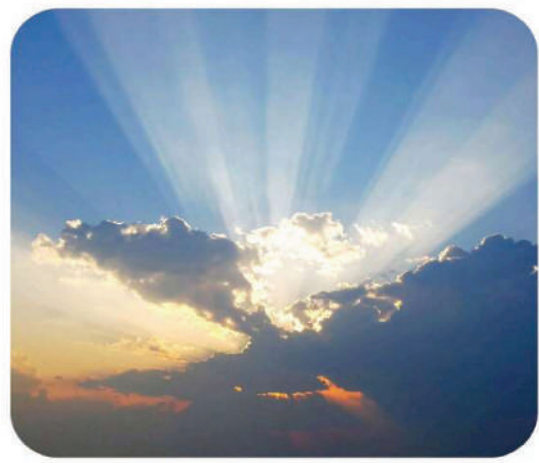
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# EASTER GREETINGS 2026



**Mark Carney**  
Prime Minister of Canada

“Today, I join millions of Christians in Canada and



around the world in celebrating Easter. Easter is a time to commemorate the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the enduring promise of renewal and redemption.

We are reminded that compassion is stronger than hate, that light follows darkness, and that hope endures – even in the face of despair.

On this holy day, we carry forward the example and the blessings of Jesus with optimism for the future.

Happy Easter, Canada, from my family to yours.” (PM Carney’s website)

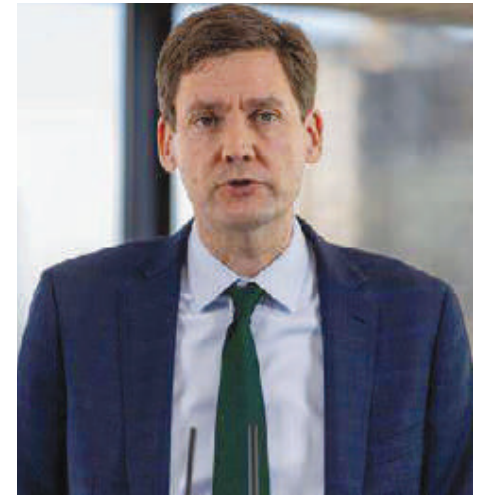
“Today, people in B.C. and around the world are celebrating Easter.

“Easter Sunday is the most important day on the Christian liturgical calendar.

“Easter is the last day in a long season of Christian observances stretching from Shrove Tuesday and Ash Wednesday, through the 40-day fast of Lent, to Holy Thursday and Good Friday.

“For Christians, Easter marks the day that their Saviour, Jesus Christ, was resurrected, making this an important holiday about the triumph of life over death, and key values in Christianity: the ultimate power of love, and the importance of self-sacrifice, putting others first, ahead of ourselves.

“Easter is also widely celebrated as a civic



**BC Premier David Eby**

holiday and an opportunity for people to get together with friends and family to eat good food with good company.

“Many families and communities also celebrate by hiding chocolate eggs and other treats for children to find on Easter morning, making this a popular holiday for kids.

“To all those who are celebrating, happy Easter!” (news.gov.bc.ca)

## Three Basic Questions - Letter to Filipino BC

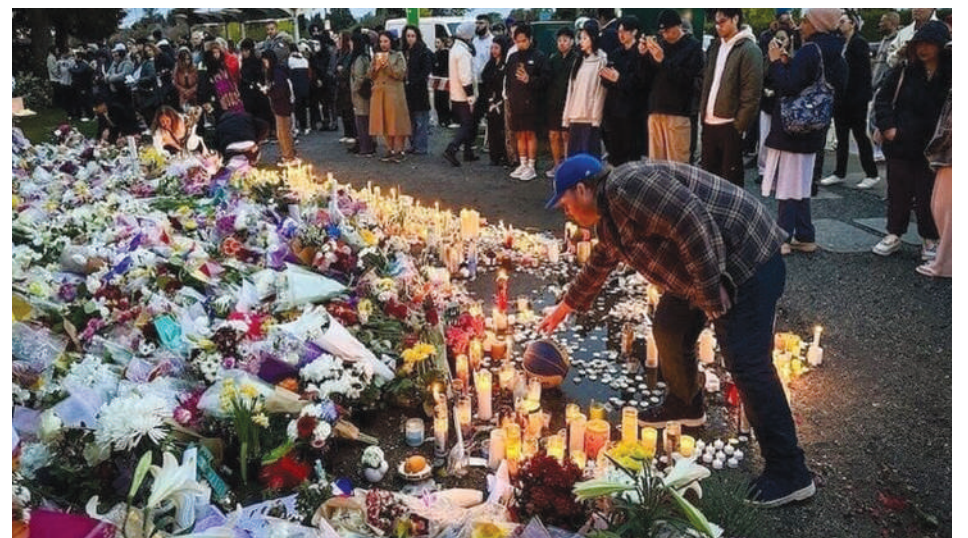
**TO: Filipino Canadian Community & Cultural Society of BC (Filipino BC) & RJ Aquino**

**Answers to three basic questions are all that we ask.**

We are members of the community who donated, promoted your fundraising efforts, and helped you raise funds in support of the victims and their families during a time of tragedy. When we gave, we did so with one clear understanding: that the funds raised by Filipino BC would go to those who were directly affected.

People gave because lives were lost, families were shattered, and others were left with permanent, life-altering injuries. The community responded with compassion and urgency because we believed we were helping the victims and their families rebuild.

What we are now hearing is deeply upsetting. Victims and their families themselves are saying that they received little to no meaningful support, whether financial or otherwise. At the same time, it is being reported that over \$2,000,000 was raised from the public following last year’s Lapu Lapu Festival tragedy by Filipino BC. Despite this, all the community has seen from Filipino BC is that significant portions of those funds were directed toward programs such as public park healing circles, art therapy, a basketball court project, and other workshops that do not provide direct, tangible support to those most affected – the victims and their families.



There are victims who continue to suffer from the tragedy – some with debilitating and life-altering injuries. In one particular instance, we heard that a victim’s family received only \$1,300 in total support. In another instance, a victim’s family reported receiving only \$800 from Filipino BC.

These amounts are a stark and shameful contrast from the figures you boasted to have received, and they are deeply inconsistent with what the public was led to believe their donations were meant to support.

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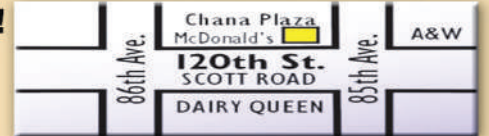
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**FILIPINO BC FROM LAST PAGE ...**

In addition to concerns about how funds were used and distributed, there are growing questions about your organization itself. Many in the community have noted the number of individuals represented to be in staff and leadership roles, and there are concerns being raised that victim funds are being used to pay Filipino BC rather than going to victims.

What is equally concerning is the way these questions have been handled to date. Your past responses have been disappointing and, frankly, unacceptable. Your Crisis Response Impact Report does not answer any of these questions. Whether raised by members of the community or your own former directors, basic questions have been repeatedly asked – not only by the public, but also by the media – yet they remain unanswered. Each time concerns are raised, they are met either with silence or with responses that are grounded in obvious avoidance.

*We ask these three questions plainly, because the community deserves answers:*

**1. Where did all of the money go if not to the victims?**

**2. Did you or anyone at Filipino BC receive any of it or any benefit from any of it?**

**3. Were any staff, board members, or persons affiliated with them paid, directly or indirectly, from the funds raised?**

These are straightforward questions. The continuing refusal to answer them directly, and the ongoing lack of transparency, is only deepening public concern and eroding trust.

We are concerned because victims and their families themselves are reporting that they received little to no meaningful support, despite the significant money raised and the promises of your organization.

In light of all of this, the fact that Filipino BC continues to seek additional sponsorships, donations, and funding to organize and manage the 2026 Lapu Lapu Festival is deeply abhorrent and, to many in the community, unacceptable. Given that Filipino BC is again asking the public for money, there is a serious and legitimate concern about how those funds will be handled and whether they will be used as represented.

This is not just about accounting. It is about

trust. Right now, our trust in Filipino BC has been broken. We, along with many others in the community, do not feel confident supporting your future events or fundraisers because, in the absence of basic answers to basic questions, we cannot trust that our contributions will be used in the way you represent.

To repair our community's integrity, it is important that any group or persons who wish to provide support to Filipino BC are provided with full transparency on the above issues to avoid ambiguity.

You raised funds in connection with this tragedy and represented that those funds would benefit the victims. The public deserves a clear and direct answer from you. Failing to address these basic questions, and instead pointing fingers elsewhere, deepens our concern and avoids accountability. Enough deflecting and

enough finger-pointing. Shifting blame does not answer the questions being asked.

You cannot take the spotlight when it benefits you and then hide from basic questions when accountability is needed. We want to continue to support our community. We want to continue to show up in times of need. But we need clarity, transparency, and honesty before we can do so again with confidence.

The victims and their families deserve and continue to deserve to be the priority. Our community that stood behind them deserves answers.

We ask that you answer our questions openly and directly.

Sincerely,

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## Arnel Pineda in divorce storm: Adultery claims shake singer amid Journey's farewell tour



"Loving a music man ain't what it's supposed to be."

Once a line that defined devotion in "Faithfully," it now echoes as something far more painful for Arnel Pineda.

Behind the soaring anthems of Journey is a man quietly unraveling, caught between a collapsing marriage, a bruising legal fight, and a farewell tour he never fully wanted to take.

### A love story turned bitter

Arnel is in the middle of a deeply personal battle: a divorce marked by mutual accusations of adultery between him and his wife, Cherry.

What was once a long-standing relationship, traced back to 2003 and sealed in marriage in 2008, has now spiraled into public dispute.

Both sides have traded allegations, with neither

backing down.

The strain, by Arnel's own admission, has taken a toll not just emotionally but also, physically.

"I have a personal problem that's taking a toll on me. It's getting in my head," Arnel shared in an interview with Rolling Stone.

### Trouble follows him offstage

The conflict with his estranged wife has also reached the courts in Quezon City, where a complaint filed under the Anti-Violence Against Women and Their Children Act accuses the singer of emotional and psychological harm.

Arnel, for his part, has denied the accusations and maintains that the case is retaliatory, even as the legal battle continues.

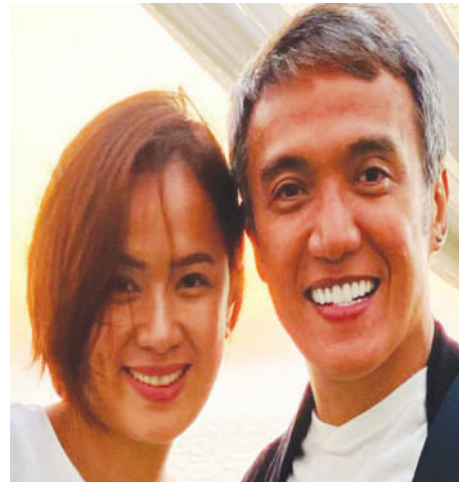
### A voice that almost walked away

Long before the headlines, Arnel had already been struggling in silence.

He revealed he twice asked to step away from Journey ahead of their ongoing farewell tour. But his pleas went unanswered by bandmates Neal Schon and Jonathan Cain.

"I said I wanted to retire because of my personal problems," he admitted.

But the tour moved forward



Arnel and wife Cherry anyway.

### Singing through the storm

With dozens of shows lined up across 2026 and beyond, Arnel now finds himself fulfilling obligations even as his world feels unsteady.

"I was a wreck and needed more time... but I still have to do this," he said.

He also confessed that the physical demands to perform are harder now. Even the cold has become too difficult for him to endure.

### Still, he stays

Arnel has spent nearly two decades carrying the legacy once held by Steve Perry.

And despite everything, the heartbreak, the accusations, the pressure, he remains onstage.

Even when love falters and life fractures, the music doesn't stop. And so he sings on. Faithfully. (N. Ramos/mb.com.ph)



## Jessica Sanchez makes Manila comeback after motherhood

AFTER winning "America's Got Talent" Season 20 in September 2025 and taking home the \$1 million prize, Jessica Sanchez soon entered a new chapter in her life, welcoming her daughter, Eliana May Gallardo, the following month.

Now that her baby is six months old, Jessica recently announced she is ready to perform live anew. In fact, she is mounting the Araneta Coliseum stage on May 16 for a major concert.

Jessica penned a message for her kababayans ahead of her May concert.

"Manila, I can't wait to see you!" she wrote on Instagram. "Join me for a very special night at the

Araneta Coliseum on May 16 for my concert! It's going to be a night of music, memories and celebrating this incredible journey with all of you."

From the start of her pregnancy with her first child with husband Rickie Gallardo, Jessica frequently shared her journey on social media, describing it as a beautiful experience even as she competed on "America's Got Talent."

She will be with her husband Rickie and her daughter Eliana when she visits Manila in May.

Jessica and Rickie dated for nine years before tying the knot in 2021. Her single, "Two Lines,"

which detailed her pregnancy, was released last year.

When Jessica shared photos of her pregnancy, Rickie commented, "Watching you carry our child while still pouring your heart into every performance has left me in awe."

Jessica has been to Manila first for a tour of "American Idol," where she finished runner-up to Phillip Phillips in its 11th season back in 2012.

A year after she placed second in "American Idol," Jessica will definitely bring out the R&B, soul and pop diva in her when she returns to Manila this May.

Apart from the concert, Jessica revealed earlier this year that she is planning to release a new album. "I plan on collaborating with some Filipino artists and maybe doing a Tagalog song," she said. (J.C. Salterio/Malaya)



# Angelica Panganiban says comeback 'worth it' as she balances being mom, wife, actress



Angelica Panganiban during her questing for 'Oh My Gan.' Photo by Jonathan Cellona, ABS-CBN News

Actress Angelica Panganiban said returning to acting has been fulfilling, especially now that she is balancing life as a mother, wife and performer.

In an interview on "Oh My Gan," Angelica shared that she has been busy since filming the movie "UnMarry" in the middle of 2025, followed by promotions during the holidays and work on her series "The Silent Noise."

"Well, naging busy since ginawa ko yung 'UnMarry' mid of last year of 2025. Nagdire-diretso na siya hanggang nag-promote kami noong Pasko. So,

it's a working holiday for me. And then right after that, sinimula namin yung 'Silent Noise.' Kaya medyo walang break," she said.

Despite the hectic schedule, the actress said she is grateful to be working again after taking a long break.

"Of course, I'm very happy dahil matagal-tagal naman din yung pahinga ko. Kaya nung nakabalik ng work... lagi lang akong excited," she said.

Angelica admitted she initially felt nervous about returning to acting after becoming a mother, even taking on theater work through the Virgin Lab Fest

to test herself.

"Yes. Siguro kaya ko talaga kinonsider mag-theater. Gumawa ako ng Virgin Lab Fest noong June of last year kasi gusto kong subukan kung kaya ko pa ba," she said.

The actress explained that motherhood brought about what she described as "mom brain," making her worry if she could still memorize lines.

"Nung naging mom ako, parang ang dami ko laging nakakalimutan. Parang ako laging lutang. May mom brain. Parang ang foggy mo lang," she said.

But after doing stage work, Angelica said she regained her footing.

"And then, nung ginawa ko yung 'UnMarry,' nung ginawa ko 'tong 'Silent Noise,' kahit papano, hindi na ganun kagrabe yung kaba ko. Dahil, parang it's like riding a bike," she said.

Now, Angelica sees her many roles in life as something empowering.

"Magical. Parang... nakakatuwa na ipakita na ito yung kapasidad ng isang babae. Kaya mo lahat. Kaya mong gawin lahat," she said of being a mom, wife, and actress all

at the same time.

The actress also said she has become more intentional in choosing projects, especially because she now has a peaceful life with husband Gregg Homan and daughter Amila in Subic.

"Kung gusto mong balikan yun, kung gusto mong bumalik dun sa darkness ng life mo, gusto mong worth it. Hindi yung parang mapapaisip ka, umuwi ka ng bahay na parang may kulang dunsanaramdaman mo," she said.

For Angelica, that peace at home has become her standard.

"Kasi ang sarap na ng buhay na meron ako ngayon. Fulfilling na siya eh. Fulfilling yung buhay bilang isang nanay for me," she said.

She added that while acting is emotionally demanding, she wants every project to feel meaningful enough to justify the time she spends away from her family.

"So para magulo niya yung buhay mo, yung balance na meron ako, gusto ko worth it talaga siya. Gusto ko uwi ako ng bahay na busog din ako," she said.

Angelica is currently starring in "The Silent Noise," which she described as one of the most challenging and rewarding projects of her career. (G. Krishnan/abs-cbn)

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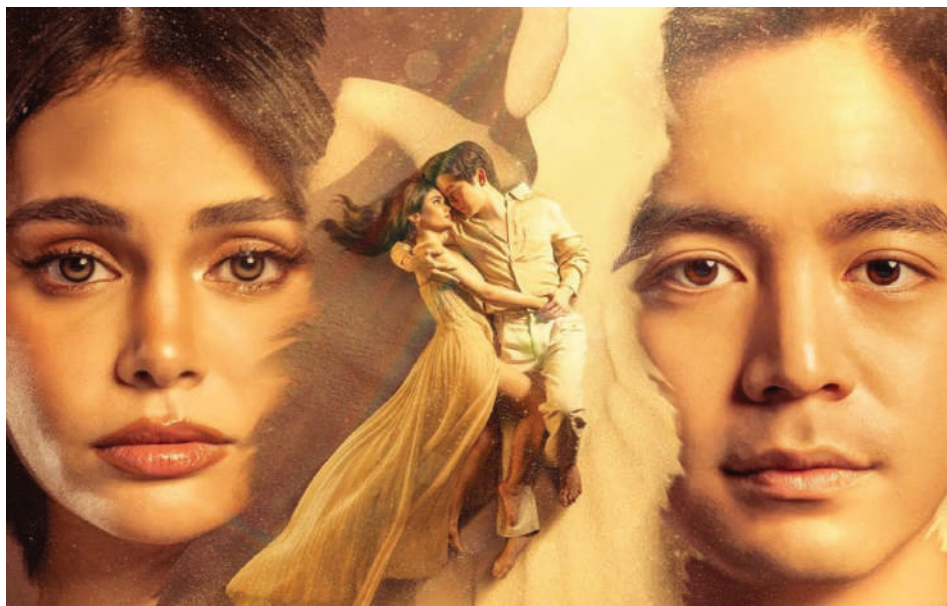
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## Joshua Garcia, Ivana Alawi Morocco-set series hitting Prime Video this May



Original poster for "Love Is Never Gone"

MANILA, Philippines — In an intertwined path to happiness, two individuals find lies and betrayal at their doorstep seeking to tear them apart.

"Love Is Never Gone" starring Joshua Garcia and Ivana Alawi has officially been given a release date on Prime Video, premiering exclusively on May 8.

The romance drama produced by ABS-CBN Studios and Dreamscape Entertainment is the first Filipino series to be shot and set in Morocco, where Ivana's father is from.

Joshua plays Teo who falls victim to Ivana's Yana, a thief also known as "Chameleon" who steals in order to care for her sickly mother.

"What begins in anger turns into love, forged through shared loss and sacrifice," goes a synopsis for the show. "However, Yana's ties to a crime syndicate lead to betrayal and Teo's wrongful imprisonment, leaving him convinced she destroyed him." Pardoned years later and back in the Philippines, Teo is rebuilding his life and learns that Gem, the wife of Jameson Blake's Ace, appears to be Yana herself.

In his attempt to enter Gem's world, Teo uncovers secrets about Ace's family and the reason sacrifices were made for his freedom.

"Caught between love, betrayal, and the corruption of a ruthless clan, Teo is forced into a final reckoning where passion, vengeance, and survival collide — proving that love endures even after betrayal," the logline ends.

Also starring in the series are Jameson Blake, Jane Oineza, Michael de Mesa, Epy

Quizon, Fyang Smith, JM Ibarra and Dina Bonnevie.

Veteran television director Emmanuel "Manny" Palo and Jojo Saguin will helm the project have previously worked together on the likes of "Doble Kara" and "100 Days to Heaven."

Palo also directed "Tanging Yaman," "Ikaw Lamang," "The General's Daughter," "Kambal sa Uma," "Nathaniel," "The Good Son" and "Unbreak My Heart."

Meanwhile, Saguin helmed "On the Wings of Love," "May Bukas Pa," "Mutya," "Walang Hanggan," "Ina, Kapatid, Anak," "Mirabella," and recently for Prime Video, "Linlang" and "The Alibi."

Celebrated screenwriter Arlene "Ayi" Tamayo, whose works include "Dirty Linen," "Wildflower" and "My Binondo Girl" will pen the script. (K. Purnell/Philstar)

## Detective Sofia Gonzalez on the case: Dolly de Leon stars in 'Maximum Pleasure Guaranteed'

MANILA, Philippines — Actress Dolly de Leon carries a badge for the first time in Apple TV's upcoming thriller-comedy series "Maximum Pleasure Guaranteed."

The show is led by "Orphan Black" star Tatiana Maslany as Paula, a newly divorced mother that works as a fact checker but ends up in a rabbit hole of black mail and dead bodies.

"Convinced she witnessed a crime — while simultaneously struggling through a custody battle and an identity crisis — Paula begins her own investigation, one that could unravel a greater conspiracy while also holding the keys to rebuilding her family and sense of self," goes the series synopsis.

Playing Paula's husband Karl is "New Girl" star Jake Johnson, who mainly looks after their daughter Hazel (Nola Wallace) with his new wife Mallory (Jessy Hodges).

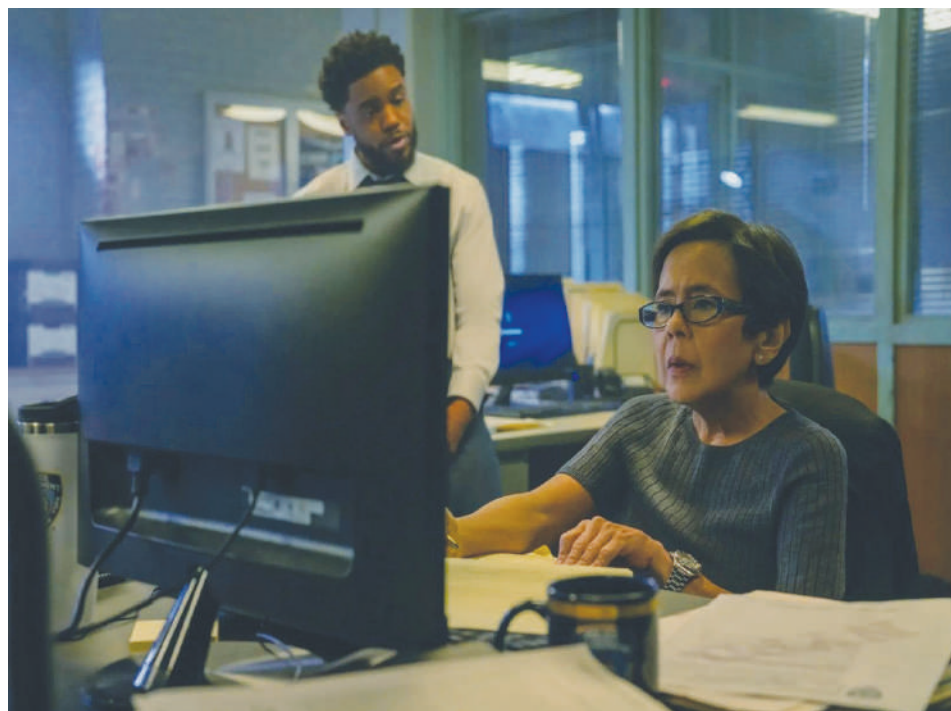
Also in the cast are Kiara Hamagami Goldberg and Charlie Hall as Paula's co-workers Geri and Rudy, Brandon Flynn as a camboy named Trevor, and "The White Lotus" and "The Last of Us" actor Murray Bartlett in an undisclosed role.

Dolly plays Detective Sofia Gonzalez and mostly shares scenes with Detective Baxter played by "Elementary" star Jon Michael Hill.

Coincidentally, Dolly and Murray recently both starred in the second season of Hulu's "Nine Perfect Strangers" headlined by Nicole Kidman.

On Instagram, Dolly shared a teaser video for "Maximum Pleasure Guaranteed," which will premiere its first two episodes on May 20 on Apple TV.

"Finally! So excited for you guys to watch this!!!" Dolly wrote in her caption, placing checks



Dolly de Leon and Jon Michael Hill in "Maximum Pleasure Guaranteed"

behind "play a detective" and "work with Tatiana Maslany."

Numerous peers expressed their excitement in the comments

section including Karen Davila, Jasmine Curtis-Smith, Erik Matti, Gab Pangilinan, and her stand-in on the show Angelica Gomez. (K. Purnell/Philstar)

# BINI to play at Coachella's Mojave stage

**(UPDATE)** Girl group BINI is set to play at the Mojave stage in Coachella this coming Saturday (Philippine time), organizers said Tuesday.

On their official social media channels, Coachella organizers announced the schedule for the first of the two-weekend affair.

BINI is set to perform on the Mojave stage — one of several festival stages — on Friday, April 10, from 4:15 p.m. to 5 p.m. (US time), which corresponds to 7:15 a.m. on Saturday, April 11, local time.

Viewers can follow their historic performance on Coachella's YouTube channel.

The eight-piece act, dubbed as the "Nation's Girl Group," will also perform on April 17 (or April 18 in the Philippines).

Also on Tuesday, the group held their first full technical rehearsal in a studio in Burbank, California, running through their 45-minute set alongside their dancers, audio crew and technical team.

"So far so good," said member Aiah. "It's day one of rehearsing back again, 'cause we last rehearsed in the Philippines. We mostly rehearsed the audio, because we really want to sound good and not just look good."

Gwen said: "As of now may inaayos pa po kami, like 'yong sa in-ear namin para pagdating doon sa Coachella stage, balanse na siya, siyempre iba po yung set up sa Pinas. Iba 'yong dati so ina-adjust pa po namin."



## ROLLING STONE FEATURE

But it's not just Filipinos eagerly anticipating a live performance from the "Pantropiko" hitmakers at the event, as Rolling Stone named BINI among the 20 acts "we can't wait to see at Coachella."

In the article, Rolling Stone noted how BINI would "make history as the first Filipino group to perform at the festival."

"BINI's vibrant pop songs and animated choreography feel tailor-made for the kind of explosive visual spectacle that Coachella promises year after year," Rolling Stone's Larisha Paul wrote.

Coachella, held annually in the deserts of Indio, California, showcases both established and emerging artists across multiple genres. — MJ Felipe / ABS-CBN News)



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# Kim Molina, Jerald Napoles on love, loss and a dream project close to home

Newly-married Kim Molina and Jerald Napoles' latest film came at a time when their personal lives were also going through something difficult.

In the Philippine adaptation of the Korean heartwarming hit "Wonderful Nightmare," the Viva artists play a married pair after Kim's character, a career-driven lawyer, dies and is given a second chance at life — this time, as a housewife with a husband (Jerald) and children she has never known, leading her to rediscover the meaning of family. While working on the film that tackles personal loss and the afterlife, in real life, Kim was also dealing with the passing of her grandfather.

"To be honest, with the process of this movie and the process of the marketing of this movie, ang dami naming na-discover. We discovered that, as partners, we really had to support each other because during the movie I was going through a lot," Kim shared with The STAR during an exclusive virtual interview with the celebrity couple.

"I was grieving over my grandfather who just passed and yung first naming dog ni Je, nawala din. So, parang, it's halo-halong emotions na kailangan kong ilabas, to think that in our personal lives kasi, there was something happening.

"So, personally, I discovered how supportive Je can be. Alam ko supportive na siya but he really supported me as a partner on and off screen," the actress further shared.

It was a no-brainer for Jerald shared to step in and become his wife's main source of support. "Actually, the film helped somehow not really ma-distract but you know, para may ibang pagkaabalahan yung utak ni Kimmy since mahal din naman yung trabaho niya," Jerald recalled.

"So since the mind is kind of tired because of the emotions that she had to feel, at least I did some service of, you know, affection and the things that she needed. Parang ako na yung nag-ready and everything, and then just let her grieve.

"Ang maganda kasi sa nangyari is mag-partner kami. You know, unlike sa ibang tao 'pag nangyari ito, maghahanap ka ng lalabasan ng sama ng loob or emotions. So automatic meron na kaagad na ako na on her quiet moments, if she feels like she wants to cry or



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

she needs me beside her, I'm already available kahit man lang doon.

He added that when someone is grieving, there is not much you can do except stay.

"Basically... if someone is grieving, you cannot intervene, eh? Not really intervene, you just have to be there."

Kim admitted it did affect her performance. Unlike in past projects, she found it difficult to separate her own emotions from those of her character in "Wonderful Nightmare."

"Ako, I believe that grieving is not just abrupt, you know, it's a process and I cannot say that I'm a hundred percent OK. Like there are times when I still think of my grandpa kasi siya nagpalaki sa akin eh. So, it's a process.

"I think it helped me in a way na meron akong lugar na pwede akong humagulgo. Pero kasi, usually when I do movies I see to it that I don't cry with my real tears. I cry with my character's tears.

"So this was the first time that there were a lot of parts of the movie that it was me. It was actually Kim who was crying. It wasn't my character Lui, it wasn't Attorney Lui Manuel who was crying, it was me, so it was hard for me to stop the tears."

"So medyo kinakabahan ako kasi hindi ko alam kung paano siya nag-translate on screen.

I'm not used to saying that because there are certain types of me bawling or crying na ayoko sanang gawin ni Lui pero dahil hindi ko ma-control, nagawa siya ni Lui. So may ganun, mahirap siya.

"It was just a sort of a way for me to, you know, release all of the emotions. I think that's how it helped me but I can't say a hundred percent."

Even with the emotional weight, the project remains important to her for another reason. It was something she had always wanted to do.

"As in, it's a dream of mine to do a Philippine adaptation of a Korean film, so this was a dream come true," said Kim.

It stands out for how it was adapted for a Filipino audience under the direction of RC Delos Reyes.

"He made sure that yung essence of the Filipino ay malalagay talaga doon sa movie and pinaka-natuwa ako at nagustuhan kong ginawa na Filipino touch ni direk RC was yung limbo," said Kim.

"The limbo in the original film was studio only all white, pero dito yung limbo natin is an (actual location), sa beach in Batangas.

"Sabi ni direk, gusto ko kasing i-encapsulate yung ganda ng Pilipinas. Kasi sa totoo lang sa buong mundo kilala tayo sa beach, sa ganda ng Pilipinas. Kaya ayaw niyang nasa studio lang yung limbo. Makikita niyo talaga din siya sa buong

pelikula."

Admittedly, taking on a well-known Korean movie came with pressure.

"Well, with the reception of the people, we're very excited and apparently the original film has a lot of fans already. Kasi talagang one of the favorite films siya sa Korea and ayun, the moment that I found out that I'm gonna do it, medyo kabado na ako. As in, inaral ko yung script, inaral ko lahat," said Kim.

"Yung mga lawyer friends ko, inaaral ko pano sila magsalita. Yung mga ganun. So it's something to look forward to personally because I just want to see myself. It's one of those films na kinakabahan akong panoorin kasi yung ibang films namin, I was very excited about all of it. Pero ito kasi mas drama talaga siya lalo sa latter part of the film, so it's something that I'm excited for people to see and hopefully, they do appreciate it."

As for Jerald, one of the highlights of the film is seeing Kim's performance.

"A favorite scene of mine is the one towards the climax of the film. Kay Kim eh, kasi showcase of the actress portraying the character. Hindi ko lang masabi kung ano yun pero something to look forward to," he said.

"And the takeaway of the movie is just, you know, be present with everyone you love at the moment. Be there, feel them, hear them, listen to them, talk to them, everything, because you'll never know if it's gonna be your last or how many times you're gonna do it in your life."

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

Though they've portrayed a "loveteam" in several films already since "Jowable," "Wonderful Nightmare" marks their onscreen debut as now husband and wife.

Jerald said, "For me, it's a bit of a premonition, of course, kasi portraying a family with the personnatalagangmakakasama mo sa buhay."

"Wonderful Nightmare" is now showing in cinemas. (N. Tomada/Philstar)

## Yasmien Kurdi brings daughter's bullying case to DepEd

MANILA, Philippines — Kapuso actress Yasmien Kurdi's fight against bullying continues, especially for all youth victims in the country.

Yasmien once again flagged this issue on social media after upholding the complaint she filed with the Department of Education (DepEd) against her daughter Ayesha Zara's former school.

The Kapuso actress, along with her husband Rey Soldevilla, personally went to the DepEd office to hold the school accountable.

The actress said that the said school did not provide protection to Ayesha, who allegedly suffered bullying from her classmates.

She said that it was her daughter who wanted them to file a complaint with the DepEd.

Yasmien posted a photo on her Instagram page with her husband and several lawyers, along with a message of gratitude to the DepEd.

"We are deeply grateful to Atty. Ade, Atty. Paeng, Atty. Rej, and



Actress Yasmien Kurdi, together with her husband and lawyers.. Yasmien Kurdi via Facebook

Atty. Jojo for their unwavering support and guidance to our family. And to all my professors in law school, thank you for your advice and guidance," she said.

"We would also like to extend our sincere thanks to DepEd Secretary @sonnyangara, Mrs. Tootsie Angara, and Ms. Fatima for their support and concern," she added.

Yasmien said that, at her daughter's request, they formally filed a complaint with DepEd, submitting complete and factual evidence.

"As her parents, we will always stand by her and protect her," the actress said.

"This is not just about one child, it is about accountability! Under the Anti-Bullying Act (R.A. 10627), schools are required to act, and when they fail, DepEd has the authority to investigate and impose sanctions," she added.

Meanwhile, Yasmien also called on parents and youth not to be afraid to come forward and speak out against bullying.

She said there are mechanisms like the TeleSafe Hotline and other contact channels of the DepEd where complaints can be reported if the school does not take action.

"Parents and kids, SPEAK UP! If schools do not act, you have the right to elevate your concerns," she said. (J.M. Severo/ Philstar)

## Xyriel Manabat vows legal action vs TNVS driver over alleged online misconduct; Grab Philippines launches probe

Actress Xyriel Manabat has vowed to pursue action against a TNVS driver who allegedly made lewd remarks about her following a routine ride.

The issue surfaced after a social media account under the name "Boss Toyo Mansi" shared a selfie with Manabat, accompanied by a caption and subsequent comments widely criticized by netizens for being inappropriate and offensive.

In an interview with ABS-CBN News, Manabat made it clear that she intends to hold the individual accountable.

"Hindi ko 'yan papalampasin. Hindi dapat gawing entertainment 'yan in any form. I hope the platform or app will do something about this. It is not petty," she said after being shown a screenshot of the post.

According to the actress, the photo was taken during a TNVS booking on Tuesday while she was on her way to work. She expressed disappointment that what began as a simple, courteous interaction



escalated into alleged online misconduct.

"Sobrang nagulat ako. Papunta lang ako ng work niyan — imagine gaano kahirap buhay ng babae. Nag-work ka lang, nagpa-pic lang — you are being kind, you are being a decent human being, you get this in return," she shared.

Manabat emphasized that her

attire and demeanor during the encounter were professional, underscoring that inappropriate behavior is never justified.

"It is never about the piece of clothing. Naka pang-work ako. Maayos ako nakipag-usap. Nag-tip pa ako," she said, adding a pointed message directed at the driver's family about the gravity of his actions.

A long-time advocate for women and marginalized sectors, Manabat reiterated her commitment to speaking out against misconduct and abuse.

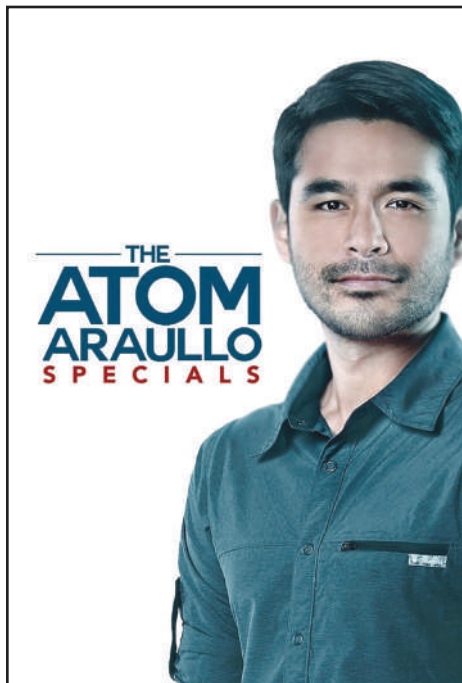
"I am never scared to express my passion about protecting women, victims of any gender and age — those who are voiceless. There is nothing to be scared of. It fuels reason to be more brave and spread awareness," she added.

In response to the issue raised online, Grab Philippines confirmed that it has initiated an investigation.

"At Grab, we practice zero tolerance for inappropriate contact and other misconduct," the company said in a statement on X. "Rest assured, we have invited the driver involved as part of our full investigation and are committed to taking the necessary actions."

The incident has since sparked renewed discussions on passenger safety, digital conduct, and accountability within ride-hailing platforms. (N. Ramos/ mb.cm.ph)

# Atom Araullo sounds call to courage for young journos



You don't need grand gestures to make an impact; you just need to choose truth in every single report. Every time a journalist has the courage to tell the truth, public trust is preserved and democracy is strengthened.

It was in Koronadal where Atom also drew the line that students are now quoting: "Influencers chase attention, journalists chase truth." Not everyone who gets attention on social media delivers correct information. In the age of virality, truth is not always viral — but it is the foundation of responsible journalism.

For Atom, Ormoc is personal. The nation first saw his incisive and fearless reporting during Typhoon Yolanda in 2013 — coverage done in the very region that bore the storm's worst. To return to Leyte not with a mic in a disaster zone, but with a keynote for the country's best campus journalists, is a full-circle moment.

And he is not a stranger to NSPC. He is part of the NSPC story. A champion of campus and community journalism, he co-founded FYT Media in 2018 and launched its Campus Journ initiative at NSPC 2020, later helping introduce Mobile Journalism as an exhibition event — a milestone that finally recognized how students actually gather news today. Since then, he has continued promoting campus journalism in talks across the country.

The National Schools Press Conference, pursuant to Republic Act No. 7079 or the Campus Journalism Act of 1991, is the annual summit of campus journalism in the Philippines. Hosted this year by DepEd Region VIII and the Schools Division of Ormoc City, it aims to demonstrate understanding of journalism through skillful execution in print, broadcast, and online; recognize the role of journalism in advocating for social consciousness and environmental awareness; promote fair and ethical use of media; foster camaraderie through healthy competition; and give learners a real pathway to future careers in media.

The 2026 theme could not be more timely: "Mapanuri, Mapanindigan at Mapanagutang Pamamahayag" (Critical, Principled, and Accountable Journalism). In an era of AI and rapid content creation, it is a call to return to the core — critical thinking for truth and accuracy, principled action for



independence and accountability for professionalism.

The contests reflect that breadth: Individual categories (English and Filipino, elementary and secondary) include News, Feature, Editorial, Sports, Copyediting and Headline Writing, Science and Technology, Photojournalism, Editorial Cartooning, Column Writing, and Mobile Journalism (exhibition, secondary). Group categories include Radio Scriptwriting and Broadcasting, Collaborative Desktop Publishing, Online Publishing (secondary), and TV Scriptwriting and Broadcasting (secondary). There will also be an Exhibit of Best Regional School Papers and the awarding of Outstanding School Paper Advisers and Campus Journalists.

Atom Araullo's credentials give weight to his words. His writing and television work have earned both local and international acclaim — honors from the Association for International Broadcasting Awards, the Cannes Corporate Media & TV Awards, the Asia Contents Awards, the Online Journalism Awards and the Society of Publishers in Asia. He has won 10 medals at the New York Festivals, including 4 consecutive Gold Awards.

He was named one of The Outstanding Young Men (TOYM) in 2010, and won First Prize in the Don Carlos Palanca Awards for English Essay in 2022. Beyond the newsroom, he serves as the National Goodwill Ambassador for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

His book, "A View from the Ground," published by the University of the Philippines Press, is the field notes of that career — stories from armed conflict, natural disasters and social issues in the Philippines and Southeast Asia. In 2025, it won both Best Non-Fiction and Best Debut Book at the inaugural Akdang Pinoy Awards. At NSPC, he will hold a book signing and meet-and-greet at Ormoc City Hall, the Multi-purpose Hall and Alto Peak Cafe.

Because the future of Philippine journalism will be in that room — 13 to 17-year-olds learning to write a clean lead, frame a photo under pressure and cut a two-minute TV report that is fair before it is fast. And they will hear it from someone who has lived the standard they are being taught.

Atom Araullo does not come to NSPC to tell students to be famous. He comes to tell them to be credible. To be "mapanuri" when a post trends. To be "mapanindigan" when the truth is unpopular. To be "mapanagutan" when they make a mistake.

In the end, that is why campus and community journalism matters. It is where courage is practiced before the national stage demands it. It is where the choice between chasing attention and chasing truth is made — story after story. So all roads lead to Ormoc next week — because the next generation of Filipino journalists will gather there and the journalist who has spent his career proving that courage is quiet, persistent and grounded in fact will be there to meet them. (N. D. Ferrer/Malaya)

To be chosen as keynote speaker of the National Schools Press Conference (NSPC) is not a routine invitation. It is a major feat — NSPC reserves that stage for only the best and most respected in Philippine journalism.

This year, from April 13 to 17 in Ormoc City, that honor belongs to Alfonso Tomas "Atom" Araullo. "Magkita-kita ta sa NSPC 2026," says the multi-awarded GMA broadcast journalist and FYT Media co-founder.

And the question he brings with him is the one campus journalism needs most right now: "Bakit mahalaga ang campus at community journalism?"

Last February, Atom stood before thousands of young writers at the SOCCSKSARGEN Regional Schools Press Conference in Koronadal City, South Cotabato, and gave them the core of his credo: "Tapang sa Katotohanan, Diwa ng Tunay na Pamamahayag."

He told the delegates that journalism does not always need drama — it needs simple, stubborn courage to defend the truth. A journalist must have the "lakas ng loob" to fact-check, to verify, to stand by what is right even when someone will get angry. Popularity is not the metric. Credibility is.

In a time when information — "tama man o mali" — spreads in seconds, the daily work of "pagsusuri, pag-verify at maingat na pag-uulat" becomes even heavier. Standing for truth can invite criticism, but it remains the foundation of a free and responsible press. As he reminded them, change in society begins with a journalist who has integrity.

# Eraserheads “Combo On The Run” Documentary Screening, Q&A, and Full Live Concert Experience with Ely Buendia Coming to Vancouver

By Janice Lozano

Vancouver, BC — April 2026 — Fans of Filipino music, culture, and storytelling are invited to an unforgettable evening as the highly anticipated Combo On The Run documentary featuring the legendary Eraserheads arrives in Vancouver for a special one-night-only event.

Taking place on Saturday, April 11, at the iconic Rio Theatre, this immersive experience goes beyond a traditional screening, bringing together film, conversation, and live music in one powerful celebration of Original Pilipino Music (OPM).

“Combo On The Run” is a compelling documentary that chronicles the journey of the Eraserheads, widely regarded as one of the most influential bands in Philippine music history. The film explores their meteoric rise to fame in the 1990s, the cultural movement they ignited, and the personal and professional challenges they faced along the way, including creative differences, the pressures of stardom, and their eventual breakup. Through rare footage, behind the scenes moments, and heartfelt reflections, the documentary offers an intimate and honest look at the band’s legacy and the enduring impact of their music on generations of fans around the world.

Following the screening, the evening will transition into an intimate audience engagement segment, featuring a special live Q&A session with Ely Buendia and the film’s director, Diane Ventura. Attendees will have the rare opportunity to hear directly from the creative forces behind the film, gain deeper insight into the filmmaking process, and engage in meaningful conversation about the story and its impact.

Closing the night, audiences will be treated to an electrifying live full concert performance by Ely Buendia, delivering a dynamic set that celebrates the timeless music and spirit of the Eraserheads. The performance



promises to bring nostalgia, energy, and connection, uniting fans through the songs that defined an era.

This event is expected to

draw a vibrant mix of music lovers, film enthusiasts, and members of the Filipino-Canadian community, making it both a cultural milestone and a meaningful gathering.



This special event is proudly brought to you by Elevé and East 45th Productions. Produced by Michelle Unso, Janice Lozano, Allan Bernard, Michelle Policarpio, and Jun Policarpio, whose combined efforts bring this cultural experience to life.

Event Details:  
• Date: Saturday, April 11, 2026

• Venue: Rio Theatre

• Program:

• “Combo On The Run” Documentary

Screening

• Live Audience Q&A with Director Diane Ventura

• Full Concert Performance by Ely Buendia

Tickets are expected to sell quickly as excitement builds around this one-of-a-kind experience. Attendees are encouraged to secure tickets early and be part of a night that celebrates music, storytelling, and cultural pride.

For ticket inquiries, sponsorship opportunities, or media coverage, please contact the event organizers.

**Media Contact:**  
East 45th Productions  
Michiko-(604) 761-6907  
Janice Lozano-(778) 772-5847  
Michelle Policarpio-(431) 200-3288

**Tickets:**  
<https://riotheatretickets.ca/events/40758-eraserheads-combo-on-the-run>

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**Sleepless: Filipinos most likely to do night shifts in Canada**

By Carlito Pablo



In April 2022, a total of 323,000 people, or 1.7 percent of workers aged 15 to 69, worked a regular night shift in Canada. Photo by Ian Findley on www.pexels.com.

A government report on how people spent their day in a 24-hour period reveals a noteworthy glance on one facet of the Filipino experience in Canada.

It's that Filipinos are most likely to work night shifts compared to other segments of the population.

Among racialized groups, landed immigrants, and Canadian-born workers, Filipinos have the highest proportion of those who stay awake in the wee hours in order to earn a living.

Released on March 12, 2026 by Statistics Canada, the report is titled "A Canadian bedtime story".

The paper report noted that in April 2022, a total of 323,000 people, or 1.7 percent of workers aged 15 to 69, "usually worked a regular night shift".

Filipinos are most likely to do night shifts at 4.3 percent, followed by Blacks at 3.3 percent.

Meanwhile, about one in 10 Canadians or 10 percent are asleep by 9 p.m.

Moreover, almost one-third of Canadians or around 30 percent are asleep by 10 p.m., while three in five are asleep at 11 p.m.

"Younger adults aged 15 to 34 are most likely to still be awake at 11:00 p.m., with almost half awake at that hour," the report noted.

The report provides a link to a previous study by Statistics Canada that was released on June 13, 2023, and titled "Quality of Employment in Canada: Night work, 2022".

"Industries where a higher proportion of workers usually work at night include transportation and warehousing, business, building and other support services, and retail trade," stated the 2023 study that utilized data from a survey in April 2022.

Referencing a 1990 International Labour Organization Night Work Convention, the paper stated that "night work means all work which is performed during a period of no less than seven consecutive hours, including the interval from midnight to 5 a.m."

"Night work can be a voluntary adaptation of work hours, but in many cases people work at night due to operational needs in settings such as hospitals and factories," the 2023 paper stated.

It also noted risks associated with working graveyard shifts.

"Working at night may impact workers' ability to balance their work hours with care and family responsibilities. In addition, night shifts are associated with a higher risk of depression, metabolic syndrome and

other health conditions."

The report also stated that immigrants and some racialized groups were also more likely to work at night.

"The proportion of workers with a regular night shift was 2.3% for landed immigrants compared with 1.5% for those born in Canada," the study noted.

Landed immigrants, as well as Filipino and Black workers, were more likely to work at night.

Among racialized workers aged 15 to 69, Filipinos are most likely to work at night at a proportion of 4.3 percent, followed by Blacks, 3.3 percent; South Asian, 2.5 percent; and Chinese at around 1.6 percent.

The 2023 study also revealed that the prevalence of regular night hours varied by level of education.

It's that workers aged 25 to 69 with a high school diploma or less were more than twice (2.5 percent) as likely to work at night than those with a bachelor's degree or higher (0.9 percent).

So where is all this night work happening?

In April 2022, the transportation and warehousing industry had one of the highest proportions of workers who usually worked a regular night shift or night hours at 5.5 percent.

Other industries with relatively high rates of night work include the business, building and other support services industry (4.5 percent), accommodation and food services (2.8 percent), retail trade (2.7 percent) and manufacturing (2.7 percent).

The 2023 Statistics Canada study also noted that private sector employees (2.1 percent) were more likely to work at night than public sector employees (1.3 percent) and self-employed workers (0.6 percent).

The March 12, 2026 paper recalled that Statistics Canada conducted a 2022 survey on how Canadians spent their day over a 24-hour period.

The data revealed "daily rhythms of life—from sleep to work to leisure".

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Now, talking about the early birds, around one in four Canadians are awake by 6 a.m. The number rises to about one in two by 7 a.m.

"By age group, well over half of adults aged 35 to 64 are awake at 7:00 a.m., while approximately three in five adults aged 15 to 34 or 65 and older are still sleeping."

As for late risers, around four in five Canadians are awake by 9 a.m.

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Dates: Saturday classes from April 18 to May 30, 2026.

Levels: Open to students from Kindergarten to Grade 12.

Location: Artopia Art Studio, Unit 215, 550 Cambie Street, Downtown Vancouver.

Registration: Available online via the Official Zeffy Page.

## Filipino Canadian Construction Society Announces 20th Anniversary Golf Event: "GOLF for a CAUSE"

**Filipino Canadian Construction Society**

**20th Anniversary**

**Golf for a Cause**

**Event Detail**

Where: Country Meadows Golf Club, Richmond, BC V6W 1E2  
 Date & Time: May 30, 2026 1PM-5PM  
 Format: Shotgun start  
 Fellowship and awarding 6PM-9PM

**PRICE**  
 Golf & Fellowship: \$96.00  
 Fellowship: \$45.00  
 Golf Carts: \$25.00  
 (Limited to 15 carts; please reserve ahead)

**Sponsorship Opportunities**

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**Registration**

Contacts:  
 Mads Mercado III  
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## Filipino Language School (Spring Term 2026)

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The Filipino Canadian Construction Society proudly marks two decades of connection, collaboration, and community with a special fundraising golf day—GOLF for a CAUSE. This one-day event blends sport, fellowship, and philanthropy on the greens, culminating in an evening of celebration and recognition.

A portion of proceeds will support a charitable institution. If you'd like to support or learn more about sponsorship opportunities, please contact:

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**Tournament Chairman**  
 Phone: +1 (604) 783-0875  
 Email: infoatfcss@gmail.com

Support the Cause **Josephine Rose Fard**



**Tournament Co-Chairman**  
 Phone: +1 (672) 866-5959  
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**Important Participation or support confirmation: \*\*by May 15, 2026**

This milestone celebration promises a day of sunny skies, friendly competition, and a warm gathering of colleagues and friends. Let's come together to honor 20 years of leadership, service, and shared success in the Filipino Canadian construction community. See you on the course!

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## World Day of Prayer 2026 in Vancouver

Vancouver, March 28, 2026.-- St. Mary the Virgin South Hill church provided the venue for the 2026 annual World Day of Prayer (WDP) in Vancouver.

The annual 2026 WDP focused on Nigeria and carried the theme "I will give you rest: Come" based on Matthew 11:28-30. The WDP movement in Nigeria prepared the service and offered stories and insights that emphasized that people everywhere are carrying both the weight of human suffering and the depths of divine rest.

The WDP was observed in services all over the world, with Nigeria as the focus of prayer and understanding. Women worldwide learned how the women in Nigeria understand and put into action the biblical passages in the context of their concerns and needs.

The annual WDP is a global prayer movement of informed prayer and prayerful action for peace and justice. The WDP in Canada is coordinated by The Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada (WICC). Each year, a different country is highlighted;

for this year, it was Nigeria.

The WDP has an International Committee which was formed in 1968. In 2027, the WDP is marking its 100th year. Rev. Gneid Lackey with the United Church of Canada in New Brunswick declared, "Imagine over 1.5 million Christians speaking 90 different languages in 150 countries gathering in spirit; uniting in prayer for relevant issues affecting women and children."

Twenty-five people, mostly women, from the Mothers Union of St. Mary the Virgin church and from the St. Andrews Church, came for the WDP and stayed for the reception after.

The theme of this year's WDP is particularly relevant today. One of the members of the Mothers Union said that "we all carry heavy burdens; we all have the common and universal need for rest, and God's grace."

The St. Mary the Virgin South Hill Church is located at 808 East 50th Avenue, Vancouver and the rector is Rev. Expedito Farinas. (By E. Maestro and Felly Farinas)



Thanks to the Mothers Union for the wonderful fellowship after the prayer. (Photo credit: Mothers Union)



World Day of Prayer 2026 gathered parishioners from St Mary the Virgin South Hill and St. Andrews; Artwork at the centre is "Rest for the Weary" by Gift Amarachi Ottah. (Photo credit: St Mary the Virgin church)

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## Kim Chiu completes short business course in Paris

Kim Chiu completed a short business course in Paris as part of her effort to continue learning beyond her showbiz career.

On Monday, April 6, "It's Showtime" hosts congratulated Kim for her achievement.

"Pero si Kim, i-congratulate natin dahil sobrang nakakaproud, nag-aral ng tatlong linggo sa Paris lang naman," Amy Perez said.

Kim shared that she enrolled in

the three-week course to expand her knowledge, particularly in business and marketing.

"This year is about learning and improving. Hindi naman tumitigil kung ano lang 'yung nalalaman natin sa buhay," Kim said.

"Marami akong pinag-aralan for future marketing purposes and business," she added.

"The Alibi" star also gave followers a glimpse of her time abroad through an Instagram

story, where she appeared to be attending a lecture. (A. Villanueva/ Manila Stnafard)



# Bianca Gonzalez wants media to hold back on luxury price posts

Television host Bianca Gonzalez Intal made an appeal to media platforms regarding the luxury items of celebrities. The "Pinoy Big Brother" host on Monday, April 6, urged publications to refrain from posting the prices of such items, given the current climate.

"Malamangaypinag-ipunannila ito, oo, pero sa ekonomiyang ito, sa taas ng presyo ng gas at bilihin, sa nangyayari sa mundo, sa hirap na pinagdadaan ng mga kababayan natin, hindi ito ang panahon para detalyehin pa at ibida ang mga ganitong bagay," she wrote.

"Hindi naayon. Salamat," Bianca added.

The post has garnered 277,900 views, 2,400 likes, 272 reposts and 27 comments.

"I think celebrities should also be more mindful of what they put out there, public figures sila eh. I understand they've worked hard for what they have, but there should be some restraint in flexing or showcasing a lavish lifestyle, [especially] considering the current economic situation," an X user wrote.

"Tama... sana maging sensitibo..." another commented.

"Agree. Let's be more sensitive, especially during these times,"

a different Pinoy said.

"This... napaka out of touch ng iba," another wrote.

The country is currently facing an oil crisis as a result of the conflict in the Middle East, where suppliers are encountering difficulties in shipping their products due to ongoing military actions involving the United States, Israel, and Iran.

This has led to soaring petroleum prices, with some fuels, such as diesel, reaching triple-digit prices per liter.

Aside from consecutive weekly oil price hikes, Filipinos are also expected to face higher electricity bills due to increased use of appliances such as air conditioners and fans, especially during the dry season.

Moreover, water concessionaires have begun raising their rates this month in response to foreign currency fluctuations.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. last month declared a state of national energy emergency. He called the situation an "imminent danger" to the Philippines' energy supply, noting that the crisis has since pushed fuel prices higher. (J. Malasig/Interaksyon)



Bianca Gonzalez in this photo posted on her Instagram on January 7, 2026 (iamsuperbianca via Instagram)

# Ashley Ortega hopes Mavy Legaspi is her last



Ashley Ortega recently shared that she's hoping Mavy Legaspi will be her last boyfriend.

"Of course, I would want him to be my last," she said. "Before we even started dating, I told him the guy I start dating should be the last one. But anything can happen, so we'll see. I really hope and pray it's him."

Ashley said their relationship has grown deeper over the past year. "It feels like we've been together for four or

five years already. We've passed the honeymoon stage. I let Mavy focus on his work without constant updates like before."

She added that Mavy, who is younger than her, changed her perspective on love. "He's consistent and always shows up. That effort is what made me fall in love with him." (M.S)

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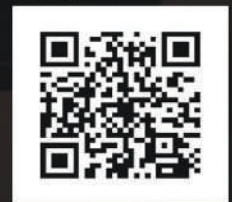


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# Philippine Church to join pope's peace vigil April 11



Pope Leo XIV greets Archbishop Gilbert Garcera of Lipa during his first Wednesday general audience as pontiff in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican on May 21, 2025. SCREEN GRAB FROM VATICAN NEWS

The head of the Catholic bishops on Tuesday urged dioceses across the Philippines to hold prayer vigils for peace

this weekend, echoing a call from Pope Leo XIV amid escalating global tensions.

The appeal follows the pope's Easter "Urbi et Orbi" message, in which he announced a prayer vigil set this Saturday, April 11, at St. Peter's Basilica.

The pontiff warned of a world increasingly shaped by conflict and what he described as a "globalization of indifference." Archbishop Gilbert Garcera, CBCP president, called on local churches to organize prayer gatherings, inviting the faithful to "implore the gift of peace" and renew commitments to dialogue, reconciliation and nonviolence.

Dioceses may hold Eucharistic adoration, recitations of the rosary or Masses dedicated to peace, he said.

"Such a collective act of prayer will not only express our solidarity with the Holy Father but will also witness to our shared hope that true peace, which begins in Christ, may

prevail in our hearts and in the world," Garcera said.

The pope on Sunday lamented that the world is "growing accustomed to violence" and "becoming indifferent" not only to the deaths of thousands of people, but to the "hatred and division" war causes, as well as its "economic and social consequences".

"We cannot continue to be indifferent! And we cannot resign ourselves to evil!" he said.

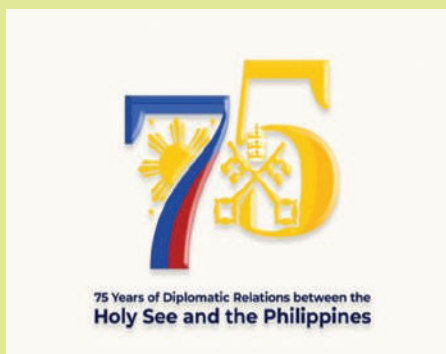
Inviting the faithful to join him in the prayer vigil, the pope said, "let us abandon every desire for conflict, domination, and power, and implore the Lord to grant his peace to a world ravaged by wars and marked by a hatred and indifference that make us feel powerless in the face of evil." (CBCP news)

## Holy See, Philippines mark 75 years of diplomatic ties

In 2015, Pope Francis visited, expressing solidarity with survivors of Typhoon Yolanda (Haiyan) and drawing some of the largest papal crowds.

Two visiting pontiffs, St. Paul VI and St. John Paul II, have since been canonized, deepening the significance of their visits, the nunciature said.

"As the Holy See and the Philippines mark 75 years of diplomatic relations, both reaffirm their commitment to working together in building a society rooted in faith, the promotion of human dignity, solidarity, and service to the common good," it said. (CBCP News)



## Paolo Contis, Polo Ravales return to primetime

Paolo Contis and Polo Ravales are back on primetime TV and couldn't be happier. Both actors are part of GMA's upcoming action series, Master Cutter, led by Dingdong Dantes.

"Finally," Paolo said in a recent interview. "We've rested for so long in primetime. For the past year and a half, I've been doing movies. When I was offered the chance to work with Dong, I grabbed it immediately. With his stature as the Kapuso Primetime King, it's a huge honor to be part of this project."

Paolo will play Dingdong's main nemesis. "I missed playing villain on screen," he

said. "For a long time, I played 'contravida' to Dong in shows like Ang Babaeng Hinugot sa Aking Tadyang and Alyas Robin Hood. We already know each other's work style. During training, we joked about why we're still doing this when we're old already. But seriously, I'm confident we'll never get angry if something happens on set."

Polo Ravales also welcomed the opportunity to work with Dingdong again. "It's great because we're friends. We go back to our TGIS and Viva Teen Barkadas days. It's awesome that we can still work together after all these years." Polo added that the series is supported by a strong



From left: Dingdong Dantes, Paolo Contis, and Polo Ravales reunite for a new action series on television

ensemble: Rio Locsin, Tonton Gutierrez, Max Collins, Jo Berry, Max Eigenmann, Ketchup Eusebio, Shuvee Etrata,

Anthony Constantino, Prince Carlos, Charlie Fleming, and child star Sienna Steves.

**AT THE MOVIES**  
By Robert Waldman

Running time: 1h 45m  
Sweet Dreams!

I Get set for an extremely good movie. Let's go back to 1990 to explore the inner workings of a repressive regime with the eye-opening *The Presidents Cake*. Yet another winner from Mongrel media this quint charmer takes us back in history to the always troubled Middle East. Get a front row seat to history smartly revealed at the Van City Theatre in Vancouver, B.C.

Dictatorships are bad for the people. As the United States is doing the world a favour by taking on those blood thirsty power fanatics in charge of Iran this safeguard of the free world provided a similar use of force when dealing with Iraq In 1990. Set against this turmoil our story follows the tale of a young girl sent by a fanatical hard-line teacher to perform a special task: bake a cake for her class in honour of Saddam Hussein, their esteemed leader. Sounds like a simple chore but it's how this whole episode unfolds that is truly captivating.

CAlong the way Lamia hooks up with her school time chum Saeed and the two engage in a host of adventures that are both unpredictable and full of danger. Cast as Saeed is Sajad

**The President's Cake (PG) \*\*\*\***

Mohamad Qasem who also is very believable and engaging as a licensed troublemaker who isn't afraid to take matters into his own hands - for better or worse. Well, boys will be boys. Just how this perilous trip turns out will have audiences on the edge of their seats and rooting with their hearts for a safe return for one gutsy and feisty little grade three year old.

Terrific acting, sharp dialogue, winning background characters, effective time capsule memories with an atmosphere meticulously recreated for the era and tension galore make *The Presidents Cake* a superbly made excellently executed joy ride. Director/writer Hasan Hadi pulls off an amazing heartfelt tale of struggle and determination. And hope.

For more reviews please visit my website [moviereviewssite.ca](http://moviereviewssite.ca).



**Unit 731 (PG) \*\*\*\***

*Criminal Intent*

War brings out the worst in people. While the U.S. is doing the world a favor by rooting out terrorists in the terror state of Iran people should learn from history - or face a repetition. By now all of the world knows of the evil emanating from the minds of wicked clerics bent on destroying their neighbors - let alone their own people. Just like the Nazis. What most people don't know is that the Japanese were just as bad. Now a new film called *Unit 731* dramatizes wicked experiments perpetrated on prisoners in Manchuria from 1936-1945. This new movie, a dramatization from *Well Go USA* is a must see movie. See it first on digital screening by contacting your local cable company or internet provider or enjoy it ( if you can call it that) by getting the DVD or Blu-ray exclusively through Amazon. *Unit 731* also goes by the name of *Evil Unbound* - how appropriate- and is with English subtitles which doesn't deter.



Talk about a haunting atmosphere. Director/writer Linshan Zhao deserves credit for shining light on a little know part of Japanese history that has been glossed over by history books. What makes the film all the more devastating as that this facility actually

existed and was in full operation. These biological weapons were in fact used on civilians in China with plans well underway to attack the west coast of the United States - just like Iran has threatened San Francisco as we speak by ships/tankers in the pacific. That's another good reason why such evil needs to be stopped once and for all. At all costs.

Smart, emotional and gripping *Unit 731* is an unforgettable movie on an unforgivable subject. And it all happened in real life. Lest we forget.

For more reviews please visit my website [moviereviewssite.com](http://moviereviewssite.com).

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## SPORTS

# Alex in Wonderland

By Chito U. Malabanan II

What Makes Alex Relatable?

A few years ago, the average Filipino sports fan spoke a specific language: “libero,” “spike,” “set point” (in volleyball), or “buzzer-beater,” “step back three point shot” and “slam dunk” for basketball. Tennis, for many, was a distant, elite pastime—a sport of country clubs and quiet etiquette that felt far removed from the high energy crowd of a PBA game or a fiesta boxing match.

Then the name Alex Eala arrived.

Suddenly, the Filipino vocabulary has expanded. Words like double fault, backhand, top spin, and tiebreaker—once alien to the masses—are now shouted at television screens from the slums of Tondo to the gated residential areas of Forbes park. We aren't just watching a girl hit a yellow ball; we are learning the soul of a sport through her.

Alex Eala's rise hasn't just been fast; it is historic. From being a standout student at the Rafa Nadal Academy to becoming the first Filipino to win a Junior Grand Slam singles title at the 2022 US Open, she broke a ceiling we didn't even know existed. By early March 2026, she crashed the another barrier by breaking into the WTA Top 30, reaching a career-high world No. 29.

In a country where athletes often struggle for lack of world-class facilities, Alex's rise feels like a defiance of the odds. She didn't just participate; she dominated, taking down Grand Slam champions like Iga Świątek and Madison Keys in rate tournaments. Her success got the attention of the global tennis community, they now look at the Philippine flag with newfound respect.

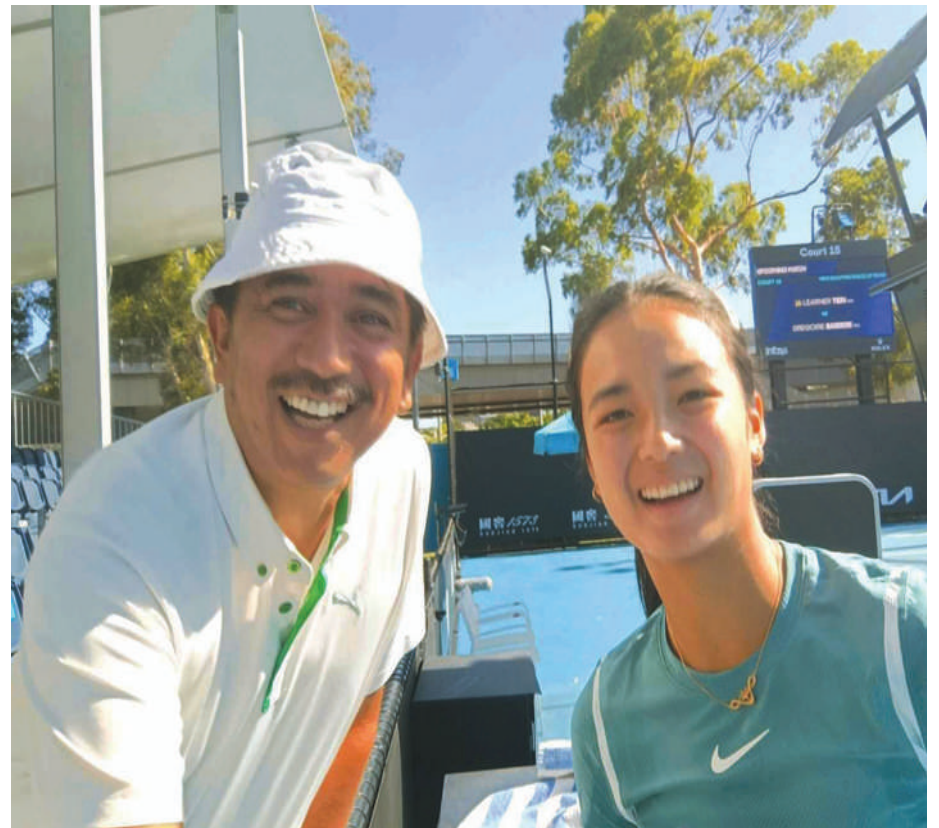
It would be easy for a tennis star to feel special. After all, Alex spent much of her youth in Spain, training under the tutelage of tennis legends. Yet, she is perhaps one of the most grounded sports hero we have.

What makes her relatable is her “down to earth Pinay shyness demeanor.” The way she speaks in Filipino with pride in international interviews, made sure the world hears our mother tongue. It's in her humility after a win and her visible, honest tearful expression after a hard-fought loss.

After her recent defeat in home soil, Alex endeared herself even further to the fans by acknowledging the pressure she faces. When asked about the weight of a nation's expectations, she replied that it was nothing compared to the daily pressure regular Filipinos face providing for their families. In that one sentence, she bridged the gap between the elite world of pro tennis and the everyday struggle of her countrymen. She isn't playing for herself; she's playing for the barangay that follows her every move.

Why are we suddenly a “tennis nation”? It's because Alex Eala gives us a different kind of hero. If Manny Pacquiao represented the raw, fighting heart of the Filipino, Alex represents the disciplined, modern, and world-ready Filipina.

She has brought the sport to our doorsteps—literally. The launch of the Philippine Women's Open in 2026, the country's first WTA tournament, was built on the momentum of her stardom. For the first time, local fans saw a tiebreaker live at the Rizal Memorial Tennis Center, feeling the tension of every top spin



Alex Eala with the author

and the heartbreak of every double fault.

Alex Eala has done more than just win trophies. She brought the sport to the masses. She inspired aspiring “tennisters”. She has proven that a girl from Quezon City can stare at the eyes of the giants of Europe and the Americas on the same

clay and grass courts without blinking.

We are hooked on tennis because, through Alex, we see our own grit reflected on the court. We know the soul of the game now because she has made its heartbeat sound remarkably like ours. Way to go Alexandra, the world is yours to own.



A. Eala from a file photo

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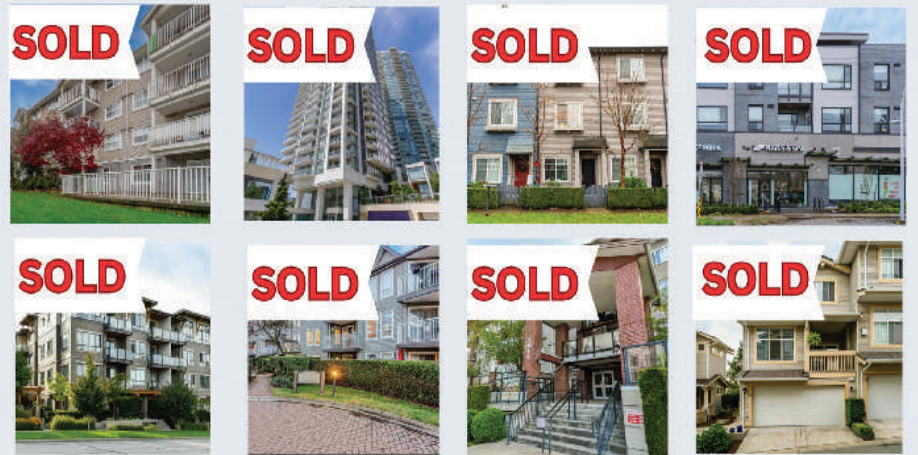




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