

## Carney calls snap elections for a strong mandate on April 28, leads current polls

Montreal, March 23, 2024 – Marc Carney asked the Governor General to dissolve parliament during a meeting at 12:00 noon today. After this meeting, reporters waiting outside the Governor-General’s mansion listened to his speech in which he outlined his main objectives to develop a strong, unified Canadian economy by Canada Day. He asked to have a strong mandate to enable him to do the job: “I’m asking Canadians for a strong, positive mandate to deal with President [Donald] Trump and to build a new Canadian economy that works for everyone because I know we need change,” Carney said on Sunday of the ongoing trade war with the United States.

The election will be held on April 28 and will see Carney face off against his main rival, the Conservative Party leader Pierre Poilievre.

Carney assumed his role as Liberal leader and prime minister after his predecessor, Justin Trudeau, announced his resignation in January amid a polling slump and an internal revolt in his cabinet.

For months, polls indicated that the Conservatives had a strong lead in the election. The Liberal Party has since seen a surge in popularity following a trade war with the US and Trump’s threat to Canada’s sovereignty.

“We are facing the most significant crisis of our lifetimes because of President Trump’s



**Prime Minister Mark Carney holds a press conference in Ottawa on Friday. Carney will run in the next federal election in the Ottawa riding of Nepean. (Sean Kilpatrick/The Canadian Press)**

unjustified trade actions and his threats to our sovereignty,” Carney said Sunday. “Our response must be to build a strong economy and a more secure Canada.”

He added: “President Trump claims that Canada isn’t a real country. He wants to break us so America can own us. We will not let that happen.”

The Conservative leader Poilievre, who launched his campaign for the premiership on Sunday with a “Canada First” message, has repeatedly portrayed Carney as a leader ill-equipped to deal with Trump.

During a press conference ahead of Carney announcing the poll, Poilievre said: “Today, the Liberals are asking for a fourth term in power after swapping Justin Trudeau for his

Canada’s prime minister in March and was expected to call the election as he sought a mandate. Carney, who is the former governor of the Bank of Canada and the Bank of England, has emphasized his financial background as the future of the Canadian economy looks uncertain.

During his address in Ottawa, the Liberal leader outlined his vision to reposition the Canadian economy. He said that after meeting with Canada’s provincial ministers on Friday, a “consensus” was reached to remove trade barriers within the country and unify the Canadian economy. He also promised to introduce a middle-class tax cut that he said would benefit dual-income families.

Canada would continue to diversify its trade partners and lessen its reliance on the United States, he said. Carney also emphasized the need to “act dramatically and act rapidly to build an economy that’s strong for Canada” and “control what we can control.”

Marc Carney, after winning the Liberal Party leadership with a huge vote of 85.9% on March 9th was inducted as the 24th prime minister of Canada on Friday afternoon, March 14th in Ottawa. Since that time, he has been busy engaging in important meetings with the premiers, making his first foreign trip to France and the U.K. and holding several press conferences

See Page 4 Snap elections called

## “Elbows up Canada” against U.S. tariffs



**People participate in a rally in response to U.S. President Donald Trump’s threats to Canadian sovereignty, on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, on Sunday, March 9, 2025. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Justin Tang. See p. 4**

## Duterte facing trial for crimes against humanity



**Rodrigo Duterte was allowed to follow proceedings via video link from a detention centre and spoke to confirm his name and date of birth. Photograph: Peter Dejong/EPA See news report on page 2.**



# Duterte facing trial for crimes against humanity

Duterte was arrested on March 11 at Manila airport on the orders of Marcos Jr and turned over to the ICC. The Philippines, which the former president withdrew from membership of The Hague-based court in 2019, said the move was in compliance with a request made by Interpol.

Supporters of Duterte have staged a series of protests across the country, calling for his release and return to the country.

Throughout the infighting, Senator Imee Marcos has tracked a course largely independent of her brother, although she is running for reelection under the administration ticket for the midterm elections.

Hours after the arrest, she had challenged the wisdom of the arrest of "poor President Duterte", warning, "This can only lead to trouble."

Members of the Duterte family had threatened in recent months to withhold their support for her reelection, and polls currently suggest she could lose her Senate seat in the voting on May 12.

On 14 March 2025, Rodrigo Roa Duterte appeared before Pre-Trial Chamber of the International Criminal

Court. Mr Duterte is suspected of the crime against humanity of murder, allegedly committed in the Republic of the Philippines between 1 November 2011 and 16 March 2019.

The Chamber verified the identity of the suspect and ensured that he was clearly informed of the crimes he is alleged to have committed and of his rights under the Rome Statute of the ICC in a language he fully understands and speaks. The hearing was held in the presence of the ICC Prosecutor and the Defence.

Mr Duterte was represented during the hearing by Mr Salvador C. Medialdea, and assisted by the Office of Public Counsel for the Defence.

The Chamber provisionally scheduled the confirmation of charges hearing to begin on 23 September 2025. The purpose of the confirmation of charges procedure is to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to establish substantial grounds to believe that the person committed the crimes he or she is suspected of. If the charges are confirmed, totally or partly, the case will be transferred to a Trial Chamber, which will conduct the subsequent phase of the proceedings:



Duterte's confirmation of charges is set for September 23, 2025.

Historical patterns suggest that if his case follows similar timelines, and if the judges decide to commit the case to trial, then he may face a wait of 10 months to over a year before trial proceedings begin right after the chamber's decision.

In a news article published March 24 in the Panay News, a lawyer Nicholas Kaufman, was interviewed by the local media over the weekend,



**Nicholas Kaufman**

**Duterte's legal counsel** stated that they are doing all means to bring the former Chief Executive back to the Philippines before or after the May 2025 midterm elections.

"Why not? That's his country. That was where he was born. Why should he not go back?" Kaufman said. "As far as I'm concerned, he's being illegally detained here, and he should go back to The Philippines as soon as possible."



**FPRRD SOLIDARITY WALK - Davao City - Thousands gathered in Davao City on March 16 for a unity walk honoring former President Rodrigo Duterte, as part of the 88th Araw ng Dabaw celebrations. Supporters called for his return, showcasing strong solidarity.**



**DUTERTE, IKULONG': Ahead of former president Rodrigo Duterte's first appearance before the International Criminal Court, sectoral groups hold protest along Katipunan Avenue in Quezon City on Friday, March 14, to call for total justice for victims of human rights abuses during the Duterte administration's 'drug war**

## Marcos may visit Trump in first half of 2025

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. may visit the White House to meet with US President Donald Trump in the next couple of months following twin visits by two top US officials to the Philippines, the Philippine Ambassador to the US said Monday.

Philippine Ambassador Jose Manuel Romualdez said Marcos' visit may be scheduled after US Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's visit to the Philippines on March 28-29 where he is set to meet President Marcos and Defense Secretary Gilbert Teodoro.

The US Department of Defense earlier said Hegseth "will travel to the Philippines to advance security objectives with Philippine leaders and meet with U.S. and Philippine forces." US Secretary of State Marco Rubio is also set to visit the Philippines sometime in April, Romualdez said.

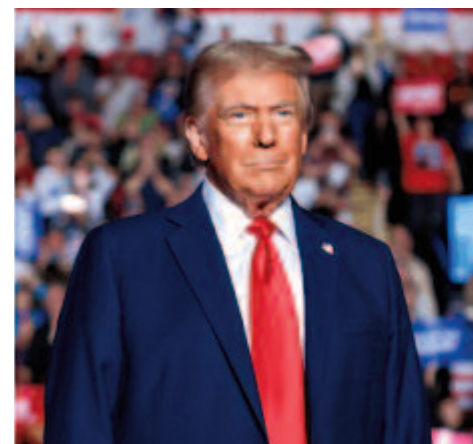
"Most likely after these visits of

these 2 officials from the United States, malalaman natin ang exact timing ng President Marcos' visit to the United States. Sinabi naman sa amin ng White House na definitely we will invite the President to come," the ambassador said in a TeleRadyo Serbisyo interview.

Romualdez added President Trump is still in the thick of ongoing negotiations for a truce between Russia and Ukraine.

"Wala pa siya sa Southeast, South Asian countries. Hopefully, [the visit will be] within the first half," he said.

Marcos earlier congratulated Trump on taking office, saying he looked forward to "working closely" with the new US administration. "Congratulations to POTUS @realdonaldtrump and to the American people on another peaceful transfer of power in their Nation's nearly 250-year history. I look forward to working closely with you and your



**Photo of Donald Trump and Ferdinand Marcos, Jr. from Facebook**

Administration," Marcos told Trump on X.

"The strong and lasting PH-US alliance will continue to uphold our shared vision of prosperity and security in the region," he added.

The United States has a decades-old security alliance with the Philippines that includes a mutual

defense treaty and a 2014 pact which allows the US military to store equipment on nine Philippine bases.

Manila has stepped up security cooperation with Washington to blunt China's efforts to control most of the disputed South China Sea.

By David Dizon, ABS-CBN News  
Published Mar 24, 2025 08:23 AM PH





### FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

## The impact of Duterte's arrest on Philippine politics and ICC's role in international law

Zenaïda Ferry Kharroubi

Duterte's arrest is expected to exacerbate political discord among Filipinos. His influential allies in government and loyal supporters are crying political persecution.

Meanwhile, human rights groups and the victims' families of extrajudicial killings view the arrest as a moral vindication. Some regard Duterte's downfall as the start of the end of a political dynasty, while others may exploit the incident with mass protests. With the impeachment case against Sara Duterte closing in and the 2025 midterm elections due in May, the Dutertes might rally around the arrest in a bid to gain public sympathy with the goal of regaining political power to avenge their patriarch.

How Duterte's ICC trial will unfold remains unclear. The burden is on the international court to show how it will handle the case amid global criticism about the slow pace of proceedings and low conviction rate. The pressure is also on the Marcos administration as to how it will manage the political backlash from Duterte's supporters.

Regardless, Duterte's trial will be an unexpected blessing for victims and human rights groups that have long clamoured for accountability and justice – something that local courts have failed to provide given a track record of acquitting or favouring powerful political personalities in the face of evidence of their corruption and abuses. According to Kristina Conti, ICC Assistant to Counsel, "the arrest of Duterte will finally allow the victims of [the] drug war and Duterte to face off on equal footing". His

arrest on Philippine soil and extradition to the Hague also offers a ray of hope for justice for millions around the world who suffer from the intimidation and apparent impunity of strong-man leaders.

Reaction to the arrest in the Philippines is highly polarized. For the families and friends of the victims, who have long strived for justice, the arrest brought some relief. Prominent activists, including Nobel Prize winner Maria Ressa, celebrated the move as a historic moment in an "age of impunity." But supporters of Rodrigo Duterte have come out to protest and hold prayer rallies in various parts of Metro Manila, Mindanao and the Visayas. These mobilizations and outcry of support for Duterte are persistent with his public popularity even during his murderous war on drugs campaign. It is worth recalling that despite his murderous track record, Rodrigo Duterte ended his presidency with a nationwide approval rating of 80 percent. Now, his daughter, Vice President Sara Duterte, remains popular with satisfaction ratings that are close, or at times slightly better, than Marcos Jr.'s approval ratings. Duterte's youngest daughter, Veronica Duterte, is a social media influencer. She features prominently in videos and pictures taken of her father when Duterte was arrested by the ICC. The videos are seen through the lens of a family protecting an ailing and elderly father. An idealization and victimization that resonates with Filipinos, perhaps more so than the international accountability mechanisms and procedures.

Duterte's arrest and extradition

to The Hague could draw new supporters for Marcos Jr. from progressive circles, but it could also consolidate support for the Duterte and the political families who support them. For certain, Marcos Jr.'s camp accounted for the political blowback that comes with cooperating with INTERPOL and the ICC. It is too soon to say to what extent Marcos Jr. might benefit from this political strategy. It remains to be seen if there will be more coordinated and well-attended mobilization efforts, both offline and online, in the coming days leading to the pre-trial of Duterte. Marcos Jr. and his allies cannot underestimate how victimization, forgetting, and memorializing are shaped in the digital space. The Marcos family, after all, benefited from a similar dynamic and managed to return to the highest public office after thirty-six years in exile. Some will argue that the pro-Duterte voices in social media are paid trolls or come from organized troll farms. Since the arrest of Duterte, fake news has proliferated online and the social media account of ICC pre-trial judge Iulia Motoc has been a target of pro-Duterte supporters. The "architects of disinformation" in the Philippines, who influenced the outcomes of the 2016 and 2022 national elections, are a force that can influence the electorate in the coming elections and should be taken seriously.

The Marcos family knows what it means to rise from the ashes. The Marcos' return to politics shows that Filipino voters can forget human rights abuses; and that loyal supporters of powerful dynasties never go away. They can bring back even the most discredited politicians to power. The Marcos family cannot discount the fact that this formula can work for another political family. This time, their rivals, the Dutertes.

There is no doubt that Duterte's arrest has brought a sense of optimism for victims of his extrajudicial killings that they will finally get justice at The Hague. But within the Philippines, justice for past atrocities remains elusive, especially when the accused hold powerful positions and the institutions of accountability remain weak.

The ICC relies on state cooperation from the country where the accused individual is located in order to carry out its mandate. Without cooperation, the international court cannot enforce its arrest warrants,

effectively leaving it powerless. Yet, as recently as a few months ago, President Marcos dismissed the idea of working with the ICC. So why now?

Marcos' newly found willingness to cooperate, as well as the pace of the extradition, demonstrates how relations have deteriorated between the Marcos and Duterte families. Duterte's supporters are adamant that Marcos' change of heart is a direct consequence of this feud, and that cooperation with the ICC is being used to deal a fatal blow to his adversary.

One move that could signal Marcos' commitment to international law – and deter critics accusing him of using the arrest warrant as a political tool – would be to rejoin the ICC. The Philippines withdrew in 2019 under Duterte, after growing criticism from the ICC about his violent methods used to prosecute his "drug war." Pressure from lawmakers and human rights groups are building on Marcos to rejoin the ICC, especially after he signaled his willingness to work with them on Duterte's arrest. Geraldine Roman, a lawmaker and Marcos ally, said "it's about time we return to the ICC and show the entire world that this country respects domestic and international laws."

If the Philippines doesn't rejoin the ICC, it risks leading those beyond Marcos' usual critics to suspect that the swift extradition of Duterte was purely politically motivated. As The Diplomat's Southeast Asia editor Sebastian Strangio writes, "whether [Marcos] does rejoin the ICC will be a test of how far [his] support for international criminal justice, and domestic accountability, really extends."

Whatever the long-term relationship between the Philippines and the ICC looks like, it's clear Marcos faces an immediate political landscape littered with potential flashpoints that could prompt anger off of social media and onto the streets in the form of civil unrest or violence.

However, perhaps the greatest overall risk to Marcos' legacy would be a failure to see the grieving families of "drug war" victims receive some form of justice. Whether the component of justice is at the forefront of Marcos' considerations remains to be seen.#

*With files from Carnegie Endowment Fund and the Diplomat websites*



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From Page 1 Snap elections called

but he has not taken the time to talk to U.S. President Donald Trump who has constantly been engaged in his rhetoric of referring to Canada in becoming the 51st state. Carney has said that he's ready to meet with Trump, if he shows respect for Canadian sovereignty.

Chandra Arya, a Liberal backbench MP whose short-lived bid to replace Justin Trudeau as leader was cut short by the party, says he has been dropped as the candidate for the Ottawa riding of Nepean. He has represented the riding since 2015.

National campaign director Andrew Bevan informed Arya of the decision in a letter Thursday, just days before an expected election call. The move to remove him comes almost two months after the party also told Arya it would not accept him as a candidate for the party leadership. This decision then gives way to Marc Carney to run to represent Nepean as he now currently lives in Ottawa.

Previously, various Liberals have suggested Carney could run in Edmonton, where he grew up; or in Toronto, where the Liberals tend to do well.

The election will take place against the backdrop of a trade war and sovereignty threats from U.S. President Donald Trump.

The governing Liberals had appeared poised for a historic election defeat this year until Trump declared a trade war. Trump has repeatedly said that Canada should become the 51st U.S. state and he acknowledged Friday that he has totally upended Canadian politics.

What Trump hasn't said is that the almost daily attacks on Canada's sovereignty have infuriated Canadians, who are cancelling trips south of the border and avoiding buying



**L to R: Marc Carney, Liberal Party leader and 24th prime minister; Pierre Poilievre, Conservative Party leader; Yves-François Blanchet, Bloc Quebecois leader; Jagmeet Singh, NDP leader and Jonathan Pedneault, co-leader of the Green Party.**

American goods when they can. The surge in Canadian nationalism has bolstered Liberal poll numbers.

The opposition Conservatives hoped to make the election about former Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, whose popularity declined as food and housing prices rose and immigration surged. But after decades of bilateral stability, the vote is now expected to focus on who is best equipped to deal with the United States.

An election campaign lasting about five weeks is going to be the shortest as there will be only 37 days before the election on April 28.

People throughout Canada will elect all 338 members of the House of Commons, one for each constituency. There are no primaries or runoffs, just a single round of voting.

Canada is like Britain in that it uses a "first past the post" system of voting, which means that the candidate that finishes top in each constituency will be elected, even if they don't get 50% of the vote.

This has generally cemented

the dominance of the two largest parties, the Liberals and Conservatives, because it's difficult for smaller parties to win seats unless they have concentrated support in particular areas.

The party that commands a majority in the House of Commons, either alone or with the support of another party, will form the next government and its leader will be prime minister.

Carney replaced Trudeau, who announced his resignation in January, but remained in power until the Liberal Party elected a new leader on March 9 following a leadership race by the governing Liberal Party. Carney won 85.9% of the votes to become the leader.

Carney, 60, is among the two main candidates. He navigated crises when he was the head of the Bank of Canada and when in 2013 he became the first noncitizen to run the Bank of England since it was founded in 1694.

His appointment won bipartisan praise in the U.K. after

Canada recovered from the 2008 financial crisis faster than many other countries.

A highly educated economist with Wall Street experience, Carney worked for 13 years for Goldman Sachs in London, Tokyo, New York and Toronto, before being appointed deputy governor of the Bank of Canada in 2003. He has both financial industry and public service credentials.

Pierre Poilievre, the leader of the Conservatives, is Carney's main challenger. The party and Poilievre were heading for a huge victory in Canada's federal election this year until Trump's near-daily trade and annexation threats derailed them.

Poilievre, 45, is a career politician and firebrand populist who says he will put "Canada first," similar to Trump's slogan of "America First." He attacks the mainstream media and vows to defund Canada's public broadcaster. His party announced that it won't allow media onboard his campaign buses and planes.

President Trump's tariffs and his rhetoric about Canada becoming the 51st state have clearly helped the Liberals in the polls while putting the Conservatives in an odd position, as their rhetoric exhibits some similarities with Trump's and a significant minority of their supporters like the President's populist style and ideas," said Daniel Béland, a political science professor at McGill University in Montreal.

The Conservatives, even before Carney won the Liberal leadership, focused on posting negative ads against him by accusing him of just being like "Justin." They had apparently predicted that Carney would eventually win the Liberal Party leadership.

*This report is a synopsis of articles from various sources such as TV news reports, files from CNN, CTV, and CBC news.*

## "Elbows up Canada" rally against Trump's tariffs

Jim Cuddy, Arlene Dickinson, Shawn Majumder and Mayor Olivia Chow joined a crowd of more than 1500 in Nathan Phillips Square Saturday, March 22, 2025.

Canadians decked out in maple leaves gathered to show their national pride and support amid tensions with the U.S. Peter Wall, the rally's co-organizer, discusses what the movement hopes to achieve.

Part of the grassroots "Elbows Up, Canada!" campaign, Saturday's rally was billed as a "peaceful show of unity, resilience and strength," at a time when Trump is making threats against Canada's sovereignty and slapping tariffs on Canadian goods.

Fittingly, chants of "elbows up!" echoed through the crowd several times as organizers and homegrown celebrity speakers took the stage.

The hockey phrase — which originated with the legendary player Gordie Howe — became a national rallying cry this month after comedian Mike Myers, who grew up in Scarborough, mouthed the words on Saturday Night Live while wearing a



**In response to U.S. President Donald Trump's tariffs, Canadian actor Mike Myers may have started a movement by pointing to his elbow and mouthing the words 'elbows up' during appearances on Saturday Night Live. The phrase has caught on and has become a rallying cry in the trade war.**

"Canada is not for sale" T-shirt. The March 1 episode aired just days before the U.S. slapped 25 per cent tariffs on Canadian goods. Most of those tariffs were subsequently paused until April 2.

Saturday's gathering in Toronto was the second "Elbows Up"

rally in Ontario this month after about 1,000 people rallied at Parliament Hill a few weeks ago.

Toronto Mayor Olivia Chow was invited to speak, along with famous Canadians like Dragons' Den star and business leader Arlene Dickinson, comedian Shaun Majumder

and Blue Rodeo's Jim Cuddy, who performed his new trade war-inspired song, We Used to be the Best of Friends.

Majumder, who'd been living in California for about 20 years, told CBC News ahead of the rally that he "could not have picked a better time in Canadian history to repatriate back to this country."

Although this is only the second official "Elbows Up" rally, Majumder said the idea is gaining steam across the country.

"Every time I post something about an 'Elbows Up' thing that's happening, people are like, 'Come to our city, come to our town, we want this to happen across the country.'" Majumder said.

Co-organizer Peter Wall says he and other volunteers started "Elbows Up, Canada!" as a way to bring Canadians together and send a peaceful message.

"We're all kind of feeling something right now as a country," Wall said. "The message is really that

See Page 12

Elbows Up





# Monthly news

By John Leo Lete  
Local Journalism Initiative  
National Ethnic Press & Media Council of Canada

## Women of Diverse Origins Hosted Press Conference for International Women's Day

Montreal, QC – In celebration of International Women's Day 2025, the Women of Diverse Origins hosted a press conference to shed light on the global struggles and resilience of women resisting patriarchy, capitalist exploitation, wars of aggression, colonialism, and violence.

The event took place on March 6th, 2025, at 10:00 A.M. at the Immigrant Workers Center, located at 475 Van Horne Street, Room 110. Under the theme, "Women taking back

speakers representing grassroots movements from around the world also shared their perspectives on interconnected struggles and strategies for collective liberation.

### A Call to Action

The Women of Diverse Origins emphasized the critical need for international solidarity to address the intersectional issues faced by women globally. The conference aimed to foster a deeper understanding of how imperialism and corporate greed



The inspiring guest speakers—Reileen Dulay, Viviana Medina, Viviane Michel, Tara Alami, Marcella Sicilano, Marie Bernadine Jeudy, and Christelle Kanga—for connecting "the global struggle for justice and equality"

our power, taking back our world, resisting patriarchy, capitalist exploitation, wars of aggression, colonialism and violence." The conference amplified voices from the frontlines of social and political struggles worldwide.

### Voices from the Frontlines

The press conference featured a diverse panel of speakers who addressed the systemic challenges women face, particularly in marginalized and oppressed communities. Key topics included the impacts of imperialism, colonial violence, labor exploitation, and the urgent need to dismantle oppressive power structures.

Among the featured speakers was Viviane Michel, an Innu community leader, who discussed the fight for Indigenous sovereignty and the unique challenges faced by Indigenous women in Canada. Michèle highlighted the deep-rooted impacts of colonialism and the importance of reclaiming Indigenous power.

Ami, a Palestinian writer and member of the Palestinian Feminist Collective, addressed the resistance against Zionist aggression and the broader implications of colonial violence. She shared insights on the generational trauma and active genocide faced by Palestinians, particularly the women who endure the consequences of militarized violence and systemic oppression. Other

exacerbate social inequalities and called for collective action to dismantle these structures.

The speakers addressed the effects of militarization, economic disenfranchisement, and the dispossession of resources on women in the Global South. They also advocated for an end to exploitative labor practices and the systemic abuse perpetuated by corporate and state powers.

### Solidarity Beyond Borders

The event sought to unite diverse movements in a collective call to reclaim power and challenge systems of oppression. The Women of Diverse Origins stood in solidarity with all women resisting violence and exploitation, asserting that global liberation is achievable only through collective action and unwavering resistance.

Media outlets, community members, and activists were encouraged to attend and amplify the voices of those on the frontlines of these critical struggles. For further information, please contact: Email: info@womenofdiverseorigins.org Phone: (555) 123-4567

Together, we reclaimed our power and envisioned a liberated world for all women.

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## Montreal's 'Les Girls' Defy Age, Clinch National Hockey Championship

Pointe-Claire, QC – In a remarkable display of passion and perseverance, the women's recreational hockey team known as "Les Girls" has shattered age barriers by securing the national championship title. Comprised

to victory. One of the team's most remarkable aspects is its inclusivity and supportive environment. Players of all skill levels are welcomed with open arms, creating a space where women



"Montreal's 'Les Girls' prove age is just a number—securing victory at the National Hockey Championship."

of players aged between 50 and 85, this West Island team has become a testament to the timeless spirit of sport, showing that age is no obstacle when it comes to achieving greatness.

Every Monday night, the Bob Birnie Arena in Pointe-Claire buzzes with energy as Les Girls take to the ice. Their commitment to the game and each other has fostered deep camaraderie and led them to the pinnacle of success in their league.

For these women, hockey is not just a sport – it's a way of life that brings joy, friendship, and a sense of purpose. "Oh, they're amazing," said Bonnie Ward, 33, who has been following the team's progress closely. "Seeing these women play with such energy and determination is truly inspiring. It shows that no matter how old you are, you can still chase your dreams and have fun doing it."

The team's journey to the championship was not without its challenges. Many players balance their time on the ice with family responsibilities and other commitments. Some members even returned to hockey after decades away, proving that it's never too late to reignite a passion. Through sheer dedication and countless hours of practice, Les Girls honed their skills and built a strong sense of teamwork that ultimately propelled them

can learn, grow, and thrive together. "It's not just about winning," said team captain Louise Tremblay, 62. "It's about being part of something bigger – a community that encourages each other to be our best, both on and off the ice."

The championship win has garnered attention beyond the local community, with many praising the team's dedication and challenging traditional notions of aging in sports. Their story has resonated with people of all ages, serving as a powerful reminder that age is merely a number and that passion knows no bounds. Social media has also played a role in amplifying their achievement, with supporters sharing messages of congratulations and admiration.

Les Girls' success comes at a time when women's hockey is gaining greater visibility and recognition across Canada. With the rise of professional women's leagues and increased media coverage, stories like theirs highlight the importance of providing opportunities for women of all ages to participate in the sport. Their triumph not only celebrates their hard work but also paves the way for future generations of female athletes.

As Les Girls celebrate their well-

See Page 7 "Les Girls"

Ville de Côte Saint-Luc City of Côte Saint-Luc

# Joyeuses Pâques Happy Easter

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## Ontario Filipino- Canadian Community News

Tony A. San Juan, OCT

### Filipino Centre Toronto to mark silver jubilee milestone

Proudly having achieved notable accomplishments and meaningful contributions in the life of the Filipino Canadian community in the Greater Toronto Area (GTHA), particularly in Toronto, the Filipino Centre Toronto (FCT) will proudly celebrate its 25th founding anniversary. The community hub will host the commemorative gala on April 5, 2025 (Saturday) from 6:00 to 12:00 pm at the Scarborough Convention Centre, 20 Torham Place, Scarborough, Toronto, Ontario.

The Filipino Centre Toronto, formed in 1999 as a non-profit & volunteer-run entity, is purposefully serving Filipino-Canadian communities through unity-enhancing community-wide programs and initiatives with a focus on promoting and propagating Filipino history, arts and culture. It was established by a host of dedicated Filipino-Canadian professionals, community leaders, advocates, and heads of specific-interest groups with the full encouragement and support of the Philippine diplomatic corps in Ottawa, Canada.

Currently led by President & CEO Mary Ann S. San Juan and Chairman of the Board Efen De Villa, the members of the FCT Executive Directorate includes Tess Lumanlan-vice president, Wendy Arena-financial officer, Leo Mascarinas-information officer, and Board directors Philip Beloso, Frank



Cruzet, Joy D'Aoust, Nenette De Villa, Faye Roncesvalles Eduave, Alvine Marasigan Flor, Mel Galeon, Judith Gonzales, Jerome Peralta, Nitz Rejdik, Jeanette Rosales, Steffie Stephens, and Priscilla Tumulak.

Several diplomatic & political dignitaries, business & community leaders, special guests, FCT members and volunteers have been invited to attend and grace the formal gathering. The evening program includes ballroom & line dancing, dinner, entertainment, special remarks & greetings, networking & sharing, and the usual "kumustahans & kantiyawans".

The FCT family, partners, supporters and volunteers promised to commemorate their "araw ng pagkakatag" as distinctly memorable and highly meaningful.

### NYPAA Celebrates silver anniversary milestone

Under a wintry, windy and cold chime, and with over 250 guests, the officers, members, and families of the North York Pinoy Athletic Association (NYPAA), popularly called the "North York Aquilas", commemorated its silver anniversary on March 1, 2025. The successful milestone celebration was held in the evening at Sts. Peter and Paul Banquet Hall in Scarborough, Toronto, Ontario.

Among the prominent guests who delivered their respective greetings and remarks were Philippine Deputy Consul General Kerwin O. Tate, Federal Minister of Mental Health & Addictions and Member of Parliament for York Centre Ya'ara Saks, Member of Parliament for Scarborough Centre

Salma Zahid, Member of Parliament for Scarborough North Shaun Chen, and long-time parent supporter-volunteer Tim Sinclair. In attendance also were NABA Commissioner Gani Gregorio, NABA Liaison Officer Edgar Tojino, and NABA Volleyball Commissioner Belinda Antonio.

Led by Sharonne Salanguit, NYPAA Chair, the Filipino-Canadian community sports organization gamely welcomed their guests, families, supporters, and volunteers to the memorable and meaningful event. Salanguit was aptly assisted by NYPAA Founders Vilma Tahsin, Roger Tarca, Bob San Juan and Ed Sotto. The "Magnificent Four" profoundly acknowledged the presence of



**NYPAA Founders: Roger Tarca, Vilma Tahsin, Ed Sotto & Bob San Juan with Philippine Deputy Consul General Kerwin O. Tate. (Photo: Vilma Tahsin)**

community leaders and sports enthusiasts and also thanked those solidly involved and engaged in the life and operation of their beloved NYPAA over the years.

The two-hour program, ably emceed by Prince Dumanat, included the singing of national anthems,

teams and coaches since NYPAA's inception, by S. Salanguit

The highlights of the celebration centred on dancing, fellowship, friendly bantering, gifts & prize raffles, photo ops, and native sweet table helpings. It was definitely and distinctively a proud and happy gathering of amateur sports



invocation by Brendalete Agoncillo, slide presentation & video messages of NYPAA "alumni", song & dance performances by the K-Pop inspired Pink Ribbon, and the presentation of certificates of recognition to several

& basketball "funatics" & aficionados, coaches, players, parents, sponsors, organizers, and team leaders orchestrated by the NYPAA founders and officers.

### Ontario Filipino Canadian community holds roundtable with three Federal Ministers

Uniquely and rarely, but a significant and purposeful engagement, three Canadian Federal ministers met with the Filipino Canadian community at a special mini-conference event. The productive roundtable discussion was held at the Filipino Centre Toronto (FCT) on March 8, 2025, in Scarborough, Toronto, Ontario.

The three Federal government ministers who joined the afternoon meeting were the Honourable Mark Miller, Minister of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship and Member of Parliament for Ville-Marie-Le Sud-Ouest-Île-des-Sœurs, the Honourable Rechie Valdez, Minister of Small Business and Member of Parliament for Mississauga-Streetsville, and the Honourable Ya'ara Saks, Minister for Mental Health and Addictions & Member of Parliament for

York Centre.

The two-hour late afternoon gathering consisted of two parts: Part 1 was the Roundtable Session with the three Federal ministers and members of the Filipino caregiver sector while Part 2 was the Meet-the-Press scrum. During the roundtable, Minister R. Valdez, after giving her introductory remarks, introduced Minister M. Miller, and Minister Y. Sa'aks to the attendees and other guests. Minister Miller and Minister Saks explained tersely cited the roles of their respective government ministries.

Minister Miller engaged in a Q&A session with the participants. Several issues and questions were raised about the problems and difficulties faced by Filipino caregivers, such as family separation, exploitation and poor working conditions, cultural



adjustment, mental health struggles, credential recognition barriers, immigration status & application backlogs, and transition issues from the old and new pilot caregiver programs

After the discussion, Minister Miller briefly explained the Federal Government's "New Canada Caregiver Programs" that will open on March 31, 2025. Together with Minister R. Valdez

directorate led by Mary Ann San Juan, Theresa Lumanlan, Frank Cruzet, Philip Beloso, and Judith Gonzales. It was attended by Filipino Canadian caregiver-centred advocates, current & former caregivers, caregiver support system agencies, immigration settlement professionals, and immigration consultants.

Among those who attended



Federal Ministers Mark Miller, Rechie Valdez and Ya'ara Saks (centre) with Filipino roundtable attendees (Photo by Joey Baking)

and Minister Y. Saks, Minister Miller fielded questions from the press. The media people includes Keisha Balatbat of Rogers OMNI Filipino TV, a representative from CBC Radio Canada International, Carlos Unas of Filipino Bulletin, Joey Baking of Little Manila Confidential, and Tony A. San Juan, a community writer & news contributor

The mini conference was organized and facilitated by Filipino Canadian community leader Juanita Abalos-Rejdiq and solidly supported by the Filipino Centre Toronto executive

were Allos Abis, Maria Fe Aguinaldo, Allan Basa, Marilyn Basa, Kelly Botengan, Mildred Casey, Joey Cruz, Wilma Delo, Laila Elcano, Sheila Estoque, April Gonzales, Javier Jardeleza, Martha Ocampo, Vilma Pagaduan, Pinky Paglingayen, Christine Salubre, Leny Rose Simbre, Chris Sorio, Jecris Tubigon, and Mitch Villa. A late merienda salo-salo was shared and served with the guests, attendees, and media representatives present.(Tony A. San Juan, OCT)

### West Island Mission and Meals on Wheels Unite to Launch Shared Kitchen Facility

By John Leo Lete, Local Journalism Initiative, NEPMCC

Dollard-des-Ormeaux, QC – In a significant move to bolster food security services in Montreal's West Island, West Island Mission (WIM) and Volunteer West Island's Meals on Wheels program have collaborated to inaugurate a shared kitchen facility. This initiative aims to address the growing demand for nutritious meals among vulnerable populations, including homebound seniors and individuals facing food insecurity.

The new facility, located at 72D Rue Brunswick, Dollard-des-Ormeaux, serves as the central hub for both

organizations. WIM, known for its commitment to providing high-quality food assistance, has been experiencing an overwhelming demand, prompting the need for expanded operations. The shared kitchen enables WIM to enhance its food assistance programs, ensuring that well-balanced meals reach those struggling with food insecurity across the West Island.

The program utilizes the centralized kitchen to prepare and deliver hot, nutritious lunches to homebound or isolated seniors and individuals with reduced autonomy. With the new facility, the program aims to produce upwards of 300 meals per

week, significantly increasing its capacity to serve the community.

Lydia Barrett, Executive Director of Volunteer West Island, highlighted the importance of this partnership, stating that the shared kitchen will enhance the efficiency and reach of the Meals on Wheels program, ensuring more individuals receive the support they need.

The collaboration between WIM and Volunteer West Island exemplifies a community-driven approach to addressing food insecurity and supporting vulnerable populations. By

pooling resources and expertise, both organizations are better equipped to meet the increasing demands for their services, fostering a stronger, more resilient community.

Residents and stakeholders are encouraged to support these initiatives through donations, volunteering, or spreading awareness about the available services. For more information on how to get involved, visit WIM's website at <https://www.wimmoi.org/> or contact Volunteer West Island at (514) 457-5445.#

From Page 5 "Les Girls"

deserved victory, they continue to inspire both the young and the old. Their message is clear: with determination, teamwork, and a love for the game, anything is possible. Whether they're skating across the ice or sharing laughter in the locker room, these women embody the true spirit of hockey and remind us all that it's never too late to chase our dreams.

We commemorate their victory in Canada 55+ Games (August 27 to 30,

### Villa Maria, a 175-year old institution, faces an uncertain future

Villa Maria first opened in 1854. The sisters of the Congregation of Notre-Dame created a bilingual boarding school for girls.

2024), which are held every two years at different venues across the nation. These Games were held in Quebec City in August 2024. The girls took home the gold medal in the 65 and over hockey division.

Les Girls have already established a new objective for April of next year, the Quebec 50+ Hockey Cup which will be held in Saint-Constant, south of Montreal, while they wait for the next Canada Games in 2026.

history. It's not only the Notre-Dame-de-Grâce neighborhood," Marie-Pierre Bousquet, a parent whose child attends Villa Maria College, said.



Villa Maria was founded by nuns in 1854. It has been a girls-only school since then. (Wikicommons)

Nearly 175 years later, the school still plays a key role in the community.

"It's really a part of Quebec

The Congregation of Notre-Dame owns what is called the Villa-

See Page 13 Villa Maria



The kitchen facility being used by West Island Mission (WIM) and Volunteer West Island's Meals on Wheels program (Photo credit: Chelsea St. Pierre)

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## Monthly News

by Angela Lacuesta

Intern Journalist

National Ethnic Press & Media Council  
of Canada Internship Program

### Student advocacy within an educational institution

Student advocacy within education plays a crucial role in maintaining an inclusive and functioning environment for all students. The Dawson Student Union is a good example of how a student group can promote an environment that connects, supports and inspires students. Student President Kenneth Clarence Oledan states, "Dawson Student Union is the student union that represents all 10,000 students at Dawson. We cater to everyone at Dawson whether they are Filipino, from France or Indonesia, etc. as we cater to every student's needs."

The Dawson Student Union of 2024-2025 is composed of executive officers involved in addressing the concerns of students, namely, Student President, Kenneth Clarence Oledan; VP of Finance, Chris Maniratanga; VP of Academic Affairs & Advocacy, Victoria Ormiston; VP of Operations & Services, Olivier Lamoureux; VP of External Affairs, Leilah Doyle; VP of Internal Affairs & Communications, Philippe Beauchemin; VP of Student Life, Faye Rasno and VP of Sustainability Equity, Leila Pozzi.

The student union executives maintain services and resources offered in the CEGEP such as Dawson Dinin' which offers students free vegan meals to address food insecurity; The Hive, a gender-focused program that offers free mental or sexual resources and products; DSU Health & Dental Plan and the OPUS fare reimbursement program for financially challenged students.

Alongside student support programs, the DSU advocates for causes such as the Law 14 petition and other education related issues. Its achievements are in the increase of meals served in the Dawson Dinin' program and the expansion of this program for students in night classes, the maintenance of The Hive program, the successful launch of the OFReP, OPUS card program with over 100 applicants in the first few days and the petition signing for Indigenous exemption from Law 14.

Obstacles faced by the DSU include legal challenges and budget limitations during the process of organizing student services or political events. Students can work with the student government to advocate for their beliefs and to directly challenge those creating barriers in education. Future projects highlighted by the student group are the launching of Dawson Snackin' - a program providing students with free snacks and coffee, the release of statements



**Kenneth Clarence Oledan**  
Dawson Student Union President  
about the Bourse Perspective program, the budget cuts regarding higher education institutions and the investigations happening at Dawson College.

The DSU (Dawson Student Union) envisions a future where the student government continues to grow and gain recognition while encouraging students to engage and participate in student government. Oledan explains, "After leaving the office and with the elections next month, I hope that there will be a lot of candidates because I think if there are a lot of students who get inspired by the work that we do and decide to run for the different positions that we have at the DSU - that's my gauge of how successful I was as president."

In an educational setting, advocacy is vital as it enables students' voices to be heard and cultivate a supportive environment where students actively work together to promote positive changes. As a Filipino student president at Dawson College, Kenneth Clarence Oledan encourages Filipinos to take leadership positions and take up space in the community to fight for things you believe in. He explains, "I was in Pinoys on Parliament and MP for Mississauga and Minister of Small Business, Rechie Valdez, the first Filipino to attain this position who said that there was a 17-year gap between the first Filipino who held that position and then her. And we shouldn't wait for another 17 years for that to happen. So, if there is an opportunity to be in a leadership position or to take a space and to be the voice of your community, go for it."

**"Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world."**  
**Nelson Mandela**

### Indigenous healthcare services through Centre Tiohtià:ke

The Indigenous Health Centre, Tiohtià:ke, located on the first floor of Queen Elizabeth Health Complex is a healthcare centre focused on catering to the needs of the Indigenous and Inuit populations. The centre's main objective is to provide effective health care services for Indigenous and Inuit people in the Montreal area, especially for those who are not able to access RAMQ, status cards or ID. It also aims to adopt holistic care in a culturally safe and accepting environment. Tiohtià:ke mainly serves the Indigenous, Inuit and Métis communities residing in the Greater Montreal regions who require medical assistance in all aspects of their lives.

The Indigenous Health Centre officially began operating in 2016 after a project by the Montreal Urban Aboriginal Community Strategy Network revealed several gaps in the healthcare services provided for Indigenous people in Montreal. This led the executive director, Carrie Martin, alongside founding members, Pascale Kaniasta Annoual and Dr. Sean Yaphe, to open a healthcare centre for Indigenous communities, similar to that of the Wabano Health Centre in Ottawa. The centre is able to function through the help of different workers such as health navigators who provide clientele with translation services, access to clinics, doctor appointments and hospitals, psychologists, intervention workers, ophthalmologists, addiction workers and

services to the First Nation communities and gaining more recognition from community members through the increasing numbers of clientele with positive feedback about the services. Throughout the years, there have also been several obstacles. These include setbacks such as the limited amounts of healthcare professionals like doctors and nurses and insufficient funding as they are a nonprofit organization using funds from the grants. These challenges lead to uncertainty about the centre's ability to continue its operations after March as expressed by the Healthcare Navigators. To aid the Indigenous Healthcare Centre Tiohtià:ke in its goals, raising awareness about the centre, donating and partnering or volunteering with the centre are appreciated.

There are a few upcoming events and projects in the Tiohtià:ke centre as explained by the Healthcare Navigators. A pop-up optometry and vaccination clinic for influenza, shingles, HPV, poxes, tetanus and other diseases will be accessible on March 18 from 9:30am to 3:30pm. Focus workshops for the Sixties Scoop survivors to encourage healing are offered alongside cultural workshops for activities such as bead working, drum and glove making. The organization hopes to expand its space and buildings to provide more services and area for their growing team.



**Waiting room of the Tiohtià:ke Centre**

spiritual healers.

Healthcare navigators at Tiohtià:ke Centre, Shirley Pien-Berube and Alanna Mitchell, present services and programs that address the needs and concerns of the community. They explain, "We have two new programs, which are for family violence and for the Sixties Scoop survivors. We have a food bank for our members, so they can come in anytime to get food. We also have a mobile clinic that comes at least once a month and a diabetic care clinic. We're also looking to start physiotherapy services, a dental mobile clinic and drama therapy as well."

The Tiohtià:ke Centre has attained many achievements over the past few years. This includes being able to provide more programs and

The Tiohtià:ke centre continues to provide services for Indigenous, Métis and Inuit communities in the Greater Montreal area. This allows the community to obtain adequate services and aid for physical and mental health alongside the promotion of culture within the organization. Healthcare Navigator, Shirley Pien-Berube states, "It is a great organization. It provides services to community members that generally will never be able to get the medical services and help because some do not have RAMQ or status cards. So, I think that's one of our biggest accomplishments. We are able to provide services to people who generally would not be able to get these services."



## The Foundation of Greater Montreal's philanthropic role

The Foundation of Greater Montreal (FGM) is a community foundation that manages philanthropic funds, connects communities and participates in the solving of issues to aid the collective wellbeing of Greater Montreal. Linda Tchombé, Director of Philanthropic Development states, "We work with community groups in order to manage donations for them and remove the administrative hassle while also working closely with the community organizations to make sure we identify the most urgent needs of the community and fund those initiatives." Their main objective is to provide philanthropic resources, support the community and encourage knowledge and initiative in Greater Montreal.

The FGM began offering its services in 2000 after a group of leaders from other organizations found importance in creating a community foundation in Montreal. It has continued to grow over the years, fostering a community for the people. The main individuals and groups involved in maintaining the foundation are team members, board directors, committees, partner groups and volunteers. The Foundation of Greater Montreal has partnered with several groups such as Native Montreal, The Girls Write the Future Fund, The Fonds Bernadette Gratton in Memoriam and many others. It has also distributed grants to organizations for important causes such as Women on the Rise, Moisson Montréal and Weredale Foundation alongside several other non-profit institutions. Tchombé also highlights the aim to provide necessary philanthropic capital to large and small organizations to help solve problems within the community.

The achievements accomplished by the Foundation of Greater Montreal within the past few years include creating strong relationships with partnering community organizations and funding important community groups that ensure the maintenance of community wellbeing.

Setbacks within the foundation are the lack of service recognition and the lack of financial resources as they do not receive government funding for initiatives. The ways the community can contribute to the mission of the FGM are by becoming an organization partner, donating to the foundation and supporting the different causes by getting to know the organizations within the Foundation of Greater Montreal.

There are several upcoming events and projects of the foundation as explained by the Director of Philanthropic Development, Linda Tchombé. She mentioned that a public speech by the CEO of the Foundation of Greater Montreal, Karel Mayrand, regarding the impact of philanthropic investments in Montreal will be delivered in the Chamber of Commerce of Metropolitan Montreal

on April 23rd Another event is the Woman Impact Montreal Collective - A Fund High Tea Event at the Ritz Carlton



**Karel Mayrand, President & CEO, Foundation of Greater Montreal**

will be held on March 23rd to celebrate their hundredth anniversary and raise funds. In terms of projects, the recent call for interest of the collective fund for climate and ecological transition has continued moving forward in the process.

Tchombé encourages individuals to register for the newsletters and take a look at the press reviews released by the foundation to stay up to date on the many events and projects. She states, "Our vision is a community that is free of poverty and discrimination, where all can see their potential and live in a healthy environment, now and in the future. If we could achieve that every year, we would be more than happy." She also emphasizes the increase of funds and philanthropic capital to fund several more initiatives in the community.

The FGM serves the wellbeing of the community in Greater Montreal through assistance and collaborations for/with other organizations. Linda Tchombé explains, "The Foundation of Greater Montreal is here for everyone in Montreal. It is your foundation. We want each person to feel a sense of belonging. We are always happy to answer questions for people who are curious about the way we work and how we work. It's difficult to picture the foundation simply because we do a lot of things. There are so many things we can do and we try our best to adapt to the needs of each person."



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## Obituary - Natalia O. Pelausa

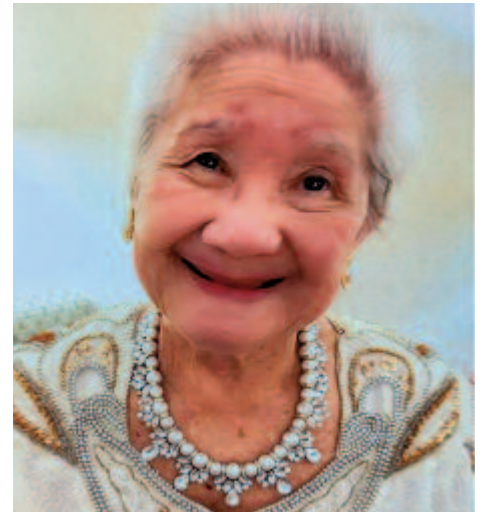
Natalia Olarte Pelausa passed away peacefully at home in TMR, Montreal, Canada, on Sunday, March 16, 2025. She was 97 years young.

Natalie was a beloved Pillar of the Filipino-Canadian community. A retired teacher, she founded the Philippine Benevolent and Scholarship Society of Quebec (PBSSQ) which for 40 years fostered benevolence and education for Filipino-Canadian youth through scholarships. She was honoured with numerous awards, including the Canada Senate Medallion and the 2024 King Charles Medal. She was preceded from life in 2010 by her beloved husband, Dr. Jesus Peduche Pelausa (Anesthesiology). She is survived by her two children: Dr. Ermelinda O. Pelausa (Neonatology) and Dr. Edilberto O. Pelausa (Otolaryngology), three grandchildren: Crisanto, Orion, and Alexander and four great-grandchildren - Orson, Jody, Sappho and Emmeline.

Natalie was a wonderful Wife, Mama, Lola and Great-Lola to her family, a bulwark for the Filipino-Canadian community and a shining example of her Catholic Faith. Her life will be celebrated and remembered by many.

Adto na sa Diyos, uban sa among gugma, Mama! - Go with our love to God, Mama!

Special thanks to her home care team from CIUSSS West-Central



**Natalie O. Pelausa**

Montreal for extra-ordinary service: Nurses Abdess Zouari and Gretchen Keller, OT Yuqing (Mary) Zhao, Dr. Karin Fink; from Nova Nurses Paula Habib and Jill; from Aux Trois Sentiers, Nurses Julia, Megan, Dr. G. Cote. Special thanks to her dedicated and compassionate caregivers Nena, Josefa, Ivy, Helen, Ester, Beth, Neema, Marieta, Mary Jane and Shazia.

Funeral services are with Dignité Centre Funéraire Cotes des Neiges with viewing from 4-9 pm on Monday, March 24, 2025 and on Tuesday, March 25, 2025. The Funeral Mass will be held in St. Kevin's Church at 11 am.

In lieu of flowers, consider a donation in her memory to PBSSQ, St. Kevin's Church, Nova Home Care and Aux Trois Sentiers.

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**Côte-des-Neiges**



As we celebrate Easter, we extend our warmest wishes for peace, joy, and prosperity to you and your loved ones. May your home be filled with happiness, your heart with love, and your life with the blessings of renewal and hope.

*Maligayang Pasko ng Pagkabuhay*



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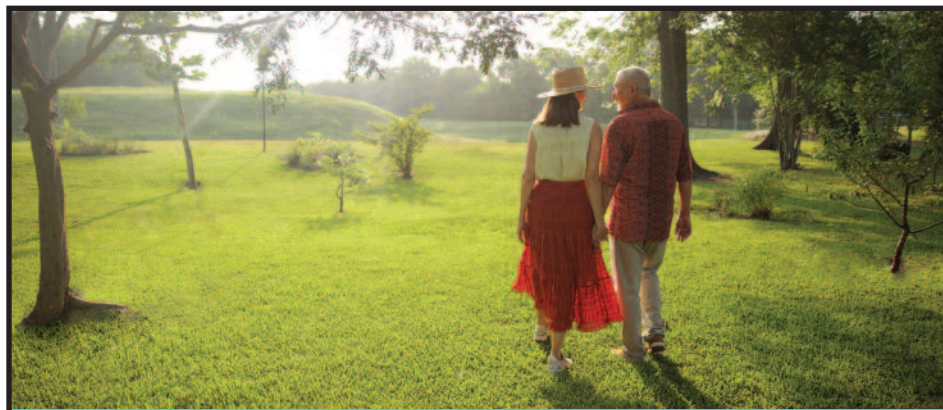
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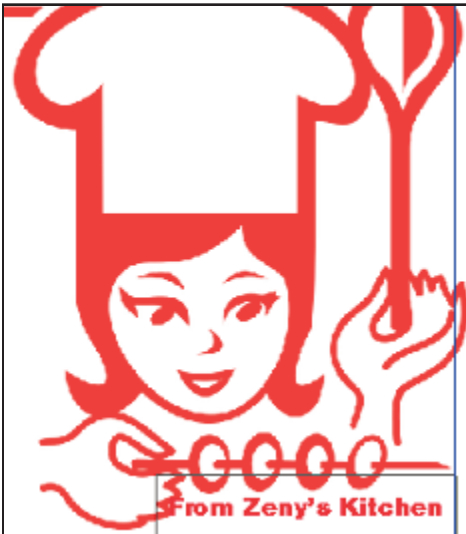
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## Delicious restaurant food recipes



### Philly Cheesesteak Meatloaf

#### Ingredients

2 tablespoons butter  
1 small yellow onion, diced  
1 small green bell pepper, diced  
8 ounces brown mushrooms, minced  
1/2 teaspoon kosher salt  
1/2 teaspoon black pepper  
2 tablespoons ketchup  
2 tablespoons Worcestershire sauce  
2 large eggs  
2 lbs lean ground beef (80/20 or 85/15)

1 cup panko breadcrumbs  
8 ounces Provolone cheese slices

#### Instructions

1) Preheat the oven to 375°F. Spray a large (9x5) loaf pan with cooking spray.  
2) Melt the butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the diced onions, bell peppers, mushrooms, salt, and pepper. Sauté for 1-2 minutes before stirring, then let brown for another 1-2 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool for 5 minutes.  
3) In a large bowl, blend the ketchup, Worcestershire sauce, and eggs until smooth. Add the ground beef, sautéed vegetables, and panko breadcrumbs, and mix thoroughly with your hands until well combined. Press half of the meat mixture into the prepared loaf pan. Lay half of the provolone cheese slices in a single layer through the center of the meatloaf, about 2 inches wide. Top with the remaining meat mixture.  
4) Bake for 40 minutes. Remove from the oven, top with the remaining provolone cheese slices, and return to the oven. Bake for an additional 15-20 minutes, until the cheese is melted and bubbly.

Let the meatloaf rest for 10 minutes before slicing and serving. Enjoy!

#### Notes

Be gentle. Mix the meatloaf ingredients until just combined. Overmixing can make the loaf dense and tough.



### Light & Crispy Japanese Chicken Tempura (25 Minutes)

#### Equipment

Deep Fryer  
Deep Fry Thermometer  
Slotted Spoon

#### Ingredients

Chicken and Seasoning  
1 lb boneless skinless chicken breast  
1/4 teaspoon kosher salt  
1/4 teaspoon ground black pepper  
1 tablespoon soy sauce  
1 teaspoon finely minced ginger  
1 teaspoon finely minced garlic

#### Tempura Batter

1 egg, beaten  
1/2 cup cake flour  
1/2 cup cornstarch  
1/2 cup ice-cold water  
1 teaspoon baking soda  
vegetable oil for frying

#### Instructions

1) Pound the chicken breast: Use a meat tenderizer to pound the chicken so that it's thinner and flatter. This allows the chicken to cook more evenly.  
2) Cut the chicken into thin strips. Season the chicken: Add chicken strips to a large bowl. Then season with salt, pepper, soy sauce, ginger, and garlic. Mix well.  
3) Make the tempura batter: In a large bowl, sift cake flour, baking soda and

cornstarch. Then add the beaten egg. Gradually add water and mix until everything is combined. (Make sure not to over-mix the batter.)  
4) Coat the chicken: Add the seasoned chicken strips to the batter and coat well.  
5) Heat the oil: Heat the oil to 350°F in a deep fryer or Dutch oven.  
Fry the chicken: Add a few pieces of the battered chicken at a time. Fry for about 4 minutes total until crispy and golden brown (flipping half way through). Remove with a slotted spoon and place the chicken onto a plate lined with paper towel. Repeat with the rest of the chicken strips. Serve and enjoy!



### Pan seared duck

#### Ingredients

1 tablespoon crushed dried rosemary  
2 teaspoons salt  
1 1/2 tablespoons dried thyme leaves  
1 teaspoon freshly ground black pepper  
3 tablespoons olive oil  
4 potatoes, cubed  
2 pints fresh or frozen blueberries  
1/2 cup water  
1/2 cup apple juice  
1/2 cup white sugar  
1 jalapeño pepper, finely chopped  
3 slices pancetta or bacon, cut into thin strips  
6 shallots, thinly sliced  
1/2 cup sliced shiitake mushrooms  
2 pounds bok choy, sliced  
4 (8 ounce) boneless duck breasts  
2 tablespoons vegetable oil  
1 tablespoon unsalted butter  
2 tablespoons aged balsamic vinegar

#### Directions

#### Step 1

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F (190 degrees C).

#### Step 2

Combine rosemary, salt, thyme, and black pepper in a small bowl; reserve for seasoning potatoes and duck.

#### Step 3

Toss cubed potatoes in a 9x13-inch baking dish with olive oil; sprinkle with 2 tablespoons spice blend until evenly coated. Spread into a single layer across the bottom of the baking dish; bake in the preheated oven, 35 to 40 minutes.

#### Step 4

While potatoes roasting, combine blueberries, water, apple juice, sugar, and jalapeño in a small saucepan. Bring to a boil over medium-high heat, then reduce heat to low; simmer until reduced to the consistency of syrup, about 10 minutes.

#### Step 5

Cook pancetta in a large skillet over medium heat, turning occasionally, until crispy. Drain on paper towels; reserve drippings in the skillet. Add shallots and mushrooms to the skillet; cook and stir until soft and just beginning to brown. Transfer shallots and mushrooms to a bowl; set aside. Increase heat to medium-high; add bok choy to the skillet. Cook and stir until leaves wilted and white stalks tender, about 5 minutes. Return shallots, mushrooms, and pancetta to the skillet, set aside off heat.

#### Step 6

Rinse duck breasts; pat dry. Rub remaining spice blend onto both sides of breasts. Heat a large skillet over medium-high heat, when hot, add vegetable oil and butter. Immediately place breasts in the skillet, skin and fat sides down. Do not move breasts until the skin is deep brown, about 5 minutes. Flip breasts; cook until an instant-read thermometer inserted into the thickest part reads 160 degrees F (71 degrees C) for well done. Transfer breasts to a plate; cover with foil and rest 5 minutes. While breasts resting, heat bok choy mixture over medium heat until warmed through.

#### Step 7

Slice breasts diagonally into 1/2-inch strips. Divide bok choy mixture among four plates; drizzle each with 1/2 tablespoon aged balsamic vinegar; arrange sliced breasts on bok choy, then ladle on blueberry sauce. Serve potatoes on the side.

From Page 4

Elbows Up

Canada is worth standing up for."

But for the American government, Wall said the rallies hold a different message: "We're neighbours, we're friends, but we don't want to get married."

Organizers want to keep the rallies a non-partisan celebration of Canadian pride, Wall said. Provincial or federal politicians aren't invited to speak, though all are welcome to attend.

But with a new prime minister in office and a federal election looming, many attendees told CBC Toronto that politics were top of mind.

With files from Mike Crawley, Andréane Williams and CBC News Network

### Social Eating Connects Communities

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**Social Tidbits**

**Montreal Community News**

**Fely Rosales Cariño**

Greetings to my Social Tidbits readers! I am feeling just a tad nostalgic this March, my birthday month. As I sit down to recall memories of past birthdays, I can clearly go back years and years ago while still a law student at the Manuel L. Quezon (MLQ) educational institution. One time, when I didn't celebrate my birthday party, I was greatly surprised to receive a birthday treat instead. My parents from Bucay,

both in heaven, I'd like to say "Thanks a lot, mom and dad." Every time I think about those years, I stop whatever I am doing and feel the weight of their loving thoughts. Then I close my eyes and send them my love.

I also remember a fellow March celebrant, Zenaida Kharroubi, Director-General & Founder of Gilmore College International and Chief Editor & Publisher of the North American Filipino Star. I fondly remember past



**Dr. Juan Viloria celebrated his 90th birthday at Chateau Dollard (where they are presently residing) on Feb. 6th. It was well attended by his SWIS friends as shown in this photo, namely, Vangie Salvador, Nora Uy (who is a neighbor at Chateau Dollard), Emy Bayan, Dorie Isada, Connie Fabro, Nelia Tioseco, Fely Rosales-Cariño, Roger & Nerie Ajero, Lita & Benny Bote, Mila Veyra, Maming Transfiguracion, Nita Advincula and Nora Arcalas. Wishing you more birthdays to celebrate in good health, Dr. Viloria.**

Abra sent me a whole roasted pig (lechon) neatly packed via a bus driver that traveled daily to Manila. No cell phones yet to alert me of this yumminess, so imagine the big scene when it finally arrived. Friends and extended families enjoyed the special delivery with me. My parents' gesture may not have meant as much then, but now I feel its impact. Getting sentimental, I think of the love that was sent with their gift. Now that they are

celebrations at Michael Davantes' apartment hosted by Michael, Tenne Rose Dayandante and Oyie Olivar. Their culinary skills were in full display. Those afternoons were sprinkled with great stories about the Filipino community association happenings.

A new meeting place has been discovered by the Seniors of West Island and Suburbs (SWIS). President Lolita Odulio, with husband Andy, is vacationing in the Philippines but left administrative duties to Connie Fabro. Some SWIS members decided to go to Tsiagos Restaurant on 4886 Sources Boulevard in DDO to verify the taste of a Portuguese cuisine. The restaurant, renowned for its exceptional piri piri chicken, among other things, is earning raves. It is no wonder Evie Magajes invited us back on February 21, 2025 to celebrate her 60th birthday there. Elvie Maximo added a festive atmosphere to the occasion by bringing a birthday crown, some table trimmings, and a cake. I say Elvie takes the crown for her fantastic planning!

Another restaurant that will, I think, quickly endear itself to many Filipinos is Oui & Oui Buffet Restaurant

on 3500 Boulevard de la Côte-Vertu in Ville Saint-Laurent. This Chinese restaurant replaced the old Fulam, the scene of many Filipino birthdays, anniversaries, and other gatherings. And on March 14, 2025, SWIS members met again to honor not one, not two, but three birthday celebrants – Emy Bayan, Maming Transfiguration, and yours truly! The restaurant was wonderfully accommodating, rearranging chairs to fit all 18 of us, and kept a steady supply of warm water and soft drinks to keep the seniors appropriately hydrated. They also offered a 10% discount on the meal, plus a coupon entitling the celebrants to go back with a 10% discount. Nice; we Filipinos love discounts! And the buffet meets all kinds of taste buds. I always like the different kinds of soups, noodles, fried shrimps (are you hungry yet?), fried chicken, etc. What I love most is the extra touch of Elvie Maximo's party planning and accessories – shiny birthday headbands, balloons, table ornaments and a cake! She tops it off with her photographic skills, arranging the crowd in their best poses to get a great keepsake. The only thing missing was a bullhorn for people to come and see what the fuss was all about. And we all loved to go back for seconds, thirds and many more. Other SWIS members who graced the occasion were Jeannette Pérignon, Evie Magajes, Beth Tolentino, Connie Fabro, Edith Valenzuela, Tina Oañe, Mila Veyra, Dory Isada, Nora Arcalas, Vangie Salvador, Benny & Lita Bote, Cely Dagsaan, and Joy Rosales.

I must say that I always have a

good time attending the Montreal Bible Baptist Church (MBBC) on 3865 Boulevard Levesque Ouest. My most recent visit on March 15, 2025 was no different. With a large Filipino Fellowship crowd that meets every second Saturday, friends and guests are sometimes treated to a special occasion where you can enjoy a variety of Filipino dishes, including a whole roast pig (lechon). This time it was a 40th birthday surprise for Mariel Baysa. husband Dexter, who usually preaches during the Filipino Fellowship, and friends skillfully planned the evening as Mariel had no clue. These events are just fun. More activities are coming up and you might just see Mariel's handiwork; she's an excellent decorator. For regular preaching, please drop by on Sunday morning (9am), Sunday afternoon (6pm) and Wednesday evenings (7pm). You will hear the preaching of Pastor Peter Kyriopoulos (Main Pastor), Pastor Mark Onofre (Assistant Pastor) as well as Pastor Luigi Bilucaglia. For more information, please contact MBBC at [bbcmontreal@yahoo.com](mailto:bbcmontreal@yahoo.com), (450) 682-3191.

In closing, may I offer to my fellow birthday celebrants and friends a promise of God found in Psalm 34:4-5, 8 ... I sought the LORD, and He answered me and delivered me from all my fears. Those who look to Him are radiant, and their faces shall never be ashamed. Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in Him!

See you next issue and God Bless.

From Page 7 Villa Maria

Maria estate, a large piece of land located west of Mount Royal.

Villa Maria school leases buildings on this land, but the congregation wants to sell the property in 2031 - one year after Villa Maria's lease ends.

Parents are concerned about where Villa Maria will go or if the school can even continue to exist.

"We'd like to get involved and see everybody working together to secure the future of a great establishment," Christophe Deckers, a parent whose child attends Villa Maria, said. "I don't know anyone that doesn't want to keep Villa open," he continued.

CTV News reached out to Villa Maria for an interview, but school officials did not want to comment.

No one from the congregation was available to speak with CTV News, but the congregation says it informed the school of its intention to sell 7 years

before the end of the lease.

Local MNA Désirée McGraw hopes the nuns can negotiate.

"Right now, the position they have taken is essentially a death sentence for Villa Maria, which is a pillar of our community. It's a great success story," McGraw said.

The other major concern is who would buy this land? And if it is a developer, what will happen with the green space?

"We need this property to continue to serve the community, for Villa Maria to stay here," she said.

McGraw plans on sponsoring a petition at the National Assembly to push for Villa Maria to stay open.

"If we can do something as parents, please ask us, because we have goodwill, we have good intentions," Bousquet said. "We cannot believe that [this] is going to happen." *With files from CTV News, March 21, 2025 report by Matt Grillo*

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# FILIPINO STAR

## SHOWBIZ GOSSIP

### Ivana Alawi on falling in love, wealth, and raising a family: 'Maybe in two years'



Ivana Alawi

The atmosphere was infused with festive cheer as guests likened the occasion to "Christmas in March." Ivana brightened the event by distributing joy and raffle prizes.

In a delightful gathering held recently in Quezon City, Ivana Alawi, a former content producer turned actress, joyfully celebrated her flourishing career alongside members of the entertainment press.

With warmth and gratitude in her voice, Ivana remarked, "Thank you so much for being with me. I've wanted to do this since last year. It was initially planned for just before Christmas, but my trip to the US delayed things. I'm really glad our schedules ended up aligning."

The atmosphere was infused with festive cheer as guests likened the occasion to "Christmas in March." Ivana brightened the event by distributing joy and raffle prizes.

The highlight of the gathering was an engaging Q&A segment, during which Ivana openly discussed her aspirations, upcoming projects, and perspectives on love and relationships.

**What she's thankful for:** "Marami akong gustong ipagpasalamat pero kung meron mang isang bagay na gusto kong



ipagpasalamat is yung pagmamahal sa akin. I'm very thankful for that. (I have a lot to be thankful for but if there's one thing I want to be thankful for, it's the love I have now. I'm very thankful for that.)" ■

**What supporters can get from her contents:** "Gusto ko na may natutunan silang lesson. At the end of the day, pagkatapos nilang manood, ano ba ang natutunan nila? That's why isa sa mga gustong kong ginagawa ay yung pagtuturo because nai-inspire sila. Marami rin batang nanonood. (I want them to learn a lesson. After they watch, what did they learn at the end of the day? That's why one of the things I like to do is teach; they are inspired. Many children watch.)"

**Love life:** "Wala nga akong time sa sarili ko eh. Kahit sa family ko hindi na kami minsan nag kakasabay kumain. Pero may pasulyap-sulyap na date ganun. (I don't have time for myself. Even with my family, we don't eat together anymore. But there are occasional dates like that.)"

**Future TV projects:** "May gagawin kaming teleserye. May movie rin this year. Yung love life saka na yun. Work muna. (We will be doing a teleserye and a movie this year. No love life. Work first.)"

**On wealth:** "Mayaman ako in different aspects. Mas mayaman ako sa pagmamahal, m sa pamilya, dahil andyan kayo. Yung pera naman mawawala rin yan. Basta saktong yaman yung ang impotante. Contented ako kung anong meron ako. (I am rich in different aspects. I am richer in love, in family, and the media. Money will disappear. I am content with what I have.)"

**On dream vacation:** "Sana Amerika uli. Sana may work din sa abroad. Sana Iceland kung papayagan ako. (I hope to be in America again, work abroad, and go to Iceland if they allow me.)"

**Advice for newbie content creators:** "Good luck sa kanila at sana magpaka-totoo sila. Sana makapag-inspire din sila. Importante na makapag-inspire rin sila sa audience. Be mindful with what you post. Hindi ako perfect. Sinasabi ko lang sa mga content producers to be careful and be aware (sa mga posts) because maraming bata ang nanonood. (Good luck to them and I hope they are real. I hope they can inspire, too. It's important that they can inspire the audience too. Be mindful of what you post. I'm not perfect. I want the content producers to be careful and be aware (in posts) because many children are watching.)"

**On falling in love:** "Siguro in two years. Kapag mga 30 na ako I think it's time for me to start focusing on love and (raising) a family. (Maybe in two years. When I'm in my 30s, I think it's time for me to start focusing on love and (raising) a family.)" ■



## Kathryn Bernardo opens up on feeling 'lost' as she turns 29



**Kathryn Bernardo**

Kathryn Bernardo admitted to feeling the onset of birthday blues, saying that she has been having feelings of being lost or getting overwhelmed by the prospect of adulthood catching up with her.

The award-winning actress, who is set to celebrate her 29th birthday on March 26, opened up about becoming sentimental on her birthday during the media con of "Pilipinas Got Talent" Season 7. During the interview with reporters, she was asked about the bravest thing she did for herself.

"I'm turning 29 in a few days. I'm at a point in my life where I feel so lost and I felt this when I gave a message during our Thanksgiving party for 'The Hows of Us.' This was the same feeling," she said.

"I didn't expect na mafefeel ko 'to ulit. Siguro it's part of adulting and growing, and nararamdaman ko siya just like everybody else (I didn't expect that I would feel this again. I guess it's part of adulting and growing, and I feel this just like everybody else)," she continued.

Bernardo said she started feeling the same emotion after wrapping up promotions for "Hello, Love, Again," which is currently the highest-grossing Filipino film. She nonetheless said that acknowledging these feelings is a brave thing for her. "I don't know kung nararamdaman talaga 'to kapag [nasa] ganitong age ka na but it's hitting me hard. To be honest, I'm so scared and I'm so lost."

"But I think it's so brave that every day, I show up and I choose to grow and accept the uncertainties," she continued. "Parang meron lang akong feeling na iba and siguro

birthday blues na 'to, may quarter-life crisis na ako. I'm feeling all these emotions. I think it's just brave na tinanggap ko 'yun. I'm allowing myself to be vulnerable. I have my days and hindi ko rin tinatago sa mga tao."

(I don't know if these feelings happen at this age but it's hitting me hard. To be honest, I'm so scared and I'm so lost. But I think that it's so brave that every day, I show up and I choose to grow and accept the uncertainties. I feel something different and maybe it's a case of the birthday blues. I have a quarter-life crisis. I'm feeling all these emotions. I think it's just brave that I didn't hide it. I'm allowing myself to be vulnerable. I have my days and I'm not hiding it from anyone.)

### Adult-like steps

The actress also shared that she got a place of her own which has been a period of adjustment for herself and her family.

"I think part of me growing is getting my own place as well, and I think it's my transition stage. Feeling ko kasi the next coming years is very important kasi 'yun 'yung magdi-dictate kung saan ako sa future [ko]. Iba pala kapag magte-29 so I'm feeling that," she said.

(I think part of me growing is getting my own place as well. I think it's my transition stage. I feel that the next coming years are very important because they will dictate where I stand in my future. I didn't expect that turning 29 would be different. I'm feeling that.)

Bernardo has been basking in her solo era since confirming her breakup with long-term boyfriend Daniel Padilla in November 2023. ■

## Gabbi Garcia prepares for 'PBB' after overcoming health struggles



**Gabbi Garcia is the newest endorser for health supplements 'Habit'**

Actress Gabbi Garcia has established herself as a multi-faceted artist in showbiz. She's able to act, sing, and connect with audiences in ways that extend beyond the screen.

This year, she's adding another title to her name. The 26-year-old has been named as a new host for the hit reality TV series Pinoy Big Brother (PBB).

But before she could take on this new role, Garcia had to focus on a different kind of challenge—her health. In an interview with the press, the young star revealed that her health took a dive in 2024.

"Last year, I started having problems with my hormones. I had hormonal imbalances," she said.

The diagnosis was a wake-up call for Gabbi, leading her to reassess her lifestyle.

"I really needed to work out, and I had to monitor what I ate. I had to take supplements. I had to watch my diet also," she shared.

This renewed outlook on health stuck with Gabbi and became non-negotiable. After all, in an industry with long hours and unpredictable schedules, staying healthy meant keeping up.

"In the line of job, you always need to be healthy. Because the schedule is also very hectic. So for me, it's not just about being sexy or losing weight. It's really about being healthy. You need to be healthy," she emphasized.

This strengthened commitment to a healthier lifestyle didn't go unnoticed as Gabbi was recently launched as the newest endorser for Habit, a line of health

supplements from Watsons Philippines.

"I started investing in my health last year, and the introduction of the Habit Health Supplement is a really perfect timing because it's also a way for me not just to advocate my healthy lifestyle to my family but also to everybody, my followers, my fans, so that they can also be encouraged to live a healthy lifestyle," she said.

Now, Garcia is channeling that same discipline into her latest project.

Taking on a hosting role for PBB Celebrity Collab Edition comes with a different kind of pressure, but instead of being intimidated, she is eager to learn.

"I'm super excited. I've worked with Robi [Domingo] several times in different hosting gigs. Ate Bianca [Gonzalez], I know her also. And I'm very much open to learning and taking notes from them. But also, I'm doing my research also," she said.

Garcia is fully aware of the challenge ahead, but rather than going in blindly, she has sought guidance from some of the best in the industry.

"Tito Boy actually called me last night congratulating me. And let me know that we have to work on something once I get the materials from PBB. So we can start reviewing, we can start assessing where I am," she said, referring to veteran talk show host Boy Abunda.

While the expectations are high, Garcia isn't letting nerves get in the way.

"Actually, no. It's really normal. I'm super excited," she said when asked whether she was feeling any pressure. ■



**Showbiz Gossip** *Continued from p.15*

# Kris Aquino opens up about breakup with her doctor-boyfriend: 'He did not love me'

**Kris Aquino and now ex-boyfriend Dr. Michael Padlan (right)**

Kris Aquino and her doctor boyfriend have ended their relationship.

She made a revelation in a heartfelt post on Instagram on March 16.

"Enough time has passed: he did not love me. In my defense, he did receive the correct professional fees, even when we were a couple. End of that chapter (never akong natakot umamin ng katotohanan)," wrote Kris on Instagram.

Kris requested prayers from netizens for her ongoing healing. She expressed gratitude to her son Bimby for supporting her during these challenging times.

In February, Kris made her first public appearance two years after she went to the US. When asked if she was okay, Kris said: "I'm not so okay."

Kris returned to Manila in September 2024 after two years in the US. She is still undergoing treatment for autoimmune conditions and is currently unfit to work. Her doctor accompanied her during the trip. ■

## Arci Muñoz regrets undergoing surgical enhancements

**Arci Muñoz**

Arci Muñoz got candid about her surgical enhancements journey, admitting that she regrets having gone through them in the first place.

The actress-singer opened up about her regrets

during a recent appearance on "Fast Talk with Boy Abunda," saying she believes there's a reason why it had to happen to her.

"Actually, alam mo, may reason kung bakit nangyari sa 'kin 'tong mga 'to. Na parang

kasi may mga regrets din ako pagdating d'yan eh. Pero alam mo, inano ko talaga, sinabi ko sarili ko God has a purpose because I learned," she explained.

Muñoz noted that when someone tries to ask her about going on the same journey, she tries to talk them out of it.

"If I think they don't really need to do it, no. No, girl. 'Wag talaga. You'll regret it, siges ka. So ako talaga, 'yun pala. 'Yun pala 'yung reason. 'Yun pala 'yung purpose ko," she said.

The "Pasion de Amor" actress explained that she decided to go through the face enhancements because she wanted to "re-invent" herself.

"Gusto ko lagi i-reinvent 'yung sarili ko kasi nga I'm very spontaneous. Dati 'to ha. Pero ngayon mas less is more na

talaga [...] That's why I always tell them you really have to think it through. 'Wag kang tutulad sa akin na talagang very ang tigas ng [ulo]," she stated.

The beauty queen-reservist underscored that she also didn't have anyone to guide her at the time.

"Wala kasing nag-guide sakin. I do whatever I want. If I can go back to that time when I didn't touch anything, I would go back there," she said, adding that she no longer desires to have any more procedures done.

In 2017, Muñoz made headlines about rumors of plastic surgery. At the time, the actress emphasized that she would never deny the issue, saying, "Deny? No, never, what's wrong with that? As if naman I committed a crime."



# Alden Richards, Kathryn Bernardo, David Licauco, and more sizzle at Bench Body of Work fashion show



The Bench Body of Work fashion show was definitely a night to remember! The country's superstars flexed their toned bods and chic fashion statements as they walked the runway. Here are some of the night's standout stars:





# Russian strikes injure scores in Ukraine as US and Kremlin officials meet for ceasefire talks

(CNN) A United States delegation met Monday with Kremlin negotiators in Saudi Arabia, where the Trump administration is pushing for progress toward a ceasefire in separate talks with Russia and Ukraine, just as Russian strikes injured scores of people in Ukraine, including children.

Talks between Russian and US officials concluded late Monday evening after more than 12 hours, the state-run Russian news agency RIA Novosti said.

The high-stakes meeting came one day after discussions between a US contingent – led by officials from the State Department, the National Security Council and members of Ukraine Special Envoy Keith Kellogg's team – and Ukraine's Defense Minister Rustem Umerov, which were described by the latter as "productive and focused."

The Kremlin said earlier that "the issue of the Black Sea Initiative and all aspects related to its renewal," would be at the top of the agenda of Monday's talks.

Earlier in the war, the so-called Black Sea Grain Initiative enabled the safe export of Ukrainian grain through Black Sea waters. Russia withdrew from that agreement, which was brokered by Turkey and the United Nations, in 2023, complaining that Russia faced obstacles exporting its own food.

Washington's delegation – led by real estate tycoon-turned-diplomat Steve Witkoff – is eyeing a potential maritime ceasefire in the Black Sea and hoping that some of the initial positivity in peace talks can be translated into a broader 30-day truce and longer-term negotiations. But a wide gulf in expectations exists between Russia, Ukraine and their US interlocutors.

## Russian attack on Sumy injures dozens

As talks continue, so do the attacks on Ukraine, where Russian



**A Ukrainian serviceman evacuates a woman from an apartment building hit by a Russian missile strike, in Sumy, Ukraine, on Monday, March 24, 2025. Reuters**

strikes have killed at least four civilians in the last 24 hours, according to regional officials on Monday morning, and injured dozens more – including a pregnant woman.

On Monday, a Russian missile strike on a "densely populated" residential area in the northeastern Ukrainian city of Sumy injured 88 people, including at least 17 children, Ukrainian officials said. Acting Sumy Mayor Artem Kobzar said on Telegram: "The city's residential sector and infrastructure facilities, including children's facilities and a hospital, were damaged."

Russian President Vladimir Putin offered to temporarily halt attacks on energy targets in Ukraine after a lengthy telephone call with US counterpart Donald Trump last week, but has continued to bombard civilian targets. Ukraine has also fired back at Russia.

Russia and Ukraine traded blame on Friday over an attack on a gas metering station that lies in Russia's Kursk region, just a few hundred meters from their shared border.

Monday's talks at the Ritz

Carlton Hotel in Riyadh, the Russian delegation included seasoned Kremlin diplomat Grigory Karasin and former spy chief Sergey Beseda, according to Russian state media. Beseda is viewed by many in Ukraine as a hard-nosed nationalist and early supporter of Russia's full-scale invasion in February 2022.

"We should not so much wait for breakthroughs as understand that work is underway in a number of areas," Russian foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said Monday of the negotiations.

Ukraine's Umerov said Monday that "another meeting with the US delegation is planned" in Saudi Arabia.

The trust deficit on the Ukrainian side has not been helped by Witkoff's recent rhetorical support for many of Russian President Vladimir Putin's maximalist positions ahead of talks. Speaking to podcast host Tucker Carlson on Sunday, Witkoff appeared to show some sympathy toward Russia's territorial ambitions in Ukraine, describing the four regions Russia wants to formally annex — Kherson, Zaporizhzhia, Donetsk and Luhansk —

as "Russian speaking."

"There have been referendums where the overwhelming majority of the people have indicated that they want to be under Russian rule," he said.

Russia held the referendums in occupied areas of the four territories in September 2022. The votes were widely viewed as a sham and heavily criticized by the US at the time as well as by allies in Europe.

"The Russians are de facto in control of these territories. The question is: Will the world acknowledge that those are Russian territories?" Witkoff asked Sunday. "Can (Ukrainian President



**Map showing Russian-occupied areas (4 in Ukraine + Crimea)**

Volodymyr Zelensky survive politically if he acknowledges this? This is the central issue in the conflict. Speaking Sunday night, Zelensky put the responsibility on Putin to end the war.

"The one who brought this war must take it away," the Ukrainian president said.

Moscow says a ceasefire will not be possible unless Kyiv agrees not to use it to resupply or reorganize its troops. It has also publicly voiced key demands such as Ukraine never being allowed to join NATO.

This story has been updated with additional developments.

CNN's Mariya Knight and Olivia Kemp

# Middle East latest: Israeli strikes kill scores in Gaza as Egypt offers new ceasefire proposal

(Associated Press, March 24, 2025)

Israeli strikes across the Gaza Strip killed more than 65 Palestinians over the past day, including women and children, the Gaza Health Ministry said Monday. In less than a week of air and ground operations since Israel broke the ceasefire with Hamas, its forces have killed hundreds of people in Gaza — sending the death toll from 17 months of war soaring above 50,000.

Meanwhile, officials say Egypt has introduced a new proposal to try and get the ceasefire back on track. Hamas would release five living hostages, including an American-Israeli, in return for Israel allowing humanitarian aid into Gaza and a weeklong pause in the fighting, an Egyptian official said Monday. Israel would also release hundreds of Palestinian prisoners.

A Hamas official said the group had "responded positively" to the proposal, without elaborating. Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not



**A wave of Israeli surprise strikes across the Gaza strip have killed 400 people and wounded more than 500 people, Gaza's health ministry says (Produced by Elaine Carrol)**

authorized to brief media on the closed-door talks.

## Israel mistakenly fires on Red Cross office in Gaza

Israel says it fired on a Red

Cross office in Gaza by mistake.

The Israeli military says its troops shot at the building after identifying a threat from Palestinian militants.

"It was later determined that the identification was false," the military said, adding that the soldiers didn't realize the building was being used by the Red Cross.

"The incident will be reviewed," the brief statement said.

The Red Cross says the building was damaged but no staff members were hurt.

## Israeli drone kills 1 in south

Lebanon, health ministry says  
Lebanon's Health Ministry says an Israeli drone strike in south Lebanon has killed one person.

State-run News Agency quoted a Health Ministry statement as saying that the Monday night drone strike took place in the village of Qaaqaiyet el-Jisr. It was not immediately clear who the target was.

Israel has killed several Hezbollah members over the past weeks in drones strike on south Lebanon.#



# 'Hoping for better': Hudson's Bay liquidation sales begin at all but six stores

Canadians headed to Hudson's Bay stores Monday in hopes of scooping up the first of the retailer's liquidation deals, but many left confused about whether the markdowns had even begun.

Shoppers who visited department stores in Quebec and Alberta noticed plenty of sales signs the company uses seasonally but none advertising a clear-out or liquidation underway.

"I was hoping for better," said Mireille Girouard as she sifted through the racks of women's clothing at a Hudson's Bay in La Salle, Que.

"I think I'll spend more when the deals are a little better."

Hudson's Bay was given court approval on Friday to begin liquidating all but six of its 80 department stores, 13 Saks Off Fifth locations and three Saks Fifth Avenue shops in Canada.

Lawyers for the struggling retailer known for being Canada's oldest company said its plan was to start the selloff Monday.

Ten minutes before the Bay was set to open at Southcentre Mall in southeast Calgary, about a dozen people were already gathered outside and more were streaming in from the parking lot.

"It's amazing what we'll do to save a dollar," one woman could be heard saying.

As shoppers began filing through the doors, staffers announced that liquidators hadn't been by the store yet and so there would be no sales above and beyond items already marked for clearance. Nonetheless, the store filled with people digging through overcrowded and disheveled clearance racks marked up to 50 or 60 per cent off.



**The Hudson's Bay at Lougheed mall in Burnaby is now permanently closed. The department store, which shaped the development of Burnaby's Lougheed Town Centre more than 50 years ago, has been undergoing a massive closing sale over the last six months.**

Sweaters, coats and other cold-weather gear appeared to make up a large portion of the steeply marked-down merchandise.

About a half-hour after opening, a long line snaked from a cash register in the home wares department.

Catherine van der Poel was clutching a set of grey twin sheets, unsure if they were on sale. She said she would only be interested in braving the line if they were at least 50 per cent off. She didn't realize liquidation sales had not yet begun at the Southcentre location.

"The signage is lacking. In fact, I don't know what the sale is for the linens," she said. "I don't see a lot of staff around. I was downstairs and trying to find the elevator to ask somebody. It was hard to find."

Van der Poel said she's relied on the Bay to find clothing that fits her tall frame, with so many brands in one

place. She's not big on online shopping and isn't sure where she'll go now.

The liquidation slated for Hudson's Bay is the product of creditor protection proceedings the retailer began earlier this month, when it said lower consumer spending, reduced downtown traffic and trade tensions between Canada and the U.S. had it facing significant financial difficulties.

Hudson's Bay originally thought it would need to shutter all of its stores but, when sales soared so much after it publicized its early liquidation plans, it made enough cash to spare six locations.

The six survivors include the flagship on Yonge Street in Toronto, as well as a location in the city's Yorkdale mall and another farther north in Hillcrest Mall in Richmond Hill, Ont. The remaining three span downtown Montreal, the Carrefour Laval mall and Pointe-Claire, Que.

Shortly before returning to his home in the Vatican on Sunday, Pope Francis made a brief appearance from a fifth-floor balcony of the Gemelli Clinic in Rome to a crowd of faithful gathered outside the hospital.

The moment marked his first public engagement in weeks. Waving and giving a "thumbs-up" before blessing the faithful gathered outside Rome's Gemelli Hospital, the pontiff

Lawyers have warned more stores could be saved from the list -- or added to it, depending on how the company's hunt for a solution to stabilize the business goes.

Among locations already on the chopping block is the LaSalle store, which occupies an anchor spot at Montreal's Angrignon Mall. It opened to much fanfare in 2018, taking over the old Target location, which in turn had taken over the Zellers that was once there.

There were no obvious signs on Monday the store would be shuttering.

However, there was a sign making clear that returns on purchases before March 25 and outstanding gift cards would only be accepted until April 6. A half-dozen people stood in line to make returns around the lunch hour on Monday.

Harv Singh grabbed some bedding during a Monday break from work at the location located in the southwestern Montreal suburb.

"It was an easy place to come," he said. "It just means having to go somewhere else I guess."

In recent decades, Hudson's Bay's competition has morphed from the few other Canadian department stores still around such as La Maison Simons and Holt Renfrew to the plethora of online retailers who sell much of the same merchandise. Even its vaunted beauty counters have come under threat from Sephora.

The Bay's prime real estate and broad selection, however, kept it hanging on.

By The Canadian Press  
Updated: March 24, 2025 at 3:17PM EDT

# Pope Francis makes first public appearance in weeks, returns to Vatican



**Pope Francis waves from a balcony at Gemelli Hospital in Rome on Sunday, March 23, 2025, following weeks of hospitalization for bilateral pneumonia. | Credit: Daniel Ibañez/CNA**

briefly thanked one well-wisher for bringing flowers for the occasion.

After the short interaction, the Holy Father was discharged from the hospital and taken to the Basilica Santa Maria Maggiore, where he delivered flowers to place before the icon of the Virgin Salus Populi Romani.

He briefly appeared at approximately noon to greet the faithful and impart his blessing. (CNA)

**Starting in the next issue, we are accepting classified ads - starting with a 3-line ad for \$15 plus taxes, additional line at \$3 per line, font size 10, Bold headings @\$10, plus text of 3-line minimum @\$15 = \$25 plus taxes (3 lines + bold heading) Please send your text by email to: filipinostar2@gmail.com**



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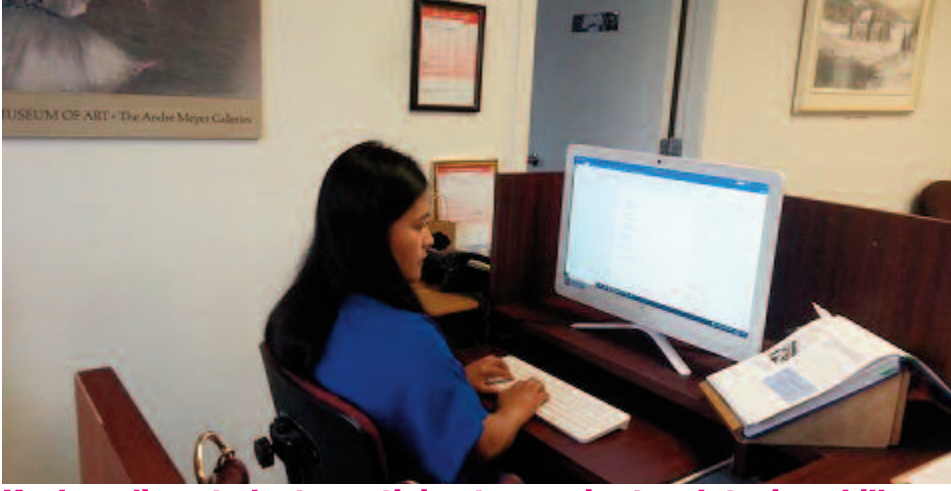


**PAB Batch 12 graduation ceremony at Gilmore College Int'l. social hall, July 7, 2017, with the instructors and guests.**

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