

## 'No austerity,' despite bigger deficit due to spending on Quebec teachers: Legault

By Christopher Reynolds The Canadian Press February 18, 2024

Premier François Legault said Sunday the ramp-up in spending on education pledged by his government will go a long way to supporting Quebec's teachers and students — and prompt a bigger budget deficit.

At a news conference, Legault said agreements recently hammered out with unions will see the province "invest massively" in teachers and educational assistants.

"We think that it will improve the working conditions of all the people working in our schools," Legault told reporters in Montreal.

"The yearly deficit for the next year will be a lot higher than expected because of this choice. But I think it's the right choice. There's no better investment than education for me."

The premier stressed that there is "no question" about cutting



Quebec Premier François Legault speaks to the press alongside Sonia LeBel, Minister Responsible for Government Administration Chair of the Treasury Council and Quebec Minister of Education, Bernard Drainville during a press conference in Montreal, Sunday, Feb. 18, 2024. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Peter McCabe

services or raising income taxes — "we're already too high compared to our neighbours."

"No austerity," he added. But with neither cuts nor tax hikes under consideration, that leaves more red ink on the budget as the only option, Legault said.

In its fall economic statement, the Coalition Avenir Québec government projected deficits of \$4 billion in 2023-24, \$3 billion in 2024-25 — the budget slated to show the fiscal dent from the deals — and \$2 billion the year after that.

On Sunday, Legault promised spending to allow for 5,000 new permanent teaching jobs and 4,000 more educational assistants. The agreements also ensure that new teachers will receive a starting salary of \$65,000 per year, while more

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No austerity

## Brazil condemns 'paralysis' on Gaza, Ukraine at G20



German Foreign Minister Annalena Baerbock said that the world will hold Russian President Vladimir Putin accountable for the war in Ukraine (DIRK WAEM/BELGA MAG/AFP/Getty Images)

Rio de Janeiro (AFP) Issued Feb. 21, 2024 — Brazil criticized the "paralysis" of the UN Security Council on the wars in Gaza and Ukraine as it opened a G20 meeting Wednesday where the international community's deep divisions were on display.

The outlook is bleak for progress on the thorny agenda of conflicts and crises gripping the planet as foreign ministers from the world's biggest economies gather in Rio de Janeiro for the Group of 20's first high-level meeting of the year.

Opening the two-day meeting, which featured US Secretary of State Antony Blinken and Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov, Brazil's top diplomat, Mauro Vieira, said the explosion of global conflicts shows international institutions like the United Nations are not working.

"Multilateral institutions are not properly equipped to deal with the current challenges, as has been demonstrated by the Security

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G20 meeting

## Canada summons Russian ambassador in protest of Alexei Navalny's death



Alexei Navalny inside a glass cell during a court hearing in Moscow in February 2021. AFP - Getty Images

OTTAWA — Canada has summoned the Kremlin's ambassador in Ottawa for a lambasting over the reported death of opposition leader Alexei Navalny while in Russian custody, Global Affairs Canada says. Foreign Affairs Minister Melanie Joly requested that Ambassador Oleg Stepanov be summoned on Wednesday to hear Canada's rebuke. Russia's prison agency said Friday that Navalny, who was serving a 19-year

sentence in an Arctic penal colony, felt unwell and lost consciousness after going for a walk and could not be revived.

President Vladimir Putin was quickly blamed for the death of his political opponent and leaders including Prime Minister Justin Trudeau vowed to hold Russia to account.

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Canada summons





FROM THE PUBLISHER'S DESK

Why do we have leap years?

Zenaïda Ferry Kharroubi

As leap years only come once every four years, it is not often talked about but most people often make a joke that it is only during a leap year that a woman can propose to a man. Whether it can happen or not, we cannot be sure or bother to know if it ever happens in real life. But for the sake of understanding the reasons behind this, we decided to find out why February is chosen to have only 28 days most of the time but has an extra day or 29 days every four years.

According to references we read about leap years, it is because of the Earth's orbit. The amount of days it takes for the Earth to complete a full revolution around the Sun is not a whole number. The 365 days we experience is actually 365.2422 days but in the Gregorian calendar, a normal year consists of 365 days. Because the actual length of a sidereal year (the time required for the Earth to revolve once about the Sun) is actually 365.2425 days, a "leap year" of 366 days is used once every four years to eliminate the error caused by three normal (but short) years.

Another interesting fact we read is about Bachelor's Day, sometimes

known as Ladies' Privilege, which is an Irish tradition by which women are allowed to propose to men on Leap Day, 29 February, based on a legend of Saint Bridget and Saint Patrick. It once had legal basis in Scotland and England.

More information about leap years also reveal that it is not always every four years that February has 29 days. By adding an extra day every four years, our calendar years stay adjusted to the sidereal year, but that's not quite right either. Some simple math will show that over four years the difference between the calendar years and the sidereal year is not exactly 24 hours. Instead, it's 23.262222 hours. Rounding strikes again! By adding a leap day every four years, we actually make the calendar longer by over 44 minutes. Over time, these extra 44+ minutes would also cause the seasons to drift in our calendar. For this reason, not every four years is a leap year. The rule is that if the year is divisible by 100 and not divisible by 400, leap year is skipped. The year 2000 was a leap year, for example, but the years 1700, 1800, and 1900 were not. The next time a leap year will be skipped is the year 2100.

And why is it that February is

chosen to be the shortest month of the year? Unfortunately, 12 times (any odd number) is always an even number. To make the number of days on the calendar add up to 365 in a year, there would have to be one month with an even number. February was chosen to have 28 days as this was when the Romans honoured their dead. Another explanation is The first Leap Day was introduced by Julius Caesar on the Julian Calendar, which was established in 45 BC. It came after Roman Emperor Augustus, who began his rule in 27 BC, is believed to have wanted his dedicated month to have the same number of days as the month named after Julius Caesar.

At the time, historians say the month of February had 30 days, while the month of August had 29. Meanwhile, the month of July had 31 days.

It has been theorized that the emperor decided to remove two days from February to be added onto August, making August a 31-day month and February a 28-day one.

Historians also think that February became the chosen month for Leap Day because the Romans didn't much care for the month and saw it as a "leftover month that nobody really wanted to begin with".

A person who is born on 29 February can be referred to as a "Leap Year baby", a "leaper" or a "leapling".

Notable figures who share that unique birthday include rapper Ja Rule, motivational speaker Tony Robbins, Mark Foster, frontman of Foster the People, US actor and singer Dinah Shore, and French actor Michele Morgan.#

February 2, 2024

Dear Editor,

Many of your readers are already aware that I left the position of National Director of the League for Human Rights of B'nai Brith on February 2.

In June 2021 when I announced I would not seek an 11th term of office on Montreal City Council, I received an unsolicited offer from B'nai Brith to be the National Director of its League for Human Rights.

I accepted that offer which came with promises that the position would have authority, latitude and resources.

Over the past two and a half years I have had a series of major national accomplishments among which are convincing five provinces to adopt the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism.

I also worked with Education Ministers to significantly improve Holocaust education, and collaborated with the RCMP, the OPP and several municipal police departments to liberalize their uniform rules to accommodate officers wearing religious symbols such as a kippah, turban or a hijab.

I also prodded B'nai Brith to reach out and build partnerships with organizations representing other racial and religious minorities.

I was able to host several major events including a global ZOOM call that highlighted the historic friendship between Filipinos and Jews and the humanitarian leadership of President Manuel Quezon in saving Jewish refugees fleeing the Holocaust.

That call saw the participation of the Ambassadors of the Philippines and Israel to Canada, Senators in Canada and in the Philippines, Members of Parliament and highly placed officials in the Foreign Service of the Philippines.

However, I was unable to transform B'nai Brith into a potent human rights organization on a national level.

Over the past year a series of administrative reforms internally has reduced the position of National Director of the League for Human Rights into a quite minor role with very little authority or latitude and very few resources.

Moreover, B'nai Brith has not built on the partnerships I helped foster

and displayed little interest in expanding them.



I am particularly disappointed in how little support was given toward growing the burgeoning friendship with the Filipino community across the country.

With the constraints placed on my role, it is best both for myself and the organization that we go our own ways. Perhaps my human rights advocacy will prove more effective outside the organization.

As of February 5, I am a "free agent" so to speak. I will certainly continue to be active in promoting human rights and will prioritize strengthening dialogue between religious and racial groups.

The Filipino community will find that I will work on issues important to it and to the Jewish community, effectively growing the successes that stemmed from my outreach in 2022 and early 2023.

Indeed, I am already in discussions with organizations such as the Filipino Heritage Month Society as to how we can again jointly celebrate Jewish and Filipino heritage months

Allow me to thank your publication for the major coverage it gave to my work and that of the League for Human Rights during my tenure as National Director. I trust you will continue to provide an attentive ear to my work as an independent human rights activist

Best regards,

Marvin Rotrand

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*The opinions expressed by the writers and columnists do not necessarily reflect that of the management of the North American Filipino Star nor its editors.*





**ALVIN DAHAN VELOSO, M. ED.**  
**FAMAS President, 1971-72**  
**2018 Retired Teacher, U.S.A.,**  
**Canada, Manila**

Two Thousand Twenty-Four (2024) will be memorable as the Filipino Catholic Community marks the 35th year of the canonical installation of Notre Dame des Philippines Catholic Mission of Montreal. In 1989, the Church started to minister to the spiritual welfare of Filipinos with the designation of Mary of the Immaculate Conception as its patroness. Her feast is on December 8 which Filipinos and the whole Christendom celebrate.

Notre Dame des Philippines symbolizes the Filipino Catholic Identity, the quintessence of success of the faith journey led by its founder, Father Carmelo Gosioco. Father Frank Alvarez, P.M.E., oversaw the spiritual and religious growth of the community over three decades but retired unexpectedly for health reasons. Sadly, Father Roberto Ruben Elago, M.S.P., who replaced him had passed away while vacationing in the Philippines and Father Jamilcar Rommel Cruz, M.S.P.,

# A Vibrant Filipino Community Amid On-going Challenges

was named the new pastor.

The administration of Notre Dame des Philippines is collegially shared by six administrators composed of Tess Ambayec, Corazon Remegio, Alice Panado and three male new board members: Filemon Tadeo, Peter Apelo and Eduardo Ruiz who were elected in December of 2023.

The Pastoral Council, which is composed of group leaders, is the overall coordinating body to oversee, implement the goals and objectives of the Catholic Mission, as a clearing house for the Catechetical Group, Altar Guild Servers, Prayer, Eucharistic Ministry, Knights of Columbus, Liturgical Music, Sacred Heart, Healing, Bible Study, Retreat Guild, Legion of Mary and Fund Raisers.

The Filipino Catholic Mission functions as a regular parish in the Archdiocese of Montreal. The Mass is celebrated on Sundays at 11:00 preceded by a brief Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament and Holy Rosary. An array of religious devotions such as Novenas and the administration of the Sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, Marriage, and Penance among others is available.

Under the energetic stewardship of Father Cruz, M.S.P., the apostolic journey is remarkably good. Barely a year into his tenure, the spiritual and religious transformation have been tangible. Church pews are full which includes other communities who feel welcomed. "This is our Church" remarked a new Filipino devotee.

Father Cruz, M.S.P., is



**New church administrators of Notre Dame des Philippines: L-R: Corazon Remegio, Alice Panado, Father Rommel Cruz, MSP, Pastor; Tess Ambayec. Rear: L-R: Peter Apelo, Ray Foz (outgoing), Felimon Tadeo. Not in photo: Eduardo Ruiz.**

appreciative of the positive reception accorded to him, but he would like to appeal for monetary help in employing a permanent parish secretary to attend to daily church activities. Since the departures of the previous staff members when Father Alvarez, PME had retired, a group of dedicated volunteers have been doing the work pro amore.

As the Notre Dame des Philippines is to celebrate its 35th year, Father Cruz believes that it is time for the Catholic Mission to have a permanent secretary to tend to daily business. Volunteers are appreciated but they also have family obligations to take care of. That the glory of God be in everything - *Ut in omnibus glorificetur Deus.*#

## The Tabamo 50th Anniversary, a Celebration of Love and Devotion

By Hilda Tan Veloso

To celebrate fifty years of sacramental marriage notwithstanding society's prevailing culture of separation, divorce, and family feuds among others was a great challenge against which Dante and Julie defied social pressures. They showed to the world that love, regardless of age is wonderful. On December 2, 2023, in the presence of the children, grandchildren, relatives and friends, Father J.R. Cruz, MSP, conducted the renewal of their original vows pronounced on Dec. 23, 1973 at the Holy Cross Parish in their hometown of Alcala, Pangasinan; reminding them of their mutual commitment to take care of each other, "for better or for worse; for richer or for poorer; in sickness and in health, until death do us part." May their examples of perseverance, love and faith in the institution of marriage and in the Divine Providence serve as light to others who are trying to find solutions to their marital dilemma. "Hope is eternal," optimistically reminding those who are struggling not to lose faith; that there is still "light at the end of the tunnel."

While in the Philippines, the Tabamo love story was however short-lived by Julie's departure in 1980 to



**Fr. Rommel T. Cruz, M.S.P., of Notre Dame des Philippines, presided at Dante and Julie Tabamo's 50th wedding anniversary.**

work in Spain, an adventure that in 1985, became a bonanza for better opportunities in Montreal, Canada. A close friend helped her find an employer-sponsor enabling Dante and their two young children Fruan and Guillester to be together in Montreal, a life story that reverberates among some migrants who have endured similar ordeal for the love of the family. Their new life in Montreal has revolved



**Dante and Julie Tabamo, family and relatives joyfully posing at their 50th wedding anniversary celebration.**

around church, work, family, education, children and the community. The entire family including the grandchildren and alongside many other parishioners have been at the forefront at Notre Dame des Philippines Catholic Mission. They have performed outstanding work as administrators, lectors, commentators, and mass servers. Fruan helps the pastor oversee the pastoral ministries. Julie's commitment has been extensive as well

since the beginning. As a former member of the administrative team, she headed special projects to generate funds for the church. Her husband, Dante, renders his service to the Filipino community by his involvement with FAMAS (Filipino Association of Montreal and Suburbs) in various capacities. He is the current vice-president of the association.#.



#### From Page 1 - No austerity

experienced educators will see a salary cap of \$109,000, up from \$92,000 currently.

Two major teachers unions approved their tentative agreements earlier this month.

One vote brought an end to a months-long squabble between the Quebec government and the more than 66,000-member FAE, which was the only union to launch an unlimited general strike during last year's public sector bargaining.

The deal followed 22 days of

strike action that shut down roughly 800 schools and saw 368,000 students stay home. The FAE represents about 40 per cent of teachers in the provincial school system.

Last week, members of the Fédération des Syndicats de l'Enseignement (FSE) and its English-language counterpart, the Quebec Provincial Association of Teachers (QPAT), voted 59.5 per cent in favour of the proposed agreement with the province to renew their collective agreements.

The FSE, which is affiliated with the CSQ, represents 95,000

#### From Page 1 G20 Meeting

Council's unacceptable paralysis on the ongoing conflicts" in Gaza and Ukraine, Vieira said, adding the situation was costing "innocent lives."

EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell for his part warned multilateralism "is in crisis."

The Security Council has failed to act on Russia's invasion of Ukraine, held in check by Russian veto power, and has struggled to find a response to the war in Gaza, with Israel's ally the United States using its veto to block calls for a ceasefire, most recently Tuesday.

Brazil, which took over the rotating G20 presidency from India in December, has voiced hopes the group could be a forum to make progress on such questions.

But that likely took a hit when Lula ignited a diplomatic firestorm Sunday by accusing Israel of "genocide," comparing its military campaign in the Gaza Strip to the Holocaust.

The comments drew outrage in Israel, which declared him persona non grata, and could overshadow any bid to de-escalate the conflict via the G20.

Blinken, who met Lula Wednesday in Brasilia before heading to the G20, "made clear we disagree with (his) comments," a senior State Department official told journalists.

The secretary of state and Brazilian leader had a "frank exchange" in their more than 90-minute meeting at the presidential palace, the official said.

#### Wars of words

More than four months after the Gaza war started with Hamas fighters' unprecedented October 7 attack on Israel, which has vowed to wipe out the Islamist group in retaliation, there is little sign of progress toward peace.

The outlook is similarly grim on Russia's war in Ukraine, which also has G20 members divided as the second anniversary of President Vladimir Putin's invasion approaches.

"Alexei Navalny was a symbol of hope for the Russian people and his legacy will live on for generations to come. Canada has already sanctioned those involved in the human rights abuses against Navalny, and we will join our partners in holding those



**A typical elementary school classroom**

Despite a push by Western countries to condemn the invasion, the G20's last summit ended with a watered-down statement denouncing the use of force but not explicitly naming Russia, which maintains friendly ties with India and Brazil, among other members.

UK Foreign Secretary David Cameron said he planned to use the Rio meeting to "call out Russia's aggression" directly to Lavrov, as Britain announced sanctions on six Russian officials over opposition leader Alexei Navalny's death in prison last week.

Lavrov -- who will meet Lula in Brasilia Thursday, according to a Brazilian official -- meanwhile lashed out at the West for "pumping Ukraine full of arms."

"Neither Kiev nor the West have shown the political will to resolve the conflict," he told Brazilian newspaper O Globo.

Blinken voiced pessimism on the current chances for diplomacy on Ukraine in his meeting with Lula. "We

that the cause of Navalny's death is still unknown and refused to release his body for the next two weeks as the preliminary inquest continues, members of Navalny's team say.

They accuse the government of stalling to try to hide evidence.

On Monday, Navalny's widow, Yulia, released a video accusing Putin of killing her husband and alleged the refusal to release his body was part of a coverup.

"They are cowardly and meanly hiding his body, refusing to give it to his mother and lying miserably," she said.

Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov rejected her allegations, telling reporters that "these are absolutely unfounded, insolent accusations about the head of the Russian state."

Navalny's death has deprived the Russian opposition of its best-known and most inspiring dissident less than a month before an election that is all but certain to give Putin another six years in power.

Many Russians had seen Navalny as a rare hope for political change amid Putin's unrelenting crackdown on the opposition.

Since Navalny's death, about 400 people have been detained across in Russia as they tried to pay tribute to him with flowers and candles, according to OVD-Info, a group that monitors political arrests.

elementary and secondary school teachers, or 60 per cent of all teachers in Quebec. QPAT represents 8,000 on the English side.

In the health sector, government negotiations with the 80,000-strong FIQ nurses union continue in the presence of a mediator.

The province says it hopes to glean more "flexibility" from nurses, with the goal of being able to move them between care units or hospitals according to need. The union has criticized the push, pointing to the prospect of disciplinary sanctions in the event of refusal.#

don't see the conditions for it right now," a US official said.

#### Blinken-Lavrov

Brazil also wants to use its G20 presidency to push the fights against poverty and climate change.

There will also be space for bilateral meetings on the sidelines of the gathering -- though a Blinken-Lavrov encounter looks unlikely, given soaring tensions.

The pair last met in person at a G20 gathering in India in March 2023.

Founded in 1999, the G20 brings together most of the world's biggest economies.

Originally an economic forum, it has grown increasingly involved in international politics.

A Brazilian government source said that after recent G20 struggles for consensus, the hosts axed the requirement that every meeting produce a joint statement -- with the exception of the annual leaders' summit, scheduled for November in Rio.#

Authorities cordoned off some of the memorials to victims of Soviet repression across the country that were being used as sites to leave makeshift tributes to Navalny. Police removed the flowers at night, but more

#### From Page1 Canada summons

A senior Canadian official conveyed the country's "strong condemnation" to Stepanov, Joly's office said in a written statement late



**People offer flowers in front of Navalny's photo that shows raindrops on it**

Wednesday afternoon.

The official also called on the Russian government to conduct a full and transparent inquiry into the death and release Navalny's body to his family without delay.

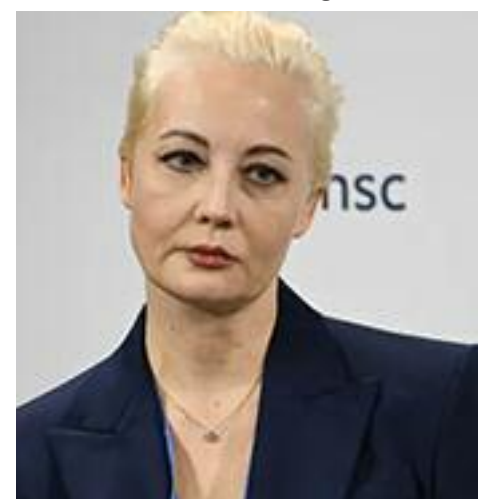
"He also expressed concern for other political prisoners in Russia and emphasized the need for Russia to protect rather than punish/arrest the Russian citizens who are mourning the loss of Navalny," Joly's office said.

responsible for his death to account as well."

Following fiercely critical comments from Trudeau, Joly and others Friday, Russia's embassy posted a social media message urging Canada to stop "interfering into our internal affairs."

"Every death is a tragedy. But the death of a Russian citizen is strictly Russia's matter," the embassy said.

Russian authorities have said



**Yulia Navalnaya, wife of late Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, attends the Munich Security Conference (MSC), on the day Alexei Navalny's death was announced by the prison service of the Yamalo-Nenets region where he had been serving his sentence, in Munich, southern Germany on February 16, 2024.(Thomas KienzleAFP/Getty Images)**

keep appearing.

Over 75,000 people have submitted requests to the government asking for Navalny's remains to be handed over to his relatives, OVD-Info said. This report by The Canadian Press published Feb. 21/24 w/ AP files.#



# Enrique Rueda Sadosa presents his new book “Filipinos in Quebec, the Pioneers” at FAMAS

By Audrey Tougas, Local Journalism Initiative

Enrique Sadosa, a renowned Filipino photojournalist and author, was a guest at the FAMAS Center on February 10th, 2024, to unveil his latest work, “Filipinos in Quebec, the Pioneers,” slated for publication. Sadosa, already acclaimed for his four other literary endeavors, notably his

followed Rizal’s journey across the globe, beyond the borders of the Philippines. Sadosa emphasized the scarcity of literature depicting Rizal’s travels outside his homeland, contrasting it with the abundance of works focusing solely on his Philippine endeavors. Aware of the significance of Rizal’s international expeditions, during which the doctor had encountered



**Ricky Sadosa showing some images from the book “Dr. Jose Rizal Travels 2020” during the presentation he made at the FAMAS Center which was attended by members of different Filipino organizations and prospective subjects of his forthcoming book to be published in the summer of 2024.**

500-page coffee table book “Dr. Jose Rizal Travels 2020,” received a warm reception from members of various Filipino organizations, including Al Abdon of the Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal, Fely Rosales Carino, Amelia Manon-og, and Zenaida Ferry-Kharroubi, publisher and editor of the North American Filipino Star.

some of the greatest minds of his time, Sadosa’s passion for history and his curiosity led him to delve into archives and engage with historians to unravel the intricacies of Rizal’s global sojourns. He proudly mentioned that the book had received a five-star rating and garnered significant sales, appealing not only to Filipino readers



**Ricky Sadosa presenting a copy of Book One entitled Bagong Bayani to Zenaida Ferry-Kharroubi who is happy to receive it, being one of the subjects in this book which featured Filipinos who immigrated to different countries around the world and considered as pioneers.**

During the event, Sadosa enthralled the audience with tales from his extensive travels tracing the footsteps of Dr. Rizal, narrating the adventures that influenced his previous book. The Jose Rizal book took five years to craft, from 2015 to 2020, during which Sadosa meticulously

but also to a broader international audience. Highlighting the global reach of his work, Sadosa mentioned that a friend in Belgium had purchased nearly three dozen copies. He donated some copies to individuals in the Philippines and members of the Knights of Rizal, underscoring his commitment to



**A souvenir photo with Enrique Rueda Sadosa (standing behind, center) with the invited members of the Filipino community who are interested in participating in his book project, taken at the FAMAS Center, Feb. 10, 2024 (courtesy of: Al Abdon) sharing Rizal’s legacy with the world.**

Sadosa’s visit to Montreal revolved around the finalization of his latest book for which he aimed to capture new images to complement the stories within. This latest work is an anthology of narratives and biographies chronicling the lives of Filipino immigrants in Quebec,

recognizing the significance of his book project in preserving the legacy of Filipino immigrants in Quebec. Al Abdon, chairman of the Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal, Estella Domingo, Rey Balansi and the Knights of Rizal have facilitated his various trips around Montreal as well as a tour of Quebec City and the presentations at



**Estella Domingo showing the sheets that she and Lina Fernandez used to work on about Filipinos in Quebec as Ricky Sadosa stands by after finishing his part of the presentation, February 10, 2024 at FAMAS.**

particularly those who embarked on the journey during the 1950s and beyond. Sadosa intertwines these stories to illuminate the resilience, struggles, and triumphs of these pioneering individuals. During his presentation at FAMAS, attendees were treated to a sneak peek into the tapestry of stories featured in the book, accompanied by vibrant images that vividly portray the Filipino immigrant experience in Quebec. The audience was enthralled by Sadosa’s storytelling prowess and the depth of his research, visibly moved by the tribute to their community’s history—a book about the Filipino pioneers in Canada that they believe to be the first of its kind.

Zenaida Ferry-Kharroubi, Editor and Publisher of the North American Filipino Star, expressed her enthusiasm for Sadosa’s visit,

FAMAS Center. Estella Domingo is a major stakeholder in this book as she used to assist Lina Fernandez who passed away about two years ago and whose brainchild was to produce a book about the pioneers in Quebec. They entrusted Sadosa to publish the book in Hongkong and complete the eventual production of copies to be shipped to Montreal.

Sadosa’s dedication to documenting the Filipino experience resonated with attendees, reflecting a shared pride in their heritage and a deep appreciation for those who paved the way for future generations. As Sadosa continues his journey to document untold stories and celebrate the richness of Filipino culture, his work serves as a testament to the enduring spirit of Filipino immigrants who are considered pioneers in Canada, their adopted country. #





## ONTARIO Community News

By Tony A. San Juan  
OCT-Retired

# Celebrating 75 years of Philippines and Canada diplomatic relations

This year, 2024, will mark a significant milestone regarding the 75 years of diplomatic and friendly relations between the Philippines and Canada. As Filipino Canadians and productive participants of the Filipino diaspora, definitely, we are honored and proud to meaningfully commemorate this platinum historic event.

Filipinos, records reflect, have a more recent history of immigration to Canada compared to other racialized groups. In the 2021 Census, Statistics Canada on October 26, 2022, reported that 960,000 Filipinos represented 2.6% of Canada's 36,991,981 total population. Just over 7 in 10 Filipinos (72.6%) had immigrated to Canada in the previous 20 years. Nearly three-quarters of people in the Filipino group were born in the Philippines (73.9%), while most others were born in Canada (24.7%). The Filipino population has continued to grow by + 177,000 with each census. Thus, the Filipino population in Canada was estimated to about 1.14 million last year.

Canada and the Philippines certainly enjoy long-standing and positive bilateral relations based on "shared democratic values and mutual interests." The bilateral relations include, among other things, bilateral trade and commerce, partnership in international assistance cooperation, and development programs with focuses on: peace, security and inclusive governance; human dignity; environment and climate action.

Historically, the formal relations between the Philippines and Canada began on December 4, 1949 when the Philippines started a trade mission to the country. The Philippine president during the time was Elpidio Quirino and Louis St. Laurent was Canada's prime minister. Officially, the Philippines first established its diplomatic presence in Canada when it opened a Consulate in Vancouver, British Columbia in May 1956 with the Consul, Gauttier F. Bisnar as Head of Post. Then In 1972, the mission was upgraded to a full embassy. His Excellency, Privado Jimenez of Biñan, Laguna, was earlier designated as the first Philippine Ambassador to Canada on March 1, 1971. The Philippines currently is represented in Canada by an embassy in Ottawa, Ontario and six consulates in Toronto, Vancouver,



Winnipeg, Calgary, Regina, and Halifax. Canada has two diplomatic representations in Manila, Philippines with an embassy in Makati City and a consulate in Cebu City, Cebu province.

During the 75 years of Philippines and Canada diplomatic relations, there have been many state and working visits made by the leaders of the two countries. A state visit, usually an indication of how well two countries get along, is a "formal visit by a head of state or government to a foreign country." Over the years, there were four Canadian Prime Ministers and five Philippine Presidents who have achieved them. Accordingly: 1) In 1983, Philippine President Ferdinand E. Marcos welcomed Prime Minister Pierre Elliot Trudeau during his state visit to the country. It's the first state visit of a Canadian Prime Minister. 2) Corazon C. Aquino, the 11th President of the Philippines visited Canada in November 1989. Aquino is the first Filipino president to visit Canada. 3) Prime Minister Jean Chretien met with Philippine President Fidel V. Ramos during the APEC Summit in Manila on January 14-16 1997. 4) Philippine President Fidel Ramos had a working visit to Canada in 1997. 5) On January 29, 2001, President Gloria M. Arroyo met with Prime Minister Jean Chretien on a working visit. 6) Prime Minister Stephen Harper made an official visit to the Philippines on November 10-11, 2012, the first by a Canadian Prime Minister in 15 years. President B. Aquino and Prime Minister S. Harper met again on the margins of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Summit in Beijing in November 2014. 7) President Benigno Aquino III visited Canada on May 7, 2015. 8) In 2017, Justin Trudeau, the 23rd Prime Minister of Canada, was in the Philippines at the APEC summit in Manila.

During the 43rd ASEAN Summit in Indonesia in September 2023, Justin Trudeau extended an invitation for Marcos, Jr. to come to Canada for a state visit. Marcos, Jr. was reported to have formally accepted

Trudeau's invitation to visit Canada in 2024. According to Canada's Ambassador to the Philippines, David Hartman, Marcos, Jr.'s trip is "likely to happen in the latter part of 2024." A final date is now being worked out by the two governments of Bongbong Marcos's possible visit to Canada. If this happens, this year will mark the first state visit of a Philippine President to Canada since the last four state and working visits of President Corazon Aquino in 1989, President Fidel V. Ramos in 1997, President Gloria M. Arroyo in 2001 and President Benigno C. Aquino III in 2015.

State visits observe official protocol, which has been established of welcoming foreign dignitaries. In this regard, it could be expected that President F. Marcos, Jr. would go to Parliament Hill in Ottawa and meet Prime Minister J. Trudeau. The two leaders would give their remarks to members of the Filipino Canadian community as well as the members of the Canadian media. Then Marcos, Jr. would be welcomed by the Members of Parliament at the House of Commons where he shall deliver an address. Also, he may be expected to spend time visiting Canadian cities with the largest Filipino communities including Toronto, Vancouver, Winnipeg and Calgary.

The friendship between the two countries remains strong after 75 years of diplomatic, economic, and cultural relations. This historic development calls for a celebration and fittingly, a long-awaited state visit to Canada by a Philippine President will highlight this jubilee event. Moreover, the Filipino Canadian community, true and faithful to its well-recognized and enviable cultural tradition, should warmly welcome the *Pang Labing Pito at kasalukuyang Pangulo ng Republika ng Filipinas* (17th and current President of the Republic of the Philippines) and in cooperation with the people of Canada, should rightfully celebrate this established friendship. #

When winter comes, can spring  
be far behind?  
P. B. Shelley

## JDL Performing Arts Stages Disney Moana Jr. Musical in Toronto

The JDL Performing Arts, a specialized talent school in Toronto, staged the "Disney Moana Jr. Musical" in the Greater Toronto Area on January 20, 2024, at the Maja Prentice Theatre, City of Mississauga, Ontario. The maiden show, held to a full-capacity crowd, was a great success! Kudos to the young Filipino-Canadian performers, producers, production staff, and parents of the community's trail-blazing event.



Disney's Moana Jr. is a 60-minute musical adaptation on the stage of the 2016 Disney animated film. This was the first Disney-licensed musical play that the USA entertainment giant authorized under a Filipino-Canadian production to present the highly-acclaimed 2016 Disney-animated movie. The amateur production is presented by arrangement with Music Theatre International-New York, USA.

The concert featured all the beloved songs from the film, written by Tony®, GRAMMY, Emmy, and Pulitzer Prize-winning composer Lin-Manuel Miranda, Opetia Foa'i, and Mark Mancina, including "How Far I'll Go," "Shiny," and "You're Welcome", according to J. De Leon.

It is a coming-of-age story that focuses on the strong-willed Moana as she sets sail across the Pacific to save her village and discover the truth about her heritage. Moana and the legendary demigod Maui embark on an epic

See Page 9 Disney Moana

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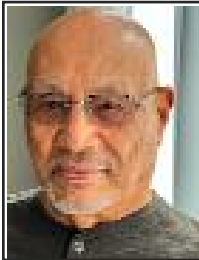
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## Literary Corner

Pedro Guidote



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From Page 8 Disney Moana

journey of self-discovery and camaraderie as both learn to harness the power that lies within. The thrilling and heartwarming story delivers empowering messages of bravery and selflessness. Josie De Leon, founder and executive director of JDL Performing Arts stressed that "Moana Jr. is sure to bring out the hero within each one of us."

Concertgoers and critics alike highly praised the performances of the participants composed of students, artists, and volunteers of the JDL Performing Arts schools and some local talents in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), Ontario. Those who enjoyed the show readily recommended a repeat performance, especially for those who were unable to watch. Meeting the general clamor, the producers and production staff decided to hold another show during March Break.

The JDL Performing Arts scheduled an encore performance on March 13, 2024 (Wednesday) with a Matinee show at 5:00 PM and an evening show at 7:30 PM. The repeat concert will be held at the City Playhouse Theatre, 1000 Westminister Drive, #10, Thornhill, Ontario. For further information, call Josie De Leon, Tel. 647-996-7755 or email [josie.deleon@yahoo.ca](mailto:josie.deleon@yahoo.ca).

## CAQ warns of 'humanitarian crisis' if Ottawa doesn't give Quebec \$1 billion for asylum seekers

The government deployed a fleet of four cabinet ministers Tuesday to remind the federal government that it needs to pay its share of the costs of welcoming asylum seekers.

QUEBEC — Faced with a constantly increasing number of asylum seekers, the Legault government warned on Tuesday that a "humanitarian crisis" is brewing because Quebec's health, education and other services have reached a breaking point.

The government deployed a fleet of four cabinet ministers to once again remind the federal government that it needs to pay its share of the costs of welcoming asylum seekers. Quebec says the bill for the last three years totals \$1 billion and that Ottawa seems to have its head in the sand.

People need to be aware of the magnitude of the situation," Canadian Relations Minister Jean-François Roberge told reporters at a news conference. "We need the federal government to assume its responsibilities.

"This cannot continue. If we are unable to provide services, we are approaching what could become a humanitarian crisis."

Roberge went further, saying Quebec's very identity could be threatened if too many asylum seekers arrive.

"It could happen if we welcome more people than we are able to house, teach French and integrate into Quebec society," he said. "So yes, there are things that are threatened, there are services that are threatened, there is a way of life that is threatened if the numbers are too great. We have to say it."

Quebec and Ottawa have been feuding and, at times, negotiating over asylum seekers for a year. Ottawa closed the Roxham Rd. crossing a year ago — a decision Quebec welcomed, only to notice with dismay that asylum seekers were now arriving by air.

As of Dec. 31, Quebec had taken in 160,651 asylum seekers out of Canada's total of 289,047, or 55 per cent. By comparison, in the same period Ontario took in 105,439 (36.5 per cent). Quebec says Ottawa needs to better distribute asylum seekers in order to ease the burden.

"This cannot go on," Immigration Minister Christine Fréchette said at Tuesday's news conference. "We are asking the federal government to act urgently, and we don't sense this now. I



"People need to be aware of the magnitude of the situation," says Canadian Relations Minister Jean-François Roberge, seen in a file photo. "We need the federal government to assume its responsibilities." PHOTO BY JOHN MAHONEY /Montreal Gazette files

would qualify the federal government's attitude in the last year as passive."

The costs are piling up, she noted. A month ago, Quebec was asking Ottawa to refund \$470 million in costs. Now Fréchette has added the costs of 2023 (\$576.9 million) for a total of about \$1 billion.

Ottawa has paid \$140 million, but the ministers said that is not enough and Quebec has reached a breaking point.

Education Minister Bernard Drainville said that as of Jan. 24, Quebec was supplying 1,237 French classes for new arrivals, the equivalent of 52 elementary schools. Quebec estimates it will need another 250 to 300 classes (the equivalent of 12 to 15 schools) to keep up with demand.

Drainville said if Ottawa "does not assume its responsibilities," Quebec might not be able to provide sufficient services.

"I cannot imagine them not waking up," he said. "It's as if they live on another planet. We don't want to hit the breaking point. We don't want to hit the wall. The Trudeau government has to act. Hopefully common sense and a certain wisdom will prevail."

"There is enormous pressure being exerted on the system," added Social Solidarity Minister Chantal Rouleau, noting the number of asylum seekers on basic social assistance has grown by 44 per cent, from 32,016 to 46,357.

That represents 29 per cent of the total in Quebec drawing the benefits,

Rouleau said. The total bill to Quebec for asylum seekers has risen from \$69 million in 2021 to \$370 million in 2023, she said.

Fréchette insisted the solution is not that complicated. By better managing the borders, the federal government could distribute asylum seekers in other provinces, as has happened in the past.

"We are simply asking the federal government to reactivate that mechanism," she said.

But Quebec's opposition parties were showing no mercy Tuesday. The Liberals said if the CAQ government has a case for asking for more money, it needs to document it much better.

"Show us the proof of what they are advancing," said interim Liberal leader Marc Tanguay, who qualified Roberge's use of the term "humanitarian crisis" as an exaggeration.

Tanguay also objected to Roberge's language about Quebec being threatened by asylum seekers.

"They need to stop seeing new arrivals as a threat," he said. "That's the risk in using such language. The CAQ cannot toss out such comments."

Parti Québécois Leader Paul St-Pierre Plamondon said the news conference attested to the CAQ's inability to get results out of Ottawa.

"They will continue going there on their knees and coming back with crumbs," St-Pierre Plamondon told reporters. "What we saw this morning was four ministers who are useless."

Asked about Quebec's pitch as he gave a news conference in British Columbia, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau recognized the efforts Quebec has made to welcome asylum seekers and promised to continue working "hand in hand" with the province to improve the system.

"What is important is to reassure everyone, from one end of the country to another, that we have an immigration system that is functional, rigorous and where the rules are followed," Trudeau said. "Our immigration system is essential for a strong future in Quebec and elsewhere, but it has to be run in an appropriate way."

Source: Philip Authier, Montreal Gazette, published Feb. 20, 2024

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# Launching of Filipino Ping Pong Club Montreal - Fostering Community Wellness Through Sports

By Tenne Rose Dayandante, host - Pinoy Pa Rin with Tenne and Michael

In a bid to promote physical fitness and foster a sense of community among the Filipino diaspora in Montreal, the Filipino Ping Pong Club Montreal or Club de ping-pong philippin de Montréal (FPPCM) is set to open its doors for regular sessions at Gilmore College. Under the umbrella of the non-profit organization, Filipino Canadian Arts and Cultural Organization, FPPCM aims to provide a safe and inclusive space for individuals of all ages and backgrounds to engage in the exhilarating sport of table tennis.

Through the initiative of Oye Olivar, in collaboration with Zenaida Kharoubi, FPPCM brings together a passionate team of coaches including Oliver Manongsong and Richard Ferreria, who are also part of the Club's managing team. With a vision to cultivate a vibrant and supportive environment, the Club endeavors to not only enhance ping pong skills but also to promote mental health and camaraderie within the Filipino community.

The generosity of sponsors has played a pivotal role in realizing this initiative. Mr. Mike Flinker's contribution of two brand-new competition-ready tables sets the stage for high-quality game play, while



**L to R: Oliver Manongsong, Zenaida Ferry-Kharroubi, Founder & Director-General of Gilmore College International, and Oye Olivar, founder of the Ping Pong Club Montreal. Photo taken on Feb. 11, 2024 during their first visit to inspect the College's social hall available for rent to different organizations for workshops and church services by signing a contract to reserve the use of the space, ensuring an orderly flow of activities.**

Sunlife advisors Derwin Collantes and Sophia Ecdao have provided invaluable support. The Club would also like to thank their sponsors: Canada Fiesta Extravaganza, Al Abdon of The Filipino Heritage Society of Montreal, P'lengke, Kalye Restaurant, Mariewin Lorenzo and Luzviminda Mazone who also contributed to

support the cause. The commitment of active members, namely, Arnold, Randolph, Randy, Markus, Paul, Ron, Jocelyn, May-May and Jay R through their pledges, underscores the community's dedication to this endeavour.

FPPCM prides itself on being an inclusive space, welcoming

individuals from all walks of life. From kids to seniors and members of the LGBTQ+ community, everyone is invited to partake in the excitement of ping pong and forge meaningful connections in the process.

As the Club prepares to open its doors for sessions scheduled two to four times a week, there is an ongoing call for additional pledges. These contributions will further fortify the Club's resources, ensuring a safe and enriching experience for all participants. Furthermore, FPPCM invites individuals, whether beginners or advanced players, to become members and join in the fun. The Club will offer classes to cater to varying skill levels, providing opportunities for growth and development in the sport.

The launch of the Filipino Ping Pong Club Montreal signifies more than just the introduction of a new recreational activity; it symbolizes a commitment to the community's wellbeing, unity, and joy. Through the shared passion for table tennis, members of the Filipino community in Montreal are poised to embark on a journey of fitness, friendship, and fun.

For more updates and to see the schedules, please check their FB page: The Filipino Ping Pong Club Montreal and Filipino Canadian Arts and Cultural Organization.#

## Asylum Seekers Granted Subsidized Daycare

By Audrey Tougas, Local Journalism Initiative

On February 7th, 2024, the Court of Appeal issued a judgment granting asylum seekers access to Reduced Contribution Regulation of the Educational Childcare Act (CPE) and reduced government day care rates. This decision marked a significant shift in policy, as since 2018, refugees had been subject to day care rates of approximately 50 Canadian dollars per day, in stark contrast to the roughly 9 Canadian dollars per day paid by Quebec residents.

In 2018, the Government led by Phillipe Couillard excluded asylum seekers from benefiting from Pauline Marois's reduced day care rates policy. This exclusion was accomplished through a reinterpretation of section 3 of the Reduced Contribution Regulation of the Educational Childcare Act. The reinterpretation restricted access to subsidized day care for those not primarily in Quebec for work purposes. Given that refugees primarily sought refuge in Quebec, regardless of their employment status or possession of work permits, they were subjected to higher day care rates. Consequently, these elevated costs deterred many from seeking employment, compelling them to remain at home to care for their children, thereby increasing reliance

on financial assistance.

Most refugees affected by the denial of lower day care rates were women, who often assumed the role of stay-at-home mothers. Lawyer Sibel Ataogul argued in court in 2020 that this legislation impeded women's rights and autonomy by forcing them into caregiver roles and preventing their participation in the workforce.

Sibel Ataogul and various organizations, including the Day Care



**Bijou Kanyinda**

Access Committee, Amnesty International, and the Commission on Human Rights and Youth Rights, supported the new resolution following the case of Bijou Kanyinda in 2018. Kanyinda, a Congolese woman seeking refugee status in Quebec, sought to enroll her three children in day care but faced prohibitively high unsubsidized costs. Following the



denial of subsidized day care rates, she filed a complaint.

In the final verdict, the Court of Appeal acknowledged the argument regarding the violation of Women's equality rights as outlined in both the Quebec and Canadian Charters. Judge Julie Dutil expressed: "I conclude that (the regulation) reinforces and perpetuates the historical disadvantage experienced by women seeking to participate in the labor market. The distinction it creates by excluding asylum seekers thus constitutes discrimination based on sex within the meaning of section 15 of the Canadian Charter."

The *Table de concertations des organisations au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes* (The Table of Consultations of

Organizations serving Refugees and Immigrants), emphasized that implementing the law would positively impact the labor market by enabling women to enter the workforce, thereby reducing reliance on childcare welfare.

Minister of Families Suzanne Roy announced plans to analyze the decision before offering a response, while the Attorney General of Quebec may consider appealing to the Supreme Court.

As of 2023, approximately 32,000 people in Quebec were on day care waiting lists, while around 65,000 asylum applicants were admitted. The proposed law would allow asylum seekers to join the waiting list for reduced rates but would not guarantee them automatic placements.#



# SA WIKANG TAGALOG

ni Zenaída F. Kharroubi

## Hanggang kailan kaya ang mga giyerang nangyayari sa Gaza, Ukraine at iba pang panig ng mundo?

Nakatanggap ako ng isang *press release* ng isang organisasyon ng Cote des Neiges sa wikang Pranse na nagsasaad ng kanilang pag-sang-ayon sa resolusyon ng gobyerno ng Quebec noong ika-31 ng Enero 2024 tungkol sa pagsuporta nila sa tinatawag na 'cease fire' sa Gaza:

**La CDC de Côte-des-Neiges est préoccupée par les conséquences locales de la guerre au Moyen-Orient**

**À Côte-des-Neiges, l'impact de la guerre au Moyen-Orient et la violence qui sévit dans la région avant et depuis le 7 octobre 2023 (y compris les enlèvements et les incarcérations arbitraires de civil-es) se répercutent sur les organismes communautaires, leurs équipes et les populations qu'elles desservent. Par ailleurs, le travail des groupes communautaires, dont plusieurs sont formés de personnes juives et arabes, s'inscrit dans une longue tradition de luttes pour la justice sociale, la dignité, l'égalité et l'équité.**

**Cette résolution, qui émerge d'une rencontre tenue avec nos membres le 12 décembre 2023, a été votée le 21 décembre dernier. Depuis, nous saluons la motion adoptée à l'unanimité par le gouvernement du Québec, le 31 janvier 2024, pour un cessez-le-feu humanitaire."**

Kahit na nais ng mga mamamayan na magkaroon ng hustisya sa sosyedad at pagrespeto sa karapatan ng bawat isa, kung ang mga lider sa mga gobyerno ng iba't ibang bansa ay hindi nagkakaisa dahil kanya-kanyang panig ang kanilang pinagtatanggol, anong paraan ang dapat gawin upang ma-amuki natin na kilalanin nilang mali ang kanilang ginagawa? Sa dulong lahat nitong pagpapatuloy na bombahin at gibain ang isang bayan, saan magpupunta ang mga taong nakatira dito na walang mga kasalanan nguni't nadadamay sa giyerang ito?

Kung babasahin nating ulit ang mga istorya ng mga giyera at paglalabanan dahil sa pag-angkin at pagkamdang ng lupa o teritoryo mula pa noong unang panahon, maiintindihan natin na ang palaging pinag-aawayan ay ang lupang ginugustong palakihin at makuha ang kayamanan na tinatawag na "natural resources" lalo na kung may mga minang nakatago sa ilalim ng lupa at dagat. Sino ang mga lider ng mga bansang nanggiyera sa mundo mula pa noong unang panahon?

Sa kasalukuyan, ang lumalabas na lider na pinagmumulan ng giyera sa Ukraine ay si Vladimir

Putin na ilang taon nang pangulo ng Russia at sa Gaza, ang puno ng grupong Hamas na hinahanap ng husto ng Israel upang hulihin, patay man o buhay.

Samantala naman, ang mga lider o puno ng mga bansang nasa paligid ng Gaza ay nagsasabing kailangang magkaroon ng "cease fire" dahil ang mg sibilyan ang naghihirap at may mahigit ng 29,000 ang namatay. Bukod sa rito, ang mga bata at kababaihan ang mahigit na napipinsala ng giyerang ito.

Hindi lamang ang mga taga Gaza ang napeperhuwisyo ng giyera. Kasali na rin lahat ang mga tao sa ibang panig ng mundo, lalo na sa ating siyudad ng Montreal na may kanya-kanyang kinakampihan - may pumapanig sa *Palestinians* at may pumapanig sa Israel. Mahirap matanto kung sino ang tama dahil sa pareparehong may katwiran - ang pagtatanggol ng Israel sa kanilang sariling sekuridad nguni't ang mga taga Gaza naman ay mayroon ding karapatan na mamuhay sa sariling bayan na hindi okupado ng Israel.

Nagsimula nang pakinggan ng mga miembro ng *International Court of Justice* sa Hague, Netherlands ang kasong tungkol sa Israel at Palestine - at kung ano mang desisyon ang magiging kinahatnan pagkatapos nilang usisain ng husto ang mga ebidensya, sana'y maging makatarungan ang kanilang gagawing hatol sa kasong ito at respetohin ng mga pinuno ng Israel at Palestine.

Ang United States of America, Canada, England, France at iba pang mga bansang may mga importanteng kontribusyon sa giyerang nangyayari sa mundo, harinawang maliwanagan silang lahat at magkaroon ng paghahangad na tapusin na ang lahat ng mga giyerang nakakaperhuwisyo sa laht ng tao, kahit anong lahi sa kahit anong bayan.

Bilang isang mamamayan na nagmamatyag lang sa mga nangyayari sa ating paligid, maari din nating pag-aralan ng husto ang mga istorya ng mga giyerang nakalipas upang makita natin kung anong pagbabago ang dapat nating gawin upang magkaroon ng katahimikan sa buong mundo na kailangan nating lahat upang mabuhay tayong maligaya, malusog, at masagana. #



## Anong mga aral ang mapupulot natin sa nakalipas na giyerang pandaigdig?

Hindi nakakapagtaka kung sakaling walang nakaka-alala sa mga nangyari noong ikalawang digmaang pandaigdig (WWII). Ayon sa Wikipedia, ang Ikalawang Digmaang Pandaigdig ay isang pandaigdigang labanan na nagsimula noong ika-1 ng Setyembre taóng 1939. Natapos ito noong ika-2 ng Setyembre 1945, at nasangkot ang karamihan ng mga bansa sa daigdig at bawat kontinente na may naninirahan. Tinuturing ito na pinakamalawak, pinakamahal at pinakamadugong labanan sa kasaysayan ng sangkatauhan. Maaalalang ang mga bansang lumahok sa digmaan ay nagbuhos ng napakaraming pansandatahang-lakas upang lupigin ang bawat kalaban. Isang linggo bago magsimula ang digmaan, ang Kasunduang Molotov-Ribbentrop ay nilagdaan ng dalawang magkakalaban, ang Alemanyang Nazi at ang Unyong Sobyet at sumang-ayon sila sa dibisyon ng teritoryong nais sakupin sa Polonya. Nagsimulang lumusob ang hukbong Alemanya sa kanluran, hilaga, at timog ng Polonya noong Setyembre 1, 1939 habang ang USSR ay nagsimulang lumusob sa bansa noong Setyembre 17 sa silangang bahagi ng Polonya. Nang sumuko ang Polonya, sila'y pinalipat sa Romania. Ang hukbong Nazi ay aktibo sa digmaan mula 1939 hanggang 1940 at halos nakontrol ang maraming bansa sa Europa. Pumasok ang Italya sa digmaan noong Hunyo 10, 1940 upang tulungan ang mga Alemanya. Ang mga bansang Pransiya, Belhika, Olanda, Austria, Tsekoslovakya, Polonya, Yugoslavia, Ukraina, Belarus, Lithuania, at kanlurang Rusya ay nakontrol ng Alemanya sa panahong iyon.

Pumasok ang Asia sa digmaan noong Disyembre 7, 1941 nang binomba ng Hapon ang Pearl Harbor sa Hawaii sa umaga. Nagbibigay-daan din ito sa pagpasok ng bansang Estados Unidos sa digmaan. Habang nangyari ang pag-atake sa Pearl Harbor, ang walong barkong U.S. Navy ships ay binagsak ng mga Hapon. Inilarawan itong bilang "a date which will live in infamy" dahil nangyari ang pag-atake ng walang anunsyo o deklarasyon. Pagkatapos ng pitong oras, nagsimulang umatake ang Hapon sa mga bansang nasa timog-silangang

Asya tulad ng Pilipinas, Hong Kong, at Singapore. Halos nakontrol ng mga Hapon ang mga bansa sa timog-silangang Asia at ang mga taong nakatira sa mga ito ay pinahirapan at pinatay.

Noong 1943, sinalakay ng mga Alyado ang Sicily, ang isla sa timog ng Italya hanggang sa sumuko ang Italya sa pamamagitan ng paglagda ng kasunduang Cassibile noong Setyembre 3 at dineklara sa Setyembre 8. Noong Abril 16, 1945, nangyari ang labanan sa Berlin at ito'y pinakahuling labanan ng hukbong Alemanya at Hukbong Pula. Habang nangyari ang labanan na ito, noong Abril 30, si Adolf Hitler ay nagpakamatay sa pamamagitan ng pagbabaril sa ulo at kasabay niya rito ang asawa niyang si Eva Braun na nagpakamatay din sa pamamagitan ng paggamit ng cyanide. Sa pagkamatay ni Hitler, humina ang Nazi Germany at marami sa kanila ang namamatay sa daan. Sumuko ang mga Alemanya noong Mayo 7, 1945 at bunga nito, nanalo ang USSR. Pagkatapos nito, nagkaroon ng selebrasyon sa Europa. Mula Moscow hanggang Los Angeles, nagkaroon sila ng malaking selebrasyon. Ang hukbong USSR ay nabigyan ng *award* sa kanilang tagumpay, "Heroes of the Soviet Union".

Noong Agosto 6 at 9, nagsimulang magbomba ang mga hukbong Amerikano sa mga lungsod ng Hiroshima at Nagasaki. Ang bombang *Little Boy* ay ginamit sa Hiroshima at ang bombang *Fat Man* sa Nagasaki. Maraming namatay sa mga Hapon hanggang sila'y sumuko noong Agosto 15, 1945. Upang mabigyang opisyal na katapusan ang Ikalawang Digmaang Pandaigdig, ang dokumentong pagsuko ay nilagdaan ng mga Hapon noong Setyembre 2, 1945. Sa pagtapos ng digmaan, 60 milyon tao ang nasawi.

Kung ating susuriin ang mga pangyayari at ang mga pinuno o lider ng mga bansang nakasali sa digmaan, maiintindihan natin seguro ang mga dahilan kung bakit sila sumalii sa digmaan. Paano kaya maiiwasan ang digmaan? Ano ang dahilan ng digmaang ito na kumalat sa buong daigdig?

Basahin natin ulit ang "history" upang huwag ulitin ang pagkakamali. #





**Education is our passport to the future for tomorrow belongs only to the people who prepare for it today.**  
**Malcolm X**



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Recipes selected from various sources

**Cooking with love provides food for the soul.**

## Satisfying dinners for Lent that aren't fish



### Bean burrito

Ingredients:

- 1 can (16 ounces) vegetarian refried beans
- 1 cup salsa
- 1 cup cooked long grain rice
- 2 cups shredded cheddar cheese, divided
- 12 flour tortillas (6 inches)
- Optional: Shredded lettuce, sliced olives, halved grape tomatoes and sliced avocado

Directions

Preheat oven to 375°. In a large bowl, combine beans, salsa, rice and 1 cup cheese. Spoon about 1/3 cup mixture off-center on each tortilla. Fold the sides and ends over filling and roll up.

Advertisement

Arrange burritos in a greased 13x9-in. baking dish. Sprinkle with remaining 1 cup cheese. Cover and bake until heated through, 20-25 minutes. Add toppings as desired.



### Cheese and pumkin filled manicotti

Ingredients:

- 1 package (8 ounces) manicotti shells
- 1 container (15 ounces) ricotta cheese
- 2 cups shredded part-skim mozzarella cheese, divided
- 1 cup canned pumpkin
- 1/4 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 2 large egg yolks
- 1/4 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1 jar (24 ounces) garlic pasta sauce, divided

Directions:

Preheat oven to 350°. Cook manicotti shells according to package directions for al dente. Drain.

In a large bowl, mix ricotta cheese, 1 cup mozzarella cheese, pumpkin, Parmesan cheese, egg yolks and nutmeg. Spoon into manicotti.

Spread 1 cup pasta sauce into a greased 13x9-in. baking dish. Top with stuffed manicotti. Pour remaining pasta sauce over top; sprinkle with remaining mozzarella cheese. Bake, covered, 25-30 minutes or until cheese is melted



### Moroccan vegetable stew

Ingredients:

- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1/2 teaspoon ground allspice
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 1/4 teaspoon salt

1 small butternut squash, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes (about 4 cups)

2 medium potatoes, peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes (about 4 cups)

4 medium carrots, sliced

3 plum tomatoes, chopped

3 cups water

2 small zucchini, cut into 1-inch cubes

1 can (15 ounces) garbanzo beans or chickpeas, rinsed and drained

Directions:

In a 6-qt. stockpot, heat oil over medium-high heat; saute onion until tender. Add seasonings; cook and stir 1 minute.

Stir in squash, potatoes, carrots, tomatoes and water; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, until squash and potatoes are almost tender, 15-20 minutes. Add zucchini and beans; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, until vegetables are tender, 5-8 minutes.

### Seafood recipes



### Honey garlic baked salmon in foil

Ingredients:

- 1 pound (450g) salmon fillet
- 1/2 cup (125ml) honey ( for non-low-carb, keto diet)
- 4 cloves garlic, minced or crushed through a garlic press
- 1/2 cup whole-grain Dijon mustard
- Juice of 1/2 lemon
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/4 teaspoon red pepper flakes
- 1/4 teaspoon Cayenne pepper
- 1/2 teaspoon paprika
- Coarse salt and black pepper
- 1 tablespoon chopped cilantro, for garnish
- 1 lemon, sliced, for garnish

Directions:

1. To make the baked honey garlic salmon: Position a rack in the middle of your oven. Preheat oven to 400°F (200°C). Line a baking sheet with a large piece of foil to fold over and seal to create a packet.

2. In a bowl, combine honey, mustard, lemon juice, garlic, oil, paprika, red pepper flakes, Cayenne pepper and a pinch of salt. Stir to combine and set aside.

3. Place the salmon onto the lined baking sheet. Pour the honey mustard mixture over the salmon, and spread evenly over the fish. Sprinkle with a good amount of salt and cracked pepper. Fold the sides of the foil over the salmon to cover and completely seal the packet closed so the sauce does not leak.

4. Bake salmon in foil until cooked through, about 10-15 minutes,

depending on the thickness of your fish and your preference of doneness. Carefully open the foil, and broil under the broiler for 2-3 minutes on medium heat to caramelize the top of salmon. Garnish the baked honey garlic salmon with cilantro and serve immediately with lemon slices. Enjoy!



### Honey-Pepper Coconut Shrimp

Ingredients:

- 1/2 cup honey
- 1/4 cup granulated sugar
- 1 teaspoon finely grated lemon zest plus 2 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon black pepper, divided
- 3 cups all-purpose flour (about 12 3/4 ounces), divided
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- 2 large eggs, lightly beaten
- 1 cup water
- 2 teaspoons baking powder
- 2 cups sweetened shredded coconut
- 2 cups panko
- 1 pound peeled and deveined tail-on raw medium shrimp
- Vegetable oil
- Mango-Habanero Aioli

Directions

Combine honey, sugar, lemon zest and juice, and 1/2 teaspoon black pepper in a medium saucepan; bring to a simmer over medium-high, stirring constantly. Simmer, stirring constantly, until sugar dissolves, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat, and set aside.

Stir together 2 cups flour, salt, and remaining 1/2 teaspoon black pepper in a shallow bowl until thoroughly combined. Whisk together eggs, 1 cup water, baking powder, and remaining 1 cup flour in a separate bowl until just combined. Stir together coconut and panko in a third bowl.

Dredge 1 shrimp in salted flour mixture; shake off excess. Dip into egg batter; let excess drip off. Dredge in coconut mixture, pressing lightly to adhere. Place on a baking sheet lined with parchment paper. Repeat process using remaining shrimp. Freeze shrimp until firm, about 30 minutes.

Pour oil to a depth of 3 inches into a Dutch oven; heat over high to 325°F. Working in about 3 batches, fry shrimp in hot oil until golden brown, 3 to 4 minutes per batch. Transfer cooked shrimp to a plate lined with paper towels to drain. Let cool slightly, about 2 minutes. Drizzle with honey mixture. Serve with mango-habanero aioli.

Mango Habanero Aioli

Ingredients:

See Page 13    Mango Habanero





# Social Tidbits

## Montreal Community News

Fely Rosales Cariño

Well, greetings to my Social Tidbits readers! I greet you heartily this February, popularly known as the month of love. Let no one say they're unlucky in love. Just think we're lucky in so many ways. No major fires, no floods, no storms, no illegal migrants coming our way, etc. As the hymn goes, 'Count Your Blessings name them one by one, and it will surprise you what the Lord has done.' Then it's easier to look forward to s-p-r-i-n-g !

Before I proceed, I cannot help but quote from scripture something appropriate not just for Valentine's Day but for all time. Please allow me to indulge myself and share with you what true love is according to 1 Corinthians 13:1-7 which says, If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing.

Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres.

I hope you have been blessed by these verses. And now I have a flashback for us. Do you remember the Seniors of West Island and Suburbs (SWIS) Christmas Party that was held at the DDO Olympic Hall last December 9, 2023? SWIS Chairman Lolita Odulio was very happy about how the group executed their individual assignments to make the event successful. She was impressed by the extraordinary efforts of past presidents Roger Ajero and Connie Fabro; she observed that everyone did their best also. Showing her appreciation, we were treated to a sumptuous lunch at Pinoy Pansitan Restaurant on 5940 Victoria Avenue. Thanks to Pansitan owner Cesar Manuel who made our lunch affordable. You can pass by this diner to satisfy your palate and have your choice of fried fish, dinuguan, chicken adobo, beef, and many more.

At this Christmas party, credit goes to Nita Advincula who choreographed a folk dance which showcased their nice costumes. Dancers Lolit Odulio, Tina Oana, Maming Transfiguracion, Nita Recillo,

Connie Fabro, Dorie Isada, Nila Hiwatig, Nerie Ajero, and Nita Advincula entertained the crowd. Perhaps a Dance Group is born? We may see them again come Independence Day celebrations on June 14, 2024 at Olympia Hall in DDO.

On January 20, 2024, Filipino born, California-raised comedian JR de Guzman entertained a sold-out crowd at the Rialto Theatre, 5723 Park Avenue. Opening for him was Canadian comedian Julie Kim who entertained with her observations on being an Asian woman, aging, her Caucasian husband's skincare routine as well as other jokes inspired by her daughter.

Following her act which left our cheeks hurting from laughter, JR took to the stage, guitar in hand. Previous to comedy, JR taught music, a talent he uses during his shows, combining his musical skills and his witty humor to wow us. Almost immediately he showed his improved prowess by working the crowd. Local radio personality DJ Yuey from Canadian Pinoy Radio was seated in the front row and caught JR's eye due to his entourage of women, who were winners of a radio contest to attend this show. Within minutes JR had crafted a song about DJ Yuwie that had the audience in tears from laughing. In fact he had the room chanting "yuwieee" throughout the whole show. Using the crowds suggestions as inspiration, JR impressed us all by creating songs using his guitar on the spot. His ability to compose music while performing live stand up comedy truly sets him apart. It's no wonder he has a Netflix special (The Comedy Special) coming up as well as an album (Dual Citizen) that debuted at #1 on iTunes and Billboard Comedy charts. JR masterfully wove audience suggestions into jokes and songs, having us all singing like a choir by the end of his show. There is no doubt JR's career in comedy will prove to be very successful; all night his fans were laughing. Loud, head back, belly aching, thigh slapping laughs. This tour, meant to test out new material, will bring him to North America until September. Special thanks to my granddaughter Karisa who attended this event and shared her observations.

On January 26, 2024, a very special tribute was given to a special lady, a special rose, the woman of the hour ... Rose de la Paz! I was delighted to receive an invitation from her; I wouldn't miss this birthday for anything! It was held at Poulet Fou et Frit on 6021

Monk Boulevard. Owners of this cozy establishment are Stanley Kuntzman & Catherine Nunez, a Filipina. This husband and wife team were gracious enough to close their restaurant so we can celebrate to our heart's content. We enjoyed good food and everybody had seconds. The birthday lady blew her candles and the presence of her children (Sherling Rose & husband Mark Robles, Jeremie Arden & wife Sophie Anctil) no doubt made her extra happy. Other lady friends present were Annie Galang, Claire Boco, Cherry Palmos, Ciony Nueva, and yours truly.

Treat for the night was Karaoke time. It seems that the party was already in full swing when I arrived. Immediately taken by the beautiful sounds that greeted me, I told myself, "What a beautiful, beautiful record". Well, it turned out to be the impressive baritone singers burning the microphone with their rendition of their favorite song hits. Leading the local celebrity circuit was dashing husband Sir James de la Paz, a picture of happiness and contentment that night. (Who could blame him?). The golden voices of Sir Dario Boco (I Did It My Way), Sir Cipriano Galang (California Blue and Tennessee Whiskey), Sir Gerry Danzil (Wonderful Sound) and the signature duet of Sir James and Sir Juluis Abad (To All The Girls We've Loved Before) put everybody in a good mood. Having the place to ourselves, reserved just specially for Lady Rose, they sang their hearts out serenading her. Rose, see you next year on your birthday again. (You must tell us the secret to your youthful looks!).

Now for this month, let's give a shout out to birthday ladies Ciony Nueva (February 14) and Monique Regacho (February 18). Apparently, Monique has invited a few friends (Nora Arcalas, Maggie Calcetas, Amy Manonog, Rina Abdon et al) for lunch at Magic

Palace Casino. She has also invited a bus load of avid casino players to help her celebrate. Monique takes care of seniors who regularly go and play in the casino every week (yes, every week!). They assemble at Tim Horton's on Victoria Avenue. And these trips are not special events. They are regular trips (every Sunday) for regular players. According to Monica, the newest player added to the list is Bert Abiera. (Balato naman!).

Guess who I saw last week doing their exercise regimen walking at the Fairview Pointe Claire? They're Jun & Lydia Alejandrino, Rudy & Pina Loresca, Nilo Valenzuela, and Benny Bote. Benny told me that everybody should walk to maintain body coordination. He also said that you should maintain socializing with friends to exercise the mind. Excellent suggestions for body and mind. Thanks for your wisdom, Benny. Furthermore, if you engage in a tête-à-tête with Benny, he offers a variety of helpful recommendations regarding nursing homes and even perspective on death. Well, if anyone wishes to try walking in the warm comforts of a mall, visit Fairview. I promise that you will not be disappointed. You might see familiar faces at the Food Court. The more the merrier, as they say.

Let me close with this tribute in the name of love: This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. (1 John 4:9-11)

My dear friends, Love One Another!

Until next issue. God Bless !  
oOo

### From Page 12 Mango Habanero

- 1 cup frozen mango chunks
  - 2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
  - 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
  - 1 teaspoon smoked paprika
  - 1 teaspoon curry powder
  - 1 teaspoon smoked salt (such as hickory)
  - 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
  - 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
  - 1 small habanero chile, seeded and chopped (about 1/4 teaspoon)
  - 1 cup mayonnaise (such as Duke's)
- Directions

Process frozen mango chunks, lime juice, sugar, smoked paprika, curry powder, smoked salt, cayenne pepper, black pepper, and

chopped habanero in a food processor until smooth, about 1 minute. Stir together mango mixture and mayonnaise in a medium bowl. Cover and refrigerate until ready to use.

Make Ahead

Aioli can be prepared and stored in an airtight container in the refrigerator up to 3 days.#

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# FILIPINO STAR

## SHOWBIZ GOSSIP

### What keeps Atasha Muhlach busy



**Atasha Muhlach**

Aga Muhlach's daughter is carving a niche for herself in show business.

She is doing so, one step at a time.

After signing with Viva Artists Agency (VAA), Atasha has been juggling time hosting "E.A.T." and various activities as model.

The 22-year old Atasha has been a busy bee herself what with her juggling her time between her hosting stints at E.A.T. and as a commercial model.

Atasha also recently cut a record titled "Pasuyo."

In a TikTok live Q&A, Atasha admitted making a

mark in showbiz is "not easy," but she is enjoying herself.

She shared, "The learning process of being in showbiz is an enjoyable experience that I found myself liking."

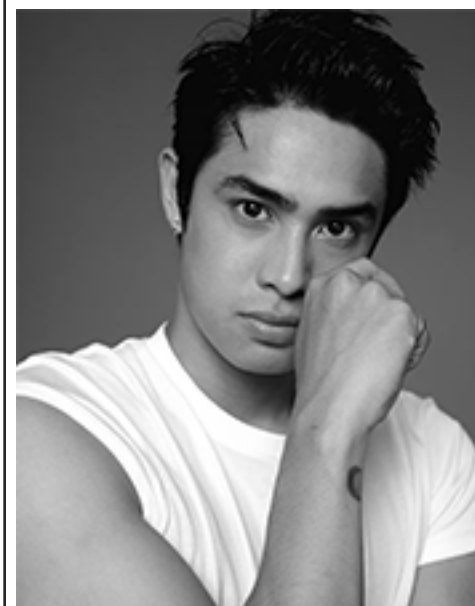
Atasha recently announced on her Instagram that she's the new endorser of Jollibee's new coffee blends.

"So happy to be an endorser of New Coffee Blends," Atasha wrote in one of her IG posts.

In another, Atasha simply wrote "bida ang saya" alongside a post of the food chain's instantly recognizable mascot.



### Donny Pangilinan describes his ideal date



**Donny Pangilinan**

Actors and love team partners Donny Pangilinan and Belle Mariano or DonBelle spent the last Valentine's Day together taping for their hit series "Can't Buy Me Love."

But if Donny would have his way, he would have wanted a different kind of date.

"Very simple lang, away from the cameras, something that does not require being on your phone," he shared at his recent Valentine's fan meet by skincare brand QuickFX.

"For me, the simplest things kasi really matter; not a lot of details, not a lot of big things, but okay din ang mga 'yun. Pero ako siguro, mas simple lang. Maybe a picnic in a park," he added.

When asked if he has already done his ideal kind of date, he said, "Nagawa naman."

According to him, it did not matter to him whether he goes on a date on Valentine's Day itself or on another day.

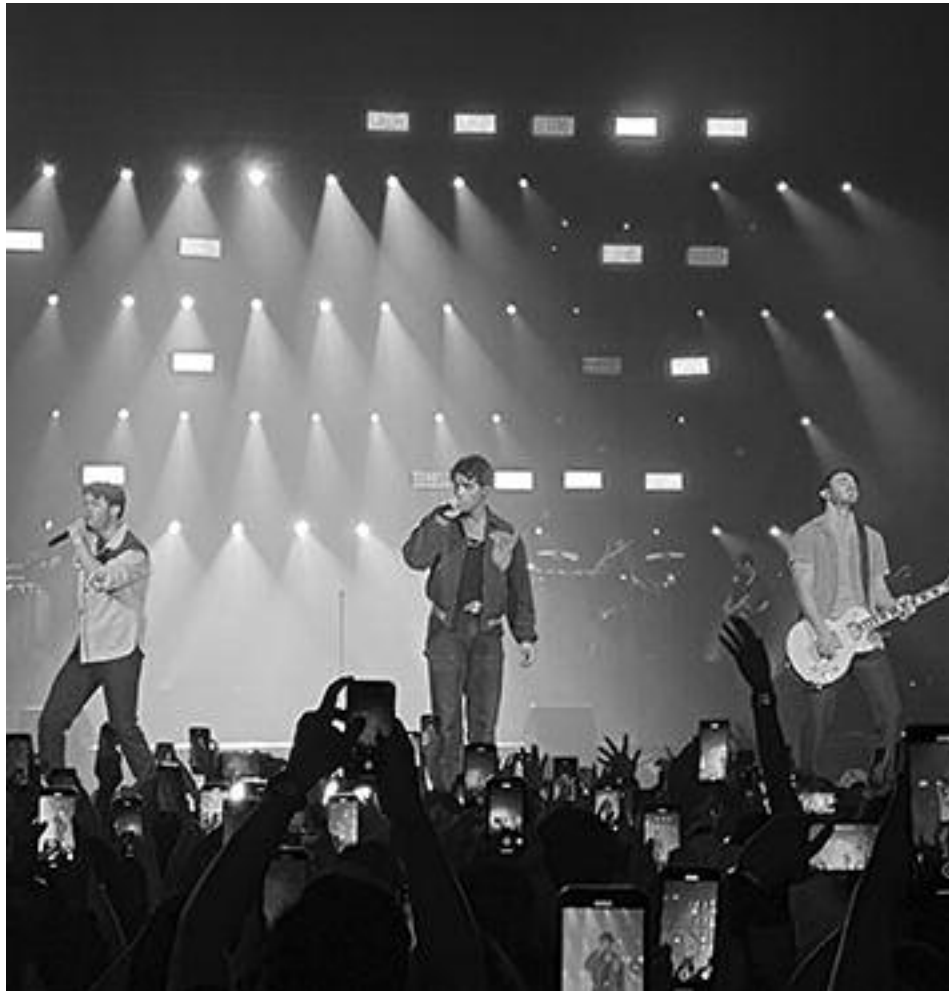
"Any day. It's more of the occasion naman. It doesn't mean na 'yun lang ang date...:"

At the Valentine event, Donny bonded with his fans over food, drinks and flowers that he gave away to 50 lucky fans.

"My best advice this Valentine's Day? Love yourself, that's the best thing you can do. And that also means taking care of your skin. The most important thing is to be comfortable in your own skin." ■



# 'Manila we love you!': Jonas Brothers enjoy Pinoy food, perform hits at 2024 concert



**The Jonas Brothers performing at their first tour stop for 2024 in Manila**

Fans were speechless, over the edge, and breathless seeing the Jonas Brothers back in the Philippines to play several of their best songs throughout the years.

Last night, Joe, Nick, and Kevin Jonas took over the Mall of Asia Arena, one of the same venues the brothers performed in during their last visit back in 2012.

The Jonas Brothers kicked the night off with "What a Man Gotta Do," then Nick laid the groundwork for the concert, "It's so good to be back! We're here to celebrate five albums."

The band went straight into hits from their namesake debut album with "S.O.S.," "Hold On," "Goodnight and Goodbye," and "That's Just The Way We Roll."

"I said Manila!" Joe yelled. "It's been way too long. We're so excited for tonight, we're just getting started."

Following a medley of "Still In Love With You," "Australia," "Hollywood," "Just Friends," and "Games," Joe shared how they

earlier went exploring the city and had some great food, "I have to say, we have to come back sooner."

The brothers then recalled being in their hotel lobby earlier and hearing arguably their most popular song on the piano, "When You Look Me In The Eyes," which the band performed as the screens blared in black-and-white much like the song's music video.

The crowd roared as the brothers performed their cover of "Year 3000" followed by some of their newer songs "Summer Baby" and "Vacation Eyes" — Nick and Joe each took turns walking on the catwalk during the latter.

Joe teased about "mixing things up," and to the audience's delight, the band performed their songs from the "Camp Rock" films, namely "Gotta Find You," "Introducing Me," and "Play My Music."

Right after, the Jonas Brothers went into a medley of songs from their 2008 album "A Little Bit Longer" with "BB Good,"

"Shelf," "Got Me Going Crazy," "Video Girl," "One Man Show," "Pushin' Me Away," and "Tonight."

The Mall of Arena crowd happily sang the choruses for "Lovebug" and "Burnin' Up," even singing the rap portion of the latter which was famously done by Big Rob.

The band performed two newer songs again — "Waffle House" and "Montana Sky" — before shifting to their 2009 album "Lines, Vines and Trying Times" starting with "Fly With Me."

Nick noted that the Manila concert was the band's first tour stop for 2024, then welcomed all old and new fans to join the family.

Joe, Nick, and Kevin finished with "Leave Before You Love Me," introducing each member of the band before racing to each part of the stage to say their farewells to the Manila crowd.

After Manila, the Jonas Brothers will head to Indonesia, New Zealand, Australia, around South America and Mexico, then finish their tour around Europe.. ■

## Catriona Gray, Sam Milby still together — Erickson Raymundo



**Celebrity couple Catriona Gray and Sam Milby**

The manager of Miss Universe 2018 Catriona Gray and actor Sam Milby debunked circulating rumors that the celebrity couple is no longer together.

Talent manager Ogie Diaz brought up the issue in a recent video on his Showbiz Update YouTube channel uploaded last February 6.

Ogie noted that numerous individuals noticed that Catriona was not wearing the engagement ring she received from Sam in recent photos.

This worried some fans as fellow celebrity Bea Alonzo similarly did not sport her engagement ring from Dominic Roque in the days building up to their alleged split, which was confirmed by TV host Boy Abunda.

As a result, Ogie reached out to Cornerstone Entertainment president Erickson Raymundo and asked if Catriona and Sam still plan to get married.

Apparently, someone already asked Erickson the same

question so he reiterated he was not aware of an event where Catriona was not wearing her engagement ring.

According to Erickson, he did not ask the couple if things were going well because they had recently gone out with fellow celebrity couple, John Prats and Isabel Oli, and are even planning to go out again.

"Nakakaloka talaga, 'di ba? Bawal bang makalimutan suotin ang engagement ring? Or masyado bang mapanuri at mapag-research ang mga netizens?" Ogie observed. "Hindi totoo na hindi tuloy ang kasal ni Sam and Catriona. Tuloy na tuloy."

It was Ogie who first publicly circulated that Bea and Dominic had split up, which was then confirmed days later by television host Boy Abunda.

Catriona and Sam went public with their relationship in May 2020, becoming engaged three years later with the wedding planned sometime this year. ■



**Showbiz Gossip** *Continued from p.15***Heart Evangelista, Chiz Escudero renew wedding vows****Heart Evangelista and Chiz Escudero**

Fashion icon Heart Evangelista and husband Senyor Chiz Escudero has renewed their wedding vows in a private island resort.

In photos taken by photographer BJ Pascual, Heart wore a beige gown designed by Lebanese fashion designer Elie Saab as she walked down the aisle at the Royal Villa in Balesin Island Club.

"Elie Saab has a special place in my heart—it was actually one of the first shows I ever attended in fashion week. I've always loved their dreamy and romantic creations, and when I saw the custom couture dress, I knew that was it," said Heart

about her dress in an interview with Harper's BAZAAR Singapore.

Heart's second gown for the reception was made by her longtime friend, fashion designer Michael Leyva.

The couple's vow renewal ceremony followed the celebration of Heart's 39th birthday and the pair's 9th wedding anniversary. Notably, the ceremony took place at the exact resort where they celebrated their wedding back in 2015.

Many fellow celebrities and fans have congratulated the fashion icon as well as expressed their admiration for her looks during the ceremony. ■

**Jessy Mendiola, Luis Manzano give peek at Palawan church wedding****Jessy Mendiola and Luis Manzano.**

Jessy Mendiola and Luis Manzano marked their third anniversary as a married couple by sharing moments from their recently held second wedding, a church ceremony, in Coron, Palawan.

The actress looked radiant in a white asymmetrical lace dress while Manzano donned a Barong Tagalog, as seen on Mendiola's Instagram page on Wednesday, Feb. 21.

In the caption, Mendiola admitted that she and the TV host were no longer excited to get married as they already did back in 2021.

"Being together for almost [eight] years and being married for [three] years have taught me so many things. One of them is that

love is not always easy, and that it isn't supposed to be easy all the time," she said. "You have to constantly work hard for it. And that's okay."

"I promise to love our family with all my being. I promise to always choose you over and over again even on our hardest days and I promise to protect our peace and happiness," she vowed to Manzano.

"Happy 3rd anniversary, my love. Thank you for always choosing to love me no matter what. I love you with all my heart," she concluded.

The couple's first wedding, a civil ceremony, was held at a luxury resort in Lipa, Batangas. After over a year, they welcomed Rosie in December 2022. ■

**'Rewind' is now PH's highest grossing film**

It's official: "Rewind" is now the highest grossing Filipino film of all time!

The film, which starred Kapuso Primetime King and Queen Dingdong Dantes and Marian Rivera, has earned a whopping P889 million in worldwide box-office sales as of Friday.

According to Star Cinema, the Metro Manila Film Festival 2023 entry has surpassed Alden Richards and Kathryn Bernardo's 2019 film "Hello, Love, Goodbye,"

which earned P880 million in global gross sales.

Previously, "Rewind" became the highest-grossing Filipino film of all time in domestic sales, a record which was also held by "Hello, Love, Goodbye."

"Rewind" is on its eighth week in theaters, screening across more than 270 cinemas in the Philippines, United Arab Emirates, the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore, Guam, and Saipan. ■



## Kris Aquino makes 'heartbreaking' health update



**Boy Abunda (left) visited his friend, Kris Aquino, in the United States in October 2023**

Kris Aquino has spoken up about her current health condition with talk show host Boy Abunda.

In yesterday's episode of Fast Talk with Boy Abunda, Aquino revealed that her recent complete blood count (CBC) showed an alarming decrease in hemoglobin count.

"I fell to below 9. It is the first time na nag-8.7 ako. In other

words, kung nasa Pilipinas ako, binibigyan na sana ako ng blood transfusion," the 53-year-old Aquino said via Zoom call.

The actress expressed her gratitude to those who had been praying for her recovery.

"Kanina kasi may nag-deliver ng pagkain dito, I was asleep pero may dala sila na mga prayer booklet. Ang laki ng

community dito sa LA, and I barely go out but when my sons go out, they [get recognized]," said Aquino.

"At wala akong na-encounter na hindi nagsabi sa mga anak ko, sa mga kapatid ko, sa mga taong alam na kaibigan ko sila, na pinagdarasal nila [ako] at sabi nila, 'kailangan siyang gumaling kasi meron pa kaming

hinihintay sa kanya. Gusto pa namin siyang mapanood," she said further.

Aquino asserted her desire to continue fighting her battle with her illnesses and promised to do so for those that have supported her long journey.

"Kailangang lumaban, hindi ko ipapahiya ang sarili ko sa inyo dahil binigyan niyo ako ng pinakamagandang regalo. 'Yung pagmamahal niyo at suporta niyo, at 'yung pagdarasal ninyo. Kasi wala naman akong nagawa para sa inyo pero kayo, sobra 'yung binibigay niyo sa akin na lakas 'cause I know na you're praying for me and that's biggest gift anyone can give," the actress said.

Aquino also expressed how much she missed her siblings and how grateful she was for her friends who have supported her, noting that she was visited by singer Dingdong Avanzado last week.

"Malalaman mo kung sino talaga 'yung mga totoo mong kaibigan dahil gagawa at gagawa talaga sila ng paraan," she said ■.

## Jaya, friends figure in car accident en route to Regine Velasquez's concert



**Jaya**

Jaya and two of her friends were hospitalized after their car was rammed from behind by another vehicle while heading to Regine Velasquez's concert at the Graton Resort and Casino in California.

On her Instagram, Jaya shared a video showing a black SUV with its mangled trunk and left fender, while a woman companion was being strapped on a stretcher

by rescuers. The video then transitioned to a hospital scene with the OPM singer on a wheelchair.

"On a ride from Sacramento, California, on the way to Graton Casino to see my friends and watch Regine V's concert when all of a sudden we get into a car collision," she said. "My friend Dr. Josephine Weber was driving and with us was Auntie Merly



Escolta (her cousin) when suddenly we [got] hit from the back."

Jaya then assured her fans that she was safe and her friends were "being checked" in the hospital. She also thanked God for helping them "make it [through] another day."

"Thank you, Lord, for making it another day. I am grateful for your mercy and grace. Praise your Holy name," she said. "I am doing ok but my friends are being checked and they will be alright, by God's grace. Thank you Jesus for

sending us divine protection and covering us with your blood. It could've been super worse. I'm glad Doc and Auntie Merls are ok."

The singer also reminded her followers to "wear seatbelts at all times," even those passengers sitting at the back. "Please wear your seatbelts, at all times when you are in a vehicle, especially if you're a back seat passenger."

Velasquez commented on her post, appearing in shock over what happened. Jaya nonetheless assured her friend that she's safe.



# Israel Hamas war: US vetoes ceasefire resolution, death toll climbs, 'acute malnutrition' warnings

## US vetoes ceasefire resolution at UN

The United States vetoed an Arab-backed UN resolution on Tuesday demanding an immediate humanitarian cease-fire in the Israel-Hamas war in the embattled Gaza Strip.

The vote in the 15-member Security Council was 13-1, with the United Kingdom abstaining.

The result reflects the broad global support for ending the more than four-month war that started with the Hamas massacre in southern Israel that killed about 1,200 people and saw 250 others taken hostage.

It is the third time the US has vetoed a Security Council resolution demanding a ceasefire in Gaza.

The Biden administration had said in advance it would veto the resolution because of concerns it would interfere with efforts to arrange a deal between the warring parties aimed at bringing at least a six-week halt to hostilities and releasing all hostages.

## Gaza's children face acute malnutrition

The nutrition status of pregnant women and children in Gaza is worsening, posing grave threats to

their health, according to a report released by the Global Nutrition Cluster.

More than 80 per cent of households in Gaza have access to less than one litre of safe water per person per day, the report found.

It also said there has been an increase in food insecurity, lack of diet diversity and deteriorating infant feeding practices.

In northern Gaza, one in six children is "acutely malnourished" and about 3 per cent require "immediate treatment," the NGO wrote.

## More than 29,000 Palestinians killed

Gaza's Hamas-run health ministry on Monday said more than 29,000 Palestinians had been killed in the Israeli assault that began after the 7 October massacre.

Despite the mounting casualties and growing international pressure, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has vowed to continue the offensive until "total victory".

There are fears the Palestinian death toll will continue to rise.

Last week Netanyahu announced Israel's military would soon invade the southernmost city of Rafah on the Egyptian border, where over



**Algerian Ambassador to the United Nations Amar Bendjama votes to approve a resolution concerning a ceasefire in Gaza while US Ambassador Linda Thomas-Greenfield looks on. AP Photo**

half of Gaza's 2.3 million people have sought refuge from fighting elsewhere. Around two-thirds of the Palestinian dead are women and children, with more than 69,000 people of the enclave's inhabitants now wounded.

Gaza's hospitals have been overwhelmed and are only partially functioning thanks to a combination of Israeli strikes and supply shortages.

Consequently, her books faced not only removal from the Montreal Jewish Public Library but also bans in southern regions of the United States.

The decision to displace Gravel's books sparked both support and opposition, with protests on both sides of the debate. Those advocating for Gravel emphasized the importance of freedom of expression, citing historical parallels such as book burnings during the Nazi era.

Independent Jewish Voices, one of the protest organizers, underscored their duty as Jews to oppose censorship in any form. Conversely, some, like Councillor Mike Cohen, questioned the accuracy of Gravel's statements and suggested the re-evaluation of her books' accessibility in libraries. The CIJA expressed willingness to engage with Gravel to discuss the implications of her remarks and their potential to fuel anti-Semitism.

Amid the controversy, Gravel announced a hiatus from social media starting February 14th, expressing gratitude for the support received during tumultuous times, "all this solidarity is giving me hope in these dark scary times." The situation underscores the complex interplay between freedom of expression, responsible speech, and the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

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## Pro-Palestinian author's books are displaced from Montreal library shelves

**By Audrey Tougas,  
Local Journalism Initiative**

Children's book author Elise Gravel has recently found herself at the center of a controversy after her books were removed from the public display at Montreal's Jewish Public Library and relocated to a separate index. Patrons now must request access to her works at the front desk.

The decision to displace Gravel's books stemmed from a series of comments she made on social media concerning the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. On platforms like Instagram, Gravel has been vocal in expressing support for the Palestinian cause, often decorated by her signature illustrations. In a post dated February 7th, she affirmed her stance against discrimination and racism, clarifying her criticism of the Israeli government as separate from anti-Semitism, "I stand firmly against any form of discrimination and racism, including anti-Semitism."

One of her controversial statements, "They were banking on our racism against Arabs, Muslims, and brown people" was altered. To avoid misinterpretation, Gravel clarified the "they" as Prime Minister Netanyahu and his allies rather than implying a broader accusation. However, despite these adjustments, organizations such as the Center for Israel and Jewish Affairs (CIJA) accused Gravel of



**Elise Gravel,  
children's book author**

spreading misinformation and anti-Semitic tropes.

Particularly contentious were Gravel's remarks about Israel's alleged practices regarding Palestinians, including claims about Israel being a large "skin bank" harvested from Palestinians. Gravel later admitted the inaccuracies of these statements and pledged to verify her sources more diligently in the future.

Gravel's outspokenness on social media led to a barrage of death threats and insults directed at her, including accusations of her being a pedophile and a terrorist supporter. Parents even claimed to have told their children that Gravel hoped to see Jewish people burned in gas

The war began when Hamas-led militants stormed southern Israel on 7 October, killing some 1,200 people, mostly civilians. They took around 250 men, women and children hostage; many of them are still being held, and their release has been at the centre of stop-start ceasefire negotiations.

Source: By Euronews with AP  
Published on 20/02/2024 - 21:13

## Leylah Fernandez loses Round 2 match in straight sets at Dubai Tennis Championship



**Leylah Fernandez (photo by: Hussein Sayed/Associated Press/File)**

Canada's Leylah Fernandez is out of the Dubai Tennis Championship after losing 6-3, 6-4 to Italy's Jasmine Paolini in the second round Tuesday.

Fernandez, of Laval, Que., won just 53.8 per cent of her first serves and was successful on only three of 11 breakpoint opportunities.

Meanwhile, Paolini converted on five of seven break points.

It was the 26th-ranked Paolini's first win in four meetings against Fernandez, who entered the WTA 1000 tournament with a season-high ranking of 33rd.

Paolini moves on to face No. 8 seed Maria Sakkari of Greece in the round of 16.

The 21-year-old Fernandez fell to 6-4 in singles play this year.

Fernandez, who ranks 18th in doubles, and partner Oksana Kalashnikova of Georgia fell 6-4, 3-6, 11-9 in the first-round doubles play in Dubai to Russia's Mirra Andreeva and Sofia Kenin of the U.S. on Monday.

Source: The Canadian Press Feb 20, 2024



## Israel vows Rafah ground assault by Ramadan if hostages are not freed

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu said his military would "finish the job" in Gaza, saying a hostage release "can be achieved through strong military action and tough negotiations."

targeted an underwater drone used by the Houthis as part of five self-defense strikes yesterday against the Iran-backed militants.

•The International Court of Justice has begun hearings on Israeli



**An image released by the Israeli Army on Saturday shows soldiers during ongoing ground operations at an undisclosed location in Gaza.**

•Israel has threatened to invade Gaza's southernmost city of Rafah by the Muslim holy month of Ramadan, which begins March 10, if the remaining hostages are not released by Hamas. Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu vowed to "finish the job" in Gaza as cease-fire talks stalled, with Netanyahu instead saying a hostage release "can be achieved through strong military action and tough negotiations."

•Yemen's Houthi rebels claim to have shot down a U.S. drone and announced that a cargo ship they targeted in the Red Sea is at risk of sinking this morning. The crew of the Rubymar have abandoned the ship, authorities said. The U.S. military

occupation of lands sought for a Palestinian state in a case that will get to the heart of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. An unprecedented number of countries will participate in the six days of hearings, which come after Israel's government formalized its opposition to the "unilateral recognition" of an independent Palestinian state.

•More than 29,000 people have been killed in Gaza since the war began, according to the Palestinian Health Ministry. More than 69,000 have been injured, and thousands more are missing and presumed dead.

•Israeli military officials said at least 233 soldiers have been killed during the ground invasion of Gaza.

By NBC News: Feb. 19, 2024,

## Top U.N. court begins hearings into Israel's occupation of Palestinian lands



**Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Palestinian Authority Riyad al-Maliki (R) stands with colleagues at the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in The Hague, 19 February 2024 (Robin van Lonkhuijsen/ANP/AFP)**

The Palestinian foreign minister accused Israel of apartheid and urged the court to declare that its occupation is illegal and must end immediately to maintain any hope of a two-state future. Pointing to the suffering of Palestinians in Gaza, Riyad al-Maliki said that "More than 3.5 million Palestinians in the West Bank, including in Jerusalem, are subjected

to colonization of their territory and racist violence that enables it."

Israel is not scheduled to speak during the hearings, but could submit a written statement. In a statement on X this morning, Israel's foreign ministry accused Palestinian leader of using the international legal system as "a political tool to attack Israel" and urged the court to rule that

Palestinians should instead return to direct negotiations over the future of Gaza, the occupied West Bank and annexed east Jerusalem."

The hearings will continue for a week at the International Court of Justice's headquarters in The Hague, the Netherlands, where over 52 states including the U.S. are expected to take part in the oral proceedings.#

## Palestinian doctor flees hospital stormed by IDF only to go back to work in overcrowded Rafah



**Dr. Mohammed Harara, who usually works at the Nasser Hospital in Khan Yunis, in a tent after Israel ordered the hospital's evacuation. NBC News**

Israeli soldiers stormed Nasser Hospital overnight, forcing patients and staff to evacuate the last major functional medical facility in southern Gaza.

Dr. Mohammed Harara, whom

NBC News has been following at Nasser since December, joined an estimated one million displaced Gazans crammed in the southern border town of Rafah. But throughout the violence and upheaval Thursday, he continued to treat the sick and the wounded.

Video shot Thursday shows Harara helping pull a patient in a dark hoodie from a car, holding the young man's head gently but firmly as the crew races him into a noisy and crowded tented field hospital.

"Mohammed, wake up! Wake up!" Harara repeatedly shouts as the young man is rushed into the hospital

amid frantic activity. The doctor calls out for a stethoscope as he pats the chest of the unconscious figure. Eventually the patient groans. (Excerpt from NBC news report by Yasmine Salam, February 15, 2024)



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# FILIPINO STAR

## FEBRUARY 2024 PICTORIAL NEWS



Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny, right, and his wife, Yulia Navalnaya, left, attend an opposition rally outside the Kremlin in Moscow on June 12, 2013. Yulia Navalnaya once avoided the limelight. Now she's Russia's newest opposition leader. But following his death in prison last week, she stepped onto a stage normally reserved for senior politicians in Munich and vowed that Putin and his allies would be brought to justice over his death. Later she solemnly vowed: "I will continue the work of Alexei Navalny." (EMMA BURROWS, Associated Press. Feb 22, 2024)



The Duke of Sussex has a go at sit-skiing during a visit to the Invictus Games event in Canada, February 22, 2024 Daily Mail.



President Joe Biden visits CJ's Cafe in Los Angeles on Feb. 21, 2024. Manuel Balce Ceneta / AP - President Joe Biden announced Wednesday that he's canceling an additional \$1.2 billion in student debt for an estimated 153,000 borrowers, marking the latest in a series of executive actions aimed at tackling a priority for younger voters.



Hamas chief Yahya Sinwar in Gaza City in April 2022. Ali Jadallah / Anadolu Agency via Getty Images file. Israel's military says it is Yahya Sinwar, the Hamas leader who was in charge of the day-to-day governance in Gaza before Oct. 7 and the man they accuse of being the architect of the terrorist attack that day. "The hunt will not stop until we capture him, dead or alive," Rear Adm. Daniel Hagari, an IDF spokesman, said in a televised statement Tuesday.



New York attorney general Letitia James Photograph: Beбето Matthews/AP Letitia James says she will seize Trump's assets if he fails to pay \$355m fraud fine. The New York attorney general says she may seek enforcement mechanisms in court if the ex-president does not have funds to pay the \$355m civil fraud fine stemming from his financial fraud trial, James said to ABC News in an interview on Tuesday evening.



Alberta Forestry and Parks Minister Todd Loewen says it's officially wildfire season in the province — 10 days earlier than usual. THE CANADIAN PRESS/Jeff McIntosh. The Alberta government has declared an early start to the 2024 wildfire season in the face of low snowpacks and forecasts of dry weather to come.