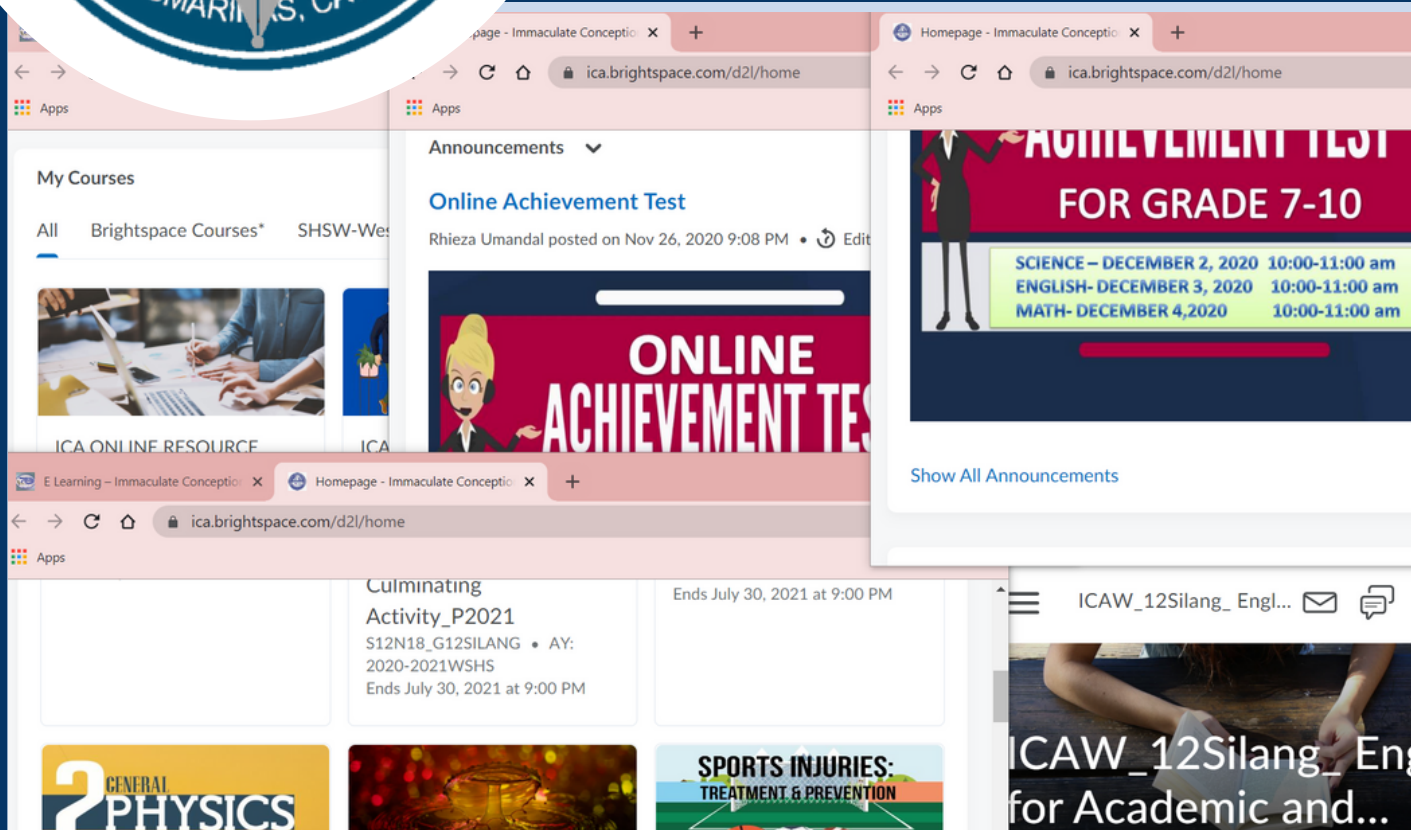




the ICAZETTE

THE OFFICIAL SCHOOL PUBLICATION OF IMMACULATE CONCEPTION ACADEMY

ISSUE 1, VOLUME 9



Nicole K. Maniego

ICANIAN JOURNOS BAG FIRST CHAMPIONSHIP IN NSPC 2020 AMID COVID-19 SCARE

Anchors from ICA Plaza made the school and Region 4A proud after showcasing their journalistic talents during the "Olympics of campus journalism" – held despite the emergence of the coronavirus.

With a theme of "Empowering communities through campus journalism," Grade 6 ICANIAN broadcasters Ma. Althea G. Valdezpinosa and Gabriel Oloan, along with their school paper adviser Mrs. Jamie Lynn Mina, qualified and were given the opportunity to compete in the annual battle of the nation's best journalists National Schools Press Conference 2020 held March 9-13 at Tuguegarao City, Cagayan province and represent not only the honored school and its community, but also the entire region.

Out of almost 5,000 contenders coming from 17 regions in the country, ICA's anchors succeeded in bagging awards from the prestigious competition.

Ma. Althea G. Valdezpinosa won 3rd Best Presenter (Individual), while both Valdezpinosa and Gabriel Oloan attained group awards such as 2nd Best in Script, 1st Best in Technical Application, and 1st Best in Overall Radio Production.

Their wins contributed to the triumph of the entire Region 4A CALABARZON after they made their '#Make8Happen' happen as they win their 8th winning streak during the NSPC 2020.

However, the school's champions weren't able to make the most out of the experience due to strict measures being followed because of the rise of the COVID-19 scare.

Because of the coronavirus, social interactions and promenading were limited, also strictly enforcing COVID-19 task forces within the competition's parameters to ensure the monitoring of the contestants' vitals and activities.

Since this is the largest and most popular gathering of campus journalists, it is clear that the supervisions performed were meticulous, therefore the fun of the competition was not that much enjoyed by the participants.

In order for a journalist to qualify in the most awaited campus journalism clash of talents, individual contenders must place 1st to 3rd in their respective regions, while those in groups shall place first unless the judges would specifically choose them to compete.

ICA's national representatives during the RSPC 2019 held November 11-14 at Antipolo, Rizal are as follows: Ma. Althea G. Valdezpinosa – 3rd Best Anchor, 2nd Best Script, and 2nd Overall Radio Production Elementary-English group; and Gabriel Oloan – 2nd Best Anchor and 2nd Overall Radio Production Elementary-English group.

Although not being able to win in the competition, it is still a remarkable contribution to the division for having 9 qualifiers from Immaculate Conception Academy, with one of them ranking in the RSPC – Nicole K. Maniego – 1st Best News Page and 4th Overall Best Collaborative and Desktop Publishing Secondary-English (Group) – after winning in the Division Schools Press Conference last September.



Photo taken from: Ms. Jamie Lynn Mina, ICA Plaza School Paper Adviser during their National Schools Press Conference held last March 9-13, 2020 at Tuguegarao City. Left: Althea Valdezpinosa, Middle: Ms. Jamie Lynn Mina, Right: Gabriel Oloan.

"ICA Goes Fully Digital" Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, ICA opens A.Y. 2020-2021

Nicole K. Maniego

Despite calls for "academic freeze" during the COVID-19 pandemic, ICA welcomed school year 2020 with a tagline of "ICA goes Fully Digital".

Pursuant to the DepEd resolution that allows school year 2020 to push through as long as schools follow the "Learning Continuity Plan for Basic Education in Time of COVID-19", online classes in ICA were opened in July 20 via e-applications that ICANIANS will use to access their learning materials year-wide.

Along with the opening of classes, ICA also introduced their students to D2L Brightspace, Google Meet (for video-conferencing), and Google Mail, along with all the other e-applications to be used for school year 2020 to 2021.

D2L Brightspace is a cloud-based learning management system (LMS) that helps K-12 institutes, higher educations and corporate organizations run both blended and fully online courses and allows teachers and instructors to design interactive training courses and evaluate assignments.

Brightspace – which serves as the main interactive e-application for the continuous conduct of academic year 2020 to 2021 – is not totally new to ICANIANS as it is was used by students from ICA Science High School years even before the pandemic started.

Along with the alteration of learning modality in ICA – from physical to online, the management also applied changes within the school's grading system.

Since face-to-face interactions are not allowed in schools as long as quarantine is still ongoing, quarterly examinations have been cancelled, which once covered up 30% of students' grades – 20% for periodic tests and 10% for long tests.

To compensate for the cancellation of examinations, ICA established a week-long Performance Assessment Week, which is allotted for the making and submission of performance tasks – takes up majority of a student's subject grade.

Subsequent to the Performance Assessment Week, a completion week is given to those who wish to comply missed requirements, activities, and quizzes. As for those with complete records, this then serves as their rest week.

To help lighten the burden of parents and guardians in paying for ICANIANS' tuition and miscellaneous fees, ICA continued to offer discounts and scholarships for school year 2020 to 2021.

As per the management's infographics, "ICA will continue to offer academic, DR. PCC (Dr. Paulo C. Campos Memorial Scholarship), and varsity scholarships in addition to sibling, alumni, and cash discounts."

On the other hand, due to the rising number of COVID-19 cases in the Philippines, the Department of Education decided to postpone the opening of classes among public schools, from the supposed August 24 to October 5.

In spite of this postponement, ICA, who started their classes way ahead of August 24, chose to continue conducting their online courses.

"The school will continue to utilize this method of learning until the ICA management, guided by IATF recommendation, is fully convinced of the safety of reverting to physical classes among the students, employees, and all stakeholders," ICA management stated.



AFRICAN SWINE FEVER OUTBREAK REACHES CAVITE

Nerson B. Rodriguez

Due to the resurfacing of the African Swine Fever (ASF) in the country, the Department of Agriculture raised nationwide concern regarding in the health of those who might be affected by the fever.

As per Agriculture Secretary William Dar, the case of African swine fever (ASF) disease in the Philippines has worsened as new outbreaks were recorded in six provinces in Luzon including Cavite.

African Swine Fever (ASF) disease have been monitored in the 6 provinces in Luzon this September 24, 2020. According to Agriculture Secretary William Dar “The new incident of ASF outbreaks brings the total regions affected to nine”. Carmona, Cavite is said to be the one of these provinces in whom were reported by their Municipal Government on September 24, 2020 in Barangay Lantic.

The chief of agriculture said that the total of 300,000 pig have so far been culled as part of depopulation operations against ASF, the government is giving a hog raiser P5,000 as indenification per pig surrendered for culling. This virus is not that harmful to humans but it can easily be transmitted because it can stay active for days when carried by food parasites such as ticks that can be found in the multiple areas of your home.

Secretary Dar started “Ang mga kawani ng kagawaran ng pagsasaka ay nandiyan in partnership with the local government units na nag-iimpliment ng elevated quarantine measures”. By the month of March, the number of culled pigs rapidly exceeded 250,000 this month as Philippine authorities confirm they have not yet contained the disease.

The pig farmers are immediately worried because their pigs may gradually become infected and when this happens, they may go bankrupt and lose their income which will cause them to starve again. It is not only the pig farmers are immediately worried about ASF but also the buyers, because there is no guarantee if the raw pork that they bought is still safe to consume.

According to the latest report from media agency, Philstar global, Philippine authorities confirmed 69 outbreaks of ASF to the world Health Organization (WHO), which have been recorded and a total of 251, 450 pigs were killed since the outbreak in August 2019. Local authorities have been applied measures to control the disease including restricted movement inside the country.

Philippines notified the first occurrence of the disease on September of 2019. In total 359 outbreaks are ongoing in 27 administrative division. The said disease started on July 25, 2019 but was only confirmed on August 30. This update covers the period from September 04 to September 17, 2020. However, the Bureau of Animal Industry assured consumers that the ASF will not pose any health risk to people, so for now consumers have nothing to worry about.



Cavite tests positive for African Swine Fever

Marius Vhaugn Jheol Baguio

THAI RATH HAILS PH “LAND OF COVID 19”; PH, DISAPPOINTED

Philippine Embassy displayed their disappointment towards Thailand’s national broadsheet “Thai Rath” branding PH as “Land of COVID 19” last August 9, Wednesday.

The newspaper was dated for its publication on August 7, Monday of the said week and had been constantly stacking up rumors from time to time. It was about the arrival of 165 Filipino teachers in Suvarnabhumi Airport on August 8 which had caused some Thai to be alert for the possible cases the newcomers might bring. The awareness of Thailand’s medias and districts was due to the report Philippine topping the South East Asian Region in terms of the total COVID-19 caseload – 139, 538.

“The characterization is inappropriate, insensitive and unhelpful at a time when all of us, brothers and sisters in the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), are closely cooperating to deal with the new and unforeseen challenges brought about by the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic,” said General Val Simon Roque of the Philippines.

In addition to Vietnam, Thailand was known to be one of those countries which had lessen the COVID cases within their locality significantly. The said issue had ceased as the Palace let it slide because of the cultural differences as well as the freedom of speech from both sides. Philippines and Thailand have been in good terms with each other especially during this pandemic period wherein Thailand introduced its cluster of movies and series to some Filipinos.



Official newspaper from Thailand covering Philippines as Land of Covid-19

What will be Left?

Nicole K. Maniego

It is unfortunate how it took Filipinos a pandemic to finally see the injustices and inhumanity present in our reality. Yet despite the fact that we are all facing a horrendous and difficult situation, what we get is the opposite of what we need — compassion. With all the injustices the country is facing, its awake citizens are intrigued to know: Did the COVID-19 outbreak take that much of a toll on every Filipino that we ended up having bigger problems than the pandemic alone? And is there a chance that compassion and humanity will prevail once we have surpassed this despicable trial of our lives?

Ever since the day COVID-19 struck the Philippines, a lot of controversial mishaps are met by both the country and the Filipinos — some of it not even related to the pandemic. Amidst the pandemic, several issues — ABS-CBN shutdown, worsened “war on drugs”, red-tagging, Philhealth graft and corruption, Dolomite sanding of Manila Bay, and the surpassing of 300K COVID cases — shook and frightened the core of the entire nation. What’s worse is that as time passes by, and while COVID cases in other countries are starting to deflate, the risk of transmissions among Filipinos are still high due to their negligence of the precautionary measures created to help stop the spread of the virus. It’s clearly the time to wake up and stop becoming selfish for a while, just until the country has finally proven that it is the “Land of COVID-19” no more.

As if the damage caused by the pandemic wasn’t enough, incidences of domestic and sexual violence in the country shot up since the lockdown started.

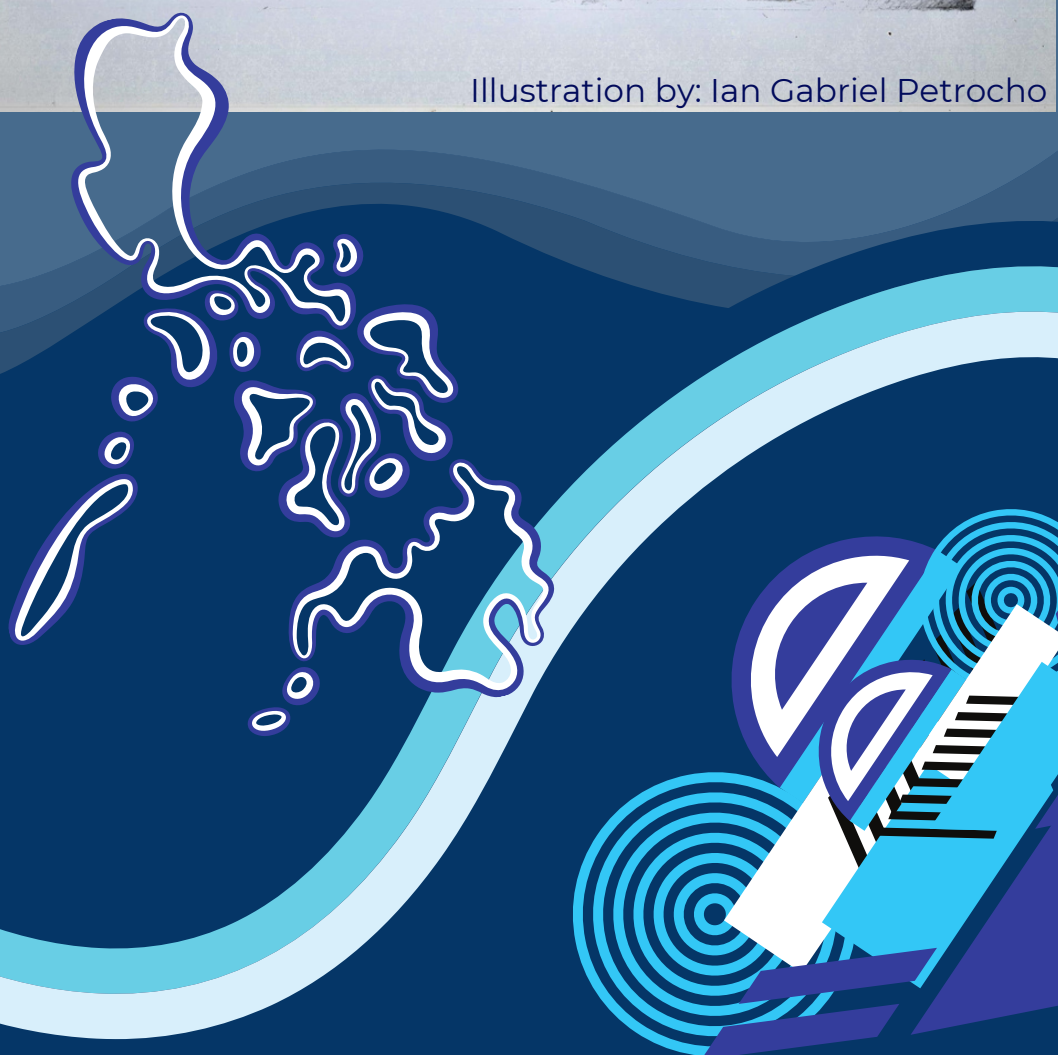
In a UP Population Institute study commissioned by the UNFPA, 144,000 women aged 15 to 49 are experiencing sexual or physical violence by their husbands or partners during quarantine. On the other hand, government statistics also showed reports that the administration’s bloody “war on drugs” deteriorated amidst the lockdown, resulting to 50 percent more people were killed between April to July 2020 as compared to the previous four-month period. And instead of working together to stop the spread of the virus, the population was divided into groups, which then started feuds in social media that are still present up to this day.

It seems as if hope and recovery is still far from reach, because despite the need for every Filipino to work hand-in-hand in order for us to rise from these ashes, us, citizens, still choose to fuel up the feuds and disputes that are, definitely, of no help in resolving the crisis present in each and everyone’s reality. It’s disappointing how it is us, the citizens, who are blocking the road to recovery. It is the citizen’s inhumane actions and irresponsible decisions that fuel up the fire that we all want to extinguish. It’s sad to think that the virus is not our only enemy, but the people who we should be working with in the first place.

Still, there will always be a tomorrow. There is still time to make things right. The government could still make good and appropriate measures to resolve the pandemic, and we, the citizens, could still have the wisdom and discipline to follow what is right. We WILL survive this trial; humanity and compassion WILL prevail; and we WILL unite, hoping and praying that the day will come when everything would go back to normal.



Illustration by: Ian Gabriel Petrocho



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Manila Bye Sands

Jairus Gwen P. Visitacion

Last September 19, a portion of Manila Bay was opened to the public after successfully dumping the "fake sand" made up of crushed dolomite rocks mined from Alcoy, Cebu that initially cost 28 million pesos. Several citizens came to catch sight of the "White Sand Beach" which is an ongoing rehabilitation project supervised by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). However, days after the temporary opening of Manila Bay, sandbags were placed along the shores to halt the sands from being washed away since many of it had already been sunken under the ocean.

On the partial progress of Manila Bay, evident it is that it looked much better compared to its previous state. The trash and debris present in the area was also cleaned up. In line with this, the intention of DENR for doing this is it prevents soil erosion and helps with flood control. Their main goal is to also turn the garbage-strewn and murky waters type of Manila Bay that we know to something similar to the famous Boracay in Aklan.

However, although the intention of the project was great, the timing is quite off given the current situation the Philippines is facing. The 389-M could have been used to aid thousands of hungry and poor families amidst the pandemic. Likewise, the budget could have been used for mass testing, aid to the hospitals, increase of front liners' salaries, or was at least used to fund the distance learning of students in the country.

Although visually pleasing, many health experts are worried as the dolomite that has been dumped to cover the grey sands of Manila Bay might pose an adverse effect and result in respiratory illnesses. To add off, Under Secretary Maria Vergeire said that the tiny particles of the dolomite might irritate one's eyes and may result in respiratory issues when inhaled.

The dolomite used as "fake sand" might not only be a threat to health but it has a negative impact on the environment. First, a mountain in Cebu was mined to harvest dolomite for the sake of this project. Subsequently, Cebu's Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) conducted a study and they were able to conclude that coral reefs were damaged due to the heavy siltation caused by the mining of dolomite used for the Manila Bay project.

Meanwhile, regarding the dead fishes that emerged in Manila Bay on the last 17th of September, the DENR found out that it is not because of the dolomite sunken in the ocean but because the southwest monsoon (habagat) is prevailing at that time and there's a presence of a breakwater between the site and adjacent waters of the beach. Therefore, the dolomite in the Manila Bay is not related to the fish kill incident as per DENR's statement.

On a different note, according to Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque throughout a virtual briefing, the 389-million budget for the enhancement of Manila Bay was part of the 2020 budget as it has been approved last 2019. Be that as it may, Vice President Leni Robredo counterattacked Roque because the budget could be reallocated following the "Bayanihan To Heal As One Act" which gives the executive branch powers to reallocate funds to address and as a response to the COVID crisis.

It's not that I am against the beautification or enhancement of Manila Bay. My take on this issue is that the government should have focused more on resolving the current situation we are in. Also, they could have chosen another project to enhance Manila Bay. Instead of mining dolomites and dumping it on the grey sands of Manila Bay which will eventually be washed away when cyclones hit Manila as what most environmentalists conclude, they must have planted mangroves which are considerably helpful as it serves as a protective buffer against cyclones and storms. Not only it is eco-friendly but the cost could have been reduced and the remaining budget could have been used as an aid to families struggling financially because of the pandemic.

As a citizen of this country, I hope nothing but the best for the nation. May this project be a blessing in disguise and contribute someday to our tourism. But above all, I hope we get through this pandemic as soon as possible so that our tourism and everything goes back to normal.

Get Hooked; SocMed in Tumult!

Marius Vhaugn Jheol Baguio

Usage of Social Media platforms have been part of each and every one's oxygen supply during these trying periods — unforeseen pandemic, COVID-19 survival, financial chase and such.

The utilization of these pedestals of technology have increased massively as the demand of the public elevated on height. Moreover, the trend of the actual number of users not just here in the Philippines but also across the world drifted sky-high.

Facebook for news and entertainment, Twitter for current issues, and Instagram for personal stuffs are just some points of our talk. If an individual could see the beneficial roles of these applications during this quarantine stretch, he can engage oneself to positivity and optimism.

Political Cries: Red vs. Yellow, Facebook on Rampage

Loads of controversies especially politics-related ones have been constantly summing up the trending issues here in our country for the past quarantined months. As the digital world trails its way on the limelight, rallies among radical parties had significantly reduced in number due to the exclusion of face-to-face interactions. But some of them had found their way to express their stance by assuring the social distancing protocol, maintaining meters gap from each other and raising those banners with conviction and yells. Most of them, occupied the cybernetic world.

Countless are on the side of analytic criticisms as the local government commits itself exclusively on such things. These people are on a rampage because instead of focusing more with the Corona Virus outbreak termination, they had invested currencies and time on rehabilitations, restorations and other not so-so important agendas.

Philippines topping the chart and entering the podium with the most active COVID-19 cases in the Southeast Asian Region and had entered the Top 20 on the world diagram. With these being said, another set of fuels has been added to the flames of anger the public are currently facing.

With fair partiality, those so-called pro supporters of the current administration are defending their beliefs and empowering one another for the nation's dignity. They stand firm and tall with their point of view against those who are opposing their principles.

Logical reasons and receipts are being spread online on a daily basis especially on Facebook, which I think are all valid and acceptable because we should all take part for the betterment of the Philippines.

Personally, I am not for being biased and a mask of a certain party list but for the furtherance of the country. With this COVID-19 pandemic still on hand, we should all take focus to what really matters, and those are prevention and medical supports to the extent of our capabilities.

If education would be put on top priority next to the utmost health-related provisions, far from being blinded with not so necessary schemas, in my opinion, is much better because it could place us on a definite escape from this hell of a virus.

Neither red nor yellow, discrete colors of bias, unity as the greatest urgency is the topmost significance of the Philippines in today's times. Clashing of viewpoints and the pursuit for superiority are the building blocks of Facebook application nowadays.

Are you one of them? You are valid and accepted, but distinct from others, start setting your priorities right and well.

Facebook-PH Deletion at Threat

With the continuous outbursts of individual assertive opinions, Rodrigo Duterte, 16th President of the Republic of the Philippines, stated his disappointment towards the Facebook staffs, and as well as to the corporation's whole team. This occurrence was due to the deletion of some legitimate government-bounded pages that tackles about awareness of possible local terrorism and communism in the country.

Facebook has been one of the leading social media platforms for Filipinos, aside from the fact that Philippines was tagged as the social media capital of the world. No one could deny the truth that the advancement of technology and usage of these devices had a great impact to all of the citizens in our country.

It could possibly come in any form — entertainment, news, personal stuffs, informative, marketing and such.

The removal of this application will result to a prodigious turning point not just for the economical status of the Philippines but for the country as a whole.

Foremost claim is that Facebook could reach a lot of our friends with just a single snap. This is one of the platforms which is likely to be subjected as a connection in marketing stuffs. Particularly this pandemic period, many Filipinos have lost their jobs and therefore invested with the online selling system. They are indeed resilient that in spite of this lockdown scenario, they found a way to chase their financial needs.

Education is one of the primary reasons why FB should stay. Both online and modular classes require the access to certain applications, links and operational sites. In comparison with Twitter and Instagram, Facebook users are indeed a larger set of consumers in the Philippines. Some Filipinos are not that much accounted with their respective household expenses thus loading one's mobile phone is a difficult task. With the help of FB's Free Data Mode and as well as the free admittance to its online messenger, Pinoy's are way much pleased and were put at ease.

Mental Health is a big talk of the nation. The occurrence of the COVID-19 outbreak caused a lot of stress, depression and anxieties to some of our co-Filos. Facebook Application was prospective to be their resort to comfort their strains and as well as save their minds. Just by logging in with their accounts, scrolling for something fun and happens to give them enough emotional upkeep, Facebook is undeniably a savior.

Toxicity is an option. It is up to the users how they would utilize these technologically advanced tools and applications.

In my personal opinion, as a handler who uses Facebook, I have seen the decent points of engaging with this application and its aims to connect each and everyone. Misusage of this is something that concerns the accountability of the users and not the community nor the company involve with this.

In today's times, we should all become a unified nation with no reservations. If by means of Facebook we can get in touch with our families, friends and teachers, so be it. I'll stand firm in front of my words and FB should not be removed as it helps us in becoming a figure of optimism, strength and resiliency. As soon as this pandemic end, Filipinos morale will stay strong and high because of this connective application.

Tell your quarantine story and log in with your pandemic account.

Get hooked with Facebook...



OVERCOMING EDUCATIONAL DIFFICULTIES AMID COVID-19

Andrea San Diego

Nowadays, the internet is already considered as an integral element of education. It is proven to have a conspicuous impact in our daily lives. However, the sudden transition to online learning have generated a new environment for the students. Majority of them are having troubles coping with the "new normal" learning system.

It is quite difficult to maintain enthusiasm for learning with a computer. Most of us are also overwhelmed by the responsibility that we will be figuring out how to navigate an online course all by ourselves. Our concerns about the sudden change to online learning are certainly valid. An etiquette guide will surely help the students apprehend how to conduct themselves properly in an online meeting.

Be on time

Punctuality is particularly significant in online meetings, since we are working without typical checks to guarantee that everybody is gathered to begin classes on time. At the point when the teachers and students are in the same room together, it is a lot simpler to call everyone's attention. In any case, that isn't the situation in online meetings. The students should be extra responsible to plan their schedules viably.

Wear appropriate clothing

Learning in the solace of your own home can cause it to feel alluring to dress down. However, we need to ensure we look presentable and professional for each other, much as the same we do at school. It is better that the students dress in a manner that is unobtrusive and clean to avoid unnecessary distractions.

Maintain a good working place

It is important to find an ideal location to study. It is necessary to have a clean and non-distracting background. If you are to work in your bedroom make sure that your bed or decorations are not prominent in the background in order to avoid distracting your fellow classmates and your teacher.

Maintain a good working place

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Background Noise

Another factor is the chance of background clamor. If you have siblings or family members that are all prone to be uproarious, attempt to isolate yourself. It also ideal to mute your audio if there are unavoidable noise in the background. You should try asking your family members to quiet down or you can just move into a quiet place.

Time Management and Procrastination.

Making a daily agenda may not appear to be a pivotal method. However, it is successful in dealing with your time. You should try figuring out when to do what you need to do. This can help you avoid procrastination. Procrastination is more than just a bad habit. It can seriously damage your mental health. Students who procrastinate tends to experience higher levels of frustrations, stress and anxiety.

Make time for yourself

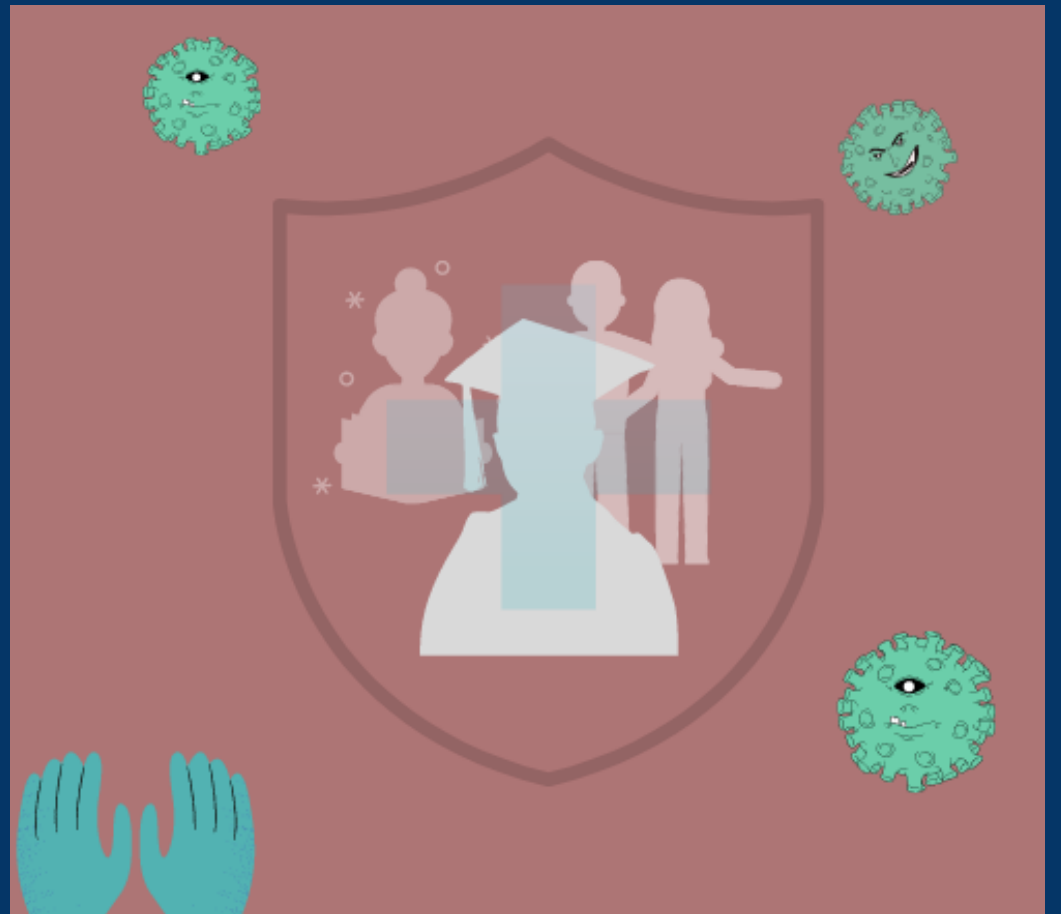
Setting aside a little effort for yourself invigorates and re-stimulates you. It allows you to think more clearly and settle on better choices. It can also help you build your confidence after some time as you come to understand that you're also important. It is important to prioritize your physical and mental health over anything else.

We are living in the midst of what is potentially one of the greatest dangers in the lifetime of our worldwide education, a colossal educational crisis. However, it has been made clear during this pandemic the importance of disseminating knowledge across fringes, organizations, and all pieces of society. In the event that online learning innovation can assume a part here, it is incumbent upon all of us to explore its maximum capacity.



ACADEMICS AMIDST PANDEMIC: ONLINE LEARNING

Christa Judiel Amor



Through the gates of the campus on a Monday morning, one could hear the pattering of the student's footsteps as they frantically walk towards the stairs in time for the flag ceremony.

With a difference of 301,256 lives, what it has become what was. On a Monday morning, one could hear the pattering of a mother's footsteps as she walks towards the room in time to wake her children up.

While cameras are on and cursors on standby, students hear "Please unmute your mics and say 'present' as I call your name".

The pandemic has offered a set of challenges that the world has to overcome. With education on the table and knowledge on the line, some countries such as the United States and Spain managed to accommodate face-to-face learning. The Philippines on the other hand has opted for alternative learnings such as modular and online modalities or a mixture of both - blended learning.

The Students

The first advantage from the viewpoint of some students is that the online class system has opened up an opportunity for autonomous learning. This means that students now have the chance to study the given topics according to the rate at which they understand them. Additionally, students may adhere to their own schedule when accomplishing tasks, whether for academics or personal errands.

Secondly, online learners have the benefit of accessing multiple bases. Upon gaining information from sources other than textbooks, students may provide additional insights on the lesson being discussed in their synchronous sessions. This also encourages the development of critical reading skills since student can assess the credibility of their data source.

Lastly, the implementation of virtual learning is a facet for self-reliance which stimulates academic individuality. Students are more likely to develop their own ideas rather than being spoon-fed.

Innately, virtual learning also presents its disadvantages. One of which is the time constraints of synchronous sessions. Due to this, lessons do not get to be fully elaborated and students have less time to voice-out their inquiries. As mentioned in the Manila Bulletin, some students used Twitter to raise their concerns as to whether the online class system is becoming more about passing the requirements rather than learning.

Following this is the limitations of accessible devices and internet speed as well. Students that experience weak and intermittent connection may have a hard time submitting and accomplishing requirements. Not to mention their participation in synchronous activities might be affected as well.

Moreover, health implications can be taken into account. Eye strain may be experienced from hours of staring into an electronic device. Also, due to the workload, online classes tend to be mentally draining and emotionally destructive.

Finally, the lack of face-to-face interaction may be challenging for those who are keen on collaboration. For some, communication with peers makes the intensive workload seem less tedious

The Teachers

Educators, instructors, facilitators, whatever label they may have, teachers are also among those who are required to adapt to the 'New Normal' form of education. They have to come up with new ways of keeping their students engaged, as well as motivated.

In the perspective of Ms. Shaira David, one of the school's Grade-12 advisers and respected Chemistry teacher, the biggest advantage of online learning as a teacher is "more family time". On the other hand, the biggest disadvantage for her is "can't distinguish working and personal hours anymore". Furthermore, the teachers themselves come across cyberspace instabilities. In such times, synchronal meetings may be canceled and makeup classes are scheduled. This may disrupt their lesson plans.

The Parents

Aside from students and teachers, the parents are also involved and affected by the online learning system. In comparison with students are higher levels, kinder and elementary students need supervision and guidance. Hence, parents who have someone in their household that can provide supervision on their children may easily adjust to virtual learning.

However, parents who have to work several hours a week away from home might be at the disadvantage section. Considering their exhaustion due to their jobs, they also have the obligation to make sure that their children have understood their lessons and are coping up with this scheme. In addition, guardians or parents may be pressured in upgrading their subscription to their respective internet plans which are costly.

Online or virtual learning has its impacts on different individuals. This setting may have its strengths, but it also has its fair share of weaknesses. Nevertheless, due to the unforeseeable future of our situation, it should be acknowledged that the students, teachers, and parents are giving their best efforts in seeing through the academic year despite the system's obstacles.

TITLE DEFENSE 101: ONLINE EDITION HOW TO BRING YOUR A-GAME TO THE E-TABLE

Christa Judiel Amor

From September 1 to September 11, 2020, Grade-9 and Grade-12 researchers sat in front of their laptops, situated on the quiet nooks of their houses as they anxiously wait for the opportunity to present their best ideas.

Notes on the side and heartbeats going faster, ICAnians exchange their final thoughts. "Uy paano ba ulit hint sa pagsagot?" they said. There are only three minutes left.

The last sixty seconds have come and the meeting links have been copy-pasted. Three dots appear on the screen and a message emerges: "You may now join."

Scan for Errors

It's no secret that the pandemic has hindered and put a pause on many of our plans. As a result, experimental studies have been prohibited as it calls for field or laboratory work. With the exclusion of topics that involve investigational methodologies, it can be said that a fraction of possible titles has been diminished as well. Nevertheless, there is still a multitude of titles that researchers may come up with.

The defense calls for the best three titles of each group. Before presenting, the researchers should be confident that all three titles are timely, significant, and relevant. Most importantly, the titles should be of the students' highest interest. The one that can be described as having urgency, significance, and relevance would most likely be chosen by the panel. To put it simply, students should re-evaluate their titles and assess the corresponding statements of the problem in preparation for the upcoming defense.

Ctrl + S

Just as how files are saved in the Documents folder, the contents and properties of each title should be embedded in the minds of the students. They should know the independent and dependent variables, motivation and objectives, and background information like the back of their hands. These components are exactly what the PowerPoint would contain. Hence, the panelists are inclined to test the researchers' knowledge on their topic.

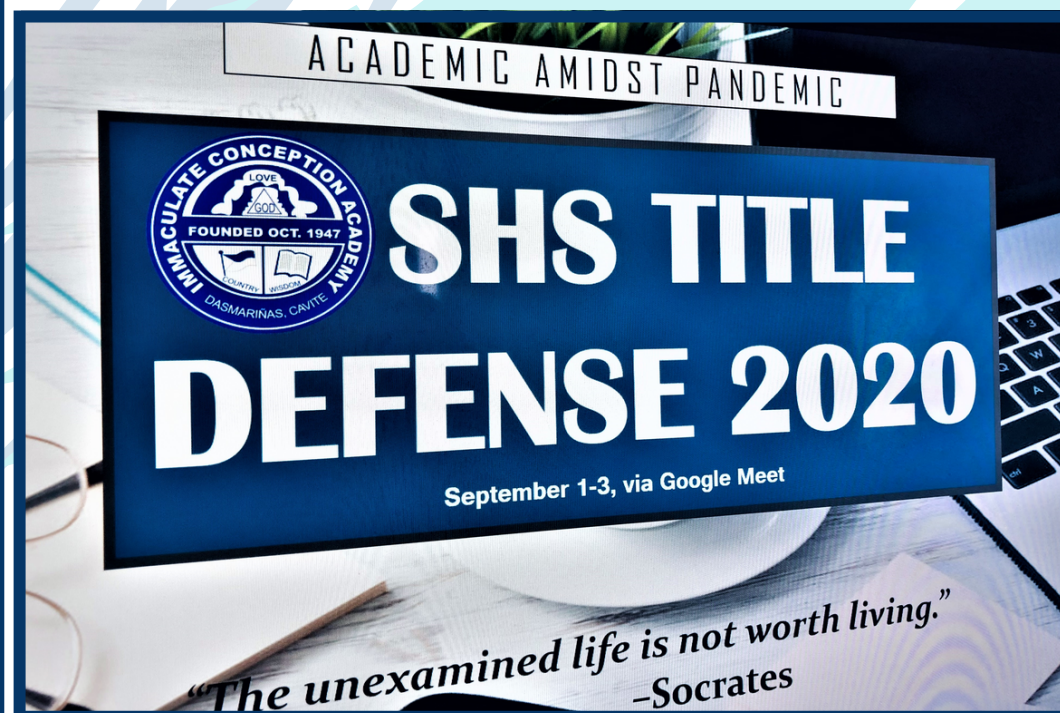
Moreover, knowing the aforementioned contents would lessen the use of fillers such as "ahh, uhmm, and hmm" since the students understand precisely what they are talking about.

When the panelists make you agree with their statements you should not agree immediately. Also, when the panelists ask questions repeatedly but same thoughts you should just repeat your answers as well because they just make sure that you really understood your research" said Mr. Michael Alba, the English for Academic and Professional Purposes teacher of Grade-12 students. As per Ms. Jalliah Baniaga, one of the school's research advisers, "In research, the greatest way to own a favorable outcome is to recognize its full foci".

Collaboration and Practice Group researches are inherently collaborative. Thus, every member should be involved in every part of the research even in minute details. Upon correspondence with group leaders and members, it has been evident that virtual pre-defense meetings and run-throughs are substantial steps in preparing for the big presentation.

As Sharla Lim, a Grade-12 research group leader said, "Prepare all possible answers to any possible questions. Try to do a mock-defense with your groupmates, it will not only be fun but also maximize your confidence in speaking".

One of the common routines for researchers is anticipating what part of their study would likely be inquired upon by the panelists. "Para sa preparations after namin maghati kung sino yung mag pe-present at sasalo ng mga tanong, gumawa kami ng list ng possible questions along sa mga pwedeng isagot sa kanila para sa lahat ng title at SOP", said Trixia Enolva, one of the Grade-12 research group leaders.



LEARN WITH LYQA: EDUCATION AS THE NEW TIKTOK TREND

Don Miguel Carreon

In the midst of a deadly pandemic everyone is currently facing, uttermost boredom, being stuck in our homes and waiting for time to pass by with no apparent reason, plans, or anything to look up to, unfortunately appear to be the new normal. But as modern problems require modern solutions, people around the world found solace and entertainment that will ease their boredom through the aid of a famous application called "Tiktok".

A vast number of people became obsessed with Tiktok, dominating the world by storm as it evolved into one of the most in-demand apps in stores today.

"In this world, there are takers and makers. What Are you?" Lyqa Maravilla said.

The video creating and streaming app ranges from dancing videos, acting POVs (Point of View), singing duets, short vlogs, art exhibits, and people who simply just want to have fun. The flexibility of this application is what made it eye candy. Major factors that make it favorable to a myriad of people of all ages are fun facts and challenges made by content creators, keeping the app interesting and viral from time to time, making it hard for people to click uninstall as they continue to use this every day.

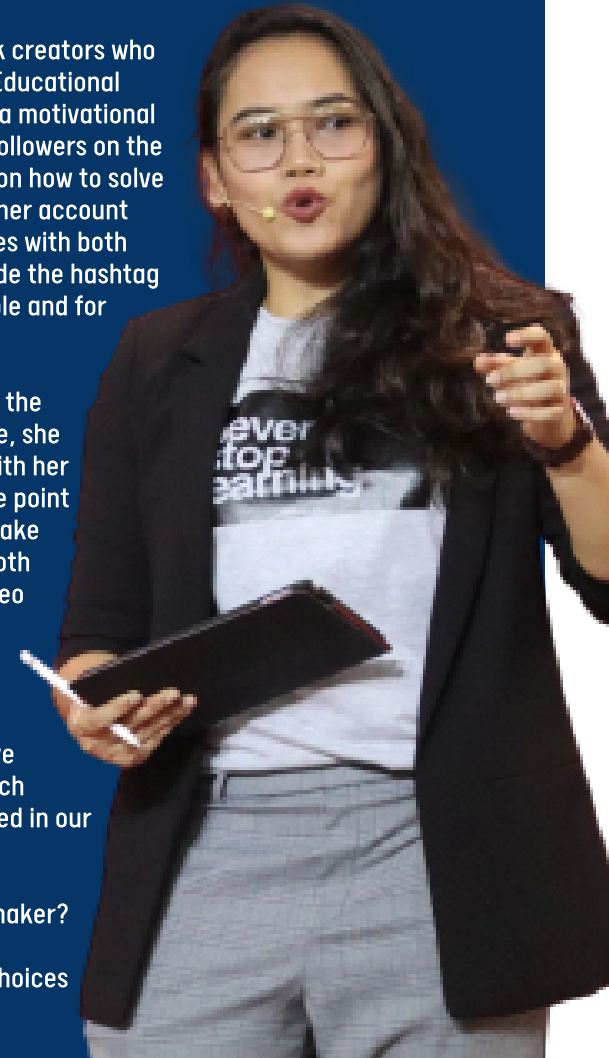
#Edutok and #Learnontiktok are viral ongoing hashtags for multiple TikTok users to find your educational TikToks with ease. The videos with the hashtag consist of multiple learning materials and life hacks helping both students and adults through every day struggles. Whether it's about school, home remedies, budgeting, cooking, business, and many more, mostly everything you need help with, you'll find it by just typing the hashtag on your Tiktok search bar. The aforementioned hashtags currently add to 156 billion views with hundreds of sectors categorizing which topic you want to learn about and as Lyqa Maravilla once said, "Don't just say "I don't know", follow it up with "But I can find out".

Lyqa Maravilla is one of the most trending TikTok creators who use the hashtags on her videos, she's a Filipina Educational content creator, a registered psychometrician, a motivational speaker, and currently has more than 1 million followers on the app. Her account @teamyqa consists of videos on how to solve multiple Math and English problems while her other account @lyqamaravilla focuses on motivational speeches with both accounts helping you through your day. She made the hashtag #AskLyqa to help other TikTok creators be visible and for them to catch her attention easily.

Everyone can be motivational, all people need is the courage to take on a platform and in Lyqa's case, she used social media to reach out to people, and with her skills and her wit to engage, she succeeded. The point of #Edutok and #LearnOnTiktok is not just to make people famous by showing off their expertise, both trends were made to help just by watching a video that's exactly or less than a minute long and of course in the comfort of our homes while going outside does not seem to be a smart idea considering the risks were all facing and the advantage of Tiktok is that users would still have access after the Corona Virus outbreak with much ease yet with a satisfactory knowledge to be used in our daily lives, up to the near future.

So, what are you? Are you a taker or are you a maker?

Only you can decide which one among the two choices you'll pick and have the courage to be.



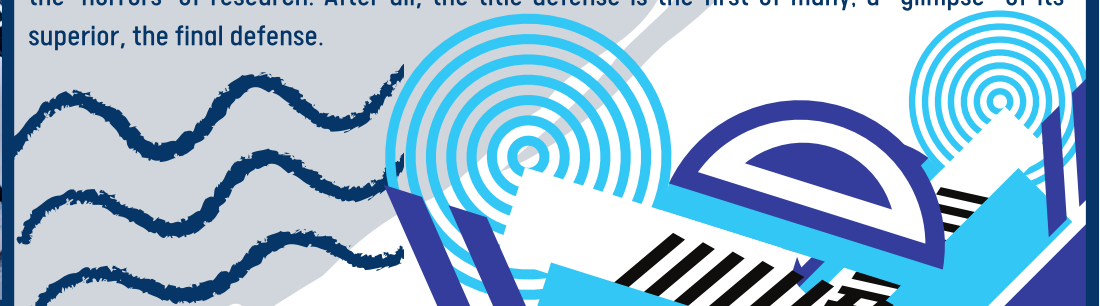
Podium to Webcam

Upon seeing the names of the panelists and their accolades, it's easy to get intimidated and overwhelmed especially for first-timers. They may not be required to stand behind a podium, but they will be facing a webcam. This doesn't change the fact that the defense is still a high-stakes situation.

According to a Grade-9 student from the Science campus, "So our first title defense was very different from the usual one. We experience it through google meet only. Though we were gonna present virtually, the tense was still there".

It is worth noting that in any type of speaking engagement, confidence is key. As stated earlier, this can be achieved by knowing the material on hand. This is vital for students for them to "create speaking points", a tip provided by Ix Chean Lee, a Grade-12 student who has once received the Best Research Award.

Overall, the familiarization of the key points will be of great help in minimizing the researchers' hesitation to speak when questioned by a panelist. This would be a good start in overcoming the 'horrors' of research. After all, the title defense is the first of many; a "glimpse" of its superior, the final defense.



BRIGHTSPACE APPLICATION: ICA'S NEW NORMAL

Marius Vhaugn Jheol Baguio

Technology is a silent revolution. Along with these Neolithic ages, its advancement has been kept constant as scientists, experts, and researchers are doing their absolute best to pursue fine inventions. Every high-tech step from the digital field creates a big gap between the past and the present that could either support or destruct the land we're living on. "High risk, high reward", a logical motto which had set the standards big and the stakes in height.

Amidst the Corona Virus Disease Outbreak, many had suffered and faced poverty because of the sudden issue that brought shock to each and everyone's households. Technology has been a great helping hand for reconstructing broken links between families and relatives who are calling for each other's help. In terms of facilities and vaccine updates, the Philippines coped up with the situation and retaliated with the construction of innovative laboratories as well as the enhancement of the existing ones. Even with these factual details we have seen in the current status of our country, there is something that is missing - what about the system of education?

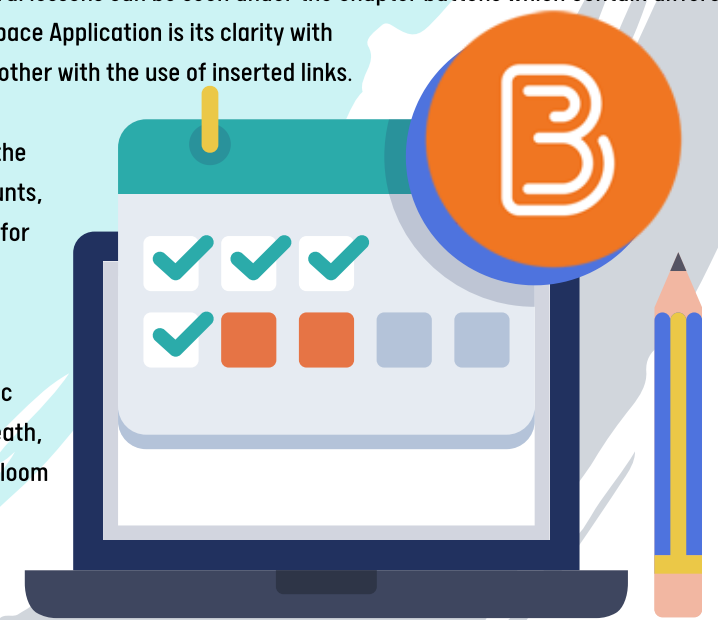
Department of Education (DepEd) and Commission on Higher Education (CHED) managed to handle the situation by implementing two possible ways of undergoing a virtual setup during this trying period - one is by means of online encounters with the usage of dynamic applications, and the other one is through modules and printed resources. Whilst in academic tremors, Filipinos have shown resiliency and are making sure that no one was left behind. In a matter of unclear choices, the number of drop-out students increased dramatically due to lack of financial support, as well as the deterrence of one's morale.

Meanwhile, Immaculate Conception Academy - Dasmariñas handled the condition by offering online classes for its learners. With the use of the Brightspace Application under the D2L Company, both the educators and the students established a dense connection to one another. It allows the teachers to navigate the progress their students have been complying with in regards to the given activities, assignments, and quizzes. They can also customize numerous restrictions, adjust the deadlines, and as well as control the submission of entries. Brightspace has the option to automatically check every quiz that has been surrendered by the students with the use of key to correction guidelines their teacher had set. Assessment tests can be in forms of multiple-choice, fill in the blanks, short answers, or essays. A time limit can be offered and an estimated range of answering period is also possible. In transporting files, a student can just drag the document then drop it into the designated box which is an easy thing to do with BS.

Educators often post copied links to lead the users most of the time to YouTube as part of the talk. Along with the discussion tab, several lessons can be seen under the chapter buttons which contain different Documents, PowerPoints, Spreadsheets, and many others that are necessary for school works. One of the best features of the Brightspace Application is its clarity with the learners, by sending automated Gmail messages upon submission as receipts of transparency and enabling to direct the site to another with the use of inserted links.

Teachers are not that equipped with much knowledge in using Brightspace and its environment. They had undergone seminars during the summer break and demonstration to principals, heads of the departments, and some students. Tutorials on how to manage your accounts, navigate the setting, and use the features of the BS Application were scattered on the internet especially on YouTube, making it easy for the students to deal with it. Majority can conclude that with the beneficial edges of enrolling at ICA, having Brightspace as a mode of academic communication, a little more progress and modification will secure this virtual setup's success.

Technology is indeed a great help particularly during these trying times when one crisis comes after another. Throughout this pandemic period when the majority of us are shouting silently, fighting our own clashes, overcoming our weaknesses, and escaping the call of death, there is a sight of hope for everyone. As time favors our side, these battle cries will all be over and a new foundation of optimism will bloom on our land, Philippines will soon be reborn.



"KA-ICA, KUMUSTA?"

Marius Vhaugn Jheol Baguio

Being calm and stable are just two emotional factors, yet could have a great effect on constructing conclusions. With the fact that technology, together with gadgets and devices can make people from different locations link with each other via online and stuff, has also its disadvantages at times.

"Misapplication and embracing irresponsibility as user can perhaps bring you into a situation wherein struggles and depressions might rule," an anonymous educator said during an online encounter.

As this pandemic started, the COVID 19 Outburst brought the majority intact in their households, being an integral prevention for keeping themselves safe. Thus, restricting themselves from outdoor activities as soon as this trying period cease up, and leaving them no choice but to commit with technological tools.

"Yes, mom bought me a new laptop!"; "Oh! New internet fiber? That's cool!"; "The latest version of this cellphone brand? Wow, Dad! You're the best!" -

Neither of them knew that those gadgets and connections won't buy them a free pass on this year's cybernetic dread.

During this online academic setup, schools are not just struggling in exploring the field of every application they are currently using but are also dealing with their inner selves. The hashtag - #AcademicFreeze has been rampant and became a talk of the nation. Students are stressing on their deadlines, internet connection, gadgets efficiency, and even their personal lives as sons and daughters in their homes, but with all of these, it seems like they have been barely making it possible, at least. But let us talk about their mental state, are you curious about what they're thinking?

Mental Health is the condition of a person's psychological well-being or an absence of mental illness. This can come in a form of cognitive, behavioral, or emotional that can possibly subject an individual to impulsive decision-making. Excessive workloads and slacking off are great factors in the deterioration of the mental state. In addition, outside influences like exhaustion from household chores and compliance to certain parental directives could also add fuel to the fire.

Immaculate Conception Academy - Dasmariñas tackled this issue by having decisive guidance programs and consultation hours for those struggling learners. Even during this simulated system, ICA still embraces the accountability for the welfare of their students and assesses them via online through the use of mobile tools. As for the initiative, guidance counselors and advisers contact the students and do ask some questions in regard of a certain matter that disturbs their psychological complaint. Referrals with proper parental consent could possibly be given to direct a learner to professionals when the case raises red flag and gets worse.

We all can see that this new academic situation is in need of adjustments and everybody's cooperation. As students, we should all learn to clear the vision of our goals and manage our priorities sensibly. The pinned due dates and stacks of activities to be passed can be lightened up with proper scheduling. Even though coping skills are diverse, knowing your passions in life could lead you to ease.

Aside from the students, educators can also sense the hardships of this pandemic system. They had attended webinars and virtual meetings to be somehow mentally-prepared for the Assessment Year 2020-2021. In addition, the fact that they are not that much fond of the use of gadgets during the traditional days stack another pile on top of their tasks list.

ICAmustahan Facebook Page has been made possible to track the ICAnians' rational well-being and to be a route for the betterment of this virtual scenario. You can ask for help by messaging the page and be reached out by ICA through digital manners. The account also posts issues and columns related to mental health that could probably boost one's academic morale.

"Both teachers and students should set their priorities and schedules. Knowing one's boundaries between school works and household chores is a good sign of improvement. Do not forget to rest and give yourself enjoyable reward after such exhaustion. If the problems are somehow overwhelming, seek for parental guidance or a trusted person's assistance. Before, during and after every activity, always do check yourself," Ms. Rose Ann Saravia, an educator from ICA Plaza said on an interview.

With these being said, one's stress can be a motivation when we see it on a view wherein positivity and optimism reign. Believe in yourself that you can accomplish your activities one after another, and can pass this year's challenges. For every submit button you are clicking; for every quiz that you are taking, there's an equivalent leap away from these computer-generated anxieties and towards feat.

JINGLE BL ROCKS

Marius Vhaugn Jheol Baguio

"It is not about being open or not. We are just two people loving each other." - Sarawat Guntithanon, Still 2gether Episode 4 (2020).

The world has been molding itself in becoming passively acceptable with the LGBTQ+ community one step after another. As we all confine ourselves in the comfort of our homes and intact with our devices, this virtual setup leaves us nothing but to surf through the vastness of cyberspace.

The Land of Smiles - Thailand has been part of every advertising commercial in our televisions and headlines of the locality's publications nowadays. As soon as its Boys Love (BL) Series and Movies snapped the senses of many Filipinos, the provision of entertainment in spite of this situation has been served. GMMTV's production team and staffs as a whole made it possible for its upcoming 4 pillars to be known - BrightWin, SingtoKrist, OffGun and TayNew.

The 2020 Gamechanger

Earlier this year, a Boys Love Succession entitled "2gether The Series" stunned the world and had opened doors for Thailand to be recognized. The preceding years, Thai films aren't that much renowned but as soon as it aired on 21st of February, partaking 13 episodes, 2gether branded another label for the country. Bright Vachirawit Chivaaree, alongside Win Metawin Opas-iamkajorn played the main roles Sarawat Guntithanon and Tine Teepakorn in the said drama. The synopsis is about a college lover who was once awestruck with whom he had bumped on a Scrubb concert. Sarawat being persistent, looks for that same guy in every scheduled show the band performs. Would he be able to accompany fate by his side or let it play with his university storyline?

The ship has sailed and brought both Bright and Win in the limelight. The fandom adherents grew in numbers which paved the way for the making of "Still 2gether", an additional 5-episode run that had ended last September 11 of the current year. With no peculiar group name, BrightWin supporters remained as it is. As of now, the uproar and hangover of many BL Fans haven't still ceased up because of the continuous airing of consecutive Thai dramas.

"Bright and Win are one of those turning points 2020 has, especially during this pandemic. They haven't just brought 'killig' factors to the core fanatics here in the Philippines but had also aided the mental health issues of many with their societal needs. As a BrightWin, a HUMSS student, rest assure that Vachirawit and Metawin are big inspiration and motivation to all aspiring Filipinos in this generation," Irish Abarquez, a former ICAnian said in an interview.

The Polar Bear and the Orca

Another Thai achievement was the making of another BL Drama in the sequel "Kiss the Series". "Dark Blue Kiss", a drama that revolves around a discrete homosexual university couple in the screen ship Pete and Kao, played by Tay Tawan Vihokratana and New Thitipoom Techaapaikhun respectively. The moral lessons of this film were about how one should receive himself as a whole, learn to admit your misconduct and as a parent, you should know how to accept your children being whoever they are.

The fandom name Polca was derived from a Polar Bear [Po] and an Orca Whale [Ca] which was from the last episode of DBK. This has ended months before 2gether aired, and has been known throughout the spectral field afterward. TayNew is one of the Holy Trinity, alongside SingtoKrist and OffGun, and are still sailing even up to these days.

Papi and his Family

Off Jumpol Adulkittiporn and Gun Atthaphan Phunsawat frolicked the roles Khai and Third in a Thai BL Drama Sequence "Theory of Love" last June 2019. It showcased unconditional love being turned down for the sake of friendship. Reflecting several issues in our society especially for all the members of the LGBTQ+ community with the use of the casts' profiles.

They are known to be a ship with the least issue as they both display their jolly sides and are indeed Earth-bounded artists despite of fame. They had also played the roles Pick-Rome in a Thai Series "Puppy Honey" and "Our Skyy".

"OffGun ship is very authentic. They always leave a mark in everything they do. Most especially, they really trust each other which I think became a good foundation of their strong relationship as actors," an admin from BL Town Café Facebook Page stated.

The Red Pillar

With all of the previous 3 ships being said, Singto Prachaya Ruangroj and Krist Perawat Sangpotirattak fulfill the 4-Pillar lineup. Being Kongpob and Arthit respectively from a well-known Engineering-themed Thai BL Series "SOTUS" and "SOTUS S", both actors contributed a lot in the said industry. The storyline revolves around the legal university hazing with Arthit as their lead hazer. Kongpob being a freshman who has the guts to oppose his senior, somehow developed inner affection towards the ferocious Arthit. Would they be able to share the same fallout with the recent ships?

Their fandom name is Peraya, derived from the incorporation of Prachaya and Perawat, which are both Thai names of the actors. The ethical lessons that can be obtained from this drama series were being true to yourself and to your feelings, and as well as the trust we build within friendship.

"SingtoKrist is more than just a BL couple or ship, they have each other as brothers, as friends or more than that. They literally complete each other and that makes their relationship efficient. I admire so much the friendship they've built and established during and after the series. They have become so close and comfortable with each other and doesn't need intimate gestures, and with these, I think are their edges with the other ships," a BL fan from Quezon City said.

Altogether, being the foundation of Thailand's well-known label as of this pandemic period - GMMTV's 4 Pillars. Philippines always topping the charts in terms of passionate supports our country is currently giving among all nations in the Southeast Asian Region.

IWantTFC which is on an affiliation with the network ABS-CBN bought the rights from some of these Thai drama series and has been consistently setting it in public view with paid advertising commercials. Some of these series are 2gether, He's Coming to Me, The Shippers, and Dark Blue Kiss. They had set these in both dubbed and original form due to the demand of the public. Merchandises and BL Products are also rampant nowadays due to the demand some fans are eager to voice out.

For those who aren't fond with this kind of film, rest assure that Thailand can back you up with their non-BL dramas including The Gifted, The Gifted: Graduation, Blacklist, Who Are You and many others. BL Town Café, a Facebook Page which have happened to be a respondent in this article. Together with the Apparel inclined with it, BL-related imports and supplies have been part of the economical proficiency and advancement of the nation in spite of this COVID-19 outbreak.

"I do not want to deduce it to merely 'stanning' homosexuality. Supporting BL series or anything alike is not that special. Whether the romance is between opposite genders or with the same, it doesn't really matter. People in love are people in love: nothing more, nothing less. Heterosexuals are never superior to homosexuals and vice versa. If only people can open their minds and not get limited by certain beliefs, there would be more acceptance in this world. Homophobia should not be a personality trait," an admin of BL Town Café from Rizal, Cavite said on a virtual talk.

"I'm actually happy that BL series are currently hyped nowadays and have reached the mainstream Filipino pop culture not just for the people coming from the LGBTQIA+ community but also for the straight ones. It's good in a way that this issue used to be part of the gray area of Filipino community and now is starting to showcase the untold stories of our beloved family and friends in the locality. These might just a part of a bigger scope of Queer studies but at least it's helping us to broaden our minds and hearts that BL is valid and true," the head admin from Tarlac stated.

With these proofs, we can therefore conclude that Boys Love, not just from Thailand, but also with the adaptations we are currently undertaking as a nation, are indeed pointing out a mark in the industry. Not just for a sort of packaged entertainment but could also be seen as films with decent lessons. Moreover, telling stories to one another, sharing your thoughts and experiences, and as well as overcoming inner fears in a form of open mindedness are epitomic embodiment of one's improvement.

"I used to think that we are born alone; we shall die alone; because we can't choose, we have to live alone. Do you know, before, I never really believed love existed, only hatred and resentment were real... until I met you," Theory of Love, 2019.



MUP 2020 SASSED PANDEMIC OUT

Marius Vhaugn Jheol Baguio

A crown is the queen's soul. It takes more than a façade to become a true queen, and by heart, you can define what sash you are going to wear.

Since the Philippines opened its door for the luxury of pageantry, many die-hard Filipino fans all around the nation gather as one, cheer for their bets and yell their provinces out loud as the contestants wrap the stages up. Recently we have witnessed the glamour of these fine ladies wearing their evening gowns and swimsuits as the different segments of the show go by.

Miss Universe Philippines 2020 is the first edition of the Miss Universe Philippines competition under its new association. The current MUP Franchise was awarded to the national pageant directress Shamcey Supsup- Lee, Miss Universe 2011 3rd - Runner Up by the prior licensed organization, Binibining Pilipinas Charities Incorporated since 1964 headed by Madame Stella Araneta.

Basta Ilongga, G'wapa!

Among the 46 delegates from every corner of the Philippines, from Luzon down to Mindanao, last October 25 we hailed a new empress despite the continuous COVID-19 outbreak. With her Ilongga poise and natural beauty, Rabiya Occaña Mateo of Iloilo City paved her way to the coveted Filipina crown. Rabiya wasn't even in the top list of front runners in winning this year's honorable Miss Universe 2020 title, a black sheep indeed.

With the trend in her performance, lying low during the preliminaries and going all-out at the final night was probably her game plan. The wit she had brought made it possible for her to take a step closer to success. Being smart enough in implying the name of the late Miriam Defensor Santiago, this Ilongga delegate smacked the question and left the stage with a solid line - "After all, she is the best president that we never had."

Hosted by KC Montero, the recorded show was indeed great and fun until it ended up with flying colors, not just by crowning the rightful queen but also opening doors for various provinces to be known. Many had questioned why does Rabiya won instead of their bets, but one thing that the organization and the other contestants testify to was the fair and transparent judging routine of the overall occurrence. Still on her feet and is ready to prepare for the most awaited event in the field of pageantry, Miss Universe Philippines 2020, Rabiya will be carrying out a Filipino famous tagline on the world's centerstage - "Basta Ilongga, G'wapa!"

The Filipina

At last, on October 25th Gazini Ganados of Talisay, Cebu finally crowned her successor from the province of Iloilo, Rabiya Mateo at Cordillera Convention Hall in Baguio City. In the Philippines, Meycauayan, province of Bulacan is well-known for its passion and artistry with jewelries. Being the hometown of the Villarica Family, possessor of the Villarica Pawnshop chain in the country and the elegances they've incorporated with such talents made it possible for the new "Filipina" crown to be known.

The pinnacle of a true Pinay beauty, Filipina symbolizes every aspect of a righteous queen is. The swirls of leaves stand for the perseverance of a woman that for every trial, defeat, or success she experiences, still embodying the Filipino values by her heart. Numerous diamonds were embedded on the leaves to showcase how a beauty queen becomes the source of hope that shines in the darkest times. Signifying fear of God, optimism, intelligence and creativity are the purposes of the yellow pearls evident on top of the crown. But the most anticipating part, the finest revelation was that Villarica Family incorporated the Philippines Flag in the crown by using the redness of Ruby, the bluish feature of Sapphire, and Topazes as the 3 bright stars.

Miss Universe Philippines and other beauty pageants in our country seek for someone who has the marks of an empowering woman in spite of trials. With the Filipina on her head, purity of her heart, and the wit of being an Ilongga, Rabiya will represent the Pearl of the Orient Seas - Philippines in the 69th edition of Miss Universe.

Cavite to Billie: You are heard!

Miss Cavite Kimberly "Billie" Hakenson expressed her gratitude and contentment after finishing 4th - Runner Up among the 46 contestants at the recent Miss Universe Philippines competition. She's one of the front-runners with her wit and sass during the closed-door race last October 21. One of the remarkable moments Billie imparted on this pageant was her clarification that she did not come out as bisexual, but just merely reiterated her truth.

"My journey is dedicated to every single person who has been pigeonholed, discriminated, or dehumanized for their gender identity, gender expression, or sexual orientation. May we no longer be silenced by fear, but empowered by our truth and the support of our allies," Billie stated firmly.

"Of course, the crown was the goal. But I achieved more than the actual crown and title. I was heard, and people listened," she added.

Many Filipinos, not just Caviteños are elated by her transparency. She may not win the title herself, but many had listened, been amplified and Billie, you are heard!

MUP Trends: The Vogue Queens

Social media platforms were on a craze after the closed-door interview of the 46 Miss Universe Philippines 2020 delegates, all at Baguio City, province of Benguet, last 21st of October. Miss Manila - Alexandra Abdon won the hearts of many Filipino pageant supporters with her humor and comicality. Keeping it real with the panel of judges during the private talk - "Basically, ganito lang kami sa Manila. Hindi kami super nagfe-fake ng personality namin," she introduced.

Various posts and tweets scattered at one snap after Miss Abdon became honest about how cold Baguio City was - "Pinapapatay ko 'yung air-con kanina, wala palang air-con," she bantered.

"Easy ka lang sa pagta-time, parang may galit ka yata," "Manila usually Tagalog lang naman so ano, uhm, di ako makapag-isip, wait," and "Wait lang p'wede paki-pause 'yung time?" were just some of her remarkable chitchats with the juries. Many memes dispersed quick and fast regarding her witticism - "Wait, kailangan kong huminga."

Aside from Alexandra, Miss Quezon Province, Faye Deveza enters the lineup for being this year's internet sensation. She was known by many for being serious with her answers, then turning to casualness afterwards. "Tapos na 'yun? Wait lang may sasabihan pa!" she said after being cut short with her introduction.

Last front-runner who marketed her jocularity to several soc-med users was Miss General Santos, Mariel Joyce Pascua. She presented herself as the "life of the party" by being casual and calm with the panel as she responds. Additionally, Miss Pascua have thrilled the judges with her composure, leaving the floor with "If you have a party, you can always invite me."

Many had criticized their performance because to view it on a professional height, those gestures and attitudes for some people are not acceptable, especially on the Miss Universe Philippines stage. But for the 3 of them, they had fun and showcased what they got. The thing that they can do as of these moments is to disregard the negativities and bashes people are imposing on them, turning all of it into something that could empower their souls even more just like how a beauty queen does it in a sassy way.

They have been called the "top 3 that we never had" - at least in the senses of the netizens.

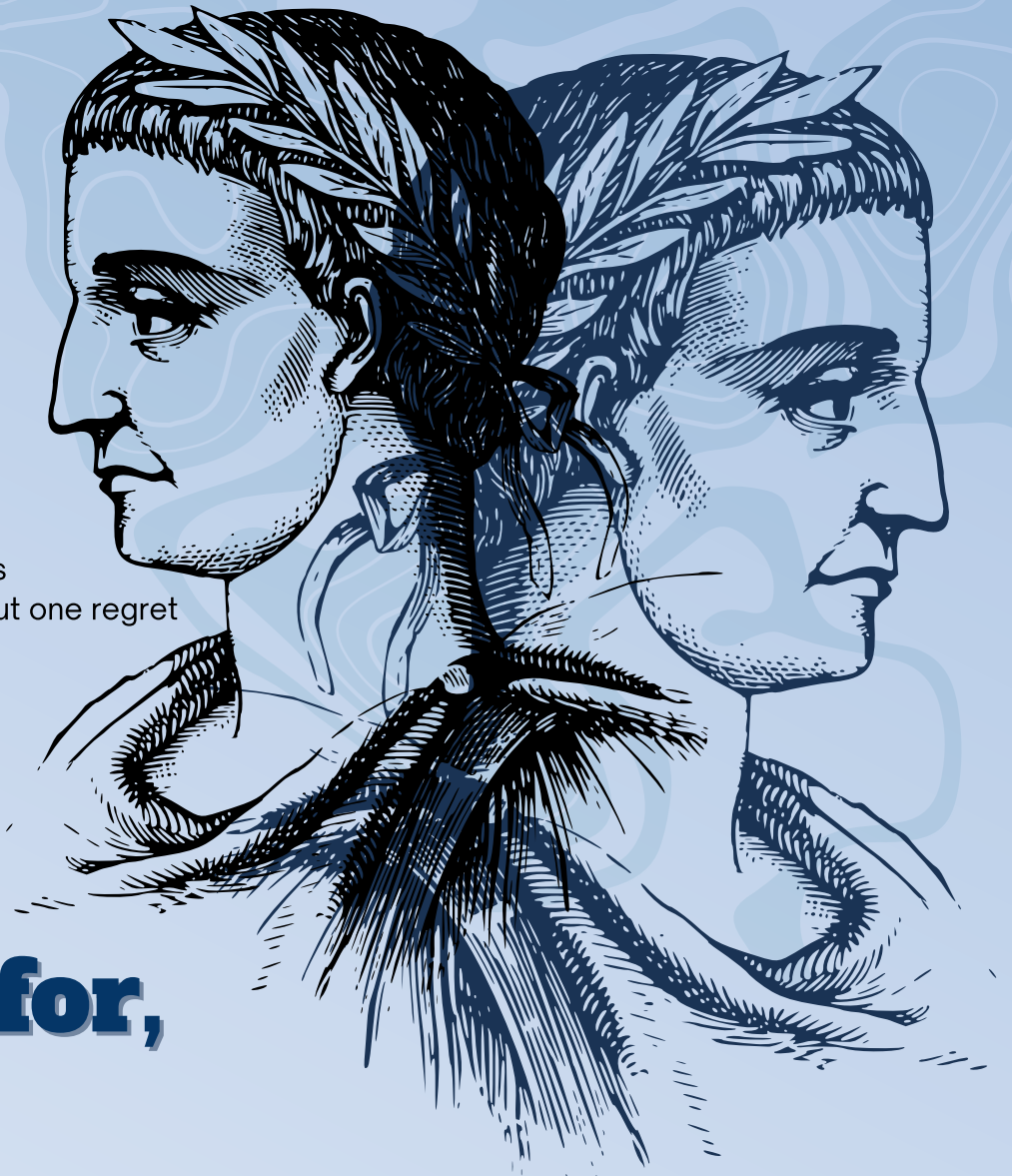
THE TALES DEAD MEN TELL

by Sharla Kirsteen Lim

Scarlet-tinted skies, and the stretching blue sea
 This is my tale, darling, come and indulge me
 For all my age and the years that by me past
 I impart you all these three things I amassed
 Even redder than the skies were the blood of my brothers
 For the promise that freedom of my Philippines will once more be hers
 To death we fought, and when my clock ticked its last, I had in mind but one regret
 That I have not held her more tightly, my querida, my sweet Elizabeth
 The sun though spins continuously along with the Earth
 And time had given my country another chance, a new birth
 Now a canine holds the crown; my Philippines once more held captive
 If futile was my sacrifice, then I shouldn't have left my love to grieve
 Look down at this white page, child, and do not forget a word
 For this question I offer you:

What is your voice for, if not to be heard?

But even then, you might close your eyes and I will have to concur
 For what am I but a dead man without even a name to utter?



AFTER THE THUNDERSTORM

by Yhixhya Pheryll D. Barro

WITH YOU

by Akari Yui

It's Sunday morning;
 birds are singing on the rooftops.
 I looked at my left and saw your glistening face,
 your messy golden hair, and the pout you wear.
 I looked at you and hummed a tune
 that my parents taught me
 Caressing your cheek while you lay there sound asleep,
 you scrunch your face whenever you feel me move
 I asked myself "How did I get so lucky to have you?" when
 in times like these all I want to do is lay down
 beside you and hug you endlessly.
 You woke up from your slumber and said
 "Kai?" with your adorable pout wanting me to cuddle you
 "Yes, my love?" I replied, and in that very moment I forgot how to breathe
 With you yearning for my love, I can't ask for anything more
 With you loving me for every second of every day,
 I couldn't ask for a better gift
 You wrapped your arms around me wanting warmth from the cold weather,
 and I couldn't ask more than to be with you.
 Every time I'm with you, I realize that I don't deserve such a dazzling woman like you.
 When I'm with you I know that I will do everything for you.

She remembers his glistening bronze eyes and pinkish lips
 The way she felt when he touched her face with his fingertips
 Treasuring all moments before it fades into unforgettable memories
 Remembering all details, hoping it won't turn into just another of those love stories
 He remembers her flattering smile and enchanting voice
 Her indecisiveness when she's about to make a choice
 He didn't fail to remember their happiness whenever they were together
 Especially that feeling inside of their hearts, just as light as feather
 Reminiscing the times they spent together
 The way he kissed her forehead like it's been forever
 The way he held her hand so tightly not ever letting go
 Both of them holding on to each other like there's no tomorrow
 Now, they're back to their despairing realities
 From their temporary escapes, their fantasies
 No where to hide and no where to run
 Alas remembering their past was done
 Their past is dead but their love is boundless
 Their future is sightless and undecided
 Focusing on the present and not letting any time get wasted
 Still hoping even if life is complicated
 They'll meet each other after the thunderstorm
 Never letting their love and hearts deform
 Keeping in mind their promises
 Remembering there is still love around us
 Both still healing from the trauma
 Making sure to avoid any drama
 No one knows what's next
 But they will always be waiting
 for each other's texts.



CORONAVIRUS: THE 21ST CENTURY PANDEMIC

Jonella Francyn Tangco

What is coronavirus?

Coronavirus is a type of common virus that usually causes upper-respiratory tract illnesses, ranging from mild to moderate, like common colds. A lipid envelope with protein spikes surrounds the core of genetic material. The spikes give it the appearance of a crown, which is called "corona" in Latin. There are different types of coronaviruses that may cause diseases in humans and animals. Some coronaviruses may cause illnesses in certain types of animals such as cattle, camels, and bats. In humans, coronavirus may cause respiratory infections ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases.

Severe symptoms have been reported in examples of human coronaviruses. In 2003, the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (SARS-CoV) was first identified in China. In Saudi Arabia, the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome Coronavirus (MERS-CoV) was first identified in 2012. And now, the third novel coronavirus that emerged is the SARS-CoV-2, the disease that caused Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), is a highly transmissible coronavirus that emerged in late 2019.

Coronavirus is known to circulate in a range of animals and these viruses can be transmitted to humans. This is called a spillover, when viruses move from one species to another. This may be due to increased contact between humans and animals or mutations in the virus. Coronaviruses are zoonotic, meaning they are transmitted from animals to people. SARS-CoV is known to be transmitted from civet cats and MERS-CoV from camels. The animal reservoir of the new coronavirus is yet to be known.



Death toll from previous to present viruses that caused pandemic worldwide.

A Silent Attack

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), the current incubation period for the virus ranges from 1 - 12.5 days. The period between the exposure to the infection to the appearance of the symptoms is called the incubation period. As for other coronaviruses, such as MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV, their incubation period reaches up to 14 days. WHO recommends monitoring contact of confirmed cases for 14 days.

The most common way that the virus spreads is through close contact with an infected person. The close contact is 6 feet within the infected person. Symptoms of the virus can be very mild to severe. Symptoms may not even develop in some people. The virus affects different people differently. Symptoms of the virus include cough, fever, headache, diarrhea, other respiratory illnesses such as shortness of breath and sore throat, etc. Some people also develop symptoms such as loss of taste or smell, rash on skin, and discoloration on fingers and toes. Severe symptoms can be pneumonia, organ failure, and even death. On average, it takes 5 - 6 days for the symptoms to show in an infected person, however it can also take up to 14 days.

People of all ages can be infected by the virus that causes COVID-19. However, there are people who are at greater risk of getting a severe COVID-19 disease. They include older people and those with underlying medical conditions such as chronic respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease, cancer, diabetes, and obesity. Anxiety and anger or feeling stressed are included in the psychological impacts these populations might have. It can be terrifying to be identified as more vulnerable or at risk of getting infected. Older people who are already experiencing dementia or cognitive decline might have it difficult along with the impacts. Being isolated and experiencing loneliness can also worsen mental health.

There are effective ways in order to prevent the spread of the disease. Stay at home as much as possible. Keeping a safe distance from other people will lessen your risk of getting the disease. Go outside if only needed and during off-peak times. Remember to always wear your mask whenever going outside. Interacting in close proximity can make the virus spread quickly. Practice proper hygiene at all times. Cover your mouth when coughing and sneezing and wash your hands always. Clean and disinfect objects you touch always. It is important to stay at home if you are feeling sick or unwell. You can call a hotline or your medical professional. But once you experience fever, cough, or difficulty breathing, and other symptoms, seek medical care immediately. Your travel history and contact with sick or unwell people should be told to your medical provider.

In these times of grief and anxiety, keep in mind to stay healthy at all times. Follow social distancing and always be safe.

CORONAVIRUS VACCINE: TO CURE OR NOT TO CURE

Jonella Francyn Tangco

Hopes for Immediate Cure

Researchers and scientists are doing their best to develop the COVID-19 vaccine as soon as they can. More than 150 coronavirus vaccines are in development in hopes to ease the global crisis. Training and preparing the body's immune system to fight off viruses and bacteria is what vaccines do. It can also prevent illnesses as the body is ready to fight them in case of exposure to disease-causing germs.

Once researchers and scientists create potential vaccine, an Investigational New Drug Application must be submitted to the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) that describes the product, the manufacturing process, and its effectiveness in animal testing.

The next phase is the human testing in clinical trials. Ensuring the safety of the vaccine and its efficacy are included in the main concerns through all of the phases of the trial. The first phase, Phase I, evaluates the vaccine's ability to generate an immune system and its safety on a small group of people, typically between 20-100 individuals. Phase II, the second phase, tests the vaccine on a larger number of people, typically several hundreds. They are separated into different groups, such as different age ranges, to determine whether the vaccine responds differently to different populations. Finally, the third phase, Phase III, may involve tens of thousands of individuals who receive the vaccine to provide further information on uncommon or rare events. After a successful Phase 3 trial, the vaccine may be licensed for use, but it is still being monitored for safety.

Development of the Vaccine

Efforts in developing the vaccine are in progress. The Operation Warp Speed of the U.S. government aims to produce and deliver 300 million doses of safe and effective vaccine by January 2021. The World Health Organization (WHO) is also making efforts with a goal of two billion doses by the end of 2021.

Several companies have been running trial phases and gathering clinical data simultaneously. Here's a look at the candidates who have reached phase three and beyond in the vaccine development.

Novavax, a biotechnology company based in Gaithersburg, Maryland, engaged in vaccine development with their candidate, NVX-CoV2373. The vaccine is administered in two doses, 21 days apart. New England Journal of Medicine published a study of the company's phase one trial with it saying that the vaccine produced coronavirus antibodies higher than what is seen from those who recovered from COVID-19 and was safe. A phase three trial was announced by Novavax on September 24 in the United Kingdom. The vaccine will be evaluated by up to 10,000 people both with and without underlying conditions.

One of world's largest multinational companies, based in New Jersey, is Johnson & Johnson, who specializes in pharmaceutical and healthcare products. Their adenovector vaccine that is being developed, JNJ-78436735, introduces a piece of DNA from SARS-CoV-2 into the common cold-causing adenovirus that has been genetically-changed so replication in the body can't happen. The launch of a phase III ENSEMBLE trial was announced by Johnson & Johnson. It will evaluate the efficacy and safety of the vaccine—among up to 60,000 adults from different countries. Older people and those with underlying conditions are also included.

mRNA-1273 of Moderna Therapeutics, a Massachusetts-based biotech company, in collaboration with the National Institutes of Health, is developing the first mRNA vaccine for human use if approved. It relies on injecting snippets of mRNA, or the virus's genetic material, into human cells and creates viral proteins that mimic the coronavirus, so it trains the immune system to recognize its presence. Moderna announced that they had started the third phase of its clinical trials on July 27, and that they continue to monitor phase two results. Stéphane Bancel, Moderna's chief executive, told the New York Times in September that it was unlikely the vaccine would be widely available in the first half of 2021.

Many other companies have been developing a vaccine. They work with great effort in hopes of finding a cure as fast as possible.

Here in the Philippines, the Food and Drug Administration said on September 25 that April 2021 would be the earliest possible availability of the coronavirus vaccine. According to the FDA Director General Eric Domingo, in a virtual press briefing, the best-case scenario is if clinical trials are completed by December or January, and a company would file an application. It would be then possible by April 2021 that an approved vaccine would be available. He also said that this is really an ideal scenario, the 3 to 6 months can be 3 months, when asked about the target set by Malacañang for the vaccine development.

The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Secretary Fortunato dela Peña was also in the briefing and told that his estimation is that he preferred a conservative timeline of at least 6 months. He also told the reporters that 6 Confidentiality Data Agreements (CDA) with foreign pharmaceutical companies have been signed by the Philippines. 3 vaccines developed by China (including Sinopharm and Sinovac) and two from Taiwan will be included in WHO's solidarity trials. It will take place alongside independent trials for other vaccines that are being eyed by the Philippines' vaccine expert panel headed by the Department of Science and Technology. Russia's Sputnik V vaccine is also being reviewed by state scientists as it was also widely criticized after President Vladimir Putin, prior to extensive clinical trials to prove its safety and efficacy, approved it.

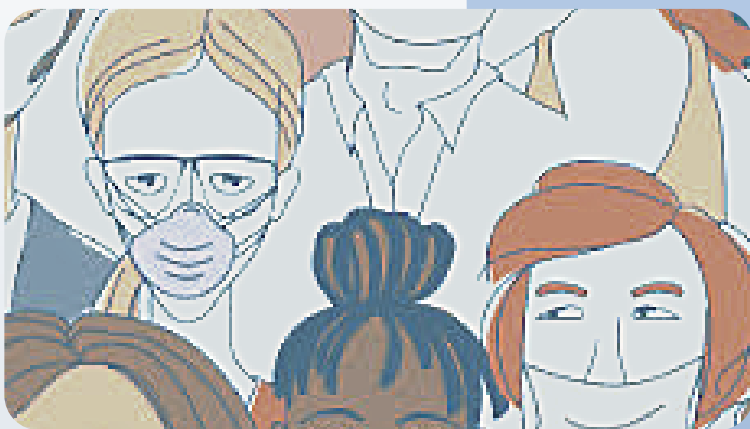
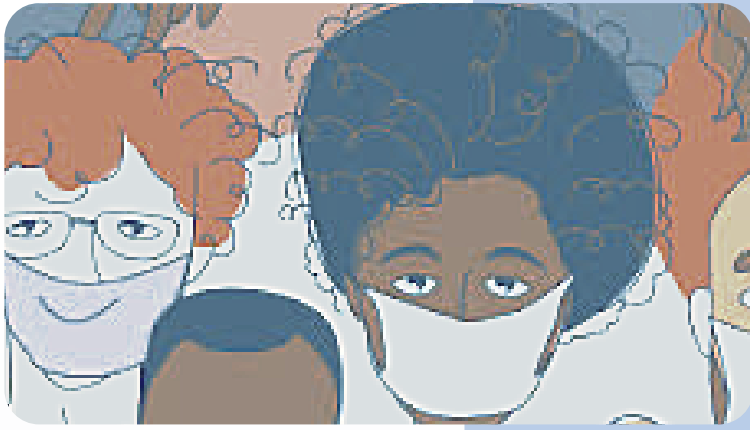
As of now, the Philippines has currently more than 330,000 cases of the disease. It also has one of the highest numbers of individuals with COVID-19 in Southeast Asia. A vaccine is being developed by researchers and scientists all over the world, hoping for this pandemic to end as soon as possible.



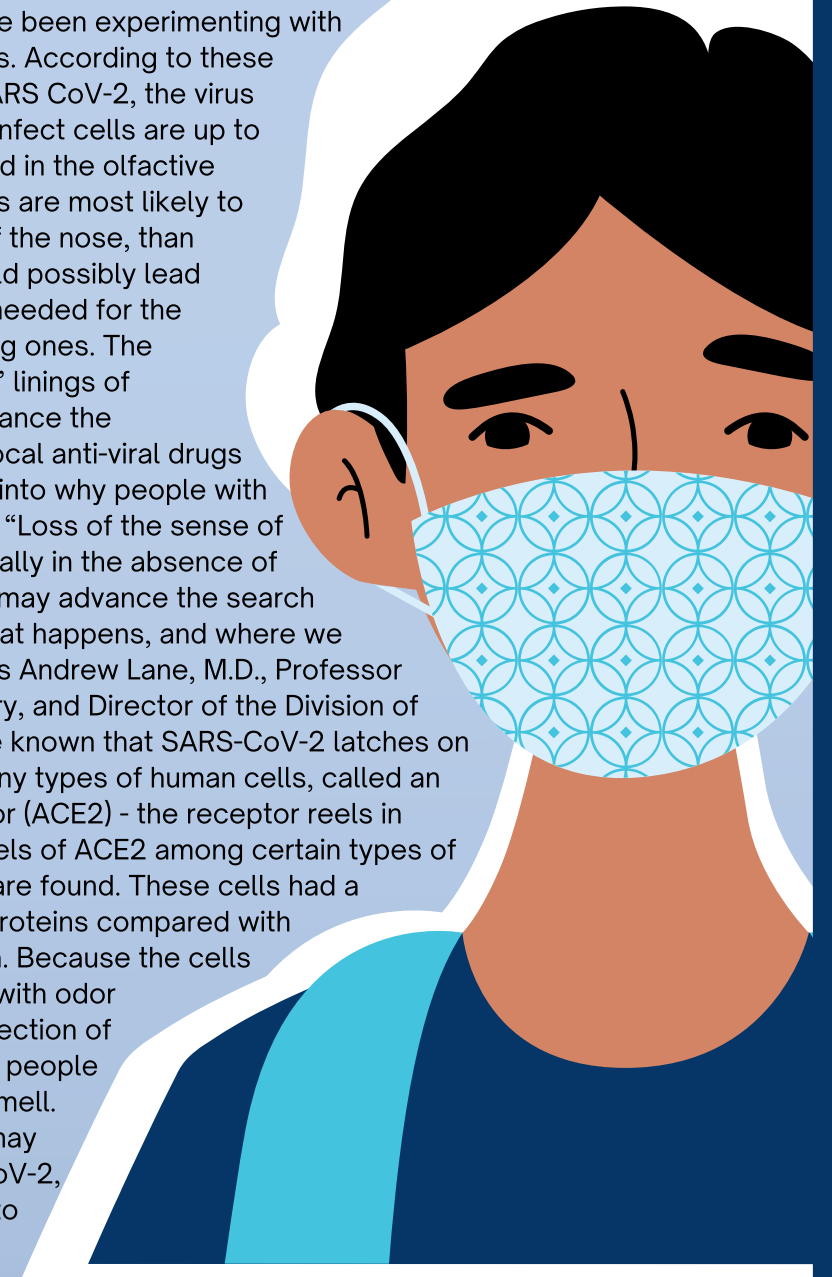
ODOR-SENSING CELLS:

Yhixhya Pheryll D. Barro

KEY ENTRY POINT FOR CORONAVIRUS



Scientists at Johns Hopkins Medicine have been experimenting with a compact number of human cell samples. According to these scientists, the “hook” of cells used by SARS CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, to latch onto and infect cells are up to 700 times more prevalent and widespread in the olfactory supporting cells. These so-called hangers are most likely to cling on the lining inside the upper part of the nose, than with the liner cells and windpipe that could possibly lead to the lungs. These supporting cells are needed for the function and development of odor-sensing ones. The findings, from a preliminary study of cells’ linings of both the nose and the trachea, could advance the search for the best target for topical or local anti-viral drugs to treat COVID-19 and offer further clues into why people with the virus often lose their olfactory sense. “Loss of the sense of smell is associated with COVID-19, generally in the absence of other nasal symptoms, and our research may advance the search for a definitive reason for how and why that happens, and where we might best direct some treatments,” says Andrew Lane, M.D., Professor of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery, and Director of the Division of Rhinology and Skull Base. Scientists have known that SARS-CoV-2 latches on to a biological hook on the surface of many types of human cells, called an angiotensin-converting enzyme 2 receptor (ACE2) - the receptor reels in essential molecules. They found high levels of ACE2 among certain types of nasal cells where odor-sensing neurons are found. These cells had a 200-fold to 700-fold increase in ACE 2 proteins compared with other samples from the nose and trachea. Because the cells with high levels of ACE2 are associated with odor sensing, the researchers suggest that infection of these cells may be the reason why some people with COVID-19 are experiencing loss of smell. The cells found in the lining of the nose may prove to be a key entry point for SARS-CoV-2, and Lane stated that there may be ways to target those particular cells with topical antiviral drugs or other therapies directly to that area.



Trembling in fear: How Earthquake Murders Mankind

In sync with the sudden and violent shakes on the ground, the people were also shaking in fear as they encounter an inevitable, deadly, and killer-like phenomenon that could possibly take their lives away – earthquake.

An earthquake refers to the shaking of the superficial of the Earth caused by the energy released in the lithosphere which creates seismic waves.

Earthquakes typically occur when rock underground suddenly breaks along a fault. Likewise, plate tectonics - the shifting of plates in the Earth’s crust, is another reason why earthquakes occur. Truth is, the plates are continuously and slowly moving everyday which means that earthquake is experienced on a daily basis without being felt or being noticed due to its weak intensity.

In line with this, it is possible to have an earthquake due to a volcanic eruption. Most earthquakes that happened underneath a volcano are usually because of the movement of magma. Surfaces crack once magma applies pressure to it and every time the rock snaps it results to minimal earthquakes.

Earthquake: A Pro Killer

Just like a killer, earthquakes attack and take lives when nobody else anticipated it to happen. Although scientists can predict where major earthquakes or the mainshock might occur with the aid of modern apparatus and instruments, they are still incapable of identifying the earthquake’s exact locations or accurate predictions of the definite time it will occur.

Meanwhile, in the Philippines, an estimate of 2000 earthquakes happen per year but only 12% or 5-6 earthquakes are felt due to their strong magnitude. These sudden and inevitable “attacks” result to several casualties, loss and damage to the properties of the country.

Last August 18, 2020, a 6.6 magnitude earthquake struck the province of Masbate. According to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS), a strike-slip earthquake occur at 8:03 in the morning. Although no tsunami recorded, the 6.6 magnitude which also affected the Bicol Region, Central Visayas, Eastern Visayas, Western Visayas, has injured at least 170 people and killed 2 individuals. Several house and establishments were destructed including a market and a police station. Power lines were also toppled down in the province, resulting in an unscheduled power interruption

Jairus Gwen P. Visitacion

Preparedness Saves Lives

Preparedness in times of different calamities will save people. As for the earthquake preparedness, it consists several survival measures which will increase the survival rate in the event of an earthquake. This could also pertain to the mitigating measures, that seek to minimize the effect of an earthquake.

A simple awareness on what to do during earthquake will most likely decrease the mortality rate. The earthquake drills promote disaster preparedness and seminars regarding do’s and don’ts during earthquake will educate mankind and would cut the casualty big time.

Simple reminders include storing food and water, securing large items of furniture that may fall over during an earthquake. Likewise, avoiding storing items above beds or sofas reduces the chance of objects falling on individuals.

Remember, an earthquake doesn’t directly kill people. The earthquake is only the mastermind of this deadly tragedy. Oftentimes, the collapsing walls, flying glass, and falling objects as a result of the ground shaking are the common reasons why one dies of earthquake.

Calamity and disasters are 100% unavoidable but preparing and devising a plan in case these phenomena happen would most likely reduce the probability that a human-being will die of this event.

Innovation of "Stay safe" App for Faster Contact Tracing

Arianne Maybelle B. Carbonell

The Department of Health (DOH) recorded that the total number of COVID-19 cases in the Philippines was 311,694 as of September 30, 2020. According to the University of the Philippines Research group (2020), the COVID-19 cases are slowing down after citizens were quarantined for 6 months.

As a way to sustain the decreasing number of COVID-19 cases, the Philippine Government improved the contact tracing in order to reach people conveniently. As a matter of fact, the Inter-Agency Task Force, National Task Force (NTF) COVID-19, and Multisys Technologies Corporation developed a digital platform for health reporting system to facilitate the spread of COVID-19 via tracking.

Contact Tracing is one of the intermediate COVID-19 responses in the public to reduce the transmission of the virus. It is manned by a lot of contact tracers to alert those people who have been possibly exposed or infected.

With the aim of preventing the transmission of the virus, the government launched an application a few weeks ago which will be used as an automated contact tracing called the "StaySafe" app.

"StaySafe" is a digital contact tracing application developed by IATF, NTF and MTC in cooperation with MVP Group of Companies that includes PLDT Company and Smart Communications Inc., to name a few. It is an integrated platform of tracking the close contacts that have the possibility of being infected.

This application can be installed by everyone on their smartphones for free. It is safe and can be easily accessed every time the users are going outside their homes even without prepaid load and it is accessible on all networks but needs an internet connection.

The platform was launched for the purpose of protecting oneself by reminding them to follow safety protocols, securing loved ones' health condition by reporting without revealing their identities, and for the sake of the community for faster contact tracing in the Philippines.

The "StaySafe" app will work by detecting the QR Code in public transportations and public places like malls - the government made sure that there are QR codes in the said establishments. After detecting the code, the user will be directed to StaySafe and then they will register their information in the application for contact tracing.

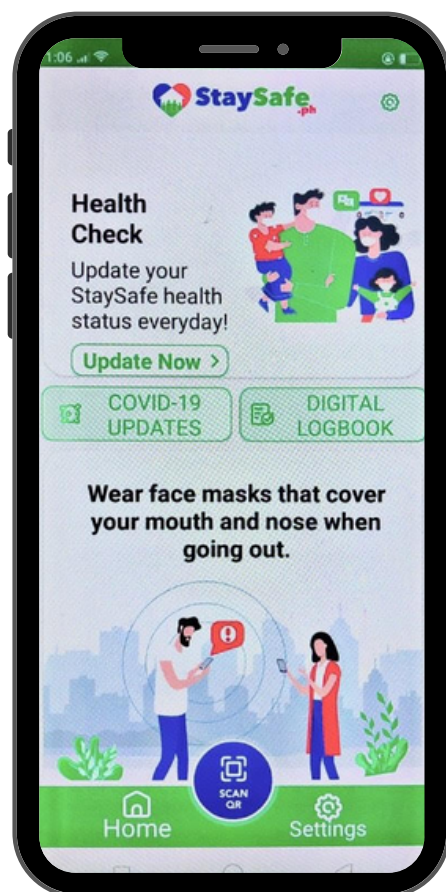
One of the good factors of this app is its availability in LRT, buses, malls and etc., but unfortunately, tricycles and jeepneys are not included, so they are aiming to use the application on a wider scale.

It is easy to use and the information is direct from the phone so people cannot fake their information. They also do not have to use pens and papers that might heighten the risk of

infection from one user to another. However, some of the people that are involved in going outside are having difficulties in using technology.

The Department of Health (DOH) and the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) are the only agencies that have access to the personal information of the individuals. The application is under the National Privacy Commission so the users are assured to be confident to share their information.

The Chief Testing of Czar, Secretary Vivencio "Vince" Dizon, believes that in order to achieve the goal of sustaining the downward trajectory of COVID-19 cases, Filipinos should be disciplined and cooperative to the protocols of the government. Furthermore, technologies can assist, but it cannot solve everything. But, the utmost significance of this breakthrough in COVID-19 response is it will boost us to open our economy confidently. These include the small steps we take to be able to take a leap back to where our economy used to stand.



On the Basis of Sex: COVID-19 Disease Outcomes

Christa Judiel Amor

With the onset of the Coronavirus disease - 2019 outbreak, people have been inspired to look past their differences and focus on working towards a common goal, which is to prevent the virus' spread. Ironically, a group of researchers has managed to take a step back and what they revealed about sex differences might just be something the world should take a glance at.

In previous studies, it was revealed that the majority (approximately 60%) of deaths caused by the Coronavirus disease are reported in males. Furthermore, it was also suggested in the findings of several studies regarding infections such as HIV, tuberculosis, Hepatitis A and C that compared to men, women have a more vigorous capability to mitigate transmittable agents.

Their interest garnered by the results mentioned, Takehiro Takahashi and his colleagues decided to formulate a study that would hopefully determine whether the virus SARS-CoV-2 stimulates different immune responses between sexes. Besides this, it is also their objective to unfold whether male susceptibility to COVID-19 has a significant relationship proportional to immunity if any.

Just over a month ago, August 26, 'Sex differences in immune responses that underlie COVID-19 disease outcomes' was published. To quote, "In this study, we examined sex differences in viral loads, SARS-CoV-2-specific antibody titers, plasma cytokines, as well as blood cell phenotyping in COVID-19 patients."

To put it simply, the researchers have assessed the sex differences in the amount of virus in the patients' blood, the concentration of antibodies produced to recognize SARS-CoV-2, the presence of signaling proteins in the plasma, and which antigens are detected in the patients' blood.

In Yale-New Haven hospital, patients confirmed positive with SARS-CoV-2 have been subject to the collection of biospecimens such as blood, nasopharyngeal swabs, saliva, urine, and stool. This was done at study enrollment (baseline) and every 3 to 7 days (longitudinal).

The patients have been divided into two groups, A and B. Cohort A contained 17 men and 22 women that weren't in the intensive care unit (ICU) among other criteria. Classified as the total patient cohort, Cohort B included the patients in Cohort A as well as 59 others who failed to meet the criteria, obtaining a sum of 98 patients. As a control group, uninfected health care workers from the same hospital were employed.

The question still stands. Are there sex differences in immune responses that produce implications on the patients' disease outcomes?

After conducting several analyses and assessments, the researchers have found out that at baseline, the levels of IL-8 and IL-18 essential chemokines were higher in male patients. This was also the case for the levels of CCL5 protein in longitudinal analysis. These "important proinflammatory innate immune chemokines and cytokines" are essential in cell migration and immunity regulation.

To support the claims of past studies, Takahashi et al.'s study has also determined that at baseline, T cells of female patients exhibit a stronger response relative to those of male patients. It was also shown that "activated CD8 T cells were significantly elevated only in female patients". As one might recall, T cells play a vital role in the termination of infected target cells.

Ultimately, the findings of the study in question infer that "while poor T cell responses were associated with future progression of disease in male patients, higher innate immune cytokine levels were associated with worsening of COVID-19 disease in female patients". In a broader sense, what one lacks, the other one possesses.

Unfortunately, men are not yet out of the woods. It was stressed in the results of the study that a negative correlation is present between the male patients' age and T cell response. This means that as a male patient's age increases, his T cell response decreases. This sheds more likelihood on the susceptibility of men to COVID-19.

Overall, the information produced by this study could significantly influence the treatments for the patients as it offers a basis for a possible sex-based approach. As proposed by the researchers, therapies and vaccines that would increase T cell response to SARS-CoV-2 may be developed for male patients. As for female patients, diminishing innate immune activation firsthand might be of top priority for their therapies.

It goes without saying that now more than ever, research is of utmost importance. Studies like this, whether directly or indirectly, take humanity one step closer to the eradication of the pandemic.

ICA STUDENT-ATHLETES, STILL ON THE GO!

Marius Vhaugn Jheol Baguio

Despite the Corona Virus Outbreak, Immaculate Conception Academy – Dasmariñas still acknowledges sports-related scholarships and new student-athletes for the school year 2020-2021.

Starting from the opening of the current assessment year on July 20, ICA embraces newly signed-in student-athletes from different sports: basketball, badminton, volleyball, swimming, chess, etc. in addition to the old grantees.

“Using our free times, we are training ourselves consistently during weekdays after our academic works. We, the whole volleyball team are sending video clips of our practice routines to Coach Kookie as proofs of our eagerness to improve for the better. I think a precise balance of discipline and hard work, together with a healthy lifestyle are key factors to maintain our play and fitness,”

varsity Bryan Ledesma said in an interview.

In addition, Coach John Benedict “Kookie” Castillo said that in order for the athletes to keep their plays in touch, they should not slack off and stop their practices.

“I have instructed them to meet me online every Sunday noontime to give updates about their class statuses and during weekdays, I am expecting them to send video clips. As Bryan had said, I am monitoring their activities both as academic students and sportspersons as well,”

Coach Kookie added.

On the other hand, Mrs. Jaqueline “Jaq” Serote, coach of the badminton team, just like what Coach Castillo has been doing, she constantly assesses her players everyday and keeps track of their performances.

Aside from undergoing a virtual setup for the academic year 2020-2021, ICA remained as it is; open arms to both students and sportspersons, and are still embracing new grantees of what they could offer.



Photo from Bryan Ledesma while having his training at home.

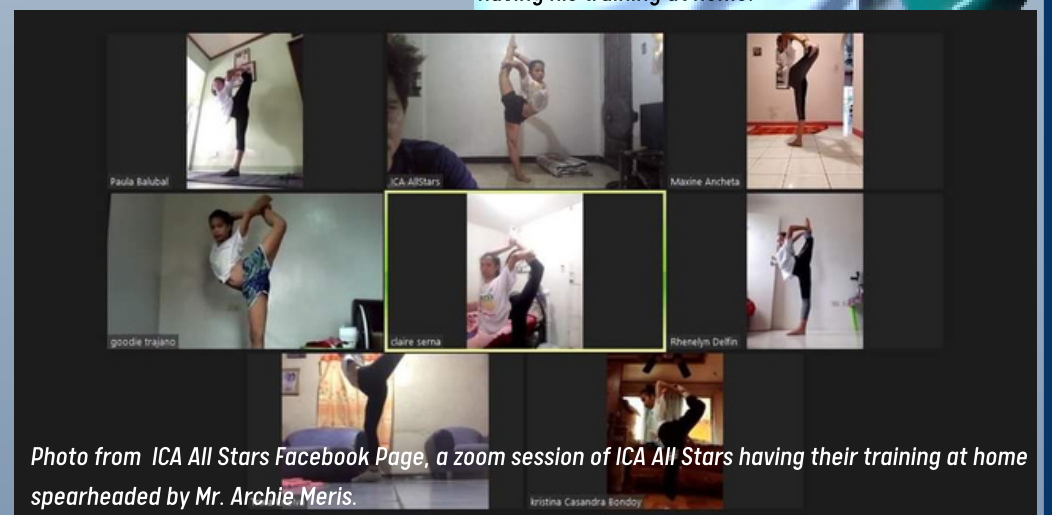


Photo from ICA All Stars Facebook Page, a zoom session of ICA All Stars having their training at home spearheaded by Mr. Archie Meris.

UST FACES SPORTS SCHOLARSHIP REMOVAL DUE TO BUDGET DROUGHT

Marius Vhaugn Jheol Baguio

University of Santo Tomas – Manila student athletes suffer scholarship issues amidst COVID-19 outbreak as UST withdraws financial assistance to athletes due to cost-cutting.

According to the official student publication of UST, The Varsitarian, 30 tiger athletes were about to be released from the reduction grants and the rest were to be subjected on a training pool that will save their 50% discounts.

Based on the school paper, UST Rector Fr. Richard Ang, O. P. stated that the scholarships they had granted during the second semester of the Assessment Year 2019-2020 would last up until December 2020 covering the first semester of this year.

“There was no formal letter yet in regards with the scholarship issue that we, the student athletes are facing. All we know is that we had been instructed to be ready for any news that might come up because some of our Team B colleagues have

a student athlete said via GMA News Online.

However, UST Office of Admission website posted that only the Santo Tomas Academic Scholarship for learners with excellent academic performance and the San Martin de Porres Equity Scholarship among students who need financial support would be accessible and given this S. Y. 2020- 2021.

Furthermore, the site also released a blog in regards with the Santo Domingo de Guzman Scholarship, a grant for the sportspersons would not be offered this year.

With this set of inconsistent details from both sides, medias and news men are looking forward for the response UST’s Institute of Physical Athletics’ (IPEA) would give.

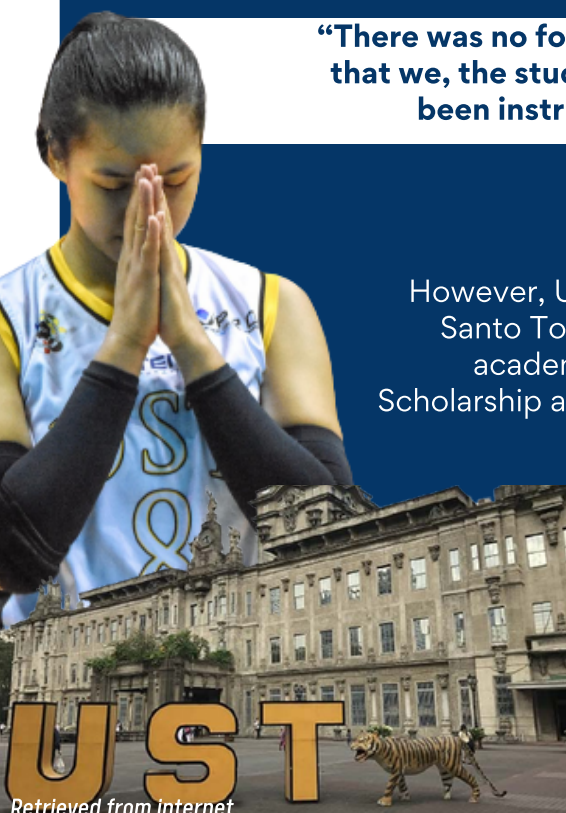
NEVER ENDING JOURNEY: A TRIBUTE TO THE BLACK MAMBA

Jhanna Canuel

Kobe Bean Bryant, also known as Kobe Bryant. Son of former NBA player Joe Bryant. He was born on August 23, 1978 in Philadelphia USA. Bryant is a 41 year NBA player. Lakers were Bryant’s favourite team growing up. The moved to Italy when his father, Joe retired from playing basketball. During summers, Bryant would go back to USA to play for summer leagues. After graduating he played for Charlotte Hornets and later on transferred to Lakers. He became the youngest All-Star in NBA history at the age of 19. Bryant humbly made a noise in the field. He is an all-time leading scorer in Lakers history. In the mid 200s Bryant named himself as the “Black Mamba” of the court. Bryant married Vanessa Laine when she turned 18 and built their own family and had their first child, Natalia, and their second, Gianna Bryant. Kobe died last January 26, 2020 alongside with her daughter and seven more people inside a helicopter. They were bound to Calabasas to attend a youth basketball tournament where their helicopter crashed at Calabasas California.

It is a very shocking news for everyone especially to his Family, Friends, and to the Basketball community. Kobe left everyone with so much knowledge and memories inside the court. A black mamba,, indeed. He is a legend no one can replace. It is sad that he’s no longer with us but Kobe Bryant will always be our Kobe Bryant.

“I don’t want to be the next Michael Jordan, I only want to be Kobe Bryant- Kobe Bean Bryant”.



UST Retrieved from internet.