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BUSINESS MIRROR

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By: Samuel Medenilla

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By: Cai Ordinario

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MANILA BULLETIN

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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By: Windi Arini

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PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

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By: Presidential Communications Office

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SUNSTAR

[Morgan Stanley vows to invest in Philippines](#)

By: Third Anne Peralta-Malonzo

PRESIDENT Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. got an investment commitment from global leader in investment banking Morgan Stanley, which expressed support to the administration's aggressive development agenda showcased by Marcos during his attendance at the World Economic Forum (WEF).

THE MANILA TIMES

[PH to host International Ecotourism Travel Mart](#)

THE Philippines takes global centerstage once more as it hosts the International Ecotourism Travel Mart (IETM), the world's first-ever and biggest ecotourism-themed expo on March 30-31 at the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction in Silang, Cavite.

[PEZA to launch sustainability reporting](#)

By: Catherine Talavera

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) is set to launch a sustainability reporting initiative this year as part of its earlier signed memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).

[Metro 3rd gears for intensified coastal management](#)

By: Gilbert Bayoran

Metro 3rd officials led by Third District Rep. Jose Francisco Benitez and Victorias City Mayor Javier Miguel “Javi” Benitez, chair of the Metro 3rd Coastal Management Alliance, convened a special meeting of the Negros 3rd District Coastal Resources Management and Development Council (N3DCRMDC) on January 17 in Talisay City, to gear up the integrated plans of various stakeholders for the restoration and conservation of coastal resources, efforts on equitable use of resources and more importantly, create more opportunities for marginal fisherfolk.

THE VISAYAN DAILY STAR

[\[Opinion\] Signal number what?](#)

By: Carlos Antonio Leonardia

Last week, what was defined as a “low pressure area” and “shear line” in terms of meteorological terms, affected parts of the Philippines, including Negros Island. These few days of bad weather resulted in flooding, landslides, evacuations, agricultural damage and school cancellations in many different areas all over the country.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS MIRROR

[Marcos seeks more focus on research to fight climate change impacts on agri productivity](#)

By: Samuel Medenilla

Concerned over the effects of climate change on agriculture productivity. President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. is now eyeing to focus government spending on research to make the sector more resilient to extreme weather.

During the Panel Session on Moving Towards Nutrition Security at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos, Switzerland on Wednesday, the President disclosed the measure is part of the government initiative to further improve the country's food and nutrition security.

Under the 2021 Global Food Security Index, he said the Philippines was ranked at a modest 64th out of 113 countries in four dimensions of food security.

“Government spending will focus on productivity-enhancing interventions for the agricultural sector, research and development is going to be a very important component for this as...with the advent, as it has been mentioned, with the advent of the climate change issues, the impact on climate change has to be part of that discussion,” Marcos said.

For this year, the government allocated 9 percent of the national budget for conservation, climate change adaptation and disaster risk reduction initiatives.

The President reiterated he wants to increase the said budget allocation to 15 percent annually.

“The Philippines recognizes the importance of mitigating the impact of climate change on economic growth and resilience,” the President said during the High-Level Dialogue-Investing in Infrastructure for Resilience at the 2023 WEF.

“To this end, it is our top priority to design and build climate-resilient infrastructure, programs, and projects,” he added.

Such investments, the President said, is also expected to help boost the economy.

Other measures to be adopted by the government to ensure the nutritional needs of the country's population will be met, Marcos said, will be the promotion of non-conventional forms of agriculture such as urban and vertical farming, and community gardening for subsistence supply.

The President said they would also look into technologies that increase the nutritional value and prolong the shelf life of food and promote values related to green and circular economy.

"We are looking to work with the WEF and various stakeholders on a holistic and integrated plan covering both food security and nutrition security," Marcos said.

[Ukraine war, climate, China reopening to keep prices up](#)

By: Cai Ordinario

THE war in Ukraine, China's reopening and climate change will continue making commodities expensive this year, according to London-based think tank the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU).

The EIU said that while its weighted price indexes are expected to trade downward this year, prices such as those of food, feedstuffs, and beverages will remain elevated because of the war in Ukraine.

The reopening of China will make base metal prices edge upward this year; while climate change is deemed as a "wild card" that could impair production of certain agricultural products.

"Although commodities prices will not fuel global inflation in 2023 as they did in 2021-22, upside risks to our baseline price forecasts are increasing and largely center on China, climate change and continued conflict in Ukraine," the EIU said in its latest Commodities Outlook.

Central to the impact of the Ukraine war on global trade is the Black Sea region, where Ukraine wheat imports transit despite the Russian blockade, the EIU said.

Developments in the Black Sea will also impact the trade and prices of oilseeds and vegetable oil prices as well as on coffee, cocoa and tea prices through high fertilizer prices and possible shortages.

In terms of the impact of China's reopening, EIU said base metal prices will be elevated but will not be as high as in 2022. The average prices of base metals is expected to drop by 11 percent in 2023 compared to 2022.

The reopening of China will, however, have a positive impact on cotton as well as energy in the domestic market. The reopening, however, will lead to more expensive gas and liquefied natural gas (LNG) prices.

Oil prices

Meanwhile, the EIU said oil prices are expected to average more than \$85 per barrel this year. This is also because of OPEC's production which will decline by 3 million barrels per day from the peak in 2022.

Energy prices will also be elevated since Russian gas supplies will remain cut off for the European Union. This will have “lasting consequences” on the European market.

“OPEC unity and commitment to lower production quotas in the face of pressure from Western countries should be watched in 2023,” EIU said. “Increased global demand for LNG will boost US natural gas prices and sustain higher LNG contract prices, which will fall only moderately in 2023.”

Climate change, meanwhile, will again play a major role in commodities this year. Heatwaves in the northern hemisphere and other extreme weather events will affect agriculture production.

A La Niña, EIU said, would affect maize and soybean production in the first half of 2023, in addition to other crops like sugar and coffee.

Weather conditions will also have a significant impact on energy consumption. Heatwaves would cause gas and electricity prices to spike while drought affected hydropower generation in many countries.

EIU said the combination of dry conditions and rising water temperatures will also hit nuclear power generation.

[Marcos admin prioritizing climate-resilient infra projects](#)

By: Anna Felicia Bajo

President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. said his administration is prioritizing building climate-resilient infrastructure programs.

Marcos made the remark on Wednesday during the High-Level Dialogue Investing In Infrastructure For Resilience in Davos, Switzerland at the sidelines of the 2023 World Economic Forum.

"The Philippines recognizes the importance of mitigating the impact of climate change on economic growth and resilience. To this end, it is our top priority to design and build climate-resilient infrastructure, programs, and projects," he said.

The Philippine government has allocated 9% of the national budget "towards initiatives to support conservation, climate change adaptation, and disaster risk reduction," according to Marcos.

"I have committed to work to increase this figure to an average of 15 percent annually," he added.

Marcos said the "Build, Better, More" flagship program has placed infrastructure development as "the pinnacle of our vision for an equitable, prosperous, and resilient Philippines by 2040."

"We recognize the critical role of the private sector partners to enable the realization of these high goals," he said.

MANILA BULLETIN

[ELEVENTH HOUR: Low-carbon tourism as a sustainable pathway to recovery](#)

By: Climate Reality Project Philippines

With countries relaxing border restrictions and economies reopening across the globe, one thing is for sure: revenge travel is in full swing. Now that travel regulations are easing up, people are hardwired to reconnect with loved ones and make up for time lost during the lockdowns.

Boracay Island in Western Visayas alone logged over a million tourists within the first eight months of 2022 and the number continues to grow, according to the Malay Municipal Tourism Office. A partial report from the Department of Tourism (DOT) Region 7 also revealed that Cebu Province registered approximately 1.8 million tourists in the first nine months of 2022. In Bohol, tourist arrivals increased by 52 percent for the first half of last year compared to the same period in 2021, according to the Bohol Tourism Office.

The year 2022 has been fairly good for the travel industry, but can we say the same for the environment?

Tourism is fundamentally linked to climate change. According to a report made by the World Travel and Tourism Council in November 2021, carbon emissions of the travel and tourism industry range from 8 percent to 11 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions (3.9 to 5.4 billion tons of CO₂ emissions out of a total of 48.9b tCO₂e in 2019). This makes the travel and tourism sector a significant contributor to climate change.

We cannot tell people to stop traveling, but we can make the travel industry more sustainable. The Philippine tourism industry's pathway to recovery should be anchored on the principles of low-carbon tourism, the kind of travel that contributes the least impact on the planet.

In 2022, we at Las Islas Travel and Tours took our commitment to sustainable tourism to the next level by becoming the first travel company in the Philippines to become a full-fledged member of Sustainable Travel International, a mission-driven organization dedicated to protecting and conserving our planet's most vulnerable destinations.

As a pioneer member from the Philippines, we are now part of a global movement of conscientious travelers and businesses that are passionate about making a difference

and giving back to the places we depend on. We are working to transform tourism's impact on nature and people by operating alongside local communities, engaging travelers and businesses in responsible practices, and strengthening destination management.

Through this work with Sustainable Travel International, we aim to safeguard nature, combat climate change, and empower communities to preserve the integrity of destinations in the Philippines and around the globe.

We have also launched a carbon footprint calculator on our website that could help travelers compute the carbon emissions generated by their various travel activities. The carbon footprint calculator helps travelers better understand their individual environmental impact by enabling them to calculate carbon emissions generated from taking flights, riding boats and other vehicles, and engaging in tourism activities. Powered by Sustainable Travel International, the Las Islas Travel and Tours carbon footprint calculator is free for all and can be easily accessed at www.lasislas.ph.

While there are many ways that you can minimize your carbon footprint while traveling, no matter how sustainable your travel habits are, certain carbon emissions are just simply still unavoidable. That's where carbon offsetting comes in.

In simple terms, carbon offsetting allows you to compensate for the carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gas emissions you produce by reducing emissions somewhere else. Calculating the carbon footprint of a particular activity is the first step toward offsetting emissions from traveling. Carbon offset credits purchased through the calculator support a vast portfolio of high-quality climate projects, including forest conservation, clean energy, and blue carbon projects around the world.

From introducing eco-pledges to banning single-use plastic on our tours, we at Las Islas Travel and Tours have always championed responsible tourism since our inception in 2014.

Last year, we took our commitment a notch higher by allowing our clients the opportunity to offset the carbon emissions generated by traveling.

In example would be the recent Iloilo City tour we organized and supervised for the Filipino Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii in partnership with CCT 168 Travel and Tours. The 12-hour private city and culinary day tour onboard an air-conditioned bus generated about 0.17 metric tons of carbon emissions. We were able to offset the transportation's

carbon footprint by availing carbon credits from Sustainable Travel International, which supports third-party verified carbon offset projects that combat climate change.

Sustainable Travel International carefully vets all its carbon offset projects, supporting only those that are verified to deliver real and measurable emissions reductions.

In the latter part of 2022, we also took part in the Slow Food movement, which envisions a world where everyone can eat food that is good for them, good for the people who grow it, and good for the planet. In partnership with Slow Food Negros, we organized and facilitated a site validation tour of Antique Province as a possible Slow Food Community. Forming communities with good, clean, and fair food is a prerequisite to formulating a Slow Food Travel itinerary, which promotes the local gastronomic heritage and the conservation of its biodiversity. By fostering sustainability along the food value chain, Slow Food Travel generates a low-carbon footprint.

Restarting travel should be done responsibly and ethically at a time of anthropogenic climate change. Moving forward, the Philippine travel industry should ensure that it is headed for long-term success and progress by employing best practices in sustainability. This means rebuilding a Philippine tourism industry that values the health of the planet and its people.

By reducing the carbon footprint of the travel industry, tourism can be used as a force for good that could benefit generations to come. Sustainability should now be the new and better normal.

Thunberg says people in Davos fuel 'destruction of planet'

By: Agence France Presse

DAVOS, Switzerland – Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg accused attendees of the World Economic Forum in Davos of “fuelling the destruction of the planet” as she arrived at the event in the Swiss Alps on Thursday.

“We are right now in Davos where (there are) basically the people who are mostly fuelling the destruction of the planet,” she said.

“The people who are at the very core of the climate crisis, the people who are investing in fossil fuels etc, and yet somehow these are the people that we seem to rely on for solving our problems.”

The 20-year-old Swede spoke on the sidelines of the WEF with fellow activists Helena Gualinga of Ecuador, Vanessa Nakate of Uganda and Luisa Neubauer of Germany at a CNBC panel that included International Energy Agency head Fatih Birol.

Thunberg said change will have to come from “the bottom up”.

“Without massive public pressure from the outside, these people are going to go as far as they possibly can, as long as they can get away with it,” she said.

“They will continue to invest in fossil fuels. They will continue to throw people under the bus for their own gain.”

Birol said the energy sector must be transformed or “we have no chance whatsoever to reach our climate targets”.

He said that attention to climate change is “sliding down” the international agenda including in Davos.

“It is now time to ring the alarm bells, bring the climate crisis together with other crises, the energy crisis, the food crisis, atop of the international policy agenda,” he said.

[UN chief slams oil firms for 'big lie' on global warming](#)

By: Agence France Presse

DAVOS, Switzerland – UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres skewered oil firms on Wednesday for having “peddled the big lie” about their role in global warming, telling the World Economic Forum that they should be held accountable.

Addressing a room full of the world’s business and political elite, Guterres drew a parallel between the actions of oil companies and those of tobacco companies that have been hit by huge lawsuits over the adverse effects of cigarettes.

“We learned last week that certain fossil fuel producers were fully aware in the 1970s that their core product was baking our planet,” Guterres said.

He was referring to a study published in the journal Science that said ExxonMobil had dismissed the findings of its own scientists on the role of fossil fuels in climate change.

“Just like the tobacco industry, they rode roughshod over their own science,” Guterres said, referring to lawsuits that determined cigarette companies had hidden the dangers of their products.

“Some in Big Oil peddled the big lie. And like the tobacco industry, those responsible must be held to account,” he said.

In 1998, US states won a landmark settlement against tobacco companies worth \$246 billion aimed at recovering the costs of treating smokers from the harmful effects of cigarettes.

The study on ExxonMobil found that the firm’s scientists had modelled and predicted global warming “with shocking accuracy”, only for the company “to spend the next couple of decades denying that very climate science”.

ExxonMobil is the target of a number of lawsuits in the United States.

Asked about the Science report, an ExxonMobil spokesman said last week that the issue had come up several times in recent years and in each case the company’s answer was that “those who talk about how ‘Exxon Knew’ are wrong in their conclusions”.

– **‘Roadblocking progress’** –

In his speech, Guterres urged the world to “end the addiction to fossil fuels” and warned that the aspirational goal of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius (2.7 degrees Fahrenheit) from pre-industrial levels was “going up in smoke”.

“Fossil fuel producers and their enablers are still racing to expand production, knowing full well that this business model is inconsistent with human survival,” he said.

“This insanity belongs in science-fiction, yet we know the ecosystem meltdown is cold, hard scientific fact,” Guterres added.

Asked if oil firms should be held accountable like tobacco firms, US climate envoy John Kerry told AFP he was “not looking right now for similarities or differences”.

“The first thing I would like to see right now is for the oil and gas companies to be joining with other critical companies, many of them here who are working diligently to try to address the climate crisis,” he said.

“We need oil and gas companies at the table to help do that,” Kerry added.

But former US vice president Al Gore, a Nobel peace prize winner for his work on climate change, praised Guterres’ speech.

“Every piece of pro-climate legislation at the national level, regional level, the local level, municipal level, the oil and gas industry and the coal industry come in and fight it tooth and nail,” he told a panel.

“They use their legacy network of political influence and wealth to stop progress,” he said.

Sweden’s Greta Thunberg and other young climate activists launched an online petition this week demanding that energy firms immediately stop opening any new oil, gas or coal extraction sites, warning that citizens would consider taking legal action to hold them accountable.

– ‘Credible’ net-zero pledges –

Guterres also called on business leaders to provide by the end of the year “credible and transparent” plans on how to achieve net-zero emissions.

He urged them to act based on recommendations published by UN experts at the UN climate summit in Egypt in November, which said firms could not claim to be net-zero if they invested in new fossil fuels, caused deforestation or offset emissions with carbon credits instead of reducing them.

Guterres also noted that the benchmarks and criteria in corporate pledges are “often dubious or murky”, which can “mislead consumers, investors and regulators with false narratives”.

“It feeds a culture of climate misinformation and confusion. And leaves the door open to greenwashing,” he said.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Cities forging ahead with their climate actions

By: Windi Arini

Scientists and thought leaders have reminded us that climate change is the defining issue of our time and is quickly becoming a human rights crisis. Research shows that 85 percent of the world's population has already experienced climate-induced extreme weather events.

About 55 percent of the world's population lives in urban areas, and this trend will continue in the next decades with a 90 percent increase of urbanization in Asia and Africa. Cities, particularly those in Asia, are some of the most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change.

Coastal cities like Jakarta, Bangkok, Chittagong, and Ho Chi Minh City are threatened by rising sea levels that will render parts of these cities unlivable, and put additional pressure on basic services and local infrastructure already strained by the COVID-19 pandemic. Other megacities like Delhi are experiencing rising heat waves with record-breaking temperatures reaching up to 49.2 degrees Celsius in May 2022.

Climate change and rapid urbanization may also increase the risk of future displacement in Asia. A report released by the Asian Development Bank and the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre highlighted that 225 million internal displacements were recorded in Asia Pacific between 2010-2021, with nearly two-thirds of the total recorded in East and Southeast Asia.

With increasingly severe climate events, such as storms, typhoons, drought, rainfalls, and heat waves, cities and those living in cities face multiple consequences. The impact of climate change in cities is more apparent for those living in areas lacking infrastructure and adaptive capacity, and individuals may be more vulnerable due to age, gender, disability, economic situation, caste, and other factors. Disasters and climate shocks will exacerbate preexisting inequalities and exclusion, rendering these groups even more vulnerable and exposed to future disasters and climate change-related risks.

Integrating a human rights-based approach into local climate adaptation plans is paramount to empowering public participation, resulting in better public services, more inclusive societies, and more sustainable and resilient cities.

While the world waited patiently (and watched in despair) for the nations negotiating at the Conference of the Parties (COP) 27 in Sharm El-Sheikh, Egypt, last November, cities are forging ahead with their ambitious, innovative, and rights-based climate actions. Mayors, planners, youth, human rights activists, academics, and civil society organizations from around the globe gathered in Gwangju, South Korea, to attend the annual World Human Rights Cities Forum, where they reaffirmed their commitment to integrating human rights into local climate actions.

One example that realized this commitment came from the City of Iloilo in the Philippines, which developed its local climate adaptation plans through participatory processes involving different sectors of society, from youth, persons with disabilities, and the LGBTQI+ community, to universities, civil society, and businesses.

Another example is the northern city of Baguio, which also developed its local adaptation plan through stakeholder meetings/consultations. The mayor also devised a strategy to mainstream local adaptation plans to various city development and investment plans.

Many more cities across Asia have initiated rights-based climate actions. For example, Dhaka issued a “Town Watching Manual,” which supports residents in understanding and identifying climate risks and vulnerability in their area, and helps them plan and take actions to minimize the negative impacts of climate change.

As part of Seoul’s effort to slash its transport emissions, the city government provides subsidies for electric vehicles of up to 20 percent, with additional support available for vulnerable people and low-income households to ensure all residents have access to clean transport.

Representatives from Asia and the Pacific youths presented their action points on youth participation in national and local climate adaptation plans. Building on the last year’s recommendations, the youth action points focus on how youth can participate more substantively in the planning, decision-making, monitoring, and evaluation of national and local climate adaptation plans. The message of nothing about us without us was made loud and clear throughout the discussion.

There is a gap in the capacity of government actors to develop and implement climate policies underpinned by gender and human rights. Whilst there are numerous resources on how to mainstream gender in climate change projects, opportunities to train technical people at national and local levels are limited.

Cities play an important role in global climate action, as often cities move faster than nations. However, without a coherent global plan on what cities can and should do and the corresponding financing, cities cannot meet their full potential as sources of innovation and solutions.

The lack of accessible climate finance for cities to spearhead local mitigation and adaptation efforts, especially in the Global South, risks exacerbating the adverse effects of climate change, such as climate-induced migration, that will impact the Global North.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

[Morgan Stanley pledges PH investment, to set up Manila office following PBBM meeting](#)

By: Presidential Communications Office

MANILA -- Multinational investment firm Morgan Stanley made a commitment Wednesday to invest in the Philippines to support the administration's aggressive development agenda during a meeting with President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. in Switzerland.

President Marcos met with Mr. Gokul Laroia, Chairman for Asia Pacific of Morgan Stanley, on the sidelines of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos.

Laroia informed President Marcos that the top global investment bank would set up an office in Manila, promising to back the government's development initiatives.

The Morgan Stanley official said President Marcos is on the right track in involving the private sector, especially in developing the country's infrastructure.

And the sovereign wealth fund being pushed by the administration becomes interesting because a lot of the infrastructure investments will be carried out in the long term, Laroia said.

When issues on government policy are addressed, private sector participation automatically happens, particularly by raising capital, according to Laroia.

"Because you know there's a lot to work with in the Philippines, as you said, the supply side dynamics need to improve," Laroia said.

"We're seeing some evidence of diversification of supply chains, the need to have the infrastructure benefit from that. So all of these can be a vicious cycle," the Morgan Stanley official pointed out.

Aside from private sector participation in infrastructure development, one of the areas that the government is looking into is the so-called environmental funding or climate change funding, President Marcos said during the meeting.

There are climate change funds such as the European Union (EU) green bond, as well as the United Nations (UN) financial instruments that the country can tap, Marcos said

as he noted that one of the challenges is clarifying the methodology for actual fund disbursement.

In developing infrastructures, the President pointed out that the public sector has to have the basic capacities, both hard and soft, and it has to lay the groundwork before the private sector comes in to flesh out everything.

Assuring the President, the Morgan Stanley official said: “We’re excited to be a part of it, and we’re spending time there, we’re opening an office there, we’re trying to work with—both the government but also the private sector. And we will be supporters and we will continue to be.”

Morgan Stanley is an American multinational investment management and financial services company headquartered in Midtown Manhattan, New York City.

It is a global leader in investment banking and has been advising clients on transactions, including mergers, acquisitions, restructurings, initial public offerings (IPOs), convertibles, share repurchases, debt offerings, and derivatives, among other services.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Legarda cites value of PH-Italy ties amid formidable challenges](#)

By: Leonel Abasola

MANILA – Senate President Pro Tempore Loren Legarda on Thursday emphasized the importance of the deepening relationship between Philippines and Italy as the two countries face the daunting challenges ahead with hope and anticipation.

“The world is decisively changing, shaped by the dangerous effects of climate change, technological advancements, and sharp shifts in social and individual values. The situation can be formidable and intimidating, but the Philippines and Italy must face the future and create deeper partnerships that can help navigate uncharted territory,” Legarda said in a statement.

“As such, I commit to supporting Philippine-Italian projects and programs, whether these be in the arts, culture, or trade and economy. It is when we ensure a sustainable exchange that we step into the unknown with hope and anticipation,” she said

The Senate leader issued the statements after being conferred the award of “Commendatore” to the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic in appreciation of her role in strengthening bilateral relations between the Philippines and Italy.

The recognition was presented to Legarda by Italian Ambassador to the Philippines Marco Clemente on Wednesday at the ambassador’s residence in Makati City.

“It is immensely an honor to receive the prestigious Order of Merit from the Italian Republic. I am extremely grateful to the Italian Republic, President Sergio Mattarella, to my good friend Pier Ferdinando Casini, and to His Excellency Marco Clemente and everyone else involved with this recognition,” Legarda stated as she accepted the award.

The title “Commendatore” is the second recognition bestowed on Legarda by the government of Italy. On July 13, 2017, the Cavaliere dell Ordine al Merito Della Repubblica Italiana (Knight in the Order of Merit of the Italian Republic) was presented to her by then Italian Ambassador to the Philippines Massimo Roscigno.

Legarda said Philippines and Italy share common goals and interests, including the love of food, diverse culture, passion for arts, and the tradition of family values and close-knit communities.

She also underscored how culture could lead to peace and stability; thus, promoting Philippine culture remained her passion and advocacy.

In 2015, the Philippines was able to return to the Venice Biennale after a 51-year hiatus through Legarda's initiative in partnership with the Department of Foreign Affairs and the National Commission for Culture and the Arts.

"This is the best example of how cultural exchanges are not merely a way to showcase and promote culture. Our participation in Venice has forged a deep relationship because each year we exchange ideas, we have meaningful discourses and we have new experiences together," Legarda said.

As a legislator, Legarda has bridged parliamentary relations between the Philippines and other nations, including Italy, to become partners for economic cooperation and cultural promotion.

Her dedication was acknowledged through numerous global recognitions, such as the Global Leader for Tomorrow given by the World Economic Forum (WEF). She is also a United Nations Environment Programme Laureate, and the Global Ambassador for Disaster Risk Reduction, Climate Change, and Environment of the Women Political Leaders.

In recognition of her commitment to the fight against climate change and to the promotion of Philippine culture and heritage, she has been bestowed the title of Chevalier (Knight) in the Ordre national de la légion d'Honneur (National Order of the French Legion of Honor) by then French President Francois Holland through former French Ambassador Thierry Mathou on Feb. 18, 2016, and on Nov. 2, 2022, she was recognized as Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Biodiversity Hero in Bogor, Indonesia, for her significant contributions to biodiversity efforts in the Philippines.

RE-powered e-vehicle charging hubs eyed

By: Kris Crismundo

MANILA – The Department of Energy (DOE) has forged a tripartite memorandum of agreement (MOA) with Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corp. (PSPC) and Shell Energy Philippines, Inc. (SEPH) Thursday to conduct a pilot study on the use of renewable energy like solar power in electric vehicle charging stations.

In a statement, DOE said Secretary Raphael Lotilla, PSPC president and chief executive officer Lorelie Osial, and SEPH president Bernd Krukenberg signed the MOA that aims to promote the use of clean energy in e-vehicle charging stations.

"I commend PSPC and SEPH for collaborating with the DOE for this laudable undertaking -- a sound testament of their resoluteness in maximizing value creation while contributing to global climate change mitigation," Lotilla said.

He added that this undertaking is in line with the implementation of the Electric Vehicle Industry Development Act (EVIDA), which aims to create an enabling environment to promote the adoption of e-vehicles and support infrastructures like charging stations.

Under the pilot project, the private sector will supply, install, operate and maintain e-vehicle charging stations; monitor and verify the energy efficiency, performance and savings in using renewable energy; and optimize the use of clean energy.

The output of the study will be used as a reference for the agency to develop programs, policies, and regulations in adopting the utilization renewable energy for e-vehicle charging stations, the DOE added.

It added that the data generated from the pilot study will also serve as benchmark for PSPC and SEPH in developing and rolling out of e-vehicle charging networks in their existing and future Shell-branded mobility sites.

"These alternative opportunities could position Shell at the forefront of their quest for sustainable and inclusive growth by adding a more long-term vision of clean technologies and renewable energy investment into their portfolio," Lotilla said.

Under the Philippine Energy Plan 2020-2040, the DOE targets a 10-percent penetration rate of e-vehicles for road transport by 2040.

As of 2021, there were 9,000 registered e-vehicles and 327 charging stations nationwide.

To boost the local e-vehicle industry, the Comprehensive Roadmap for Electric Vehicle Industry will be released by end of the first quarter of the year.

SUNSTAR

[Morgan Stanley vows to invest in Philippines](#)

By: Third Anne Peralta-Malonzo

PRESIDENT Ferdinand “Bongbong” Marcos Jr. got an investment commitment from global leader in investment banking Morgan Stanley, which expressed support to the administration’s aggressive development agenda showcased by Marcos during his attendance at the World Economic Forum (WEF).

On the sidelines of the WEF in Switzerland, Marcos met with Gokul Laroia, chairman for Asia Pacific of Morgan Stanley. Laroia informed Marcos that they will be setting up an office in Manila and promised to back the government’s development initiatives.

Morgan Stanley is an American multinational investment management and financial services company headquartered in Midtown Manhattan, New York City.

It is a global leader in investment banking and has been advising clients on transactions, including mergers, acquisitions, restructurings, initial public offerings (IPOs), convertibles, share repurchases, debt offerings, and derivatives, among other services.

Laroia said the Marcos administration is on the right track in involving the private sector in its plans especially for the betterment of the infrastructure in the Philippines, noting that when issues on government policy are addressed, private sector participation automatically happens, particularly by raising capital.

“Because you know there’s a lot to work with in the Philippines, as you said, the supply side dynamics need to improve,” the Morgan Stanley official said.

“We’re seeing some evidence of diversification of supply chains, the need to have the infrastructure benefit from that. So all of these can be a vicious cycle,” he added.

Marcos told Laroia that another area the government is looking into to develop is the so-called environmental funding or climate change funding.

“We’re excited to be a part of it, and we’re spending time there, we’re opening an office there, we’re trying to work with— both the government but also the private sector. And we will be supporters and we will continue to be,” said Laroia.

Laroia said they also find the proposed sovereign fund of the Philippines interesting because a lot of the infrastructure investments will be carried out in the long term.

In a breakfast meeting with top international chief executive officers (CEOs) on the sidelines of WEF, Marcos maintained that setting up a Philippine sovereign wealth fund is a “good idea” to leverage government assets and pursue big-ticket infrastructure projects, particularly in energy and agriculture, as well as digitalization.

“When we first discussed the sovereign wealth fund, the real purpose is that there is not enough money in government to do all the things that we need to do,” Marcos said.

“We have reserves. And we must make [sure] that money sitting in banks, commercial and government... we need to find a way to make that money work for us, and that’s why we thought the sovereign wealth fund would be a good idea to leverage what assets the government has, what monies the government has,” he added.

Marcos said the sovereign fund will encourage private sectors to partner with the government, noting its crucial role in national growth and development.

The President assured that with the professionals managing the fund, it will be efficient in driving strategically important investments to the country.

“The management of the wealth fund must be seen to be rational, sober, professional... we will certainly make sure that anyone who will look at the fund will see that it is run professionally and properly. In that way, the wealth fund has a good future to be able, as I said, to succeed in doing what we want to do, which is leveraging what we have for these big-ticket investments,” Marcos said.

House Bill 6398, which seeks the establishment of the Maharlika Wealth Fund, was introduced by House speaker Martin Romualdez, Marcos’ cousin, in November 2022.

Initially, under the proposed measure, the funds, which will be invested in real estate and financial assets, will be sourced from primarily from contributions from the Government Service Insurance System (GSIS), Social Security System (SSS), Land Bank of the Philippines (Land Bank), and Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP).

It was later decided to no longer compel GSIS and SSS to serve as mandatory contributors to the funds amid concern raised by pensioners.

Marcos admitted being the one who brought it up in order for the country to have additional sources of investment as he certified the bill as urgent.

The bill was approved on third and final reading by the House of Representatives on December 15, 2022 and was transmitted to the Senate on December 19, 2022.

THE MANILA TIMES

[PH to host International Ecotourism Travel Mart](#)

THE Philippines takes global centerstage once more as it hosts the International Ecotourism Travel Mart (IETM), the world's first-ever and biggest ecotourism-themed expo on March 30-31 at the International Institute for Rural Reconstruction in Silang, Cavite.

Organized by the Japan-based Asian Environmental Network, the IETM will promote the country's ecotourism sites, indigenous practices and culture, and push for measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

According to International School for Sustainable Tourism (ISST) president Mina Gabor, the fair will share best practices on ecotourism from global experts and provide networking avenues with ecotourism authorities and advocates.

The gathering will also bring together delegates and exhibitors worldwide to showcase products and services that have a strong ecotourism component, green technology and sustainable green practices.

The IETM will also have an Ecotourism Interactive Forum which is a series of six titles and themes designed to offer practical insights and effective steps to help improve sustainability knowledge and practice. Each session will have breakout or discussion group sessions for interaction among the group members and speakers.

Forum themes are Introduction to Ecotourism, Sociocultural Dimensions of Ecotourism, Environment and its Impact to Ecotourism, Economics/Business of Ecotourism, Education for Ecotourism, and Technology, Marketing and Promotion for Ecotourism, all of which will include best practices.

In line with the event, the ISST, the Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), and the Southeast Asian Regional Center for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture forged a memorandum of understanding for the hosting of the expo.

"The Covid-19 pandemic has catalyzed the growing awareness that nature is part of the solution to public health and environmental challenges. Thus, a regional fair that elevates the tourism sector as a leader in promoting the balance between economic development and harnessing nature as a solution to our current challenges only comes timely," says ACB executive director Theresa Mundita Lim.

She said that ACB will feature the success stories of its biodiversity conservation and livelihood programs in Southeast Asia through an interactive exhibition and displays featuring earth-friendly materials.

The event's government partner agencies are the Department of Tourism, Tourism Promotions Board, the Province of Cavite, and the Municipality of Silang.

[PEZA to launch sustainability reporting](#)

By: Catherine Talavera

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Economic Zone Authority (PEZA) is set to launch a sustainability reporting initiative this year as part of its earlier signed memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI).

In a statement, the PEZA said the goal of the sustainability reporting initiative is aimed at making sustainable actions and reporting.

“Voluntary compliance to the GRI’S Sustainability Action and Reporting and the UN SDGs can be a source of competitiveness for the country in attracting more FDIs and in enhancing regulatory compliance. Many advanced and developing economies subscribe to these principles to be able to measure the impact of FDIs on the host countries toward inclusive, resilient and sustainable development,” Panga said.

In March 2022, the PEZA forged an MOU with GRI for sustainability reporting.

Affiliated with the United Nations Environment Programme, GRI is an international independent standards organization that helps businesses, governments and other organizations understand and communicate their impacts on issues such as climate change, human rights and corruption.

PEZA’s MOU with the GRI was one of the topics discussed by PEZA OIC Tereso Panga during the recent Philippine-Switzerland 5th Joint Economic Commission (JEC) held in Bern, Switzerland on Jan. 12.

“This MOU aims to contribute to the acceleration and achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the advancement of sustainability reporting in the Philippines especially within the ecosystem of export-oriented locators in PEZA,”Panga said.

“This partnership is delivered within the framework of the GRI’s Sustainability Reporting for Responsible Business program and is funded by the Switzerland State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO),”he said.

Panga said among the objectives of the signed MOU are to raise awareness of sustainability and sustainability reporting among the export-oriented industry, and develop industry-specific sustainability reporting guidelines for the export-oriented

industry; and build capacity of the export-oriented industry on how to communicate their impacts to the economy, environment, and society.

Other efforts of the PEZA in line with the GRI MOU include plans of issuing a PEZA memorandum circular regarding sustainable trade and investments guidelines for the compliance of locators and registered business enterprises.

As part of this effort, a roundtable discussion (RTD) will be conducted in the later part of the first quarter.

In addition, the PEZA and the GRI will establish a technical working group (TWG) composed of various locators and industries.

“As for the prospective TWG members that will be formed for the sustainability reporting, GRI has already provided PEZA a proposed list of chosen industry locators and partners. PEZA and GRI are also inviting the Department Trade and Industry (DTI) and the PhilExport to be one of our potential TWG members,”the PEZA said.

Metro 3rd gears for intensified coastal management

By: Gilbert Bayoran

Metro 3rd officials led by Third District Rep. Jose Francisco Benitez and Victorias City Mayor Javier Miguel “Javi” Benitez, chair of the Metro 3rd Coastal Management Alliance, convened a special meeting of the Negros 3rd District Coastal Resources Management and Development Council (N3DCRMDC) on January 17 in Talisay City, to gear up the integrated plans of various stakeholders for the restoration and conservation of coastal resources, efforts on equitable use of resources and more importantly, create more opportunities for marginal fisherfolk.

Cong. Benitez hosted the meeting, underscoring the importance of taking an Eco-System Approach to coastal resource management, and emphasized the need to take into consideration climate change in policy formulation and support for fisherfolk communities affected by the environmental crisis.

“We must make sure that our coastal resources are managed properly and developed, with two specific variables that need to be kept in mind”, the solon said, in a statement issued by his office.

“First is climate change and how it’s changing our oceans and seas, and second are the fisherfolk that live off the resources that must be properly managed in a sustainable way,” the Rep. Benitez added.

Council chair and Victorias City Mayor Javi highlighted the importance of coming together to work on how to best manage the Third District’s marine and coastal resources.

“In the macro-level, coastal resource management is important for an archipelagic country like the Philippines in terms of climate change, livelihood for fisheries, and especially for tourism which is an economic driver for our country,” Mayor Benitez noted.

A review of the Metro 3rd coastal alliance fisheries and aquatic resource management plan was also tackled during the meeting, with the guidance of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Fish Right Program, through Visayan Sea Field Program Coordinator Andrea Leonor Barcelona, who presented the status of the Ecosystem-Approach to Fisheries Management (EAFM) Plan of the Council.

Among critical issues to be tackled by the Council are illegal fishing, black sand mining and sustainability of sardines and shellfish.

The N3CRMDC was formally organized in 2019, bringing together the Third District local government units to intensify synergy and collaborative work among government and non-government bodies.

The council will refine and finalize its EAFM Plan for the Third District under the guidance of the newly-elected chairperson Mayor Marvin Malacon of E.B Magalona.

Also present in the special meeting were representatives of offices providing assistance to the Metro 3rd Council – the Negros Occidental Provincial Government through the Provincial Environment Management Office, Provincial Environment Management Office, Fisheries Division of the Office of Provincial Agriculture, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, and Philippine Coast Guard. Also present were Talisay City Vice Mayor Nic Jalandoni, Talisay Councilor Carl Lizares and Silay City Councilor Antonio Duca Jr.

THE VISAYAN DAILY STAR

[\[Opinion\] Signal number what?](#)

By: Carlos Antonio Leonardia

Last week, what was defined as a “low pressure area” and “shear line” in terms of meteorological terms, affected parts of the Philippines, including Negros Island. These few days of bad weather resulted in flooding, landslides, evacuations, agricultural damage and school cancellations in many different areas all over the country.

According to reports, 15,198 persons from 4,476 families were affected by the floods and heavy rains and an estimated P30.4M worth of crops were ruined by the weather. Classes in all levels in public and private schools were also cancelled for 2-3 days, despite no typhoon signal being raised, which, if you come to think of it, must be how climate change feels like.

We are already familiar with the term low pressure area, or LPA, which in my mind, simply means a few days of abnormally wet weather but normally is nothing drastic. From my experience as a human being, an LPA is simply a warning to bring raingear or an umbrella, and not to get a carwash yet.

The new weather term being bandied around is “shear line,” which I have never heard of before. Although government and media has been using the term a lot recently, I never bothered looking it up and simply assumed it was just an LPA with an attitude but is not yet mean enough to be a typhoon.

Anyway, after last week, I finally looked up the term. According to the glossary of the American Meteorological Society, a shear line is a narrow zone across which there is an abrupt change in the horizontal wind component parallel to this line; a line of maximum horizontal wind shear. As a layman, I did not understand a word of this so I naturally turned to Wikipedia, which still contained so many meteorological terms that I won't waste space defining it anymore. Suffice to say, it is a technical term for a weather-related phenomenon.

The recent use of the difficult to define term ‘shear line’ by PAGASA tells me that they are having trouble defining the new breed of weather disturbances affecting the country. If in the olden days, it was simple as waiting for the weather bureau to declare Typhoon Signal numbers 1-5 before taking action, it looks like local government officials will now have to deal with weather phenomena like the new breed of LPA, shear lines and whatever comes next.

To be fair to the public officials who called off classes for 2-3 days while it was just raining normally in most places because that's what LPAs do, other places were already experiencing floods and landslides, so erring on the side of caution makes sense. However, without a proper protocol and/or definition from PAGASA and national government, the future becomes very confusing for school officials and parents every time an LPA is spotted (which is quite often), especially if it comes with a shear line (which nobody actually knows what it really means).

Climate change is upon us and if we don't adapt, we are going to get washed away. There are so many things we must do and haven't done, and one would be for PAGASA to consider restructuring its storm signal warnings. After a few episodes of LPA, habagat, shear line and whatever whatnot that turned out to be destructive and disruptive even if it wasn't defined as a typhoon because storm signals weren't raised, a review of the that would seem to be the most sensible course of action for any weather bureau.

This is what it means when they say we need to make our societies resilient as the climate changes. If we are not going to allow an LPA or shear line to regularly cancel classes and cause landslides, the quickest solution would be to change its definition so we can say a typhoon did it. Or at least come up with new warning signals that can help us prepare and cope with the new moods of the weather.

On the other hand, if these weather phenomena are going to be normal, maybe we should start making our schools, students and transport systems more rain proof so we don't have to cancel classes so easily every time. Or, since we should now be prepared for outbreaks and bad weather, an online backup protocol should be in place.

At the same time, our leaders will need to go beyond lip service when they say they will make our towns and cities resilient. When it comes to flood and landslide proofing, that means spending a lot on infrastructure, improvements and response mechanisms in order to achieve real "resiliency" instead of passing that job to regular Filipino who by now understand fully well what we have to do to fend for ourselves when crap happens.

For now, PAGASA and LGUs have to start getting their act together and figure out a better way to deal with the changing climate. Updating our storm signal warning system shouldn't be that hard to do. Hopefully that can be done before the next undefined storm comes along

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