



## NEWS ROUNDUP

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- Climate action: Makati installs solar panels in 9 public schools
- PHL told to use UN climate ruling to demand more from polluters
- Int'l beauty queen backs tariff breaks for EVs, urges PH for inclusive incentives
- [Opinion] Let's not wait until the water runs dry
- Water shortage poses challenge to strategists
- Planting native trees: More than just greening the City of Love
- Generally fair weather throughout PH on Tuesday – Pagasa
- Filipino seafarers next challenges: Stop 'ambulance chasing,' adapt to decarbonization
- [Opinion] Stopping the oil spill from a climate change perspective
- [Opinion] The climate apocalypse and the biblical apocalypse: Pick your fantasy
- Miss Earth 2022 backs tariff breaks, inclusive incentives for electric vehicles
- Transitional Committee on Loss and Damage Begins Work with Successful First Meeting in Egypt

### CCC IN THE NEWS:

- Modern e-jeepney eyed to cost less than P1M
- 'Oil spill dispersants pose risks to human health'

### ABS CBN

#### [Climate action: Makati installs solar panels in 9 public schools](#)

The city government of Makati City, the Philippines' financial hub, has installed solar panels in 9 of its public schools to promote "sustainable energy," and raise awareness on climate change impacts.

### BUSINESS WORLD

#### [PHL told to use UN climate ruling to demand more from polluters](#)

By: Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza

PHILIPPINE CLIMATE and good governance advocates urged the Marcos government to use the landmark United Nations (UN) ruling asking the world's top court to clarify

states' obligations regarding climate change in demanding more action from top polluters.

## **MANILA BULLETIN**

### **[Int'l beauty queen backs tariff breaks for EVs, urges PH for inclusive incentives](#)**

By: Aron Recuenco

Advocates of clean sources of energy got another big ally in Miss Earth 2022 and environmentalist Mina Sue Choi who has expressed her support on tariff breaks for electric vehicles (EVs) and its components.

### **[\[Opinion\] Let's not wait until the water runs dry](#)**

Year in, year out, alarm bells over a water crisis are being raised by various sectors of society. Water shortage is experienced in different parts of the country, drying large tracts of land and destroying the agriculture sector, due particularly to the entrance of the dry season, but now exacerbated because of the effects of climate change.

## **MANILA STANDARD**

### **[Water shortage poses challenge to strategists](#)**

By: Ray S. Eñano and AFP

The lack of access to potable water is an age-long problem facing global leaders and climate change is exacerbating the challenge.

## **PANAY NEWS**

### **[Planting native trees: More than just greening the City of Love](#)**

By: Glenda Tayona

PRESERVING and nurturing the environment is part of the Iloilo City government's development roadmap called W.H.E.E.L.S. (Welfare, Health and Sanitation, Education, Environmental Management, Livelihood, and Sustainability).

## **PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER**

### **[Generally fair weather throughout PH on Tuesday – Pagasa](#)**

By: Zacarian Sarao

Generally fair weather is expected to prevail throughout the country on Tuesday, with hot and humid temperatures in Luzon, said the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

## **RAPPLER**

### **[Filipino seafarers next challenges: Stop ‘ambulance chasing,’ adapt to decarbonization](#)**

By: Michelle Abad

MANILA, Philippines – Following the European Union (EU)’s decision to continue recognizing seafarer certificates issued by the Philippines, some next challenges for Filipino seafarers and the maritime industry include stopping “ambulance chasing” and adapting to decarbonization.

### **[\[Opinion\] Stopping the oil spill from a climate change perspective](#)**

By: John Leo Algo

It has been a month since the sinking of the MT Princess Empress, arguably the worst oil spill on Philippine waters since the one near Guimaras in 2006. The spread of pollution has already reached the coastlines of multiple provinces, from Palawan to Batangas, and is threatening the well-being of thousands of Filipinos.

## **THE MANILA TIMES**

### **[\[Opinion\] The climate apocalypse and the biblical apocalypse: Pick your fantasy](#)**

By: Yen Makabenta

I HAVE often wondered why the fabulists (sci-fi writers) of the climate change movement invoked the vision of Armageddon and apocalypse to conjure their prophecy of catastrophe from global warming or climate change.

## **THE PHILIPPINE STAR**

### **[Miss Earth 2022 backs tariff breaks, inclusive incentives for electric vehicles](#)**

Miss Earth 2022 and environmentalist Mina Sue Choi voiced her support for the implementation of tariff breaks for electric vehicles and its components, highlighting its necessity for the environment.

## **UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE**

### **[Transitional Committee on Loss and Damage Begins Work with Successful First Meeting in Egypt](#)**

The Transitional Committee on the operationalization of the funding arrangements and new fund for responding to loss and damage held its first meeting from 27 to 29 March 2023 in Luxor, Egypt. The meeting concluding with the adoption of a workplan towards COP28.

## **CCC IN THE NEWS:**

## **MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT**

### **[Modern e-jeepney eyed to cost less than P1M](#)**

By: Irma Isip

Francisco Motors Corp. targets to lower to P800,000 the cost of an electric jeepney to make it affordable to drivers and operators.

## **THE PHILIPPINE STAR**

### **[‘Oil spill dispersants pose risks to human health’](#)**

By: Helen Flores

The chemical-based dispersants being used to clean the oil spill in Oriental Mindoro pose risks to public health, an official of the Climate Change Commission (CCC) warned yesterday.

**Information and Knowledge Management Division**

## **ABS CBN**

### **Climate action: Makati installs solar panels in 9 public schools**

The city government of Makati City, the Philippines' financial hub, has installed solar panels in 9 of its public schools to promote "sustainable energy," and raise awareness on climate change impacts.

Makati Mayor Abby Binay said the use of solar panels is "just one step towards achieving our goal of creating a more sustainable and resilient city."

"As a city, we have a responsibility to protect the environment and address the effects of climate change... By investing in solar panels for our public schools, we are taking a step towards a greener, more sustainable future for our beloved city," she said during the inauguration of the solar panel program at San Antonio National High School.

"We are setting the bar, an example to the community na dapat gumawa na tayo ng paraan para maibsan 'yung nangyayari sa atin na climate crisis," she added in a separate interview with the media.

The San Antonio National High School is considered the first public school in Makati to have fully-operational solar panels, based on a statement from the city.

Makati aims to transition to the use of solar energy in 25 public elementary and high schools for this year, Binay said. While she admitted the installation was costly, the mayor believed their investments will be returned in 3 years.

The local government said 88 percent or 3,644 kilowatt hours (kWh) of San Antonio National High School's electricity consumption came from solar power, while 12 percent or 498 kWh was sourced from an electric distribution utility company.

So far, the following schools have started using solar power:

- Makati High School
- East Rembo Elementary School
- Makati Elementary School
- Pembo Elementary School
- San Antonio Village Elementary School
- Nicanor Garcia Elementary School
- Tibagan High School
- Rizal Elementary School

The installation of solar panels in 6 more public elementary and high schools is currently underway, the mayor said.

“I guess itong first 15 is the pilot, bilang patunay na aming sineseryoso ang call for climate action,” she said.

Ten more schools will have solar panels by next year, she added.

In August last year, the local official declared a state of climate emergency in a bid to lead local efforts to address the on-ground effects of rising global temperatures.

Binay said her city is also partnering with the Korea International Cooperation Agency to use electric buses for its smart public transport system.

## **BUSINESS WORLD**

### **[PHL told to use UN climate ruling to demand more from polluters](#)**

By: Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza

PHILIPPINE CLIMATE and good governance advocates urged the Marcos government to use the landmark United Nations (UN) ruling asking the world's top court to clarify states' obligations regarding climate change in demanding more action from top polluters.

On March 29, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution led by the Pacific Island nation of Vanuatu seeking an International Court of Justice (ICJ) advisory opinion on the obligations of states to combat climate change.

The resolution asks the ICJ to outline the "legal consequences" for states which "have caused significant harm to the climate system and other parts of the environment" in consideration of climate change's impacts on small island states and peoples.

"This is really a historic move by the UN and a very important one for climate-impacted countries like ours," Lea Guerrero, country director of Greenpeace Philippines, said in a phone interview.

"We believe that the Philippine government can substantially contribute to the proceedings," she said.

It might take about 18 months for an ICJ opinion to be issued, which will include inputs from different countries, Ms. Guerrero said, citing Vanuatu's estimate.

She urged the administration of President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. to use the decision in calling for more climate commitments from rich countries.

"This move should also be cited by the Philippine government as a basis to continue calling on rich countries to meet their targets in terms of reducing greenhouse gas emissions," Ms. Guerrero said.

The decision, she said, should also prompt the government to craft a coherent climate policy that would take into consideration the Commission on Human Rights' (CHR) report indicting more than 40 companies for driving the climate crisis and causing harm to Filipinos.

The National Government has yet to formally acknowledge the CHR report.

“Through this landmark resolution, countries and corporations with high carbon emissions and those funding or supporting environmentally destructive projects in climate-vulnerable developing countries will be held accountable,” Jerwin Baure, public information officer of Manila-based AGHAM, said in a Facebook Messenger chat.

“Countries like the Philippines have been suffering from worsening climate-related disasters, and this resolution could serve as a basis in demanding reparations.”

Joshua Villalobos, a 17-year-old climate activist from the central Philippine province of Negros Occidental, is among those who rejoice over the landmark ruling, which he said is “long overdue.”

“For the longest time, we have seen the inaction of polluter countries and vulnerable countries like the Philippines and our people have been at the receiving end of destructive and deadly climate impacts,” he said via Messenger chat.

#### ‘POWERFUL WEAPON’

The UN’s adoption of the Vanuatu-led resolution came on the same day that the European Court of Human Rights opened cases against France and Switzerland over alleged failures to protect the environment.

Gerry C. Arances, executive director of Center for Energy, Ecology, and Development, said the expected opinion from ICJ will be a “powerful weapon” for the Philippines and other vulnerable countries in demanding more climate actions from big countries.

“[It will compel them] to act in the best interests of peoples and protect them from worsening climate impact,” he said via Messenger chat.

Mr. Arances said the UN resolution should be taken as a “challenge” by the Philippine government to align all its development and economic plans to the “most ambitious” climate targets, advance a long overdue transition plan, and amplify the call for a global energy transition and the phaseout of fossil fuels.

Philip Arnold “Randy” P. Tuaño, dean of the Ateneo School of Government, said the UN decision should prompt the Marcos government to thoroughly document the impact of climate change on Philippine communities.

It should also compile reports showing climate change’s impact on the education and health sectors as well as economic activities including food production.



“The top polluters are...becoming more aware of these adverse impact and compensation was one of the key discussions in the previous Conference of Parties on the environment,” Mr. Tuaño noted. “There is some talk in European countries of increasing tariffs on goods and services that have a high carbon content but we hope that the European Union helps developing countries adjust to this situation before this is undertaken.”

Last year, Greenpeace said as much as 80% of Manila could be submerged by 2030, potentially impacting 87% of its economic output.

Antonio Gabriel “Tony” M. La Viña, a lawyer and environmental expert, said that although an advisory opinion is non-binding, it has a legal and moral weight. “It will send a strong signal to carbon-emitting countries and companies,” he said via Messenger chat.

Mr. Marcos, who vowed to work towards a shift to green energy, has yet to declare a climate emergency, which would authorize the government to mobilize funds to step up climate mitigation efforts.

The House of Representative made a declaration in 2019, but Greenpeace said last year that a “follow-through” from the National Government has yet to be seen.

The US has yet to declare a climate emergency, nor has China. They accounted for 41.89% and 34.75% of world GDP in nominal and purchasing power parity terms, respectively, in 2021.

Terry L. Ridon, a public investment analyst and convenor of infrastructure think tank InfraWatch, said that although the ruling would target big countries, it should not “preclude the Philippines from undertaking voluntary commitments to contribute to the global climate mission.”

Mr. Ridon, meanwhile, said expediting the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) is one of the “most realistic” commitments the Philippines can make, as the prices of EVs continue to drop.

“The current pricing of EVs is starting to compete with the pricing of mass market internal combustion engine vehicles,” he said.

Mr. Marcos earlier said there’s a need to “look properly at what the real timetable is for the introduction of electric vehicles” since the country does not have enough renewable energy capacity yet to complement green transport.

Sonny S. Melencio, chairman of Partido Lakas ng Masa, which has been actively campaigning for climate justice, said the Marcos government should follow the lead of Vanuatu and urge the ICJ and local courts “to pursue charges and cases against the polluters, and to develop a people-centered, socially equitable and inclusive just transition program for the Philippines.”

Mr. Melencio said the ruling would push people’s movements to continue “mobilizing the people and putting pressure on governments to stop building coal and fossil fuel projects and pursuing other destructive projects.”

## MANILA BULLETIN

### [Int'l beauty queen backs tariff breaks for EVs, urges PH for inclusive incentives](#)

By: Aron Recuenco

Advocates of clean sources of energy got another big ally in Miss Earth 2022 and environmentalist Mina Sue Choi who has expressed her support on tariff breaks for electric vehicles (EVs) and its components.

In an interview during the 2023 International Ecotourism Travel Mart, Choi said that , since the Philippines has various congestion issues and burning fossil fuel as its main source of power, the transition will not be immediately mainstreamed and will be based on the desire of the people.

“For the Philippines specifically, I think, especially they have a lot of congestion issues and a lot of burning fossil fuels as well still. I feel like this change is gonna happen but it's not gonna happen immediately because you know, it's cheaper to use gas or to use oil,” said Choi.

Based on a study by the Statista Research Department, coal is still dominating the power production of the Philippines at 47.6 percent, followed by other fossils at 18 percent, and gas at 10.7 percent, with a total of 76.3 percent, while renewable energy such as wind, solar, bioenergy, hydro, and other renewables takes up 23.7 percent of the country's total power source.

Earlier this year, Executive Order No. 12 series of 2023 was issued which aims to lower the tariff rates of electric vehicles to mainstream its usage in the country and help mitigate the impacts of climate change.

Although Choi said that the implementation of EO12 is good, she insisted that it would not be easy to persuade people to move out of the traditional mode of transportation even with the current incentives.

“More people demand this change. I think there's gonna be a greater change in the fossil fuel industry as well. So I think it's very vital that this change happens. I think it's gonna happen,” she said.

The beauty queen stated that the transition to electric vehicles is happening in other countries as various leading automobile companies started to launch their first EVs such as Rolls Royce and Toyota.

But under EO12, electric motorcycles and other two-wheel electric vehicles are still subject to 30 percent import duty.

Calls to make the import tax break inclusive by amending EO 12 with the inclusion of two and three-wheeled EVs are gaining ground from industry stakeholders and clean-air advocates alike.

According to the Land Transportation Office, they recorded almost eight million units of motorcycles in their agency.

The agency added that motorcycles are also the most favored mode of transportation of motorists in the country.

“I think the government needs to put their input where they make incentives for people to want to, you know take EVs or take more sustainable mobility,” said Choi.

According to the Department of Energy, the country is aiming to go full electric by 2040 by deploying around 6.3 million electric vehicles across the Philippines, which almost covered 50 percent of all vehicles on the road.

## [Opinion] Let's not wait until the water runs dry

Year in, year out, alarm bells over a water crisis are being raised by various sectors of society. Water shortage is experienced in different parts of the country, drying large tracts of land and destroying the agriculture sector, due particularly to the entrance of the dry season, but now exacerbated because of the effects of climate change.

What's different this year is that the government seems to be ready to address this perennial problem, if we are to use as basis the recent pronouncements of the administration and the departments involved in this issue.

For one, when the President was asked by the media what his administration is doing to address the impending water crisis, he was confident to say that the government is ready to — once and for all — not only solve the issue at hand, but to address its root causes.

First, the President acknowledged that this is not a seasonal issue but something that affects all of us on a day-to-day basis. Summer or not, some Filipinos still do not have access to clean, safe drinking water. Various industries also face water shortages even when it is the rainy season.

To address the root causes of the water crisis, the first thing that the administration did was to issue an executive order creating the Water Resource Management Office (WRMO). For the meantime, the WRMO is tasked to consolidate various plans to tackle the water crisis, pending the creation of a full-fledged department that will be known as the Department of Water Resources (DWR).

The President called on Congress to fasttrack the passage of a bill to create DWR. “There are many agencies that are concerned when it comes to water management. So, we have to make it more cohesive. That’s why we established (the WRMO), which presently will be attached to the Office of the President and the DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources),” Marcos said. “We are hoping down the road... since there are bills filed in the legislature in both houses, to establish the (DWR).”

The DENR is also proactively addressing the looming water crisis brought about by climate change. This was stated by DENR Secretary Ma. Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga during the United Nations 2023 Water Conference last March 22 to 24, 2023.

“Today, more than ever, there is a critical need for nexus governance, climate and disaster resilience, one that pursues a strategic balance between supply and consumption of water for health, food, energy, and environmental security,” Loyzaga

said. She noted that the WRMO, which is a first in history, aims to “achieve water security by integrating the functions of all agencies with water-related mandates.”

The creation of the agency, and its eventual transformation to a full department is being prioritized in coordination with the legislative branch. The President is aware that things have to move faster, as water is life, and an efficient water management system means a healthier population and a stronger nation. “We have kept postponing this problem over many years at every level. So, it’s time to put in a cohesive (water management) plan that every LGU and government agency can follow.”

A looming water crisis can not be tackled with a trickle of solutions; it must be faced with an all-out, hands-on-deck action from the government, solving issues from the ground up, and uprooting years of inefficiencies, bureaucratic entanglements, and roadblocks. Only then we will all feel the flow of relief, knowing that a water crisis is a thing of the past.

## MANILA STANDARD

### [Water shortage poses challenge to strategists](#)

By: Ray S. Eñano and AFP

The lack of access to potable water is an age-long problem facing global leaders and climate change is exacerbating the challenge.

In the Philippines, some 11 million families face the dilemma and are forced to rely on “unprotected” deep wells, springs, rivers, lakes and rainwater for their household needs.

Lack of sanitation facilities, according to National Water Resource Board (NWRB) executive director Dr. Sevilla David Jr., has also forced some families to defecate in the open, risking water contamination and diseases.

The water supply lack worsens during the dry season. “We have enough water supply for now. But the PAGASA says El Niño is looming,” says David. “We need to prepare for this as it could affect our water supply, particularly in our farms,” David said.

The water crisis received centerstage during a three-day United Nations Conference that drew some 10,000 participants in New York.

UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on March 24 called on the world to safeguard water resources to avert conflict and ensure future global prosperity.

Water, he says, is “the most precious common good” and “needs to be at the center of the global political agenda,” he said at the end of three-day UN conference.

“All of humanity’s hopes for the future depend, in some way, on charting a new science-based course to bring the water action agenda to life,” Guterres said. “Now is the time to act.”

The world is not on track to meet its 2030 water goals, including access to safe drinking water and sanitation for all.

Guterres before the meeting described water as humanity’s “lifeblood” and said its “vampiric overconsumption” had “broken the water cycle” and led to more natural disasters.

The world is “blindly traveling a dangerous path” as “unsustainable water use, pollution and unchecked global warming are draining humanity’s lifeblood,” Guterres said in a

foreword to the report, released hours ahead of the first major UN meeting on water resources in nearly half a century.

### Worsening shortages

Between two and three billion people worldwide experience water shortages. These shortages will worsen in the coming decades, especially in cities, if international cooperation in this area is not boosted, warn the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and UN-Water in the latest edition of the UN World Water Development Report.

Globally, 2 billion people (26 percent of the population) do not have safe drinking water and 3.6 billion (46 percent) lack access to safely managed sanitation, according to the report.

The global urban population facing water scarcity, says the report, is projected to double from 930 million in 2016 to 1.7–2.4 billion people in 2050. The growing incidence of extreme and prolonged droughts is also stressing ecosystems, with dire consequences for both plant and animal species.

There is an urgent need to establish strong international mechanisms to prevent the global water crisis from spiraling out of control. Water is our common future and it is essential to act together to share it equitably and manage it sustainably, the report said.

In 2020, two billion people were still without safe drinking water and 3.6 billion lacked access to safely managed sanitation services, including 494 million who had to relieve themselves in the open, according to the latest figures compiled by the UN-Water website.

At least two billion people drink water contaminated with feces, and 2.3 billion lack basic sanitation services—conditions conducive to the spread of cholera, dysentery and polio.

While climate change makes droughts more frequent and intense, UN climate experts (IPCC) also estimate that about half of the world's population suffers from “severe” water shortages during at least part of the year.

The World Bank estimates that climate change-exacerbated water shortages could cost some regions up to six percent of GDP by 2050 due to impacts on agriculture, health, income, and potentially forced migration or even conflict.



Agriculture makes up more than 70 percent of global water usage, but as city populations have continued to grow, “water allocation from agriculture to urban centers has become a common strategy to meet freshwater needs,” the UN said.

But that’s not likely to be enough. The number of urban residents threatened by water scarcity is expected to rise from 933 million in 2016 to between 1.7 and 2.4 billion in 2050, according to UN-Water, which projects that India will experience the most severe effects.

## PANAY NEWS

### Planting native trees: More than just greening the City of Love

By: Glenda Tayona

PRESERVING and nurturing the environment is part of the Iloilo City government's development roadmap called W.H.E.E.L.S. (Welfare, Health and Sanitation, Education, Environmental Management, Livelihood, and Sustainability).

Under the leadership of Mayor Jerry P. Treñas, the city government creates sustainable and environment-friendly initiatives to make the metro greener and more livable.

“We continue to promote our natural treasures to make Iloilo City one of the most livable metros in the country,” said Treñas.

Thus, among others, there's massive tree planting activities in open spaces, plazas, floodway, and roads.

One thing remarkable in this undertaking is the drive to propagate native trees across the metropolis.

Planting native trees is more than just helping improve biodiversity and greening the earth. It also uplifts the sense of pride and enhances heritage awareness of a community.

Iloilo, for instance, is the only place in the country which has a native tree named after it – the Iloilo tree (*Aglaia argentea*).

To raise awareness about this, four years ago then Ilonggo senator Franklin Drilon and local government officials headed by Treñas and Gov. Arthur Defensor Jr. planted two saplings of Iloilo tree at the provincial capitol grounds. They hope to instill among Ilonggos that native plants are part of the Ilonggo heritage.

For some groups of native tree enthusiasts and environmental advocates, which launched a petition through change.org to plant more Iloilo tree and other native trees particularly on the Iloilo Provincial Capitol grounds, planting native trees will not only enhance the heritage awareness of the Ilonggos but will also give the Ilonggo youth a living, physical connection to their ancestors who lived with these trees at a time when forests still covered a great part of the Philippines.

Meanwhile, to complement the historical significance of the plazas such as Plaza Libertad and Jaro Plaza, various native trees including the Iloilo tree were planted.

Treñas also led the planting of native Anilao tree and Salinggogon in Molo plaza in partnership with the Zoological Society of London, PNTE, and barangay officials.

Along Iloilo City's famous Calle Real, native trees Bagalunga, Itang-itang, Lanete, Banago, Kahoy Dalaga, and Mali-mali species were planted in big pots to bring foliage in the area and provide shade when they grow.

More native trees were also planted along the stretch of the Sen. Benigno Aquino Jr. Avenue, particularly from Barangay Taft North, Mandurriao district to barangays Dungon 1 and 2 as well as in General Luna Street, City Proper district.

These included Alibangbang, Ahern Balok, Salinggogon, Balitbitan, Bani, Achuete, Balay Lamok, Duguan, Bignay, Banaba, Balay Lamok, Pitogo, Catmon Sibuyan, Dangkalan, Banasi, Dita, and Bagawak.

Furthermore on the pipeline also is the plan to grow 2,000 native trees including the Iloilo tree along the 10-kilometer stretch starting from the service road of the Iloilo International Airport in Sta. Barbara town up to Barangay Ungka II, Pavia.

Iloilo City Executive Assistant for Environment Armando Dayrit said Treñas wants to welcome the visitors with beautiful sight of native trees and to emphasize that Iloilo is environment-friendly.

Dayrit said they are eyeing to start the planting activity by May or June this year in time for rainy season.

Treñas himself has already got the go signal from the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines and the Department of Public Works and Highways regarding the plan.

The city mayor also plans to issue an executive order requiring all real estate developers, barangay officials and school heads to plant native trees in their areas every year.

He added all open spaces in subdivisions shall be planted with native tree seedlings and will be assisted by the city government's departments and offices through providing the seedlings.

Meantime, Dayrit noted they target to plant native trees in 75 vacant spaces owned by the city government located inside subdivisions.

The city government is running a nursery in Barangay Caingin, La Paz district. Currently, there are 16,000 seedlings, of which around 10,000 are native species.

On the other hand, on top of the priorities in sustaining the environmental needs of the city is the proposed Tree Park Network Project.

Under the project, eco-forests in three districts namely, Iloilo Tree Park in Barangay Lanit, Jaro; Beach Forest in Barangay Boulevard, Molo; and Mangrove Eco-park in Barangay, La Paz will be established.

Treñas emphasized aside from providing additional recreational facilities for the public and opportunities to bring people closer to nature to support efforts to achieve Sustainable Development Goals, the tree park project also aims to help mitigate the effects of climate change and restore biodiversity in the city.

## PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

### Generally fair weather throughout PH on Tuesday – Pagasa

By: Zacarian Sarao

Generally fair weather is expected to prevail throughout the country on Tuesday, with hot and humid temperatures in Luzon, said the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

“We still expect generally fair weather conditions to continue throughout Luzon, including Metro Manila,” Pagasa weather specialist Daniel James Villamil said in Filipino.

“It will be hot and humid throughout the day and there is a high chance of thunderstorms and sudden downpours in the afternoon and evening.”

The same generally fair weather will prevail over the Visayas and Mindanao, especially as the effects of a low pressure area located east of Mindanao and outside the Philippine area of responsibility are expected to weaken

As of 4:00 p.m. Monday, the LPA was last spotted 1,850 kilometers east of Mindanao.

No gale warning was raised in the country’s in-land seas and surrounding seaboard.

Pagasa said the temperature range in key cities/areas across the country for Tuesday will be:

- Metro Manila: 23 to 32°C
- Baguio City: 16 to 24°C
- Laoag City: 24 to 31°C
- Tuguegarao: 24 to 33°C
- Legazpi City: 24 to 32°C
- Puerto Princesa City: 24 to 33°C
- Tagaytay: 21 to 22°C
- Kalayaan Islands: 25 to 33°C
- Iloilo City: 26 to 32°C
- Cebu: 26 to 32°C
- Tacloban City: 24 to 31°C
- Cagayan De Oro City: 25 to 31°C
- Zamboanga City: 25 to 32°C
- Davao City: 24 to 33°C

## RAPPLER

### Filipino seafarers next challenges: Stop ‘ambulance chasing,’ adapt to decarbonization

By: Michelle Abad

MANILA, Philippines – Following the European Union (EU)’s decision to continue recognizing seafarer certificates issued by the Philippines, some next challenges for Filipino seafarers and the maritime industry include stopping “ambulance chasing” and adapting to decarbonization.

In a media briefing on Monday, April 3, Francesco Gargiulo, CEO of the International Maritime Employers Council and Natalie Shaw, director of employment affairs of the International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), pointed to ambulance chasing as a big issue that may continue to affect Filipino seafarers’ employment.

Gargiulo even said that it was the “single biggest issue that the industry faces in the Philippines.”

Ambulance chasing occurs when lawyers actively go after victims of accidents, or people involved in potentially big legal issues, to persuade them to file cases against their employers to get the largest settlement possible.

The lawyers pushing this modus usually end up raking in huge amounts of commission and hidden charges, leaving the seafarer with a minimal amount from the settlement.

“It’s the reason why a number of our members, maritime employers, have decided to shift their manpower source away from the Philippines and towards perhaps sometimes less qualified manpower sources,” said Gargiulo.

Ambulance chasing specifically involving seafarers is illegal under Republic Act No. 10706 or the Seafarers Protection Act.

ICS senior manager of policy and employment affairs Helio Vicente reported, while not specifying the time period, that there was a decrease in Filipino seafarers from comprising 20% of seafarers worldwide to around 14.4%.

Vicente said one of the reasons for the decrease was ambulance chasing.

Shaw added: “It’s very important to us that the system is reviewed to make sure that appropriate measures are put in place, and to mitigate the situation of ambulance chasing so that the Filipino seafarers can be seen as a viable option in the global fleet.”

Gargiulo expressed confidence that the resurgence of demand for Filipino seafarers would come once ambulance chasing is addressed. He said one way to address this would be the passage of the Magna Carta for Seafarers, which the House of Representatives has approved.

“I’m very confident that if we were to get to a place at some point... where we have a Magna Carta in place that defends the seafarers’ rights as well as protects some of the employers from abuses such as ambulance chasing, we will see a resurgence of Filipino numbers,” said Gargiulo.

“[This,] combined with the action that the President and his government are taking when it comes to education and certification in the country, we will see the Philippines coming back to the sort of percentages of world fleets that they used to enjoy,” Gargiulo added.

#### Skills needed for decarbonization

Countries across the globe have expressed a net-zero target for decarbonization by 2050, and these commitments involve the shipping industry. According to the EU, the global shipping industry accounts for 3% of worldwide greenhouse gases.

In COP 26, the United Nations’ climate change conference in Glasgow in 2021, the Maritime Just Transition Task Force was set up. In the Monday press conference, Vicente highlighted the importance of introducing new trainings for seafarers in handling energy sources that would support the decarbonization agenda.

“What we’re looking at with the Maritime Just Transition Task Force is not the ship, which is essentially what a lot of the discussions around decarbonization focus on. What we’re looking at really is the people. So the seafarers, those that will be required to develop new skills [and] handle new alternative fuels,” said Vicente.

Ammonia, for example, is sometimes used as a shipping fuel and has toxicity implications that maritime workers need to understand. Hydrogen, while seen as a clean energy source, has flammability issues.

Vicente said that the industry would need up to 800,000 seafarers to develop new skills by the 2030s.

#### Why Filipino seafarers are hireable

Prior to the EU decision on Friday, March 31, the Philippines had grappled for nearly 20 years the issue of non-compliance with international maritime standards. One of the main issues the European Maritime Safety Administration (EMSA) pointed to was with

maritime studies curricula and training standards. Despite this, the country remained one of the top suppliers of seafarers across the world.

How did Filipinos remain so hireable? Shaw explained that the issues were not with the Filipino seafarers' practical skills, but with administrative processes in training and documentation. Gargiulo added that maritime schools did not implement curricula uniformly across the country.

"Every year the Philippines produces... 30,000 maritime graduates, [and] 3,000 of these get a job in the fleet. That's a large number. However, that's a 10%. So what that tells you is that there's a number of institutions in the Philippines that have done the right thing, that have the right standards, and that are loved by our employers. But there's also a number of institutions that are not at the same level," said Gargiulo.

"And this is what happens when an organization like EMSA comes to the Philippines. They don't look at the top 10, the top five, the top whatever. They look at the entire country. When they look at the entire country, they find that the standard is not the same across the board. And those are the concerns that EMSA has been raising for years," he added.



## [Opinion] Stopping the oil spill from a climate change perspective

By: John Leo Algo

It has been a month since the sinking of the MT Princess Empress, arguably the worst oil spill on Philippine waters since the one near Guimaras in 2006. The spread of pollution has already reached the coastlines of multiple provinces, from Palawan to Batangas, and is threatening the well-being of thousands of Filipinos.

There are many angles through which to examine the implications of this disaster, including the climate lens. What is clear is that this incident is yet another reminder of the need to end the era of fossil fuels in the Philippines, directly or otherwise.

Who is safe?

As of this writing, more than 137,000 people have already been affected by the oil spill. Most of the impacted municipalities are located in the Mimaropa region, which has the highest poverty incidence rate in Luzon. It is no secret that the poorest are the ones who experience the worst of the impacts of any environmental crisis, and this is no exception.

Several major economic sectors, including fishing and ecotourism, have already been affected in recent weeks, while cases of health problems have also been reported in communities in Oriental Mindoro hit hard by the oil spill. These are grounds for affected communities to not only claim compensation for property damages and/or loss of livelihoods triggered by the incident, but also potential legal cases against responsible entities due to the inability to exercise their rights, including the right to a clean, healthy, and sustainable environment.

Compounding this is the damage that may have been done to local ecosystems. The oil spill has already reached the Verde Island Passage, known as one of the centers of marine biodiversity that is vital not just for the livelihoods of nearby communities, but also for maintaining the area's resilience to climate change impacts.

Cleaning up the pollution would take at least months, but the long-term impacts on both natural and anthropogenic areas in the region could be felt for years. Ultimately, it might result in an even higher vulnerability to climate change impacts as a result of both the reduced capacity of communities due to lower incomes and more fragile ecosystems that provide defense against hazards like storm surges.

For instance, Oriental Mindoro was recently named as one of the 17 Philippine provinces that are among the 100 most vulnerable areas in the world to climate-related disasters. In the context of the oil spill, without proper clean-up, coastal inundation could

contaminate nearby freshwater sources and further trigger health issues in an area already considered as high-risk.

### 'Stop the spill'

There is no question that parties involved in allowing the oil tanker to travel must be held accountable for the disaster, including the owner of the ship, RDC Reield Marine Services. It is notable that the charterer, SL Harbor Bulk Terminal Corporation, is a subsidiary of San Miguel Corporation, which has by far the largest planned expansion of natural gas use in the entire Southeast Asia.

This incident may be viewed as another indicator of the negligence that many fossil fuel companies have exhibited in their operations. While the oil spill itself is unlikely to have huge long-term impacts on the local climate, the fact remains that further excessive burning of fossil fuels like oil and natural gas would cause more extreme climate changes in the future, which would impact countries like the Philippines the most.

It is even more ironic that the current administration advocates for a higher dependency on natural gas. Without holding companies supporting, financing, or conducting even more fossil fuel operations accountable for their actions, disasters like this are bound to occur again. Actions that result in harm for communities and ecosystems, whether through attributable climate-related catastrophes or oil spills, must not go unpunished.

Steps must be undertaken to improve coordination among numerous government agencies when responding to disasters of this kind. Conflicting statements from different officials on details like the ship's construction and permits certainly would not help in making the government's response more urgent or effective.

While initiatives such as cash-for-work programs for affected families and calling for the assistance of neighboring nations in stopping further spillage have already been planned and/or conducted, these need to be complemented with long-term policy reforms and other strategies to avoid incidents like this from happening.

An example of a potential overarching policy reform is a stronger integration of the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights into national laws and policies. Doing so should enhance accountability mechanisms on corporations and protect communities from human rights violations associated with environmentally-destructive practices, including with fossil fuels.

Existing laws should also be amended or changed to enable holding polluters liable, especially in cases like this. An example of this is the Oil Pollution Compensation Act of 2007, which keeps cargo owners of capsized ships from being held liable. The "polluters

pay” principle, a foundational block of Philippine environmental laws, must be upheld and emphasized in the decisions the government would make when addressing those responsible for this incident.

Lastly, the MT Princess Empress disaster is yet another reminder that ending our dependence on fossil fuels should have started years ago. Nonetheless, a just transition must be implemented towards not just any fuel cleaner than coal, but to renewable energy (RE). It has already been well-established that for reducing the nation’s greenhouse gas emissions, making the energy system more flexible and resilient, making electricity more affordable for consumers, or attaining true sustainable development, the Philippines’s future lies on properly executing said transformation.

Much like the need to stop more oil from leaking out of MT Princess Empress or the spill from spreading into more of the nation’s waters, the Philippines needs to avoid further dependence on fossil fuels before its consequences become too much to be contained.

## THE MANILA TIMES

### [\[Opinion\] The climate apocalypse and the biblical apocalypse: Pick your fantasy](#)

By: Yen Makabenta

I HAVE often wondered why the fabulists (sci-fi writers) of the climate change movement invoked the vision of Armageddon and apocalypse to conjure their prophecy of catastrophe from global warming or climate change.

They adopted this tactic because they needed a bogeyman to sharpen human dread and anxiety about the consequences of warming.

The biblical apocalypse, as described in the Book of Revelation in the New Testament, was perfect for this task, because believers, Christians especially, are brought up in dread of the Second Coming of Christ and Judgment Day.

For some, nothing is more hair-raising than the prospect of judgment.

But why should any of us believe in this gratuitous substitution of climate catastrophe for Armageddon?

Why should this be any different from the foolish talk about witches and ogres by maids anxious to make children in their care behave?

Why will an entire society stand at attention when the United Nations evangelizes about climate apocalypse?

Cult of climate apocalypse

It is fitting to speak about this today because last week, the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) issued yet another report designed to scare the world witless about the impending end and of humanity because of the climate.

Lest we fall for the charlatanism of UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres, let me call attention today to a most enlightening article by a serious writer on how climate apocalypse and the biblical apocalypse have combined to form a cult that holds so many people in its grip.

Michael Crowley, a British author and dramatist published the essay entitled "The cult of the climate apocalypse" in the Spiked website on March 26, 2023. He wrote:

"The End Times are back once more. The latest Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) report, published this week, prompted a typically apocalyptic response in the media and beyond. 'It's our last chance to limit global warming before climate-change damage becomes irreversible,' ran one headline. 'Act now or it's too late,' was the Guardian's measured assessment. It might as well have said, 'Repent sinners, the end is nigh.'

This swerve into almost religious rhetoric is no one-off. Mainstream climate-change coverage and activism are now dominated by the apocalyptic imagination. Indeed, the belief that humanity is facing possible extinction in the next century or sooner lies at the heart of the propaganda of Extinction Rebellion (XR) and its spin-off, Just Stop Oil. During interviews, and increasingly court appearances, activists present themselves as distressed and angered by the complacency of the public. Time is running out, they say frantically.

The apocalyptic nature of so much of contemporary environmentalism is no mere rhetorical flourish. It seems to structure the thought and outlook of activists. To grasp why apocalyptic thinking seems to resonate so strongly with hardline environmentalists, it is worth looking at the ancient, indeed biblical, origins of this thinking — in which fantasies of vengeance and the promise of a world redeemed were first forged.

### Apocalypse then

The apocalypse tends to be understood today as a terminally violent event, like catastrophic global warming. But that wasn't always the case. Apocalypse originally meant a revelation, a prophecy of things or events unknown that would appear to someone in dreams, visions or via angels. A belief in a revelation, a day of judgment and subsequent kingdom of God, predates Christ and can be found in Persian and Greco-Roman literature as well as in Jewish and Christian literature. This terminal trinity — revelation, judgment day and a subsequent kingdom of God — was said to answer for the sins of humankind.

In the final book of the New Testament, Revelation, subtitled 'The Revelation of St John the Divine,' the apocalypse appears to a prophet. He foresees God's vengeance upon a sinful, dying world. God's wrath culminates in Armageddon, a final battle between good and evil.

It is richly symbolic, of course. But there are traces of the literal world there, too. The word Armageddon, for instance, is believed to be derived from the ancient city of Megiddo, an old battleground on Israel's northern plain. This is not incidental — it is part of the defining political context of Revelation. From about 730 BC, the Israelites

experienced centuries of occupation by Syrians, Persians, Greeks and Romans. And they fought back for centuries, too.

Indeed, Jesus would have spent most of his life in the theater of one of history's fiercest guerrilla uprisings. And it's in the context of this almighty struggle that the apocalyptic imagination flourished.

'The cult of the vengeful messiah', wrote New Testament scholar Bart Ehrman, 'was rooted in the practical struggle against Roman colonialism.'

Indeed, Flavius Josephus, a 1st-century Romano-Jewish historian and military leader, claimed that Jesus was one of five Jewish rebel leaders who lived between 40 BC and AD 73. He was involved in the First Jewish-Roman War (AD 66-73), which ended with the destruction of Jerusalem and, according to Josephus, the murder of up to a million Jews and the enslavement of nearly 100,000 others.

The Jews' defeat coincided with the completion of the earliest Gospels beginning with Mark. According to anthropologist Marvin Harris, the Roman victory prompted early Christians to deny that their cult had arisen out of 'the Jewish belief in a messiah who was going to topple the Roman Empire.' And so Jesus was re-conceived as a pacifist, and the writings of Roman-to-Christian convert Paul helped obscure the Jewish messianic origins of the Jesus movement.

But those messianic origins clearly persist in Revelation. The final book of the New Testament can be read as a revenge fantasy — as fictional payback for the catastrophic defeat suffered by the Israelites at the hands of Romans. 'And when the Lamb opened the fifth seal', reads Revelation 6:9, 'I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the testimony they had upheld. And they cried out in a loud voice, 'How long, O Lord, holy and true, until You avenge our blood and judge those who dwell upon the Earth?'

As Christianity spread, so did the fantasy of the apocalypse — it entered Islam in the Koran and the Hadith. The great Christian thinker, St Augustine (354-430), developed the apocalyptic theme, by calculating that the end of the world would be some 300 years after his lifetime. Thereafter, bishops, monks, mystics and a pope made further predictions. By the Middle Ages, the Second Coming was already a thousand years overdue, so certain Christian factions decided to try to bring it about. This was partly the impetus behind the systematic violence of the Crusades.

The greening of the apocalypse

Apocalypticism may have developed hand in hand with religion and Christianity in particular. But it has persisted as a mode of thinking among certain sections of society, even as Christianity's influence has waned. Indeed, as societies have become more secular, so apocalyptic thinking has become more secular, too.

We see this today, above all, in the case of environmentalism. For it's there that apocalyptic projections and predictions are now most at home. Greenism shares with its biblical precursor an obsession with days of judgment, with vengeance upon the wicked and the dream of a redeemed world. But there's a vital difference between the biblical apocalypse and its green iteration. Those to be judged today are not a portion of sinful humanity. No, they are all of humanity. And the redeemed world dreamt of by climate activists is not the kingdom of God promised by earlier apocalyptic narratives. Instead, it is a kingdom of nature, and it is distinctly opposed to humanity.

In short, the green End Times amount to a very anti-human apocalypse.

At the forefront of the arms race in catastrophic prophecies is Extinction Rebellion.

Here is a literally hopeless creed. XR and its apocalyptic ilk do not seem interested in climate change as a practical challenge — as something that can be addressed with technological and material development, as environmental problems have been mitigated in the past.

Climate change poses a challenge to humanity. But green apocalypticism does not help anyone. It inspires panic in those who buy into it, especially young people. They then see it as their job to wake us all up, to make us see what they see, to reveal the coming Armageddon. As far as they are concerned, this righteous mission trumps everything else.

The zealous, unreasoned activism this kind of thinking promotes is bad enough. But the second effect of this environmentalist apocalypticism is arguably even more damaging. Casting human history and humanity's achievements as effectively sinful, abominable, indeed fallen, can only demoralise people. It contributes to a broader societal pessimism that undercuts any prospects for positive social change.

You can see this in the way that mainstream politicians, trying to burnish their green credentials, now criticise the Industrial Revolution. No wonder that some eco-radicals claim that Britain should pay reparations for the Industrial Revolution, even though it was a giant leap forward not just for Britons, but for mankind the world over. Both the radical and elite wings of green politics adhere to the apocalyptic narrative that demands an absolute break from the past — because it is seen as so sinful.

Given this denigration of the achievements of humanity, green apocalypticism is a deeply anti-human narrative. By casting the achievements of humanity as sinful, it deprives us of many of our sources of strength and of hope. That's why it must be resisted. We should look around us, and over our shoulder, at the enormous ingenuity and resourcefulness that human beings have shown in the past, and continue to show today."

### Parody of revelation

The Book of Revelation is the final book of the New Testament (and therefore the final book of the Christian Bible). It occupies a central place in Christian eschatology (the branch of theology concerned with the end of the world).

Revelation was among the last books accepted into the Christian biblical canon, and to the present day some churches that derive from the Church of the East reject it. Eastern Christians became skeptical of the book because of doubts concerning its authorship and unusual style.

During the 16th century and the Protestant Reformation. Martin Luther called Revelation "neither apostolic nor prophetic." In the 1522 preface to his translation of the New Testament Huldrych Zwingli labeled it "not a book of the Bible."

When they first unfurled their vision of a climate apocalypse, the proponents said "climate apocalypse" was an allegory of the biblical apocalypse in the Book of Revelation. The way things have developed in the climate change movement, climate apocalypse has served more as a parody of Revelation.



## THE PHILIPPINE STAR

### [Miss Earth 2022 backs tariff breaks, inclusive incentives for electric vehicles](#)

Miss Earth 2022 and environmentalist Mina Sue Choi voiced her support for the implementation of tariff breaks for electric vehicles and its components, highlighting its necessity for the environment.

“For the Philippines specifically, I think, especially they have a lot of congestion issues and a lot of burning fossil fuels as well still. I feel like this change is gonna happen but it's not gonna happen immediately because you know, it's cheaper to use gas or to use oil,” Choi said in an interview during the 2023 International Ecotourism Travel Mart last March 29.

According to Choi, since the Philippines has various congestion issues and burning fossil fuel as its main source of power, the transition will not be immediately mainstreamed and will be based on the desire of the people.

Based on a study by the Statista Research Department, coal is still dominating the power production of the Philippines at 47.6%, followed by other fossils at 18%, and gas at 10.7%, with a total of 76.3%, while renewable energy such as wind, solar, bioenergy, hydro, and other renewables takes up 23.7% of the country's total power source.

Earlier this year, Executive Order No. 12 series of 2023 was issued which aims to lower the tariff rates of electric vehicles to mainstream its usage in the country and help mitigate the impacts of climate change.

The beauty queen insisted that the implementation of EO12 is good but it won't be easy to persuade people to move out of the traditional mode of transportation even with the current incentives.

“More people demand this change. I think there's gonna be a greater change in the fossil fuel industry as well. So I think it's very vital that this change happens. I think it's gonna happen,” the beauty queen added.

She stated that the transition to electric vehicles is happening in other countries as various leading automobile companies started to launch their first EVs such as Rolls Royce and Toyota.

However, under EO12, electric motorcycles and other two-wheel electric vehicles are still subject to 30% import duty.

Calls to make the import tax break inclusive by amending EO 12 with the inclusion of two and three-wheeled EVs are gaining ground from industry stakeholders and clean-air advocates alike.

According to the Land Transportation Office, they recorded almost 8 million units of motorcycles in their agency. Motorcycles are also the most favored mode of transportation of motorists in the country.

“I think the government needs to put their input where they make incentives for people to want to, you know take EVs or take more sustainable mobility,” she stated.

According to the Department of Energy, the country is aiming to go full electric by 2040 by deploying around 6.3 million electric vehicles across the Philippines, which almost covered 50% of all vehicles on the road.

## UNITED NATIONS CLIMATE CHANGE

### [Transitional Committee on Loss and Damage Begins Work with Successful First Meeting in Egypt](#)

The Transitional Committee on the operationalization of the funding arrangements and new fund for responding to loss and damage held its first meeting from 27 to 29 March 2023 in Luxor, Egypt. The meeting concluding with the adoption of a workplan towards COP28.

The workplan sets out key substantive and procedural milestones and steps to be taken towards the delivery of recommendations to COP28. It includes dates for upcoming workshops and meetings of the Transitional Committee, including a fourth meeting, which the Committee has agreed to add to its schedule of work in 2023. According to the plan, the Committee will focus on all elements of its mandated recommendations at each gathering, gradually moving towards a consensus outcome a month or so before COP28.

Opening the meeting, UN Climate Change Executive Secretary Simon Stiell said: "You are here not just to construct a fund, but to create something much bigger: a lifeline for vulnerable people and places." He also urged the Committee to "approach this work in a way that is creative, collaborative, and constructive, so that we can respond to the mandate and rise up to the challenge that is before us."

The COP27 President, Sameh Shoukry, said: "Your work can be very impactful and help maintain the sense of trust and dialogue multilateralism that prevailed in Sharm el-Sheikh."

The decision to establish a dedicated fund to assist developing countries in responding to economic and non-economic loss and damages associated with climate change was a historic move agreed at last year's UN Climate Change Conference COP27. The Transitional Committee is responsible for operationalizing both the new funding arrangements and the fund for consideration and adoption at this year's COP28 in Dubai.

During last week's meeting, the Transitional Committee exchanged preliminary views on the purpose and scope of the new funding arrangements and the fund. Through this conversation, members shared initial ideas and asked a range of questions about what gaps currently exist in the financial architecture and how the new funding arrangements and the fund can help bridge these gaps.

Observer organizations also shared their views and considerations.

The Committee is composed of 24 members from all geographical regions, and has selected Richard Sherman (South Africa) and Outi Honkatukia (Finland) as its Co-Chairs.

To support the work of the Transitional Committee, a technical support unit (TSU) has been established. The TSU consists of staff seconded from UN agencies, international financial institutions, multilateral development banks, and the operating entities of the financial mechanism. Secondments have been received from the Adaptation Fund, the UN Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, the Global Environment Facility, the Green Climate Fund, the United Nations Multilateral Fund for the Implementation of the Montreal Protocol, the World Bank, UN Environment Programme, among others. The TSU is expected to provide additional technical expertise and support to the Transitional Committee, through inputs and recommendations, including from the UN Climate change secretariat.

The workplan reflects the large volume of work ahead to fulfill the mandate in the months ahead. Regular intersessional work, including monthly calls, will also take place to advance the work.

## CCC IN THE NEWS:

### MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

#### [Modern e-jeepney eyed to cost less than P1M](#)

By: Irma Isip

Francisco Motors Corp. targets to lower to P800,000 the cost of an electric jeepney to make it affordable to drivers and operators.

In an interview, Francisco Motors owner Elmer Francisco said they are set to present today to Undersecretary Ceferino Rodolfo, managing head of the Board of Investments (BOI) a 10-year, \$10-billion plan for jeepney modernization that they intend to enroll for the third slot of the Comprehensive Automotive Resurgence Strategy (CARS).

If found eligible, CARS will also fund 40 percent of the capex, which would cut the production cost, according to Francisco.

“Our target is to bring down the cost to less than a million pesos. As of now, the commitment from the DTI is a subsidy of P200,000 on top of the P360,000 subsidy from the Department of Transportation (DOTr),” Francisco said.

But he said the company is looking for funding institutions like the Climate Change Commission, the Asian Development Bank and state-owned Land Bank of the Philippines and Development Bank of the Philippines.

Other incentives will help reduce the cost of the e-jeepney, he said.

Francisco Motors will be eligible for registration with the Philippine Economic Zone Authority as it is located within a proclaimed ecozone in Jose Panganiban, Camarines Norte.

“In our meeting with DOTr Secretary Jaime Bautista, we told him it is impossible to implement PUV modernization within one year. The \$10-billion estimated cost of the 10-year plan can be lowered if we can get incentives, subsidies,” he added.

The project also includes other e-vehicles like e-trikes.

Francisco said at P800,000 per unit of e-jeepney the return on investments is two years because the vehicle is more efficient, requires less maintenance and practically has no downtime. The prototype will be ready by this month or in May.

## THE PHILIPPINE STAR

### 'Oil spill dispersants pose risks to human health'

By: Helen Flores

The chemical-based dispersants being used to clean the oil spill in Oriental Mindoro pose risks to public health, an official of the Climate Change Commission (CCC) warned yesterday.

“Aside from harming marine flora and fauna, dispersants also endanger human health as these contain 2-butoxyethanol, which can cause injury to red blood cells, kidney or liver with repeated or excessive exposure,” CCC Commissioner Albert dela Cruz Sr. said.

Although dispersants can help clear the oil spill, Dela Cruz said these could later damage the marine ecosystem in affected areas.

“While dispersants can clean the coastal waters of Mindoro and Batangas from the massive oil slick, the resulting chemical reaction of using these can become a major concern in terms of pollutants sinking into the marine floor,” Dela Cruz said.

He said authorities are currently using chemical-based dispersants to clear the oil spilled by the sunken M/T Princess Empress.

The tanker was loaded with more than 900,000 liters of industrial oil when it sank in the waters off Naujan town on Feb. 28.

Dela Cruz, a biologist and environment protection specialist, said the dispersants could only remove oil from the surface of the water and could still pollute the sea bed and the shore line.

Instead of using dispersants, he suggested the use of skimmers or the conduct of filtration to remove the oil from the water.

Dela Cruz had met with officials of the Philippine Coast Guard led by Admiral Artemio Abu to assess the situation.

During the meeting, Dela Cruz said the incident could be better addressed through filtration or the use of skimmers.

**=END=**