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31 MAY 2023 [08:00 am]

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BANAT BALITA

[Climate disaster resilient nga komunidad gitinguha](#)

By: Sanden J. Anadia

CEBU, Philippines — Gitigom na sa Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)-7 pinaagi sa Disaster Response Management Division (DRMD) niini ang mga representante sa pilot local government units (LGUs) alang sa pag-implementar sa Risk Resiliency Program (RRP).

FINANCIAL TIMES

[Insurance industry turmoil over climate alliance exodus](#)

By: Ian Smith and Kenza Bryan

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[UAE: Companies encouraged to join fight against climate change as country gears up for COP28](#)

By: Nasreen Abdulla

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MAHARLIKA TV

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Senate President Pro Tempore Loren Legarda presided over the Subcommittee on Economic Affairs' joint hearing with the Committees on Environment, Natural Resources, and Climate Change, and Finance focused on two significant bills: the Philippine Ecosystem and Natural Capital Accounting System (PENCAS) bill and the Blue Economy bill.

NIKKEI ASIA

[Mahathir calls for 'peace and stability' at Future of Asia](#)

By: Ryohtaroh Satoh

At the Future of Asia forum last week, former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad stressed that a war does not solve problems and called for countries to work together for the common goal of "peace and stability."

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Amidst the Climate Crisis, How Can Queer Filipino Art Create a Language of Resistance?](#)

By: Evan Tan

Pride Month is coming, and it might be the most important one yet. Globally, we're seeing the rise of hate and violence towards LGBT+ people, as governments launch aggressive attacks against queer rights — from Italy, where Prime Minister Georgia Meloni has declared war against the “LGBT lobby”; to Uganda, where a new law punishes “aggravated homosexuality” with the death penalty.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Bills to address climate change threats gain traction in House](#)

By: Filane Mikee Cervantes

The House of Representatives has approved two measures that will address the ill effects of climate change through the rehabilitation and conservation of key resources.

RAPPLER

[Enhanced southwest monsoon dumps rain while Typhoon Betty moves slowly](#)

By: Acor Arceo

With Typhoon Betty (Mawar) still moving slowly over the waters east of Batanes, its enhancement of the southwest monsoon or habagat also continues.

THE GUARDIAN

[Climate change to blame for up to 17 deaths on Mount Everest, experts say](#)

Experts say this is likely to be one of the deadliest years on record on Mount Everest, with variable weather caused by climate change being blamed as one of the main reasons for the deaths of up to 17 people.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Philippines starts siphoning oil from sunken tanker](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

Work to recover the remaining oil from the MT Princess Empress that sank off Oriental Mindoro began Monday and may last for a month, the Philippine Coast Guard said.

VATICAN NEWS

[Philippines: Groups demand reparations from industries as climate crisis worsens](#)

By: Zeus Legaspi

Multiple green and multisectoral groups in the Philippines have called on fossil fuel companies to be held accountable for the pollution and worsening climate hazards affecting the country.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE CANADIAN INQUIRER

[Whole-of-society approach needed to address climate change](#)

By: Anna Leah Gonzales and 'Philippine News Agency

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) on Monday called for a whole-of-nation and community approach to address the impact of climate change.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Ople pushes for better migration governance at Asia-GCC dialogue](#)

By: Marita Moaje

Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) Secretary Susan Ople on Tuesday called for a “bold discussion” to ensure the protection of all migrant workers through better migration governance.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BANAT BALITA

Climate disaster resilient nga komunidad gitinguha

By: Sanden J. Anadia

CEBU, Philippines — Gitigom na sa Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)-7 pinaagi sa Disaster Response Management Division (DRMD) niini ang mga representante sa pilot local government units (LGUs) alang sa pag-implementar sa Risk Resiliency Program (RRP).

Usa kini ka convergence program nga mag-operationalize sa Climate Change Adaptation, Mitigation, and Disaster Risk Reduction (CCAM-DRR) Cabinet Cluster nga adunay kinatibuk-ang tumong nga makabaton og climate ug disaster resilient nga mga komunidad.

Base sa taho sa DSWD-7 ang RRP adunay duha ka model nga mao cash-for-work ug cash-for-training diin ang duha nagtumong sa pagpalig-on sakapasidad sa mga kabus ug komunidad sa socio-environmental risk.

Nagpasabot kini sa paghatag kanila og temporaryo nga oportunidad sa kita baylo sa trabaho sa komunidad o pagtukod sa ilang mga kapasidad alang sa pagpamenos ug pagdumala sa kalamidad pinaagi sa mga oportunidad sa panginabuhian ug pagbansay sa kahanas.

Ang LGU officers, Social Welfare and Development, Planning and Development, Budget, Disaster Risk Reduction Management ug Environment and Natural Resources kabahin sa mga partisipante gikan sa mga Probinsiya sa Sugbo, Bohol, Negros Oriental, ug Siquijor ingon man gikan sa highly urbanized nga mga dakbayan sa Sugbo, Mandaue ug Lapu-Lapu.

Si Regional Director Shalaine Marie Lucero nipahinumdom sa mga partisipante nga ang DSWD maoy nag-una sa paghatag sa mga LGU og technical assistance ug resource augmentation isip tubag, recovery ug rehabilitation nga mga aspeto.

Pinaagi sa pakigtambayayong sa LGUs, ang kolektibong mga paningkamot kinahanglang motubag sa panginahanglan sa pagpanalipod sa mga komunidad ug pamilya sa panahon sa kalamidad ug kini kinahanglang sundon alang sa kaayohan sa rehiyon.

Iyaha usab nga gihisgotan nga ang buhat sa convergence nga kinahanglang magtumong sa kalig-on diin ang tanang gitudloan sa pagpahiangay sa mga pagbag-o ug pagkat-on sa pagsagubang sa maong butang

FINANCIAL TIMES

[Insurance industry turmoil over climate alliance exodus](#)

By: Ian Smith and Kenza Bryan

Dark smoke billowing across the Richard Rogers-designed Lloyd's of London headquarters and the banner unfurled by climate protesters last week provided a visible reminder of the political war over the role of the insurance industry in global warming.

On the same day in New York, another campaign group was pushing in the opposite direction, with the "anti-woke" group called Consumers' Research targeting the offices of European insurers with a mobile billboard.

It demanded the companies pull out of the Net-Zero Insurance Alliance (NZIA), a UN-convened body set up two years ago for insurers wanting to cut their carbon footprint and reduce climate change risk. The rightwing pressure group claimed these efforts to scale back insurance cover for fossil fuel projects were anti-competitive. "Call off the collusion," it blared.

On the latest front in the environmental, social and governance battles testing all corporations, it was the anti-ESG forces that carried the day.

Lloyd's joined a string of big European insurers, as well as a major Japanese and an Australian reinsurer, to quit the alliance by the end of the week, throwing it into disarray.

A letter from US attorneys-general sent to the insurance groups this month raised "serious concerns" over whether the alliance was at odds with antitrust laws. This was a key catalyst for the departures, according to people briefed on the decisions to withdraw at two insurers.

"It's a real shame that the NZIA looks as if it is in the process of collapsing. That shouldn't be the reality," Lindsay Keenan, European co-ordinator at campaign group Insure Our Future, said. "Any sensible person knows that collective action is required to solve the climate crisis."

But Washington-based Consumers' Research executive director Will Hild aims to keep up the pressure, claiming the alliance was part of a wider "ESG scam". "We're going to be pushing back on the entire conspiracy to enforce environmental policy through corporate collusion rather than the democratic process," he said. "It won't be a full victory until NZIA no longer exists."

Some experts said the exits from the insurers' alliance could undermine other industry coalitions and pledges by the wider financial sector to cut emissions. A trickle of banks and asset managers have quit other key climate alliances in recent months because of the ESG backlash.

"It would be naive to suggest there's no risk of contagion [to other climate alliances]," said Simon Holmes, a member of the UK Competition Appeal Tribunal and visiting law professor at the University of Oxford. "One person gets cold feet, the next does as well . . . everybody loses from this."

He added that while it was possible to characterise withdrawing insurance cover from fossil fuels projects as anti-competitive "in a narrow sense", there was a strong case that coalitions such as the NZIA met the conditions to be exempt from these laws, on the grounds of a wider consumer benefit.

The anti-ESG campaigners' "bigger victory", said Jakob Thomä, co-founder of a non-profit think-tank, the 2 Degrees Investing Initiative, was in casting a cloud. "It adds transaction costs," he said. "People will know to cross their t's three times, four times, to try to protect themselves from being caught in the crosshairs of the anti-ESG movement."

The attacks were also a sign that net zero policies were starting to become a "pain point" for fossil fuel industries, Thomä added.

The insurance initiative was one part of the broad umbrella group, the Glasgow Financial Alliance for Net Zero, set up by former Bank of England governor Mark Carney ahead of the UN climate summit held in 2021.

It warned on Friday that the "political attacks are now interfering with insurers' independent efforts to price climate risk, which will harm policyholders, main street investors and local economies".

The NZIA faced criticism from the start — but more frequently that its collective action was too weak, rather than too strong. Climate campaigners questioned why a policy banning the insurance of coal projects was not a condition for entry. At the time, the NZIA's leadership cited "antitrust issues".

Even with what many climate activists saw as a low bar to membership, it failed to attract US insurers as members. Soon after its launch, the secretary-general of the public-private Insurance Development Forum said it was uncertain that the industry could "make much progress" without the backing of the vast US insurance sector.

At the same time, industry intentions to reduce their underwriting exposure to climate risk have come up against arguments about energy security and the impact on coal-dependent economies.

“Enabling the transition, I think, is a more productive outcome for society than shutting off the lights,” Carl Hess, chief executive of major insurance brokerage Willis Towers Watson, said last year.

Lloyd’s of London, which had set a goal to end new insurance for the dirtiest projects of thermal coal and oil sands, as well as Arctic drilling, from the start of last year, also then appeared to row back. It said it was “not mandating” the exclusion of these policies, saying it was down to individual companies in the market to make their own underwriting decisions.

Those insurers now departing the net zero alliance are still largely expected to continue to disclose the greenhouse gas emissions associated with their underwriting, in the framework provided by the Partnership for Carbon Accounting Financials.

At a company level, some insurers are stepping up their exclusions for clients that do not bring their business in line with climate goals.

The property and casualty insurer called If, part of Nordic group Sampo, began screening its corporate customers for ESG criteria in 2021. Out of more than 600 clients, 19 were found to have fallen short of sustainability standards, it said. For two clients with a bad record of pollution, it plans to decline insurance at the next renewal, while others are on watch.

Chief executive Morten Thorsrud said it was “happy to help [clients] by nudging them towards a more sustainable strategy and operations”.

US insurers are also taking steps to reduce their risk individually. New York-listed Chubb, a leading energy insurer, announced new underwriting criteria that would require clients to reduce their emissions of methane, the largest component of gas and a significant contributor to global warming.

Insurers will continue to be dragged in both directions. A report from Greenpeace Nordic this week said 69 insurers, including Lloyd’s companies, still cover groups planning new oil and gasfields in Norway.

At the same time, anti-ESG campaigners are expected to intensify criticism of climate plans during a divisive US presidential election campaign in the year ahead.

“This is a distraction, but we stay the course,” said Curtis Ravenel, a senior adviser to Gfanz. The private sector could only “go so far”, he added, with government intervention to provide rules and standards needed to “truly catalyse climate action”.

KHALEEJ TIMES

[UAE: Companies encouraged to join fight against climate change as country gears up for COP28](#)

By: Nasreen Abdulla

With just six months and one day to go for COP28, private companies and organisations were encouraged to join the race against climate change at an event held in Dubai on Monday. The 'Road to COP28' event gave companies the options of several local and global campaigns they could join, to contribute towards UAE's Net Zero by 2050 initiative.

For UN Climate Change High-Level Champion Razan Khalifa Al Mubarak, at the top of her list of priorities is to get more companies to join the global Race to Zero and the Race to Resilience campaigns. The largest and most credible global alliance of non-state actors currently has over 11,000 members.

"I want to bring the race closer to the region," she said at a media roundtable. "If you look at it now, there [is] not enough representation or participation from the region. I want to find why aren't they engaging and why aren't they participating."

It was in January this year that Razan was elected as the UN Climate Change High-Level Champion. A position which originated with the Paris Agreement and has become a hallmark of each COP meeting, the champion must engage with non-state actors to help achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement. The term of a champion is for two years, during which she will work for a year with the previous year's champion, and then the following year's champion.

Razan also said that her among her priorities was to have a capacity building hub in the UAE. "I want a climate change hub to provide information but also to train and ensure that we have the right skills for our current employees across sectors," she said.

Changes needed

The event served as a platform for local businesses to understand how they can join the Net Zero initiative in a series of presentations as well as panel discussions. A presentation by Muna Alamoodi, director of climate change at the Ministry Of Climate Change And Environment, outlined several measures that companies could take.

Transitioning to clean and renewable energy sources, utilising climate-friendly substitutes, reducing waste generation and intensifying energy efficiency in all sectors were highly recommended. Muna introduced the National Dialogue for Climate Ambition

(NDCA), which is a monthly assembly led by UAE government departments for priority sectors like Cement, Energy, Mobility, Industries and manufacturing and Waste, among others.

She also encouraged participants to take the UAE Climate-Responsible Companies Pledge to help the country achieve net zero by 2050. The pledge calls on companies to commit to measuring and reporting greenhouse gas emissions, factoring climate change mitigation as a core business principle, encouraging stakeholders to take part in climate action, and engaging with all segments of society to develop net-zero plans.

Challenges

Razan admitted that there are several challenges when inviting private companies to contribute to net zero. According to her, there are three levers that need to be considered: technology, regulation and finances.

“Sometimes the technology is not there or is not cost effective,” she said. “We also have to create the right regulatory environment to provide the incentives to invest in the needed technology. We have to ensure that the right environment encourages that financing goes to the right places and discourages going to the places that are most damaging.”

Meanwhile, companies also admitted that they were facing challenges in their endeavour to be sustainable. “You don’t want to be the first mover and lose business,” said Susanna Elias-Stulemeijer from Talabat, while adding that the company’s move to switch to e-bikes was being slowed down by the lack of a sufficient number of electric charges in the country.

MAHARLIKA TV

[Legarda advocates for sustainable economic management with PENCAS, Blue Economy bills](#)

Senate President Pro Tempore Loren Legarda presided over the Subcommittee on Economic Affairs' joint hearing with the Committees on Environment, Natural Resources, and Climate Change, and Finance focused on two significant bills: the Philippine Ecosystem and Natural Capital Accounting System (PENCAS) bill and the Blue Economy bill.

"I could say this is probably the best time to institute this commonsensical approach to managing our national patrimony, but the truly best time would have been when I first filed the Philippine Economic, Environmental and Natural Resources Accounting (PEENRA) bill in 2007. We would have realized then what we stood to lose, the damage we stood to suffer, and we would have planned and invested accordingly," Legarda said.

The four-term senator also underscored the need for comprehensive planning and investment to address the potential losses and damages to the nation's resources.

Acknowledging the full support of the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and Climate Change Commission (CCC), Legarda expressed her optimism that the time has come for concrete action.

"Restoration must use economic indicators that value more than just the incomes and ignore the destruction of our natural capital in generating revenues and in calculating what is lost," she stated.

"As we face an age of changing climate and unprecedented biodiversity loss, the challenge is how we can use our vulnerability as an opportunity to examine the role and impact of natural resources on the economic growth of a developing nation such as our country," Legarda furthered.

The proposed PENCAS aims to integrate environmental inputs and outputs into national income accounts, accurately reflecting the country's development and economic performance.

Aside from the PENCAS bill, Legarda also championed the Blue Economy bill. The hearing addressed the promotion of effective maritime governance, which is crucial for ensuring the sustainability of the blue economy and safeguarding the Philippines' maritime interests.

Legarda explained that the United Nations defines the blue economy as a range of economically sustainable activities related to oceans, seas, and coastal areas, focusing on social equity.

“We are a maritime nation with up to 88% of our territory covering 2.2 million square kilometers of water area, so it is crucial to enhance the health and well-being of marine resources for coastal communities and aid preservation efforts for the environment,” she said.

NIKKEI ASIA

[Mahathir calls for 'peace and stability' at Future of Asia](#)

By: Ryohtaroh Satoh

At the Future of Asia forum last week, former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohamad stressed that a war does not solve problems and called for countries to work together for the common goal of "peace and stability."

During the 40-minute "fireside chat" of the Tokyo event, he answered questions from Nikkei Asia Editor-in-Chief Shin Nakayama and the audience.

The following is a transcript of the session, lightly edited for clarity.

Q: After last year's general election, you retired from the first line of politics, but you have been traveling widely overseas and doing press interviews and press conferences, and you are even writing a book. Also, in July this year, you will be 98 years old. So what is your health condition now, and how are you able to deal with such a busy schedule?

A: I'm very fortunate in that I don't suffer from fatal diseases, although I did have heart problems. But today, heart problems can be treated. And I have been operated on two times, but I don't have a disease like cancer. So I am free to follow a very moderate regime in life, a way of life where I don't put too much strain on myself despite the heavy schedule.

I find that being active is very important. If you grow old, and you become dumb, and you don't work, you don't think, you don't read, you don't write, then you become weaker, you regress, or your ability to think will diminish, and your body also will become weak. So it is important to keep on an active life.

Q: Last week, we had the Hiroshima summit. Along with Nagasaki, Hiroshima experienced an atom bomb. Leaders from France, the U.K., India and others visited Hiroshima and the Peace Memorial Museum. When the bomb was dropped, you were a student in Malaysia. And you have been working against nuclear weapons. How do you assess the significance and meaning of the Hiroshima summit?

A: Citing the meeting in Hiroshima is very important because it should serve to remind people of the disastrous bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It should remind us that war is very harmful, very damaging and that it kills a lot of people. And nuclear war is the worst kind of war that you can have. Because the capacity to kill is greater, greater

even than ordinary bombs and other weapons. So it should serve to remind the people who met there that war is bad and nuclear war should not be allowed at all.

Unfortunately, we see two different views. The Global North thinks that war is still a solution to conflicts between nations, and the Global South -- obviously, Brazil, India and Indonesia -- these people do not want war. They want peace. So they were not supportive of the war between Russia and Ukraine. They want peace. So there is a difference in the effect of citing the meeting in Hiroshima. It doesn't deter the North from thinking about war. But it makes the South feel that a nuclear war is too damaging. And we should not get involved in wars but promote peace.

Q: Coordination between the Global South and G-7 countries became a major theme of the summit. What kind of cooperation can be achieved between those two groups?

A: There is a difference in the policies and position of the Global North against the Global South. It is obvious the South wants to have peace, and they want to cooperate with the North in order to achieve peace. On the other hand, it seems that the Group of Seven went to Hiroshima trying to persuade this global South to support the war between Russia and Ukraine. And their views differ from the North, from the Group of Seven.

Q: One year has passed since the beginning of the Ukraine war, with no prospect of ending the war at this moment. You experienced war when the old Japanese military forces went to Malaysia. How do you see the current status of the world, particularly related to the war?

A: It [depends on] the mindset of certain countries. For example, during the Second World War, Russia and the West cooperated. They were partners in the war against Germany. But immediately after Germany was defeated, the West decided that the new enemy was Russia. And therefore, the West set up NATO, and NATO is directed against Russia. And Russia responded by setting up the Warsaw Pact.

In war, they could work together but in peace, they regard each other as rivals, which is unhealthy. And eventually, after 70 years, they have forgotten ... the results of the Second World War, particularly the two atom bombs. And now they are talking, and Russia did mention that they may use nuclear weapons in this war. I don't think you can make Russia surrender.

[Russia] will fight to the end, and maybe when in desperation they may use nuclear weapons. And when they do that, the other side will also resort to nuclear weapons. And we will have a third world war where nuclear weapons will be used. And nuclear weapons will damage not just the countries that are fighting each other. [They] will

damage the whole world, as we have seen what happened after Hiroshima. Radiation affected many countries far from Hiroshima. So if you have a nuclear war, the whole world will suffer.

Q: There are no signs of an end to the war. But Dr. Mahathir, you say that reform is needed for the existing international framework, including the United Nations. How do you think those existing frameworks will be changed?

A: The world is now facing certain common problems. For example, we are faced with climate change [and] the COVID-19 pandemic. We are seeing the effects of war. These affect the whole world, not just any one country. So there is a need for us to restructure the United Nations, or to set up a kind of world government that would look after certain international problems that are faced by the whole world.

Today, what we are seeing is that each country tries to deal with climate change and the pandemic by itself. And the result has been that [as] the rich countries benefited most from the vaccine, the poor countries suffered. But the disease affects the whole world. So we should think of a common approach. And a common approach to dealing with international problems should be through a kind of world government where there are no countries with veto power.

Q: Indeed, the existing international framework should be reformed into something of a world government. One of the reasons for the dysfunction is that the U.S., China and Russia are confronting each other in the United Nations. Asia is forced to choose between the U.S. and China. What do we have to respond to in these situations?

A: We should not take sides. We should not support the U.S. ... and we should support the world. And the world includes China, the U.S., Russia and the rest. We should think of the common good, rather than your own good against the opposition. At the moment, the attitude is that they have identified Russia as the enemy. And now, of course, they have identified China also as the enemy.

The attitude is that the West should confront these two countries. And when you have that kind of thinking, you create tension. And eventually, the tension may lead to confrontation and maybe even violence and war. So that is not a good attitude to have. We must think about peace and stability in the whole world, not just any bloc or country.

Q: You adopted the Look East policy as prime minister. You saw the economic growth and economic recovery of Japan after the devastation of World War II. But Japan is now expanding its defense budget and also trying to procure missiles, or have a more aggressive manner so that we can have a first-strike capability. What do you think about this kind of strategy of the Kishida administration?

A: What I think is very strange is that the United States dropped two atomic bombs on Japan. And in the past, many Japanese people were killed. But you can be friends with the United States. You can even allow the United States to have its bases here. [Japan's] attitude towards the United States is strange compared to [its] attitude against China, or even against South Korea. Why can you not be friendly with China and South Korea when you can be friendly with a country that has bombed you with atom bombs?

This is something that you have to rethink. If you can be friendly with the United States, you should find ways and means to be friendly with your close neighbors: China and South Korea.

So the attitude that Japan has taken is one of selective confrontation. You can work with the United States, but not with China. I see no reason why you cannot work with China. But we can always be influenced by what happened in the past. We should think of the present and the future. And that is why although Malaysia also was occupied by Japan, we bear no hostility towards Japan. We find that Japan is a good model to follow. And so we introduced the Look East policy, [which] has benefited Malaysia a lot. At the same time, I think it has also benefited Japan in other ways. So being friendly is a good policy.

Q: The defense spending expansion in Japan may be causing some uncomfortable feelings among Asian countries. How do you view the expanding defense budget of the Japanese government?

A: I used to think of Japan as the first model country which has made war illegal. You cannot participate in aggressive war, though you can defend yourself. It is the first country in the world that illegalized war. It will continue with that policy, and other countries also should follow that policy. Unfortunately, now, you are rearming again. And because there is a wish of some of your allies that Japan should forget about war being illegal, Japan should rearm and use force in order to achieve its objective. And that will be a very backward set. The way forward is for all countries in the world to make war illegal. We must have peace. And for that, we have to have new structures to govern the world.

Q: In Malaysia, many ethnicities and religions are intermingled. Are there any tips for creating harmony among the races and religions? If there is any common value system among people in Asia to maintain peace and stability in Asia, what do you think it is?

A: Malaysia claims to be a Muslim country. But the Muslim population is only 60%. 40% are non-Muslim. There are Hindus, Buddhists, Christians, Taoists and others. And part of the teachings of Islam is that people can have their own religion, and you have to respect them: to them their religion, to us our religion. That is the teachings of Islam. So,

if you go to Malaysia, you will see not only mosques, you will see a lot of Hindu temples, a lot of Buddhist temples, a lot of the Chinese Taoist religion.

So that is what is advocated by Islam if you follow the true teachings of Islam. So in Malaysia, we are very tolerant. There is no compulsion in Islam. That is the teaching. So I think for other countries also, what's wrong with being tolerant? It achieves peace, and in peace, people will prosper and people will enjoy life. But if you adopt a standard, [it becomes] I am right, you are wrong. And the other side also feels the same. There will be a confrontation. And there will be tension in a confrontation later on.

Common values are there. We are all tolerant to some extent. We have to be more tolerant of others. People talk about human rights. Human rights means that you have your right, I have my right. So if I recognize that you have your right to have your own religion, then you shouldn't be against them simply because the religion is different or the ethnic group is different.

There is a need, for example, to ensure that all the people in the world, when they are children, when they are going to school, or when they are being brought up by their parents, for them to implant in the minds of their children that they have to be tolerant of other people. They have to live with other people. And if they have the spirit, this feeling of tolerance, then they will be like Malaysia, where we have differences. We have differences between people, different religions and different races, but it does not become violent. That is important. You can have differences, but don't resort to harmful acts of violence, like killing people and doing things that will damage the peace and stability of the nation.

Q: You were known as a champion of the notion of the East Asian community for many years. Now we have the East Asia Summit. Is this what you had in mind? Secondly, how realistic is the notion of an East Asian community seeing how Northeast Asia is still so divided? And India and China still have competitive relationships, and the East Asia Summit has not led to a real East Asian community. What are your comments on that?

A: For a long time, for hundreds of years almost, the world was Eurocentric because the Europeans went everywhere in the world, and sort of spread their own culture, their own system to the rest of the world. We feel that only the Europeans can do well and that others cannot do well. But what we noticed was that, after World War II, the Eastern countries like Japan, South Korea and later on China were able to rebuild to the extent that they could compete with the West and actually excel, do better than the Europeans.

I visited Japan many times from 1961 onwards. I thought that there were a lot of good things in the East that we could follow. And we will prosper if we follow; that is why we decided on the Look East policy.

Today, I think most [Asian] countries are following the Look East policy. We need to have some kind of East Asian currency, for example, because the dollar has actually depreciated very much, and the dollar is not as stable as it should be. So, why not use a new currency for trading and East Asian currency only for trading and not for domestic use. But if you do that, of course, America will not feel very happy. Because if you have another trading currency, you do not need any more dollars, there is no demand for dollars. And when there is no demand for dollars, the dollar will depreciate further.

Eastern countries are divided on this issue. We need to have more meetings of Eastern countries in order to achieve some kind of consensus so that we can free ourselves from Western domination in the economic field as well as in the political field.

Q: You talked about pursuing the common good. And I was very much impressed by your statement about peace and stability. But it is very difficult to pursue the common good in governance. What do you think about this?

A: In the past, countries existed in isolation because travel was difficult. But today, the world has become smaller. And because of the ease of travel and porous borders, we are neighbors. Whether you are 12,000 miles away or next door, you are still neighbors. If you don't learn how to live with your neighbors, you will have problems. And if you think that conflicts can be resolved through war, war is a very primitive way of solving problems. As primitive people, as tribes, we can fight. But when nations fight, the damage that you see happening in Ukraine, for example, is terrible. Thousands of people are killed, millions of people have to migrate, and the whole country is devastated. Is that what a civilized human society is all about?

That is why I believe that despite our differences, we should try and achieve some common goal. And the common goal for the world should be stability and peace. And for that, we have to bring up our children to believe that war is a crime, to criminalize war, and go for peace and work for peace.

We should have exchanges between children; children should be able to see other children in other countries. For example, although Malaysia does not have any relations with Israel, we allow Israeli students to come and see what Malaysia is like. So by exchanging students and later on as adults, we have more international groupings, and there will be common values, which we will develop. And common values, of course, must be the values that will lead to peace and stability throughout the world.

Q: Who would you prefer to support in a future general election in Malaysia?

A: In my view, UMNO (United Malay National Organization) has been destroyed. It no longer adheres to the objectives [for why it] was formed. Today, we see UMNO as a

party that is only interested in making money for itself. It doesn't care what happens to the country, what happens to the people of Malaysia. Therefore, I will not be with UMNO anymore because this is not the UMNO that I joined [and] led before. I can only join Bersatu, but even Bersatu has some problems. We need to discuss those problems, and we need to find a common approach to dealing with Malaysian politics.

Q: ASEAN has had a lot of difficulty solving the issues facing Myanmar. So what kind of approach would be effective in this situation?

A: One should remember that for a long time, Myanmar was under military rule. They were people like Than Shwe, who ruled Myanmar as a military dictatorship. But we accepted Myanmar as a member of ASEAN. After that, we tried to persuade Myanmar that it should cease the military and authority in government and go for democracy. I myself invited Than Shwe to come to Malaysia to see that there is nothing wrong with the democratic system. The military plays its role. The government has the administration as its role.

As you know, eventually, after Than Shwe gave the leadership to another person, Myanmar decided to become more democratic, to allow for an election, to allow even Aung San Suu Kyi to lead the country. So that move was successful. But now, again, we have another military man seizing power and trying to impose authoritarian military rule in Myanmar. We should adopt [a benign] approach -- non-confrontation and non-isolation -- but to try and keep in touch with the present leadership to try and persuade them that Myanmar and the military itself will benefit from a Myanmar that is democratic, that is stable, and that is peaceful.

The people of Myanmar deserve to have a good government. And I think the military, even though they may think more about their own power, I think they are all people of Myanmar. And I'm quite sure they want to see Myanmar also prosper and be peaceful, like the other ASEAN countries.

[Amidst the Climate Crisis, How Can Queer Filipino Art Create a Language of Resistance?](#)

By: Evan Tan

Pride Month is coming, and it might be the most important one yet. Globally, we're seeing the rise of hate and violence towards LGBT+ people, as governments launch aggressive attacks against queer rights — from Italy, where Prime Minister Georgia Meloni has declared war against the “LGBT lobby”; to Uganda, where a new law punishes “aggravated homosexuality” with the death penalty.

In the Philippines, Christian fundamentalists and lawmakers such as Joel Villanueva continue to roadblock the passage of the SOGIE Equality Law, legislation that has been languishing for over twenty years. Online anti-LGBT propaganda has also been escalating, as queerphobes attempt to sway public opinion against equal rights by arguing that the SOGIE Equality Law will harm freedom of religion and curtail academic freedom.

A government that crushes dissent will inevitably come after us at some point. We saw how many queer Filipinos argued during the last election that putting people with a history of disrespecting human rights spell doom for the community.

We have grown aware of how larger systems affect the progress or downfall of the LGBT+ community.

And yet, despite this awakening and recognition of how larger systems play a part in ensuring greater and stronger queer inclusion, what I find interesting is how the community has left the climate crisis issue largely untouched. In my last column, I mentioned that we're soon to cross the 1.5°C global warming target, which means that the climate crisis may get worse.

This spells bad news for LGBT+ Filipinos, as people from developing countries (such as the Philippines) will be the most affected by the worsening climate. As the crisis amplifies the challenges that the minorities from these countries are already facing (such as homelessness, unemployment, lack of medical access, and poverty), we can expect all the marginal gains the Filipino queer community has achieved to start unraveling.

This is not speculation: numerous thoughtpieces and research have highlighted that the climate crisis' damage and the queer community's suffering are intertwined.

Fossil fuel companies have managed to deflect criticism from the queer community in the Philippines by cozying up with us. Shell, in particular, is known for their active efforts to support LGBT+ and LGBT+-adjacent causes (such as HIV advocacy.) We see how Shell sponsored last year's Pride PH March, joined an LGBT+ inter-industry pride organization (together with another fossil fuel company, Chevron), and supported the #AwraSafely campaign (you could even see that the campaign's contact email is a Pilipinas Shell Foundation email.)

The power of language and storytelling has been crucial for LGBT+ people to articulate our needs, with neologisms and terminologies expanding the articulation of our reality to the larger world. Concepts like sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, sex characteristics, pinkwashing, and queer joy (among the many other words and phrases in our ever-growing lexicon) enrich and illuminate the multifaceted experiences of our community. As a counterpoint to the criticism often lobbed by cis-het (and some queer people too) that these new jargons only serve to complicate and obfuscate our existence, it isn't the fault of these concepts: human nature is simply a complicated and creatively chaotic affair.

Because the myth-making force of language can be such an effective tool for hoarding power, it's unsurprising that authoritarian regimes and destructive corporations would also use it to muddy the discourse, coöpting progressive words into their marketing to paint themselves as heroes allied with other progressive movements.

Sarah Seger, activist and co-founder of the Aoeteroa Liberation League (ALL), calls out this "vague-washing". In a video posted on ALL's Instagram account, she explains: "Take diversity, for example. A diversity of thought can be a beautiful thing, but it's reduced to mean a diversity of appearances and identities. This can create an illusion of diversity, without reflecting on the needs of the most oppressed, like victims of poverty or war.

In fact, the most oppressive powers tend to beat their own drums the loudest. To resist their vague-washing tactics, we must make concrete and measurable demands led by those whose needs are most urgent."

It is difficult to imagine a world outside of patriarchy, as it is hard to imagine a world beyond capitalism. Oppressive systems often have cunning ways of simultaneously destroying people who question the status quo, fomenting discord within communities, and crushing hopes for a better world – which, in turn, leads to marginalized people accepting their subjugation and even inspiring them to love their oppressors. (I am wont to believe that years of persecution are what led gay hairdresser Ricky Reyes to be defeated enough to say: "Ang api ng bakla dapat sa 'tin lang 'yan. 'Wag nating

ipangalandakan sa tao, ba't kailangan pa sabihin sa madlang people na, 'Uy intindihin mo nga ako, bakla ako.' Teka muna.")

Even philanthropy can be used by billionaires and multinationals to alleviate symptoms rather than address the causes, through performative acts that perfume their brands.

In 2016, Shell launched their #MakeTheFuture campaign, The flashy campaign, launched with endorsers such as Oscar winner Jennifer Hudson, DJ Steve Aoki, Brazilian celebrity Luan Santana, Chinese pop star Tan WeiWei, and Nigerian singer Yemi Alade, was supposed to showcase "the ongoing actions Shell is taking to help create a more sustainable, energy-rich, lower-carbon future."

Yet, years after that campaign was launched, a report from environmental campaigner Global Witness said that Shell's solar and wind investments are only 1.5% (about US\$288 million) of its capital expenditure.

The Guardian's Paul Vallely observes: "When it comes to addressing inequality, a well-intentioned philanthropist might finance educational bursaries for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, or fund training schemes to equip low-paid workers for better jobs. That allows a few people to exit bad circumstances, but it leaves countless others stuck in underperforming schools or low-paid, insecure work at the bottom of the labor market. Very few concerned philanthropists think of financing research or advocacy to address why so many schools are poor or so many jobs are exploitative. Such an approach, says David Callahan of Inside Philanthropy, is like 'nurturing saplings while the forest is being cleared'."

Art has often been a convenient accessory to give credibility to make the larger public fall hook, line, and sinker for the propaganda of companies like Shell, which in the first quarter of 2023 recorded US\$9.6 billion in profits, profiting off the rise of oil and natural gas prices and the Russian-Ukraine war. Despite their promises to do better, internal documents have revealed that Shell "has no immediate plans to move to a net-zero emissions portfolio over our investment horizon of 10-20 years."

When Queer Art Practitioners Confront Their Uneasy Corporate Collaboration

For queer artist Derek Tumala, coming to terms with the destruction that typhoon Haiyan left in its wake in 2013 was the starting point toward his greater awareness of climate change. With connecting art and science as an overarching theme of his art practice, creating work around the climate for him was a natural progression.

He shared with me the digital art project he did with SM Supermalls, "Kayamanan ng Pilipinas," a digital garden displayed on the LED screen in the SM Mega Tower lobby, which morphed in sync with the weather outside. "We're triggering weather data and

translating it into actual weather inside the work. So kunwari ‘pag umulan sa Mandaluyong, it’s going to rain inside [on the digital garden],” he explained.

I couldn’t help but think about the treachery of images, where art becomes a convenient placeholder for reality: a world sanitized and removed from meaning and consequences. Seeing the changing weather, a lived reality by the masses outside, transubstantiated into an aesthetic piece contemplated upon by people shielded from its effects, seems more like a preview of a dystopic future. That SM commissioned it made the project even more surreal, as they covertly cut down dozens of trees to expand their Baguio mall despite environmentalists’ protests, with the Supreme Court stepping in to stop them for good.

He commented on how Shell, as a known patron of the local art scene (the Shell National Students Art Competition is about to enter its fifty-sixth year this 2023), has shielded itself from criticism from the art community.

“Being a patron of the arts for so long, they’ve already embedded themselves into that kind of spaces and positioned themselves as a good part of it.

“It’s all about business. What do you call, corporate social responsibility, which is bullshit, right? But it works. Because people need money. And the money comes from corporations. And I think artists or institutions want to counter that system, like how can we actually reimagine the structure that we don’t need corporations?”

“If you ask me, I mean, I need money. Sometimes, I have to do corporate work because it’s not sustainable to depend on institutions...It’s really hard for artists to say no to projects, and you build a system on how you sustain your system. Corporate is easy money. That’s an ongoing conflict for me — how I can balance that out.”

David Loughran is an art curator and founder of coastal-based arts organization and residency Emerging Islands. Through Emerging Islands, David and his partners try to connect artists with coastal communities to explore the most urgent ecological issues of our time. Informed by his background in the arts industry, David knows this game that businesses play is neither new nor shocking.

He muses:

“If you work long enough in cultural work or art, you can see through the fake glimmer of corporate social responsibility. You can very easily see how much of these projects are very top-down. They get in there, they try to paint a picture of what a community is like, but not do the bottom-down thing, to really shore up the stories, the actual histories, actual relationships with ecology.

“That same thing is true of the development sphere as well, I think the development sphere these days is struggling to humanize their perspectives. And even that is a very limited point of view because it’s not just about humans. You’re talking about things that kind of really impact entire ecosystems. What does it mean to think multi-species, think more than human, or think about indigenous [peoples]?”

That corporations deploy a top-down approach to addressing social issues may be an essentialist problem: corporations are, by nature, hierarchical creatures that worship at the altar of efficiency. The solutions they often develop are grounded on a belief that resources can be quickly mobilized to tick off a list of problems. (This optimization of philanthropy may remind you of the burgeoning movement of bourgeois aid, effective altruism — which is being heavily criticized for its belief that positive change is a largely quantifiable endeavor.)

How Queer Artists Can Create a Language of Resistance

Rapper, visual artist, and climate activist Jon Bonifacio, who is also the national coordinator of the nationwide environmental campaign center Kalikasan PNE (Kalikasan People’s Network for the Environment), believes the larger queer community can do something that large businesses like Shell will never be able to do: empathize with those in the margins.

He cites the experience of Aries Soledad, queer activist, and PAMALAKAYA Pilipinas community organizer. Aries’s story, who is respected by Cavite’s coastal community for standing up against corporate land reclamation, is a lesson for all of us, notes Jon.

“I think what we need to do as a community—whether queer or, like, you know, the broader Filipino audience, it’s to really go down there and see what queer people on the ground, in the poorest of the poor communities, see what they’re experiencing. And I think that is what groups like Shell can never go up.

“The narratives they are pushing that they’re, you know, the friend of the queer community or the friend of the art community...you go down there, and you see how climate change is impacting all these people. That sort of breaks their narrative.

“I think that’s what we need to champion: those narratives of people who are queer or people who are otherwise marginalized — and making those the figureheads of why we’re fighting for the climate, and why we’re fighting against climate change.

“Once we have a very clear and concrete idea of what goes on on the ground, that’s how we’ll break the narratives being fed by groups like Shell.”

Those who are separately fighting for queer rights and climate justice already encounter heavy resistance from the ones who benefit most from oppressive systems. That's why fighting for both (that is, to be a queer climate activist) can seem daunting: an open invitation from two giant enemies to tag-team and obliterate you.

I particularly like how Mitzi Jonelle Tan, climate activist, and Youth Advocates for Climate Action Philippines (YACAP) convenor, acknowledges the power of transformative, positive, and radical imagination in guiding people towards an alternative future that builds up communities as it destroys destructive, greenwashing businesses.

In an interview with artist Leeroy New, who uses his word-building art practice as a way to spark conversations on climate change, Mitzi argues:

“Radical imagination is a powerful and important tool in activist spaces. It's difficult to imagine a sustainable and climate-just system when it's so different from the one we have today, but we must practice imagining it and encourage others to do so as well.

“We must show people what that other world looks like. We must create a better world in our mind's eye. We can't just be anti-imperialist, anti-fossil fuels, anti-extraction, and anti-injustice, without also being pro-people, pro-planet, pro-community, and pro-love and joy.

“We must collectively dare to break the mold: to, imagine and create these alternative futures.”

Derek assents:

“There are a lot of stories or scenarios that are not being told...This is sad because we also don't have much platform to say that. The [stories of the] most vulnerable are not really being articulated well. People here don't really take it seriously.

“What art can't do is solve problems. We can't really say — like okay, this is the right thing. What we can do is say or articulate things that are not yet being articulated. What art can do is we can nudge thinking. We can enter these spaces that are not even thought about. Those are very important also.

“Art can enter so many spaces, so many topics that a human being can experience.”

His current works, which are part of the ongoing exhibit “Adaptation: Reconnected Earth” at the Museum of Contemporary Art & Design (MCAD) Manila, do precisely that. He offers a space for contemplating climate change and how capitalist greed propels us

beyond the point of no return. One of his dioramas, “Unearthing of Funny Weather,” is based on the Didipio mine in Nueva Vizcaya operated by Australian-Canadian mining firm Oceangold. Derek’s work is a commentary on the interconnections of modern colonialism, capitalism, and climate change.

Jon acknowledges that getting people to think about climate change through art is one thing; getting people to act is another.

“If you have that position in which you’re able to get a lot of people to listen or look at your work. that’s something that you can work on, and hopefully, use your mediums and avenues to really convey the messages that need to get up.

“But that’s just one part of the problem because a lot of people are doing that. A lot of people are, you know, already drawing or writing or illustrating about climate change or writing songs, or doing plays.

“I mean, it’s all good work, but I think the next step is to get people from watching your work or listening to the stuff you put out — how do you get from there, to having them do something concrete about climate change? Like, you know, lobbying for bills, or going to communities and helping them with their organizing, all of that. How does one do that? How do you connect those two, you know, very different things?”

Like Jon, I acknowledge that it is the big question we’re all trying to resolve: how to get people to act. Maybe the solutions won’t be as straightforward. The answers will not be easy. But until then, we need artists to help us express the questions that those in power try hard to stop us from asking.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Bills to address climate change threats gain traction in House](#)

By: Filane Mikee Cervantes

The House of Representatives has approved two measures that will address the ill effects of climate change through the rehabilitation and conservation of key resources.

During Monday's plenary session, a total of 268 lawmakers voted to approve on final reading House Bill 8204, which seeks to enhance the conservation and restoration of peatlands to allow the country to manage it sustainably given their value as natural solutions to address climate change.

Speaker Martin Romualdez said peatlands, which are wetland ecosystems with accumulation of decomposed plant materials, have peat and permanent water logging and vegetation in the form of trees, shrubs, grasses, and mosses.

Romualdez further pointed out that these are nature-based solution for climate change mitigation considering that they function as carbon sinks because they take in and store more carbon than they release.

"Hence, this measure will provide opportunities for the country to achieve multiple benefits for biodiversity and climate resiliency, including financing through market-based instruments and mechanisms," he said.

The bill tasks the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), through the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), to lead the monitoring and overall implementation of the proposed legislation.

Under the measure, the DENR shall develop a National Peatland Conservation and Restoration Program to provide direction, support and guidance to the local government units (LGUs) and stakeholders in the development and implementation of their local peatland conservation and restoration programs.

The program will include a mapping of peatlands in the country, and assessment of vulnerability to climate change and disaster risk management, among others.

The proposed law requires that peatlands classified as agricultural lands will be reclassified to either forest lands or national parks, upon DENR's recommendation.

The bill also prohibits the drainage, deforestation, clearing, dumping of waste and introduction of invasive alien species in peatlands.

The chamber also overwhelmingly approved with 284 votes House Bill 7754, which seeks to reforest and rehabilitate fishponds that have been abandoned or unutilized for three years.

The bill proposes to amend Section 43 of Presidential Decree 705 or the “Revised Forestry Code of the Philippines” and reduce from five years to three years the period needed to reforest unutilized or abandoned fishponds.

Romualdez said instead of remaining an idle asset, these abandoned or unutilized fishponds can be used to help in efforts to safeguard and protect the environment.

“This measure also aims to address the ill effects of climate change by actively promoting reforestation in areas that can be planted with trees,” he said.

The main objective of HB 7754 is to expedite the reversion of unutilized or abandoned fishponds to forest lands so that these can be “immediately rehabilitated and reforested”.

It also mandates the Department of Agriculture and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to jointly set guidelines in the determination and rehabilitation of abandoned, undeveloped or underutilized fishponds covered by Fishpond Lease Agreements.

The measure was introduced by Agusan del Sur Representatives Alfelito Bascug and Eddiebong Plaza, together with Bulacan Rep. Linabelle Ruth Villarica, and was approved in the House Committee on Natural Resources chaired by Cavite Rep. Elpidio Barzaga.

RAPPLER

Enhanced southwest monsoon dumps rain while Typhoon Betty moves slowly

By: Acor Arceo

With Typhoon Betty (Mawar) still moving slowly over the waters east of Batanes, its enhancement of the southwest monsoon or habagat also continues.

On Tuesday evening, May 30, rainfall warnings were raised for parts of Western Visayas and Mimaropa as the enhanced southwest monsoon dumped rain.

In Western Visayas, the provinces of Aklan, Antique, and Guimaras as well as the southern part of Iloilo were seeing heavy rain, while in Mimaropa, the province of Occidental Mindoro and some areas in Palawan were affected.

Betty was located 320 kilometers east northeast of Basco, Batanes, or 330 kilometers east of Itbayat, Batanes, as of 10 pm on Tuesday. It continues to slowly move north.

The 11 pm bulletin of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) also shows the typhoon weakened, with its maximum sustained winds decreasing from 150 kilometers per hour to 130 km/h. Its gustiness went down from 185 km/h to 160 km/h.

While Betty did not make landfall in the Philippines, it has been affecting Northern Luzon due to its size. The typhoon will still cause rain in the following areas within 24 hours:

Tuesday evening, May 30, to Wednesday evening, May 31

50-100 millimeters (mm): Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, La Union, Abra, western part of Benguet

The enhanced southwest monsoon may also trigger more rain in the next two days.

Tuesday evening, May 30, to Wednesday evening, May 31

50-100 mm: Occidental Mindoro, Antique, northeastern part of Aklan

Wednesday evening, May 31, to Thursday evening, June 1

50-100 mm: Occidental Mindoro, Antique, Aklan, Cuyo Islands, Calamian Islands, northern part of mainland Palawan

Meanwhile, PAGASA maintained the list of areas under tropical cyclone wind signals as of 11 pm on Tuesday.

Signal No. 2

Gale-force winds (62 to 88 km/h), minor to moderate threat to life and property

Batanes

Signal No. 1

Strong winds (39 to 61 km/h), minimal to minor threat to life and property

- Cagayan including Babuyan Islands
- northern and eastern parts of Isabela (Santo Tomas, Santa Maria, Quezon, San Mariano, Dinapigue, Delfin Albano, San Pablo, Ilagan City, Benito Soliven, Tumauini, Cabagan, Palanan, Quirino, Divilacan, Gamu, Maconacon, Naguilian, Mallig)
- eastern part of Ilocos Norte (Piddig, Bangui, Vintar, Marcos, Pagudpud, Banna, Adams, Carasi, Dingras, Solsona, Dumalneg, Nueva Era)
- Apayao
- northern part of Kalinga (Tabuk City, Balbalan, Pinukpuk, Rizal)
- northeastern part of Abra (Tineg, Lacub, Malibcong)

The weather bureau added that the enhanced southwest monsoon will bring occasional to frequent gusts to Western Visayas, Bicol, Aurora, Quezon, the northern part of mainland Palawan including Calamian and Cuyo islands, Occidental Mindoro, Oriental Mindoro, and Romblon, as well as the remaining areas of the Ilocos Region and the Cordillera Administrative Region that are not under wind signals.

The gale warning issued at 5 pm on Tuesday remains in place, covering the following seaboard:

seaboard of Northern Luzon and eastern seaboard of Central Luzon – rough to high seas, with waves 3.1 to 6.5 meters high

seaboard of Southern Luzon and eastern seaboard of Visayas – rough to very rough seas, with waves 2.8 to 4.5 meters high

PAGASA warned that rough to high seas are risky for all vessels. In areas with rough to very rough seas, small vessels should not sail while larger vessels must be on alert for big waves.

Betty is projected to keep moving north slowly until Wednesday, May 31, then speed up as it turns north northeast on Thursday, June 1, and northeast or east northeast on Friday, June 2, and Saturday, June 3.

Betty could leave the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR) on Thursday evening or early Friday morning.

Outside PAR, it may pass very close to or make landfall in the vicinity of Japan's central Ryukyu Islands, possibly in Okinawa Island, according to PAGASA.

Betty is also seen to weaken into a severe tropical storm on Thursday and into a tropical storm on Friday.

PAGASA explained that the weakening would be caused by "cooler ocean waters, dry air intrusion, and increasing vertical wind shear." The weather bureau is also not ruling out a "faster weakening rate" due to the dry air affecting the typhoon.

PAGASA added that Betty may start transitioning into a post-tropical cyclone on Saturday or Sunday, June 4, when it would already be outside PAR.

Betty entered PAR as a super typhoon early Saturday, May 27, and before its entry, had reached a peak intensity of 215 km/h. It is the country's second tropical cyclone for 2023 and the first super typhoon of the year.

THE GUARDIAN

[Climate change to blame for up to 17 deaths on Mount Everest, experts say](#)

Experts say this is likely to be one of the deadliest years on record on Mount Everest, with variable weather caused by climate change being blamed as one of the main reasons for the deaths of up to 17 people.

A total of 12 people have now been confirmed dead during Everest expeditions this season and another five are missing, presumed dead, as no contact has been made for at least five days in all cases, according to the Himalayan Database, which tracks mountain fatalities.

The figure was confirmed by Yuba Raj Khatiwada, the director of Nepal's tourism department. "Altogether this year we lost 17 people on the mountain this season," he said. "The main cause is the changing in the weather. This season the weather conditions were not favourable, it was very variable. Climate change is having a big impact in the mountains."

It would make this year one of the worst on record for deaths on Everest, matched only by the events of 2014 when 17 died, most of whom were local sherpas killed in an avalanche. On average, between five and 10 people die on Everest every year but recent years have seen a spike.

Among those who lost their lives climbing Everest this year were Jason Kennison, a 40-year-old mechanic from Australia who had overcome spinal injuries to climb to the top but could not make it back down, a Canadian doctor, Pieter Swart, and three Nepalese sherpas who died in an avalanche in April.

Those still missing include solo Hungarian climber Suhajda Szilárd, who scaled the mountain without a sherpa guide or additional oxygen, and an Indian-Singaporean climber who is feared to have fallen off the mountain.

This year has been more deadly than 2019, when images went viral of overcrowding and "carnage" on Everest, with hundreds of climbers waiting up to 12 hours to scale the mountain and reports that people were forced to clamber over bodies and incapacitated climbers. A total of 11 people died that year.

The Nepal government has been criticised for issuing 479 permits this year, the highest number ever. At £12,000 each, they are a major income generator for the small cash-strapped country, and the government has been reluctant to scale back numbers.

Khatiwada denied it was too many, saying the number was high this year because the window for climbing had opened earlier and the season had been longer than usual, so that there was no overcrowding.

The rising death toll comes as the 70th anniversary of Edmund Hillary and Tenzing Norgay's historic first ascent to the peak of Everest was celebrated on Monday. It marked the start of a global obsession among mountaineers to scale the world's highest peak, with over 10,000 ascents since and demand for climbing permits increasing every year.

Ang Norbu Sherpa, the president of the Nepal National Mountain Guide Association, said "too many" permits were being issued and it was putting environmental pressure on the mountain.

"The climbing has pattern has changed, it used to be hardened climbers but now it is a lot of novice climbers who want to get to the summit of Everest," said Sherpa.

Experts and celebrated mountaineers have warned that Everest, which tops 8,848 metres, is now seen as a "tourist destination" and a playground for the thrill-seeking rich, even those with little experience of climbing at high altitude, who are willing to pay upwards of £48,000 to be guided to the summit.

Alan Arnette, a mountaineer who climbed Everest in 2011 and now writes regularly on conditions, said this year had been "chaos". "The root cause of the high number of deaths lies with inexperienced clients who push themselves too hard and do not turn back soon enough," he said.

"Many guide companies have no experience requirements and accept anyone, telling them 'We will teach you everything you need to know.' But when the client gets in trouble, they can be abandoned to save the lives of the support staff. We saw several clients abandoned this season, left alone on the upper mountain, with some still missing today."

There had also been concerns that the increased human activity at Everest base camp, which is located on the Khumbu glacier, is making it unstable and unsafe, exacerbating dangerous conditions already created by global warming. According to a recent survey, Everest's glaciers have lost 2,000 years of ice in just the past 30 years.

In order to cater to the demands of upwards of 400 climbers annually, about 1,500 people will come to base camp during the season, where luxury facilities can include massages and evening entertainment. Helicopters are also now a common way to reach base camp.

A plan was put forward last year by Nepal officials to move the base camp to a spot lower down the mountain, off the thinning glacier. Khatiwada confirmed that a plan was under way to change the rules so no trekkers could spend the night at base camp, and instead would have to stay lower down.

However, this plan has faced resistance by the sherpa community, who voiced concern that it would add three hours to the Everest climb and could potentially make it more dangerous. Sherpa said there were plans to learn how to better manage the base camp, rather than moving it. "It is a big question mark for local people where it could be moved to," he said.

The high number of climbers is also escalating the problem of the massive amount of rubbish left strewn on Everest. Though the situation has improved slightly since the introduction of a £3,200 "garbage deposit", which is only returned if they bring back 8kg of rubbish, local guides say the mountain is still littered with rubbish, particularly plastic, at the end of every season.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Philippines starts siphoning oil from sunken tanker

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

Work to recover the remaining oil from the MT Princess Empress that sank off Oriental Mindoro began Monday and may last for a month, the Philippine Coast Guard said.

MT Princess Empress, which was loaded with 800,000 liters of industrial fuel, sank in rough seas on February 28, affecting over 194,000 people in Southern Luzon and Western Visayas and threatening the area's rich marine life

Diving support vessel Fire Opal is expected to siphon 120,000 to 240,000 liters of oil.

Commodore Geronimo Tuvilla, Coast Guard's incident management team in Oriental Mindoro commander, said it may take between 20 and 30 days to extract the remaining oil from the vessel.

"Once the oil removal is completed, we hope that the process will pave the way for the rehabilitation of affected areas and finally transition to the normalcy of lives of affected Mindoreños," Tuvilla said.

Fishers from some parts of Oriental Mindoro have yet to resume their fishing activities. Fishers who were ordered to stay ashore participate in the government's cash-for-work program, which provides temporary income.

The oil spill is also posing threats to the Verde Island Passage, an area called the "Amazon of the Oceans" because of its rich marine life. Initial estimates by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources put the environmental damage caused by the oil spill at P7 billion.

Call for accountability

Pola Mayor Jennifer Cruz expressed frustration over the government's slow response in addressing the oil spill. Pola is one of the worst-affected municipalities.

"Those behind this should be held accountable because we are tired," Cruz said in a joint hearing conducted by the House ecology and natural resource committees Monday.

Fr. Edwin Gariguez, lead convenor of Protect Verde Island Passage (VIP), noted the oil spill is still not being treated as a "national disaster."

“While the government dilly-dallies in exacting accountability and justice, the damage to Verde Island Passage’s ecosystem and resulting impacts on stakeholders continue to worsen. Companies responsible for this must be punished,” Gariguez said.

RDC Reield Marine Services owns the oil tanker. Reports identified SL Harbor Bulk Terminal Corporation, a subsidiary of San Miguel Shipping and Lighterage Corporation, as the charterer. Under the Oil Pollution Compensation Act, charterers are exempted from claims for compensation for pollution damage.

VATICAN NEWS

[Philippines: Groups demand reparations from industries as climate crisis worsens](#)

By: Zeus Legaspi

Multiple green and multisectoral groups in the Philippines have called on fossil fuel companies to be held accountable for the pollution and worsening climate hazards affecting the country.

Greenpeace Philippines, in a statement on May 29, highlighted the significant climate impacts caused by the fossil fuel industries, which have reportedly contributed to the escalating environmental dangers in the archipelago.

"The Philippines is in a constant state of climate emergency, Super Typhoons are the Philippines' new normal, even as we are already experiencing longer-term, slow onset impacts such as drought, sea level rise, and diminishing resources," said Jefferson Chua, a campaigner from Greenpeace Philippines.

The country's northern provinces are taking the impact of Typhoon Mawar (local name "Betty") – the world's strongest typhoon so far this year. Although it downgraded into a typhoon, Mawar is still expected to bring strong winds and heavy rainfall that may cause floods and landslides.

About 20 tropical cyclones hit the Philippines annually. Climate change exacerbates these climate hazards as oceans' temperatures increase, making typhoons stronger and more frequent, Greenpeace said. In the past six years, the archipelago experienced 14 super typhoons.

"Meanwhile, fossil fuel companies responsible for most of the carbon emissions that have largely contributed to the climate crisis, are still looking to expand their operations, further exacerbating the effects of climate change, even as they rake in huge profits from our people's suffering," he added.

Further, the organization pointed out that globally, the largest oil, gas, and coal companies are responsible for over US\$ 200 billion in expected lost GDP per year from 2025-2050, the cost of which is shouldered by governments, taxpayers, and the "uncompensated victims of climate change".

"Typhoon Mawar, like all other super typhoons before it, is a stark warning and reminder that things will get a lot worse," Chua said.

“The Philippine government must demand reparations for losses and damages from fossil fuel companies. The world shouldn’t let these climate crimes continue; culprits must be held to account and must pay reparations,” he added.

Cry for justice

Meanwhile, Protect VIP (Verde Island Passage), a network of residents, fisherfolk, youth, faith-based, and civil society groups decried the Philippine government’s alleged inaction on holding fossil fuel companies accountable as polluters.

This call came after the oil spill affecting the VIP and surrounding communities hit its 90-day mark without those responsible being held accountable for the widespread pollution.

The group attended the Joint Hearing of the Committees on Ecology and Natural Resources in the Philippine Congress on Monday to convey their disappointment with the lack of sanctions for RDC and San Miguel Corporation (SMC) which were among the owners of the sunken vessel that spilled industrial oil in the VIP.

“This national disaster has been going on for three long months, but we fear that it is still not being treated as one. While the government dilly-dallies in exacting accountability and justice, the damage to Verde Island Passage’s ecosystem and resulting impacts on stakeholders continue to worsen. Companies responsible for this must be punished,” said Father Edwin Gariguez, lead convenor of Protect VIP.

Father Gariguez recently toured Europe to demand banks sever ties with “polluting industries” in the Philippines.

“We must not let these polluters go scot-free. At this time of ecological and climate crises and increasing loss of wildlife, one of the most biodiverse marine ecosystems in the world is in peril. Curiously, our agencies seem to refuse to lift a finger in exacting liability from those responsible. They must face their day of reckoning for the damage they wrought on the environment and the people's livelihood,” said Gerry Arances, co-convenor of Protect VIP.

In February, tanker MT Princess Empress capsized off the coast of Oriental Mindoro, bringing down with it 800,000 liters of industrial oil causing damage to people and wildlife in the area.

FILE PHOTO: An aerial view shows the oil spill from the sunken fuel tanker MT Princess Empress on the shores of Oriental Mindoro, Philippines.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE CANADIAN INQUIRER

[Whole-of-society approach needed to address climate change](#)

By: Anna Leah Gonzales and 'Philippine News Agency

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) on Monday called for a whole-of-nation and community approach to address the impact of climate change.

“For our whole-of-nation and whole of community approach, we are urging our national government agencies, local government agencies, private industry partners, including what we call the different homeowners association, to have their own action plan,” CCC Commissioner Albert Dela Cruz said during the Laging Handa briefing.

“On the national level, we have what we call the national adaptation plan. We have the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC). For the local level, you have the LCCAP or Local Climate Change Action Plan, and then we have also the Industry Climate Change Action Plan,” he said.

The National Climate Change Action Plan 2011-2028 outlines the country’s adaptation and mitigation agenda.

The action plan focuses on food security, water sufficiency, ecological and environmental stability, human security, climate-smart industries and services, sustainable energy, and knowledge and capacity development.

Under the NDC, the Philippines earlier committed to a 75-percent greenhouse gas emission reduction and avoidance by 2030.

For the local level, Dela Cruz said local government units (LGUs) should immediately pass their LCCAP.

“We are calling on our local government units to pass the LCCAP in a form of an ordinance. We have a joint memorandum circular with the DILG (Department of the Interior and Local Government) to cascade information to the different local government units so that our LGUs will have LCCAP,” he added.

Dela Cruz said LCCAP mandates LGUs to have a specific action desk, have their own action officer, and a local climate action plan, including village level.

He said LCCAP also mandates the creation of a specific committee on climate change aside from the committee on environment.

“The industry climate change action plan is also included. The big malls, subdivisions, and other business establishments should have their own industry climate change action officer. They will cascade the information to our local government units, to our industry sectors, so that we will have the whole of society approach in our battle against climate change,” he said.

Dela Cruz also encouraged consumers to only patronize businesses that help fight climate change.

“Let’s look at [products’] label. Do they have what we call, a net zero carbon by 2030 or by 2050? If they have that program, we patronize them. If they don’t have that program, then we don’t buy their products or services because they have no programs for sustainability,” he said.

Aside from these initiatives, Dela Cruz said CCC is also urging LGUs and the public to adopt edible landscaping.

“We at the CCC, we have a resolution that discourages ornamental plants. As much as possible, we should adopt edible planting,” he said.

Dela Cruz said once this policy is signed by the secretary of the Department of Environment, the edible landscaping will be implemented in public offices and private industries.

“We need to wake-up and we need to do our responsibility. We live in one planet. There should be equal responsibility for all sectors,” he said.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Ople pushes for better migration governance at Asia-GCC dialogue](#)

By: Marita Moaje

Department of Migrant Workers (DMW) Secretary Susan Ople on Tuesday called for a “bold discussion” to ensure the protection of all migrant workers through better migration governance.

During her speech at the Asia-Gulf Cooperation Council Senior Officials Dialogue held at the Bonifacio Global City, Ople encouraged stakeholders to have a bold discussion and collectively work together to be able to achieve Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) and Global Compact on Migration (GCM) objectives.

Among the topics to be discussed include SDG Target 8.8 that “protect labor rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment.”

Also to be tackled is SDG Target 10.7 which refers to the facilitation of “orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.”

Also included in the pipeline for discussion are GCM Objectives 8 and 23 which refer to the shared responsibility to “facilitate fair and ethical recruitment and safeguard conditions that ensure decent work.”

According to Ople, Objective 23 seeks to “Strengthen international cooperation and global partnerships for safe, orderly, and regular migration.”

“In shorthand, what all these means is how do we keep our workers safe as they cross borders, as they look for better opportunities for their families and how to balance the situation, with also the need to meet the needs of our foreign employers for skilled, responsible, and reliable foreign workers,” Ople explains.

With the Philippines hosting the discussions, she expressed hope that actual experiences by senior labor migration officials and resource persons from countries of origin in Asia and countries of destination in the GCC would help in achieving its goals.

“From these discussions, we hope to find each other – not that we are lost, but precisely because we move in the same circles – influencing policy, setting directions in labor mobility, migrants’ and migrant workers’ rights, and gender equality, and other issues,” she said.

Aside from the DMW, officials from the Department of Foreign Affairs, the International Organization for Migration, International Labor Organization, United Nations Network on Migration and the Climate Change Commission are also present at the event.

Also present were key government officials from Indonesia, Nepal, Bangladesh, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, Qatar, Oman, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and the United Arab Emirates.

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