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07 JUNE 2023 [08:00 am]

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By: Jonathan L. Mayuga

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By: Ashley Erika O. Jose

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CNN PHILIPPINES

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REUTERS

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THE MANILA TIMES

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By: Red Mendoza

FOURTEEN Filipino scientists, including a Department of Health official, were included in the list of the most outstanding scientists and researchers in the 2023 edition of the Asian Scientist 100 of the Asian Scientist Magazine.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[\[Opinion\] Bracing for disaster](#)

By: Marichu Villanueva

The occurrences of scattered to at times widespread rainfall associated with the southwest monsoon (habagat) during the past few days confirmed indeed the onset of the rainy season in our country. Last Friday, our very own Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) even made an official declaration on the start of rainy season.

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TV PATROL

[UNICEF: Milyon-milyong batang Pinoy lantad sa mga peligrong dala ng climate change](#)

By: Raphael Lozano

Base ito sa pag-aaral ng United Nations Children's Fund o UNICEF> Giit ng ilang ahensya ng pamahalaan na panahon na para kumilos para maiwasan ang malubhang epekto nito.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BUSINESS MIRROR

DENR, JICA reaffirm cooperation on management of PHL forestland

By: Jonathan L. Mayuga

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) vowed to strengthen forest management in the Philippines to boost the livelihood of upland dwellers and farmers to help sustain economic development.

JICA is the sole Japanese government agency that implements Official Development Assistance, providing technical cooperation, loans, and grants, to overcome challenges common in developing nations. It operates in more than 150 countries and regions worldwide, including the Philippines.

JICA Chief Representative to the Philippines Sakamoto Takema paid a courtesy visit and was received by DENR Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga at the DENR Central Office in Quezon City on May 29.

During the visit, Loyzaga and Takema discussed the Forestland Management Project (FMP), a joint DENR-JICA undertaking that aims to strengthen forestland management in three critical river basins in the country, namely, the Upper Magat and Cagayan, Pampanga, and Jalaur on Panay Island.

A 10-year project that started in 2012, the FMP focused on rehabilitating degraded forestlands and improving the socioeconomic conditions of affected communities surrounding the three river basins.

FMP employed collaborative and comprehensive community-based management strategies, such as empowering people's organizations; securing land tenure rights; enterprise development for food security and income; and development, conservation, protection, and sustainable use of forestland resources.

Loyzaga and Takema also talked about other possible areas of cooperation for environmental protection, biodiversity conservation, climate change mitigation, and disaster risk reduction.

At the same time, Takema introduced JICA's other environment-related projects and activities, such as the Pasig-Marikina River Channel Improvement Project, Flood Risk Management Project in various cities, and Disaster Risk Reduction and Management-Capacity Enhancement Project, among others.

DENR and JICA have been working closely for the protection and conservation of the environment and natural resources for six decades.

Most recently, JICA sponsored DENR's training program on Sustainable Forestry Management with Community Participation in 2019. It also provided technical assistance in establishing ecological solid waste management programs in the cities of Calbayog, Sagay, and Davao in 2022.

BUSINESS WORLD

[DoE calls for fair treatment of poor countries in transition to green-energy technology](#)

By: Ashley Erika O. Jose

ENERGY Secretary Raphael P.M. Lotilla called on developed countries to ensure a “just” transition to green technology for poorer countries, citing the need for low-cost financing and technology transfers.

“We hope our development partners and countries like Sweden would assist us not only in making the private sector share technology and access to innovation, but also to assist the Philippines in terms of securing favorable financing that would allow us to build the necessary infrastructure,” Mr. Lotilla said at an energy forum the Department of Energy (DoE) co-organized with the Embassy of Sweden.

Mr. Lotilla said technology is constantly developing, leaving the government the task of selecting which tech is most suitable for the Philippines’ green energy transition.

“First of all, green transition for a developing country like the Philippines must be a just transition; it must be a fair transition and therefore we must avoid transferring the burden of climate transition to an already overburdened Philippine population,” he said.

Mr. Lotilla said that aside from harnessing indigenous renewable energy resources, the Philippines must also turn to liquefied natural gas (LNG) as a transition fuel while evaluating the various forms of technology available.

“We have to take full advantage of all sources of energy that are currently in place and to use them in a wise manner. At the same time, we need to be able to transition to a cleaner environment. And this we address by making sure that the additional capacities that we need will be sourced from renewable and greener sources of energy,” Mr. Lotilla said.

He said that the Philippines cannot as yet transition away from coal-fired power plants, though the government must prepare for coal-fired energy to be phased out eventually.

“There is no denying that we need them still. But we have placed them in a trajectory (in which), clearly, over time, they are going to be replaced.” Mr. Lotilla said.

CNN PHILIPPINES

'Chedeng' now a tropical storm, may soon turn into typhoon

"Chedeng" has intensified into a tropical storm and may be upgraded to typhoon category by Thursday, the state weather bureau reported Tuesday evening.

In its 11 p.m. bulletin, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said Chedeng is forecast to gain more strength in the next three to four days and may turn into a severe tropical storm Wednesday.

"Rapid intensification is not ruled out. Peak intensity may be reached by Friday or Saturday," PAGASA added.

The tropical cyclone was last spotted 1,145 kilometers East of Southeastern Luzon, moving North Northwestward over the Philippine Sea.

Chedeng's maximum sustained winds intensified from 55 kilometers per hour (kph) to 65 kph and gustiness from up to 70 kph to 80 kph.

PAGASA said Chedeng is unlikely to directly bring heavy rainfall over any portion of the country in the next three to five days. Raising of wind signals is also unlikely.

Chedeng is likewise expected to remain far from the country's landmass throughout the weekend, but it may enhance the southwest monsoon or habagat.

Chedeng is the third storm to enter the Philippine Area of Responsibility this year after Super Typhoon Betty hit the country last month.

PAGASA earlier said it expects 11 to 14 tropical cyclones to enter the country's weather monitoring area from June to November.

[The Arctic may be sea ice-free in summer by the 2030s, new study warns](#)

By: Rachel Ramirez

The Arctic could be free of sea ice roughly a decade earlier than projected, scientists warn – another clear sign the climate crisis is happening faster than expected as the world continues to pump out planet-heating pollution.

The Arctic may be sea ice-free in summer by the 2030s, new study warns

By: Rachel Ramirez

The Arctic could be free of sea ice roughly a decade earlier than projected, scientists warn – another clear sign the climate crisis is happening faster than expected as the world continues to pump out planet-heating pollution.

The researchers analyzed changes from 1979 to 2019, comparing different satellite data and climate models to assess how Arctic sea ice was changing.

They found that declining sea ice was largely the result of human-caused, planet-heating pollution, and previous models had underestimated Arctic sea ice melting trends.

“We were surprised to find that an ice-free Arctic will be there in summer irrespective of our effort at reducing emissions, which was not expected,” Seung-Ki Min, lead author of the study and professor at Pohang University of Science and Technology in South Korea, told CNN.

Arctic ice builds up during the winter and then melts in the summer, typically reaching its lowest levels in September, before the cycle begins again.

Once Arctic summers become ice-free, the buildup of sea ice in the colder seasons will be much slower, Min said. The warmer it gets, the more likely the Arctic is to stay free of sea ice further into the colder season.

Under a “higher emissions pathway” – in which the world continues to burn fossil fuels and levels of planet-warming pollution continue to rise – the study projects the Arctic will see a complete loss of sea ice from August until as late as October before the 2080s, Min said.

The study’s findings contrast with the UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change’s 2021 state-of-the-science report, which found the Arctic would be “be practically ice-free near mid-century under intermediate and high greenhouse gas emissions scenarios.”

This new study shows it could happen 10 years earlier, regardless of emission scenarios, Min said.

Over the past several decades, the Arctic has warmed four times faster than the rest of the world, a 2022 study showed. There has already been a rapid loss of sea ice in the region, with September sea ice shrinking at a rate of 12.6% per decade, according to NASA.

An Arctic with no summer sea ice would send dire ripple effects around the world. The bright white ice reflects solar energy away from the Earth. When this ice melts, it exposes the darker ocean, which absorbs more heat causing additional warming – a feedback process called “Arctic amplification.”

The decline of sea ice can also have an effect on global weather stretching well beyond the Arctic.

“We need to prepare ourselves for a world with warmer Arctic very soon,” Min said. “Since Arctic warming is suggested to bring weather extremes like heatwaves, wildfires, and floods on Northern mid- and high latitudes, the earlier onset of an ice-free Arctic also implies that we will be experiencing extreme events faster than predicted.”

A sea ice-free Arctic could also lead to an increase in commercial shipping as new routes open up, which would have a knock-on effect. According to last year’s annual Arctic report card by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, a surge in shipping traffic would lead to more emissions and pollution in the region.

Mika Rantanen, researcher with the Finnish Meteorological Institute and lead author of the 2022 study, told CNN the study published Tuesday benefited from “novel and state-of-the-art methodology” to predict when the Arctic will be ice-free.

“The methodology is very careful and brings a high degree of certainty in the attribution,” said Rantanen, who was not involved in the study. “The most striking result is not that the sea ice loss is attributed to greenhouse gas increases, which was already largely known, but that they project ice-free Arctic earlier than previously thought by about decade.”

Min said the findings show that the Arctic is on the verge of becoming “seriously ill,” and that the region has reached a “tipping point.”

“We can regard the Arctic sea ice as the immune system of our body which protects our body from harmful things,” Min said. “Without the protector, the Arctic’s condition will go from bad to worse quickly.”

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

[Israel foreign minister in Manila](#)

By: Ashzel Hachero

ISRAELI Foreign Minister Eli Cohen is in Manila for a two-day visit aimed at forging a stronger relationship between the two countries in the area of agriculture, technology and economic ties.

Accompanying Cohen, who arrived late Sunday, is an Israeli business delegation that the embassy said would meet with Filipino business executives to determine ways to further increase trade and economic cooperation.

Cohen yesterday paid a courtesy call on President Marcos Jr. in Malacañang after meeting with his Philippine Foreign Affairs Secretary Enrique Manalo.

Malacañang said Cohen's visit is "the first time in 56 years" for an Israeli foreign minister.

Israeli Ambassador Ilan Fluss said, "Israel and the Philippines are celebrating their 65th anniversary of friendly relations this year. The visit of Israel's Foreign Minister to the Philippines reassures that Israel is a friend and an ally of the Philippines, and we see the relations flourishing further in the years to come."

Fluss said Cohen's visit is a "strong political and economic message," a reciprocity to the visit of former President Rodrigo Duterte to Israel in 2018 which paved the way for the opening of the Israeli defense and economic attaché offices in Manila, as well as the signing of agreements on the deployment of Filipino workers and expansion of defense cooperation.

Manalo and Cohen inked an agreement that is expected to boost the two countries' efforts in addressing environmental challenges.

"This agreement will provide opportunities for both Israel and the Philippines to share best practices on how to address common challenges related to the environment, preservation of ecosystems, disaster risk management, and promotion and dissemination of environmental technologies," Manalo said.

He said the agreement will further boost the two countries' efforts to prevent and address water pollution, adapt to climate change, properly manage wastes, and protect biodiversity.

Manalo said the Philippines and Israel are also working closely to deepen cooperation, especially in the areas of defense and security and agriculture.

“We are also exploring further opportunities in science and technology, trade, energy and counter-terrorism. Our dialogue allows us to discuss the whole range of bilateral cooperation between the Philippines and Asia,” Manalo added.

Cohen took note of the relations between Israel and the Philippines, calling it “important and strategic” even as he said that more could be done to further enhance ties.

He said aside from agriculture, environment, technology and defense, other areas of cooperation that the two countries could further work on are in the tourism and cyber security.

Cohen also urged Manila to open direct flights between the two countries, that will contribute to tourism and to the business sector as well.

Last year, the estimated bilateral trade of Israel and the Philippines in both goods and services reached more than \$534 million, with Israeli imports from the Philippines growing by 39 percent compared to 2021, reaching \$193 million worth of goods.

Israel is also a strong partner of the Philippines in the defense and security sectors, with the former having supplied military equipment to the Armed Forces of the Philippines, including long-range air defense radars, unmanned aerial surveillance vehicles and Spyder surface-to-air missile systems for the Philippine Air Force, 155mm self propelled and towed howitzers to the Army and Marines, Shaldag MKV fast attack craft and Spike NLOS missile system to the Philippine Navy, among others.

PALAWAN NEWS

Expert suggests ukay-ukay helps mitigate climate change

By: Rachel Ganancial

Some of the great finds to complete a look can be found while shopping at second-hand clothing stores, commonly known as “ukay-ukay.” However, this practice not only benefits everyone’s pockets but also serves as an indirect way to mitigate climate change, according to an environmental expert.

Dr. Ronald Edilberto Ona, an environmental sociologist and the dean of the College of Sciences at Palawan State University (PSU), explained that shopping at second-hand stores is one of the means of pursuing sustainable fashion, which plays an indirect role in addressing climate change.

It should not be seen solely as a source of relief goods or only for the poor, but as a way to reuse clothes and reduce the demand for new production.

“Ang isang nakikita ko na sustainable fashion ay ang pag-patronize ng ukay-ukay. Talagang sustainable siya dahil ang mga lumang damit, instead of throwing or burning them—now being used. Mga brand naman sa ukay kalimitan magaganda—niri-reuse ang damit, fashion din siya,” he said.

Reusing “ukay” items also extends the life cycle of garments, which should be a practice within a circular economy approach. This approach believes that garments should be designed for recycling, repair, or repurposing at the end of their life cycle. By reducing the demand for new production, resources can be conserved.

The fast fashion industry, characterized by the rapid turnover of trends, leads to mass production of clothes, which requires significant amounts of resources such as oil, chemicals, and water. These resources contribute to the creation of greenhouse gases that are responsible for climate change.

The United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) has reported that the fashion industry is responsible for contributing 8-10 percent of global emissions.

According to Dr. Ona, patronizing “ukay” as one of the ways of sustainable fashion can help address this problem.

“Ang sustainable fashion kasi kung titingnan mo siya sa internet ay more on fashion industry pero hindi niya nare-recognize o isinasama yong mga ukay-ukay as

sustainable fashion—hindi siya tinitingnan as sustainable fashion, but more or less ay parang relief goods or para sa mahihirap,” he said.

The city of Puerto Princesa has numerous “ukay” stores where prices vary depending on whether the items are newly arrived or not. If the store decides to replenish stocks, the prices gradually decrease.

Ona believes that the lower the price, the more people will choose to shop at ‘ukay,’ potentially making this practice sustainable. Living in a sustainable manner also helps minimize landfill waste and reduces methane emissions, both of which are greenhouse gases.

“Sa Pilipinas, may malaking impact ang ukay-ukay dahil nagbibigay siya ng cheap alternative sa mga damit na mahal. At the same time, pwede ka rin maging fashionable kasi may mga branded. Reuse din kaya instead of throwing ay nagagamit mo pa,” he said.

Shopping at “ukay” is not the sole means to achieve sustainable fashion. Other possible ways include minimizing the supply chain, opting for garments made from biodegradable materials, and raising consumer awareness about mindful purchases.

Consumers should also be conscious of the carbon footprint associated with each purchase they make, as it contributes to the current climate change issues we are experiencing.

REUTERS

UN climate talks in Germany kick off with no final agenda

By: Riham Alkousaa

United Nations climate talks in Germany kicked off on Monday without an agreed final agenda for technical discussions, a senior negotiator said, clouding optimism that the 10-day meeting would result in a clear programme for the COP28 conference in Dubai.

The Bonn Climate Change Conference, designed to prepare decisions for adoption at COP28 in the United Arab Emirates, is seen as a mid-way check for how ambitious international climate talks will take shape at COP28 in December.

Despite months of discussions since the previous COP27 in Egypt, there was no agreement on adopting the agendas proposed by the COP permanent subsidiary bodies for the Bonn conference, Nabeel Munir, chair of UN Subsidiary Body for Implementation (SBI), said at the opening of the talks.

"What we experienced today ... with the non-adoption of the agenda, it's not desirable, but it's not uncommon in a party driven process," Simon Stiell, executive secretary of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), told a news conference on Monday.

Stiell said the December conference could be the most significant one on climate change since Paris as it provides the world an opportunity to get on track to meeting the 2015 Paris climate protection commitments.

Making as much progress as possible in Bonn in the coming 10 days is important as the conference, with 200 countries' representatives, sets the technical groundwork for the political decisions required in Dubai later this year, Stiell added.

Tom Evans, a policy adviser at independent climate think tank E3G, said the main issue was whether to have an agenda item on climate change mitigation in the Bonn conference, which the European Union had proposed, posing the question of fossil fuels phaseout.

"It's a bit of a warm up to some of the tension around this question that we could see at COP 28," he added.

At last year's climate summit in Egypt, over 80 countries including the EU and small island nations agreed to include language in the final outcome calling for a phase down

of all fossil fuels. Countries including Saudi Arabia and China urged Egypt not to include that language in the final text.

Asked whether Stiell would push COP28 president designate Sultan al-Jaber to put fossil fuel phaseout on the Dubai conference agenda, he said, "I'm not there to tell him anything."

But he said the secretary's position was clear that halving emissions by 2030 and reaching net zero by 2050 required a deep cut and phasing out or down of all fossil fuel, Stiell added.

The Bonn conference will witness talks on climate change policy issues including the so-called global stocktake at COP28, or a review of countries' collective progress every five years, in the first such procedure since the Paris Agreement in 2015.

THE MANILA TIMES

[14 Filipinos in Asian Scientist 100 list](#)

By: Red Mendoza

FOURTEEN Filipino scientists, including a Department of Health official, were included in the list of the most outstanding scientists and researchers in the 2023 edition of the Asian Scientist 100 of the Asian Scientist Magazine.

The list, the Singapore-based magazine said, celebrates the success of the region's best and brightest and highlights their achievements across a range of scientific disciplines.

To be included in the list, the honoree "must have received a national or international prize in the preceding year for his or her research. Alternatively, he or she must have made a significant scientific discovery or provided leadership in academia or industry."

Among the scientists honored were Health Assistant Secretary Beverly Lorraine Ho in biomedical sciences.

Ho was awarded in 2022 The Outstanding Women in the Nation's Service (Towns) for her work in public health, while her research has contributed to policies like the sugar-sweetened beverage tax, universal health care, and the implementation of health technology assessment processes.

Fellow Towns awardees Dr. Aletta Yniguez and Dr. Pia Bagamasbad were also in the list for their contributions to marine science research and the spearheading of a reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction training program for the detection of Covid-19, respectively.

Other Towns awardees included in the list are Erika Fille Legara, Keisha Alena Mayuga and Anna Oposa del Rosario in Engineering and Environmental Sciences and Geology, respectively.

Glenn Banaguas, a science diplomat, was awarded the United Nations' Sasakawa Award for disaster risk reduction for his work with Climate Smart Philippines.

Climate Smart Philippines is "a centralized, multi-stakeholder platform that supplies data for an evidence-based approach to address climate change and reduce disaster risk.

"We will continue to bring science closer to the hearts of our people and use science to transform their lives," Banaguas said.

Other scientists included in the list were Roel Suralta, David Penaloza, Joseph Auresenia, Rinlee Butch Cervera, Allan Gil Fernando, Mario Juan Aurelio and Edwin Atabay.

[Opinion] Bracing for disaster

By: Marichu Villanueva

The occurrences of scattered to at times widespread rainfall associated with the southwest monsoon (habagat) during the past few days confirmed indeed the onset of the rainy season in our country. Last Friday, our very own Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) even made an official declaration on the start of rainy season.

For a tropical country like ours, the month of June has always been our fixed period of the typhoon season when storms and typhoons come in and out of our country one after the other. An average of 20 tropical cyclones and storms enter each year in our so-called Philippine area of responsibility (PAR).

According to PAGASA, the peak of our typhoon season is normally from July through October when nearly 70 percent of all typhoons develop. During this period of time, intermittent rains and thunderstorms break out even if there is no typhoon. Although it is already the rainy season, our PAGASA weather forecasters reiterated the El Niño phenomenon, or the long dry condition remains a threat in our country.

That's the irony of climate change when the normal weather pattern becomes abnormal.

In fact, we had had already two typhoon visitors one after the other less than two months apart. Tropical storm (TS) "Amang" first made a landfall in Catanduanes on April 11 and subsequently crossed the usual typhoon belt areas in the Bicol and Quezon provinces. Then "super typhoon" Mawar that wrought devastation in Guam, locally named "Betty," later on entered the PAR on May 27.

But long before TS "Betty" could reach the PAR, the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) announced having mobilized and organized concerned government agencies. The OCD, presently headed by DND assistant secretary Ariel Nepomuceno, is an attached agency of the Department of National Defense (DND). The OCD serves as the implementing arm of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC).

Incidentally, erstwhile Tarlac Rep. Gilberto Teodoro officially made a comeback in his old post at the DND. President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. (PBBM) swore him into office yesterday at Malacanang along with newly appointed Health Secretary Dr. Teodoro Herbosa.

Nepomuceno welcomed the appointment of his new boss Teodoro at the DND. A Reserve Major in the Armed Forces, Nepomuceno belongs to Class 1987 of the Philippine Military Academy. As DND Secretary, Teodoro sits as the vice-chairman of

the President at the NDRRMC while the DOH Secretary is among the members of this inter-agency body.

But it is the OCD that supervises, monitors, and evaluates the implementation of disaster management programs to ensure their effectiveness. It is also tasked to coordinate the activities of various government agencies and instrumentalities as well as of private institutions and civic organizations devoted to public welfare.

In my column "Climate change trips" published in this corner last May 29, I credited the so-called "whole of government" approach in the early preparations and pre-positioning of men, equipment and resources as part of the disaster risk reduction (DRR) practices implemented to mitigate potential damages of super typhoon "Betty."

That column mentioned the OCD chief was among the official delegates of the Philippines who flew to New York for a three-day conference held at the United Nations from May 18-20. The information was based on the official press and photo release of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

It banded about DENR Secretary Antonia Loyzaga being designated by PBBM to head the Philippine delegation to this UN High-Level Meeting on the Midterm Review of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR). The photo release showed Loyzaga and several other officials who included DENR Undersecretary and Chief of Staff Marilou Erni among the Philippine delegation to New York.

Nepomuceno, who writes "Perceptions," opinion column pieces for The STAR and the BusinessWorld sought to clarify his personal circumstances in this New York trip. In particular, he took exceptions to his having participated in a "junket" as described in that column.

In the spirit of fair play, pertinent portions of his rejoinder are reprinted below:

"I've read your column re 'Climate Change Trips.' I'm sad because of the 'junket'...I fully understand your concern. But if I may explain, to at least clear my name on this."

"1. I paid for my own plane ticket and hotel. I used my credit card which means I'll pay for these in installments for few months. I'm mindful of your concern on how to use government funds properly po. I have the card receipts..."

"2. Until the last two weeks prior to the trip, I wanted to stay in Manila because of the huge workload that I have...which will still be there after the trip. But my staff and other officers explained that as head of OCD, I must attend to show respect to my counterparts whom I'll also need to strengthen my network. And that I would learn from

the important discussions during breakout sessions (not only the 'reading' of commitments). Truly, I'm thankful that I attended. I learned a lot from the trip. I made strong contacts for OCD."

"3. Lastly, my messages and call logs would show that I was still working daily with my staff in Manila while I was in the US. The time difference worked for me. Mam, I'm clearing my name not with your readers or the public. I'm messaging you because I want to clear my name with you po. I'm not expecting anything more than to explain with you that I'm doing my best to serve our country well... Ariel"

Postscript: "Even my personal staff who was with me, Atty. Jek Casipit, paid for his own ticket and hotel also. But I promised him that I will try to pay him back (not soon though)," he added.

Meanwhile, tropical depression "Chedeng" has started unleashing rains and thunderstorm while another potential eruptive episode of Mt. Mayon in Bicol is brewing. We always pray in times of our worst fears but let's get OCD-scale preparedness for disaster.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[With 1M mangroves and trees planted, GCash, RAFI continue reforestation initiatives in Cebu](#)

Committed to support sustainable development and address climate change, the Philippines' leading mobile wallet GCash, together with the Ramon Aboitiz Foundation Inc. (RAFI), are continuing their initiatives to increase forest coverage and enhance existing mangrove areas in Cebu.

Through Gcash's GForest and RAFI's One to Tree Program, a total of 1,075,000 mangroves and upland trees have been planted since 2021. For the remainder of 2023, 75,000 more mangroves will be planted, completing the target of 1,150,000 trees spread across three projects in the province.

The two GForests cover the Luyang Watershed in the northern town of Carmen. One project has 375 hectares of farmland in the barangays of Caurasan, Upper Natimao-an, Liboron, Ipil, Cantumog and Lower Natimao-an.

Meanwhile, the other consists of 355 hectares of farmland with planting sites in the barangays of Upper Natimao-an, Corte, Ipil, Caurasan, Hagnaya, Lanipga and Cantumog.

Among the 600,000 native trees planted in the two GForests are avocado, bangkal, cacao, cashew, coffee, guyabano, jackfruit, mamalis, mangosteen, molave, nangka, narra and rambutan, with a high survivability rate between 92% to 94% as of March 2023.

The Luyang Watershed is a significant ecological area in Cebu as it supplies at least 24 thousand cubic meters of surface fresh water. The enhancement of tree cover in the two GForests will improve rainwater percolation.

As a result, this increases the water table under the horizon which supplies springs that support surface water along rivers. The neighboring urban cities of Cebu, Mandaue and Lapu-Lapu will benefit from this in terms of water supply.

The third project is GForest Mangroves which aims to plant 550,000 seedlings in Daanbantayan, San Remigio and Medellin. The three municipalities are facing the Tañon Strait, the biggest marine protected area in the Philippines under the National Integrated Protected Areas System.

As of May 2023, about 47.5 hectares have been covered for enrichment planting with 475,000 seedlings of the bakhaw lalaki (*Rhizophora apiculata*), bakhaw babae (*Rhizophora mucronata*), bakhaw bato (*Rhizophora stylosa*), bungalon (*Avicennia alba*), miapi (*Avicennia marina*), *Avicennia officinallis*, *Avicennia rumphiana*, Pagatpat (*Sonneratia alba*), pedada (*Sonneratia caseolaris*) and *Sonneratia ovata* species.

Aside from mitigating the risks of natural disasters and augmenting water supply, the partnership has also helped in the livelihood of local communities.

GCash and RAFI have engaged 200 landowners, 687 individuals and 10 people's organizations in the site preparation, tree-planting and maintenance activities of the projects.

"GCash is steadfast in playing an active role in minimizing the effects of climate change. Through GForest, we encourage Filipinos to take part in our eco-friendly initiatives and be Green Heroes. With partner organizations like RAFI, we continue to plant the seeds for a better tomorrow," CJ Alegre, GCash Head for Sustainability, said.

"This partnership with GCash allows us to reach more people and enable them to take part in caring for our environment even in simple ways. Through this partnership, people can build GForests one tree at a time, and also help in community-building and income augmentation of locals. This is a win for the environment and a win for Cebuanos," Amaya Aboitiz-Fansler, RAFI President and CEO, said.

GForest is an in-app feature rolled out in 2019 in line with GCash's sustainability agenda. Users earn green energy for cashless transactions done in the app such as paying bills, buying load and sending money. Green energy is collected and used to plant virtual trees.

GCash partners with international and local organizations in planting actual trees around the country. At present, they have planted 2.2 million trees and aim to plant a total of 5 million trees by 2025.

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[UNICEF: Milyon-milyong batang Pinoy lantad sa mga peligrong dala ng climate change](#)

By: Raphael Lozano

Base ito sa pag-aaral ng United Nations Children's Fund o UNICEF Giit ng ilang ahensya ng pamahalaan na panahon na para kumilos para maiwasan ang malubhang epekto nito.

Sang-ayon ang Climate Change Commission sa resulta ng pag-aaral ng UNICEF. Ayon kay Commissioner Albert Dela Cruz dapat seryosohin ito ng mga magulang. Para naman kay Environment Secretary Tony Yulo Loyzaga lahat ng Pilipino ay apektado ng climate change.

Habang maaga mahalaga aniyang maturuan ang kabataan kung bakit nangyayari ang climate change at ang epekto nito sa kapaligaran at buhay nila.

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