



NEWS ROUNDUP

09 AUGUST 2023 [08:00 am]

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By: Ted Cordero

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) has set aside over half-a-trillion pesos under the proposed P5.768-trillion 2024 National Expenditure Program (NEP) for programs and projects aimed at addressing the impact of climate change.

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By: Ma. Teresa Montemayor

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) on Tuesday said educating Filipinos about urban agriculture could promote self-sufficiency amid inflation, marked by rising prices of basic commodities.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

AL JAZEERA

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Heavy rainfall has drenched Norway and Sweden, causing a train to derail and roads to flood. Swedish and Norwegian meteorologists issued red alerts, the most severe warning level, covering several days this week.

They said the hardest-hit places could receive a month or more worth of normal rainfall in 24 hours – possibly triggering the worst floods in 25 years in Norway, and in 50 years in Sweden.

A train carrying more than 100 passengers derailed in eastern Sweden on Monday as the rain partly washed away the railway embankment, injuring three people who were taken to hospital, police said.

Gale force winds and thunderstorms knocked out local power lines and disrupted several Baltic and North Sea ferries as well as some air traffic, while Norway suspended certain train services and postponed a number of outdoor football matches.

Norway's Prime Minister Jonas Gahr Stoere said he expected extreme weather events to become more frequent.

"This is an effect of climate change, with wilder and wetter weather in Norway," Stoere told public broadcaster NRK.

Hitting Sweden on Sunday evening and reaching Norway on Monday, the low-pressure system was dubbed "Hans" by the Norwegian Meteorological Institute, which said naming the weather system makes it easier to get the public's attention.

Authorities warned those most affected to stay away from rivers and steep slopes and only travel when strictly necessary.

They said there was a high risk of widespread property damage as the downpour was set to continue in the coming days.

Neighbouring Denmark also saw heavy rainfall and issued a yellow alert, a lower-level warning, while meteorologists in Finland said the country could see severe thunderstorms later this week.

Elsewhere in Europe, the death toll from days of heavy rains and flooding in Slovenia climbed to six on Monday.

Slovenia's Prime Minister Robert Golob has described the torrential rains and severe flooding that hit the Alpine country of two million as its worst natural disaster since independence 30 years ago.

Flash floods and landslides that began on Thursday had submerged large swaths of central and northern Slovenia, cutting off access to villages and disrupting traffic.

On Sunday, emergency workers recovered the body of a 35-year-old man in a river near the village of Mirna Pec in the east.

Another man, who was taking part in the clean-up operations, was found dead after falling into a cesspit near the town of Kamnik close to Ljubljana, media reports said.

The bodies of two Slovenians and two Dutch citizens had been found earlier.

BUSINESS WORLD

Marcos eyes Candaba impounding

By: Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza

THE MARCOS government is looking at a proposed impounding system at the Candaba swamp in Pampanga province in northern Philippines as a long-term solution to Central Luzon's flooding problem.

The proposal would be a part of the long-term plan, but the immediate needs include massive dredging of internal waterways and main river outflows, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. said at a situation briefing in Pampanga.

Metro Pacific Tollways Corp. President Rogelio Singson, a former Public Works secretary, proposed the construction of a 200-hectare water impounding system at the swamp to prevent flooding in nearby low-lying areas.

A water impounding system is an earth fill structure built across a narrow depression or valley to harvest and store rainfall and runoff for immediate and multiple use.

Mr. Marcos Jr. said the government is also considering elevating certain structures in the province to ease heavy traffic.

"We'll raise the North Luzon Expressway so that what recently happened will not happen again," he said. "And then we will study alternative routes."

Marcos, US senator tackle nursing programs and RE

By: John Victor D. Ordoñez

UNITED STATES Senator Ladda Tammy Duckworth on Wednesday floated the idea to Philippine President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. of sending American students to nursing schools in the Philippines to address a shortage of nursing programs in the US.

During a courtesy call on Mr. Marcos Jr., the US senator also discussed the efforts of the US and Philippines to prioritize renewable energy (RE), Ms. Duckworth's office said in a statement posted on her website.

"Noting the impact of climate change and the effects of the pandemic on the world economy, the President and Senator Duckworth talked about their respective governments' shift to renewable energy, more importantly in the Philippines, as it strives to transform the economy post-pandemic," it said.

Mr. Marcos said he expects more partnerships with Washington.

Quezon City Rep. Marvin D. Rillo on Sunday pushed his bill that seeks to raise the base pay of government nurses amid the brain drain involving nursing graduates.

His House Bill 5276 seeks to raise the monthly pay of government nurses to salary grade 21 or about P64,000 a month.

A total of 18,104 Filipino nursing graduates spent a combined P200 million to take licensure examinations in the United States (US) from January to June, the lawmaker said.

In April, Mr. Marcos signed an executive order directing the Department of Energy to draft a framework that would fast-track the rollout of offshore wind projects.

The president in his foreign trips had urged foreign companies to invest in the country's green energy sector.

In a separate statement, the Philippine presidential palace said Ms. Duckworth was also eyeing a collaboration on the production of electronic vehicle batteries.

"I can't think of a better place to create a new manufacturing ecosystem for the American market than here in the Philippines where we can work together to supply that market so that we can continue to make our switch to renewables as well," she said.

Mr. Marcos said the Philippines has the potential to efficiently produce batteries, citing the country's nickel, bauxite and cobalt resources. "This is what we are hoping to develop here."

CNN

[July hit a crucial warming threshold that scientists have warned the world should stay under](#)

By: Rachel Ramirez

The world got its first preview last month of what summer will be like at 1.5 degrees of global warming — a threshold that scientists warn the planet should stay under, yet one that it has flown increasingly close to in recent years.

The average global temperature in July, the hottest month on record by far, was around 1.5 degrees Celsius warmer than the pre-industrial era that ended in the mid-to-late 1800s, the European Union's Copernicus Climate Change Service reported Tuesday.

The announcement came after a series of deadly heat waves and remarkable record-breaking temperatures for several continents, as well as unprecedented ocean heat around the globe. Copernicus scientists say it's the first summer month that has surpassed 1.5 degrees, offering a glimpse of future summers.

The 1.5-degree threshold is significant because scientists consider it a key tipping point for the planet, beyond which the chances of extreme heat, flooding, drought, wildfires and food and water shortages will become even more unfavorable for life as we know it.

It's the goal that scientists chose in the landmark 2015 Paris Agreement to minimize the damage of the climate crisis while affording time to wean society and the economy off planet-warming fossil fuels.

It's also not something that's tracked by the day or month. Scientists are particularly concerned that global temperature will stay above 1.5 degrees for the long term. Through 2022, the world had warmed around 1.2 degrees.

"While breaking the 1.5-degrees-Celsius threshold for a day or a week or a month is not the same as breaking it for the long-term average, it is important to monitor how frequently, and for how long, we exceed this threshold," Rebecca Emerton, scientist with Copernicus, told CNN. "As temperatures continue to rise, the effects will continue to become more serious."

July 2023 was the hottest month on record by a large margin

Nineteen out of the 30 hottest months on record globally occurred in the last eight years, when global warming surpassed 1°C (1.8°F) above pre-industrial levels each time. This

July, global average temperature averaged 16.95°C (62.5°F) — nearly a third of a degree Celsius higher than July 2019, the previous record.

The last few years have made it abundantly clear that the world is already feeling alarming effects of the climate crisis that many are not prepared for. If the planet continues to heat up, Emerton said the world will face even more extreme weather than what much of the planet has already experienced.

“We’ve seen the impacts these kinds of events are already having on people and on our planet, and so every small part of a degree of warming is significant,” Emerton said.

According to Berkeley Earth, an environmental data nonprofit, there have only been 10 other months that were warmer than 1.5 degrees Celsius above their historical average, with March 2023 being the most recent. Before that, the other months that have been 1.5 degrees warmer than pre-industrial times have occurred during winter or early spring.

Berkeley Earth Lead Scientist Robert Rohde said surpassing 1.5 degrees Celsius in July is the first time that threshold has ever been crossed during the summer in the Northern Hemisphere, which makes this a critical moment for the planet.

“While the past unusually warm winters are notable, observing extreme warmth in summer is likely to have greater direct impacts on people’s lives,” Rohde, who is not involved with the Copernicus report, told CNN. “Adding 1.5 degrees Celsius in winter makes for a mild winter but doing it during summer can give rise to unprecedented extremes.”

Although Rohde said it is likely that 2023 will be the warmest year on record, it’s unlikely that 2023 as a whole will be 1.5 degrees warmer than pre-industrial times.

“The year-to-date average is still below 1.5 degrees Celsius, and we find it unlikely that the rest of 2023 will be warm enough to bring the whole year average above 1.5,” he said.

Copernicus scientists noted that as El Niño continues to develop, the world may witness more of these unprecedented temperature breaches.

“Even if the climate crisis does not accelerate, but continues on its current trajectory, we will see more days, weeks, months and years with record-breaking temperatures, and other impacts on our Earth system,” Emerton said. “We need to be doing all that we can to reduce emissions and limit future warming.”

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Solon reiterates call to integrate climate science in governance

By: Wilnard Bacelonia

A senator resounded on Tuesday her appeal for the government to move forward and consider climate science as a tool in every decision that it makes in the future.

In her privilege speech, Senate Pro Tempore Loren Legarda suggested various approaches in pursuing development with responsible action to mitigate and adapt to climate change.

Legarda said a transformative mindset in governance, mainstream science, and cascade opportunities to local government units should be adopted.

She said the country's decarbonization efforts should also be accelerated and ensure timely implementation of the Nationally Determined Contribution, without being restricted by the 2.71 percent unconditional share in emissions reduction and avoidance.

"Let us aim for higher ambition by embracing the Net Zero scenario, and its imperatives to combat further warming while ensuring access to more advanced, climate-benign technologies," Legarda noted saying environmental laws should also be revisited.

"Especially the Clean Air Act, which no longer meets the World Health Organization 2005 and 2021 guidelines on air quality, and push for other key legislation, such as circular economy, blue economy, ecosystems regeneration, and forest management," she added.

Convergence between agencies and stakeholders, Legarda said, should also be optimized, as well as working with a whole-of-government, whole-of-society, and whole-of-world approach to maximize resources and impact for every Filipino.

She also included the proposed national budget that should be scrutinized and see if it is in accordance to the vision of President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr.

"The recent State of the Nation Address underscored the importance of disaster resilience and climate action and has made this a clear priority of his Administration, stating that progressive, livable, and sustainable communities can only be achieved by taking responsible action to mitigate and adapt to climate change," Legarda recalled.

Considering the future generations, the lawmaker cited the Philippine Development Plan, Sustainable Development Goals, National Climate Change Action Plan, and Nationally

Determined Contribution that should lay out crucial strategies and solutions to climate change for the government to act upon.

Legarda principally authored Senate Bill No. 1993 or the Blue Economy Act, a priority legislation of President Marcos which seeks to support efforts to achieve a vibrant and sustainable economy by prioritizing the country's marine resources.

THE MANILA TIMES

Marcos seeks solutions to Central Luzon flooding

By: Kristina Maralit

THE government is studying long-term solutions to the perennial flooding problem in Central Luzon, such as the construction of an impounding system in the Candaba Swamp and water collection pools.

During a situation briefing at the provincial capitol in the City of San Fernando following his inspection of typhoon-hit areas, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. ordered an extensive study on the proposed impounding system.

"This won't be approved if you won't allow it. If you approve it, it will take up 10 percent of land for the impounding," he said in English and Filipino during his meeting with the provincial officials.

He also raised other possible solutions to the massive flooding in the wake of a typhoon. These include dredging operations as a short-term solution and elevating certain structures in San Simon, Pampanga, to ease heavy traffic when it floods.

"We'll raise the NLEx so that what recently happened will not happen again. And then we will study alternative routes, maybe for trucks.... Cars and other light vehicles will use other roads. We'll see," he stated.

A similar impounding project is also being planned for Bulacan, another province severely affected by the massive flooding caused by the recent typhoons.

"That will be a long-term impounding project, where there will be a collection of water so that it won't reach the rivers and cause them to overflow just like what happened," the President said in a separate media interview.

"That's for the long term. This has been long-planned, but it has not yet been implemented. We will start it. The simplest solution there is for us to make impounding large scale," he added.

Marcos was referring to one of the provisions of the law that mandates the construction of rainwater collectors under Republic Act 6716.

The impounding areas will be huge and could cover around 200 hectares, the President explained, noting that such facilities could also be a source of water for irrigation and household use.

This is the administration's concept not only for flood control but also for irrigation, he said, noting that power generation could also be added into the mix, if there is geographic suitability.

Aside from constructing impounding areas, there are a lot of things that should be changed in terms of water use and sourcing, he said.

Sourcing groundwater must be stopped, and the country must instead switch to tapping surface water sources, he added.

"We will be making a lot of changes. We must stop getting water from wells. We should be sourcing water from rivers," said the President.

"We should be collecting rainwater because the Philippines is not a dry land. But we experience drought because we don't efficiently collect water. We must learn how, as it is one problem we face, and [in doing so], we also mitigate the effects of climate change," he added.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Biden to tout climate policy in visit to baking US southwest](#)

President Joe Biden will announce Tuesday that he is putting the brakes on uranium mining in a vast area around the Grand Canyon, in the first salvo of a trip aimed at warming Americans up to his climate policy.

Biden will give the area of nearly one million acres "national monument" status, White House climate advisor Ali Zaidi told reporters on Air Force One as it flew the 80-year-old Democrat to Arizona late Monday for a tour through the southwestern United States.

Zaidi said the area's new status will prohibit new uranium mining projects on the site, without affecting existing mining rights.

Local Native American tribes had sought such a ban for decades, seeking to curb mining activity around the immense, spectacular river valley.

The creation of a new protected area is both a tribute to the "vibrant story" of the Indigenous people there, and safeguards the "incredibly important ecosystem" around the Colorado River, Zaidi said.

Biden's multi-state trip comes as the region still recovers from a brutal, record-setting heat wave.

The president, who is running for re-election, plans to use the visit to "highlight how his administration has made historic investments in climate, conservation, and clean energy," according to the White House.

He will spend Tuesday in Arizona, before traveling the next day to neighboring New Mexico.

Both states and the surrounding region have experienced severe heat waves this summer, with Arizona's capital Phoenix in July recording the hottest month ever for a US city.

Scientists warn that global warming is making heat waves hotter, longer and more frequent.

'Existential threat'

The trip comes just ahead of the one-year anniversary of Biden's signing of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), a mammoth package of climate investments and other programs that has become the centerpiece of his first term in office.

"The president has translated the greatest risks we face into our greatest economic opportunity," Zaidi said.

Biden regularly describes climate change as an "existential threat," and criticizes his Republican opponents for failure to act on the issue.

The IRA funnels some \$370 billion into subsidies for America's energy transition, including tax breaks for US-made electric vehicles and batteries.

Since the climate law was signed, some \$75 billion in new manufacturing investments have been announced, according to policy analyst Jack Conness of think-tank Energy Innovation: Policy and Technology.

Beyond the IRA, the overall amount unveiled by private companies across critical areas ranging from semiconductors to EVs is even larger.

The White House touts some \$503 billion in commitments to key industries under the Biden administration, which has also seen the passage of other legislation including the American Rescue Plan and the Chips and Science Act.

But it remains unclear if the investment gains are translating into clear optimism on the ground, with a Gallup poll in June finding that 66 percent of Americans say the economy is getting worse.

And nearly 60 percent of Americans disapprove of Biden's handling of climate change, according to a Washington Post-University of Maryland poll conducted last month. The survey also found that few adults said they knew a good amount or great deal about the IRA.

With Biden's re-election campaign underway, the Democrat is touting his "Bidenomics" economic agenda, which involves bringing manufacturing back to the United States after decades of offshoring.

"Polls don't tell the whole story," his spokeswoman Karine Jean-Pierre said aboard Air Force One Monday. "The hope is that we'll get our message out."

Besides addressing the summer heat crisis, Biden's visit to Arizona comes with electoral incentives.

The 80-year-old Democrat narrowly won Arizona in 2020, and it is among the handful of states expected to be decisive in determining next year's presidential election.

On Thursday, Biden is expected to travel to Utah where the focus will be on veterans' programs.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

GMA NEWS

[DBM allots P543.4B for climate change mitigation in 2024 proposed budget](#)

By: Ted Cordero

The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) has set aside over half-a-trillion pesos under the proposed P5.768-trillion 2024 National Expenditure Program (NEP) for programs and projects aimed at addressing the impact of climate change.

In a statement, the DBM said it set aside P543.45 billion under next year's spending program "to mitigate the repercussions of severe weather patterns, such as intense typhoons and worsening floods, within the Philippines."

The amount, which constitutes 9.4% of the total proposed budget, would be used for climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies. The allocation also surpasses the anticipated 8% contribution stipulated in the Philippine Development Plan for addressing impacts of climate change.

"Recognizing its fundamental importance, the bulk of climate change expenditures will be allocated for water sufficiency projects with P294.46 billion to benefit communities all over the country," said Budget Secretary Amenah Pangandaman.

Likewise, in his 2024 Budget Message, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. underscored the administration's efforts in tackling climate change.

"With global temperatures reaching record highs, with floods and droughts that displace millions, we have made future-proofing a top priority of this administration to address climate change. In fact, for Fiscal Year (FY) 2023, the allocation for this purpose was increased by over 60% to P464.5 billion. For FY 2024, this has been increased even further to reach P543.4 billion. Of this amount, P168.6 billion will be allotted for mitigation, while P374.9 billion will be for climate adaptation," said the President.

The DBM said the government prioritizes adaptation measures due to the country's vulnerability to the impacts of climate change.

The agency said this was outlined in the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP).

In particular, the DBM said the NCCAP's list of strategic priority areas includes the following:

- Water Sufficiency (streamlining of water governance structure, improving sanitation in infrastructures), P294.46 billion
- Sustainable Energy (promotion and expansion of energy efficiency and conservation, development of sustainable and renewable energy and transport), P180.72 billion
- Food Security (climate-resilient crop and livestock production systems and technologies, early warning systems), P40.18 billion
- Knowledge and Capacity Development, 12.97 billion
- Climate Smart Industries and Services, P6.02 billion
- Ecosystem and Environmental Stability, P5.95 billion
- Human Security, P2.58 billion
- Cross-Cutting, P550 million

Climate Change Expenditure Tagging

The DBM, meanwhile, said it has institutionalized Climate Change Expenditure Tagging (CCET) together with the Climate Change Commission (CCC).

The CCET provides guidelines for tracking and reporting government agencies' climate-related budgets and has been helping government agencies and local government units (LGUs) plan their respective climate-and-disaster responsive budgets.

The Budget Department has also adopted the Program Convergence Budgeting (PCB) into the allocation process.

The PCB is a budgeting approach that utilizes government resources for key programs and projects in coordination with attached departments and agencies.

It said that one of PCB's undertakings is the Risk Resiliency Program (RRP) which aims to reinforce the government's crisis management and adaptive capabilities.

The PCB has a proposed budget of P424 billion and is expected to adapt to and mitigate the damaging effects of climate change and disasters in the country.

The DBM said the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)—which will receive the highest climate change expenditure budget at P308.08 billion—will also get P215.643 billion for flood management, which includes the construction, rehabilitation, and maintenance of various flood mitigation and control structures, as well as for water supply/septage and rainwater collection infrastructure.

“Under the DPWH project, there's a flagship project called Flood Management Program. This year, we have a budget of P185 billion, and for 2024, we proposed P215.643

billion,” Secretary Pangandaman said, adding that two other projects will be supported by a loan from Korea Eximbank, the credit agency of South Korea.

Other proposed allocations include P1.397 billion for the Pampanga Integrated Disaster and Risk Resiliency Project; P7.4 billion for the Bulacan Angat Water Transmission Project; and over P1 billion for the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority’s (MMDA) flood control initiatives.

Quick Response Fund

The DBM added that a separate P7.425 billion allocation for the Quick Response Fund (QRF) will go to “first-responder agencies” during calamities and disasters such as typhoons, earthquakes, and fires, namely:

- Department of Education (DepEd), P3 billion
- Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), 1.250 billion
- DPWH, P1 billion
- Department of Agriculture (DA), P1 billion
- Department of National Defense (DND), P500 million
- Department of Health (DOH), P500 million
- Department of Transportation-Philippine Coast Guard (DOTr-PCG), P75 million
- Department of Interior and Local Government-Bureau of Fire (DILG-BFP), P50 million
- DILG- Philippine National Police (DILG-PNP), P50 million

Under the law, once their QRF dips to 50% or less, the DBM said the agencies may request the Budget Department, subject to the President’s approval, for a replenishment via the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund (NDRRMF), which has an allotment of P31 billion.

Aside from the aforementioned funds, there’s also the Local Government Support Fund (LGSF).

Under Republic Act (RA) No. 11936, Special Provision No. 1 of the LGSF in the FY 2023 General Appropriations Act (GAA), provides the amount of P1,925,500,000 for financial assistance to LGUs and P7,236,336,000 as support for Capital Outlays and Social Programs to LGUs.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Urban agriculture promotes self-sufficiency amid inflation - CCC

By: Ma. Teresa Montemayor

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) on Tuesday said educating Filipinos about urban agriculture could promote self-sufficiency amid inflation, marked by rising prices of basic commodities.

In a news release, CCC Commissioner Albert dela Cruz Sr. said it is important to conduct programs that develop food security through activities helping the public understand the significance of urban agriculture and self-sufficiency.

"Educating Filipinos about urban agriculture could somehow help assuage the hardships being experienced by most in the face of skyrocketing prices of agricultural products, particularly rice and vegetables common on the dinner table of majority of households," Dela Cruz said.

Dela Cruz has been conducting forums on food security in partnership with the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Plant Industry as well as the Department of Social Welfare and Development and Cooperative Development Authority in different communities across the country in the recent months.

Analysts predicted an increase in upside risks connected to inflation.

Earlier, China Banking Corporation chief economist Domini Velasquez noted that despite inflation dropping in the past six months, there is still the possibility of a reversal as base effects could lead to August inflation matching or even topping the 4.7 percent recorded last month.

The downward trend was reportedly due to lower prices of housing, utility and fuel, food and alcoholic beverages and transport prices.

However, rice prices were increasing both in domestic and international markets, particularly following India's decision to ban exports of non-basmati white rice, Velasquez said.

She added that emerging El Niño conditions and recent strong typhoons could also drive up domestic food prices.

Bank of the Philippine Islands senior economist Emilio Neri pointed out that importation is usually the immediate solution to rising consumer prices when there is a shortage of

prime commodities supply, but this might become difficult if other countries are also affected by El Niño.

Some 200 residents from Barangay Calantas in Florida Blanca, Pampanga attended one of the forums, expressing their support for the government's efforts in providing valuable information regarding the importance of climate action in response to the impacts of climate change and global warming, he said.

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