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15 AUGUST 2023 [08:00 am]

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KHALEEJ TIMES

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By: Muzaffar Rizvi

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

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By: Leilanie Adriano

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CCC warns public vs increasing heat waves in coming months

By: Ma. Teresa Montemayor

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MANILA STANDARD

Climate change group warns public of heat waves, water shortage

By: Butch Gunio

The Commission on Climate Change (CCC) on Monday warned the public to prepare for increasing heat waves in the coming months that could cause drought and water shortages despite rains and localized thunderstorms.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

Marcos says climate could be factor in academic calendar debate

By: Pia Gutierrez

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Monday said he has no preference on proposals to return to the old academic calendar but noted that weather conditions could be a factor.

The Department of Education is studying a proposal to return to the old June-March school calendar instead of August to May after several groups complained that the new calendar did not consider the hot season.

“Pinag-uusapan nga namin, eh. We were talking with the teaching staff here. Tinatanong ko sa kanila ano ang preference nila. Pinag-aaralan natin. The DepEd is in the process-- sila sa kasalukuyan ay meron silang ginagawang study kung ano talaga ang pinakamaganda,” the President said during a stop at Victorino Mapa High School in San Miguel, Manila.

“Siguro ay-- malaking tanong yan, eh. Hindi ganoon kasimple yan. Kasi nung pinalitan natin 'yung schedule dahil pre-pandemic, ngayon naman climate change ang kailangan nating pag-usapan dahil ise-schedule mo 'yan. Napakainit at pati 'yung mga bata hinihimatay na kaya kailangan nating isama sa pag-aaral 'yan kung ano 'yung mga dapat gawin.”

The President however clarified that he has no preference between the old and new school calendar.

“Wala naman kaming preference. Mas gusto namin ito, mas gusto namin iyan. Hindi naman. Titingnan lang talaga natin kung ano yung pinakamaganda both for the kids, especially for the children, at tsaka sa mga teacher, at tsaka sa mga administrative non-teaching staff. Kailangan pa papapasukin natin sila, mainit na masyado, baka hindi na kayang gawin ang trabaho nila, magkasakit pa,” he said.

Marcos was at Victorino Mapa High School in San Miguel, Manila Monday to inspect the ongoing Brigada Eskwela activities in preparation for the opening of classes on August 29.

Vice President and concurrent Education Secretary Sara Duterte accompanied the President during the inspection. The President and the Vice President also took time to paint some school chairs.

The Philippine leader also handed V Mapa High School principal Robert Velasquez a check worth P1 million to support the school's ongoing preparations. Aside from the financial aid, Malacanang also donated cleaning and construction equipment to the school.

"Mahalaga lalong lalo dito sa Pilipinas na lahat na pagdating sa ating mga anak mga bata ay (ginagawa natin) para gumanda naman ang kanilang experience sa eskwela," the President said.

"Ito na ang pinakaunang pasukan na medyo normal after the lockdown. Pero marami tayong pinalitan, marami tayong inayos na mga reklamo at pinagtiya-tiyagaan at pinaghihirapan ng ating DepEd Secretary na si Vice President Sara Duterte."

Among the changes instituted by the Department of Education is the launching of the Matatag basic education curriculum, which decongests the current curriculum by reducing the number of competencies to focus on the development of critical literacy, numeracy and socio-emotional skills of learners from preschool to Grade 3.

Marcos welcomed the move to make the curriculum more responsive to the needs of Filipino students.

"It's very significant because here we're trying to— ayusin pito para maging mas bagay sa pangangailangan ng batang Pilipino," he said.

"Kasama na rin diyan -- that includes all our efforts para pagandahin ang mga international score natin especially when it comes to STEM subjects. Also, binibigyan natin ng pagkakataon yung mga after 10th grade na mamili kung sila ay magbo-vocational, magte-technical training or itutuloy nila. So that's more or less the big system changes that we're doing."

"Itong Matatag curriculum is the legacy of the Marcos administration sa basic education natin sa ating bansa. Lahat po ng nakitang problema ng mga international and local education experts natin, in-address po namin dito sa bagong K-10 program. Una na rito yung napakaraming learning competencies so from approximately 11,000, napababa natin to 3,000 learning competencies. Sa key stages, Grade 1-3, dati seven subjects tayo. Binaba natin sa five subjects with a focus on math and reading. Then ang science natin papasok pag Grade 4," Vice President Sara Duterte meanwhile said.

EGAY DAMAGE

Marcos also admitted that not all schools damaged by the recent typhoon Egay will be fully repaired by the start of the classes on August 29.

“Hindi pa lahat. Kasi nung tumama ang bagyo, ang sabi namin anong magagawa namin sa isang buwan? So far basta kung ano ang pwede nating gawin kasama ng ating LGU ay ginagawa lahat para maayos ang mga nasira. At patuloy naman ang school building program, pero malaking sagabal,” he said.

Meanwhile, Vice President Duterte said DepEd is ready to implement blended learning for schools damaged by typhoon Egay that have yet to finish reconstruction by the opening of classes. This as she assures that measures are in place to ensure that there is no disruption of learning for affected students.

“Priority (ang repairs for Egay damaged schools) para sa ating budget for this year, pero kung hindi po umabot ang repair ng August 29, immediately po iimplement ng ating mga paaralan ang blended learning program natin dahil wala na pong learning disruption ang direction ng Department of Education, lagi pong blended learning or in person classes,” she said.

Weak habagat still affecting PH; isolated rains possible: PAGASA

The southwest monsoon or habagat will continue affecting the country, bringing scattered rains to some regions, the state weather bureau said Monday.

In its 24-hour weather forecast, PAGASA said the habagat is still currently affecting Southern Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

Palawan, western Visayas, Zamboanga peninsula, Basilan, Sulu and Tawi-Tawi will have cloudy skies with scattered rainshowers and thunderstorms.

Metro Manila and the rest of the country, on the other hand, will have partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rainshowers or thunderstorms, also due to the habagat and localized thunderstorms.

PAGASA also warned of possible flooding or landslides due to moderate to heavy rains.

EURO NEWS

[Hawaii wildfires: What caused the deadly blazes and is climate change to blame?](#)

A series of unprecedented climate conditions contributed to what could be the worst natural disasters in the state's history. Wildfires on Hawaii's Maui island and Big Island have killed at least 96 people, forced thousands of residents and tourists to evacuate, and devastated the historic resort city of Lahaina.

The blaze which devastated the town of Lahaina is one of the deadliest US wildfires in over 100 years, according to research from the National Fire Protection Association.

Authorities have warned that the effort to search for and identify victims is still in its early stages. Dogs trained to detect human remains, called cadaver dogs, have been called in to help identify victims in the wreckage of buildings.

Here are some key questions and answers about the disaster.

How did the fires in Hawaii start?

The official causes of the fires, which started on Tuesday night (8 August), have not yet been determined.

However, the National Weather Service had issued warnings for the Hawaiian Islands for high winds and dry weather - conditions ripe for wildfires - which it cancelled late Wednesday.

A lawsuit has also been filed against Hawaii's main electricity provider. It claims that power lines blown over by Hurricane Dora led to the spread of the Lahaina wildfire.

"These power lines foreseeably ignited the fast-moving, deadly, and destructive Lahaina Fire, which destroyed homes, businesses, churches, schools, and historic cultural sites," it alleges.

Nearly 85 per cent of US wildfires are caused by humans, according to the US Forest Service. Natural causes include lightning and volcanic activity.

In Hawaii, less than 1 per cent of fires are due to natural causes, according to Elizabeth Pickett, co-executive director of the Hawaii Wildfire Management Organization. The Hawaiian Islands have six active volcanoes, including one on Maui.

Is climate change to blame for Hawaii's fires?

Around 14 per cent of Hawaii is suffering from severe or moderate drought according to the US Drought Monitor and 80 per cent of the state is classed as abnormally dry.

Since 2008, there has been a particularly dry period with scientists calculating that 90 per cent of Hawaii is getting less rainfall than it did 100 years ago.

Combined with the high winds from Hurricane Dora, warm temperatures and very low humidity, there was an increased risk of fire danger.

Hawaii's Governor Josh Green has said that the wildfires are the "worst natural disaster that Hawaii ever faced".

He has blamed the deadly blazes on a combination of weather conditions never seen before, linking them to climate change.

"We're seeing this for the first time in many different parts of the world," Green added.

Record-breaking heat this summer has contributed to unusually severe wildfires in Europe and western Canada.

Scientists say climate change, driven by fossil fuel use, has led to more frequent and more powerful extreme weather events.

Why didn't emergency sirens go off?

Hawaii has one of the world's largest emergency siren systems. But, as the deadly wildfires broke out, it remained silent.

Officials have said that the 400-siren system wasn't activated. Some residents have said they didn't receive an official text or phone warning either.

Many were taken by surprise as fires spread at an astonishing speed. Some say that the blaze may simply have moved too quickly for a formal response.

The Hawaii Emergency Management Agency has confirmed that mobile phone alerts and messages on televisions and radio stations were activated. As wildfires spread on Tuesday, power and most communication services - including emergency calls and cell phones - were cut off.

Officials had to resort to public radio stations and posts on official websites and social media to update residents.

Hawaii Attorney General Anne Lopez has called for an official review of the emergency response to the wildfires with the hope of "understanding the decisions that were made before and during".

What is driving Hawaii's wildfires?

Winds from Hurricane Dora, hundreds of miles southwest of the Hawaiian Islands in the Pacific Ocean, have fanned the flames across the US state, officials say.

The Lahaina fire on Maui travelled at an incredible speed of around "one mile every minute," according to Governor Green. He blamed high winds for the speed of the spread.

In addition to Dora, a low-pressure system to the west near Japan is also contributing to the high sustained winds. Dry vegetation is also a factor.

The spread of flammable non-native grasses such as Guinea grass in areas of former farmland and forest has created large amounts of small, easily ignited materials that increase the risk and severity of fire.

Such grasses comprise 26 per cent of Hawaii, according to Pickett.

Where are the fires and how contained are they?

The fires have caused widespread devastation in Lahaina, a beach resort city of about 13,000 people on northwestern Maui that was once a whaling centre and the Hawaiian Kingdom's capital. It now draws 2 million tourists a year.

As of Sunday evening, the Lahaina fire was 85 per cent contained, while the Pulehu fire, burning to the east, has remained 100 per cent contained. The Upcountry fire in the mountainous centre of the eastern mass of the island is now 60 per cent contained.

The fires have also scorched parts of the Big Island.

Some 271 structures were destroyed or damaged, the Honolulu Star-Advertiser said, citing official reports from the US Civil Air Patrol and Maui Fire Department.

Hawaii is an archipelago about 3,200km west of the US mainland. It is made up of eight main islands, including Hawaii, known as the Big Island.

The island of Maui lies to the north and west of the island of Hawaii.

KHALEEJ TIMES

COP28 UAE's Presidency Leads To Meaningful Progress

By: Muzaffar Rizvi

The UAE's Presidency of COP28 would lead to meaningful progress and effective global climate action as the Emirate has manifested its commitment towards combating environment challenges by implementing several initiatives to mitigate climate change effects, says a diplomat.

Pakistan's Ambassador to Republic of Korea Nabeel Munir, who was Lead Negotiator of the Group of 77 and China at COP27, said all parties are already negotiating a next course of action to address global environmental challenges at the earliest.

"Firstly, the \$100 billion climate finance promise should be fulfilled at the earliest to build trust. And then, for the future, parties are already negotiating a "New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance", from the baseline of \$100 billion per year, for the post 2025 period," Munir told Khaleej Times during an interview.

Ambassador Nabeel Munir is currently chairing the 'Subsidiary Body on Implementation' and would continue to lead until COP29.

"I hope that the quantum of finance agreed under the NCQG should be sufficient enough to address the needs of developing countries, as identified in their Nationally Determined Contributions," he said.

Pakistan will attend COP28 in UAE in November this year. How it will play its key role to make this event a success?

Success of COP 28 will be defined by its robust outcomes. For Pakistan, operationalisation of the funding arrangements and the fund for addressing Loss and Damage would hopefully be one of its major outcomes. Pakistan has been calling for it for years, and at COP27 in Sharm El Sheikh, the fund was indeed established. It is now imperative that developing countries start actually benefitting from it.

Similarly, the first Global Stocktake would be a great opportunity to both look back, and plan ahead. It could be an opportunity to put the world back on track to achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement, including its temperature goal.

Many other seminal issues will be part of the deliberations at COP28, and Pakistan will constructively engage with all parties to reach decisions on key elements defining the

success of COP28 and ensuring positive contributions towards finding sustainable solutions.

How do you see UAE's initiatives on climate change, and what do you suggest to address this alarming threat to global community?

Pakistan believes that the UAE's Presidency of COP28 would lead to meaningful progress and effective global climate action, to reverse the negative impacts of climate change.

The UAE has manifested its commitment towards combating climate change by implementing several initiatives to mitigate climate change effects. For instance, the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Solar Park, one of the largest renewable energy projects globally, contributes to reducing carbon emissions.

The UAE has also invested in sustainable agriculture, water conservation, and waste management, demonstrating a comprehensive approach to addressing various aspects of the climate crisis.

Pakistan feels that the UAE's Presidency of COP28 offers immense potential for global progress in addressing challenges posed by climate change.

We have to remember that in our fight against climate change, it is imperative that all countries, including the developing countries, take ambitious climate action. But for this to happen, it critically important that developing countries are provided sufficient and predictable means of implementation i.e. climate finance, technology development and transfer and capacity building support by the developed countries. Striking a balance between ambition and support may be the key to success.

The UAE and Pakistan are on the same page to make COP28 a success. What do you say?

As developing countries, I feel Pakistan and the UAE are fully aligned on elements that will define COP 28, and are working collectively towards making it a resounding success. COP28 President-designate, Dr Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, recently visited Pakistan and shared his vision with our leadership. Earlier, in June I also had a very productive discussion with Dr Sultan during the Bonn Climate Conference. We are confident in his abilities to deliver ambitious outcomes that are grounded in realities.

COP28 has no other option but to come up with creative solutions to sustainable continuity of the planet. What do you say?

One cannot over stress the importance of ambitious and comprehensive climate action by all, in terms of mitigation action, adaptation measures and actions to address the loss and damage associated with climate change. I see COP28 as an important milestone on the road to combat climate change. It is an opportunity for “course correction”. However, this course correction must not disregard the key principles of the UNFCCC and the Paris Agreement, on which the edifice of global environment and climate change regime was built.

What should be the COP28 resolution to address climate change? Do you think COP28 will be a new benchmark and set fresh environment standards as part of damage control measures?

The first Global Stocktake under the Paris Agreement will conclude at COP28. Based on a comprehensive GST process to review global progress to date on achieving the goals of the Paris Agreement, all Parties to the Agreement will agree on a set of recommendations in all areas related to climate change, inter alia, mitigation, adaptation and finance. We hope that these recommendations will be robust enough to be regarded as a new benchmark in our fight against climate change.

Please describe top 3 challenges to address global environment issues?

For me, the three principal challenges would be:

- Ambitious GHG emissions cuts by all countries, while maintaining the lead of the developed countries.
- Provision of sufficient and predictable climate finance by developed countries.
- Adoption and full implementation of the framework for achieving the Global Goal on Adaptation (GGA).

How do you see the role of developed nations in tackling climate change issue?

Developed countries have an obligation to provide means of implementation i.e. climate finance, technology development and transfer and capacity building support to the developing countries in order to empower them to take ambitious climate action. Without this support, developing countries would not be able to deliver on their Nationally Determined Contributions under the Paris Agreement. Thus climate finance is critical to achieving our goals and targets.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

'Extreme danger': Casiguran, Aurora logs highest-ever heat index at 60°C

By: John Eric Mendoza

Casiguran, Aurora on Monday logged the highest-ever heat index recorded in the country so far at 60°C, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

The town's heat index falls under the "extreme danger" category, making cases of heat stroke "imminent," Pagasa said.

This is also the fourth day when the area recorded heat beyond 52°C, the threshold for the "extreme danger" category.

On Aug. 11 and 12, the area recorded 53°C, while the heat index on Aug. 13 jumped to 59°C.

The heat index measures the level of discomfort an average person experiences due to the combined effects of the temperature and air humidity.

Pagasa officially declared the onset of El Niño in early July, which increases the prospect of below-normal rainfall conditions that could bring negative impacts such as "dry spells" or droughts in some parts of the country.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[DPWH to help mitigate long-term flooding in Batac, Paoay](#)

By: Leilanie Adriano

The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) on Monday announced its plan to construct an eight-kilometer floodway and a diversion channel in Ilocos Norte to put an end to the perennial flooding in downtown Batac and low-lying areas in neighboring Paoay town.

At a press conference at the Fort Ilocandia Resort, DPWH Secretary Manuel Bonoan said the project will get initial funding next year though the project design is now in the works, with the structure expected to be completed in two to three years, as part of the Marcos administration's priority flood control projects.

"The plan is to divert partly Quiaoit River to Galpac creek by constructing a floodway in Batac City to connect to Paoay," said Bonoan after coming out of the Philippine Economic Briefing attended by the different Cabinet secretaries here.

During the typhoon season, the Quiaoit River in Batac City often swells, leaving hundreds of households underwater for days.

Constructing a floodway or a diversion channel, the DPWH said will mitigate flooding in the area as the excess floodwater will be partly diverted to the Paoay Lake for irrigation purposes.

In the meantime, the city government of Batac has purchased at least four units of backhoes to clear waterways during the onset of the rainy season and help reduce incidents of flooding in low-lying areas.

"We are glad that the DPWH and the national government is helping us address our flooding problem," Batac Mayor Albert Chua told reporters also on Monday.

While in Ilocos Norte, the DPWH secretary also took the time to visit the Patapat viaduct where a portion of the Manila North Road in Barangay Pancian, Pagudpud is prone to landslide.

To prevent on- and off-road closures during bad weather, Bonoan reported that the DPWH is extending the Patapat viaduct to two kilometers more.

For now, the DPWH is working on stabilizing the slope protection until the rainy season is over and they can start constructing the extension of the Patapat viaduct.

Early on, the DPWH approved an initial budget of PHP300 million for the Patapat Viaduct 2 project which will be implemented on a multi-year project to be completed in four years for PHP1.2 billion.

The project was initiated by Ilocos Norte (1st District) Rep. Ferdinand Alexander Marcos to help address the frequent road closures on the Manila North Road caused by landslides and rockslides during inclement weather.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[CCC calls for 'bayanihan' for climate and disaster resilience](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) has called on stakeholders to do "bayanihan" in addressing the climate crisis and strengthening regional and national climate change and disaster resilience.

In his "Call to Action and Collaboration" at the Asian Conference on Climate Change and Disaster Resilience (ACCCDR) on Aug. 10, CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje urged all stakeholders to form part of a global, concerted effort to urgently address climate change.

"Our collective resolve will allow us to do more to save lives and protect the livelihoods of the present and future generations," Borje said.

In view of Asia's climate and disaster vulnerabilities, Borje emphasized the need for climate change to be mainstreamed in the country's socio-economic development planning and implementation.

Under President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s leadership, the Philippine government embedded climate change in the Philippine Development Plan 2023-2028.

The plan specifically embodies "Chapter 15: Accelerate Climate Action and Strengthen Disaster Resilience."

As climate change now underpins human development and human security, Borje said climate change must be the "lynchpin for all of the policy formulation, planning, and implementation."

He likewise underscored the key roles of government agencies and legislators, business and private sector leaders, academic and research institutions, civil society and non-government organizations, and international and regional organizations particularly on the need to do "bayanihan" and to further intensify collaboration, nurture innovative solutions and exhibit accountability across sectors and nations.

"I call on everybody, it is time for us to work very closely together, and it should bring out the very best in the Philippines and every Filipino," he stressed.

Reflecting on the event theme, “Building Bridges: Driving Collective Action for a Climate and Disaster Resilient Asia,” Borje reminded the participants that “building bridges is not just a metaphorical concept but a moral imperative to achieve the desired resilience for us all.”

“The challenge is now—we must challenge ourselves to do better for our sake, and for our world's future,” he said.

Representatives from the private sector, government, civil society and non-government organizations, international organizations, and the academe also pledged their commitment to collective action.

The ACCCDR brought together thought leaders, policymakers, climate and disaster experts, practitioners and scientists, and advocates to discuss critical issues on climate and disaster resilience in Asia.

The event was presented by Aboitiz Power Corporation in partnership with the CCC, Asian Institute of Management, NOW Corporation and EASD Environmental Consultancy.

CCC warns public vs increasing heat waves in coming months

By: Ma. Teresa Montemayor

The Commission on Climate Change (CCC) on Monday warned the public to prepare for increasing heat waves in the coming months that could cause drought and water shortages despite rains due to southwest monsoon and localized thunderstorms.

In a statement, CCC Commissioner Albert dela Cruz Sr. said dry spells would come despite heavy rains drenching parts of the country.

Citing data from the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), dela Cruz said the state weather bureau has declared the occurrence of El Niño in the Tropical Pacific after the Oceanic Niño Index recorded 0.5°C in April, May and June.

Moreover, Apayao, Cagayan and Kalinga are already experiencing drought based on the 60 percent reduction in the expected rainfall in these areas.

Dry conditions were also experienced in Isabela and Tarlac.

Dela Cruz also cautioned the public over prolonged rainfall and eventual flash floods that could disrupt daily routines and affect the prices of prime commodities.

"Last week, heavy rain triggered floods and caused traffic congestion in several parts of Metro Manila, leaving thousand of commuters stranded. Intense heat caused by El Niño can also result in increased rainfall," he said. "There will be rain in Metro Manila and other areas due to the phenomenon's weakened state even as rainfall patterns likewise depend on our geographical location."

During an El Niño episode, warmer ocean temperatures lead to changes in atmospheric circulation patterns that enhance the development of low-pressure systems and the formation of atmospheric moisture, resulting in more precipitation, dela Cruz said.

MANILA STANDARD

Climate change group warns public of heat waves, water shortage

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In Bataan meanwhile, Senator Win Gatchalian underscored the need for the government to undertake an effective flood control program that would shield communities from the damaging impact of climate change.

“Due to the adverse impact of climate change on our communities, the government needs to provide adequate flood control structures that would provide vulnerable areas

with ample protection from the devastating impact of floods,” said Gatchalian during the ceremonial turnover here of rice to the province of Bataan on Sunday morning.

Aside from Bataan, the senator also visited Pangasinan, Bulacan, and Pampanga to check the devastation of the recent typhoons and distributed P8.5 million worth of rice to typhoon victims in affected areas in Luzon.

Several towns and municipalities across Pangasinan, Bulacan, Pampanga, and Bataan have been declared under a state of calamity in the wake of typhoons Egay and Falcon.

The senator said P5.2 million worth of rice was distributed in Malolos, Calumpit, Hagonoy, Balagtas, Paombong, Obando, San Miguel, Guiguinto, Pandi, and Plaridel in Bulacan.

Gatchalian’s call on climate change coincides with the President’s pronouncement that the national government has a master plan to swiftly address climate change, including the construction of a big water dam for flood prevention and agricultural enhancement.

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