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FOX NEWS

[John Kerry's office consulted left-wing environmental groups while crafting policies, emails show](#)

By: Thomas Catenacci

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MANILA BULLETIN

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By: Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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By: Cristina Eloisa Baclig

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PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Biz group pushes for flood control master plan in NegOr capital](#)

By: Mary Judaline Partlow

Dumaguete City— The Negros Oriental Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NOCCI) is pushing for a long-term drainage and flood control master plan for this provincial capital as a congressman has pledged PHP100 million for its initial planning.

THE MANILA TIMES

[\[OPINION\] Balance short- and long-term responses to food crisis](#)

The food crisis that we have been experiencing here in the Philippines for months and spectacularly highlighted recently by the shortage of sugar is part of what major institutions are now calling a global food crisis. Unfortunately, even though it is a global problem, which makes many of the factors contributing to it beyond any one government's control, it is up to individual countries to solve it for themselves.

[Bulacan eyes new solutions to address flooding](#)

By Frederick Silverio

The perennial flooding in Bulacan coastal areas is seen to be resolved by implementing nature-based solutions, thus the result of the briefing led by the provincial government of Bulacan (PGB) with the representatives of the Economic Affairs Section of the Netherlands Embassy.

[Financial reporting to sustainability reporting](#)

By Kristine Ismael

The Philippines is one of the countries that are most vulnerable to all kinds of natural disasters. Every year, we expect strong storms to come and when they do, a lot of people are displaced and properties and livelihoods are damaged. In the worst case, lives are lost.

[Wrestling the plastic monster](#)

By Ben Kritz

For its size, and despite being otherwise considered more a victim of the climate-change problem than a source of it, the Philippines is a prodigious producer of plastic waste. While characterizations of the country as being "among the world's worst" in this regard may be unfair, Filipinos have long recognized the problem. Despite this, efforts to curb plastic pollution through national — and local-level — laws have only had modest results.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[OPINION] [A step back in our climate change effort](#)

By Andrew J. Masigan

The conservative Republican agenda continues to rip through American legal fabric. Just after the overturn of the 1973 decision of Roe vs. Wade (which legalized abortion in America), the American Supreme Court ruled anew to effectively clip the powers of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

THE STRAITS TIMES

[SOS! Scientists sound climate alarm with exclamation mark](#)

Oslo - Most scientific studies - even those with remarkable findings - have long had their wider appeal dimmed by unremarkable titles.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

[Gov't earmarks P1.6 trillion to pay debts next year](#)

By: Ted Cordero

The government is allocating more than P1 trillion next year to settle maturing local and foreign debt as well as its corresponding interests, according to budget documents.

TYPHOON FLORITA UPDATES:

ABS-CBN NEWS

[Storm forces schools to shut day after reopening](#)

By Agence France-Presse

Schools were ordered shut across the northern Philippines Tuesday -- a day after many resumed in-person learning for the first time since COVID-19 hit -- as torrential rain and strong winds pounded the main island of the archipelago.

CNN PHILIPPINES

[Severe tropical storm 'Florita' exits PH area of responsibility](#)

By CNN Philippines Staff

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, August 24) - Severe Tropical Storm "Florita" accelerated westward and left the Philippine area of responsibility (PAR) Wednesday morning, the state weather bureau reported in its 5 a.m. advisory.

FRANCE 24

[Storm forces Philippine schools to shut day after reopening](#)

Schools were ordered shut across the northern Philippines Tuesday -- a day after many resumed in-person learning for the first time since Covid-19 hit -- as torrential rain and strong winds pounded the main island of the archipelago.

NDRRMC

[NDRRMC SitRep No. 3 Florita](#)

Reported 24 Aug 2022 8AM

Affected population: 1,344 families; 4,646 persons in 3 regions, 8 provinces, 30 cities and municipalities, 60 barangays

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Ilocos Norte residents brace for 'Florita'](#)

By Leilanie Adriano

COLLAPSED BRIDGE. A bridge in Barangay Badio, Pinili, Ilocos Norte collapses on Monday (Aug. 22, 2022) due to raging waters brought about by Severe Tropical Storm Florita. Ilocos Norte Governor Matthew Joseph Manotoc suspended work and classes on Tuesday (Aug. 23, 2022) as he urged residents to brace for the storm. (Photo courtesy of Rod Sadian)

RAPPLER

[Severe Tropical Storm Florita leaves PAR but rain, winds linger](#)

By Acor Arceo

Severe Tropical Storm Florita (Ma-on) exited the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR) before dawn on Wednesday, August 24, but Signal No. 1 remains raised in parts of Northern Luzon and rain will continue until afternoon.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

FOX NEWS

[John Kerry's office consulted left-wing environmental groups while crafting policies, emails show](#)

By: Thomas Catenacci

Special Presidential Envoy for Climate (SPEC) John Kerry's office participated in multiple discussions with left-wing environmental groups that appeared to inform policymaking decisions, according to emails shared with Fox News Digital.

Officials in the SPEC office sought to discuss key agenda items as recently as December with non-governmental organizations like the Sierra Club and the United Nations Foundation, according to documents obtained by government watchdog Protect the Public's Trust (PPT) and shared with Fox News Digital.

The documents, which were obtained via information request, did not show any similar conversations or meetings with fossil fuel energy groups or companies.

"You'll see from the participants' list that there's a lot of interest in this conversation," Alden Meyer, a climate policy consultant and senior associate at the green group Third Generation Environmentalism, wrote in a May 2021 email planning a Zoom call between environmental organizations and SPEC officials.

Meyer's subject line was titled "Zoom info and topics for tomorrow's G7 discussion" and the email copied four SPEC officials whose names were redacted and leaders of 13 environmental groups. The email, which came weeks ahead of high-level G7 meetings in the U.K., included various topics the parties planned to discuss during the virtual call.

Among the topics, the officials planned to discuss whether the U.S. would support a G7 statement ending fossil fuel infrastructure financing, phasing out traditional gas-powered vehicle sales and phasing out coal power generation. The call also included a conversation about whether the U.S. would coordinate a global effort reducing methane emissions.

The email also showed that the participants would discuss a so-called "clean counteroffer" to the Chinese government's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), a massive infrastructure project stretching from China to Europe.

While it is unclear the exact influence of the policy discussion, President Biden announced a \$200 billion counter to the BRI in June that prioritized climate change and the U.S. entered into a global methane pledge during the United Nations climate summit in November. Biden also set a goal to ensure at least 50% of all vehicle sales are electric by 2030 in August 2021.

In addition, a December 2021 email from Jake Schmidt, the managing director of the Natural Resources Defense Council's (NRDC) international program, revealed that

several environmental groups were invited to a briefing from the SPEC office and National Security Council (NSC), which Kerry has a position on, about overseas fossil fuel finance.

I'll send a calendar invite with the Zoom details but wanted to put this on your radar," Schmidt wrote to other environmentalists on Dec. 16, 2021. "The State Department (ENR and SPEC) plus the NSC have offered a briefing ... to brief the community on the International Energy Engagement Guidance."

The email was sent to leaders of Friends of the Earth, Oxfam, Sierra Club, Oil Change International, the Climate Reality Project, World Resources Institute, the Bank Information Center, RMI and the Center for International Environmental Law, which all actively push a rapid transition from fossil fuel energy to green sources like wind and solar.

A similar email was not sent to industry groups favoring traditional forms of power like oil and natural gas, according to the documents shared with Fox News Digital.

Just as FOIA revealed that teachers' unions exerted undue influence in the development of policy regarding school reopening, these conversations seem to provide evidence that large, powerful activist organizations may be pushing the same expensive climate policy that just passed as what some are terming the 'Green New Deal Lite,'" PPT Director Michael Chamberlain told FOX News Digital.

For an administration claiming to be guided by the science, there are more than a few indications that the input of their political allies may be a bigger driver of policy," he continued. "Little wonder that the American public's trust in its government is in free fall."

A State Department spokesperson directed Fox News Digital to the agency's "Requester Service Center," but didn't address questions about the emails or whether Kerry's office similarly engages with fossil fuel energy groups.

MANILA BULLETIN

GMA Network and Nestlé PH join forces for the environment

GMA Network, Inc., the country's leading broadcast company, and Nestlé Philippines, one of the largest food and beverage manufacturers, are teaming up for the environmental advocacy campaign, Kapuso at Kasambahay ng Kalikasan.

This partnership combines Nestlé's pioneering sustainability initiatives with GMA's unrivaled reach and most trusted content. Together, both organizations will encourage collective action on crucial environmental challenges.

In a virtual ceremony, Atty. Felipe L. Gozon, Chairman and CEO of GMA Network, and Mr. Kais Marzouki, Chairman and CEO of Nestlé Philippines, signed a memorandum of agreement to commence the campaign.

"We believe that our partnership with GMA Network can help move the needle to involve more consumers in creating a lasting, positive impact on the environment. GMA has the credibility, reach and influence to mobilize people for the cause of sustainability and ultimately the regeneration of the planet," said Mr. Marzouki. "If we put all our efforts together, we can make a difference. Our joint campaign to build awareness on the impact of plastic waste can go a long way."

Atty. Gozon added, "With this partnership, we will be able to communicate that it does not take a lot to become environmentalists. Through our joint efforts, Nestlé and GMA will inspire Filipinos through basic acts at home, like proper waste disposal, power and water conservation practices, creative recycling and re-purposing, and even simply embracing a less material lifestyle, all these can make a big difference."

GMA Network is recognized as one of the notable organizations that promote sustainability in the country, being the first media and broadcasting company in the Philippines to sign with the United Nations (UN) Global Compact. On air, it broadcasts programs that champion the planet and has integrated green practices into its business operations. The Network has also institutionalized green advocacy through the Kapuso ng Kalikasan, its flagship environmental program.

"We are at the start of a deepening synergy between our two organizations, both committed to saving the environment," said Angel Javier Cruz, Vice President and Head of Corporate Affairs and Communications. "As we speak, various projects are in the works and you'll see more of these in the coming months."

Part of the campaign includes an advocacy video headlined by artists from Sparkle, GMA's talent management arm. On-ground volunteer activities will also be conducted in parallel with intensifying environmental education online.

"We aim to inform and educate the public about the country's most pressing environmental problems and encourage them to take action to be part of the solution,"

said Joey Uy III, Nestlé PH Senior Vice President for Corporate Affairs and project proponent.

As a major food and beverage manufacturer, Nestlé PH has made local sustainability commitments in line with Nestlé's global ambition and roadmap to achieve net zero greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2050. Among its pioneering initiatives in the country, Nestlé PH is the first multinational fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) firm to achieve and maintain plastic neutrality, recovering the equivalent volume of plastic packaging it puts out in the market. With plastic as a significant source of GHGs, the company is taking a leadership role in tackling plastic waste towards a waste-free future.

PAGASA issues flood precaution advisory as Magat Dam releases water

By: Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz

Residents in low-lying communities in Isabela were warned against possible flooding as the Magat Dam in Isabela discharged water from its reservoir on Monday morning, Aug. 22.

In an advisory issued at 9 a.m., the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said areas that are likely to be affected by Magat Dam's release of water are the municipalities of Ramon, San Mateo, Aurora, Cabatuan, Luna, Reina Mercedes, Burgos, Naguilian, and Gamu—all in the province of Isabela.

The dam's level of 187.10 meters as of 6 a.m. is about 3 meters below its 190-meter normal high water level.

Magat Dam authorities have opened one of Magat Dam's gates with a 0.50-meter opening.

According to PAGASA Hydro-Meteorology Division weather facilities specialist Edgar Dela Cruz, Magat Dam may exceed the 190-meter normal high water level during the passage of tropical storm Florita.

"Ine-expect namin na aakyat siya aabot sa 190 meters dahil medyo mataas yung average rainfall na nakuha namin sa models (We expect it to reach 190 meters because the average rainfall we got from the models is quite high)," Dela Cruz said in a press conference.

"Ine-expect namin na kahit naka-open siya ng gate, ng half meter, malamang sa hapon ay baka magdagdag pa ng gate open (We expect that even if it has already opened one gate at half a meter, it may open another gate or increase the gate opening by Monday afternoon)," he added.

Dela Cruz also said PAGASA has also issued general flood advisories in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), Ilocos Region, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Mimaropa (Oriental Mindoro, Occidental Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, Palawan), and Bicol Region.

"Pero ang pinakababantayan natin ay ang CAR dahil kapag dumaan ang bagyo sa mga lugar na nilindol medyo high risk siya sa mudslide or landslide (But what we will closely monitor is the Cordillera Administrative Region because the storm may traverse the earthquake-hit areas that are quite high risk of mudslides or landslides)," he said.

A 7.0-magnitude earthquake jolted Abra and nearby provinces on July 27.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Tip of the iceberg: Dolomite beach and flooding in Manila

By: Cristina Eloisa Baclig

Manila, Philippines—Amid the recent heavy downpour in Metro Manila, the Manila Bay Dolomite Beach has been again brought into the spotlight as it has been blamed as one of the causes of flooding in several Manila roads.

Last week, localized thunderstorms led to gutter-deep flooding in several parts of Manila, including areas along Taft Avenue, Kalaw, Quirino, United Nations Avenue, and Pedro Gil.

While an earlier news report cited the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) saying that the flooding was caused by the controversial Manila Baywalk Dolomite Beach project, MMDA acting general manager and flood control director Baltazar Melgar pointed out a different cause.

In an interview, Melgar clarified that the flooding was partly caused by the unfinished pumping stations and pipelines near Dolomite Beach, three main drainage outposts: the Faura and Remedios drainage systems, and the Estero de San Antonio Abad.

“Dolomite Beach has no connection to the recent flooding in the area,” Melgar said.

“The reason why flood water subsided slowly during heavy rains last Friday was the ongoing construction of three pumping stations and a pipeline by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), which is expected to be completed by October,” he added.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Biz group pushes for flood control master plan in NegOr capital](#)

By: Mary Judaline Partlow

Dumaguete City– The Negros Oriental Chamber of Commerce and Industry (NOCCI) is pushing for a long-term drainage and flood control master plan for this provincial capital as a congressman has pledged PHP100 million for its initial planning.

“We are looking forward to this plan coming to fruition by next year, considering that the recent flooding that inundated the city has become a cause for concern not only for the business sector but for everyone else,” NOCCI president Edward Du said in an interview on Tuesday.

Du said during a recent NOCCI-initiated event to discuss the water and electricity woes of the city with the concerned utility firms, the flooding problems in the city became a “side issue”.

He noted that Rep. Manuel T. Sagarbarria of the 2nd District of Negros Oriental, whose coverage includes this city, said during the event that he would seek a “budget insertion” for 2023 for a feasibility study and the initial stage of the master plan.

On August 7, torrential rains inundated many parts of the city, including the Freedom Park and the national highway in front of the Capitol.

Many residents complained that their homes were flooded, while motorists had to drive through roads that were submerged in water.

The business group is seeking to have the drainage system in the city upgraded, given the increase in population and the number of vehicles plying the streets, and the resumption of face-to-face classes, Du said.

The congressman’s budget allocation should be enough to cover Freedom Park and its vicinity for starters, as the city government, headed by Mayor Felipe Antonio Remollo, has already set aside some budget to address another perennial flooding problem in the outskirts barangays of Mangnao and Banilad, he said.

The businessmen are hoping that Governor Pryde Henry Teves, Sagarbarria, and Remollo could collectively come up with a long-term solution to solve the city’s flooding problems.

THE MANILA TIMES

[\[OPINION\] Balance short- and long-term responses to food crisis](#)

The food crisis that we have been experiencing here in the Philippines for months and spectacularly highlighted recently by the shortage of sugar is part of what major institutions are now calling a global food crisis. Unfortunately, even though it is a global problem, which makes many of the factors contributing to it beyond any one government's control, it is up to individual countries to solve it for themselves.

We can lament factors such as the war in Ukraine, persistent supply chain bottlenecks, and high fuel prices that adversely affect the Philippines' food security and well-being, but the only response we can make is to work on protecting the Philippines from these external factors, rather than waiting in vain for someone else to solve them.

A commentary published this week by the Manila-based Asian Development Bank (ADB) in an indirect way provides some useful advice to policymakers about how that goal can be achieved. The main point of the article was to highlight the ways in which the ADB is helping countries in the region to address the food crisis, but in detailing those provides a number of useful policy directions that can and should be implemented, whether a country seeks outside assistance or not.

The most important point is that policies to address the food crisis require a balance of short-term and long-term measures. To provide some sense of what problems those measures should address, the ADB noted that the Philippines is among the countries in Asia and the Pacific that are most vulnerable to climate change effects, while at the same time being heavily import-dependent for food supply.

In this context, we could characterize short-term measures as the things the government is already doing, while the long-term measures are initiatives that should be pursued. Some examples of short-term measures in connection with the recent sugar supply crisis include tracking down and relieving supply bottlenecks — particularly those that have been caused intentionally by greedy speculators — assessing supply needs and importing as needed to make up for the immediate shortfall, and imposing price controls to relieve some of the food cost burden on consumers.

Without the long-term measures, however, those short-term actions will have limited positive impact, and will have to be continually repeated. Long-term measures that we have called for in the recent past include such things as ratification of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, which will expand and lower the cost of two-way trade in many goods, particularly agricultural commodities; increasing the budget and technical capacity for agricultural research and development in order to improve productivity and diversify the agricultural sector; creation of the Department of Water Resources to better manage water supplies, of which agriculture is the biggest user; and passage of the Land Use Act, which will provide better protection and more rational use of agricultural lands.

The second important point made by the ADB is that whatever measures are employed to address the food crisis, they should prioritize climate resilience, not only to mitigate and adapt to climate change but to take advantage of the growing number of economic opportunities climate change management directly and indirectly provides. Severe drought in many parts of the world have constrained food supplies, and it is an unhappy coincidence that at this moment, large agricultural areas of Northern and Central Luzon are grappling with the aftermath of a strong tropical storm to remind us of the perils of a rapidly changing climate. We cannot control the weather, but what we can do is to improve our response to its effects on food security in the short term, and minimize harm over the long term. Useful initiatives in this respect include the ones mentioned above but also, for example, improving protection of coastal and mountain lands, which provide natural protection against flooding and landslides.

For the sake of economic prosperity and the simple health and well-being of the Filipino people, the country should strive to achieve food security that is assured no matter what Mother Earth or geopolitics throws at us. The government should welcome any guidance toward achieving that goal, and make implementation of the steps needed to make it a top priority.

Bulacan eyes new solutions to address flooding

By Frederick Silverio

The perennial flooding in Bulacan coastal areas is seen to be resolved by implementing nature-based solutions, thus the result of the briefing led by the provincial government of Bulacan (PGB) with the representatives of the Economic Affairs Section of the Netherlands Embassy.

Matthijs Zijlmans, project manager for Partners for Water Program of Netherlands Enterprise Agency, identified that the main contributors to flooding in North Manila Bay include sediment extraction, land subsidence, fluvial flooding, climate change, and erosion and sediment shortage, storm surge, the decline of natural habitat, and population expansion.

Zijlmans and his team had open discussions with former Hagonoy vice mayor Angel Cruz, a member of the Alyansa ng mga Baybayin-Bayan ng Bulacan at Pampanga (ABB-BP) who led the discussion, requested the participation of his colleagues from their alliance to come up with a concrete project proposal for flood control and mitigation and to further identify the funds needed for the implementation of the project with the help of the PGB.

The North Manila Bay Flood Protection Strategy on Nature-Based Solutions and Dialogue is the potential project that the LGU led by Bulacan Gov. Daniel Fernando wanted to address with the Embassy of Netherlands at the One Grand Pavilion Matilde Hall, Blas Ople Road, Barangay Bulihan here recently.

On Tuesday, Fernando told The Manila Times that the PGB through the Provincial Planning and Development Office headed by Arlene Pascual will do its best to come up and help in developing a concrete plan to finally resolve the problem of flooding in the province.

Fernando also mentioned that with the latest developments in the province such as the construction of the airport and PNR Line Tutuban to Malolos, it is just proper to resolve the flooding situation so as to not hamper the realization of this progress as well as to secure the safety of Bulakenyos residing in the coastal areas.

According to Eileen Vizmonte from the Economic Affairs Section of the Netherlands Embassy in the Philippines, the North Manila Bay Flood Protection Strategy is a project funded by the Netherlands government which is a small follow-up project after the Manila Bay Sustainable Development Master Plan and was finalized last April 2022.

This strategy aims to increase the resilience of people and businesses against flooding in the North Manila Bay Area using nature-based solutions and to recommend pilot locations for the implementation of the project.

Meanwhile, other participants who attended the meeting were representatives from the ABB-BP including the City/Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Offices and/or Engineering Office of Coastal Municipalities from Hagonoy, Calumpit, Paombong,

Guiguinto, Balagtas, Obando, Bulakan, Bocaue, Marilao, Cities of Malolos and Meycauayan and the ABB-BP LGUs of Pampanga namely Macabebe, Masantol, Sasmoan, and Lubao.

Financial reporting to sustainability reporting

By Kristine Ismael

The Philippines is one of the countries that are most vulnerable to all kinds of natural disasters. Every year, we expect strong storms to come and when they do, a lot of people are displaced and properties and livelihoods are damaged. In the worst case, lives are lost.

The effects of climate change and global warming have become more evident. Just this May, we experienced record-breaking local temperatures ranging from 39 to 55 degrees Celsius. Heat waves, flash floods and landslides are not just confined to the Philippines — we see the same phenomena (as well as forest fires, hurricanes and more) all over the globe.

As businesses play a key role in environmental degradation or conservation, there is an initiative to make sustainability reporting mandatory. It is the practice of disclosing the overall performance of an organization to stakeholders. The report is based on the triple-bottom-line concept covering economic (profit), environmental (planet) and social performance (people). There is now greater attention as to how businesses affect these three aspects and the actions they are taking toward long-term sustainability.

In the Philippines, the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) mandates all publicly listed companies (PLCs) to comply with SEC Memorandum Circular 4, Series of 2019, wherein they must submit a sustainability report as an attachment to SEC Form 17-A. Not all aspects in the reporting template must be disclosed — only matters which are material.

Though the SEC recognizes that some companies are already advanced in sustainability efforts as well as reporting, some are still starting their journey. For that reason, the SEC released guidelines as an introductory tool for PLCs that are new to sustainability reporting. This only means that sustainability must be part of the agenda of all PLCs.

Globally, there is a recent movement to include sustainability reporting as one of the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). On Nov. 3, 2021, the IFRS Foundation Trustees formed the International Sustainability Standards Board to develop a comprehensive global baseline. Exposure drafts for general sustainability-related disclosure and climate-related disclosure requirements were released for comment in March and the deadline passed last July 29, 2022. There are also other existing globally recognized sustainability standards or frameworks, especially in G7 countries.

As the old adage says, what gets measured gets acted on. The world is racing to conserve and protect the environment as day by day the effects of climate change rapidly and intimately affect all aspects of our lives. Sustainability reporting will serve as a tool for companies, governments and stakeholders to ensure that businesses operate sustainably and that we can contribute or call out any harmful practices. The regulations, however, will only have teeth if everyone will gain deeper understanding and actively involve themselves in sustainability development.

One of the Filipina leaders I look up to and admire is the late Environment Secretary Gina Lopez. In a speech, she said that it was the poor who were most affected by climate change and global warming. In the Philippines, we see how the poor are left to pick up the pieces after calamities with little or no help.

On an encouraging note, Lopez also said: "We do not need to give up economic growth — from clean energy, to sustainable transportation, to all facets of life. We need to have the courage to change the way we do things. We cannot and must not build an economy based on suffering."

We must prepare for this change and be willing to become agents for this global movement. At the end of the day, we only have one home, one planet to share with all who are living and for the generations to come.

Wrestling the plastic monster

By Ben Kritz

For its size, and despite being otherwise considered more a victim of the climate-change problem than a source of it, the Philippines is a prodigious producer of plastic waste. While characterizations of the country as being "among the world's worst" in this regard may be unfair, Filipinos have long recognized the problem. Despite this, efforts to curb plastic pollution through national — and local-level — laws have only had modest results.

But several recent and planned initiatives are being hailed as steps toward changing that, leading to real reductions in plastic use and better management of plastic waste. Not everyone agrees, however. While the new measures may have good intentions, some critics charge, they are misdirected, inadequate or in some cases even amount to "greenwashing," solutions that do not have any measurable positive impact or create other environmental problems.

The scale of the plastic waste problem in the Philippines is difficult to describe in relatable terms. According to a World Bank report in March 2021, which uses the word "staggering" a couple of times to describe the Philippines' volume of plastic waste, the country generates 2.7 million metric tons of plastic waste annually, much of it in the form of unrecyclable, single-use sachets. "By some estimates," the World Bank says, "the Philippines consumes a staggering 163 million sachets every day."

poster

To put that into an individual perspective, that means that every one of the 113,419,913 people in this country (the estimated population as of Aug. 15, 2022) creates 23.8 kilograms of plastic waste — in other words, an amount (by mass) just a bit smaller than a half-sack of rice — every year.

A study published by the World Wildlife Fund in 2020 estimated that up to 35 percent, or about 945,000 metric tons of the plastic waste find their way into the Philippines' environment every year, and of that volume, according to the World Bank study, about 750,000 metric tons are discarded in the ocean. Estimates of how much plastic waste is recycled vary between 10 and 15 percent; the remainder is disposed of in landfills.

While the problem is small in comparison to the huge amount of plastic waste it generates on its own, the Philippines nevertheless also has to contend with plastic waste imported from other countries, primarily the United States, South Korea and Hong Kong. In 2019, the last year for which there is reliable data, the Philippines imported an additional 11,761 metric tons of plastic waste, more than half of them from the US. And this is just the amount imported legally; no real estimates exist for the amount of plastic waste illegally imported each year, usually by misclassifying it in customs declarations. High-profile seizures of smuggled waste in recent years, most notably from Canada, South Korea and the US, suggest that the true volume of imported plastic waste is likely much higher than official data indicates.

Management of solid waste in the Philippines according to the "3 Rs" principle — Reduce, Reuse, Recycle — was codified into law with the "Solid Waste Act of 2001" (Republic Act

9003), but full implementation and enforcement of the law has never been achieved. In the years since, the government has developed several large-scale strategy "road maps" to improve waste management, all of which have been predicated on more stringent enforcement of RA 9003.

These plans include the National Solid Waste Management Strategy 2012-2016, which set a target of diverting 50 percent of solid waste by 2016; an updated strategy in the 2017-2022 Philippine Development Plan (PDP), which reset the target to 80 percent solid-waste diversion by 2022; and the Philippine Action Plan for Sustainable Consumption and Production (PAP4SCP) published by the National Economic and Development Authority in 2019, which was essentially a detailed revision of the strategy set forth in the 2017-2022 PDP. In addition, in November of last year the Department of Environment and Natural Resources adopted the National Plan of Action for Marine Litter it developed with the UN Development Program. That initiative targets zero waste in Philippine waters by 2040, but, as a result of the change in administration after the May 2022 elections, is still awaiting implementation.

For now, the PAP4SCP is the main blueprint for the Philippines' waste management strategy, and the new initiatives to manage plastic waste are either direct or indirect results of it. While this may be considered progress, what has been accomplished so far has already fallen behind the schedule envisioned by the plan.

The PAP4SCP sets forth short-term (2020-2022), medium-term (2022-2030) and long-term (2030-2040) actions to be taken in policy and regulation; research, innovation and technology; infrastructure; and promotion and education. One key difference between the PAP4SCP and earlier road maps is that the action plan places more emphasis on private-sector involvement in waste reduction, the basis of the plan's only significant accomplishment so far, the passage of the Extended Producer Responsibility Act (RA 11898).

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[OPINION] [A step back in our climate change effort](#)

By Andrew J. Masigan

The conservative Republican agenda continues to rip through American legal fabric. Just after the overturn of the 1973 decision of Roe vs. Wade (which legalized abortion in America), the American Supreme Court ruled anew to effectively clip the powers of the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Why is this relevant to us? The EPA was established in 1970 by then US president Richard Nixon to manage greenhouse gas emissions. The decision of the Supreme Court stripped the EPA of its power to regulate emissions from fossil fuel power plants and to mandate (or expedite) the shift of America's power source mix from fossil fuel to renewable energy. In other words, the EPA can no longer enforce climate change action on the power industry. The Supreme Court effectively took away America's most effective tool to mitigate climate change.

America is the second largest emitter of greenhouse gases, spewing 4.745 billion metric tons of carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide and fluorinated gases into our atmosphere every year (data from 2019). For context, the largest emitter of greenhouse gases is China, who dumps 9.877 billion metric tons into the atmosphere, while the Philippines is responsible for only 135.3 million metric tons.

The Supreme Court's 6-3 ruling allows coal fired power plants in America to operate unhampered and without consequence.

The lawsuit was filed by Republican states, led by West Virginia, a coal producing state. While Republicans celebrate the Supreme Court decision, environmental groups, including those in the Philippines, are expressing exasperation. Coal-fired power plants account for 25 percent of American greenhouse gas emissions.

The United Nations expressed serious concern since the Supreme Court's decision will make it harder to achieve the goals of the Paris Agreement. For those unaware, the goal of the Paris Agreement is to limit the increase of global temperature by 1.5 degrees Celsius.

To exceed the 1.5 degrees Celsius threshold will trigger changes in the planet's atmospheric balance and this could be fatal to all life forms. Time is ticking and we are already feeling the consequences of climate change. In America and Europe, extreme blizzards, frequent forest fires and severe droughts have become a natural occurrence. In tropical countries like the Philippines, frequent and increasingly violent typhoons, higher sea levels and storm surges have become annual tragedies. The UN has declared the Supreme Court decision a step back in human survival with worldwide repercussions.

But the decision is a vindication for Donald Trump. It will be recalled that in 2021, the US Court of Appeals struck down Donald Trump's Affordable Clean Energy rule. That rule

would have imposed limits on a Clean Air Act provision that provides the EPA authority to regulate emissions from existing power plants. With this decision, Trump finally got his way. Curiously, three of the nine Supreme Court members are Trump nominees.

The ruling of the Supreme Court was based on what is called the “Major Questions Doctrine.” In essence, the doctrine dictates that federal agencies, like the EPA, cannot implement policies of great importance and social impact without the express consent of Congress. The fact that the EPA continues to regulate the emissions of coal power plants and the power industry as a whole, without a congressional mandate, makes it illegal, they argue.

West Virginia Attorney General Patrick Morrisey, a Republican, called the ruling “a huge victory against federal overreach and excess of administrative state.”

The majority of Republicans do not consider climate change an issue urgent enough to cull the coal industry. The Pew Research Center says that Democrats are more than three times as likely as Republicans to say that dealing with climate change should be a top priority (78 percent vs. 21 percent). Less than a third of registered Republicans nationwide said that climate change is caused mostly by human activities – the greater majority claim that it is a natural phenomenon.

Politically, this is a defeat for US President Joe Biden, who intended to lead the world in climate change mitigation. Not only is his multi-billion package of climate change investments stuck in Congress, now the EPA is de-fanged. It is a defeat for both the democratic agenda and environmentalists.

President Biden called the ruling “another devastating decision that aims to take our country backwards. While this decision risks damaging our nation’s ability to keep our air clean and combat climate change, I will not relent in using my lawful authorities to protect public health and tackle the climate crisis.”

Biden subsequently directed his legal team to work with the Justice Department to review the ruling and find ways under federal law to protect against pollution, including emissions that cause climate change. It is still unclear how the Biden administration can regain regulatory sway over the coal industry.

Invoking the Major Questions Doctrine was rarely argued in court until recently. But this is a precedent that opens the way for other lawsuits meant to question other regulatory powers of the US Federal government. Many suspect that the Clean Water Act will be next to be questioned. The same for No Vaccine Mandate and Same-Sex Marriages. Clearly, the US Supreme Court is leading America back to conservatism according to the Republican agenda.

No matter what direction the political winds blow, no one can deny that the planet is deteriorating towards a dangerous path as humans continue to burn fossil fuels at an alarming rate. This is a huge step back for America, for the world and for humanity. We

can only hope that President Biden finds legal ways to mitigate if not eliminate the use of fossil fuel power in his own backyard.

THE STRAITS TIMES

SOS! Scientists sound climate alarm with exclamation mark

OSLO (THOMSON REUTERS FOUNDATION) - Most scientific studies - even those with remarkable findings - have long had their wider appeal dimmed by unremarkable titles.

But as researchers - who mostly err on the side of cautious understatement - grow more alarmed by worsening climate change impacts including heatwaves, droughts and melting ice, an unfamiliar piece of punctuation is creeping into their work: the exclamation mark.

"SOS! Summer of smoke" reads the title of one study referenced in a flagship series of reports by the United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) released this year. Another trumpets, "Too hot to help!".

Climate protesters have long deployed the punctuation on banners urging "Climate Action Now!" or warning "There is no planet B!".

Activists hope that exclamation marks, by stirring visceral feelings to match scientific findings about the deteriorating state of the planet, can spur greater efforts to cut the greenhouse gas emissions heating it up.

"It's about emotions - this affects all our lives," said Nuala Gathercole Lam, a spokeswoman for the Extinction Rebellion (XR) activist group in Britain. But, she warned, "exclamation marks can seem like over-labouring" an already-clear message.

XR's global website starts with the sober sentence: "This is an emergency", followed by a lower section urging "Act Now!".

Some researchers say the appearance of the exclamation point in scientific work reflects growing concern about rising temperatures among the wider public.

Adeniyi Asiyani, an assistant professor at the University of British Columbia, wrote a report cited by the IPCC entitled: "'I don't get this climate stuff!' Making sense of climate change among the corporate middle class in Lagos".

He drew the emphatic punctuation from a Nigerian businessman he spoke to, who expressed frustration that climate solutions are hard to understand.

"I won't be surprised if more exclamation is being used ... deliberately to create a sense of urgency and a sense of fear too," said Asiyani.

"I personally have my reservations about (doing it) - but that's what I see around increasingly now," he added in emailed comments.

Sober science

The IPCC's February report on adapting to the impacts of climate change refers to more than a dozen studies that include an exclamation mark in the headline, up from just four in the previous - albeit shorter - IPCC science assessment in 2014.

The IPCC, whose findings must be approved by all governments ranging from oil-producing OPEC nations to climate-vulnerable Pacific island states, has no specific guidance to authors on using exclamation marks, said spokesman Andrej Mahecic.

As a rule, IPCC reports avoid using "!", except when citing titles of other scientific studies.

But a single exclamation mark slipped into Chapter 2 of the February IPCC report in the sentence: "Hotter temperatures also increase mosquito bite rate, parasite development, and viral replication!".

Editors spotted the rogue "!" and it will be deleted in the final version, said Camille Parmesan, a coordinating lead author of the chapter who is affiliated with France's National Centre for Scientific Research, the University of Plymouth and the University of Texas at Austin.

"No, generally exclamation marks are not used in IPCC (!!!!!)," she wrote in an email interview.

There is also some unease over the "!" creeping into scientific papers, with many journals strictly limiting its use, fearing it comes across as self-defeating shrieking.

The style guide for the respected journal Science says: "The exclamation point is rarely justified in scientific writing except as a factorial symbol in mathematics." "Science may allow an exclamation point as part of a direct quotation, but we don't use exclamation points for emphasis," added Meagan Phelan, who leads the magazine's media relations.

The Nature scientific journals are also restrictive.

"Our general guidance is to avoid exclamation marks," said Lisa Boucher, press manager for publisher Springer Nature.

Trend-setting Trump

By contrast, the attention-grabbing punctuation abounds in social media posts, as users express emotion from horror to enthusiasm.

An unlikely role model for climate scientists, former US President Donald Trump sprinkled his tweets with "!"s before he was suspended from the Twitter platform in 2021.

During a cold spell in January 2019, he asked: "What the hell is going on with Global Warming? Please come back fast, we need you!"

Nowadays, even traditionally more cautious tweeters are starting to adopt the "!" to get their point across.

With the severe summer heatwaves besetting Europe, UN Climate Change in July included a yellow warning sign emoji, containing an exclamation mark, in a tweet saying that rising temperatures increased the risks of death from heat stress.

"We are ramping up the rhetoric a bit because the situation is increasingly dramatic. Exclamation marks are increasingly appropriate," said John Hay, head of content at UN Climate Change, adding that its Twitter account rarely uses "!".

Liuba Belkin, an associate professor at Lehigh University in Pennsylvania who studies social psychology, wrote an article referenced in the 2022 IPCC report about how employees in shops in Eastern Europe are less likely to help clients in energy-draining heatwaves.

Her study "Too hot to help! Exploring the impact of ambient temperature on helping", was published in the European Journal of Social Psychology.

"I try to use meta-communication (exclamation points, smiley faces, etc) as much as possible to enrich and more accurately convey the intended message," she said by email.

Still, many are in two minds about liberally sprinkling writing with "!".

Danny Rubin, a US author of books on business writing, said exclamation points are over-used, weakening their value, and are rarely justified to convey "excitement or urgency".

"As in all things, moderation is key," he added.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

[Gov't earmarks P1.6 trillion to pay debts next year](#)

By: Ted Cordero

The government is allocating more than P1 trillion next year to settle maturing local and foreign debt as well as its corresponding interests, according to budget documents.

Under the Budget Expenditures and Sources of Financing for Fiscal Year 2023, the government is earmarking P1.601 trillion for debt servicing.

The amount includes P1.019 trillion in principal repayments and P582.32 billion in interest payments.

Sought for comment, Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno said that principal payments are covered by a bond sinking fund, or money maintained to pay off debts.

Nonetheless, Diokno said that interest payments of P582 billion as percentage of the P5.268-trillion 2023 budget is 11.5%, "which is manageable."

"About three decades ago interest payments as percent of the budget was about one-third. Those were the hard times," Diokno told GMA News Online.

The debt servicing expenditures next year is programmed to be higher than the P1.263 trillion earmarked to settle debts this year.

Broken down, the P1.6 trillion set aside for debt settlement will be for P1.348 trillion in domestic debts and P253.775 billion in foreign loans.

In particular, the P1.348 trillion programmed for domestic debts will settle maturing P20 billion worth of Treasury Bills, P671.3 billion of Fixed Rate Treasury Bonds, P59.18 billion Benchmark Bonds, P565.25 billion Retail Treasury Bonds, P26.878 billion Onshore Dollar Bonds, P2.14 billion Agrarian Reform Bonds, and P2 billion Central Bank-Board of Liquidators (CB-BoL) Bonds.

For foreign debt, the amount earmarked for repayment is comprised of P131.312 billion in interest payment and P122.464 billion for principal amortization for loans incurred by the national government through various loan deals with several creditors such as the Asian Development Bank, the Japan International Cooperation Agency, and the US Agency for International Development, among others.

The automatic appropriations for debt servicing or payment of principal and interest on public debt is provided under Presidential Decree No. 1177, issued by late former President Ferdinand Marcos Sr. in 1977.

Under Section 31 of PD 1177, “All expenditures for (a) personnel retirement premiums, government service insurance, and other similar fixed expenditures, (b) principal and interest on public debt, (c) national government guarantees of obligations which are drawn upon, are automatically appropriated.”

In a statement sent to GMA News Online, Budget Secretary Amenah Pangandaman said that “debt-servicing is expected to stabilize and decline over the near term, consistent with the Marcos Jr. Administration’s fiscal consolidation plan of reducing national government (NG) debt-to-GDP ratio.”

“This plan is anchored on its medium-term fiscal framework (MTTF),” she said.

Biggest since 2011

Think tank IBON Foundation executive director Sonny Africa said that “P1.6-trillion in interest and principal payments on debt is the most the government has ever paid for debt service.”

Africa said it is equivalent to using 44 centavos out of every peso in revenues, “which is the biggest share of revenues going to debt service in 12 years, or since the 68 centavos being paid in 2011.”

Africa said that using so much of revenues to repay debt is counterproductive as “large share of government revenues [are] going to debt service instead of being spent domestically on urgent ayuda, education, health, and MSMEs (micro, small, and medium enterprises).”

“The government can consider negotiating a suspension or even cancellation of debt payments to development agencies like the ADB and World Bank, or to the bilateral creditors of friendly governments like Japan, US and China —this can free up over P90 billion in 2023 alone which can be used more productively,” Africa said.

Sought for comment, Rizal Commercial Banking Corporation chief economist Michael Ricafort said that “the increase in debt servicing/payments in the national budget may already reflect the need to pay the large additional debt incurred during the pandemic (P2 trillion per year or a total of P5 trillion since 2020).”

“The increased debt payments would be part of the sacrifice to be able to better manage the country’s debts/overall fiscal performance, bring down the debt-to-GDP ratio to below the international threshold of 60%, and make it more sustainable over the long-term term and for the coming generations,” Ricafort said.

Likewise, Union Bank of the Philippines lead economist Ruben Carlo Asuncion said that higher debt service allocation is “precisely the bitter pill that our policymakers have to face with the bigger debt stock. Budgeting is difficult and the law provides that we pay for our debt accordingly.”

As of end-June, the last month in office of the Duterte administration, the national government's debt stock amounted to P12.79 trillion, as the previous administration embarked on a borrowing spree to boost state coffers to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic—providing cash aids to vulnerable sectors, procuring vaccines to immunize the population, among others—as it implemented hard lockdowns to control the spread of the disease, causing economic activity to contract which affected state revenue collection.

The Marcos administration is targeting to bring down the debt-to-gross domestic product (GDP) ratio below 60% by 2025.

As of end-June, the debt-to-GDP ratio—a measure of size of the government's debt relative to the economy—stood at 62.1%, above the internationally recommended ceiling of 60%.

Priority sectors

The Budget chief also emphasized that “debt servicing shall not hamper the implementation of the government's priority programs and projects.”

Despite the higher allocation for debt settlement, there were double-digit increases in the allocations for education, infrastructure, health, social protection, and agriculture in the Department of Budget and Management's (DBM) proposed 2023 budget.

The funding for the education sector, which by law receives the largest share of the budget, increased to P852.8 billion from P788.6 billion this year.

Majority of the amount will go to the Department of Education (DepEd)—currently headed by Vice President Sara Duterte-Carpio—with P710.6 billion, up 12.20% from P633.3 billion in 2022.

Aside from the DepEd, funding for the sector also covers the state universities and colleges (SUCs), the Commission on Higher Education (CHED), and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA).

The proposed budget also allocates a total of P1.196 trillion for the government's infrastructure programs for the year.

This includes P718.4 billion for the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), while the Department of Transportation (DOTr) will receive P17.1 billion or 120.4% higher than its P75.8-billion budget in 2022.

Following two years of lockdowns brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the DBM proposed a 10.4% budget increase for the health sector to P296.3 billion.

The amount covers the budgets of the Department of Health (DOH) and the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PHIC), with P29 billion for the purchase of drugs,

medicines, and vaccines, and over P19 billion for the salary and benefits of healthcare workers.

Some P23 billion was also allocated to the Health Facilities Enhancement Program (HFEP) to finance the acquisition of medical equipment and the construction, rehabilitation, and upgrading of health stations, health units, and health facilities.

The DBM also proposed a 39.2% increase in the budget of the Department of Agriculture (DA)—currently headed by Marcos—to P184.1 billion.

This covers P29.5 billion for irrigation services, in line with Marcos' directive to prioritize the agriculture sector and transform it into a main driver of growth and employment.

The DBM allocated P197 billion for the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), as the administration seeks to continue programs such as the Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program, among others.

Some P18.4 billion of the Department of Labor and Employment's (DOLE) P26.2-billion budget will also be used for the Livelihood and Emergency Employment Program.

Aside from these, the administration allotted P453.1 billion for climate change expenditures, in cooperation with the Climate Change Commission.

There was also a 9% increase in the Department of National Defense (DND) budget to P240.7 billion, with the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Fund at P31 billion.

Pangandaman said that almost 90% of the budget “are available for the delivery of public services, programs and projects, which comprises economic and social expenditures, personnel services and general public services.”

“As emphasized by the President in his budget message, this administration shall endeavor to attain its macroeconomic and fiscal objectives by working towards a strong domestic demand, coupled with a comprehensive but harmonized socioeconomic agenda, economic resilience, fiscal discipline and investor confidence and continued favorable sovereign credit ratings,” she said.

“Lastly, allow us to note that debt incurred in recent years have been put into good use, such as on productive investments in infrastructure and human capital, as well as in recovery and health programs amid the pandemic. Debts incurred for the realization of projects are not plain and simple government expenses. They are investments that are made for the purpose of realizing a minimum required economic return,” she added.

Unprogrammed appropriations

The proposed P5.268-trillion 2023 budget also contains P588,162,480,000 unprogrammed appropriations.

Unprogrammed funds may be tapped if there are excess revenue collections, new revenue collections or those arising from new tax and non-tax sources, and approved loans for foreign assisted projects.

“Release of funds shall be subject to the submission of a Special Budget pursuant to Section 35, Chapter 5, Book VI of E.O. No. 292, s. 1987 and the following: (i) for excess revenue collections, issuance of a certification that remitted collections to the Bureau of the Treasury from a particular revenue source has exceeded the corresponding revenue collections target; or (ii) for new revenue collections, issuance of a certification that remitted collections identified were not part of, nor included, in, the original revenue collection targets reflected,” according to budget documents from the DBM.

“In the case of approved loans for foreign-assisted projects, the issuance of SARO (Special Allotment Release Order) covering the loan proceeds shall be subject to submission by the agency concerned of a Special Budget, together with the physical and financial plan, project profile, and a copy of the perfected loan agreement, as approved in the accordance with pertinent laws, rules, regulations, and guidelines issued thereon.”

TYPHOON FLORITA UPDATES:

ABS-CBN NEWS

[Storm forces schools to shut day after reopening](#)

By Agence France-Presse

Schools were ordered shut across the northern Philippines Tuesday -- a day after many resumed in-person learning for the first time since COVID-19 hit -- as torrential rain and strong winds pounded the main island of the archipelago.

Severe tropical storm Florita (international name Ma-on) struck the northeast coast of Luzon around mid-morning, raking the largely agricultural region with gusts of up to 185 kilometers (115 miles) an hour, the state weather service said.

Two people were injured by falling trees in the mountainous province of Cagayan where intense rain caused the main river and its tributaries to swell overnight, provincial disaster official Ruelie Rasping said.

"We're currently being hit by strong winds and heavy rain. The Cagayan river is rising," Rasping told AFP.

The provincial capital Tuguegarao was drenched with 98 millimetres (3.9 inches) of "torrential" rain over a three-hour period after the storm made landfall, an official at the state weather bureau told AFP.

Florita was expected to sweep in a northwest direction across the country and head out over the South China Sea late Tuesday or early Wednesday.

Some low-lying areas of the capital Manila were left in knee-deep floodwater, as the storm intensified the southwest monsoon.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. suspended classes and work in government offices in the national capital region and surrounding provinces until Wednesday, his spokeswoman said.

It followed similar orders issued by provinces in Florita's path.

The Philippines, ranked among the most vulnerable nations to the impacts of climate change, is hit by an average of 20 storms every year.

Florita was the first significant one since April when tropical storm Megi unleashed landslides and flooding that killed more than 200 people mostly on the central island of Leyte.

Florita struck a day after the Philippines reopened classrooms for face-to-face lessons, more than two years after the pandemic hit.

CNN PHILIPPINES

Severe tropical storm 'Florita' exits PH area of responsibility

By CNN Philippines Staff

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, August 24) - Severe Tropical Storm "Florita" accelerated westward and left the Philippine area of responsibility (PAR) Wednesday morning, the state weather bureau reported in its 5 a.m. advisory.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) lowered tropical cyclone wind signals and warned of moderate to heavy rainfall.

Signal No. 1 is raised over Batanes, Babuyan Islands, the western portion of mainland Cagayan (Claveria, Santa Praxedes, Sanchez-Mira, Pamplona, Abulug, Ballesteros, Allacapan, Aparri, Lasam, Santo Niño, Rizal), Apayao, Abra, the western portion of Kalinga (Balbalan, Pasil, Tinglayan), the western portion of Mountain Province (Bauko, Tadian, Besao, Sagada, Sabangan, Bontoc, Sadanga), the northern and western portions of Benguet (Mankayan, Bakun, Kibungan, Kapangan, Tublay, La Trinidad, Sablan, Tuba, Baguio City, Atok), Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, and La Union.

Florita's winds weakened to 95 kilometers per hour (kph) and gusts of up to 115 kph as it left the PAR.

PAGASA said moderate to heavy rains will still persist this morning over the Ilocos Region, Abra, and Benguet. Light to moderate with at times heavy rains will be experienced over the rest of the Cordillera Administrative Region and over the Ilocos Region until the afternoon.

Classes and office work in some areas remain suspended.

PAGASA said the southwest monsoon or "habagat" will also bring rains over Western Visayas and Mimaropa in the next 24 hours.

"In Metro Manila and the rest of Luzon, we are going to expect a generally fair weather condition since the severe tropical storm is still moving over the West Philippine Sea," PAGASA weather forecaster Raymond Ordinario told CNN Philippines' New Day.

Florita moves westward throughout the forecast period. Further away from the country, it is seen to re-intensify and reach typhoon category as it heads towards the southern portion of China, PAGASA also said in its bulletin.

FRANCE 24

[Storm forces Philippine schools to shut day after reopening](#)

Schools were ordered shut across the northern Philippines Tuesday -- a day after many resumed in-person learning for the first time since Covid-19 hit -- as torrential rain and strong winds pounded the main island of the archipelago.

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Some low-lying areas of the capital Manila were left in knee-deep floodwater, as the storm intensified the southwest monsoon.

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It followed similar orders issued by provinces in Ma-on's path.

The Philippines, ranked among the most vulnerable nations to the impacts of climate change, is hit by an average of 20 storms every year.

Ma-on was the first significant one since April when tropical storm Megi unleashed landslides and flooding that killed more than 200 people mostly on the central island of Leyte.

Ma-on struck a day after the Philippines reopened classrooms for face-to-face lessons, more than two years after the pandemic hit.

NDRRMC

NDRRMC SitRep No. 3 Florita

Reported 24 Aug 2022 8AM

Affected population: 1,344 families; 4,646 persons in 3 regions, 8 provinces, 30 cities and municipalities, 60 barangays

Preemptive evacuation: 1,013 persons from Reg II, CAR

Casualties - 0

Related accidents - 37 (vehicular, rain-induced landslides, flooding)

Reported damages:

Houses - 0

Agriculture - 0

Infrastructure - 0

Other assets - 0

State of Calamity - 0

Transport - Affected roads (17) bridges (7) seaports (9)

Power - 13 localities affected (38% restoration to date)

Water supply - 1 locality affected (0% restored)

Suspension of class in 275 localities, and work in 98 localities

Total assistance provided: PHP 915,176.5

Note: SitRep source are reports of LGUs. NDRRMC expects more reports today, for inclusion in SitRep 4 tomorrow.

RAPPLER

[Severe Tropical Storm Florita leaves PAR but rain, winds linger](#)

By Acor Arceo

Severe Tropical Storm Florita (Ma-on) exited the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR) before dawn on Wednesday, August 24, but Signal No. 1 remains raised in parts of Northern Luzon and rain will continue until afternoon.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said in its 5 am bulletin on Wednesday that Florita was already 335 kilometers west of Calayan, Cagayan, over the West Philippine Sea.

The severe tropical storm accelerated as it left PAR, moving west northwest at 30 kilometers per hour from the previous 25 km/h.

It is heading for the southern part of China, where it is expected to make landfall on Thursday morning or early afternoon, August 25.

At the time of Florita's exit, it had maximum sustained winds of 95 km/h and gustiness of up to 115 km/h. Inside PAR, its peak intensity was 110 km/h.

By Wednesday evening, Florita might re-intensify and reach typhoon status, PAGASA said.

Florita made landfall in Maconacon, Isabela, at 10:30 am on Tuesday, August 23, bringing torrential rain and strong winds. It then crossed Isabela, Cagayan, Apayao, and Ilocos Norte, before emerging over the West Philippine Sea on the same day.

PAGASA warned that rain from Florita will persist in the following areas:

Wednesday morning

Moderate to heavy rain

- Ilocos Region
- Abra
- Benguet
- Light to moderate rain, with at times heavy rain

Light to moderate rain, with at times heavy rain

- rest of Cordillera Administrative Region

Wednesday afternoon

Light to moderate rain, with at times heavy rain

- Ilocos Region

The weather bureau added that while the rain will “gradually weaken throughout the day,” scattered floods and landslides remain possible.

The southwest monsoon or hanging habagat, which is still being enhanced by Florita, will also affect the western parts of Central Luzon and Southern Luzon on Wednesday. Scattered rain and thunderstorms are likely in these areas:

- Bataan
- Zambales
- Oriental Mindoro
- Occidental Mindoro
- Metro Manila

Meanwhile, here are the areas under Signal No. 1 as of 5 am on Wednesday, still experiencing strong winds:

- Batanes
- Babuyan Islands
- western part of mainland Cagayan (Claveria, Santa Praxedes, Sanchez-Mira, Pamplona, Abulug, Ballesteros, Allacapan, Aparri, Lasam, Santo Niño, Rizal)
- Apayao
- Abra
- western part of Kalinga (Balbalan, Pasil, Tinglayan)
- western part of Mountain Province (Bauko, Tadian, Besao, Sagada, Sabangan, Bontoc, Sadanga)
- northern and western parts of Benguet (Mankayan, Bakun, Kibungan, Kapangan, Tublay, La Trinidad, Sablan, Tuba, Baguio City, Atok)
- Ilocos Norte
- Ilocos Sur
- La Union

The highest tropical cyclone wind signal that had been raised due to Florita was Signal No. 3.

Gusts are also expected on Wednesday in these areas:

- Mimaropa
- Metro Manila
- Cavite
- Quezon
- Bulacan
- Pampanga
- Pangasinan
- Aurora
- areas in Cordillera Administrative Region and Cagayan Valley not under Signal No. 1

PAGASA also issued a new gale warning at 5 am on Wednesday, saying that waters are rough to very rough in the seaboards listed below. Waves will be 2.8 to 5 meters high.

- northern, western, and eastern seaboards of Northern Luzon
- seaboards of Central Luzon

The weather bureau advised fishing boats and other small vessels not to sail, and larger vessels to watch out for big waves.

Florita was the Philippines' sixth tropical cyclone for 2022. It hit the country during the first week of classes for public schools.

=END=