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By: Ariel Rojas

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By: Beatriz Marie D. Cruz

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By: Diwa Guinigundo

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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By: Anna Leah Gonzales

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By: Roy C. Mabasa

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THE MANILA TIMES

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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[\[Opinion\] Plastic is in the air](#)

By: Eunille Santos

Every breath we take, every move we make – plastic’s watching us. It might sound like a riff on a classic song, but it’s a terrifying reality. In today’s world, plastic pollution is no longer confined to the oceans, beaches or landfills. It’s in the water we drink, the food we eat and even in the very air we breathe, and it’s sneaking into our lungs, one microplastic at a time.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

Yagi intensifies into a super typhoon

By: Ariel Rojas

Tropical cyclone Yagi, known as Enteng locally, intensified into a super typhoon on Thursday morning over the South China Sea, state weather agency PAGASA said.

As of 8 a.m., Yagi was packing winds of 195 kilometers per hour and up to 240 kph gusts, PAGASA said.

The Yagi-enhanced southwest monsoon or habagat will continue to bring up to torrential rains over the western sections of Luzon, including Metro Manila this Thursday.

The bad weather caused floods in some Metro Manila roads and prompted the cancellation of several flights.

Storm Enteng left a trail of destruction in the Philippines, with damage to agriculture reaching P350.85 million, according to the Department of Agriculture.

Landslides and flash floods caused by Enteng killed at least 15 people while 21 were still missing, the Office of Civil Defense said Wednesday.

Those who perished included a person who suffered head trauma after being hit by a wall that collapsed, a pregnant woman killed by a landslide, a man who was electrocuted as the floodwaters rose, and a baby who drowned.

BUSINESS WORLD

[ADB to boost infrastructure support for Philippines under six-year plan](#)

By: Beatriz Marie D. Cruz

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Thursday said it would boost investments in human development, infrastructure and disaster resilience in the next six years to help the Philippines achieve inclusive growth.

Under its Country Partnership Strategy 2024-2029, the multilateral lender committed to leverage partnerships, increase co-financing and help tailor-fit solutions based on the country's needs.

The ADB also cited economic competitiveness and nature-based development and disaster resilience as priorities under its new country strategy.

"These priorities are complemented by crosscutting initiatives that promote digital transformation, gender equality and improved governance and institutional capacity," it said in a report.

Under its partnership strategy, the ADB would also focus on developing the country's economic corridors and regional centers, ADB Country Director for the Philippines Pavit Ramachandran said.

Last year, the Philippines got \$4.5 billion (P252.8 billion) in sovereign and nonsovereign assistance from the ADB. From this year until 2029, the loans are expected to hit at least \$24 billion, it said.

"We expect to sustain a similar level of annual financial support during the new Country Partnership Strategy," Mr. Ramachandran said in the report.

This covers project preparation and feasibility studies for the government's big-ticket investments and transaction advisory services for public-private partnership (PPP) projects.

The ADB cited the Philippines' readiness to become an upper middle-income country, but climate change, poverty and income inequality could dampen its growth prospects.

The government aims to achieve upper middle-income status by 2025. Under the World Bank's income classification data, the country has remained a lower middle-income economy.

The country also remains vulnerable to external shocks that could affect state revenues, trade and commodity prices.

To combat this, the ADB will focus on disaster financing and investments in flood mitigation. It will also seek to improve food security through agribusiness and logistics development to cushion supply pressures.

ADB's assistance will also support investments in energy and digital infrastructure, Mr. Ramachandran said.

The multilateral lender will also work with the government to address right-of-way and resettlement issues to avoid delays in infrastructure projects.

The lender will also support the development of climate-smart infrastructure, promote a low-carbon economy and push the sustainable use of the country's natural resources.

"The country's high vulnerability to climate change, which affects the poorest of the poor, and persistent poverty and income inequality, need to be urgently addressed to ensure the growth trajectory is sustained and will not be derailed despite disasters and shocks," Mr. Ramachandran said.

The Philippines has the highest natural disaster risk index in the world at 46.86, according to the 2023 World Risk Index.

To address poverty, the ADB will increase support for quality education and healthcare, social protection, rural development and employment.

The bank will also promote PPPs in transport, clean energy, agriculture and healthcare, and extend the use of PPPs to local governments.

It also said it would push widening credit access for small and medium enterprises and support digital transformation and ease of doing business, Mr. Ramachandran said.

Last year, the ADB was the country's second-biggest source of official development assistance at \$11.43 billion.

The government targets 6-7% economic growth this year and 6.7-7.5% next year. It also expects growth to average 6.5-8% through 2028.

MANILA BULLETIN

[Opinion] Disaster risk management and SDG goals

By: Diwa Guinigundo

While we were rocked by the news of alleged irregularities in the use of confidential funds in one government office, it was as shocking to know of another irregularity in the procurement of laptops in the Department of Education, of all departments. As if these were not enough, the Commission on Audit flagged the same department over its feeding program. Audit teams found “there were either unsanitary packing, questionable expiry dates, or pests and molds on the bread meant for students.” The program was funded up to ₱5.69 billion.

In the last two weeks, the Filipino people also learned that evading jail term and getting away with it, at least until yesterday, is not only for the movies. The suspended Mayor of Bamban, Tarlac Alice Guo succeeded in leaving the Philippines presumably through the southern back door without any trace of departure from the country. Her lawyers and notary public continued to maintain “she is still very much around.” Her arrest yesterday by Indonesian authorities proves they were not exactly truthful.

Again, our law enforcement authorities have more homework to do when fugitive televangelist Apollo Quiboloy and his five co-accused in a human trafficking case remain at large for months after a Pasig regional trial court (RTC) issued the arrest warrant. The authorities also failed to serve another arrest warrant against Quiboloy subsequently issued by a Davao RTC over a sexual abuse case.

And yes, while the directive to sweep all “sleeping” funds of government owned and controlled corporations (GOCCs) has been justified as prudent, one that minimizes the need for higher taxes or more borrowings, this broadsheet reported last Friday the successful launch of public offshore commercial borrowing of \$2.5 billion, or at ₱57 to a dollar, more than ₱142 billion. For the first half of 2024 alone, it was also reported that the country’s foreign borrowings already aggregated ₱267.4 billion.

Which brings us to the Asian Development Bank (ADB) from where another \$500 million is expected, or around ₱28.5 billion. This loan is dedicated to climate finance and is part of the \$10 billion commitment announced by ADB in Dubai last year. That’s ₱570 billion aimed at improving the climate resilience of local communities in the Philippines. Investments are expected to go to public transport, clean energy, disaster risk management and social protection.

With dwindling fiscal space, we have no option but to pin tremendous hope on this program loan. So far this year, we have received two deafening wake-up calls from the country's third tropical cyclone this year, typhoon Carina which literally punished us last July 24, and tropical storm Enteng that caused no small amounts of floods and landslides in Luzon this week.

Contrary to the allegations of some, the problem in disaster management is not the number of appropriate weather advisories issued by, in the case of the Philippines, PAGASA. PAGASA continues to monitor these types of weather developments 24 hours a day. Execution of PAR plus five remains, meaning, the advisory covers the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR) but expanded by five degrees in case a tropical cyclone develops beyond PAR.

As a global community, it is our lack of sensitivity and response to the impacts of climate change including what the ADB and the United Nations in their recent report called "slow and sudden onset of weather events" that are compromising our ability, and those of other countries, in meeting the global Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). While some steady progress has been made in enhancing food security, mitigating malnutrition and improving public health, more progress is absolutely required. The challenges of climate change, health crisis and the scourge of inflation are wreaking havoc on agricultural and labor productivity, loss of jobs and displacement of people. As a result, our progress in promoting food security, and reducing poverty is severely hampered.

We need to do more. We need to expedite the disposition of cases involving POGO champions and their escapades, or the unmitigated incompetence or lack of accountability of some in authority. We should avoid dissipating scarce public resources in favor of non-essential but favored public projects.

Thus, the report of the ADB and the United Nations' Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) and the United Nations Development Programme, "People and Planet: Addressing the Interlinked Challenges of Climate Change, Poverty and Hunger in Asia and the Pacific," released last February 2024 could not have stressed that message enough. Incremental progress, that which we are only capable of, is considered many times inadequate in achieving the SDGs of 2015 — zero poverty, zero hunger, good health and well-being, quality education, among others.

The problem in many countries, if not all of them, is that "global and regional policies do not adequately support the integration of climate priorities with efforts to address poverty and hunger." We put a wedge between economic development and health, for

instance, or disaster risk reduction and poverty and income inequality, for that matter. Some governments are willing to forego strong promotion of public health or quality education in favor of petty local infrastructure projects or expansion of government plantilla positions even as digital solutions are readily available.

Before it is too late, we need to put in our spirit that weather shocks continue to be more severe over the years, that their burdens are unevenly distributed to the disadvantage of the impoverished nations and peoples. No less than UN Resident Representative Gustavo Gonzalez who declared that the Asia-Pacific region, the Philippines included, “is not on track to achieve any of the SDGs.” If this statement from the United Nations two years ago is to be believed, SDGs would only be achieved in 2065 or 40 years from today.

In fact, the Philippine Statistics Authority earlier this year reported that for us, less than 20 percent of SDG indicators were on track, with nearly 30 percent regressing. With our poor capacity to roll with the weather punches, we cannot say more than that for our efforts to reduce poverty and hunger, as well as achieve quality public health and education.

While we spend time on other things...

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

[Opinion] Overpopulation as main culprit for climate change

By: Reynald Alfred A. Recede

The unprecedented increase in the country's population has a lot of impact on the lives of many Filipinos. The effect is seen in the economy, geopolitical concerns, education, and the serious results of climate change, the most pressing issue at this time.

Climate change, or the long-term change in the climate of a place, has been brought about by global warming. This is the rise in the Earth's temperature due to the increase in the concentration of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere like carbon dioxide, methane, and chlorofluorocarbons. In our country, the devastating effects of climate change have been heavily blamed on the gas emissions of developed countries, and the poor flooding systems because of bureaucracy and corruption in the government.

Another important factor often missed is the lack of discipline among us Filipinos. This is apparent in how Filipinos dispose their trash. In the recent Supertyphoon "Carina" and Typhoon "Enteng," photos and videos abound of garbage and other waste materials floating in floodwaters or collecting on the streets once floods have subsided.

Unfortunately, this lack of discipline in throwing our garbage in designated garbage bins or trash collection areas means a waste of the money put into building the best and most efficient flooding systems. In other developed countries like Singapore, if you fail to follow laws on waste disposal, you will be fined or apprehended. The strict implementation of the law has resulted in the public's adherence to set rules and regulations and to waste being disposed of in proper designated areas.

The other important factor behind flooding is the country's failure to control the increase in its population. An increase in population means more consumers and a rise in demand for basic commodities that are often packaged in plastic and disposable materials. This, I believe, is where the true problem lies. If only we can control the increase in population, we can also address the very source of pollution, which are the products that we produce for the consumption of an increasing number of people.

As an educator, let me ask: Can we still win the war against climate change? Of course! However, although our increasing population is a major cause of flooding from the heavy rains brought about by climate change, we cannot just decimate our population. That would make us like Thanos, the mad titan in Marvel movies, who believes that genocide is the answer to protect his world.

I believe we can still mitigate climate change by doing the following: First, we can educate Filipinos on the repercussions of a huge population in relation to climate change. Next, we can intensify a course program on climate change if this is not yet integrated in some subjects in junior high school. Intensifying and making the education program more relevant and updated will help our learners see the importance of waste reduction in saving the planet. Third, cooperation between government and the private sector is necessary to set up facilities that will encourage the recycling of products. This in itself is a response to the call of the United Nations for people to create sustainable solutions to fight climate change.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[ADB earmarks \\$24B for PH lending program for 2024-2029](#)

By: Anna Leah Gonzales

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) said lending for the Philippines is expected to reach USD24 billion between 2024 and 2029, as the government ramps up projects and programs to sustain growth and boost the country's resilience against the effects of climate change.

The indicative pipeline is in line with the priorities identified in ADB's newly-launched country partnership strategy (CPS) for 2024 to 2029 that sets a transformative agenda for the Philippines in the next six years.

"Last year we provided \$4.5 billion in both sovereign and non-sovereign assistance, and we expect to sustain a similar level of annual financial support during the new CPS. This is an indicative amount which is subject to annual review with the government," ADB Country Director for the Philippines Pavit Ramachandran said in a statement.

"Our support includes project preparation and feasibility studies for the government's big-ticket investments under the Infrastructure Preparation and Innovation Facility as well as transaction advisory services for PPP (Public-Private Partnership) projects," he said.

The CPS will focus on key areas such as human development, economic competitiveness and quality infrastructure, as well as nature-based development and disaster resilience.

Under the new strategy, the ADB will also intensify support for initiatives that benefit low-income households, promote regional economic growth corridors through flagship infrastructure investments, and shift focus to emerging sectors like clean energy, blue economy, and nature-based investments.

The CPS also aligns with the Philippines' development goals, reinforcing the government's reform momentum in areas such as private sector development, public investment, and social inclusion.

The ADB will also work to embed climate actions across its engagements and investment plans in the country.

Under the new CPS, the ADB will catalyze private sector-led development by supporting policy and regulatory reforms, strengthening of markets and investment pipelines, and expanding funding availability.

“This new strategy will further a flourishing collaboration to support the country in achieving a prosperous future that leaves no one behind, particularly as it faces the dual challenges of accelerating economic growth and addressing persistent poverty and income inequalities,” Ramachandran said.

“We are leveraging our full suite of support modalities—financial and nonfinancial—to deliver transformative impact, ensuring that the benefits of growth reach all Filipinos, particularly the most vulnerable,” he said.

POLITIKO

[New Zealand Group Visits UPLB To Strengthen Climate Smart Farming Ties](#)

By: Roy C. Mabasa

A New Zealand delegation led by Ambassador Catherine McIntosh visited the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) last week to review progress on the ASEAN Climate-Smart Agriculture (CSA) Initiative, a New Zealand-backed project aimed at reducing greenhouse gas emissions in agriculture.

The visit underscores the deepening collaboration between the two countries as they work to promote sustainable farming practices in the face of climate change.

The delegation, which included officials from the New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries and the New Zealand Greenhouse Gas Research Centre (NZAGRC), met with UPLB Chancellor Jose V. Camacho Jr. and scientists from the Dairy Training and Research Institute (DTRI).

Discussions focused on strategies to enhance food security while minimizing the environmental impact of livestock farming, a key contributor to agricultural emissions.

Experts Dr. David Pacheco and Dr. Roger Hegarty from NZAGRC, along with Matthew Johnson from the New Zealand Ministry for Primary Industries, joined the talks, highlighting shared goals in emission reduction and livestock development.

Meetings with leading Philippine scientists, including Dr. Arnel Del Barrio, Dr. Amado Angeles, Mr. Gerard Guadayo, Dr. Phoebe Llantada, and Ms. Charity Castillo, emphasized the commitment of both nations to tackling emissions through science and innovation.

The delegation toured UPLB's Headbox Respiration Facility at the DTRI Farm, a critical resource in the development of a Tier 2 greenhouse gas inventory for cattle emissions in the Philippines.

The facility collects data essential for refining the measurement of livestock emissions, a key step in the country's broader efforts to meet its climate targets.

"People are at the heart of this Initiative. Empowering people to engage and advocate for this Initiative is key to its success," Ambassador McIntosh said, praising the progress of the project and the dedication of Philippine partners.

The delegation also engaged with representatives from the Southeast Asian Regional Centre for Graduate Study and Research in Agriculture (SEARCA) and the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI), expanding the scope of regional collaboration.

The ASEAN CSA Initiative is designed to cut greenhouse gas emissions from livestock, particularly in regions vulnerable to climate change.

Agriculture accounts for about nine percent of the Philippine economy, with ruminant livestock contributing a significant share of agricultural emissions.

The initiative, funded by the New Zealand government with technical support from NZAGRC, aims to provide more accurate measurements of these emissions, supporting the Philippines' commitment to reduce greenhouse gases by 75 percent by 2030 as part of the Paris Agreement.

New Zealand's investment in the CSA Initiative, amounting to over NZ\$1.6 million (PHP55.4 million), reflects its commitment to innovative and collaborative solutions to global environmental challenges.

THE MANILA TIMES

[World pumping out 57M tons of plastic pollution a year](#)

The world creates 57 million tons of plastic pollution every year and spreads it from the deepest oceans to the highest mountaintop to the inside of people's bodies, according to a new study that also said more than two-thirds of it comes from the Global South.

It's enough pollution each year — about 52 million metric tons — to fill New York City's Central Park with plastic waste as high as the Empire State Building, researchers at the University of Leeds in the United Kingdom said.

They examined waste produced on the local level at more than 50,000 cities and towns across the world for a study in Wednesday's journal Nature.

The study examined plastic that goes into the open environment, not plastic that goes into landfills or is properly burned.

For 15 percent of the world's population, government fails to collect and dispose of waste, the study's authors said — a big reason Southeast Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa produce the most plastic waste. That includes 255 million people in India, the study said.

Lagos, Nigeria, emitted the most plastic pollution of any city, study author Costas Velis, a Leeds environmental engineering professor, said. The other biggest plastic-polluting cities are New Delhi; Luanda, Angola; Karachi, Pakistan; and Al Qahirah, Egypt.

India leads the world in generating plastic pollution, producing 10.2 million tons a year (9.3 million metric tons), far more than double the next big-polluting nations, Nigeria and Indonesia.

China, often villainized for pollution, ranks fourth but is making tremendous strides in reducing waste, Velis said.

Other top plastic polluters are Pakistan, Bangladesh, Russia and Brazil. Those eight nations are responsible for more than half of the globe's plastic pollution, according to the study's data.

The United States ranks 90th in plastic pollution with more than 52,500 tons (47,600 metric tons), and the United Kingdom ranks 135th with nearly 5,100 tons (4,600 metric tons).

In 2022, most of the world's nations agreed to make the first legally binding treaty on plastics pollution, including in the oceans. Final treaty negotiations take place in South Korea in November.

The study used artificial intelligence to concentrate on plastics that were improperly burned — about 57 percent of the pollution — or just dumped. In both cases incredibly tiny microplastics, or nanoplastics, are what turn the problem from a visual annoyance at beaches and a marine life problem to a human health threat, Velis said.

Several studies this year have looked at how prevalent microplastics are in our drinking water and in people's tissue, such as hearts, brains and testicles, with doctors and scientists still not quite sure what it means in terms of human health threats.

"The big time bomb of microplastics are these microplastics released in the Global South mainly," Velis said. "We already have a huge dispersal problem. They are in the most remote places... the peaks of Everest, in the Mariana Trench in the ocean, in what we breathe and what we eat and what we drink."

Theresa Karlsson, science and technical advisor to International Pollutants Elimination Network, another coalition of advocacy groups on environment, health and waste issues, called the volume of pollution identified by the study "alarming" and said it shows the amount of plastics being produced today is "unmanageable."

But she said the study misses the significance of the global trade in plastic waste that has rich countries sending it to poor ones. The study said plastic waste trade is decreasing, with China banning waste imports.

But Karlsson said overall waste trade is increasing and likely plastics with it. She cited EU waste exports going from 110,000 tons (100,000 metric tons) in 2004 to 1.4 million tons (1.3 million metric tons) in 2021.

The United Nations projects that plastics production is likely to rise from about 440 million tons (400 million metric tons) a year to more than 1,200 million tons (1,100 million metric tons), saying "our planet is choking in plastic."

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[\[Opinion\] Plastic is in the air](#)

By: Eunille Santos

Every breath we take, every move we make – plastic’s watching us. It might sound like a riff on a classic song, but it’s a terrifying reality. In today’s world, plastic pollution is no longer confined to the oceans, beaches or landfills. It’s in the water we drink, the food we eat and even in the very air we breathe, and it’s sneaking into our lungs, one microplastic at a time.

Microplastics, those tiny fragments of plastic less than 5 millimeters in size, have infiltrated the air we breathe. A single-use plastic bag can take up to 1,000 years to degrade, and rather than disappearing entirely, it breaks down into micro- and nanoplastics that linger in the environment.

But plastic bags are just the tip of the iceberg. Microplastics are introduced into the environment from a variety of sources, including cosmetics, synthetic clothing, industrial processes and single-use plastic packaging. The cosmetics industry, one of the fastest-growing markets, is a major contributor. Microplastics are often found not only in packaging, but also within product formulas, particularly in items like facial scrubs and cleansers.

The over-production of plastics globally is a direct contributor to this crisis. Plastic production is expected to triple by 2050 if no intervention is done. Even worse, only nine percent of all plastics ever made has been recycled. The rest? It’s either sitting in landfills, polluting our oceans or breaking down into microplastics that are now circulating in the air we breathe.

Closer to home, the air in Metro Manila isn’t immune to microplastics. A local research reveals the presence of microplastics in the city’s air. This comes as no surprise. In the Philippines, where companies aggressively market sachets, the absence of meaningful policies to curb plastic production has led to an estimated 164 million sachets consumed daily, on top of the long list of other single-use plastics produced by corporations. These single-use packets are convenient but harmful for the environment, affecting our biodiversity, livelihood and health.

The health impacts of microplastics entering our bodies are still being understood, but the preliminary findings are nothing short of alarming. Aside from our lungs, microplastics have been found in our blood, heart, breastmilk and even placentas. A

potential health risk from micro- and nano-plastics is from the toxic chemicals present in plastic. Examples of chemical additives used in plastic are phthalates – known to be endocrine disruptors – which have been proven to affect human health.

The plastic crisis isn't just a local problem – it's a global emergency. As we celebrate the International Day of Clean Air for Blue Skies, it's crucial to recognize that the air we breathe should be free from pollution, including microplastics. Just as air knows no borders, the fight against plastic pollution must be a global effort. A strong and binding Global Plastics Treaty is essential to curb the production, use and disposal of plastics. We need international cooperation from world leaders to ensure that corporations are held accountable for their relentless plastic production, and that they drastically reduce their plastic production and switch to real, sustainable solutions like reuse and refill.

Much like we all breathe the same air, we – including the governments and corporations – share the same responsibility to protect it. If we want to continue taking deep, healthy breaths without the fear of inhaling plastics, we must invest in clean air now, and that includes transitioning from toxic single-use plastics to reuse and refill systems. As the final intergovernmental negotiation for the Global Plastics Treaty happens this November, let's urge world leaders to champion a strong treaty that addresses this crisis head-on, ensuring that our lungs, our communities and our planet, are free from plastic pollution.

Because every breath counts, so does every action we take.

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