

11 July 2023 Tuesday



DENR

NEWS ALERTS

NEWS CLIPPINGS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
AND
INITIATIVES
SERVICE



PAGE



UPPER



LOWER



PAGE 1

STORY



BANNER

STORY



EDITORIAL



CARTOON

07-11-23

TITLE: _____

PAGE: _____

DATE: _____

1/3

METRO HOUSEHOLDS FACE DAILY WATER SUPPLY CUT

STORY BY MEG J. ADONIS AND MARLON RAMOS

Starting July 12, taps will run dry for nine to 11 hours in Maynilad's service area as level of Angat reservoir in Bulacan continues to go down. Close to 600,000 customers in Metro Manila affected.

A2



STILL DROPPING Residents living near Angat Dam at Barangay San Lorenzo Hilltop in Norzagaray, Bulacan, are witnesses to the rapid drop in the level of the reservoir that supplies water to Metro Manila. Water level at Angat on Monday was 179.26 meters, down from 179.99 m on Saturday. —DAN WILLIAMS



2/3

FROM A1

**By Meg J. Adonis
and Marlon Ramos**
@Team_Inquirer

Starting Wednesday, more than half a million households within the concession area of water distributor Maynilad Water Services Inc. will have to endure service interruptions of as long as 11 hours as the water level of Angat Dam continues to drop amid the El Niño weather phenomenon.

On Monday, Maynilad water supply operations head Ronald Padua explained that around 591,000 customers in Caloocan, Navotas, Malabon, Valenzuela, Manila and Quezon cities will have their supply cut from 7 p.m. to 4 a.m.

However, this will be extended to 6 a.m. in some areas in Caloocan, Malabon and Quezon City due to their distance from Angat Dam.

"We have limited the implementation of the water service interruption to nighttime so that it won't be much of an inconvenience to our customers," Padua said, and assured the public that services would resume "on time."

He could not give an estimate of how long the service interruptions would last, saying

that this would largely depend on rainfall in the Ipo watershed.

This comes after elevation in Angat Dam on Monday morning further dipped to 179.26 meters from 179.99 m on Saturday, which is already below the 180-m minimum operating level at which water services are available 24/7.

Angat currently supplies 98 percent of potable water in Metro Manila through the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS).

Water from Angat—estimated at 4,000 million liters per day (MLD), or equivalent to around 1,600 Olympic-sized swimming pools—flows to the La Mesa and Ipo dams to help deliver raw water to Maynilad's and Manila Water Co. Inc.'s treatment plants.

Maynilad gets the majority of Angat's allocation at 2,600 MLD given its bigger customer base at 9.5 million, compared with Manila Water's 7.6 million.

Elevation at Ipo Dam also lowered to 98.59 m on Monday, already below its 101-m maintaining level.

Deep wells

The National Water Resources Board opted to cut supply allocation for the MWSS to 48 cubic meters per second (CMS) from 52 CMS to allow Metro Manila's main water source to recover.

"Because of the lower al-



3/3



ALTERNATIVE SOURCE This well supplies the water needs of a neighborhood at Barangay Old Capitol Site in Quezon City and will be useful during service interruptions from water concessionaires. —GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE

location, we no longer have enough supply in the La Mesa portal ... For us to address this gap, we need to lower the supply that we deliver to customers at certain times of the day," Padua said.

Maynilad and Manila Water split supply coming from Angat in the La Mesa portal.

Padua said they expect around 62 MLD of additional supply coming from its water loss reduction efforts by the latter part of the year, when El Niño is projected to be at its worst.

Padua added that they were also reactivating Maynilad's deep wells from 60 locations as buffer supply, while other projects were expected to come on stream by

the latter part of the year.

Asked why only the Maynilad concession area was affected by the lower allocation, Padua explained that cities in the west zone were closer to Manila Bay, which had poor water quality that could not be used to augment dwindling supply.

He added that the company inherited old water networks that needed repairs, and that they had already replaced 66 percent of these.

Padua remained optimistic, however, that rainfall would increase until next month to raise water levels, particularly in Ipo Dam, since this had a lower capacity and spilling level.

"Hopefully this happens in

the Angat and Ipo watersheds to lessen the number of days that we need to execute the water service interruptions," Padua added.

Metro Manila last experienced a water crisis in 2019, when millions of households had to suffer hours—sometimes days—without water, after the water level in Angat dipped below the 160-m critical level.

Gov't plan

With the looming prospect of extended interruptions, President Marcos has ordered the Water Resources Management Office, an attached agency of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, to submit this week its recommendations to ease the impact on the country of the El Niño phenomenon.

"I just spoke to (Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga) and she has told me that she will be prepared to make public what needs to be done," the President said.

He said the departments of environment, public works, agriculture and the National Irrigation Administration were already coordinating to address the looming water shortage in the coming months.

Mr. Marcos also said he had tapped former Public Works Secretary Rogelio Singson to help the government draw up a

"contingency plan" to mitigate the effects of El Niño on the country's water resources.

He said Singson, who headed the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) during the administration of the late President Benigno Aquino III, would take part in "crafting an overall plan for the Philippines."

He described Singson, former president of Maynilad who is now the president and chief executive officer of Metro Pacific Water, a water investment firm of business tycoon Manuel V. Pangilinan, as a "water management expert."

"We have a plan," Mr. Marcos said during a meeting in Malacañang on the government's response to the prolonged dry spell brought about by surging temperatures across the world.

Senate Minority Leader Aquilino Pimentel III on Monday said Mr. Marcos should thoroughly discuss his administration's concrete long-term plans to address the recurring water shortage in his upcoming second State of the Nation Address.

Pimentel also appealed to the public to conserve water and electricity during this critical period, as he cited how adverse effects of water shortage and El Niño would lead to "far-reaching consequences" on various sectors of the economy. —WITH A REPORT FROM MELVIN GASCON INQ.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
AND
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

1/3



A man arranges water containers for sale along a roadside in Bacoor, Cavite yesterday. Residents in southern Metro Manila are bracing for water service interruptions of up to 12 hours starting tomorrow due to the further decrease in the water level of Angat Dam. Inset image from OneNews shows members of a Dumagat tribe performing a rain dance along with other rituals near Angat Dam.

Water supply rotation in Metro begins July 12

MWSS turns to rain dance

By DANESSA RIVERA

West zone concessionaire Maynilad Water Services Inc. has scheduled nighttime water service interruptions starting tomorrow to preserve water supply amid Angat Dam's declining water level.

"Affected customers are advised to remember the service interruption schedule and to store water for their needs for hours of the day when supply will be unavailable. Mobile water tankers will be deployed as needed," Maynilad said in an advisory on July 10.

Water service interruptions in Caloocan, Malabon, Valenzuela, Navotas, Quezon City and Manila will affect 591,000 customers, according to Maynilad supply operations head Ronaldo Padua.

The specific list of affected barangays is announced on Maynilad's social media pages.

Turn to Page 4



PAGE



UPPER
LOWER



PAGE 1
STORY



BANNER
STORY



EDITORIAL



CARTOON

07-11-23

Water supply

PAGE

DATE

2/3

Water From Page 1

The daily service interruptions will be limited to the nighttime hours of 7 p.m. to 4 a.m., or 6 a.m. in some areas.

The service interruptions are being implemented after Angat Dam's water level fell below its normal operating level of 180 meters.

Maynilad has yet to determine whether this service interruption will be extended and expanded in scope.

"We can't answer until when this situation will end. We're hoping there will be rains over the Ipo watershed to augment the water supply," Padua said.

Rain dance

Dumagat tribe members will perform a rain dance at Angat Dam.

"Last year (the indigenous group) also conducted a rain dance. The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System called this weather modification or specification program as we respect the connection of our fellow Dumagat with nature. This traditional ritual could help in managing our watershed," MWSS division manager engineer Patrick Dizon said in a radio interview.

As of Monday morning, the water level of Angat Dam dropped to 179.23 meters or 0.33 meters less compared to its previous level of 179.56 meters.

Based on the National Water Re-

sources Board (NWRB)'s projection, the water level of Angat Dam could reach between 176 and 177 meters.

"Based on the historical record, even if there is El Niño, by August or September we expect the water level of Angat Dam to increase," Dizon said.

Maynilad Water Services Inc. has been instructed to ensure that the schedule of rotating water interruptions will be followed, he added.

"Maynilad should follow the announcement on water interruption and if possible, the nine hours interruption should be shortened. The interruption should not exceed 4 a.m.," he said.

Dizon said Manila Water will provide 25 million liters daily to Maynilad.

"It may increase, depending on the arrangement between Maynilad and Manila Water. We may increase it to an additional 25 to 50 million liters," he said.

Angat Dam supplies more than 90 percent of Metro Manila's potable water needs and provides for the irrigation needs of 25,000 hectares of farmlands in Bulacan and Pampanga.

'Alarming'

Meanwhile, Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) hydrologist Rosalie Pagulayan said the drop in Angat Dam's water level is "alarming."

"The drop in the level of Angat Dam is very critical for Metro Manila... If there will be no rains to re-

plenish the elevation, the downward trend is quite alarming," Pagulayan said in a radio interview.

She added the water level will reach 176 meters if no rain will replenish the reservoir in the next nine days.

Pagulayan said that only three dams - Binga Dam in Benguet, Magat Dam in Isabela and Caliraya Dam in Laguna - registered a water level increase while the rest suffered further drops in water elevation.

The water levels of other dams - Ipo Dam in Bulacan, La Mesa Dam in Quezon City, Ambuklao Dam in Benguet, San Roque Dam in Pangasinan and Pantabangan Dam in Nueva Ecija - dropped.

NWRB executive director Seville David Jr. said they will further cut the 48 cubic meters per second (cms) water allocation for Maynilad and Manila Water if the water level of Angat continues to drop.

The 48 cms and 20 cms water allocation for the two water concessionaires and for irrigation, respectively, took effect on July 8 when Angat Dam's water level fell below its normal operating level.

"We continue to monitor the water level (of Angat Dam) together with the MWSS and the National Irrigation Administration (NIA). If the water level continues to drop and no rains will come, we need to further adjust the water allocation to protect the current supply and prepare for the effect of El Niño at the end of the year," David said.



3/3

"Based on our projection and PAGASA data, if we experience below-normal rains because of El Niño, we may not attain our target elevation of Angat before the year ends," he added.

Tube wells mobilized

NIA's Central Luzon office will mobilize 500 shallow tube wells as Angat Dam's water level continues to drop.

NIA Central Luzon director Josephine Salazar told **The STAR** in a text message that through its different irrigation associations, the 500 shallow tube wells distributed last year to the region's farmers will be mobilized.

They will also assist the irrigation associations with the fuel requirements for the shallow tube wells, and will make final assessments on the number of additional tube wells to be constructed.

Federation of Free Farmers national manager Raul Montemayor told **The STAR** in a text message that they are "not sure if shallow tube wells will be reliable under drought conditions because the underground water table may also dry up fast."

"Pumps also need fuel and are relatively costly to operate. Some farmers reportedly spend as much as P30,000 per season to run their pumps. There are also water management technologies such as alternate drying and wetting, but I am not sure if this is doable in large irrigation systems where there are fixed

schedules for the release of water," Montemayor said.

He advised farmers to look at alternative crops that do not need a lot of water, such as corn and mungo.

4 SM Agri Multipurpose Cooperative chairman Simeon Sioson urged the government to conduct cloud-seeding operations to save rice crops in Central Luzon.

Regulate water use

San Juan Mayor Francis Zamora said the proposal to regulate the water usage of businesses in Metro Manila will depend on the decision of local government units (LGUs) in the National Capital Region.

"What are the establishments that consume huge amounts of water in their operations? These are the car wash, golf courses and swimming pool. Not all cities in Metro Manila have golf courses or hotels... It will now depend on the LGUs to pass ordinances for the regulation of establishments' water usage," Zamora said in an interview with **GMA-7**.

Zamora mentioned that San Juan City is setting up water catchment areas to store rainwater.

The water dousing tradition during the feast of Saint John the Baptist on June 24 was banned.

He urged LGUs and Metro Manila households to conserve and recycle water and collect rainwater. - With Bella Carioso, Ramon Efren Lazaro, Jose Rodel Clapano



TITLE:

PAGE

Manila Standard

VOL-XXXVII • NO. 148 • 3 SECTIONS 12 PAGES • P20 • TUESDAY, JULY 11, 2023 • www.manilastandard.net • mt.day@std.net

HOT ITEM ON SALE

A vendor arranges a display of water containers for sale at a roadside shop in Bacoot, Cavite on Monday. Customers of Maynilad Water Services in greater Metro Manila may experience supply interruption of up to 12 hours starting Wednesday owing to the low water levels of Angat Dam. **Norman Cruz**



12-hr. water interruptions start July 12

Lower supply from MWSS, says Maynilad

By Othel V. Campos,
Joel E. Zurbano and
Macon Ramos-Araneta

MAYNILAD Water Services, Inc. (Maynilad) is cutting water flow to five of its service areas for as much as 12 hours daily starting July 12, following a further reduction in the supply of raw water from the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS).



LIST OF AFFECTED AREAS (from 7 p.m. to 4 a.m.)

- Manila
 - Navotas
 - Valenzuela
 - Caloocan - up to 6 a.m. in some areas
 - Malabon - up to 6 a.m. in Dampalit, Hulong Duhat, Tahong
 - Quezon City - up to 2 a.m. or 6 a.m. in some areas
- (see full list online at manilastandard.net)

"The water interruption will be every 7 p.m. starting July 12. It is expected to be extended until 6 a.m. the next day, but the supply should be available by as early as 4 a.m. in some parts. We just need to build up pressure so water can flow as swiftly as possible during the hours it is available," said Maynilad vice president and head of water supply operations Romald Padua.

This came a day after the Department of Environment and Natural Resources

Next page

12-hr.... From A2

advised village leaders and residents of Metro Manila to reduce activities such as watering lawns and washing cars to avert massive water interruptions in the coming months.

The DENR's Water Resources Management Office, through a bulletin, also said its team will conduct spot inspections of government office buildings for unwarranted use of water, leaks, and faulty bathroom fixtures.

The team will ensure that WRMO Bulletin Nos. 1 and 2 are posted in offices accordingly.

In a briefing Monday, Maynilad said efforts, from all corners, are underway to preserve water in Angat Dam in preparation for the effects of the El Niño phenomenon, which may be felt in the coming months.

The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) has further cut water allocation to the MWSS to 48 cubic meters per second (CMS) starting July 8, after it reduced supply twice from 52 CMS on April 16 to June 30, and 50 CMS on July 1 to 7.

At 48 CMS, Maynilad will get less supply than it needs to sustain normal service operations. Spreading out the limited supply will necessitate daily

service interruptions in some portions of the West Zone, which includes the cities of Caloocan, Malabon, Manila, Navotas, Quezon City, and Valenzuela.

The company's supply augmentation projects, as well as local rains at the Ipo watershed, are expected to help mitigate the impact of lower releases from Angat Dam.

Affected customers are advised to keep in mind the interruption schedule, and to store water once it becomes available during the daytime. Mobile water tankers will be deployed as needed.

The water company warned users to expect some water discoloration once supply resumes during the day as this is a normal consequence of service interruptions. Maynilad explained that the returning supply scours the naturally occurring mineral deposits inside the pipelines.

Maynilad advises users to allow the water to flow out briefly until it clears but use the initial flow of water for non-drinking purposes, such as for flushing toilets, to avoid wastage.

The company said it continues to coordinate closely with all Angat Dam stakeholders in balancing the need between preserving the limited supply and managing the impact of lower allocations on water consumers. It is also facilitating other supply augmentation projects so that more supply can be generated.

Meanwhile, water usage of Metro Manila establishments may be regulated in

the discretion of local government units.

Metro Manila Council chairman and San Juan City Mayor Francis Zamora said local chief executives have the autonomy to decide on the matter, saying not all cities in the National Capital Region have establishments that need large amounts of water.

"Based on our discussion, it will now depend on each LGU because the demographics of our cities are not the same," Zamora told a TV interview, adding that the cities can pass their own ordinances.

Talk of water usage regulation came after the MWSS appealed to business establishments and those consuming massive volumes of water to conserve and limit their usage.

"This is something that we discussed as a Metro Manila Council and I am optimistic that all Metro Manila LGUs will adopt the same policy so that we can use collected rainwater. This can be used to wash cars, clean the toilets, or water plants," Zamora said in a mix of English and Filipino.

State weather bureau officials said at least 30 provinces may experience a dry spell while at least two provinces may suffer from drought due to the El Niño phenomenon.

PAGASA climate monitoring chief Ana Solis said the possibility of El Niño is high. She said rainfall is expected to decrease in September and drop further from October to December this year.



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
AND
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

THE EXPONENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1880
MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

4
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

07-11-23

TITLE: _____

PAGE _____

DATE _____

Maynilad warns of 9 to 11 hours of water service interruptions

Areas in Metro Manila under the Maynilad Water Services concession, may experience water interruption starting July 12 following the measures now being implemented amid the continuous drop in the water level of Angat Dam.

Affected by nine to 11 hours of daily water service interruptions are portions of Caloocan City, Malabon City,

Tondo, Santa Cruz, Quiapo, Sampaloc, Port Area, Intramuros, Ermita, Paco, Navotas, Quezon City, and Valenzuela.

In a statement, Maynilad said they are now looking for ways to cushion the impact of the drop in Angat Dam water level by generating water supply from various augmentation projects.

The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) had earlier announced

that once the water level of Angat Dam drops below 180 meters, the allocation for Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) and National Irrigation Administration (NIA) will drop to 48 cubic meters per second (cms), from 50 cms.

The decision was made to maintain the adequate water level in Angat Dam for the remainder of 2023 until the first quarter of 2024, in case El Niño persists. (Nicole Magmanlac)



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
AND
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

THE EXHIBENT OF PHILIPPINE PROGRESS
SINCE 1900
MANILA BULLETIN
THE NATION'S LEADING NEWSPAPER

4
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

07-11-23

TITLE:

PAGE

DATE

Angat, Ipo, Bustos dams' water levels continue to drop

By FREDDIE VELEZ

The water levels of Angat Dam, Ipo Dam, and Bustos Dam, all in the province of Bulacan, continue to drop, prompting the province's government agencies to prepare for the effects of a severe dry season.

Col. Manuel Lukban Jr. (Ret.), Bulacan Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (PDRRMO) officer-in-charge, said that as of July 8, the water elevation of Angat Dam was 179.44 meters (the normal operating level is 212 meters), Ipo Dam was 98.60 meters (normal level is 100 meters); and Bustos Dam was at 17.08 meters which is below the spilling level of 17.35 meters.

At around 6 a.m. on Monday, July 10, Lukban reported that the water level of Angat Dam was at 179.33 meters, while Bustos Dam was at 16.95 meters.

The PDRRMO said if the water level of Angat Dam continues to decline, 90 percent of the raw water requirement for Metro Manila through the facilities of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System will be affected.

Manila residents will have potable water problems while the health of children and senior citizens may be affected due to severe heat.

Angat Dam is also the source of irrigation water for Bulacan and Pampanga farmers

The water elevation problem

is preventing the release of water from the Ipo Dam as the water level has reached below its normal level.

Maynilad is reportedly directly using Ipo Dam as its sub-reservoir as it usually keeps its water level at 100 meters, a meter lower than its spilling level of 101 meters.

As of press time, the Bulacan PDRRMO said it is now closely monitoring the water levels of the Bulacan dams as well as closely coordinating with PAGASA should the water level continue to drop.

The PDRRMO said the rainy season is expected to shore up the dam's water elevation so it could fully provide water supply to Metro Manila and augment the power supply of the Luzon grid.



Marcos: Mitigation plan for impact of El Niño to be unveiled this week

By SAMUEL P. MEDENILLA

[@sam_medenilla](#)

AMID growing concerns on the impact of El Niño on the country's water supply, President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. announced the government will soon unveil its plan to address such effects of the dry spell caused by the said phenomenon.

Speaking during a meeting in Malacañang, Marcos said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) through its Water Resources Management Office (WRMO) is now finalizing the said plan.

"We will have a plan for the mitigation of the effects of El Niño this week," Marcos said.

He noted that former Public Works and Highways Secretary Rogelio Singson will provide inputs for the contingency plan.

Last May, the Presidential Communications Office announced the

reconstitution of the El Niño task force, which will be tasked to implement the mitigation measures.

The chief executive made the assurance after the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) declared the start of El Niño last week.

State meteorologists said the effects of El Niño this month are still "weak," but are expected to strengthen in the coming months.

Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) has already warned that 600,000 households may suffer long water disruptions due to the dropping water level of Angat Dam.

Marcos said the government is bracing for such scenarios through water catchment structures and proper management of existing dams.

"We have a plan. So we are making sure that we will be ready when that time comes," Marcos said.



QC, Camanava, Manila to experience daily service interruptions starting Wednesday

MAYNILAD customers in Caloocan, Malabon, Navotas, Valenzuela, Quezon City and Manila will experience daily service interruptions due to the "drastic cuts" in raw water allocation that started on Saturday, July 8.

The 48 cubic meters per second (CMS) allocation, which is lower than the 52 CMS given from April 16 to June 30 and the 50 CMS from July 1 to 7, means Maynilad will get less supply than it needs to sustain normal service levels, the company said in a statement.

"Spreading out the limited supply will necessitate the implementation of daily service interruptions in some portions of the West Zone starting July 12, 2023," it said.

Maynilad's supply augmentation projects, as well as local rains at the Ipo watershed, helped to mitigate the impact of lower releases from Angat Dam.

This, Maynilad said, would help limit the daily service interruptions to the nighttime

hours from 7 p.m. to 4 a.m. (or to 6 a.m. in some areas) despite the drastically lower allocation. Expected to be affected are barangays in Caloocan, Malabon, Valenzuela, Navotas, Quezon City, and Manila.

Affected customers are advised to remember the service interruption schedule, and to store water for their needs for hours of the day when supply will be unavailable. Mobile water tankers will also be deployed as needed.

"Upon resumption of water service, please expect some discoloration in the supply. This is a normal consequence of service interruptions, as the returning supply scours the naturally occurring mineral deposits inside the pipelines. When this happens, let the water flow out briefly until it clears but use the initial flow of water for non-drinking purposes, such as for flushing toilets, to avoid wastage," Maynilad said in its water service advisory.

The company said it will coordinate closely with all Angat Dam stakeholders in balancing

the need between preserving the limited supply and managing the impact of lower allocations on water consumers. The company is also facilitating other supply augmentation projects so that more supply can be generated.

"As we strive to stretch available supplies and generate more water to mitigate the impact of El Niño, we call on all water consumers to do their share in the conservation effort by using water responsibly," the Maynilad statement added.

National Water Resources Board (NWRB) Executive Director Sevilla David Jr. admitted that the reduction in raw water supply allocation becomes imperative to conserve water from Angat, the level of which has fallen below the 180 meters above sea level normal operating level.

"We have also decided to reduce the water allocation for irrigation from 28 CMS to 20 CMS which will affect farms in Bulacan and Pampanga because of this," said David,

who echoed the call of the Water Resource Management Office (WRMO) to residents of Metro Manila and nearby provinces of Rizal, Cavite, and Bulacan to conserve water and practice rainwater harvesting, as much as possible.

"We really need to make this a regular thing [rainwater harvesting] to help reduce demand for treated water," he said. Rainwater, he said, can be used to water plants, clean cars and garage and other non-essential water uses.

Building owners and administrators, he said, should also heed the government's call to conserve water to prevent another episode of severe water supply shortage.

David added that the NWRB has allowed Maynilad and Manila Water to source water from deep wells for the meantime that water level at Angat remains low to augment the supply of water to Metro Manila and other areas being serviced by the private water concessionaires. **Jonathan L. Mayuga**



D7-11-23

TITLE:

PAGE

DATE

OPINION

Long-term solution to El Niño



Manny B. Villar

THE ENTREPRENEUR

THE El Niño phenomenon, or a period of extended drought, is one climate change problem that needs a long-term solution. It is occurring more often and could have permanent and damaging effects if we do not treat it as a persistent economic threat.

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. last week was quick to recognize that crop production would bear the brunt of the El Niño phenomenon that might last until the first half of 2024. Reduced crop output, as we know, leads to higher inflation, which the government is starting to tame. But worse than the inflationary impact is the ensuing dire situation of our rural farmers, who mostly rely on harvests and their income from them for their daily sustenance.

Another obvious impact of the extended dry spell is the reduced supply of potable water to millions of Filipino consumers in urban centers and the rural areas. The lack of ample water supply is actually an age-long problem worldwide even without El Niño, and climate change is exacerbating the situation.

Some 11 million families, per the National Water Resource Board, face

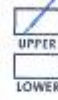
the predicament and are forced to rely on "unprotected" deep wells, springs, rivers, lakes and rainwater for their household needs. Lack of sanitation facilities, according to NWRB Executive Director Dr. Sevillo David Jr., has also forced some families to defecate in the open, risking water contamination and diseases.

The United Nations, meanwhile, is not remiss in warning about the global water shortage. The United Nations, in the latest edition of the UN World Water Development Report, says between two and three billion people worldwide experience water shortages. About 2 billion people (26 percent of the population) do not have safe drinking water, and 3.6 billion (46 percent) lack access to safely managed sanitation, according to the report.

UN Secretary-General Antonio



PAGE



TITLE:

Long-term solution ..

PAGE

DATE

D7-11-23

Guterres has called on the world to safeguard water resources to avert conflict and ensure future global prosperity. Water, he says, is "the most precious common good" and "needs to be at the center of the global political agenda."

The El Niño is a reminder to our policymakers to treat the water resource problem more seriously. The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration has already warned some 36 provinces may experience a dry spell while at least two provinces may suffer from drought.

The weather phenomenon has reared its ugly head this early. The water levels in all major dams in Luzon have been going down, with Angat Dam's reserve nearing the 180-meter critical level as of last week. A reserve below this elevation means reduced water supply to Metro Manila and other users that depend on Angat, including irrigation and the power sector.

The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System has warned an estimated 632,000 Metro Manila households may be affected by water service interruptions arising from low allocation and lack of rain over the watersheds.

The lower water level due to El Niño and reduced rainfall are expected to decrease the volume of other water resources such as lakes and rivers that feed into rural irrigation

canals. Our farmers, no doubt, will suffer the most from the dry spell.

Perhaps, we should take the warning of the UN's World Meteorological Organization more seriously. The onset of El Niño, according to WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas, will greatly increase the likelihood of breaking temperature records this year and triggering more extreme heat in many parts of the world and in the ocean.

"The declaration of an El Niño by WMO is the signal to governments around the world to mobilize preparations to limit the impacts on our health, our ecosystems, and our economies," says Taalas.

Our local government units should be drawing up mitigating measures now to lessen the impact of the dry spell on consumers and our farmers. But beyond these stopgap actions, our policymakers should start considering long-term preemptive measures against El Niño and other natural disasters.

It may be wise to consider the construction of alternative and mini dams, and other water impoundments to protect Filipinos from destructive weather phenomena. We can also introduce modern technology to our farmers, and drought-tolerant crops as part of the solution.

For comments, send e-mail to mbv_secretariat@vistaland.com.ph or visit www.mannyvillar.com.ph



WRMO to present El Niño plan

By HELEN FLORES

The Water Resources Management Office (WRMO) will present this week its recommendations to mitigate the impact of El Niño in the Philippines.

"We will have a plan for the mitigation of the effects of El Niño this week. I just spoke to the Secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources this morning and she has told me that she will be prepared to make public what needs to be done," President Marcos said during a meeting at Malacañang, referring to Secretary Toni Yulo-Loyzaga.

"We are designing now a system of catchment basins not only for flood control. The original plan was only for flood control. But... flood control always now includes irrigation and sometimes even power, if we can do it," he added.

The National Irrigation Administration has a design for existing dams to ensure continuous water supply for agricultural use, Marcos said.

He also tapped former

public works secretary Rogelio Singson to craft a contingency plan for the dry spell.

The President issued Memorandum Circular 22 on June 7, directing all government agencies to strictly implement water conservation measures to avert possible water crises due to El Niño.

Meanwhile, Environment Undersecretary Carlos David revealed on July 10 that some government agencies have incurred P10 million to P17 million water bills due to "leaks."

"We did a study together with Manila Water and Maynilad. There are government facilities that have a P10-million bill per month or P17 million and even small offices have a P1 million per month water consumption bill," David said in a television interview.

"There are leaks after the meter and this is really not the responsibility of the concessioners," he added.

The WRMO has directed government building managers to monitor their monthly consumption, he added.



Address water shortage in SONA, Marcos asked

SENATE Minority Leader Aquilino "Koko" Pimentel 3rd has called on President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. to address the water shortage and the El Niño phenomenon in his upcoming State of the Nation Address (SONA).

The senator on Monday expressed hope that the President would not focus more on the Maharlika Investment Fund in his July 24 SONA.

"It is crucial for the President to use the State of the Nation Address as a platform to present long-term strategies and sustainable solutions that can mitigate the effects of water shortages and El Niño," he added.

In a statement, Pimentel raised the need to immediately address the water crisis and mitigate the impact of El Niño on agriculture and farmers.

The United Nations World Meteorological Organization officially declared the emergence of El Niño conditions in the Tropical Pacific for the first time in seven years, with a 90 percent probability of them persisting until the second half of 2024.

"The adverse effects of water shortages and El Niño have far-reaching consequences on various sectors of the economy," Pimentel said.

He noted that past droughts and water crises have taken a significant toll on the economy, business, agriculture, power

generation, public health and natural resources.

Citing a study by Columbia University, Pimentel said that the El Niño events of 1997 and 1998 left 70 percent of the country experiencing devastating drought conditions.

He also cited the statement by the Union Bank of the Philippines Inc. Chief Economist Ruben Carlo Asuncion who said that a strong El Niño event could lead to national GDP (gross domestic product) losses of up to \$3.3 billion.

"These staggering economic implications highlight the importance of proactive and preventive measures to mitigate the impact of the water crisis and El Niño," Pimentel said.

He said that in March 2023, the President himself acknowledged the gravity of the water crisis, stating that 11 million families lack access to clean water as the dry season approaches.

"As I said before, the government should take an anticipatory approach and not merely be passive in addressing these challenges," Pimentel said.

The senator also appealed to the public to conserve water and electricity during this critical period.

"These problems need immediate attention and concerted efforts from both the government and the public. I implore each of us to conserve water," he said.

BERNADETTE E. TAMAYO

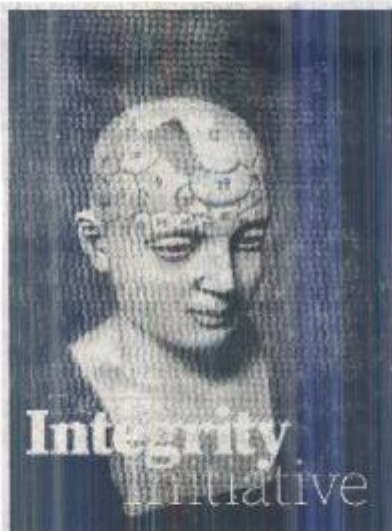


TITLE:

PAGE

DATE

Water Scarcity leads to water interruption



By HENRY J. SCHUMACHER

THE information about water interruptions this week and the ongoing El Niño phenomenon reminds me of articles I wrote in 2015 about water scarcity and what should be done about it.

Although more and more people are consuming much more water, domestic water consumption is not the biggest problem. Regarding the different consumer sectors,

agriculture is globally responsible for the bulk of water consumption (up to 85 percent of the Philippines' water demand comes from agriculture. Industry and the domestic sector are the next largest water consumers). Due to the annual increase of food demand, water demand is expected to double within the next 50 years.

Ways of overcoming this problem may be the increased use and treatment of rainwater, wastewater and the desalination of seawater. The latter, however, is a financially and energetically very complex procedure. Far simpler solutions may generally be seen in the field of saving water, raising public awareness of this precious finite commodity and in political framework concerning management and distribution of water.

The worst-case scenario predicted is a water crisis in the Philippines by 2025. This prediction by the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) identified Metro Manila, Metro Cebu, Baguio, Angeles and Davao as among those to be worst hit by a severe water shortage by 2025.

With this kind of scenario in 2015, my question is: What has been done since then by government and the private sector to address this danger?

Have government, water utilities and private business firms discussed issues such as increasing sustainable access to water supply, water security, conservation, water management and the perspective of the leading water users, especially agriculture that accounts for up to 85 percent of the freshwater used in the Philippines every year?

In March 2015, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) urged the public to conserve water in the face of the El Niño phenomenon that might cause water shortages. Among the water conservation measures for households being encouraged by the MWSS include using a pail and dipper instead of the shower; turning-off the tap while washing, shaving or brushing teeth; not thawing frozen food under a running tap; watering plants or lawns during cooler parts of the day and regularly checking water pipes for leaks.

Individuals can start their conservation efforts by realizing freshwater is a finite resource that will one day be in dangerously short supply if wasted on needless activities such as watering house plants daily or washing cars with too much water.

In addition, the government and the private sector should work more



07-11-23

TITLE:

Water Scarcity . . .

PAGE

012

DATE

closely together to tackle the more pressing challenges to ensure future freshwater water supplies. Among these major challenges are privatizing other government-owned water utilities using improved versions of the public-private partnership model adopted in the Manila Water and Maynilad privatizations.

In 2011, it was suggested to create the National Water Resources Management Office (MWRMO), which would be under the Office of the President and would absorb all the economic regulation functions of agencies in the water supply sector. It would be responsible for management and protection of water resources for domestic water supply; irrigation; fisheries; hydropower; sanitation; aquaculture; flood control; navigation and recreation and control of water pollution and environmental restoration. Has it ever been established?

Let us realize that the hardest hit by a life-threatening water crisis will be the poor. It is therefore essential that the government and the private sector (and we as individuals) address water conservation and avoid the JICA prediction for 2025. I am interested in your views; contact me at hjschumacher59@gmail.com



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
AND
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

Printed since 1956

The Manila Times



07-11-23

TITLE:

PAGE:

DATE:

SMC removes over 1.3M tons of waste from Pasig River

SAN Miguel Corp. (SMC) has reported it breached the 1-million-metric-ton mark of silt and solid waste removed from the historic but polluted waterway, adding it is optimistic the project can be fully completed by August, or right in the middle of the rainy season.

SMC President and CEO Ramon S. Ang said with the use of bigger equipment it procured for the monumental undertaking, the company has been able to remove 1,312,615 tons of waste from critical sections of the Pasig River.

The project, in partnership with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and other government agencies, is in support of the Manila Bay rehabilitation effort and is being implemented at no cost to the government.

Ang said the company's dedicated team as well as its fleet of heavy equipment, including some donated by Japanese shipping giant NYK Line in honor of its Filipino seafarers, will close in on



■ Pasig River CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

the 1.5-million-ton mark by the time the initiative wraps up.

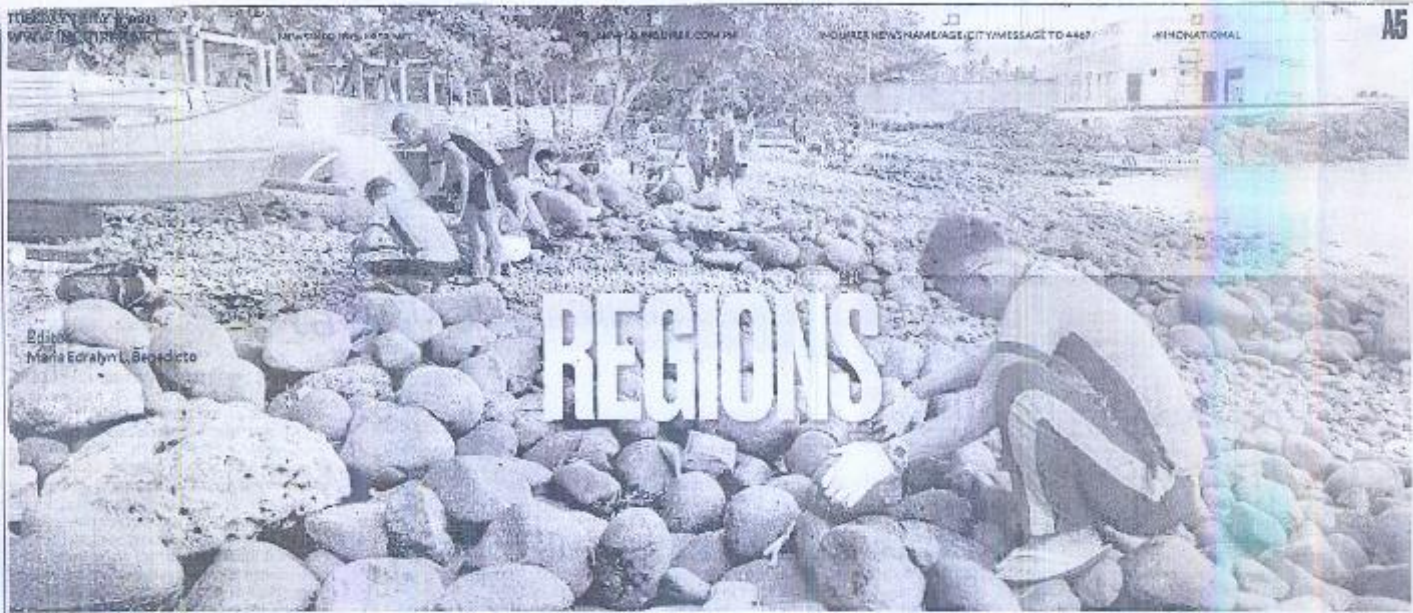
SMC's Pasig River cleanup output has also surpassed the 1.12 million tons of silt and waste it removed from another polluted

major river, the Tullahan River, which has helped reduce incidences of severe flooding.

Currently, the average daily extraction output is 2,000 metric tons, with the current coverage at

21.62 kilometers, Ang said.

Ang shared that SMC is now eyeing to further improve its river cleanup activities in Bulacan province. SMC is also cleaning up the San Juan River.



CLEANING CREW Personnel of the Philippine Coast Guard clean up rocks along the shores of Barangay Benit in San Ricardo town, Southern Leyte, on Sunday, two days after an oil spill was reported in the area. —PHOTO COURTESY OF THE PHILIPPINE COAST GUARD

PCG eyes 2 ships as source of Southern Leyte spill

Fishing, swimming in the waters of San Ricardo town suspended during cleanup operation

By **Joey Gabieta**
and **Robert Dejon**
@inquirervisayas

TACLOBAN CITY—The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) has started investigating two ships that could have been responsible for the oil spill that has damaged the coastal areas of San Ricardo town in Southern Leyte.

Lt. Comdr. Donna Liza Duran, PCG Southern Leyte station commander, said they took oil samples from LCT Georgia-1 and MV San Ric Ferry 20, both of which were docked in a private port in Barangay Benit of the town when the spill was spotted on July 7.

LCT Georgia-1 is a cargo ship while MV San Ric Ferry 20

is an interisland passenger vessel that plies the route between San Ricardo and Surigao City.

According to Duran, the Marine Environmental Protection Group of the Southern Leyte Coast Guard station, together with barangay officials and residents, immediately conducted manual scooping and shoreline cleanup to get rid of the oil slick.

"We already took samples of the oils that spilled in the sea on Friday and will match these to the oil from the two ships so we can determine where they came from," Duran said on Monday.

The oil spill, which was reported by residents of Barangay Benit on Friday morning, had spread about 500 meters from the shore of the village.

Larry Solis, head of the provincial disaster risk reduction and management office in Southern Leyte, said at least three coastal villages were affected by the oil spill—Benit, Timba and parts of Cabutan.

Duran said a PCG ship had arrived in San Ricardo, bringing with it some oil spill booms to prevent the oil slick from spreading.

Contained

"There's no need to panic because the spilled oil was already contained, including those left in the debris and stones at the shoreline," she said.

As of Sunday, authorities already used 100 pieces of absorbent pads to contain the oil spill. Duran advised residents not

to fish at this time for safety purposes.

The cleanup drive is being done by the municipal government through its disaster risk reduction and management office, the local police, and members of the PCG.

The PCG has yet to determine the volume of oil that spilled to the sea.

Mayor Roy Salinas of San Ricardo town said there was no need to declare a state of calamity due to the oil spill.

However, he directed affected residents not to venture to the sea, either to swim or to fish.

"A cleanup drive was immediately conducted to ensure that it (oil) would not further spread," he said in a phone interview on Sunday. **INQ**



07-11-23

TITLE: _____

PAGE _____

DATE _____

PCG leads oil spill cleanup in S. Leyte

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) has collected five sacks of oily debris from the shores of San Ricardo town in Southern Leyte, where an oil spill reportedly occurred on Friday.

In a statement issued yesterday, the PCG said that its personnel along with local government units and volunteers conducted a cleanup operation right after the incident.

It said the team collected five sacks of oily debris from the shores of Barangay Benit.

The cleanup resumed on Sunday. The PCG has yet to give updates on the progress of the operation.

PCG Southern Leyte chief Lt. Cmdr. Donna Liza Ramacho said there was no need to install spill booms as oil traces were minimal.

The PCG has yet to determine the source of the spill.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) said it is ready to assist families affected by the spill.

DSWD Secretary Rex Gatchalian said he discussed with San Ricardo Mayor Roy Salinas the form of assistance needed by the affected residents.

Mayor Salinas recommended food-for-work as the municipal government hired the villagers to clean the shore on a limited budget. - Evelyn Macairan, Sheila Crisostomo



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
AND
INITIATIVES
SERVICE



PAGE



PAGE 1
STORY



BANNER
STORY



EDITORIAL



CARTOON

07-11-23

TITLE: _____

PAGE _____

DATE _____

Mayon's abnormal parameters up anew

By CET DEMATERA and BELLA CARIASO

LEGAZPI CITY – After slowing down for three days, Mayon Volcano's abnormal parameters soared again in the past 24 hours, with lava flows extending down the slopes 3,300 meters away from the crater, state volcanologists said yesterday.

Aside from lava flows, the monitoring team of the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) recorded 33 pyroclastic density currents (PDCs) collapsing from the lava dome, 109 weak or low-frequency volcanic earthquakes and 325 rockfall events.

"Satellite monitoring showed an increase in sulfur dioxide emissions that averaged 943 tons," Phivolcs said.

With this new development, Phivolcs reiterated that the volcano's six-kilometer-radius permanent danger zone should remain unoccupied.

Communities within the seven- and eight-kilometer radius were advised again to be ready for evacuation should the PDC activity worsen.

Paul Alanis, Phivolcs resident volcanologist based at the Lignon Hill Observatory in this city, said they are closely monitoring the pyroclastic density currents as these could travel faster and farther downslopes than the other volcanic ma-

terials such as lava flows and collapsed debris.

"Lava flows advance very slowly, but pyroclastic density currents roll down quickly and can burn down everything along its path. We are watching the PDC activity very closely," Alanis told **The STAR** yesterday.

He said some of the 33 pyroclastic density currents traveled from one to four minutes, stretching 3.3 kilometers away from the crater.

Phivolcs said that lava flows travel "very slowly" and remain at 2,800 meters at the Mi-isi Gully, but have now extended to 100 meters, or 1,400 meters at the Bonga Gully.

Collapsed debris remain at 4,000 meters from the summit crater.

Alanis said that although lava travels in different directions from the summit crater, it converges in huge gullies along the upper and middle slopes.

"These incandescent materials, when viewed

at night, look like they are spewed in several directions of the summit crater. These materials gather again once these roll down and are deposited in major gullies," Alanis said.

He said the recorded volcanic earthquakes, although high in number, could not trigger a strong explosion as these have no sufficient energy.

From 26 the other day, the volcanic quakes spiked to 109 yesterday.

Meanwhile, over P105 million in financial assistance has been provided to Mayon evacuees, Malacañang said yesterday.

The assistance came from the Department of Social Welfare and Development, local government units and non-government organizations.

In a post on Facebook, the Presidential Communications Office (PCO) said the total amount of assistance has reached P105.63 million.

As of Sunday, the government has more than P2 billion in standby funds for emergency purposes, the PCO said.

The United States' Agency for International Development provided close to P13 million in assistance to Mayon evacuees. – **With Alexis Romero, Michael Punongbayan, Pia Lee-Brago**



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
AND
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

A5
PAGE

UPPER
✓
LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

07-11-23

FILE:

PAGE

DATE

DANGER ZONE REMAINS OFF-LIMITS TO ALL HUMAN ACTIVITIES

INCREASED PYROCLASTIC FLOW NOTED ON MAYON

By **Abby Boiser,**
Tina G. Santos
and **Ma. April Mier-Manjares**
@Team_Inquirer

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) has recorded a sharp rise in the frequency of fast-moving volcanic flows at Mayon Volcano in Albay province on Monday.

In a volcano advisory issued on Monday, Phivolcs reported a total 33 pyroclastic density currents (PDCs), from the four recorded on Saturday.

PDCs, which are dangerous flows of ash, rocks and gases, traveled from one to four minutes down a 3.3-kilometer slope from the summit crater, Phivolcs said.

Sulfur dioxide emission, meanwhile, decreased to an average 943 tonnes per day on Sunday, from the recorded 1,145 tonnes per day last Saturday.

Phivolcs also logged a jump from 26 volcanic earthquakes on Saturday to 109 on Sunday. The seismic energy release however remained at generally the same level since June 15.

Mayon remains under alert level 3—which means an increased tendency toward a hazardous eruption—since it was raised June 8.

"It is strongly recommended that the areas inside the 6-kilometer-radius permanent danger zone (PDZ) remain evacuated, and that communities within the 7- and 8-kilometer-radius be prepared in case current PDC activity worsens," Phivolcs said.

As of Monday, at least 5,765 families (20,148 people) from the PDZ were housed in different

evacuation facilities in the towns of Malilipot, Sto. Domingo, Daraga, Camalig and Guinobatan, and cities of Tabaco and Ligao.

Cluster working group

On Monday, the provincial government of Albay announced that it created cluster working groups to start data collection to help in the recovery programs for the families affected by the unrest of Mayon Volcano.

Cedric Daep, chief of Albay Public Safety and Emergency Management Office, said the clusters would be working under the province's Disaster Response Desk, recently created by Gov. Edcel Greco Lagman under Executive Order No. 63, that focuses on the humanitarian response plan and strategies in the delivery of support to the affected families.

Daep said there would be 12 clusters that would address issues related to agriculture, food, livelihood, camp coordination and management, early recovery, emergency shelter, nutrition, logistics, protection, environment and tourism, and health, water, sanitation and hygiene.

He said the recovery plan would be put in place even as they were still attending to the needs of the displaced residents.

"Just like any other procedures and in disaster risk management application and governance, while we in the response phase, we are already starting the recovery phase to avoid overlapping of activities and not to cause in delays [in the] phase out of response to recovery," Daep said at a press briefing on Monday.

The province had ordered



STILL RUMBLING Mayon Volcano continuously generates pyroclastic density currents and lava flow as seen in this photo taken at 5:40 p.m. on Monday in Daraga, Albay. The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology has recorded increased activity on Monday morning due to lava dome collapse.

—PHOTO CONTRIBUTED BY DENNIS MIRABUENO

mandatory evacuation of families inside the PDZ on June 9, a day after alert level 3 was raised over the volcano.

Maria Vivien Cea, head of provincial social welfare office, said the food and nonfood items were still sufficient in different evacuation sites as more aid arrived in the province.

US aid

Among those that came to the aid of the evacuees was the US government, through the US Agency for International Development (USAID), which has provided nearly P13 million to communities affected by the increased activity of Mayon Volcano.

The aid included more than P11 million (\$200,000) in imme-

diated humanitarian assistance and P1.86 million (\$33,600) worth of education materials, the US Embassy in Manila said in a statement on Monday.

It said the USAID had partnered with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to provide clean water, essential hygiene items and emergency shelter to over 2,500 individuals in evacuation centers in the towns of Camalig, Guinobatan, Libon, Malilipot and Sto. Domingo.

USAID and IOM will also help the local communities in managing evacuation centers and repairing critical water and sanitation infrastructure, the embassy said.

USAID also donated learner and teacher kits to 19 schools affected by the Mayon's continued restiveness, benefiting some 6,000 students and 200 teachers.

With USAID support, the UN World Food Programme, in cooperation with the Department of Social Welfare and Development, also provided logistics assistance and transported around 58,000 family food packs to the evacuees.

The US Embassy noted that USAID works year-round with its Philippine partners to develop programs that enhance the country's disaster preparedness and response such as the US Geological Survey's Volcano Disaster Assistance Program.

The program offers hazard assessment training, early warning system development and volcano monitoring equipment installation to disaster monitoring organizations like the Phivolcs, it said. **INQ**



1/2

Mayon's unrest intensifies anew

By ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) issued a new notice of "increased activity" in Mayon Volcano on Monday, July 10, due to the observation of more pyroclastic density current (PDC) occurrences over the past 24 hours.

Phivolcs recorded 33 PDC events caused by dome collapse from the summit crater of Mayon Volcano as well as the collapsing front and margins of the advancing lava flows on the upper to middle slopes at 5 p.m. on Sunday, July 9.

"The PDCs travelled for approximately one to four minutes down the Mi-isi (south) and Bonga (southeastern) gullies within 3.3 kilometers of the crater," it said. ▶ 4

Mayon's unrest intensifies anew ◀

PDCs are mixtures of fragmented volcanic particles or pyroclastics, hot gases, and ash that rush down the volcanic slopes or rapidly outward from a source vent at high speeds.

Volcanic gas emission, quakes increase slightly

According to Phivolcs, the volcano's sulfur dioxide emissions also increased on Sunday, averaging 943 tons per day.

However, it pointed out that the measured volcanic gas flux has only been slightly above background for the past three days and remains much lower than the typical ranges of eruption gas flux from Mayon.

Meanwhile, 109 weak low-frequency volcanic earthquakes have been recorded by the Mayon Volcano Network since 5 a.m. on Monday.

Phivolcs noted that the seismic energy release has been sustained at generally the same level since June 15.

As it closely monitors the frequency of PDC occurrences, Phivolcs urged communities within the seven- and eight-kilometer radius to be ready in case the current activity worsens.

It also strongly advised that entry

into the six-kilometer permanent danger zone be strictly prohibited.

Pilots were also asked to avoid flying close to the volcano because ash from a sudden eruption may pose hazards to aircraft.

Alert level still up

The Presidential Communications Office (PCO) likewise warned those within the eight-kilometer radius to be prepared due to its increased activity.

"Tumaas pa ang posibilidad ng pagsabog ng Bulkang Mayon (The possibility of Mayon Volcano erupting has increased)," the PCO wrote in a Facebook post on July 10. "Nananatili itong nakapailalim sa alert level 3 habang kasalukuyang nagpapakita ng higit pang aktibidad (It remains under alert level 3 while it currently shows increased activities)," it added.

Mayon Volcano remains on alert level 3, which means there is still an "increased tendency toward a hazardous eruption."

Communities near the restive volcano were also advised to maintain increased vigilance against lahars and sediment-laden stream flows along channels draining the

volcano edifice, as heavy rainfall could cause channel-confined lahars and sediment-laden stream flows.

According to Phivolcs, communities on the southern side of Mayon Volcano may most likely experience ash fall events based on the current wind pattern.

Phivolcs has upgraded Mayon Volcano's status twice the past month, first to level 2 on June 5 and then to level 3 on June 8 due to "intensified magmatic unrest."

Aid for Mayon-affected communities

Meanwhile, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) reported that as of the evening of July 9, ₱105,632,444.84 worth of humanitarian assistance was provided by the DSWD, local government units (LGUs), nongovernment organizations (NGOs), and other partners to those affected by the volcanic activity.

The DSWD, as cited by the PCO, said available resources as of July 9 is worth ₱2,056,648,943.72.

A total of 9,876 families or 38,376 persons from 26 affected barangays in the Bicol region are affected.

According to the DSWD, 5,360



PAGE

UPPER
LOWER

PAGE 1
STORY

BANNER
STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

07-11-23

TITLE:

Mayon's unrest . . .

PAGE

DATE

7/2

families are currently in 26 evacuation centers in the region, while 408 families are temporarily staying with their friends or relatives.

₱13-M US assistance

The United States government, meanwhile, said it had provided ₱13 million worth of assistance to communities affected by the ongoing eruption of Mayon Volcano in Albay province.

The assistance was coursed through the US Agency for International Development (USAID).

In a statement, the US shared that ₱11 million of the ₱13 million went to immediate humanitarian assistance, while some ₱1.86 million worth of education materials were also given out.

Aside from humanitarian aid, the USAID also donated learner and teacher kits to 19 schools affected by the volcano's rampage.

"These education materials will help ensure learning continuity for an estimated 6,000 students and 200 teachers," the statement read.

The UN World Food Program, with the support of the USAID and in cooperation with the DSWD, also provided logistics assistance and transported around 58,000 family food packs to evacuees.

The agency has partnered with the International Organization for

Migration (IOM) in providing "clean water, essential hygiene items, and emergency shelter" to over 2,500 individuals in evacuation centers in the municipalities of Camalig, Guinobatan, Libon, Malilipot, and Santo Domingo.

"USAID and IOM will also help the local communities in managing evacuation centers and repairing critical water and sanitation infrastructure," the statement said.

The USAID works year-round with its partner agencies in the Philippines to develop programs that enhance the country's capacity to prepare and respond to disasters.

One of these programs is the US Geological Survey's Volcano Disaster Assistance Program, which the United States has supported for more than 35 years.

Among other things, the program "offers hazard assessment training, early warning system development, and volcano monitoring equipment installation to disaster monitoring organizations" like the Phivolcs.

During disasters, USAID also deploys its own disaster response experts who coordinate response efforts with the Philippine government, civilian organizations, and humanitarian partners. (With reports from Argyll Cyrus Geducos and Raymond Antonio)



EDITORIAL

Rising to El Niño's challenge

REASSURING that the government is prepared for El Niño, a warming of the ocean surface, or above-average sea surface temperatures, in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean.

National Economic and Development Authority Undersecretary Rosemarie Edillon said with preparations and mitigation measures in place, the country is expected to be up to the challenge of the weather phenomenon.

In 1982-1983, El Niño-related droughts affected 450,000 hectares of farmland in the Philippines and the most severe El Niño occurred in 1997-1998, when rainfall fell to half of historical levels, causing drought in two-thirds of this basically agricultural economy.

As early as March this year, climate monitoring and analyses by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration or PAGASA suggested the unusual warming of sea surface temperatures along the equatorial Pacific.

“President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. ordered government agencies to prepare for the possible impact of El Niño, ensure ‘protocol-based and scientific’ long-term solutions.”

On twinkle toes, President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. ordered government agencies to prepare for the possible impact of El Niño, ensure “protocol-based and scientific” long-term solutions, and come up with a campaign to generate public awareness of water and energy conservation.

According to Undersecretary Edillon, “We always have El Niño. Three years in, three years out...Its impact really depends on how well we prepare for it. The people already know how to deal with it with help

from government agencies.”

For one, the Department of Agriculture is mapping out the areas that could be negatively affected by the dry spell while the Department of Social Welfare and Development said it has stockpiled food and non-food items, ready to be augmented by local government units.

Edillon added some areas in Luzon are already experiencing dry spell, and 36 more provinces across the country are expected to be hit by dry spell by December.

Moderate El Niño is seen by the end of 2023 and there is an 86 percent probability that El Niño will become moderate between November 2023 and January 2024.

PAGASA climate monitoring chief Ana Liza Solis told a public briefing those with health condition should take precaution against high temperatures and advised the public to conserve water and check for water leaks, as well as to save energy.

She added if the El Niño prolongs, “there is a possibility that it [2024] could be one of the highest (hottest) year on record.”

Currently, weak El Niño persists, and this could possibly result in dry spell or drought in the next two months.

Officials have noted that reduction in rainfall is likely, and, if this prolongs, high temperature will prevail, especially towards next year.



PH, UAE agree to continue advancing global climate action

By ARGYLL GEDUCOS

The Philippines and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) have agreed to continue working together in advancing global climate action ahead of the UAE's

hosting of the 28th Conference of the Parties (COP28) this year.

This developed after Climate Change Commission (CCC) Secretary Robert Borje and COP28 President Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber met in Bonn, Germany, last week to "further discuss areas of cooperation towards advancing and accelerating global climate action for the global south."

In a statement, the CCC said the discussion between the two officials focused on critical pillars of mitigation, adapta-

tion, loss and damage, and means of implementation and support.

To advance global climate action given national circumstances, Borje raised the importance of partnerships on technology development and transfer, finance and investments, capacity building, and other areas that may be explored, including communication, education and awareness, and research and development projects.

Sharing the same vision, Al Jaber said they are committed to working together towards a transformative, scaled-up, and integrated South-South Cooperation in the lead-up to COP28 and even beyond.

CCC said the bilateral partnership between the two countries opens many opportunities to address the issue of climate change.

"The bilateral partnership presents new pathways of cooperation towards accelerated just transition and greenhouse gas emissions avoidance and introduction of new and appropriate technology and innovation," it said.

"Under the guidance of President Marcos, the CCC is hopeful that this partnership with the United Arab Emirates and other UNFCCC Parties will contribute to stronger global cooperation towards meaningful and transformative climate action," it added.



WORLD STRUGGLING TO SUPPORT LIFE

WELCOME TO THE ANTHROPOCENE, EARTH'S NEW CHAPTER

PARIS—Since 2009, a band of geologists and other scientists have toiled on locating ground zero for the Anthropocene, the proposed geological epoch borne of humanity's outsized impact on the planet.

On Tuesday they will deliver their findings.

In essence, the Anthropocene Working Group was mandated to answer three questions.

The first, roughly, is this: would aliens sifting through Earth's layered rocks and sediment a million years from now discern a human signature distinctive enough to mark a clear geological boundary?

If they did, when would it start?

The Working Group has concluded that humans and their activity have evicted the planet—and its inhabitants—from the stability of the Holocene epoch, which began 11,700 years ago and provided conditions that allowed human civilization to flourish.

The world is getting uncomfortably hot and its life-support systems are failing.

The threshold for the "epoch of humans" first proposed in 2002 by chemistry Nobel Paul Crutzen, they said, should be the mid-20th century.

This is when a sharp surge in greenhouse gas concentration, microplastic pollution, invasive species, radioactive traces from atom bomb testing and a dozen other markers of our species' growing influence added up to what scientists now call the Great Acceleration.

That leaves the question of the "golden spike" the single lake deposit, coral reef, ice core or other geological repository of evidence that best embodies the Anthropocene.

The "winner" will be announced Tuesday in joint press conferences at the Max Planck Society in Berlin and a meeting of working group scientists in Lille, France.

Presented as recommendations, the fruit of the Working Group's long labors must now be validated by skeptical, hard-nosed scientists at the International Commission on Stratigraphy (ICS) and the International Union of Geological Sciences.



IN SEARCH OF THE SPIKE Scientists handle a multiple-core sampling device in Beppu Bay, Japan, while looking for the site that offers evidence of the Anthropocene. —AFP

The chances of that happening are slim, according to almost everyone involved.

At one level, the issues under debate are narrow to the point of pedantry—rock experts quibbling over whether the Anthropocene merits inclusion in the International Chronostratigraphic Chart, the planet's official 4.6-billion-year timeline.

Some geologists say it doesn't meet the technical cri-

teria, even as they acknowledge a rupture with the past.

At the same time, marking the end of the Holocene and the start of a new epoch would force us to ponder humanity's devastating impact.

For the first time in Earth's history, a single species has not only radically changed the planet's morphology, chemistry and biology, but is aware of having done so.

Crutzen, who earned a Nobel for identifying the man-



STRATEGIC
COMMUNICATION
AND
INITIATIVES
SERVICE

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

04
PAGE

UPPER
 LOWER

FACE
 STORY

BANNER
 STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOON

07-11-23

TITLE:

Anthropocene

PAGE

DATE

made chemicals destroying the protective ozone layer, hoped the concept and reality of the Anthropocene would focus minds on the challenges ahead.

"It could well be a paradigm shift in scientific thinking," he said at a symposium in 2011.

A dozen years later, many of the scientists who look at how the strands of the Earth system intersect agree.

"It's the recognition that, 'Oh my God, we have tipping points. Oh my God, the Holocene is the only state that can support us,'" Johan Rockstrom, head of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research, told Agence France-Presse (AFP).

"The paradigm shift is the realization that we're leaving the Holocene and entering the Anthropocene."

Other scientists, however, remain unconvinced, including those against the Anthropocene being adopted as a formal epoch.

"The conditions which brought about glaciation"—a dozen mini-ice ages over the last million years—"haven't

changed, so we might expect that the Holocene is simply another interglacial," Phil Gibbard, secretary of the ICS, told the "Geology Bites" podcast last year.

He suggested the planet could continue in that pattern for another 50 million years.

As for the Anthropocene, Gibbard has suggested calling it an "event" covering millennia of human alterations of the environment.

For geologist Jan Zalasiewicz, who led the Anthropocene Working Group, that's not good enough.

Failure to formally ratify the concept, he said, would leave the impression that the Holocene conditions that allowed human civilization to flourish are still there.

"Clearly they are not," he told AFP.

In the end, Zalasiewicz said, we can only follow the evidence.

"Science is basically trying to establish what's real as opposed to what's not," he said.

"And the Anthropocene is real." —AFP