

15 August 2023 Tuesday



**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

# **NEWS CLIPPINGS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**



TITLE:

PAGE

DATE

# 'Review adverse impacts of reclamation projects'

By Krixia Subingsubing  
@krixiasINQ

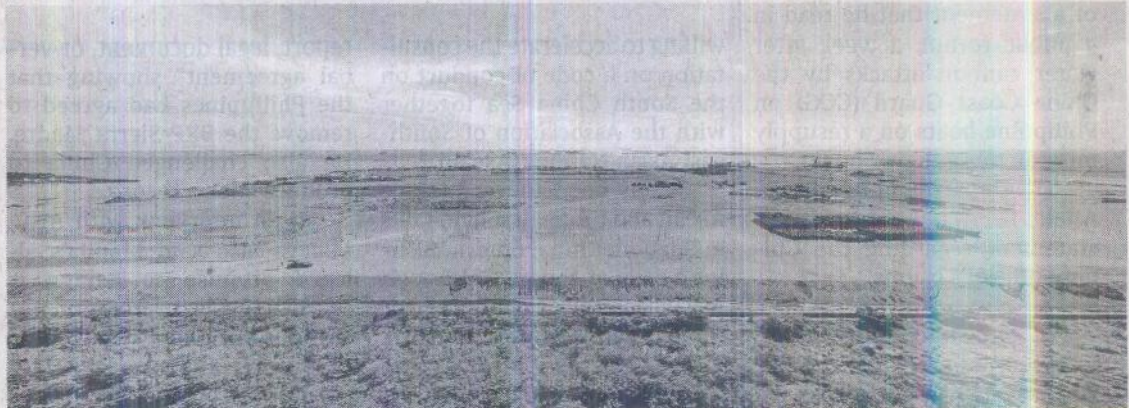
The respite from reclamation activities in Manila Bay could give the country's engineers and marine scientists time to study and design coastal engineering solutions that could mitigate its adverse impacts, according to experts advocating for stronger policies to improve coastal resilience in the country.

Speaking to reporters on Monday, Philippine Council for Industry, Energy and Emerging Technology Research and Development (PCIEERD) head Enrico Paringit and University of the Philippines (UP) geologist Fernando Siringan said it was even more urgent to improve the country's coastal management policies amid the threats of reclamation and rapid urban development.

This includes, among others, designing proper interventions that could protect coastal communities from erosion and flooding; and studying how projects like dump-and-fills affect coastal areas like Manila Bay, they said.

"We do not really exclude the possibility that these developments might even work for us especially since we're constrained in terms of resources," Paringit said.

"But we need to take a look at scientific merits of having them constructed, what are their pros and cons, what can make it suc-



LAND AHOY! The reclamation site in Manila Bay along Diokno Boulevard in Pasay City looks desolate on Monday after the government suspended all reclamation activities in the bay. —GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE

cessful and what could threaten it, what are its unintended consequences," he added.

## 'We wait first'

So "until such time that you have a clear idea of what is being lost and whether it can be recovered, or whether technology can be used to minimize impacts, then it's only right that we wait first," Siringan said.

Siringan was referring to President Marcos' orders to suspend all 22 reclamation activities in Manila Bay to review how these projects would impact its ecosystems.

This developed as the PCIEERD led a coastal resilience summit hosted by Mariano Marcos State University (MMSU) in Batac, Ilocos Norte province to discuss different experiences and

projects both here and abroad in improving coastal resilience.

Many advocates consider Manila Bay as the poster child of coastal management challenges, with reclamation and seabed mining drastically changing its landscape and ecosystems.

But "what is happening in Manila is happening across the country," Paringit said, as sea level rise and coastal erosion happen at varying degrees across the country.

## Coastal engineering

At least 60 percent of the country's population live in coastal communities, leaving them vulnerable to these climate change-related impacts.

"And while not everyone will suffer severe problems, they will likely experience one or few types

of coastal hazards and suffer long-term events," Paringit added.

These challenges are also why the PCIEERD built the country's first coastal engineering center in MMSU, a state university near the coast, to house projects and innovations to combat coastal erosion and flooding.

For now, the PCIEERD is bankrolling some P172.5 million worth of coastal engineering projects such as sea walls across the Philippines.

Even so, "we have just started capacitating ourselves on coastal engineering as a discipline and as a field expertise," Paringit said.

"We currently still have very few human resources, and some of them might have already been part of such development projects. So who else could evaluate [these projects]?" he added. **INQ**



STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATION  
AND  
INITIATIVES  
SERVICE

PHILIPPINE DAILY

BALANCED NEWS • FEARLESS VIEWS

INQUIRER

1  
PAGE

UPPER  
 LOWER

PAGE 1  
STORY

BANNER  
STORY

EDITORIAL

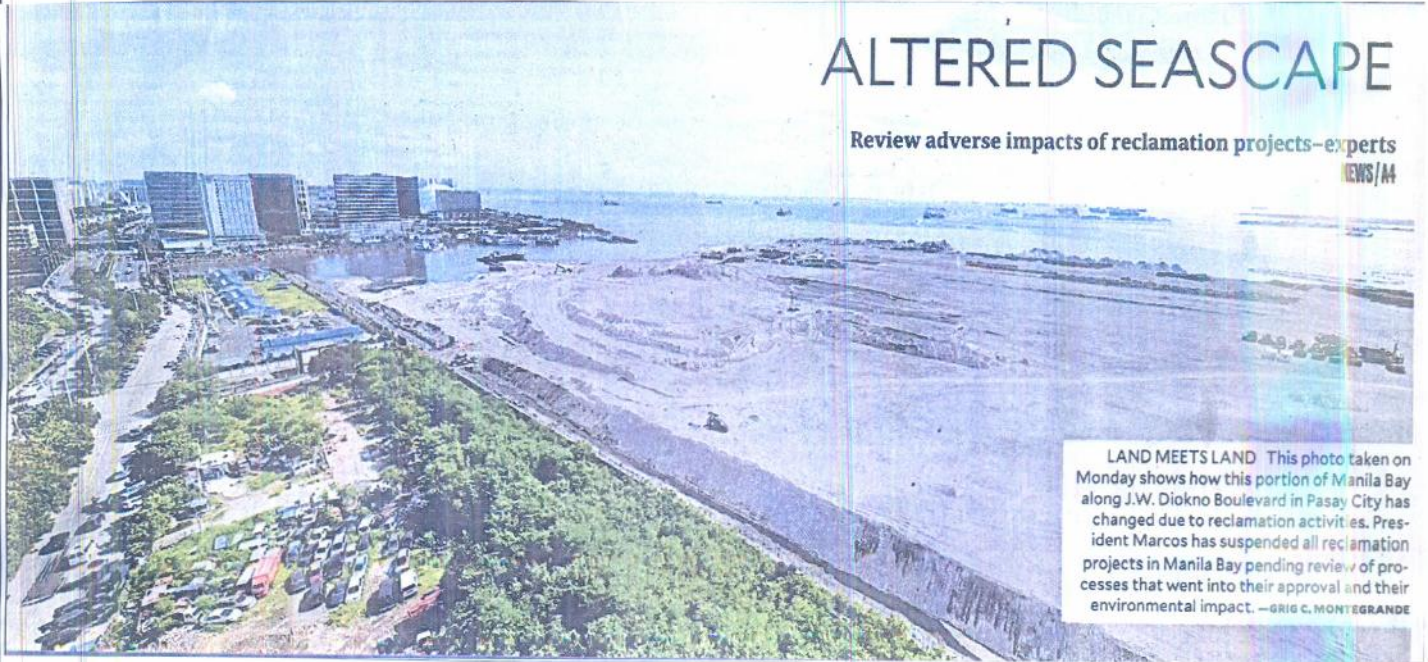
CARTOON

08-15-23

TITLE:

PAGE

DATE



# ALTERED SEASCAPE

Review adverse impacts of reclamation projects—experts  
NEWS/44

**LAND MEETS LAND** This photo taken on Monday shows how this portion of Manila Bay along J.W. Diokno Boulevard in Pasay City has changed due to reclamation activities. President Marcos has suspended all reclamation projects in Manila Bay pending review of processes that went into their approval and their environmental impact. —ERIC MONTESGRANDE



STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATION  
AND  
INITIATIVES  
SERVICE

08-15-23

PAGE

DATE

## PRA defends Manila Bay reclamation projects

By GHIO ONG

Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA) assistant general manager Joseph Literal is defending reclamation projects in Manila Bay, maintaining that the projects are compliant with government requirements.

"(The 13 Manila Bay reclamation projects which were all underway) have scrupulously obtained their Environmental Compliance Reports, area clearances and necessary certifications while adhering to additional prerequisites," Literal said in a radio interview over the weekend.

He added that the projects underwent "meticulous environmental evaluations, encompassing comprehensive studies delving into climate change impacts, geological analyses and holistic ecological ramifications."

In a statement sent to The STAR,

Literal claimed that the projects would not cause flooding in the mainland as reclaimed lands would be situated 20 to 200 meters from Manila Bay's coastlines.

The 13 approved reclamation projects would develop only 5,000 of the estimated 199,000 hectares in Manila Bay from Navotas City to Tanza in Cavite, he noted. There are a total of 22 reclamation projects nationwide.

President Marcos suspended the 22 reclamation projects last week pending review of their compliance with environmental laws.

As for Chinese companies blacklisted by the United States and involved in the reclamation projects, Literal said they "possess Philippine Contractor's Accreditation Board special licenses, substantiating their non-blacklisted status and compliance with Philippine laws, evading blacklisting." — Cecille Suerte Felipe



## EDITORIAL

# Suspended projects

**I**T IS gratifying that President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has suspended 22 Manila Bay reclamation projects, except one, following what the government perceives as problems in implementation.

The presidential suspension allows space for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to have a comprehensive review of proponents' compliance with environmental regulations.

Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga said: "We have to take our time, really beginning with those that are ongoing, because they are in fact, already impacting the areas. And then, we will graduate to those that are in fact, still not yet begun," she added.

Loyzaga said the suspension is already in effect. "As soon as the President speaks, I think that will be in effect... and we now have a formal (order)."

According to President Marcos, the sea along Roxas Boulevard could disappear because of the projects, approved when the incumbent president was Rodrigo Duterte (2016-2022).

Loyzaga said a scientific team, formed to conduct a community impact assessment, would be composed of a physical scientist, oceanographers, geologist, climate scientist and social scientist.

Asked about DENR's target, Loyzaga said, the DENR would know once the scientific team converges and the work

*"We hope something really bold and positive would be done – and fast – to correct the disquieting scenario"*

program is laid out.

The suspension followed the US embassy's concern the Manila Bay reclamation projects have ties to the China Communications Construction Co., which was blacklisted by Washington in 2020.

The Chinese firm has been included in the US Department of Commerce's Entity List for its role in helping the Chinese military construct and militarize the artificial islands in the South China Sea.

The US embassy added the CCCC had also been cited by the World Bank and Asian Development Bank for engaging in

"fraudulent" business practices.

It is unsettling that in a Senate hearing last week, Public Works Secretary Manuel Bonoan said his department was not involved in the approval of the reclamation projects, indicating a possible overreach by the Local Government Units.

"Is it proper for LGUs to award the contracts for the reclamation projects? From what I know, all bodies of water, including Manila Bay, are patrimonial assets owned by the state," he said in a radio interview.

"That's why I don't understand what happened here and why the LGUs were authorized to grant the contracts," he said. "It's one of the contentious issues here."

Then here comes Senator IV Ejercito who has urged the Senate blue ribbon committee to look into the "midnight gold rush" approval of 22 reclamation projects round Manila Bay.

Ejercito also questioned the authority of local government units to enter into contracts with private companies, many of which are owned by the Chinese government, to dredge and dump sand off the shores of Manila Bay.

"If we want to get to the bottom of these reclamation projects, all stakeholders and agencies concerned have to be summoned [to a Senate investigation]," Ejercito said, but stopped short of raising a time frame.

We hope something really bold and positive would be done – and fast – to correct the disquieting scenario.



## BBM faces litmus test at Ayungin



TO THE  
POINT

EMIL P.  
JURADO

### Manila Bay reclamations

President Marcos Jr. suspended 22 reclamation projects in Manila Bay, the reports said.

Santa Banana, there are 22 reclamation projects in Manila bay, all aimed at building artificial land areas in Manila Bay, I can't believe it!

With 22 reclamation projects in Manila, there goes the famous sunset of Manila Bay.

My gulay, what will happen to Manila Bay?

Whoever authorized them should be canned, jailed and the key thrown into the polluted Pasig River.

Well, at least BBM had the good sense of suspending them.

It's now up to the Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga to review them.

In my opinion, Mister President, they should, all 22 of them, be canceled.

They are all threats, not only to the environment, but to national security.

All for what, my gulay, for the benefit of people behind the reclamation?

What bothers me more about the reclamations projects right behind the American Embassy is that it is in joint venture with blacklisted state-owned China Communications Construction Co (CCCC) that was responsible for building those artificial islands for China at the West Philippine Sea, now highly militarized with airfields, ports and the like for the use of China at the South China Sea, which China claims to be its own under its mythical "nine-dash line" claim to the whole China Sea.

I believe not only the CCCC should be banned from getting involved in projects in the Philippines, but all Mainland Chinese business involvement in Philippine projects.

Note that, in most of the Chinese investments involved in the Philippines, they are state-owned.

Santa Banana, China does not have to invade the Philippines, they are already here!



STRATEGIC  
COMMUNICATION  
AND  
INITIATIVES  
SERVICE

Trusted Since 1898

# The Manila Times



08-15-23

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

PAGE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## Vessels for reclamation projects monitored

THE Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) said on Monday it would continue to closely monitor and inspect foreign vessels reportedly involved in reclamation activities in Manila Bay.

In an interview, PCG Manila Station Commander Capt. Jerome Lozada said that to date, they have inspected 47 vessels engaged in reclamation projects.

Lozada said all 47 vessels have complied with the documents issued by the Maritime Industry Authority (Marina).

The inspection was conducted with the Bureau of Immigra-

tion to check the documents of foreign nationals onboard the Chinese vessels.

"We inspected the safety documents and the statutory documents issued by Marina, and the maintenance of the engine," said Lozada.

He said all domestically registered vessels in Manila Bay are subject to inspection.

Lozada said no new vessels that will engage with the reclamation projects have arrived.

"We are still continuously monitoring the activities of these vessels," he said.

"We inspect them every three months as per our existing circulars. We will be closely monitoring to ensure that the vessels engaged in the reclamation projects are complying with the suspension that is being issued."

On August 10, House Deputy Majority Leader Erwin Tulfo warned about possible security threats after crew members of Chinese vessels docked in Manila Bay were seen being transported to areas around the bay.

Tulfo noted that the ships have been in the area for months and are involved in dredging and

reclamation.

The Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA), meanwhile, said all Chinese contractors in Manila Bay reclamation projects have secured permits to operate following reports on possible security threats.

"Before these vessels and their crew were allowed to enter or do business here in the Philippines, especially at Manila Bay, we required special permits from other government agencies," PRA Assistant General Manager Joseph Literal said on Monday.

**FRANCO JOSE C. BARONA**



## SMC river cleanup goes north

### BIZ BUZZ



It's not his responsibility, but he will take on the challenge anyway.

We're talking about San Miguel Corp. president and CEO **Ramon Ang**, who addressed the flooding issue in Pampanga that happened late last month due to the incessant rains.

This flooding in a short section of the North Luzon Expressway resulted in vehicular traffic slowing to a crawl and inconveniencing thousands upon thousands of motorists and travelers.

Ang said that the main culprit for the flooding was the clogged underside of the Tulaoc Bridge in San Simon, Pampanga, which caused water to go over it [thus flooding NLEX] instead of flowing freely under it.

The San Miguel chief said that he has sought the permission of Pampanga Gov. **Dennis Pineda** for the conglomerate to take it upon itself to restore the river's proper water flow and the latter has agreed to expedite the needed approvals.

Strictly speaking, of course, the cleanup job is nowhere near Ang's area of responsibility "but we will do it ourselves so that people will not be inconvenienced," he said.

Having already spent P3 billion over the last three years to clean up the Pasig, San Juan and Tullahan Rivers, Ang said he would now devote an equal amount of resources to dredging and desilting waterways in Bulacan and Pampanga to prevent a repeat of the recent flooding. —DAXIM L. LUCAS





## VIRTUAL REALITY

TONY LOPEZ

### The airport and floods

If there is one thing that riles Ramon S. Ang to the max, it is being accused, unfairly and falsely, of wrongdoing, especially as regards the consequences of action taken by the San Miguel Corp. management to implement or execute its major projects.

Aside from being a beer and beverage, food and power powerhouse, SMC is the largest private infrastructure company in the Philippines. It has rights to 964 kms of tollways in Luzon, 78 percent of total tollways. Its P735-billion New Manila International Airport (NMIA) on 2,500 hectares of land in Bulacan town, Bulacan is the single largest investment by any company, government or private, in the Philippines. In 2022, its P1.5-trillion revenues were equivalent to 6.8 percent of GDP or total national economic production.

After the Ondoy-level floods inundated Bulacan, Pampanga and provinces up north, social media erupted with speculation the massive deluge was caused by the Bulacan airport now under construction, with 2027 as the opening date target.

Hearing that, the SMC president and CEO went on the offensive. RSA met with top officials of the DENR, DPWH and the Metro Manila Development Authority and the governors of the flooded provinces.

He explained the recent major flooding in Bulacan this way:

When major typhoons like Egay and Falcon hit the country, vulnerable areas like Bulacan are heavily affected due to various reasons such as:

- Both Egay and Falcon brought substantial rainfall which naturally affected low-lying areas, as water from mountains and rivers in other provinces, along with spillage from dams, flow and accumulate.
- Heavily-silted and polluted rivers, waterways and drainage systems which reduce capacity to hold water and prevent floodwaters from being carried out to sea and instead overflow into communities.
- Land subsidence (sinking) due to over-extraction and depletion of groundwater which has caused land to settle or sink.
- The proliferation of fishponds has further impeded the flow of water and compromised waterways.
- Its proximity to Manila Bay and its river systems that make Bulacan susceptible to the impacts of rising sea levels.

The geographical location of Bulacan and its numerous river systems that are heavily polluted, not the future airport, make the province vulnerable to flooding.

Decades before the land restoration for the NMIA started, Bulacan had been subject to severe flooding from storms and typhoons.

The NMIA site in Bulacan sits on titled lands that were previously swamps and fishponds with pre-existing earth dikes. This is proven by maps of NAMRIA, the state maps agency.

The place is naturally surrounded by two main rivers—the Meycauayan River and the Maycapiz/Talipot River.

Also, there is no development outside of the normal boundaries of the NMIA property nor is there an obstruction on the pre-existing river systems.

According to RSA, “the construction of the airport, together with SMC’s parallel commitment to clean, deepen and widen the surrounding rivers, in fact, provides the province a ready solution to flooding at no cost to the government and taxpayers.”



SMC has spent P2 billion to dredge and clean Pasig and its sister rivers north of Manila, at no cost to the government. This explains, RSA points out, “why there was no flooding in Marikina, San Juan and Talayan Village in Quezon City.”

“The mitigation of floods as well as other risks, primarily through dredging and clean-up of Bulacan’s heavily-silted and polluted river systems, are integral to the airport’s operations and long-term viability,” says the company’s explainer.

SMC’s cleanup initiatives provide the Bulacan large-scale solution to flooding that was not there before. SMC has desilted and removed wastes from about 4.4 kilometers of a targeted 13-km length along the Talipot/Maycapiz River and Meycauayan River. A total of 537,788 metric tons of silt and solid waste was removed.

SMC is also coordinating with LGUs and the DENR on the expansion of the scope of its river cleanups to include other major rivers within and outside the airport project site to maximize flood mitigation.

SMC’s San Miguel Aerocity, Inc. has tapped international consultants to ensure that the project does not add to local flooding issues or cause adverse environmental impacts.

Per SMC’s initial findings, using flood modeling and actual monitoring of water volumes in the rivers adjacent to NMIA, there has been no increase in water levels since the land development started in 2022.

“The overall design of the airport project in Bulacan province is meant to address its problem of flooding that has existed for many decades and made worse by clogged waterways and drainages,” explains RSA.

Finally, RSA insists NMIA is not land reclamation. Land reclamation is the process of creating new land from oceans, seas, riverbeds or lake beds.

“The project site sits on titled lands,” clarifies SMC. RSA started buying lands in Bulacan in 1999 when he became enamored with flying and airports.

It’s just that in previous decades, much of the land area had been submerged due to subsidence and rising sea levels, and eventually converted into privately-owned fish pond businesses.

SMC’s international contractor, Royal Boskalis Westminster NV, is restoring submerged land into land form again, at a cost of euro 1.5 billion (\$1.64 billion).

An Export Credit Insurance (ECI) from the Dutch government backs the Boskalis contract.

Initially, SMC’s flood mitigation program around NMIA covered only Bulacan province’s rivers and tributaries.

Now, RSA has offered flood mitigation and river dredging services for Pampanga and other LGUs.

With his dredging and extensive river cleanup, RSA assures, “we can significantly increase the carrying capacity of our rivers and help solve flooding once and for all.”

The DENR, by presidential order, has suspended all the 22 reclamation projects along Manila Bay. BBM suspects the reclamation projects could be causing the recent massive floods.

After the floods, what concerns RSA most? The sharply slowing economy.

Email: biznewsasia@gmail.com



**08-15-23**

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

PAGE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## FIRST PERSON

ALEX MAGNO

### Tulaoc

#### Flood plain

I never really appreciated how many rivers and tributaries flowed through Central Luzon until I took a close look at the maps Ramon Ang reproduced at San Miguel headquarters.

Ang produced those detailed maps to argue two things: that the New Manila International Airport project was actually sitting on an island surrounded by two rivers and the sea; and that the waterways of the region need a sustained cleanup to prevent future clogging.

Waters from two mountain ranges – the Cordillera and the Sierra Madre – unload into the Central Luzon provinces, making their way to Manila Bay. With the rivers heavily silted and trash-filled and parts of the region experiencing subsidence due to overexploitation of our aquifers for irrigation, add the deforestation of the mountain ranges, flooding will become chronic unless a comprehensive engineering plan for the region is executed immediately.

The airport project itself does not involve creating new land from Manila Bay. It merely repurposes land that was previously used for agriculture and aquaculture. All the land used for this giant development have existing land titles.

The redevelopment of the land is being undertaken with technical support from Dutch engineers. No one could be better than the Dutch at water management. Their whole country was carved from the sea.

The international consultants, particularly Royal Boskalis, ensure that the airport project follows the strictest international standards in environmental and social impacts mitigation. As part of the airport project, San Miguel is implementing a massive river cleanup involving not just the surrounding river systems but, eventually, all the rivers in Bulacan and Pampanga.



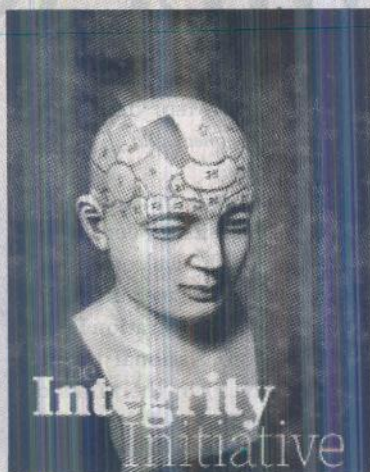


TITLE:

PAGE

DATE

# Goodbye, plastic



BY HENRY J. SCHUMACHER

**T**HE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has revealed that as of July, only 16.55 percent or just 662 of around 4,000 enterprises registered with the Department of Trade and Industry had submitted to the National Solid Waste Management Commission their programs for the proper management of their plastic wastes. These include plastic bags, sachets, labels, laminates, and both rigid and flexible plastic used for such products.

While it is good to see that quite a number of companies have responded to the call for sustainability in terms of changing their business model to address natural resource consumption, raw material selection, product/packaging design, we have to admit that the

numbers remain small, looking at the DENR data.

Given these appalling number and the pressure on companies to join the sustainability movement and help the country win the war against plastic, I would like to highlight a fantastic opportunity for companies that take the plastic issue seriously and be ahead of their competition.

A US company called Matter has developed fantastic products that kiss plastic goodbye:

Matter's plant-based biopolymer and fiber products are high-performing, high-quality, and certified compostable.

Their biopolymer bags are strong and durable, and they resist tearing.

Their fiber items are leak-resistant and microwave-safe.

Here's what's cool about all things Matter:

They:

- Fully compost within 12 months
- Return nutrients to the soil
- Re-use crop waste

Oh! And did I mention Matter uses far less energy to convert sustainable raw materials into products than conventional manufacturing? High-five for a smaller carbon footprint.

It's time to ditch the plastic and make it Matter!

Let me highlight some exciting information on "Make it Matter":

## Who we are

MAKE it Matter is a community of talented marketing professionals with nimble minds, caring spirits, and a life-long commitment to enjoying life's simple pleasures. We are strategists, writers, branding experts, designers, and producers with decades of successful projects behind us and a shared excitement about what's next.

## What we do

WE produce creative marketing communications that bring technology to life and help you educate, persuade, and inspire. Our projects include branding, presentations, digital and print stories, and live experiences. Our clients value us as attentive listeners, sounding boards, navigators of the road ahead, and sources for well-researched data.

## What we believe

WE believe in co-creating with our clients and, whenever possible, making it fun! Attentive listening and insightful questions lead our process, often guiding us to unexplored, breakthrough territory. We think that work is a place of doing and being, and we try always to deliver the best of both. The name Make it Matter reflects our desire to make what we create—and our time on earth—count.

Please take note that I am not representing Matter; I just find their activities exciting as they are addressing our desire to kiss PLASTIC goodbye. As said above, let's join and win the war against plastic. I would appreciate your feedback. You can contact me at [hjschumacher59@gmail.com](mailto:hjschumacher59@gmail.com)



08-15-23

DATE

TITLE:

## Climate change group warns public of heat waves, water shortage

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

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

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

Apayao, Cagayan and Kalinga are already experiencing drought based on the 60 percent reduction in the expected rainfall in these areas. Dry conditions were also experienced in Isabela and Tarlac.

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

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

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

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

"Due to the adverse impact of climate change on our communities, the government needs to provide adequate flood control

structures that would provide vulnerable areas with ample protection from the devastating impact of floods," said Gatchalian during the ceremonial turnover here of rice to the province of Bataan on Sunday morning.

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

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

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

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



## CCC warns vs heat waves

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

In a statement, CCC Commissioner Albert de la Cruz Sr. said dry spells will occur despite the heavy rains drenching parts of the country.

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

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

Dry conditions were also experienced in Isabela and Tarlac.

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

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

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

PNA



## COMMENTARY

# One year on: How has US climate plan affected trade ties?

**WASHINGTON, D.C.:** United States President Joe Biden's landmark climate action plan may have been trailed by billions of dollars in clean energy investment, but its potential to reshape trade lines has strained ties with allies.

The Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), signed into law on Aug. 16, 2022, directs some \$370 billion in subsidies toward America's energy transition, including tax breaks for US-made electric vehicles (EVs) and batteries.

But the incentives, which boost American manufacturing after years of offshoring, have triggered fears that they could draw businesses out of other countries.

"This was really the United States coming into the game in a big way," said Joshua Meltzer, a senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.

Europe had been subsidizing the development of clean technologies since before the IRA, as had China and others, he told Agence France-Presse (AFP).

But Washington's entry "meant that for these subsidies to remain competitive they had to be continued or raised," Meltzer said.

### 'Unintended consequences'

The legislation had some "unintended consequences" in constraining trade with key US allies,

said Jeffrey Schott, a senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics.

A sticking point was a consumer tax credit of up to \$7,500 for the purchase of EVs assembled in North America.

To qualify for the full credit, vehicle batteries should also have a percentage of critical minerals sourced from America or countries with which it has free-trade pacts, leaving the European Union and, initially, Japan in the cold.

This drew ire from those countries, and US officials eventually expanded access to the clean vehicle subsidies, noting in March that the free trade agreement requirement could also include newly negotiated critical mineral deals.

This includes one that Japan had inked with the US just shortly earlier, opening doors to benefits from some subsidies.

"Part of the initial friction was because ... the last revisions of the IRA were done in haste and in secret," said Schott.

There appeared to be a "lack of understanding that US allies were not all US free-trade partners," he added, leading to some "creative accounting" by the Treasury Department in defining how the law would be implemented.

Meltzer said the US "quite quickly tried to respond to these concerns by negotiating these

kind of bilateral deals," referring to Japan's pact and the EU's efforts toward a similar accord.

This alleviated many concerns, he added.

### Partnerships and relocations

Canada, which warned about the risks of a subsidy war, has since responded by matching certain IRA incentives with those of its own.

In April, it announced up to CA\$13.2 billion (\$9.8 billion) in subsidies over 10 years for Volkswagen's first overseas battery plant in Ontario.

Elsewhere, South Korea's largest automobile maker, Hyundai, is hoping to produce US-assembled electric cars eligible for subsidies at a site under construction in Georgia.

Other South Korean companies have forged partnerships with US ones to build assembly lines meeting IRA requirements, such as battery maker Samsung SDI's joint venture with General Motors to build an EV battery plant in the US.

"The IRA would benefit the US through additional output and lower strategic dependence vis-a-vis China," said an analysis by three European Central Bank economists in July.

"The US would gain from positive relocation effects, increasing production by 6 percent to 30

percent in electrical and optical equipment," the economists said in a column on the Center for Economic Policy Research's policy portal.

This comes mainly at China's expense, and to a smaller degree the EU's, the economists said.

While the relocation involves a relatively small share of total output, losses in specific sectors can be more substantial.

Since the climate law was signed, at least \$75 billion in new manufacturing investments has been announced, said policy analyst Jack Conness of think tank Energy Innovation: Policy and Technology.

IRA green subsidies may be "of similar size" to those available in the EU, but the US clean-tech subsidies are "simpler and less fragmented," said European think tank Bruegel in a report this year.

Such factors could make the US subsidies more attractive to businesses, at a time when Europe also faces rising energy costs following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

"If you're in an energy-intensive sector such as chemicals ... the US looks increasingly attractive," Meltzer said.

"It's a broader set of factors, I think, that are creating competitive challenges in Europe," he added. "The IRA is a part of that ... but it's not everything." AFP



TITLE :

PAGE

DATE

# Mayon-affected families receive ₱323-M aid – OCD

**L**EGAZPI CITY (PNA) — Government assistance to families in Albay province affected by the ongoing Mayon Volcano unrest has reached ₱323.3 million, the Office of Civil Defense in Bicol (OCD-5) reported on Monday.

Gremil Alexis Naz, OCD-5 spokesperson, said the significant aid increase from ₱265 million in the August 9 report shows the continuous assistance provided by different government agencies and other stakeholders.

"The additional cost of assistance of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) is from the Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Ating Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers (TUPAD) payout received by Mayon-affected beneficiaries, the continuous distribution of family food packs, payout for the Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situations (AICS) program, and Emergency Cash Transfer of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD)," Naz said.

At least 5,789 families or 20,254 persons from eight affected towns or 26 barangays were evacuated.

A total of 5,371 families or 18,801 individuals are inside 27 evacuation centers while 418 families or 1,453 persons are displaced but not sheltered

at evacuation centers.

A total of 1,120 livestock were also evacuated from different designated areas.

Assistance provided to affected local government units (LGUs) and the provincial government of Albay includes distilled water in six-liter bottles, drums, family food packs, family kits, family tents, financial and fuel aid, hog grower feeds, hygiene kits, laminated sacks, "malongs," modular tents, nets, nylon ropes, rice, and tarpaulins.

OCD-5 also provided siphoning services to address comfort room concerns in evacuation centers and fuel assistance to members of the logistics cluster.

Meanwhile, Marygizelle Mesa, DSWD-5 spokesperson, said an initial 4,950 sacks of rice intended as aid for the Mayon-affected families arrived here over the weekend from the Japan Ministry of Agriculture-Forestry and Fisheries under the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) Plus Three Emergency Rice Reserve Tier 3 program.

An additional 5,050 sacks of rice are expected to arrive by August 17.

Mayon Volcano is still under Alert Level 3, a relatively high level of unrest.



PAGE

UPPER  
 LOWER

PAGE 1  
 STORY

BANNER  
 STORY

EDITORIAL

CARTOO

08-15-23

TITLE: \_\_\_\_\_

PAGE \_\_\_\_\_

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

## Casiguran, Aurora sizzles at 60°C heat index on Aug. 14

By ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

The heat index, or temperature as perceived by the body, reached 60 degrees Celsius (°C) in Casiguran, Aurora on Monday, Aug. 14, based on the monitoring of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).

For the fourth day in a row, PAGASA has recorded extremely dangerous heat indices in Casiguran: 53°C on Aug. 11, 53°C on Aug. 12, 59°C on Aug. 13, and 60°C on Aug. 14.

A heat index above 52°C indi-

cates "extreme danger" because "heat stroke is imminent," PAGASA said.

In addition to Casiguran, 16 other areas on Monday experienced "dangerous" heat indices: Calapan, Oriental Mindoro (45°C); NAIA, Pasay City (43°C); Dagupan City, Pangasinan (43°C); Tuguegarao City, Cagayan (43°C); Baler, Aurora (43°C); Ambulong, Tanauan, Batangas (43°C); Alabat, Quezon (43°C); Daet, Camarines Norte (43°C); Virac, Catanduanes (43°C); Roxas City, Capiz (43°C); Calayan, Cagayan (42°C); Aparri, Cagayan (42°C); ▶ 9

## Casiguran, Aurora sizzles at 60°C heat index on Aug. 14 ◀

Iba, Zambales (42°C); CLSU Muñoz, Nueva Ecija (42°C); Sangley Point, Cavite (42°C); and San Jose, Occidental Mindoro (42°C).

PAGASA said a heat index ranging from 42°C to 51°C indicates impending "danger," as "heat cramps and heat exhaustion are likely," and "heat stroke is probable with continued activity."

In the next 24 hours, the southwest monsoon, or "habagat," may continue to bring scattered light to occasional heavy rains to Palawan, Western Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula, Basilan, Sulu, and Tawi-Tawi.

Meanwhile, the rest of the country will continue to experience partly cloudy to cloudy weather with isolated rain showers or thunderstorms.