

31 JULY 2023 Monday



**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

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# Pasig River development body up

BY KRISTINA MARALIT

**P**RESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has ordered the creation of the Inter-Agency Council for the Pasig River Urban Development as part of his administration's efforts to enhance the quality of life along the river's banks.

The directive was issued through Executive Order (EO) 35, signed by Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin on July 25.

The four-page circular highlights Pasig's significance in trade and tourism.

"The Pasig River holds immense historical and cultural significance as a vital waterway which facilitates trade, transportation, and commu-

nication, and serves as a prominent landmark and tourist attraction," part of the circular said.

To be chaired by the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development secretary and vice-chaired by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) chairman, the Inter-Agency Council will oversee the rehabilitation of the Pasig River

and nearby water systems.

The council will have as members the secretaries of the Departments of Public Works and Highways, Environment and Natural Resources, Interior and Local Government, Tourism, Transportation, Finance, and Budget and Management; the chairmen of the National Historical Commission of the Philippines and the National Commission for Culture and the

Arts; the general manager of the Philippine Ports Authority; the commandant of the Philippine Coast Guard; general manager of the Laguna Lake Development Authority; and the chief executive officer of the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority.

The National Housing Authority will serve as the secretariat of the council.



# Marcos forms inter-agency body for Pasig River rehab

By HELEN FLORES

An inter-agency body has been formed by President Marcos to accelerate the rehabilitation and enhancement of banks along the Pasig River, a vital waterway and a prominent landmark and tourist attraction in the country, Malacañang said yesterday.

The Inter-Agency Council for the Pasig River Urban Development was created under Executive Order 35, issued and signed by Executive

Secretary Lucas Bersamin on July 25.

The council, which will be chaired by the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development, will be responsible for facilitating and ensuring the full rehabilitation of the banks along the Pasig River water system and nearby water systems.

According to the EO, the Pasig River holds "immense historical and cultural significance as a vital waterway, which facilitates trade, transportation, and communication,

and serves as a prominent landmark and tourist attraction."

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority will serve as the council's vice chair while the following agencies will serve as its members: Departments of Public Works and Highways; Environment and Natural Resources; Interior and Local Government; Tourism; Transportation; Finance, and Budget and Management, as well as the Historical Commission of the Philippines,

National Commission for Culture and the Arts, Philippine Ports Authority, Philippine Coast Guard, Laguna Lake Development Authority, and Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority.

Aside from facilitating and ensuring the full rehabilitation of Pasig River, the council is also tasked to formulate a Pasig River Urban Development Plan and implement a coordinated and integrated rehabilitation of the Pasig Riverbanks system and

nearby water systems, EO 35 said.

In November 2019, Marcos' predecessor, Rodrigo Duterte, issued EO 93, abolishing the Pasig River Rehabilitation Commission.

Under EO 93, Duterte stressed the need to "consolidate ongoing rehabilitation efforts in all river systems and tributaries within the Manila Bay Region and streamline rehabilitation functions by transferring them to agencies with relevant core mandates."





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# Marcos forms inter-agency council for Pasig River rehabilitation

By ARGYLL CYRUS GEDUCOS

President Marcos has constituted the Inter-Agency Council for the Pasig River Urban Development as part of the administration's response to the urgent need to rehabilitate and enhance the quality of life along the banks of Pasig River.

Malacanang issued Executive Order (EO) No. 35 signed by Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin on July 25 highlighting Pasig River's significance in trade and tourism.

"The Pasig River holds immense historical and cultural significance as a vital waterway which facilitates trade, transportation, and communication, and serves as a prominent landmark and tourist attraction," the President said.

"There is an urgent need to rehabilitate and enhance the quality of life along the banks of the Pasig River, its tributaries, and surrounding communities," he added.

Based on the four-page EO, the Inter-Agency Council will be responsible for facilitating and ensuring the complete rehabilitation of the banks along the Pasig River and nearby water systems.

The Council will be chaired by the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) Secretary with the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) chief as co-chairman.

Its members will come from 13 other agencies: Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG),

Department of Department of Tourism (DOT), Department of Transportation (DOTr), Department of Finance (DOF), Department of Budget and Management (DBM), National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP), National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA), Philippine Ports Authority (PPA), Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), and the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA)

The National Housing Authority (NHA) shall serve as the Secretariat of the Council and is tasked to provide administrative support to its member agencies.

According to the President, the convergence of concerned national government agencies was necessary to synchronize and strengthen inter-agency efforts to accelerate the implementation of policies, programs, and projects that would improve the water quality, restore marine life, and develop the Pasig River's banks, tributaries, and surrounding communities.

Aside from facilitating and ensuring the full rehabilitation of the Pasig River, the Council must formulate a Pasig River Urban Development Plan. The Council shall implement a coordinated and integrated rehabilitation of the Pasig Riverbanks and nearby water systems.

It is also tasked to ensure that easements provided under the Civil Code of the Philippines and other relevant laws are followed. It must study, prepare, and implement a comprehensive shelter plan for the relocation of informal settlers and

accept grants or any assistance from local and foreign sources subject to existing laws.

The Council is also directed to work closely with the national government agencies and local government units to review existing Presidential issuances related to the Pasig River's rehabilitation and development. It is likewise tasked to recommend their repeal or amendment to the Office of the President.

The Council is also directed to submit a quarterly report on implementing the EO.





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## PBBM OKs plan on Pasig River rehab and dev't

PRESIDENT Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has approved an inter-agency council for the Pasig River urban development plan.

Malacanang said this is part of the administration's response to the urgent need to rehabilitate and enhance the quality of life along the banks of the river.

A four-page Executive Order (EO) No. 35, issued on July 25 and signed by Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin, stated that the inter-agency council will be responsible for facilitating and ensuring the full rehabilitation of the banks along the Pasig River water system and nearby water systems.

The inter-agency council will be chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD), vice-chaired by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) chairman with 13 member agencies such as the DPWH, DENR, DILG, DOT, DOTr, DOF, DBM, NHCP, NCCA, PPA, PCG, LLDA and TIEZA.

Aside from facilitating and ensuring the full rehabilitation of the Pasig River, the council is also tasked to formulate a Pasig River Urban Development Plan and implement a coordinated and integrated rehabilitation of the Pasig Riverbanks system and nearby water systems. It is also tasked to ensure that easements provided under RA 386 (Civil Code of the Philippines) and other relevant laws are followed; study, prepare and implement a comprehensive shelter plan for relocation of informal settlers; and, accept grants or any assistance from local and foreign sources subject to existing laws, rules and regulations.



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## PBBM forms council for Pasig River rehabilitation and devt

**P**RESIDENT Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. has issued Executive Order (EO) 35, establishing the "Inter-Agency Council for the Pasig River Urban Development" as part of the administration's response to the urgent need to rehabilitate and enhance the quality of life along the banks of the Pasig River.

A four-page EO, issued last July 25 and signed by Executive Secretary Lucas Bersamin, stated that the council would be responsible in facilitating and ensuring the full rehabilitation of the banks along

the Pasig River water system and nearby water systems.

The inter-agency council will be chaired by the Secretary of the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD), vice-chaired by the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) chairman, with 13 member-agencies such as the Departments of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Interior and Local Government (DILG), Tourism, (DOT), Transportation (DOTr),

Finance (DOF), Budget and Management (DBM), National Historical Commission of the Philippines (NHCP), National Commission on Culture and Arts (NCCA), Philippine Ports Authority (PPA), Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), and Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprises Authority (TIEZA).

Aside from facilitating and ensuring the full rehabilitation of the Pasig River, the council is also tasked with formulating a Pasig River Urban Development Plan and

implementing a coordinated and integrated rehabilitation of the Pasig Riverbanks system and nearby water systems.

It is also tasked with ensuring that easements provided under RA 386 (Civil Code of the Philippines) and other relevant laws are followed; study, prepare, and implement a comprehensive shelter plan for the relocation of informal settlers; and, accept grants or any assistance from local and foreign sources subject to existing laws, rules, and regulations.

The council is also directed to work closely with the national government agencies and local government units to review the existing presidential issuances related to the rehabilitation and development of the Pasig River and recommend to the Office of the President the repeal or amendment of the same.

The council is also directed to submit a quarterly report on the implementation of the EO.

According to the EO, the Pasig River holds immense historical and cultural significance as a vital waterway that facilitates trade, transportation, and communication and

serves as a prominent landmark and tourist attraction.

"There is an urgent need to rehabilitate and enhance the quality of life along the banks of the Pasig River, its tributaries, and surrounding communities," the EO read.

The EO added the convergence of concerned national government agencies is necessary to synchronize and strengthen inter-agency efforts to accelerate the implementation of policies, programs, and projects that aim to improve water quality, restore marine life, and develop the banks of the Pasig River, its tributaries, and surrounding communities.

*Jovee Marie N. Dela Cruz*





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# DENR flagged over P2-B unliquidated funds

By **ELIZABETH MARCELO**

The Commission on Audit (COA) has called out the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) over P2.024 billion in unliquidated funds it transferred to national government agencies, local government units and government-owned and controlled corporations for supposed implementation of various projects.

In its 2022 annual audit report on DENR, the COA noted that of a total of P3.577 billion fund transfers made by the DENR in 2022 and previous years, 56.59 percent or P2.024 billion remained unliquidated by the implementing agencies (IAs) as of Dec. 31, 2022. Of the total unliquidated amount, P901.252 million was transferred in 2022 while P1.123 billion was transferred in prior years.

The COA noted that P91.750 million of the unliquidated transferred funds were already considered "dormant or non-moving" for more than 10 years, while the remaining

P1.920 billion were outstanding for less than 10 years.

"During the year (2022), demand letters and follow-up letters were sent on various dates to IAs requiring the submission of liquidation reports and refund of the unutilized fund transfers for completed projects, if any; however, in spite of the agency's efforts, the fund transfers remained unliquidated," the commission said.

"No other further actions like meeting with the IAs were made to enforce liquidations; thus, the existence of enormous balance of transferred funds," it added.

The audit body cited its Circular 94-013, which requires the source agency, in this case the DENR, to require the IAs to regularly submit liquidation reports as well as a copy of journal vouchers concerning their expenditures.

It also cited COA Circular 2016-005 which mandates all government agencies to "conduct regular and periodic verification, analysis, and validation" of existing receivables,

unliquidated cash advances and fund transfers and determine the accountable officers and IAs.

The audit body said the same circular also directs the head of the agency to submit to COA a request for authority to write-off from its book of accounts any dormant receivables.

The COA noted that while a total of P91.750 million of the transferred funds remained dormant or unliquidated for more than 10 years, the DENR Central Office as well as other regional offices (ROs) and Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Offices or PENROs did not make any requests to write off or to derecognize the amounts from their books.

The COA, however, clarified that writing off a dormant account from the books "does not mean condoning/extinguishing the obligation of the accountable officer debtor."

Aside from the Central Office, the other DENR offices identified to have unliquidated fund transfers were ROs in Ilocos region, Central

Luzon, Calabarzon, Western Visayas, National Capital Region and Cordillera Administrative Region.

Also called out for unliquidated fund transfers were three DENR bureaus: Land Management Bureau, Biodiversity Management Bureau, and Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau as well as the PENROs of Apayao, Ilocos Norte, Pangasinan, Bataan, Bulacan, Pampanga, Laguna, Cavite, Iloilo, Davao Oriental, Negros Occidental, Samar, Eastern Samar and Zamboanga del Norte.

The COA recommended to the concerned DENR offices to "continue sending the demand letters regularly and make representation with the heads of the concerned IAs, for the submission of the liquidation documents of fund transfers and the return of the unexpended balances of all completed projects, if any."

In their respective replies the concerned DENR offices committed to comply with the audit recommendation and to continue exerting efforts to demand liquidation by the IAs.





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**YOUNGBLOOD**

# The changing weather

EARL CARLO GUEVARRA

**A**t the start of 2023, Zamboanga City was battered by floods that have never been seen in decades, caused by a mere low-pressure area that wasn't supposed to bring record-breaking rains down from the sky.

While my family was doing fine and only had to deal with the inconvenience of brownouts and water interruptions, hundreds of thousands of people in the port city weren't as lucky. For those who remember basic Philippine geography, Zamboanga City is supposed to be a type 3 city—this means that while there are light monsoon rains and thunderstorms from May to October, the period between November and April is supposed to be quite dry.

Within a few hours, torrential rains flooded the runways of the Zamboanga City International Airport to the point that it had to shut down. Then came the kicker: The entire portion of the national highway within the city proper was inundated in knee-deep water, and to top it all, two bridges that connect Zamboanga to the rest of Mindanao and the country have suffered extensive damage.

In economic terms, that's equivalent to tens of millions of pesos worth of damage and lost productivity.

On the human side of things, thousands of people have been forced to abandon their homes and stay in evacuation centers at the beginning of the year. Knowing that everyone was still reeling from the effects of the global pandemic, those hit by this disaster would have been completely terrified.

This was not the first time that it happened as a more severe disaster took place in 2022: Many portions of the city have been covered in neck-deep water; animals such as dogs, cats, pigs, and even cows were forced to swim in the floods to save themselves, while the rivers overflowed—drowning bridges and cutting access from one part of the city to another.

When my Kuya and Ate sent pictures and videos of what was happening in the city, I gasped in shock. Many of the places were flooded two meters deep, which was more than enough to drown most people, swimmers included. Given that the city was supposed to have outlets, both natural and man-made, to drain the water out to the vast expanses of the Sulu Sea, the effects of the storm served as a testament to its unexpected severity and strength.

It made me wonder: How did the weather look back in the day? Was it more destructive? Or was it more forgiving?

Once upon a time, an announcement of a typhoon usually meant suspension of classes and/or work for one or two days; it was a rather manageable routine as long as the rivers didn't overflow. For us kids, it meant that we could spend our days watching "Doraemon," "Mobile Suit Gundam SEED," "Slam Dunk," or the latest anime/cartoon show in peace; alternatively, we could all go out and play in the rain.

Indeed, there was predictability in the weather back then.

Today, each low-pressure area advisory usually brings chills down everyone's spine; there's no way to know whether it will suddenly become a supertyphoon, cause all the rivers to overflow, or bring winds and rains of the century that would send roofs flying in the sky and roads drowning in neck-deep water.

The typhoons seem to be racing to break a record, whether in the amount of rainfall, wind velocity, or extent of damage—as if hell-bent on causing chaos and destruction in their path.

You don't anymore know how the weather will go: There could be harsh and unappealing heat in the morning, heavy rains at noontime, and dry, cold winds at sunset. The weather could even change every six hours or so.

Even on days when the weather is supposed to be more predictable, it can be two extremes: heat that would make you feel as if you are in a sauna, and rain that quickly fills up the streets and makes you wonder what kind of sin you did to deserve this kind of downpour. I don't remember when the weather started to become extremely scary, but I do also think that it's not too late to replant trees, take care of our environment, and simply be more responsible with the way that we interact with nature on this little planet that we call Earth.

Sometimes, I think that the record-breaking droughts and wildfires worldwide as well as the history-making storms that we are experiencing in our part of the world are a way to remind us that we are not supposed to abuse this planet, but rather serve as its stewards and use it responsibly and in harmony with the millions of other creatures and lifeforms.

It's simply heartbreaking to see lives lost simply because we didn't properly do our job as stewards of this planet.

Earl Carlo Guevarra, 29, is a proud Zamboangueño who lives in the heart of Manila. He travels to different places and consumes huge amounts of fruit tea in his free time.





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# Promising ways to catch and store rainwater

Keep thinking that a major reason why there is no sense of urgency among Filipinos in addressing climate change is the smug thought that we are in a climatically hot and wet country, which is further fed with copious rainfall by regular typhoons. But I would like to disabuse our mind of such notion because, among Southeast Asian countries and Japan, the Philippines actually ranks second from the lowest in terms of per capita water availability a year, with only 1,907 cubic meters per person, based on a study by the World Bank on the Philippine Environment Monitor early in the millennium.

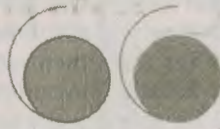
While water-related government agencies are being urged to address water scarcity and the high cost of agricultural products, I would like to offer practical advice on where to focus our attention so that we can collect and store water more cheaply and quickly at the sub-watershed and household levels.

One promising alternative is setting up what are called small water impounding projects (SWIPs). SWIPs that are built in small sub-watersheds are cheaper and faster to construct, plus they directly provide local government units with water and other benefits, and closely involve the local community in their development efforts. As communities are mobilized at the more manageable level of sub-watersheds that abound in our mainly mountainous country, this approach can even be a practical way of rehabilitating our more than 130 impaired critical watersheds.

The SWIP is a structure constructed across a narrow depression or valley to hold back water and develop a reservoir that will store rainfall and runoff during the rainy season for immediate or future use. Its spe-

## COMMENTARY

MELITON B. JUANICO



### IT IS ABOUT TIME THAT WE FOCUS OUR ATTENTION AT THE HOUSEHOLD LEVEL, AND ON THE NEGLECTED PRACTICE OF RAINWATER HARVESTING

cific functions include: crop irrigation, flood control; groundwater recharge; aquaculture; domestic water use, water for livestock, and recreation/ecotourism. A study by the Forest Management Bureau in 2015 puts the cost of a SWIP construction at only around P300,000.

A joint study by the Department of Public Works and Highways and the Department of Agriculture in 2001 of 25 SWIPs in northern Luzon also showed that, compared to non-SWIP farms, SWIP areas had significantly higher palay yields during both rainy and dry seasons. The study also pointed out that the key to the success of a SWIP project

includes the early participation of beneficiary farmers in planning decisions from the formation and design stages, and nurturing the farmers' sense of project ownership.

The government should lose no time in shifting its focus to this promising project. Amid the threat of more frequent droughts hitting the country during El Niño events and the consequent short notice given by the National Water Resources Board to households on cuts to their water supply, it is also about time that we focus our attention at the household level, and on the neglected practice of rainwater harvesting commonly observed in arid regions of the world.

I am referring to rainwater collection that captures water from the roofs of houses through the use of a gutter that conducts the water into either a rain barrel or into a cistern placed either above or below the ground. In the Iloilo province where I come from, towns without piped water commonly use a tall cylindrical tank for catching and storing rainwater for general household use. We call the tanks "allebe," a corruption of the Spanish word "aljibe"—meaning cistern.

A study by S.F. Heron in 2018 observes that a typical household in cities can reduce its consumption of treated water from mains by between 30 and 50 percent through rainwater harvesting. We should lose no time in actively promoting long-ignored practices as we face the challenges of climate change.

Meliton B. Juanico is a retired professor of geography at the College of Social Sciences and Philosophy at the University of the Philippines Diliman, and is a practicing licensed environmental planner.





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# Angat, other dams' water levels continue to rise

By RAMON EFREN LAZARO

The water level of Angat Dam continues to rise from its minimum operating level following the rains brought by Typhoon Egay and the effects of approaching storm Falcon.

Records from the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office of Bulacan showed that Angat Dam's water elevation at 8 a.m. on July 30 was at 194.00 meters or 2.1 meters higher com-

pared to its previous day level of 191.90 meters.

This is 18 meters below its normal high water level of 212 meters and is moving closer to a more stable water level for the coming months when El Niño is expected.

The effects of the incoming typhoon Falcon are expected to further raise the water elevation of Angat Dam.

On the other hand, Ipo Dam was still releasing a total of 47.20 cubic

meters per second (CMS) of water yesterday morning to its downstream river which flows toward Bustos Dam, Josephine Salazar, regional director for Central Luzon of the National Irrigation Administration, told **The STAR**.

Meanwhile, Bustos Dam deflated its Rubber Gate No. 3 again, discharging 355 CMS of water to its downstream river system that slices through the towns of San Rafael, Bustos, Baliwag, Pulilan, Plaridel,

Calumpit, Paombong and Hagonoy before flowing out to Manila Bay.

In a radio interview over *dzBB*, Bulacan Gov. Daniel Fernando blamed Bustos Dam for the floodwater in the towns on its downstream river system after it released more than 700 CMS of water.

The governor also pointed to the big volume of water from the San Jose del Monte river system as the culprit in the overflowing of the Bocaue River.

Motorists felt the brunt of the flood as it inundated a stretch of the North Luzon Expressway in Bulacan including parts of MacArthur Highway, which are both major thoroughfares.

Donna Marcelo, vice president of the communication and stakeholder management of NLEX Corp., said in a text message to **The STAR**: "Flooding was due to the overflow of the Bocaue River and the release of water from Ipo Dam (Saturday)."





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# 'Falcon' intensifies into severe tropical storm; enhanced 'habagat' may bring more rains

By ELLALYN DE VERA-RUIZ

Tropical cyclone Falcon (international name: Khanun) further intensified on Sunday, July 30, and may bring more rains over parts of the country

in the next three days, said the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).

In its 5 a.m. bulletin, PAGASA said the center of Falcon was last located

1,180 kilometers east of northern Luzon.

Falcon was upgraded from a tropical storm to a severe tropical storm with maximum sustained winds of 95 kilometers per hour (kph) near

the center and gusts of up to 115 kph.

It may continue to intensify gradually and become a typhoon between Sunday evening and Monday morning, July 31, as it moves over the Philippine Sea. ► 4





## 'Falcon' intensifies into severe tropical storm; enhanced 'habagat' may bring more rains 1◀

PAGASA said Falcon may remain far from the country's landmass, making the raising of tropical cyclone wind signals still unlikely.

However, it may continue to pull the southwest monsoon, which could bring rains over Metro Manila, Zambales, Bataan, Pampanga, Bulacan, Occidental Mindoro, Palawan, Romblon, Northern Samar, and most of Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon), Bicol Region, and Western Visayas on Sunday.

On Monday, monsoon rains may persist in Metro Manila, Ilocos Norte, Pangasinan, Zambales, Bataan, Pampanga, Bulacan, Occidental Mindoro, Palawan, Romblon, Northern Samar, and most of Calabarzon, Bicol Region and Western Visayas, and on Tuesday in Metro Manila, Ilocos Region, Abra, Benguet, Zambales, Bataan, Bulacan, Bicol Region, and most of Calabarzon, Mimaropa (Oriental Mindoro, Occidental Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, Palawan), and Western Visayas.

"Under these conditions, flooding and rain-induced landslides are expected especially in areas that are highly or very highly susceptible to these hazards as identified in hazard maps and in localities that experienced considerable amounts of rainfall for the past several days," PAGASA said.

Falcon continues to move north-northwestward at 15 kph, and may leave the country's area of responsibility on Monday or Tuesday, Aug. 1.

### La Mesa Dam

The La Mesa Dam in Quezon City is close to overflowing due to incessant rains caused by the southwest monsoon, or "habagat" enhanced by severe tropical storm Falcon.

"The water level of La Mesa Dam

as of 9:30 p.m. (July 29) is 79.81 meters and is expected to rise due to continuous occasional rains caused by the southwest monsoon. Excess flood waters in La Mesa Dam will overflow in the event that the dam elevation reaches 80.15 meters," PAGASA said in a hydrological dam situationer issued at 10 p.m., Saturday.

Since the La Mesa Dam has no floodgates, excess water may overflow into the Tullahan River and nearby communities.

A flood warning was raised over Pasig, Marikina, and Tullahan rivers and their tributaries Upper Marikina River—Rodriguez, Antipolo, and San Mateo in Rizal, Quezon City, and Marikina City; Lower Marikina River—Pasig City and Mandaluyong City; Pasig River—Pasig City, Makati City, Mandaluyong City, and Manila City; Tullahan River—Quezon City, Caloocan City, Malabon City, Navotas City, and Valenzuela City; Mango River—Rodriguez, Rizal; Nangka River—Marikina City, and San Mateo and Antipolo in Rizal; and San Juan River—Quezon City, San Juan, and Manila City.

"People living near the mountain slopes and in the low-lying areas of the abovementioned cities and local disaster risk reduction and management councils are advised to take necessary precautionary measures," PAGASA said.

### Families evacuated

Nearly 300 families have preemptively evacuated their homes on Saturday night, July 29, after Marikina River's water level rose to 16 meters, triggering the 2nd alarm.

As of 9 a.m. on Sunday, July 30, 208 families remain in the city's evacuation centers, said Marikina

Mayor Marcelino "Marcy" Teodoro in a radio interview.

Majority of the families came from low-lying areas in the city, namely Barangays Malanday, Nangka, and Tumana.

Teodoro said that 34 evacuation centers around the city remain open in case heavy rains persist and the Marikina River water level warning system resets.

In Valenzuela City, 276 families temporarily took shelter in the city's evacuation centers on Sunday, July 30, as some villages were affected by floods and heavy rains caused by the southwest monsoon enhanced by severe tropical storm (STS) "Falcon."

According to the city government, the families, which include 1,013 individuals, were evacuated to 13 evacuation centers as of 11 a.m.

Valenzuela City Mayor Weslie "Wes" Gatchalian inspected the Coloong Pumping Station on Sunday, in preparation for the effects of rains caused by the monsoon and STS Falcon.

The mayor also visited the families at the evacuation centers on Saturday, July 29, while the city government distributed food packs and deployed its medical teams to provide assistance to affected residents.

As of 12 p.m. on Sunday, Cuevas Street in Barangay Dalandanan was not passable to light vehicles due to 10-12 inches of flood, while G. Lazaro Street, also in the same barangay, is not passable to all types of vehicles (18-22 inches of flood), according to the city government.

The local government said that all 22 pumping stations in the city are fully operational. (With reports from Khriscielle Yalao and Aaron Homer Dioquino)





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## Falcon intensifies before leaving PAR today

Severe Tropical Storm Falcon is expected to leave the Philippine area of responsibility tonight or tomorrow morning and may further intensify into a typhoon, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).

At a briefing, PAGASA weather specialist Aldczar Aurelio said that Falcon (international name Khanun) continues to enhance the southwest monsoon, bringing rains to the entire Luzon and Western Visayas.

Aurelio added that the center of Tropical Storm Falcon was located

1,180 kilometers east of Northern Luzon with maximum sustained winds of 95 km/hour near the center and gustiness of up to 115 km/hour as it moved north-northwestward at 15 km/hour.

"There is a low possibility that it will make landfall," Aurelio said.

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### Falcon From Page 1

He noted that Falcon may still develop into a typhoon today.

"Intense to torrential rain is expected in Zambales and Bataan, while heavy to intense rain in Occidental Mindoro, moderate to heavy rain in Metro Manila, Cavite, Pangasinan, Tarlac, Pampanga, Bulacan, Palawan, including Cuyo, Calamian and Kalayaan islands and Antique," he said.

Aurelio warned of flooding in the affected areas.

"We should remain on alert as the soil is saturated, causing possible landslides," he added.

According to Aurelio, other areas to be affected by monsoon rains include Romblon, Ilocos region, Northern Samar, a big portion of Calabarzon, Bicol region, Abra, Benguet and Western Visayas.

Aurelio said that due to the influence of the enhanced southwest monsoon, gale warning is in effect over several coastal waters along the western seaboard of Luzon.

"Sea travel is risky for small seacrafts. For larger vessels, operating in gale conditions requires experience and properly equipped

vessels. Mariners without proper experience or operating ill-

equipped vessels are advised to remain in port or seek safe

harbor," the state weather bureau said.

**- Bella Cariaso**





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**MORE HEAVY RAINS**

# PAGASA: 'FALCON' EXPECTED TO BE TYPHOON MONDAY

By Inquirer Luzon,  
Abby Boiser  
and Frances Mangosing  
@Team\_Inquirer

Severe Tropical Storm "Falcon" (international name: Khanun) is expected to become a typhoon on Monday morning before leaving the Philippine area of responsibility (PAR) by Monday night to Tuesday morning, the state weather bureau said on Sunday afternoon.

Falcon was already expected to reach typhoon category by Sunday, although it was still classified as a severe tropical storm as of the 5 p.m. bulletin issued by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

More heavy rains induced by the southwest monsoon, this time enhanced by Falcon, pounded parts of Luzon over the weekend, flooding areas still reeling from the onslaught of Typhoon "Egay" (international name: Doksuri) last week.

Pagasa maintained its earlier warning of "generally higher" rainfall as Falcon gained strength and moved closer within the PAR.

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# PAGASA: 'FALCON' EXPECTED TO BE TYPHOON MONDAY

## FROM A1

The storm was last located at 1,170 kilometers east of extreme northern Luzon with maximum sustained winds of 110 km per hour. Pagasa said it would move 930 km east northeast of extreme northern Luzon by Monday afternoon.

Falcon is not likely to make landfall. But as it continues to enhance the southeast monsoon, "gusty weather conditions" will prevail over over Ilocos Norte, Pangasinan, Zambales, Bataan, Pampanga, Bulacan, Metro Manila, Occidental Mindoro, Palawan, Romblon, Northern Samar and most of the Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon provinces), Bicol and Western Visayas regions.

The government continues to assess the impact of Egay some three days after it left the PAR, with the National Disas-

ter Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) reporting on Sunday that the typhoon has caused P4.4 billion worth of infrastructure damage and P1.5 billion worth of agricultural losses.

A total of 16 people were killed while 20 were missing and 52 sustained injuries.

Asked why fatalities in the boat sinking at Laguna de Bay (*see story on Page A4*) have not been included in Egay's death toll, the Office of Civil Defense said that incident "is still for validation whether it is related to... Egay as there [were] no Tropical Cyclone Wind Signal raised in [that] area."

So far, 40 areas have declared a state of calamity while some P64 million worth of aid has been provided to typhoon-hit regions, it added. —WITH REPORTS FROM JOANNA ROSE AGLIBOT, TONETTE OREJAS AND CARMELA REYES-ESTROPE INQ





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# State of calamity up in Bataan, Pampanga

By RIC SAPNU AND BELLA CARIASO

Floods and heavy downpour spawned by Super Typhoon Egay have prompted authorities to place the province of Bataan and four municipalities in Pampanga under a state of calamity.

Meanwhile, the provincial government of Bulacan is considering a similar declaration due to floods that affected 12 towns and two cities.

Bataan Gov. Joet Garcia announced on Saturday that the province is under a state of calamity due to the recent typhoon and the bad weather caused by the southwest monsoon and Tropical Storm Falcon.

Garcia said the bad weather destroyed up to P22.38 million worth of agricultural crops.

Up to 639 families are staying in different evacuation centers, he said.

As this developed, the towns of Macabebe, Masantol, San Simon and Sto. Tomas in Pampanga have been placed under a state of calamity due to massive floods.

Sto. Tomas was the latest to be placed under a state of calamity following a special session by the municipal board yesterday morning.

Several major roads in the province such as portions of the Apalit-Macabebe-Masantol Road, Bahay Pare-San Luis-Sto. Domingo Road and the Candaba-San Miguel Road were impassable to all types of vehicles as of yesterday.

Meanwhile, Bulacan Gov. Daniel Fernando said he might declare a state of calamity, although he would finalize it once he arrives from South Korea.

"I am scheduled to go home tonight (last night) from my mission (in South Korea). We are preparing the data for the declaration," Fernando said.

Earlier, Ilocos Norte was the first province in Northern Luzon to declare a state of calamity followed by Cagayan, Ilocos Sur, Abra and several towns and cities in Pangasinan.

The provincial government of Bulacan blamed the release of water from Bustos Dam for the massive flooding.

Fernando said he has called the attention of the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), which handles the operation of Bustos Dam.

"According to a report from our PDRRMO, at least 700 cubic meters per second of water were released. I was furious," Fernando said, referring to the provincial disaster risk reduction and management office.

Based on video footage provided to him by the PDRRMO, he said the volume of water released from the dam was way more than what the NIA claimed.

"I saw the video. The flow of water at the releasing gate was big," he said, adding that at least five gates of the dam are currently releasing water.

"I have been questioning the (stability) of the gates. Only five of the six gates are functioning and these five are unstable," he said.

Fernando said the flooding was exacerbated by the high tide and the monsoon rain.

"Rains are expected to persist as Typhoon Falcon will enhance the monsoon," he said.

The Calumpit District Hospital in Calumpit, Bulacan stopped accepting patients yesterday afternoon due to the flood.

In an advisory sent to the provincial government, hospital administrators said patients who have appointments were advised to reset their schedules.

Patients currently admitted in the hospital were transferred to the Bulacan Medical Center in Malolos for continuous treatment.

Emergency cases were given first-aid before being transferred to other hospitals, the advisory read.

## Price freeze

The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) is implementing price control on prime commodities in all areas hit by the calamities.

DTI Secretary Alfredo Pascual told journalists in Laoag, Ilocos Norte that traders should follow the price freeze order, otherwise they would face consequences.

Republic Act 7581 or the Price Act provides that prices of basic commodities should automatically be frozen in areas placed under a state of calamity.

DTI personnel will be deployed in typhoon-hit areas to monitor and ensure that the price freeze is properly implemented. - **With Jun Elias, Ramon Efrén Lazaro**





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Residents ride a hand tractor to cross a flooded street in Dagupan, Pangasinan yesterday. High tide and rain spawned by Typhoon Egay submerged several areas in the city. CESAR RAMIREZ



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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

**nation**

EDITOR: TERESA B. COROS

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# 'Weakening' slow lava effusion from Mayon continues

By ELLALYN RUIZ

**F**or the fourth consecutive day, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) observed a "weakening" of the slow effusion of lava from the Mayon Volcano crater

on Sunday, July 30.

"In the past 24-hour period, there has been a marked weakening of slow lava effusion from the summit crater of Mayon Volcano that fed lava flows on the Mi-isi (south), Bonga (southeastern), and Basud (eastern) gullies," Phivolcs said in a bulletin

issued at 8 a.m.

"Respectively, these lava flows have maintained distal lengths of approximately 2.8 kilometers, 3.4 kilometers, and 600 meters from the crater," it added.

Phivolcs first noticed the weakening of lava effusion on July 27.

However, Phivolcs said the volcano is still on Alert Level 3, which means that a hazardous eruption is still possible within weeks or even days.

It recorded 68 low-frequency volcanic earthquakes and 18 rock fall occurrences in the past 24 hours.

Communities near the restive volcano are recommended to maintain increased vigilance against lahars and sediment-laden stream flows on channels draining the vol-

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

Since Mayon Volcano's status was upgraded twice in the past month, first to Level 2 on June 5 and then to Level 3 on June 8, Phivolcs strongly advised that entry into the six-kilometer Permanent Danger Zone be strictly prohibited.

It warned that ash fall may occur in areas south of Mayon Volcano due to current wind patterns.

Phivolcs advised pilots to avoid flying near the volcano's summit because ash from a sudden eruption can be dangerous to aircraft.