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Speaker backs calamity state

NDRRMC recommendation awaits President's approval

PAENG'S DOING. An aerial shot shows residents wading through a flooded rice field at a village in Tuguegarao, Cagayan on October 30, a day after Tropical Storm Paeng hit. Authorities and emergency workers – from the Philippine Coast Guard, Bureau of Fire Protection (pictured), and other security agencies – scrambled to rescue residents trapped by floods and collapsed buildings while distributing relief goods across the country. **AFP, PCG, BFP photos**

By Ronald O. Reyes and Rio Araja

DISASTER officials on Sunday formally recommended that President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. place the entire country under a state of calamity for a year, after Tropical Storm "Paeng" left 48 people dead and a wide swath of destruction across almost all regions.

Paeng is expected to leave the Philippine area of responsibility Monday morning or afternoon.

A state of calamity would enable the government to tap additional funds for disaster relief and freeze prices of basic commodities.

House Speaker Martin Romualdez on Sunday said he supported the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) recommendation.

"The NDRRMC respectfully recommends the following: declare a national state of calamity due to the effects, damage, and projected impacts by severe tropical storm Paeng for a period of one year, unless earlier lifted; and to accept offers of international assistance based on needs," said NDRRMC Executive Director Raymundo Ferrer in his recommendation to Mr. Marcos.

As of press time, Malacanang still had no word on whether the President

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Speaker...

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would approve the disaster agency's proposal. On Saturday, Mr. Marcos said he will wait for the NDRRMC resolution even as he acknowledged the number of regions affected already merits a state of calamity declaration.

"Considering that many regions are affected, that justifies the state of calamity," the President said in a meeting with agency officials.

Meanwhile, Romualdez said: "Reports reaching my office indicate that almost all regions in the country were affected by the onslaught of severe tropical storm Paeng, which destroyed bridges, roads, and key infrastructure and wrought havoc on life and property."

He said he has asked members of the House of Representatives to help executive department agencies assess the damage caused by the storm and help in relief operations in their respective districts.

The Speaker said the damage assessment reports would be compiled so the House can consider possible adjustments to the budget allocation for repair and rehabilitation in the 2023 General Appropriations Act.

"At the moment, our focus is on relief operations to alleviate the suffering of our fellowmen and to deliver aid as soon as possible to those in need. We have launched a relief drive and operations in the House of Representatives to help the national government secure the resources needed in affected communities," he said.

The House will also use its power over the purse to see to it that rehabilitation of affected communities will proceed unhampered as soon as the relief stage is completed, he added.

Southern Leyte 2nd District Rep. Christopherson Yap agreed on the need to declare a state of national calamity.

"Although our district was spared from major devastation comparable to what we experienced with Super Typhoon Odette, there are parts of the country that need the national government's assistance in order to rise again from this natural calamity," he said.

The NDRRMC said at least 48 persons perished in the storm, which displaced almost a million people.

Initial estimates also put losses due to agricultural damage at P54.96 million in Western Visayas and Soccsksargen. More than 700 houses in various regions were damaged (see related stories on A1 – Editors).

The Police Regional Office-Eastern Visayas said 13,812 people or 4,066 families have remained in 211 evacuation centers across the region. Some 2,041 passengers, four ships, and 620 vehicles were also stranded in various seaports.

At least 25 areas remained flooded, with 20 other areas still without electricity.

The most heavily affected areas were in Bangsamoro, Soccsksargen, Eastern Visayas, Bicol, and Western Visayas.

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BFAR eyeing sale of discounted products by oil firms to fisherfolk

THE Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) is eyeing to implement a program that would allow the sale of discounted petroleum products by oil companies to fisherfolk groups to help the latter cope with rising fuel prices.

BFAR OIC-Director Demosthenes Escoto said he is in talks with the Department of Energy (DOE) for a possible program that would offer direct selling of discounted fuel to identified fisherfolk groups.

"We have initially talked with the Philippine National Oil Company (PNOC), exploring the possibility of coming up with a direct sale of diesel for our fishermen. PNOC told us to discuss this in detail with the DOE," Escoto told reporters in a recent interview.

"DOE is actually asking for some data, such as which groups will benefit. We will give them all the data and hopefully they can arrange some sort of an arrangement wherein our fisherfolk can buy fuel at discounted price," Escoto added.

Escoto explained that the discounted fuel program would be an "industry-to-industry" agreement between oil companies and fisherfolk groups.

He pointed out that the government would only serve as a "facilitator" of the agreement, linking the fisherfolk associations with the oil companies.

Escoto said they are banking on the idea that oil companies would be able to provide fisherfolk associations with a "discounted" fuel price should they buy in bulk.

"That is what we are encouraging: to have an arrangement between our fishing associations and the private suppliers of petroleum [products]," he said.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) has been implementing a fuel voucher discount program for corn farmers and fishermen to help them mitigate the impact of the rising oil prices on their productivity ***(Related story: https://businessmirror.com.ph/2022/01/24/da-readies-%E2%82%A7500-m-fuel-subsidy-program-for-farmers-fisherfolk-amid-oil-price-hikes/)***

The fuel subsidy program had an initial funding of P500 million but was later increased to P1.1 billion.

Under Special Provision 20 of the General Appropriations Act (GAA) for Fiscal Year 2022, the fuel discount program would be in effect if the average Dubai crude oil price, based on Mean of Platts Singapore for three months reaches or exceeds $80 per barrel. The beneficiaries of the program must be farmers or fisherfolk who own and operate agricultural and fishery machinery individually or through a farmers organization or cooperative.

The DA also expanded its fuel voucher program in the future to cover all agricultural commodities that use farm machinery to help them cope with expensive oil prices ***(Related story: https://businessmirror.com.ph/2022/08/04/da-expands-coverage-of-p500-m-fuel-voucher-program-for-farmers/).*** *Jasper Emmanuel Y. Arcalas*

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DA's initial farm damage estimate from 'Paeng' at ₱50M, seen rising

By Jasper Emmanuel Y. Arcalas
@jearcalas

INITIAL estimates of agricultural damage and losses caused by Typhoon Paeng are at almost P50 million, with nearly 2,000 hectares of farms in three regions affected, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said on Sunday.

In its third bulletin, the DA-Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Operations Center (DA-DRRM OpCen) said about 2,543 metric tons (MT) of produce were affected by Paeng in the regions of Mimaropa, Bicol and Western Visayas.

The DA-DRRM OpCen added that 762 farmers lost potential income due to the typhoon.

"Affected commodities include rice, high value crops and fisheries. These values are subject to validation," it said in its report published on Sunday morning.

DA-DRRM OpCen report showed that bulk of the agricultural damage and losses or about 95.38 percent was recorded in the rice sector.

Paeng damaged 1,887 hectares of rice farms with an estimated volume loss of 2,479 MT worth P47.25 million, according to the DA-DRRM OpCen report.

The high value crops (HVC) sector registered P1.24 million worth of damage and losses as 64 MT of assorted vegetables and papaya across 62 hectares were damaged by the typhoon.

Meanwhile, the fisheries sector incurred P1.05 million in damage and losses as Paeng affected municipal fishing boats in Masbate, the DA-DRRM OpCen report showed.

"The Department of Agriculture, through its Regional Field Offices (RFOs), is conducting assessment of damage and losses brought by Paeng in the agri-fisheries sector," it said.

"The DA continuously coordinates with concerned [national government agencies], [local government units] and other DRRM-related offices for the impact of the tropical cyclones, as well as available resources for interventions and assistance," it added.

The DA-DRRM OpCen said the national government has available assistance to affected farmers and fisherfolk such as seeds, drugs and biologics, as well as fingerlings.

Paeng is now the fourth typhoon in the fourth quarter to cause agricultural damage and losses.

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FISH KILL IN CAMARINES SUR

AGRI DAMAGE PILING UP AS STORM EXITS PAR

Damage caused by Severe Tropical Storm "Paeng" (international name: Nalgae) on the agriculture sector is starting to pile up after heavy rains and strong winds devastated farm lands and fishing areas in its path.

As of 9 a.m. on Sunday, the Department of Agriculture (DA) in Western Visayas (DA-6) reported that farm damage in Negros Occidental and Iloilo already amounted to P70.32 million.

At least 1.6 metric tons of crops worth P33.5 million were also damaged after floods hit 171 villages in Capiz, Antique, Aklan and Negros Occidental.

Partial assessment by authorities on the effects of Paeng in the Bicol region placed the initial damage at P3.6 million in agriculture and infrastructure while farmers and fishermen in Oriental Mindoro lost around P30 million in crops and fishing facilities.

The amount of damage is still expected to rise since it did not yet include reports from the provinces of Albay, Camarines Norte and Catanduanes.

In Camarines Sur, Paeng has so far cost P1.1 million in high-value crops such as lettuce and pechay.

Meanwhile, in Sorsogon, the losses in high-value crops were estimated at P104,434.

Masbate's fisheries sector incurred P1 million worth of losses.

So far, according to the DA, Paeng has affected 62 fisherfolk and farmers in the three provinces.

Zamboanga City Agriculturist Carmencita Sanchez said damage to agricultural crops already reached P1.86 million, involving some 44.4 hectares of rice fields and vegetable farms.

Other affected areas

In Buhi town, Camarines Sur, an estimated loss of P3.9 million due to fish kill in Lake Buhi was separately reported, according to Carmelita Marquez, the municipal disaster risk reduction and management officer.

The lake is home to the world's smallest commercial fish, the "sinarapan" (*Mistichthys luzonensis*).

Marquez said that as of Saturday, the fish kill has affected the area of Tambo village and involved 126 fish cages containing tilapia.

As of Sunday morning, authorities were still monitoring other possible affected areas.

The Oriental Mindoro Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office reported that in Pola town, agricultural (rice, high-value crops, corn) losses were estimated at P30 million while P45,000 worth of motorized bancas were damaged.

The agricultural losses initially reported came from the towns of Pinamalayan (more than P20 million) and Victoria and Calapan City.

Meanwhile, Bulacan province initially recorded more than P15 million worth of losses to rice and vegetable crops.

Damage by earlier storms

Nearly 575 ha of rice crops of 548 farmers worth more than P4 million and 37.85 ha of vegetable plantations of 195 growers worth more than P5.9 million have been destroyed. Some P5.3 million worth fisheries products worth P15.4 million were also destroyed.

The farm losses caused by Paeng will add to the P583 million in agricultural damage caused by two weather disturbances that struck earlier this month, Tropical Depression "Maymay" and Typhoon "Neneng."

The DA had reported that damage to the farm sector by Supertyphoon "Karding" in late September amounted to P3.12 billion while Severe Tropical Storm "Florita" in August caused another P1.13 billion in losses. —REPORTS FROM REY ANTHONY OSTRIA, MA. APRIL MIER-MANJARES, MADONNA T. VIROLA AND CARMELA REYES-ESTROPE INQ

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Paeng's damage in Bicol placed at ₱93.1 M

LEGAZPI CITY – At least ₱93.1 million worth of crops, fisheries, and power and flood control projects were destroyed as Severe Tropical Storm Paeng battered Bicol on Saturday, the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) in the region said on Sunday, Oct. 30.

In an interview, Gremil Alexis Naz, OCD-Bicol spokesperson, said the initial consolidated damage reports came from the provinces of Albay, Camarines Sur, Masbate, and Sorsogon.

"For Albay, the cost of damage in agriculture is ₱22 million, for Camarines Sur damage in rice, high-value crops and fisheries reached ₱66.5 million, Masbate with ₱2.9 million and in Sorsogon, ₱129,433 damage," he said.

A total of ₱1.4 million worth of damage to local infrastructures were reported in Caramoan, Camarines Sur.

The Department of Agriculture said 5,954 hectares ▶ 9

Paeng's damage in Bicol placed at ₱93.1 M 1◀

of agriculture crops including rice, high-value crops, coconut and fisheries were destroyed.

"At least 9,414 farmers and fisherfolk were affected by the weather disturbance," Naz said.

In the department's Bulletin No. 3, the DA said the initial damage to agriculture by Paeng has now reached ₱49.54 million, affecting 1,949 hectares of agricultural areas in MIMAROPA or Region IV-B, Bicol, and Western Visayas Region.

The DA said 762 farmers have been affected by the devastation of Paeng.

The production loss in the said areas is pegged at 2,543 metric tons. (Jel E. Santos and PNA)

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PHilMech cites 4 research projects

FOUR research, development and extension (RD&E) projects by the Philippine Center for Postharvest Development and Mechanization (PHilMech) were given awards during the agency's 42nd annual in-house review earlier in October.

Eleven projects covering agricultural mechanization, bioprocess engineering, socioeconomic and policy research, and food protection and laboratory research composed this year's evaluation process.

Four projects were awarded the best paper based on the achievement of objectives, use of appropriate methodology and identification of problems encountered that should be resolved to improve the delivery of outputs.

The winning projects include: Field Testing of CVS-based Mango Sorting Machine by engineer Arlene Joaquin, Dr. Romualdo Martinez and engineer Richard Avila (also granted the Earliest Bird Award for being the earliest paper submitted); Production of Moringa (*Moringa oleifera*) Powder Using Multi-Commodity Solar Tunnel Dryer by Dr. Ofero Capariño, engineer Christian Rod de Vera and Dr. Ma. Cristina Gragasin; Molecular Identification of Insects and Mites by Angelo de la Fuente, Nea Ciara Fabaleña and Mark Anthony Mangoba; and Brown Rice Processing Enterprise Showcasing PHilMech Impeller Rice Mill Technology by Dr. Michael Gragasin, and engineers John Rey Cargamento and Genaro Tolentino.

A guest panel of evaluators from the University of the Philippines-Los Baños, Central Luzon State University and a PHilMech director assessed the selection of best papers.

PHilMech Director Dr. Dionisio Alvindia emphasized the significance of research as a vital component of the agency's mandate.

"The backbone of PHilMech is research and development. Let us make our research studies relevant in order to create impact and produce promising results for the benefit of our stakeholders," he said.

Alvindia also encouraged the "young blood" in the RD&E sector.

"May this activity inspire our young researchers to conduct and conceptualize such studies that can generate technologies to help address the problems, needs and concerns of the farmers," he added.

Other projects presented and evaluated include: Establishment of Rubber Sheet Processing System for Farmers of Kidapawan City, North Cotabato; Establishment of Abaca Fiber Processing System for Farmers of North Cotabato; Profiling and Characterization of Precursors Responsible for Flavor and Aroma Development in Local Cacao Beans; Verification of Different Preservation Techniques on the Viability and Stability of Short- and Long-Term Storage of Microorganisms; Establishment of Abaca Fiber Processing System for Farmers of North Cotabato; and Establishment of Baseline Information and Organization of Technology Used in the Production and Postproduction of High Value Crops.

PHilMech's interim director for RD&E, Dr. Romualdo Martinez, together with Tolentino, acting chief of the agency's Planning, Management and Information Technology Division, led the opening of the project review. **THE TIMES**

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PH calls for unhampered global movement of agri products

THE Philippines has called for efforts to keep the unhampered movement of food and agricultural inputs across borders.

The call was made during the 50th Session of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) in Rome held from October 10 to 13.

During the Ministerial Segment where the State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2022 was discussed, Agriculture Secretary and President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. through a video message called for efforts to keep the unhampered movement of food and agricultural inputs across borders. The President committed firmly to joining fellow leaders to strive for inclusive, resilient, and sustainable agriculture and food systems.

Reiterating the message of President Marcos at the United Nations General Assembly held in New York last month, Agriculture Senior Undersecretary Domingo Panganiban emphasized that the CFS, the whole UN system, and its private sector and civil society partners should focus on working toward immediate fulfillment of obligations under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement, which is aimed at cutting greenhouse gas emissions, provide climate financing, and transfer technology for adaptation for the most vulnerable and developing countries.

Panganiban further highlighted the need to invest in boosting the productivity and resiliency of agri-food systems.

The CFS, established in 1974 and reformed in 2009, is the foremost inclusive international and intergovernmental platform for all stakeholders to work together to ensure food security and nutrition for all.

The country statement delivered by Panganiban also underscored the need to keep trade transparent, predictable and fair.

"We should empower the youth toward their successful engagement in agriculture and food systems," Panganiban added. The Philippines endorsed the implementation of the CFS policy recommendations that could support the youth in becoming successful agents of agri-food systems transformation for poverty reduction and food security.

Panganiban also pledged the Philippines' support as the CFS works toward the development of Voluntary Guidelines on Gender Equality and Women and Girls' Empowerment in the context of food security and nutrition.

In the country statement, Panganiban underscored the importance of strengthening the capacity of nations in data collection and analysis so that data and evidence-based policymaking and program development can effectively bring the global community closer to national, regional and global food security goals.

Charge d' Affaires, a.i. of the Embassy of the Philippines in Rome Nina Cainglet said there are strategic advantages in promoting Philippine agriculture and its food security agenda in multilateral fora such as the Committee of World Food Security. "The Philippines' participation can raise awareness on how the country is prioritizing agriculture and food security, which areas the country will welcome support for, and what global policies and international programs may be needed," Cainglet said.

In his closing remarks, Panganiban said, "The Philippines acknowledges that, at this historical juncture, in the aftermath of an unparalleled global food and energy crisis, greater international engagement, cooperation, exchange and action are vital for our shared success. We stand ready to do our part and work with you all."

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House eyes adjusted 2023 budget to fund rehab of 'Paeng'-hit areas

THE House of Representatives may adjust the 2023 budget for rehabilitation of areas affected by severe tropical storm Paeng, Speaker of the House Martin Romualdez said Sunday.

He called for a comprehensive assessment of the damage and destruction caused by Paeng in many parts of the country, saying Congress may adjust the proposed P5.268 trillion national budget for next year to ensure storm-stricken areas get the help they need.

The House has already passed the proposed budget for next year on the third and final reading, while the Senate is yet to tackle it shortly after Congress resumes its session on Nov. 7.

The Department of Agriculture estimated that the storm caused damage in Mimaropa, Bicol, and Western Visayas amounting to P49.54 million, affecting 762 farmers and a loss of 2,543 metric tons of production and 1,949 hectares of agricultural area.

Affected commodities include rice,

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high-value crops, and fisheries. The values were still subject to validation, the department said.

The Department of Public Works and Highways, meanwhile, said at least 45 national roads across the country were closed to traffic because of the widespread damage caused by Paeng.

In an interview with radio dzBB, DPWH Secretary Manuel Bonoan said various roads were damaged because Paeng traveled from Mindanao to Luzon.

He added that clearing operations were ongoing, particularly on major roads so that goods and services as well as relief could pass.

Bonoan said the department needs to repair broken bridges and roads going to Antique from Iloilo.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said 147 roads and 53 bridges were not passable because of Paeng.

Bonoan said the Bantilan Bridge in Quezon Province was totally washed out due to debris from big logs.

The bridge, which is 30 meters long, is located between Barangay Tipas in San Juan, Batangas, and Barangay Bantilan in Sariaya, Quezon.

Also, Bonoan said parts of Daang Maharlika, a national road from Davao to Cagayan, were impassable due to fallen trees and soil erosion.

He said roads in Aklan experienced flooding but no major damage so far has been reported.

Calabarzon (Region 4-A) has recorded at least three fatalities and evacuated more than 80,000 residents.

Noveleta Mayor Dino Reyes Chua said of the two fatalities in the municipality one died of a heart attack, and the other slipped and suffered a fatal head injury.

Cavite Gov. Jonvic Remulla said that a third fatality was due to electrocution.

At least 10,101 Cavite residents (2,959 families) were also evacuated in preparation for Paeng, which flooded 33 areas in Noveleta, Imus, Kawit, Bacoor, and Rosario.

Floods in the province have started to subside, enabling relief distribution to begin within the day. **Othel Campos and Rio N. Araja**

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

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Paeng agri damage nearing P50 M

By DANESSA RIVERA

Severe Tropical Storm Paeng left nearly P50-million damage to agriculture, with rice as the most affected commodity, according to preliminary data released by the Department of Agriculture (DA) yesterday.

Based on initial assessment, the DA said damage and losses have been reported in Negros Occidental.

The typhoon affected 762 farmers, with the volume of production loss estimated at 2,543 metric tons (MT), and destroyed 1,949 hectares of agricultural areas in Bicol, Mimaropa (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan) and Western Visayas.

Affected commodities include rice, high-value crops and fisheries.

The DA said Paeng ruined 1,887 hectares of palay farms, with 2,479 MT lost or equivalent to P47.25 million.

In light of the weather disturbance, the DA said it activated its disaster risk reduction and management operation centers nationwide.

The agency prepositioned seeds for rice and corn as well as drugs and biologics for livestock and poultry in safe storage facilities.

The DA earlier advised farmers to harvest matured crops and utilize post-harvest facilities.

Farmers were also told to secure seed reserves, planting materials and other farm inputs including feeds and water for livestock; move farm machinery and equipment to higher ground; relocate animals, and clear irrigation drainage and rice paddies of obstructions to prevent flooding.

Meanwhile, fishermen were advised to harvest their produce early, mobilize post-harvest equipment and facilities, and secure fishing vessels as well as refrain from venturing into the sea as potentially rough sea conditions prevail over affected seaboards.

Based on combined data from Ilocos region, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon), Mimaropa and the Cordilleras, Paeng devastated more than one million hectares of palay and 64,336 hectares of corn, or equivalent to 70.59 percent and 26.64 percent, respectively, of the national standing crops.

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editorial

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Buy red onions, save the peso

THE Philippines has many economic concerns not least of which is the weather. Call it bad luck or a normal weather pattern, the last thing we needed was another major storm blowing through, damaging crops and agricultural infrastructure.

The global food situation is fragile right now and may get worse with Russia announcing over the past weekend that it will suspend indefinitely its involvement in the internationally-brokered deal that allows Ukraine to export grain from its Black Sea ports. London Wheat Futures traded on the ICE or Intercontinental Exchange reached a 12-year high in May 2022 at the $400 level and was trading prior to the Russian announcement at $300, having decreased by 25 percent from the high price.

Public and pundit attention is focused on the three primary components of our economy's performance: economic growth, inflation, and the peso-dollar exchange rate. Just as crucial is the "balance of payments" both financial and trade related, which computes if money is flowing in or out of the country. Then the government's financial health must be factored in by looking at the budget deficit, which is much more important than the size of the government debt that gets the headlines.

Inflation is the one issue that is most prominent in the news as the price of basic commodities and other consumer goods is most obvious to the public. It is also the one factor that in the age of globalization, the government is probably least able to influence effectively and sensibly. The immediate solution is always price control; and/or provide government subsidies.

Price controls inevitably lead to shortages of goods, and subsidies inevitably lead to harming the government's fiscal health. Both are solutions to the question "Why doesn't the government do SOMETHING?" No to inflation.

While not the absolute "inflation solution," a currency with a higher exchange value to the US dollar is important. Philippine inflation is closely correlated to the global price of crude oil especially in the past 20 years. In fact, you will have extreme difficulty finding any economy that does not see inflation flowing along the ups and downs of the crude oil price, both short and long term.

For example, when oil was priced at $40 per barrel in 2020, Japan's inflation rate was negative 0.5 percent. With an oil price of $100, Japan's inflation is 3 percent. Indonesia had an inflation rate of a little over 2 percent as 2022 began and oil was $80. Oil near the $100 level and Indonesia's inflation is running at seven-year high of 5.95 percent. In 2019, Vietnam had 2 percent inflation and was paying $60 for oil. Now its inflation is running at 4.3 percent.

However, the price of oil is also dependent on the currency exchange rate and here, there is a problem. A starting point to look at the currency rate is January 2008 prior to the global debt crisis. Since then, the Japanese yen has depreciated against the dollar by 55 percent, the British pound by 33 percent, and the Philippine peso by 42 percent.

Japan wants a less valuable yen to help spur exports and hopefully economic growth. But that is not the situation for the Philippines.

Last week Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno said the government is open to the possibility of the peso touching the 60-level against the US dollar, but he said interventions will continue to prevent the local unit from overshooting that level.

Tell the world you are going to "defend the currency" at a particular level and you may prompt an "attack." Then again it may encourage Filipinos both here and abroad to convert to pesos by believing 60 is the most you are going to get for your dollars.

But one thing is certain. We are importing way too much, and we must as individuals do everything we can to "Buy Local" to support the peso. Maybe everyone wants white onions. But local onions keep our money at home.

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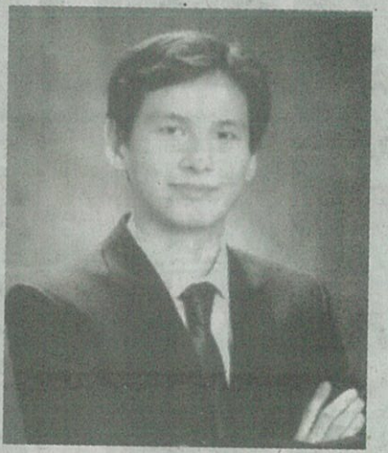
SL Agritech introduces its next generation of leaders

SL Agritech, the pioneer in research, development, and production of hybrid rice seeds in the Philippines, recently introduced the next generation of leaders who will continue to strengthen the company's legacy in pushing for rice self-sufficiency and a holistic agricultural recovery in the country.

As the leader of the group and the successor of SL Agritech's CEO Henry Lim Bon Liong, Michelle Lim-Gankee now serves as the Executive Vice President and is in charge of the company as a whole. As the company's EVP with more than 11 years of experience, Michelle has been actively involved in the research and development of hybrid seed technology, ensuring that SL Agritech's tradition and their family's legacy of assisting regional farmers is carried on.

Michelle's simple childhood motivated her to reach out to vulnerable communities and look for ways to uplift their lives. She has led the company's Masaganang Ani 300 program, which enabled farmers to produce more than three times as much through hybrid seeds and so double their revenue. Many farmers' lives have drastically improved as a result of this initiative.

She shares, "The use of hybrid seed technology means providing our farmers and the Filipino people a fighting chance to attain rice sufficiency. Through our current hybrid seed varieties which includes the SL-8H, SL-19H, SL-20H, and SL-68H, we continue to improve our research and development capabilities in quest of more high-yielding seed varieties that will aid in the production of rice and improve the livelihood of our farmers today."



(From left to right) SL Agritech Marketing Director Tiffany Lim-Ngo, SL Agritech Executive Vice President Michelle Lim-Gankee, and SL Agritech Executive Vice President for Operations Brian Lim

The third generation of leadership includes SL Agritech Corporation EVP for Operations Brian Lim.

Brian is a strong advocate of the development of hybrid rice technology to ensure the prosperity and security of our nation's food supply. He oversees operations and assures the quality of rice and seeds exported to both domestic and foreign markets. He is in charge of the entire end-to-end process as well as labor activities at the facility.

Beyond his passion for agriculture, Brian finds ways to give back to the community by continuously opening up avenues to expand contract growing sites. Earlier this year, Brian helped the company pursue its plant expansions.

The company's efforts have reached Laguna, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, and Mindoro. Through this initiative, the company can continue to provide employment opportunities to the agri-sector and simultaneously help more farming communities.

Completing the list of leaders is Tiffany Lim-Ngo, the current Marketing Director of SL Agritech. Tiffany championed CSR programs that helped develop marginalized farming communities into highly progressive ones. One of the most notable campaigns she leads is the "Balik-Biyaya" program—an ongoing project that provides feeding programs and rice donations to farmers, fishermen, community pantries, and hospitals across the country.

As Marketing Director, she also ensures that SL Agritech's products are positioned effectively in the market through various media channels and campaigns such as the launch of a Brown Rice tapping Gary Valenciano as an ambassador to help increase awareness of its health benefits.

She also looks for opportunities to introduce new rice products in the market such as the newly-launched Doña Maria Brown Rice Puffs and the ready-to-eat, easy-to-cook champorado & pancake mix from Doña Maria Creations.

Bringing in a new perspective in leading SL Agritech, Michelle, Brian, and Tiffany are ready to take on different challenges in order to help the current agricultural landscape of the country. Circling back to the company's core, the team is bound to spearhead holistic innovations through their R&D efforts in order to boost the local rice production through high-yielding seed varieties.

"The future of the Philippines relies on the future of our agricultural technology. I am proud of the next generation of leaders who can push for positive contributions to the agri industry," concludes SL Agritech CEO Henry Lim Bon Liong.

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State of calamity in 'Paeng'-hit regions as death toll reaches 60

PRESIDENT Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. ordered officials to declare a state of calamity in provinces badly affected by tropical storm "Paeng" (international code name Nalgae), as tens of thousands of people remain in evacuation centers.

Marcos wants a declaration to cover the Bicol Region in the southernmost part of Luzon and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), his press secretary said in a news statement.

The President is also weighing a recommendation from the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) to declare a national state of calamity for one year, which would trigger a price freeze and the release of emergency funds.

Paeng is the 16th storm to slam the Philippines in 2022 and has affected areas across the three major island groups of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao. About 20 cyclones pass through the Philippines each year, causing fatalities and damage to agriculture, homes and infrastructure.

The storm comes at a time when the Southeast Asian nation is already experiencing food shortages from sugar to white onions, fanning the highest inflation in four years. In September, typhoon "Karding" (international code name: Noru) damaged swaths of the country's farmland, further aggravating supply constraints.

Paeng has weakened as it exited the Luzon landmass on Sunday. Moving at 30 kilometers per hour. It now has maximum sustained winds of 85 km/h and gusts of up to 105 km/h, the state weather bureau said in its 5 a.m. report. It forecasts Paeng will have left the Philippines by Tuesday.

The government has evacuated nearly 170,000 people, more than half of who were still in evacuation centers late Saturday, according to the national disaster-management agency. It reported that at least 60 people had been killed and 40 others injured, in the rampaging floods, landslides and torrential rain triggered by Paeng. Nearly 200 roads and bridges remain impassable.

15 out of 17

IN a situation briefing held last Saturday, NDRRMC Executive Director Raymundo B. Ferrer said the agency is proposing for a declaration of a national state of calamity since 15 out of the country's 17 regions are susceptible to the floods and landslides caused by the storm.

"With this, in behalf of the chairperson, the NDRRMC respectfully recommends for the following: declare a National State of Calamity due to the effects, damage and projected impacts of Severe Tropical Storm Paeng for a period of one year, unless earlier lifted; and to accept offers of international assistance based on needs," Ferrer said.

Marcos expressed reservations on the proposal since he noted Paeng did not affect some parts of the country.

The President, however, said he would wait for NDRRMC to officially submit the proposal before he decides to act on it.

Tsunami fear brings deaths

VICTIMS of a huge mudslide set off by Paeng in a coastal Philippine village that had once been devastated by a killer tsunami mistakenly thought a tidal wave was coming and ran to higher ground toward a mountain and were buried alive by the boulder-laden deluge, an official said Sunday.

At least 18 bodies, including those of children, have been dug out by rescuers in the vast muddy mound that now covers much of Kusiong village in southern Maguindanao province, among the hardest-hit by Paeng, which blew out of the northwestern Philippines early Sunday.

Officials fear 80 to 100 more people, including entire families, may have been buried by the deluge or washed away by flash floods in Kusiong between Thursday night and early Friday, according to Naguib Sinarimbo, the interior minister for a Muslim autonomous region run by former separatist guerrillas.

Nalgae, which had a vast rain band, left at least 61 people dead in eight provinces and one city in the Philippine archipelago, including in Kusiong, and a trail of destruction in one of the world's most disaster-prone countries.

High fatalities

THE NDRRMC reported the downpour caused by Paeng led to flash floods and landslides, which killed at least to as much as 48 people as of the last body count, and caused 13 others to go missing.

About of 40 of the said fatalities were from Maguindanao.

Marcos expressed concern over the large number of deaths in the province, which could have been prevented with better preemptive evacuation.

"We could have done better in Maguindanao in terms of preparing because...the 40 deaths with 10 people missing is a little too high. We should have done better than that," Marcos said.

The President ordered the Department of Science and Technology on how it could further improve the dissemination of flood warnings to local government units through the Department of the Interior and Local Government.

Government aid

LIKEWISE, the President also instructed concerned government agencies (LGU) to provide relief aid to evacuees and restore power in storm-hit areas.

Paeng affected 271,359 persons from the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR), Calabarzon, Mimaropa, and Regions 5, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12 and Caraga.

Of which, 31,140 were displaced and are staying in evacuation centers.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and LGUs were able to release an

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initial P482,872 worth of assistance to evacuees.

Social Welfare Secretary Erwin T. Tulfo said the government still has over P1.5 billion standby funds and stockpiles, which are ready for deployment in storm-hit areas.

DOH preparations

THE DOH has prepared over P31 million worth of drugs and medicines, medical supplies and other commodities as Paeng continues to affect several parts of the country.

In preparation for Paeng, the DOH said, a total of P31,063,736.14 worth of drugs and medicines, medical supplies, and other commodities were already prepositioned in different regions, namely Regions I, II, CAR, 4A, 4B, 5, 6, 7, 8, Caraga, BARMM and the National Capital Region.

Meanwhile, a total of P72,803,656.64 worth of commodities is ready for mobilization in the DOH Central Office Warehouse.

The DOH, through the Centers for Health Development (CHDs), in coordination with regional and local health and disaster response offices, assured that it continues to support affected areas through the deployment of human resources for health, provision of emergency and other health commodities, continuous monitoring of health-care facilities and augmentation of resources.

*"Bago pa po mag-*landfall *ang bagyo ay naghanda na ang* DOH *dahil alam po natin na marami ang maaapektuhan ng bagyong* Paeng (Even before the typhoon made a landfall we have been prepared because we know that many will be affected)," DOH Officer in Charge Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said.

Strengthen NDRRM mandate

A LABOR group urged lawmakers to pass a law, which will empower the NDRRMC to respond during disasters and calamities.

In a news statement issued on Sunday, the Federation of Free Workers (FFW) stressed the need to strengthen the mandate of NDRRMC amid the growing frequency of destructive calamities, particularly typhoons, which hit the country each year.

"Federation of Free Workers urges the government to upgrade the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council into a department or strengthen it by amending the law that created it to improve coordination among local government units in order to appropriately respond to disasters and do so in a timely manner," the FFW statement said.

Power restoration

THE Manila Electric Company (Meralco) reported Sunday afternoon that over four million customers across its franchise area experienced momentary and sustained power interruptions.

Of the total, 450,538 customers are still affected. Majority of them are still in Laguna and Cavite, and the rest are in parts of Batangas, Metro Manila, Rizal, Bulacan, and Quezon.

"We ask for our customers' patience and understanding since we could not give a definite time on when service will be restored. Rest assured that our ground personnel and line crews are working round the clock to restore power the soonest possible time," Meralco Spokesperson Joe R. Zaldarriaga said.

The National Electrification Administration (NEA), meanwhile, said there were 32 electric cooperatives (ECs) that reported partial power interruption and 10 experienced total power interruption.

The initial damage cost is estimated at around P778,468.00 from two affected ECs, it added.

The National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP), for its part, said three transmission lines were already restored. These are the Sorsogon-Bulan 69kV Line, Bay-Calamba 69kV Line, and the Labrador-Bolinao 69kV Line.

There are still seven transmission lines that are down as of this writing. These are the Cabanatuan-San Luis 69kV Line, Cabanatuan-Fatima 69kV Line, Gumaca-Lopez-Tagkawayan 69kV Line, Pitogo-Mulanay 69kV Line, Batangas-Bolbok-Bauan 69kV Line, Famy-Comon 69kV Line, and Calaca-Nasugbu 69kV Line.

It also reported three affected backbone lines. These are the San Juan-Calauan 230kV Line 1, Tayabas-Naga 230kV Line 2, and Tayabas-Pagbilao 230kV Line 1.

NGCP has deployed 73 line gangs comprised of almost 600 personnel and four choppers to inspect and assess the impact of the tropical storm to its operations and facilities. Aerial inspection and simultaneous restoration activities are being conducted in areas already accessible. ***Bloomberg News, AP, Samuel P. Medenilla, Lenie Lectura, Claudeth Mocon-Ciriaco and Manuel T. Cayon***

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The agri-aqua innovation challenge

(First of two parts)

MAPPING THE FUTURE

MATTHEW GEORGE O. ESCOBIDO

Despite the country's fertile lands and waters and huge exclusive economic zones, the Philippines is behind its neighbors in farm productivity, crop diversification, and agri- and sea-based export production. Our farmers and fisherfolk comprise two-thirds of the poor in the country. Such is the irony that they themselves are not that keen on their children following in their footsteps. The result is a declining enrollment in courses and erosion of workforce in the agriculture and aquaculture sectors. As the average age of farmers increases past 58 years old, this setup threatens food security.

In this context, the Department of Science and Technology–Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development, the Asian Institute of Management and the Management Association of the Philippines set up the Agri-Aqua Innovation Challenge. By leveraging science and technology, the innovation challenge aims to inspire and engage the next generation of Filipinos in shaping a modern, progressive and more relevant agriculture and aquaculture sectors.

This is an annual competition open to student teams and registered startups. It aims to provide a platform where research and development occurring in universities can be translated to actual products and services used by Filipinos. Research by Ph.D., masters, or undergraduate students should not only be "bound" as publications, but also as an intellectual property in products, resources in companies and foundations of industries. It encourages entrepreneurs to take advantage of science and technology in their products and services and in their businesses.

The innovation challenge highlights the role universities play in our innovation ecosystem and national development. Aside from transmitting knowledge, skills and attitudes to students, universities are catalysts of economic development. For instance, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), a small university of 13,000 people, reported its entrepreneurial impact in 2015. Alumni have founded more than 30,000 companies, employed almost 5 million people, and generated $2 trillion in annual revenues or about six times the gross domestic product of the Philippines.

The Philippine Startup Ecosystem 2020 Report, on the other hand, counted more than 400 startups in the country. How many of them from our universities and received venture funding is not known. Even if all are from our universities or have received funding, the Philippines, a country of 100 million people, has an output no different than that of the University of Virginia. Yes, Virginia. This is according to Pitchbook's global ranking of schools in terms of number of startups from 2006 to 2020. Stanford ranked first with 1,258 startups followed by UC Berkeley, MIT and Harvard.

But change is coming. INQ

(To be concluded)

The author is co-chair of the MAP human and development committee for higher education, CEO of Conceptblocks and adjunct Professor at AIM. Feedback at map@map.org.ph and matthew.escobido@nxtclass.org.

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Storm destroys P15-M crops in Bulacan

INITIAL reports from the Bulacan Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office (PDRRMO) showed that a man drowned and at least P15.3 million worth of crops and fisheries were destroyed as Tropical Storm "Paeng" battered the province on Saturday, October 29.

The Bulacan PDRRMO identified the victim as Leo Chavez, 42, a resident of Barangay San Roque, City of San Jose del Monte, Bulacan.

Chavez's body was retrieved by rescuers on Sunday morning at the Santa Maria River in Barangay Santo Cristo.

He has been reported missing since October 29.

PDRRMO head Liz Mungcal said 730 hectares of agricultural produce, including rice, vegetables and fisheries, were lost to Paeng.

Estimated damage for rice is P4,071,586; vegetables, P5,990,920; and fisheries, P5,333,346.

A total of 795 farmers and fisherfolk were affected by the tropical storm.

High tide generated by Paeng inundated hundreds of *barangay* (villages) in 10 cities and municipalities of Bulacan.

Flood waters had risen up to 6 feet in these villages.

FREDERICK SILVERIO

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Group pushes safer tobacco products

A GROUP composed of tobacco harm reduction advocates called on Asian countries, including the Philippines, to support the use of alternative modalities and instruments that can help reduce the harms of combustible and unsafe tobacco products.

During the 5th Asia Harm Reduction Forum at The Manila Hotel on Saturday, the Coalition of Asia Pacific Tobacco Harm Reduction Advocates (Caphra) signed "The Manila Declaration-2022" urging the governments in Asia to adopt science-based regulatory frameworks on the manufacture, importation, sale, and consumption of devices and ingredients that are safer alternatives to tobacco such as vapes and other electronic devices.

The forum, which was organized by the Harm Reduction Alliance of the Philippines (Harap) and The Vapers Philippines (VapersPh), as the Philippine government prepares the implementing rules and regulation for the Vaporized Nicotine and Non-Nicotine Products Regulation Act, also known as the Vape Law, which recently lapsed into law.

The group noted that the over-restrictive government policies on the use of vapes and other similar products including e-cigarettes are a contradiction to the intent and objective of the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC) Treaty.

"We, the consumers of safer nicotine products and those adults who currently smoke, ought to be the principal beneficiaries of enlightened, science-based regulatory frameworks allowing us access to these life-saving technologies," the group said in the manifesto.

"Instead, we continue to be marginalized, ignored, denigrated and attacked, our choices restricted, and our rights denied, and our lives and health are negatively impacted by the continuing failure of WHO (World Health Organization) and its funders to follow its own mandates or to consider the science," it added.

Peter Dator of VapersPh said while their movement supports laws that would set the quality and standard of vape products and e-cigarettes, access to these devices should not be too prohibitive that users would be forced to revert to cigarette smoking.

"It is very ironic because while the government is taking all the necessary steps to reduce the health risks caused by cigarette smoking, they are also throwing all the stumbling blocks to discourage people from accessing safer alternatives such as vapes and e-cigarettes," he said.

He added that his group is hoping for the regulatory policies to be crafted based on the new Vape Law that would encourage people to adopt safer alternatives to stop cigarette smoking.

Dator said government policymakers should defer to well-documented studies proving that increasing cigarette taxes did not do much to reduce the number of Filipinos who smoke tobacco.

Caphra said the WHO-FCTC and its country delegates should follow the science and evidence around tobacco harm reduction and recognize the people's rights to access alternative products that can help them stop the habit of smoking cigarettes.

The group said vaping is dramatically safer than cigarettes and has helped millions quit smoking.

"Vaping is not smoking. It uses electronic devices to generate nicotine-containing vapor without burning tobacco. Governments charged with protecting public health should welcome that, not discourage it," the group said in the manifesto.

Caphra is an alliance of Tobacco Harm Reduction Advocates in the Asian region which seeks to educate, advocate and represent the right of adult alternative nicotine consumers to access and use products that reduce harm from tobacco use. **PNA**

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ARF to improve farmers' output

BY CONRAD M. CARIÑO

NEARLY 80 percent of the remaining P10-billion Agrarian Reform Fund (ARF) will be used to support agrarian reform communities in improving their far productivity.

This, as Agrarian Reform Secretary Conrado Estrella 3rd was tasked by President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. to utilize the remaining P10 billion of the ARF during the 150th meeting of the Presidential Agrarian Reform Council Executive Committee (PARC) on Oct. 28, 2022.

"I was tasked by the President, being the vice chairman of the PARC, to convene this very important meeting, to use the remaining P10 billion of the Agrarian Reform Fund (ARF) to realize his dignified goals for our farmers," Estrella said in a statement on Sunday.

The meeting resulted in the adoption of the President's recommendation for the release and utilization of P10 billion from the ARF balance as follows:

– Support services with P7.85-billion budget for the implementation of projects including agri-extension services, distribution of farm inputs and farm machines to agrarian reform beneficiaries, and infrastructure development and public works projects, among others;

– Landowners compensation, with an amount of P1.4 billion for documented landholdings with pending claims due for payment;

– Additional P500 million for administrative and operating expenses needed for the implementation of the above components of the agrarian reform program; and

– Institutional human resources for capacity development programs getting P250 million to empower and enhance the competencies of the department for its effective implementation.

During the meeting, Estrella said members of the Senate and House of Representatives have committed to the President that they would pass the "New Emancipation Act" for the landless farmers this December.

"This bill would enable the Department of Agrarian Reform to distribute free lands to the farmers," he said.

Estrella added that this would create a great impact to the farmers along with the intensified provision of necessary support services to make their lands become more productive to generate more income.

"I believe that this is a historic executive meeting because this gathering will not just improve the lives of the farmers, but it will also have a beneficial effect in our agricultural sector," he said. **WITH REPORTS FROM PNA**

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Nutritional info on food service menus pushed

AGRI party-list Rep. Wilbert Lee is batting to pass a bill mandating the public disclosure of nutritional information on menus of food service establishments to help address the problems of obesity, unhealthy diet, and inadequate nutrition among Filipinos.

If passed, House Bill No. 2421 would mandate food service establishments to put on their menus and menu boards—in a clear and conspicuous manner—nutritional information, he said.

While the existing system requires packaged foods to disclose nutritional facts, meals sold through food establishments contain no such disclosure, Lee said.

"The health-conscious must estimate or guess the nutritional content of meals in restaurants. Those who are less aware of the need for proper dieting are left oblivious to the nutritional values they intake, which would potentially cause detrimental effects on their health in the long run," he said.

The measure would enable consumers to make more informed and healthier food choices, promote health awareness and proper dieting and assist consumers who are monitoring their diets or dealing with chronic diseases, such as cardiovascular disease and diabetes, the lawmaker added.

In March the Department of Health, World Health Organization, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) raised alarm on the growing obesity in the Philippines, with 27 million Filipinos being overweight and obese. **Rio N. Araja**

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Group to gov't: Back tobacco alternatives

By Willie Casas

THE Coalition of Asia Pacific Tobacco Harm Reduction Advocates (CAPHRA) has urged the Philippines and other Asian governments to support the use of alternative modalities and instruments to help reduce the global harms of combustible and unsafe tobacco products.

The Philippine government started crafting the Implementing Rules and Regulation for the Vaporized Nicotine and Non-Nicotine Products Regulation Act, also known as the Vape Law.

CAPHRA made its call and said that over-restrictive government policies on using vapes and other similar products, including e-cigarettes, contradict the Framework Convention on Tobacco Control Treaty's intent and objective.

"We, the consumers of safer nicotine products and those adults who currently smoke, ought to be the principal beneficiaries of enlightened, science-based regulatory frameworks allowing us access to these life-saving technologies," said CAPHRA said in the "The Manila Declaration-2022" manifesto.

"Instead, we continue to be marginalized, ignored, denigrated, and attacked, our choices restricted, and our rights denied, and our lives and health are negatively impacted by the continuing failure of WHO and its funders to follow its own mandates or to consider the science," it added.

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Ilocos Norte poultry raisers urged to remain vigilant against bird flu

LAOAG CITY—The Ilocos Norte government is urging all poultry raisers and other stakeholders in the province to stay vigilant against avian influenza Type A (H5N1), commonly known as bird flu.

Gervy James Gumarit, head of the Communication and Media Office of the Ilocos Norte government, said Sunday last Oct. 20, the Department of Agriculture Regional Field Office 1 distributed free-range chickens to 20 Balik Probinsya beneficiaries.

Several days later, the chickens tested positive for bird flu, hence, the local government units concerned were alerted while the Provincial Veterinary Office in coordination with the DA is conducting surveillance and disinfecting services.

To prevent the spread of bird flu, all mayors, quarantine guards, shippers, farm owners, backyard raisers, and other stakeholders were told to implement preventive and quarantine measures immediately.

"Please coordinate with your respective Agriculture Office for any poultry mortality and Health Offices for any influenza-like symptoms," Gumarit said.

All stakeholders were also advised to implement strict biosecurity and prevent free-range chickens from being on the loose. If not confined, net enclosures should be in place.

Provincial veterinarian Dr. Loida Valenzuela said bird flu is considered an economic disease as well as a disease of public health importance.

The public is advised not to eat raw poultry products and only buy live or dressed poultry from sellers who can provide proof that their commodity is negative for the disease.

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55 dead, 20 missing as Paeng exits Phl

By MICHAEL PUNONGBAYAN

At least 55 people are dead and 20 more missing as Severe Tropical Storm Paeng exits the country today, rescuers and weather officials have said.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC), which has a slower vetting process, yesterday reported a death toll of 48 and the number of missing at 22. Most of the casualties were reported in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM).

The Rapid Emergency Action on Disaster Incidence (READi), an outfit of the BARMM, reported that 40 people either died in landslides

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55 dead From Page 1

that flattened villages or drowned in waist-deep floodwaters that tormented farming enclaves in Datu Odin Sinsuat and Datu Blah municipalities in Maguindanao del Norte.

The NDRRMC also counted two fatalities each in Regions 6 (Western Visayas) and 8 (Eastern Visayas); three in Region 12 (Soccsksargen in Central Mindanao), and one in Region 5 (Bicol).

One of the dead in Region 6 was Roger Caro, 50, whose body was found in a car that had been swept away by a flash flood off the bypass road in Barangay Jalaud Norte, Zarraga, Iloilo around 1 a.m. yesterday.

Not included in this count was the death of a motorcycle rider in an accident along the rough and slippery road of Sitio Ibulao, Barangay Baguinge, Kiangan, Ifugao in the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) last Friday.

Still in CAR, Kalinga resident Severino Lumacday, 62, remained missing after he was hit by falling rocks, knocked into a creek and swept away to the Saltan River in Balbalan town. The search for his body has extended to Cagayan province since the river joins the Chico River and drains to Tuao in the neighboring province located in Region 2.

In Region 3, the body of Leo Chaves, of Barangay San Roque, San Jose del Monte City, Bulacan, was retrieved from the Santa Maria River at 6 a.m. yesterday. He was reported missing at 1 p.m. Saturday at the height of Paeng's torrential rains.

After 'Paeng,' may be 'Queenie'

Meanwhile, Paeng (international name Nalgae) is forecast to exit the Philippine area of responsibility today as another weather disturbance approaches the country.

Yesterday, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said that Paeng was moving west-southwest while decelerating before turning north-northwest or northwestward, then west-northwestward toward southern China.

PAGASA also reported that the new tropical depression, spotted almost stationary in the Pacific Ocean some 1,250 kilometers east-northeast of Northeastern Mindanao, will be named "Queenie" when it enters the Philippine area.

Packing winds of up to 45 kilometers per hour near the center and gustiness of 55 kph, this tropical depression may enter the country today, but also weaken into a low-pressure area upon landfall, it said.

Hundreds of thousands displaced

During its onslaught, Paeng caused flash floods and landslides from Thursday night to Friday, displacing a total of 578,258 residents in Cotabato City and the provinces of Maguindanao del Sur and Maguindanao del Norte.

Of this number, 337,980 are residents of BARMM's regional capital of Cotabato City, the READi reported.

Cotabato City is traversed by downstream waterways from the 220,000-hectare Liguasan Delta, a catch basin for more than a dozen large rivers from hinterlands in North Cotabato, South Cotabato, Sultan Kudarat and Bukidnon provinces.

Bangsamoro Local Government Minister Naguib Sinarimbo, who is overseeing the operation of the READi contingent, said their calamity and disaster responders are still out, providing evacuees with relief interventions.

While no deaths were reported in Negros Occidental in Region 6, floods spawned by heavy rains displaced 7,670 families or 32,447 people in 24 municipalities and cities.

The Provincial Social Welfare and Development Office said flash floods hit 97 barangays in Negros Occidental, affecting 8,962 families or 37,253

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persons.

On a national scale, the NDRRMC said Paeng adversely affected 277,383 families or a total of 932,077 individuals in 2,445 barangays throughout the country.

Of the number, the NDRRMC reported that 44,847 families or 168,453 people have been displaced by heavy rains, flooding and landslides.

The NDRRMC estimated the cost of damage to houses in seven affected regions at P38.9 million.

On the other hand, damage to agriculture in Regions 6 and 12 alone and covering crops, infrastructure, machinery and equipment has reached more than 54.9 million.

Nat'l state of calamity pushed

Department of National Defense (DND) officer-in-charge Jose Faustino Jr., NDRRMC chairman, said a recommendation to place the country under a national state of calamity has been submitted to President Marcos.

Faustino said he and Interior Secretary Benhur Abalos, Social Welfare Secretary Erwin Tulfo, and Special Assistant to the President Antonio Lagdameo Jr. flew around Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon yesterday morning and will proceed to the BARMM to assess the situation.

In Region 4-A, three landslides and flooding were reported in 40 areas across the provinces of Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon (Calabarzon).

There were 117 power interruptions reported in 44 municipalities in the region, 24 of which have already been restored as of yesterday afternoon.

In Cavite, Gov. Jonvic Remulla told radio station *dzBB* that a total of 2,959 families or 10,101 individuals, were evacuated from their flood-submerged houses in 33 areas across Noveleta, Imus, Kawit, Bacoor and Rosario.

Meanwhile in Quezon province, a Chinese vessel with 21 crewmembers was stranded and taking shelter in waters off Pitogo.

In CAR, landslides, flooding and mudflows led to several road closures, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)-Cordillera reported.

These incidents were reported in Kabugao and Calanasan towns in Apayao; the Gov. Bado Dangwa National Road and Cong. Andres Acop Cosalan Road in Benguet; Kiangan-Tinoc, Kiangan-Tinoc-Buguias, Banaue-Mayoyao-Alfonso Lista-Isabela Boundary, and Ubao-Taang Roads in Ifugao; and the Lubuagan-Batong Buhay-Abra, Mountain Province-Calanan-Pinukpuk-Abbut, and Balbalan-Pinukpuk Roads in Kalinga, among others. **– With John Unson, Jennifer Rendon, Artemio Dumlao, Ed Amoroso, Gilbert Bayoran, Ralph Edwin Villanueva, Ramon Efren Lazaro**

THE PHILIPPINE STAR
TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

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House bill aims to revitalize local salt industry

By DELON PORCALLA

A senior administration lawmaker has filed a bill in the House of Representatives that aims to revitalize the country's salt industry through a "comprehensive salt industry development program" that will do away with massive salt importation.

Rep. Ron Salo of party-list Kabayan, chairman of the House committee on overseas workers affairs, authored and sponsored House Bill 1976 in an attempt to make the Philippines self-sufficient in salt production.

"This bill is a product of numerous consultations with various stakeholders – salt farmers, salt producers, and even representatives from agencies. We have carefully studied and crafted this bill, bearing in mind first and foremost the needs of our local farmers," he said.

Salo highlighted the classic irony where the Philippines imports around 93 percent of the country's salt requirement, despite having 36,000 kilometers of shoreline – the fifth longest shoreline in the world – that can be utilized for massive salt production.

"I am glad to sponsor our proposed salt industry bill. This has been one of my advocacies since the 17th Congress; and now in the 19th Congress, the issues of the salt industry are at last put into the limelight," he said.

HB 1976 tasks the government to provide technical, physical and financial assistance to sea salt farmers, including artisanal salt farmers, to develop and improve their craft.

It also mandates the government to invest in the identification and construction of salt farms for lease to qualified salt farmers, whether individuals, cooperatives, or corporations.

Salo attributed the country's heavy dependence on imports to "an outdated policy regime, low quality control and product improvement, limited development of new production areas, unattractive business environment for small enterprises and lack of new investments."

Businessman Sergio Ortiz-Luis Jr., chairman of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry, who attended a recent hearing on the issue, heaped praises on the filing of the bill, saying that "it is a bill that you don't expect any opposition."

Salo is optimistic that support from key stakeholders will further push the measure.

Those who manifested their support and will be providing the House committee on agriculture and food position papers were the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Cooperative Development Authority, and Department of Science and Technology.

Other representatives who also showed support included Reps. Richard Gomez (Leyte), Gerville Luistro (Batangas) and France Castro (ACT Teachers party-list).

Rep. Wilbert Lee (Agri party-list) filed his own version of the bill.

"I'm very pleased that I now have a co-champion in the revitalization of the salt industry. With the chairperson, Rep. Lee, and the other members of the committee, I am not anymore a lone voice in the wilderness calling for the development of the salt industry," Salo said.

Daily Tribune
WITHOUT FEAR ▫ WITHOUT FAVOR

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Global cooperation amid crises

GOING FORWARD
CHRISTOPHER LAWRENCE "BONG" GO

> ***I myself share the same passion as our national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal, which is to serve and love our country and our fellow Filipinos.***

National development cannot operate in a vacuum. The importance of stronger global cooperation to assist in domestic growth has become even more pertinent in light of the Covid-19 pandemic and the aggravation of some of the most intractable challenges that the world is facing. Against this backdrop, it is imperative that we strengthen our ties with other countries to identify areas in which we could work together toward the fulfillment of our respective national goals.

Thus, I am grateful that we have recently concluded a successful three-day parliamentary visit in France from 24 to 26 of October. I was part of the official Philippine Senate delegation that was invited to visit the said European country for inter-parliamentary exchanges on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the establishment of Philippine-French diplomatic relations.

The Philippine delegation was led by Senate President Juan Miguel Zubiri, Senate President Pro Tempore Loren Legarda, Senate Majority Leader Joel Villanueva, and Senate Deputy Majority Leader Joseph Victor Ejercito, together with fellow senators Manuel Lapid, Maria Lourdes Binay and Grace Poe.

During the visit, we met with the French Senate led by their Senate President Gérard Larcher, as well as with Guillaume Kasbarian, a member of the French National Assembly and chair of its Economic Affairs Committee, members of the Atomic Energy Commission, the Nuclear Safety Authority of France, and representatives of the French private sector, particularly those from the energy and transportation industries. We were also hosted by the France-South East Asian Friendship Group led by Senator Mathieu Darnaud.

I am optimistic that the visit would pave the way for a more profound relationship between the Philippines and France, especially as it opened up new opportunities for collaboration between the two nations in areas such as sustainable energy, climate change, economic growth, and food security.

Following our parliamentary visit in France, I then proceeded to Madrid, Spain. On 28 October, I was tasked to represent the Philippine Senate in the unveiling of the ceremonial plaque commemorating the 75th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Spain at the Jose Rizal Monument, Avenida de las Islas Filipinas. This was upon the invitation of the Philippine Embassy in Spain led by our Ambassador Philippe Lhuillier, and the National Historical Commission of the Philippines.

It was a fitting tribute to the rich history shared by both countries as well as to our Filipino hero Dr. Jose Rizal whose beliefs and advocacies continue to inspire a nation even after more than 100 years since he died. I myself share the same passion as our national hero, Dr. Jose Rizal, which is to serve and love our country and our fellow Filipinos.

During these foreign visits, I am also grateful to be given an opportunity to meet our *kababayans* residing there. I know it is hard to be away from their loved ones here so it was a pleasure to share stories with them as they extended their warm welcome and also showed their support for our shared advocacies towards providing a safer and more comfortable life for our children.

As head of our Senate Committee on Health, I am also thankful for the opportunity to personally express our gratitude to the French and Spanish governments for their respective Covid-19 vaccine donations to the Philippines at the height of the pandemic. The donations went a long way toward ensuring the success of our vaccination program and the safety of our citizens against the threat of the virus.

Amid these responsibilities as a senator, we still continue to assist communities in crises here in our country. For instance, our office assisted 160 families who were affected by a fire incident in Pasay City. I also checked in on the situation of the victims myself through a video conference call.

My office also continued a series of relief operations last week for victims of disasters and other struggling Filipinos across the country. More fire victims were assisted, including 63 families in Parañaque City; 22 residents in Mati City, Davao Oriental; five individuals in Alabel, Sarangani; and four more in Lala, Lanao del Norte.

Beneficiaries also include 1,146 students from San Simon, Pampanga; 4,703 indigent residents from various towns in Lanao del Norte; 1,000 from Abucay, Bataan; 1,000 from Ibajay, Aklan; 866 from Dumaguete City, Negros Oriental; 600 from San Jose del Monte City and 278 from Malolos City, Bulacan; 230 from Dingalan, Aurora; 130 from Sta. Cruz, Laguna; and 1,000 from San Antonio, Nueva Ecija.

We also helped 500 struggling residents in Naval, Biliran following the groundbreaking of the Super Health Center in the town.

Meanwhile, to boost the local economy, we also continue to assist small business owners. We supported 592 micro, small and medium enterprises in Tubao, Pugo, Agoo, Bagulin, Burgos, Rosario, Sto. Tomas, Aringay, Santol, Caba and Balaoan in La Union; and 250 in Infanta, Quezon.

Stronger cooperation in addressing climate change will be particularly helpful for a country like ours, which is touted as one of the most vulnerable countries to the effects of climate change. In fact, many areas in our country are presently inundated due to the severe tropical storm "Paeng," claiming the lives of our people, displacing even more, and causing damage to properties and infrastructures. Worse, this came on the heels of a magnitude 6.4 earthquake that hit Abra province last 25 October.

> ***Cooperation, whether on a domestic or international level, has long been proven to be crucial in the achievement of every collective goal.***

The extent of devastation caused by typhoon "Paeng" and recent calamities makes our call to establish the Department of Disaster Resilience and to build mandatory evacuation centers in every town, city and province more relevant than ever.

I also wish to express my sympathies to those who have lost their loved ones due to the calamity. Rest assured that we will do our part, to the best of our abilities, to provide support and help affected communities recover. I am continuously coordinating with our national agencies on the ground and concerned local government units to assist them in every way we can. Our teams are on their way to Maguindanao, Zamboanga, Cotabato, Cavite, Panay Island and other affected areas to help in the relief operations.

As we commiserate with those who have lost loved ones, let us do our best to ensure we can save more lives now and protect more lives in the future.

Cooperation, whether on a domestic or international level, has long been proven to be crucial in the achievement of every collective goal. Let us continue to forge closer ties and boost each other up so that even in the face of local and even global challenges, we can all emerge stronger and better than ever.

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NDRRMC: 'Paeng'-affected persons reach over 900K

TROPICAL storm "Paeng" has so far affected 277,383 families or 932,077 individuals in 2,455 barangays in 14 regions in the country, according to the latest update of the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) yesterday.

These communities are in Regions 2 (Cagayan Valley), 3 (Central Luzon), 4-A (Calabarzon), 4-B (Mimaropa), 5 (Bicol), 6 (Western Visayas), 7 (Central Visayas), 8 (Eastern Visayas), 9 (Zamboanga Peninsula), 11 (Davao), 12 (Soccsksargen), Caraga, Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), and the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR).

As of this posting, 44,847 families or 168,453 persons are in 2,125 evacuation centers while the remainder are being helped by relatives or friends.

Reported deaths are placed at 48, along with 40 injured, and 22 missing. Confirmed and validated deaths are 37 – 33 in BARMM, two in Soccsksargen and two in Western Visayas.

Still undergoing validation confirmation are reports of 11 deaths–seven in BARMM, two in Region 8, one in Region 12, and one in Region 5. Confirmed injuries were placed at two in Region 12.

While undergoing confirmation are 40 injuries– 31 in BARMM, three in Region 8, and four in Region 5.

The NDRRMC also reported four confirmed missing persons in BARMM while still undergoing confirmation are reports of six missing also BARMM, three in Region 12, eight in Region 8, and one in Region 5.

A total of 714 houses were reported damaged in Regions 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, Caraga, and BARMM. Partially damaged houses were 555 while totally damaged houses were 159.

Meanwhile, the Philippine Army (PA) said its disaster response units (DRUs) are on standby alert for humanitarian assistance and disaster response missions following the onslaught of "Paeng."

"The Army leadership prepared 21 DRUs, two urban search-and-rescue (USAR) teams, three aircraft, and 12 military trucks that would readily be deployed to various Unified Commands in nearby areas and provinces for rescue and relief operations," PA spokesperson Col. Xerxes Trinidad said in a statement yesterday.

PA chief Lt. Gen. Romeo Brawner Jr. made sure of the functional preparedness of the Army's DRU teams in assisting the Filipinos in typhoon-affected areas.

"The Philippine Army is prepared and ready to give service when needed. The sacrifices of the Army troops are for the Filipinos and the country," he added.

Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary Benjamin "Benhur" Abalos Jr. said the agency, together with the Philippine National Police and the Bureau of Fire Protection ,are all hands on deck in working with local government units in ongoing disaster response efforts.

Abalos also said the DILG is also working with concerned national government agencies to respond to affected families and mitigate the loss of lives and damages to property.

"Further, the Department is closely coordinating with the Ministry of the Interior and Local Government of the BARMM which is now under a state of calamity to help them access their calamity funds to provide assistance to the affected families," he added.

On Saturday, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) said 34 road sections in Western Visayas, Eastern Visayas, BARMM, CAR, Calabarzon, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Bicol, and Soccsksargen were closed due to rockfall, soil collapse, road cut, road slip, mud flow, and damaged bridge approach, among others, the DPWH said.

(With reports from Lloyd Caliwan/Ferdinand Patinio/PNA)

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'Paeng' leaves behind damaged bridges, houses, poultry farms in Laguna

By Gil Aman

TYPHOON "Paeng" yesterday left behind damaged bridges, houses, crops and poultry farms in the province of Laguna.

An iron footbridge in Bgy. Bayate in Liliw town collapsed and was carried away by a strong current of flood coming from the nearby Mt. Banahaw.

People living near the river in the village were evacuated to safer areas.

"Paeng" also destroyed a duck poultry and piggery farms in Victoria town.

The storm lashed the 4th and 3rd district and caused flooding in the 1st and 2nd districts of the province.

The City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (CDRRMOC) in San Pablo City reported that 33 barangays were affected by "Paeng," wherein some houses were partially and totally-damaged.

The City Council immediately called for an emergency special session for a declaration of a state of calamity.

As of press time, no casualty has been reported by the authorities in Laguna.

Personnel of the Department of Public Works and Highways, with the help of village officials, removed from the highway the banana trunks and trees toppled by strong winds and heavy rainfall.

RAGING FLOOD. **The part of an iron footbridge in Bgy. Bayate, Liliw, Laguna which was carried away by a flashflood from Mt. Banahaw. A number of families from the village were evacuated to safer areas as typhoon "Paeng" crossed Laguna after fifth Landfall in Sariaya, Quezon.** *Photo by GIL AMAN*

The highway of Siniloan and Bgy. Bangbang in Los Banos, Laguna also experienced flooding.

The Provincial Disaster Management Office has yet to determine the damage brought by "Paeng" in Laguna.

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Paeng causes P49M agri damage in MIMAROPA, Bicol, W. Visayas

By CORY MARTINEZ

MORE than P49 million worth of agricultural products and farmlands were damaged by Tropical Storm Paeng in MIMAROPA, Bicol and Western Visayas Region.

In its Bulletin No. 4 on TS "PAENG," the Department of Agriculture(DA) reported that the total damage was recorded at P49.54 million wherein 762 farmers were affected, with volume of production loss at 2,543 metric tons (MT) and 1,949 hectares of agricultural areas.

Affected commodities include rice, high value crops and fisheries. These values are subject to validation.

The DA, however, said that through its Regional Field Offices (RFOs), it continues to conduct assessment of damage and losses brought by "PAENG" in the agri-fisheries sector.

The DA further continuously coordinates with concerned national government agencies (NGAs), local government units (LGUs) and other Disaster Risk Reduction Management (DRRM)-related offices for the impact of the tropical cyclones, as well as available resources for interventions and assistance.

The DA disclosed that affected farmers will be provided with assistance with the distribution of rice, corn and assorted vegetable seeds and drugs and biologics for livestock and poultry.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR), on the other hand, will distribute fingerlings and assistance to affected fisherfolk.

The affected farmers and fishers can also avail of the Survival and Recovery (SURE) Loan Program from the Agricultural Credit Policy Council (ACPC) with loanable amount of up to PhP 25,000 payable in three years at zero interest; and Quick Response Fund (QRF) for the rehabilitation of affected areas.

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Paeng death toll climbs to 55; 22 missing

By ZAIDA DELOS REYES

THE number of fatalities due to the onslaught of severe tropical storm Paeng already climbed to 55 as reported by provincial disaster response and rescue units on Sunday morning with atleast 22 other persons missing and 40 injured persons in various affected provinces mostly in the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region of Muslim Mindanao (BARRM).

However, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) clarified that based on their data, they only listed 48 deaths with 22 missing.

Added to the list of fatalities were two each from Region 6 and 8, three in Region 12 and one in Region 5.

Update issued by NDRRMC showed that a total of 277,383 families or a total of 932,077 individuals from 2,445 different barangays across the country were affected by Paeng's wrath.

The NDRRMC said 2,125 evacuation centers are providing temporary shelter to some 44,847 families of 168,453 persons displaced by heavy rains, flooding, and landlides.

A total of P38.9 million worth of houses were partiallg and totally destroyed by Paeng in seven affected regions in the country.

Damage to agriculture in Regions 6 and 12 alone covering crops, infrastructure, machinery and equipment has reached more than 54.9 million.

Department of National Defense (DND) officer in charge, Senior Undersecretary Jose Faustino Jr. who also chairs the NDRRMC in a press briefing said a recommendation to place the country under a national state of calamity has been submitted to President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.

Faustino said he and Interior and Local Governmnet Secretary Benhur Abalos, Social Welfare Secretary Erwin Tulfo, and Special Assistant to the President Antonio Lagdameo Jr. flew around the Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon yesterday morning and will be visiting BARMM too to assess the situation.

He assured that President Marcos' directives are bing carried out including the immediate deployment of potable water to the BARMMM to be followed by water purifying systems and the restoration of power in all affected areas with priority to hospitals and evacuation centers.

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2.9M Pinoy nagutom sa Q3 2022 - SWS

Halos 2.9 milyong pamilyang Pilipino ang nakaranas ng involuntary hunger sa third quarter ng 2022, ayon sa Social Weather Stations (SWS) survey na inilabas nitong Sabado.

Sa Sept. 29 to Oct. 2, 2022 poll, na unang SWS survey sa ilalim ng administrasyon ni Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr., napag-alaman na 11.3 porsyento ng mga pamilya ang walang makain "at least once in the past 3 months."

Katulad ito ng 11.6 porsyento o tinatayang 2.9 milyong pamilya na nagutom noong Hunyo 2022, at bahagyang mas mababa sa 12.2 porsyento o 3.1 milyong pamilya noong Abril 2022.

"However, it is still 1.3 points above the 10 percent (estimated 2.5 million families) in September 2021, and 2.0 points above the pre-pandemic annual average of 9.3 percent in 2019," sabi sa SWS.

Ang October 2022 hunger rate ay kabuuan ng 9.1 porsyento (2.3 milyong pamilya) na nakaranas ng Moderate Hunger at 2.2 porsyento (573,000 pamilya) na nakaranas ng Severe Hunger.

Tumutukoy ang Moderate hunger sa mga nakaranas ng gutom "only once" o "a few times" sa nakalipas na tatlong buwan.

Habang ang severe ay sa mga madalas nakaranas nito na "often" o "always."

Pinakamataas ang kagutuman sa Metro Manila na 16.3 porsyento ng mga pamilya, na sinundan ng Mindanao sa 15.3%, Balance Luzon sa 9.6%, at Visayas sa 7.0%. *(Mer Layson)*

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San Pablo City, Zamboanga City at Albay nasa state of calamity

Nina DORIS FRANCHE at JORGE HALLARE

Nasa ilalim na ng state of calamity ang San Pablo City sa Laguna, Zamboanga City at lalawigan ng Albay dahil sa matinding pinsala na kanilang inabot dulot ng matinding pananalasa ng bagyong Paeng.

Ayon sa San Pablo City Information Office, Sabado nang ipasa ng Sangguniang Panglungsod ang resolusyon nitong Sabado na nagdedeklara ng state of calamity.

Base sa City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (CDRRMC), 33 barangay ang apektado ng severe tropical storm Paeng. Ilang kabahayan ay partially damaged at nasira ang mga pananim matapos na malubog sa baha.

Bukod sa matinding pagbaha, naitala ng CDRRMC ang pagguho ng lupa dahil sa malakas na ulan at hangin.

Hanggang nitong Linggo ng umaga ay umiiral ang Tropical Cyclone Wind Signal No. 1 sa Laguna, base sa PAGASA.

Samantala, Sabado din nang aprubahan ng konseho ng Zamboanga City LGU ang deklarasyon ng state of calamity matapos irekomenda ni Mayor John Dalipe na siyang chairman ng City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council.

"The declaration will enable the city government and the affected barangays to utilize resources and address [the damage] caused by the tropical storm," ni Dalipe.

Sa tala ng Emergency Operations Center, isa ang patay habang apat ang nawawala nang rumagasa ang flash flood noong Huwebes at Biyernes.

Mahigit 5,000 pamilya at nasa 42 barangays ang naapektuhan ng bagyo at pagbaha sa Zamboanga.

Samantala, nitong Sabado ay gumawa ng resolusyon ang Sangguniang Panlalawigan sa ipinatawag na special session ni Albay Vice Governor Grex Lagman na nagdedeklara sa buong lalawigan ng Albay sa state of calamity bunsod din sa matinding pinsala na inabot ng lalawigan. Nasa P93 milyon ang inisyal na pinsala sa agrikultura at imprastraktura rito.

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Sinira ni 'Paeng' sa Kabikulan nasa P93-M; 1 patay at 1 nawawala

LEGAZPI CITY, Albay - Umabot na sa inisyal na P93,101,291 ang tinatayang naging danyos habang isa ang naiulat na nasawi at isa ang nawawala matapos ang paghagupit ng bagyong "Paeng" sa Kabikulan.

Sa ulat ng Office of Civil Defense regional office sa pangunguna ni regional director Claudio Yucot ang may pinakamalaking napinsala sa Bicol ay ang agrikultura lalo na sa palay, mais, high value crop at fisheries na umabot sa 91,701,291 piso halaga. Sa lalawigan ng Camarines Sur ang naiulat na may pinakamalaking napinsala sa palayan, mais, high value crop at palaisdaan na umabot sa 66,587,740.63.

Sa Albay, nasa P22,074,116.44 ang nasirang palayan. Ang Masbate ay nagkaroon ng danyos na 2,910,000 piso sa pagkasira ng ilang palaisdaan habang P129,433.96 ang nasira namang high value crop sa Sorsogon.

Maliban sa agrikultura, nasa P1,400,000 ang nasira sa imprastraktura matapos masira ang isang tulay at flood control sa Camarines Sur.

Isa naman ang naiulat na nasawi sa Mandaon, Masbate. Isa ang nawawala sa Mercedes, Camarines Norte at apat ang nasugatan mula sa Sorsogon.

Simula noong Sabado ng hapon hanggang kahapon, karamihan sa 28,462 pamilya o 111,579 katao na sumilong sa mga evacuation centers sa buong rehiyon ay nakauwi na makaraang mag-utos ng decampment ang mga lokal na pamahalaan.

Unti-unti namang nabawasan ang aabot sa 4,655 na stranded na pasahero sa buong rehiyon makaraang payagan nang maglayag ang mga barko kung saan 2,952 dito ay nasa iba't ibang pantalan habang 1,703 ang nasa kahabaan ng Maharlika National Highway lulan ng mga bus, cargo trucks at mga sasakyan na patungong seaports. *(Jorge Hallare)*

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48 patay, 1M residente napinsala ni 'Paeng'

Nasa 48 katao ang nasawi habang tinatayang halos isang milyong residente ang naapektuhan ng bagyong Paeng, ayon sa pahayag ng National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) nitong Linggo.

Nabatid na sa bilang ng mga namatay, 40 ang naiulat sa Bangsamoro region, tatlo sa Soccsksargen, tig dalawa sa Western at Eastern Visayas at isa sa Bicol region.

Ayon sa NDRRMC, naapektuhan din ang nasa 32,077 indibidwal sa 2,445 barangay sa Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Bicol Region, Western Visayas, Central Visayas, Eastern Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula, Davao Region, Soccsksargen, Caraga, Bangsamoro, at Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR).

Nawasak naman ng bagyo ang bahay ng 168,453 residente na pawang nananatili pa rin

Ni DORIS FRANCHE

sa 2,125 na evacuation center.

Binanggit ng NDRRMC, hindi madaanan ang 147 kalsada at 53 na tulay sa buong bansa matapos mapinsala ng bagyo.

Umabot na rin sa 379 insidente ng pagbaha sa buong bansa, bukod pa sa naitalang 60 na landslides, at anim na flash flood.

Halos P55 milyon ang naitalang pinsala ng Department of Agriculture sa sektor ng agrikultura sa Western Visayas at Soccsksargen.

Sa huling ulat ng Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), tinatahak na ng bagyo ang West Philippine Sea palayo ng bansa.

Umabot din sa 714 kabahayan ang nawasak habang 147 kalye at 53 tulay ang hindi madaanan.

Abante
UNA SA BALITA

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Mga pamilyang gutom sa NCR, Visayas, Mindanao sumirit

MAY 2.9 milyong pamilyang Pilipino ang nakaranas ng gutom nitong nakaraaang tatlong buwan at 573,000 pamilya naman ang mas madalas walang makain o ang tinatawag ng Social Weather Stations (SWS) na severe hunger.

Ayon sa 3rd quarter 2022 survey ng SWS, ang 2.9 milyong pamilya ay katumbas ng 11.3% ng mga pamilya sa bansa at mas kaunti ng bahagya sa 12.2% o 3.1 milyong pamilyang nagsabing nakaranas ng gutom noong 2nd quarter ng taon.

Dumami naman ang mga mas madalas na walang makain sa 573,000 na katumbas ng 2.2% ng mga pamilya nitong Oktubre, kumpara sa 546,000 o 2.1% nung Hunyo.

Ginawa ng SWS ang survey mula Setyembre 29 hanggang Oktubre 2, at ito ang unang survey sa ilalim ng administrasyon ni Pangulong Ferdinand 'Bongbong' Marcos Jr.

Sabi ng SWS, dumami ang mga nakaranas ng gutom sa Metro Manila, Visayas at Mindanao ngunit nabawasan ang nagutom sa ibang bahagi ng Luzon o ang tinatawag ng SWS na balance Luzon. **(Eileen Mencias)**

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Russia suspends Ukraine grain deal over ship attack claim

By Andrew Meldrum
The Associated Press

KYIV, Ukraine—Russia announced Saturday that it will immediately suspend its implementation of a UN-brokered grain deal that has seen more than 9 million tons of grain exported from Ukraine during the war and has brought down soaring global food prices. Ukraine accused Russia of creating a world "hunger games."

The Russian Defense Ministry cited an alleged Ukrainian drone attack Saturday against Russia's Black Sea Fleet ships moored off the coast of occupied Crimea as the reason for the move. Ukraine has denied the attack, saying that the Russians mishandled their own weapons.

The Russian declaration came one day after UN chief Antonio Guterres urged Russia and Ukraine to renew the grain export deal, which was scheduled to expire on Nov. 19. Guterres also urged other countries, mainly in the West, to expedite the removal of obstacles blocking Russian grain and fertilizer exports.

The UN chief said the grain deal—brokered by the United Nations and Turkey in July—helps "to cushion the suffering that this global cost-of-living crisis is inflicting on billions of people," his spokesman said.

UN officials were in touch with Russian authorities over the announced suspension.

"It is vital that all parties refrain from any action that would imperil the Black Sea Grain Initiative, which is a critical humanitarian effort that is clearly having a positive impact on access to food for millions of people," said Guterres' spokesman, Stephane Dujarric.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called the Russian move "predictable." He accused Moscow of "blockading" ships carrying grain since September. Currently, he said, 176 vessels are backed up at sea, carrying more than 2 million tons of food.

"This is a transparent attempt by Russia to return to the threat of large-scale famine in Africa and Asia," Zelenskyy said Saturday in his nightly video address. He called for a tough response against Russia from international bodies like the UN and the G-20.

Ukraine's Foreign Minister, Dmytro Kuleba, accused Russia of playing "hunger games" by imperiling global food shipments.

In Washington, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said the suspension was regrettable and urged "all parties to keep this essential, life-saving Initiative functioning."

"Any act by Russia to disrupt these critical grain exports is essentially a statement that people and families around the world should pay more for food or go hungry," Blinken said in a statement Saturday night. "In suspending this arrangement, Russia is again weaponizing food in the war it started, directly impacting low- and middle-income countries and global food prices, and exacerbating already dire humanitarian crises and food insecurity."

Russia's Foreign Ministry on Saturday accused British specialists of being involved in the alleged attack by drones on Russian ships in Crimea. Britain's Defense Ministry had no immediate comment on the claim.

"In connection with the actions of Ukrainian armed forces, led by British specialists, directed, among other things, against Russian ships that ensure the functioning of the humanitarian corridor in question (which cannot be qualified otherwise than as a terrorist attack), the Russian side cannot guarantee the safety of civilian dry cargo ships participating in the Black Sea initiative, and suspends its implementation from today for an indefinite period," the Russian statement said.

Ukraine's Ministry of Infrastructure said that Ukraine has never threatened the Black Sea grain corridor, which "is exclusively humanitarian in nature," and would contin-

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ue to try to keep shipments going. It said since the first ship left Odesa on Aug. 1, more than 9 million tons of food have been exported, including more than 5 million tons to African and Asian countries. As part of the UN World Food Program, it said, 190,000 tons of wheat have been sent to countries where there is hunger.

Russia also requested a meeting Monday of the UN Security Council because of the alleged attack on the Black Sea Fleet and the security of the grain corridor, said Dmitry Polyansky, Russia's first deputy representative to the UN.

Russia's agriculture minister said Moscow stands ready to "fully replace Ukrainian grain and deliver supplies at affordable prices to all interested countries." In remarks carried by the state Rossiya 24 TV channel, Dmitry Patrushev said Moscow was prepared to "supply up to 500,000 tons of grain to the poorest countries free of charge in the next four months," with the help of Turkey.

Earlier Saturday, Ukraine and Russia offered differing versions on the Crimea drone attack in which at least one Russian ship suffered damage in Sevastopol, a key port on the Ukrainian peninsula annexed by Moscow in 2014.

The Russian Defense Ministry said a minesweeper had "minor damage" during an alleged pre-dawn Ukrainian attack on navy and civilian vessels docked in Sevastopol, which hosts the headquarters of Russia's Black Sea Fleet. The ministry claimed Russian forces had "repelled" 16 attacking drones.

The governor of the Sevastopol region, Mikhail Razvozhaev, claimed the port saw a "massive attack" by air and sea drones. He provided no evidence, saying all video would be seized for security reasons.

But an adviser to Ukraine's Interior Ministry claimed that "careless handling of explosives" had caused blasts on four warships in Russia's Black Sea Fleet. Anton Gerashchenko wrote on Telegram that the vessels included a frigate, a landing ship and a ship that carried cruise missiles used in a deadly July attack on a western Ukrainian city.

In other developments on Saturday, Russian troops moved large numbers of sick and wounded comrades from hospitals in Ukraine's southern Kherson region and stripped the facilities of medical equipment, Ukrainian officials said as their forces fought to retake the province.

Kremlin-installed authorities in the mostly Russian-occupied region have urged civilians to leave the city of Kherson, the region's capital—and reportedly joined the tens of thousands who have fled to other Russia-held areas.

Zelenskyy said the Russians were "dismantling the entire health care system" in Kherson and other occupied areas.

"The occupiers have decided to close medical institutions in the cities, take away equipment, ambulances. Just everything," Zelenskyy said.

Kherson is one of four regions in Ukraine that Russian President Vladimir Putin illegally annexed last month and where he subsequently declared martial law. The others are Donetsk, Luhansk and Zaporizhzhia.

As Kyiv's forces sought gains in the south, Russia kept up its shelling and missile attacks in the country's east. Three more civilians died and eight more were wounded in the Donetsk region, as Russian soldiers try to capture the city of Bakhmut, an important target in Russia's stalled eastern offensive.

Russian shelling also hit an industrial building in Ukraine's southern Zaporizhzhia region.

In the latest prisoner exchange, 50 Ukrainian soldiers, including two former defenders of the Azovstal steel plant in Mariupol, and two civilians were released Saturday as part of a swap with Russia, who received 50 Russian soldiers, both sides reported.

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BY

Ukraine grain exports stopped

Russia suspends participation in deal blaming Kyiv's 'drone assault' on Black Sea fleet in Crimea

KYIV, UKRAINE—Ukraine's maritime grain exports were halted on Sunday after Russia suspended its participation in an agreement that allowed the vital shipments, blaming drone attacks on its ships in Crimea.

The July deal to unlock grain exports signed between Russia and Ukraine and brokered by Turkey and the UN, is critical to easing the global food crisis caused by the conflict.

The agreement already allowed nine million tons of Ukrainian grain to be exported and was due to be renewed on Nov. 19.

On Saturday, Russia said it was halting its participation after its army accused Kyiv of a "massive" drone attack on its Black Sea fleet, which Ukraine labeled a "false pretext."

US President Joe Biden called the move "purely outrageous" while Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Moscow was "weaponizing food."

On Sunday, the EU urged Russia to "revert its decision."

The center coordinating the logistics of the deal said in a statement that no traffic was planned for Sunday.

"A joint agreement has not been reached at the JCC for the movement of inbound and outbound vessels on 30 October," it said. "There are more than 10 vessels both outbound and inbound waiting to enter the corridor."

Ukraine's foreign minister said on Twitter that Russia was blocking "two million tons of grain on 176 vessels already at sea" that he said was "enough to feed seven million people."

He accused Moscow of having planned to "resume its hunger games" in advance and said the Black Sea explosions were "220 kilometers away from the grain corridor."

Kyiv and the UN earlier urged that the agreement remain in force.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called the Russian move "an absolutely transparent intention of Russia to return the threat of large-scale famine to Africa and Asia."

IN TROUBLED WATERS In this photo taken on Aug. 14, the first UN-chartered vessel MV Brave Commander loads grain for export in a port on the Black Sea coast. —AFP

Stephane Dujarric, spokesperson for the UN secretary-general, said, "It is vital that all parties refrain from any action that would imperil the Black Sea Grain Initiative which is a critical humanitarian effort."

Sevastopol in Moscow-annexed Crimea has been targeted several times in recent months and serves as the headquarters for the Black Sea fleet and a logistical hub for operations in Ukraine.

The Russian army claimed to have "destroyed" nine aerial drones and seven maritime ones in an attack on the port early Saturday.

"In light of the terrorist act carried out by the Kyiv regime with the participation of British experts against ships of the Black Sea fleet and civilian vessels involved in the security of grain corridors, Russia suspends its participation in the implementation of the agreement on the export of agricultural products from Ukrainian ports," the Russian defense ministry said on Telegram.

Moscow's forces alleged British "specialists," who they said were based in the southern Ukrainian city of Ochakiv, had helped prepare and train Kyiv to carry out the strike.

Russia added that the same British unit was involved in explosions on the Nord Stream gas pipelines last month.

Britain denied both claims, saying "the Russian Ministry of Defense is resorting to peddling false claims of an epic scale."

Moscow's military said ships targeted at their Crimean base were involved in the grain deal.

Russia had recently criticized the deal, saying its own grain exports have suffered due to Western sanctions.

Mikhail Razvozhayev, the Moscow-installed governor of Sevastopol, said Saturday's drone attack was the "most massive" the peninsula had seen.

Attacks on Crimea, annexed by Moscow in 2014, have increased in recent weeks, as Kyiv presses a counteroffensive in the south to retake territory held by Moscow for months.

In early October, Moscow's bridge linking Crimea to the Russian mainland—personally inaugurated by President Vladimir Putin in 2018—was damaged by a blast that Putin blamed on Ukraine.

Saturday's Crimea attack came as Ukraine pressed in a counteroffensive in the south aiming to retake lands held by Moscow for months. —AFP

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Russia backs out of Ukraine grain deal

MOSCOW, Russia (AFP) – Moscow on Saturday suspended its participation in a landmark agreement that allowed vital grain exports from Ukraine, blaming drone attacks on Russian ships in Crimea.

Russia made the announcement after its army accused Kyiv earlier Saturday of a "massive" drone attack on its Black Sea fleet, which Ukraine labelled a "false pretext" and the UN urged the deal's preservation.

Moscow's military said ships targeted at their Crimean base were involved in the grain deal.

US President Joe Biden called the move "purely outrageous" while Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Moscow was "weaponizing food."

The July deal to unlock grain exports signed between Russia and Ukraine and brokered by Turkey and the UN, is critical to easing the global food crisis caused by the conflict.

The agreement already allowed more than nine million tons of Ukrainian grain to be exported and was due to be renewed on Nov. 19.

A Turkish security source told AFP that Ankara had not been "officially notified" of Russia's suspension, while Ukraine and the UN pushed for the agreement to remain in force.

"I call on all states to demand that Russia stop its hunger games and recommit to fulfilling its obligations," Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said on Twitter.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky called the Russian move "an absolutely transparent intention of Russia to return the threat of large-scale famine to Africa and Asia."

"Just today, more than two million tons of food are in the sea. This means that access to food has actually worsened for more than seven million consumers," he said in his nightly address.

Stephane Dujarric, spokesman for the UN secretary-general, said: "It is vital that all parties refrain from any action that would imperil the Black Sea Grain Initiative which is a critical humanitarian effort."

'Peddling false claims'

Sevastopol in Moscow-annexed Crimea has been targeted several times in recent months and serves as the headquarters for the Black Sea fleet and a logistical hub for operations in Ukraine.

The Russian army claimed to have "destroyed" nine aerial drones and seven maritime ones, in an attack in the port early Saturday.

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Moscow's forces alleged British "specialists," whom they said were based in the southern Ukrainian city of Ochakiv, had helped prepare and train Kyiv to carry out the strike.

In a further singling out of the UK – which Moscow sees as one of the most unfriendly Western countries – Russia said the same British unit was involved in explosions on the Nord Stream gas pipelines last month.

Britain strongly rebutted both claims, saying "the Russian Ministry of Defense is resorting to peddling false claims of an epic scale."

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Russia drops Ukraine grain deal

MOSCOW: Russia on Saturday (Sunday in Manila) suspended its participation in a landmark agreement that allowed vital grain exports from Ukraine, blaming drone attacks on Russian ships in Crimea.

Russia made the announcement after its army accused Kyiv earlier Saturday of a "massive" drone attack on its Black Sea fleet, which Ukraine labelled a "false pretext" and the United Nations urged the deal's preservation.

US President Joe Biden called the move "purely outrageous" and said it would only serve to "increase starvation."

The July deal to unlock grain exports signed between Russia and Ukraine and brokered by Turkey and the UN is critical to easing the global food crisis caused by the conflict.

The agreement already allowed more than 9 million tons of Ukrainian grain to be exported and was due to be renewed on November 19.

A Turkish security source told Agence France-Presse (AFP) that Ankara had not been "officially notified" of Russia's suspension, while Ukraine and the UN pushed for the agreement to remain in force.

"I call on all states to demand that Russia stop its hunger games and recommit to fulfilling its obligations," Ukrainian Foreign Minister Dmytro Kuleba said on Twitter.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy called the Russian move "an absolutely transparent intention of Russia to return the threat of large-scale famine to Africa and Asia."

"Just today, more than two million tons of food are in the sea. This means that access to food has actually worsened for more than seven million consumers," he said in his nightly address.

Stephane Dujarric, spokesman for the UN secretary-general, said: "It is vital that all parties refrain from any action that would imperil the Black Sea Grain Initiative which is a critical humanitarian effort."

'Peddling false claims'

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OUR DAILY BREAD **A man carries bread in the village of Drobysheve, in eastern Ukraine's Donetsk region, on Friday, Oct. 28, 2022 (October 29 in Manila), after the liberation of the area. Russia on Saturday suspended its participation in a landmark agreement that allowed vital grain exports from Ukraine, blaming drone attacks on Russian ships in Crimea.** AFP PHOTO

Russia's foreign ministry spokeswoman Maria Zakharova said Saturday Moscow would raise the blasts and the alleged drone attack at the UN Security Council.

The British defense ministry said this "invented story says more about arguments going on inside the Russian government than it does about the West."

Moscow's military said ships targeted at their Crimean base were involved in the grain deal.

The United Nations coordinator for the Black Sea Grain Initiative, Amir Abdulla, reported that Russia had notified him earlier Saturday of "its concerns about the safety of movements of merchant vessels" under the agreement.

Russia had recently criticized the deal, saying its own grain exports have suffered due to Western sanctions.

'Massive' attack

Mikhail Razvozhayev, the Moscow-installed governor of Sevastopol, said Saturday's drone attack was the "most massive" the peninsula had seen.

City authorities said the harbor was "temporarily" closed to boats and ferries and urged people "not to panic."

Attacks on Crimea, annexed by Moscow in 2014, have increased in recent weeks as Kyiv presses a counteroffensive in the south to retake territory held by Moscow for months.

Moscow-installed authorities in Kherson, just north of Crimea, have vowed to turn the city into a fortress, preparing for an inevitable assault.

On Thursday, Razvozhayev said a thermal power station had been attacked in Balaklava, in the Sevastopol area.

He claimed there was only minor damage and no casualties.

In early October, Moscow's bridge linking Crimea to the Russian mainland — personally inaugurated by President Vladimir Putin in 2018 — was damaged by a blast that Putin blamed on Ukraine.

The Russian fleet stationed in the port had also been attacked by a drone in August.

Russia's allegations on Saturday came as the Ukrainian army reported fighting in the Luhansk and Donetsk regions in the east, including near Bakhmut — the only area where Moscow's forces have advanced in recent weeks.

Pro-Russian separatists fighting alongside Moscow also announced a new prisoner exchange with Kyiv, saying 50 will return home from each side. **AFP**

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Russia suspends participation in Ukraine grain deal

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US President Joe Biden called the move "purely outrageous" while Secretary of State Antony Blinken said Moscow was "weaponizing food."

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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky called the Russian move "an absolutely transparent intention of Russia to return the threat of large-scale famine to Africa and Asia."

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Sevastopol in Moscow-annexed Crimea has been targeted several times in recent months and serves as the headquarters for the Black Sea fleet and a logistical hub for operations in Ukraine. **AFP**

Daily Tribune
WITHOUT FEAR + WITHOUT FAVOR

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Russia blocks Ukraine grain exports

Moscow retaliates from drone attack of its naval fleet in Crimea

MOSCOW, Russia (AFP) – Ukraine's maritime grain exports were halted Sunday after Russia suspended its participation in a landmark agreement that allowed the vital shipments, blaming drone attacks on its ships in Crimea.

The July deal to unlock grain exports signed between Russia and Ukraine and brokered by Turkey and the United Nations, is critical to easing the global food crisis caused by the conflict.

The agreement had already allowed more than nine million tons of Ukrainian grain to be exported and was due to be renewed on 19 November.

On Saturday, Russia said it was halting its participation after its army accused Kyiv of a "massive" drone attack on its Black Sea fleet, which Ukraine labeled a "false pretext."

Sevastopol in Moscow-annexed Crimea has been targeted several times in recent months and serves as the headquarters for the Black Sea fleet and a logistical hub for operations in Ukraine.

The Russian army claimed to have "destroyed" nine aerial drones and seven maritime ones in an attack on the port early Saturday.

"In light of the terrorist act carried out by the Kyiv regime with the participation of British experts against ships of the Black Sea fleet and civilian vessels involved in the security of grain corridors, Russia suspends its participation in the implementation of the agreement on the export of agricultural products from Ukrainian ports," the Russian defense ministry said on Telegram.

The center coordinating the logistics of the deal or JCC said in a statement that no traffic was planned for Sunday.

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Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky called the Russian move "an absolutely transparent intention of Russia to return the threat of large-scale famine to Africa and Asia."