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BBM visits calamity areas in north

By ALEXIS ROMERO

President Marcos vowed to provide the needs of areas affected by Typhoon Egay and to have their electricity restored as he visited the provinces of Abra, Ilocos Norte and Cagayan yesterday.

During his visit to the three provinces, Marcos presided

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President Marcos leads the distribution of financial assistance and generator sets to various municipalities of Ilocos Norte affected by Typhoon Egay during a visit to Laoag yesterday.



BBM From Page 1

over situation briefings on the effects of Egay (Doksuri) and distributed assistance to local governments.

Marcos, also the agriculture

secretary, cited the need to ensure that typhoon-hit areas would have enough supply of rice. He said the government has to look for rice suppliers so that the National Food Authority could extend the necessary emergency support.

"Again, rice, for me, is the most important," the President said during a situation briefing with disaster management and local officials in Abra.

He reiterated that the government won't import rice unless the supply becomes so

low and prices are already inaccessible to ordinary consumers.

During a situation briefing in Cagayan, Marcos said he is eyeing a deal to acquire rice from India as he admitted being worried about a possible spike in the prices of the commodity.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

TRUTH SHALL PREVAIL

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"I'm thinking about the national supply for rice because everything is being imported by Indonesia, Vietnam has closed its doors and we are looking for a new source. India also closed its doors, but I think I can make a deal with India. Maybe we can talk to someone there. But we have to start importing already," the Chief Executive said.

"Everybody is preparing for El Niño. Everyone in Southeast Asia will buy simultaneously. I am nervous. Prices will rise again even if we import. That is the problem that I see," he added.

Marcos cited the need to look into local vegetable supply and to identify measures that would make prices stable, noting that Benguet's vegetable farms were also hit by the weather disturbance.

Aside from ensuring sufficient rice supply, the government also seeks to restore the power supply in typhoon-struck parts of Ilocos and Cordillera regions, Marcos said.

Citing Department of Energy data, Marcos said the province of Ilocos Sur is at 37 percent in terms of energy restoration while Cagayan is at 42 percent. Bangued, the capital of Abra, is at 86 percent.

Marcos admitted that the huge number of toppled poles and power lines would make it difficult to restore power immediately. "That's why it's going to take a little time. So, of course, we're going to do it as quickly as possible, but... we cannot rush it. It has to be done properly otherwise, the substations would be damaged," he said in Filipino.

Marcos gave assurance that government assistance in affected provinces is in place.

"The emergency needs are there - the food, shelter, even the communication, the water supply. Those things are in

place and are ready," he said during a relief distribution at the Bangued town plaza. "We have prepared. We have readied a lot of food packs. The most important water supply will follow and also the electricity," he added.

Marcos personally delivered relief supplies and cash assistance to Abrenian families in Bangued.

He also extended cash assistance to various local government units, including the provincial governments of Abra, Benguet and Mountain Province, as well as all towns in Abra.

Sen. Imee Marcos, the President's elder sister, and Social Welfare Secretary Rex Gatchalian were welcomed by Abra leaders led by Rep. Ching Bernos, her husband former congressman and now La Paz town mayor JB Bernos, national president of the League of Mayors; Abra Gov. Dominic Valera and his daughter Vice Gov. Joy Bernos and Cordillera police director Brig. Gen. David Peredo.

Around 600 residents of Barangay Sta. Rosa in Bangued also received family food packs from the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

Abra has been placed under state of calamity because of floods and damage to its infrastructure and agriculture.

In a Sangguniang Panlalawigan (SP) resolution, local legislators cited massive displacements of villagers because of damage from strong winds and torrential rains.

Infrastructure and government buildings and facilities were also heavily damaged, the Abra SP said, while the Abra Electric Cooperative reported power outages throughout the province as electric posts, wires and facilities were toppled.

- With Artemio Dumlaog

Point of view

SONA 2023: Bagong Pilipinas?

By JOEL PABLO SALUD

President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr. kicked off his second State of the Nation Address (SONA) from the very gut – inflation.

This is understandable. So far, the inflation rate is where the new administration has gained some ground despite tremendous challenges at the start. How these statistical figures translate to actual spending power, of course, remains to be seen.

In his first SONA in 2022, Marcos mapped out the measurable medium-term macroeconomic and fiscal objectives in terms of gross domestic product (GDP) growth of “6.5 percent to 8 percent real GDP growth annually between 2023 to 2028.”

The Philippine Statistics Authority’s report in May 2023 tells us that during the first quarter alone, the country has already pegged a growth rate of 6.4 percent. This may have been the “lowest growth registered after seven quarters.” However, it remains quite impressive coming from the context of a post-pandemic economic ambition. And he proudly mentioned this.

The President, of course, pointed out a slew of other “achievements” all throughout the SONA, but more within the tone of the usual political motherhood statements backed up by statistics whose sources weren’t even cited.

Having also hinted at the “exacting global standards” the Philippines has to meet in its journey towards a “Bagong Pilipinas,” I wondered: Why did the President miss mentioning the country’s gross national income per capita?

Anyone with a modicum of economic knowledge would know that no amount of infrastructural achievement in real time would mean anything if spending power is sorely lacking.

In his first SONA, the President did mention his goal of reaching at least \$4,256 gross national income (GNI) per capita for the upper middle-income bracket by 2024.

But with foreign direct investments sluing down the slippery slope of inflation and other factors – dipping to “\$876-million net inflows in April 2023, lower by 14.1 percent from the \$1.0-billion net inflows in the same month last year,” according to Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) – Marcos’ GNI per capita goal may not see the light of day in the appointed time.

Overall, inflation may have dipped to 6.1 percent in May 2023 from 6.6 percent in April 2023. However, rice inflation continues to posit the highest year-on-year growth rates of 3.4 percent from 2.9 percent, “and vegetables, tubers, plantains, cooking bananas and pulses at 12.6 percent from 10.0 percent,” says the Philippine Statistics Authority.

This puts considerable strain on income. The Philippines’ GNI per capita remains at \$3,950 in 2022 from \$3,550 in 2021. Pretty much a long way off from the World Bank’s acceptable middle-income bracket of \$4,255. This corner of the Medium-Term Fiscal Strategy (MTFF) is not good.

By comparison in Southeast Asia, the Philippines had been eating dust from the racing slicks of Singapore (\$67,200 GNI per capita) and Brunei (\$31,410), and upper-middle-income nations like Malaysia (\$11,780), Thailand (\$7,230) and Indonesia (\$4,580).

How does this relate to a recent Social Weather Stations survey where 45 percent of Filipino families rate themselves as poor, with 33 percent borderline? This may seem like a recovery from the previous 51 percent, but the figures do not bode well when you look at them in actual numbers. Because in a country that rakes in P5.3 trillion as national budget – where a trillion pesos are lost annually to corruption – one hungry Filipino is one too many.

Expectedly, too, the President calls to fore the achievements of the agricultural sector, which he heads.

Let’s be fair. In his first SONA, Marcos raised the agrarian debt burden with the goal of amending Sec. 26 of Republic Act 6657. “On this law, the loans of agrarian reform beneficiaries with unpaid amortization and interest shall be condoned,” he said amid applause. Did this promise see the light of day?

Marcos proudly recalled the signing of RA 11953 in his second SONA, basically easing the debt burdens of agrarian beneficiaries by condoning all their loans, including interests, penalties and surcharges. This covered nearly P58 billion of what land beneficiaries owed the Landbank of the Philippines. Checking on whether that was a blind claim, I found out that the Landbank had assured the success of the Agrarian Emancipation Act.

How this legal development will advance food security would be interesting to watch, nonetheless. Many say that the absence of a new Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program (CARP) might hinder its success.

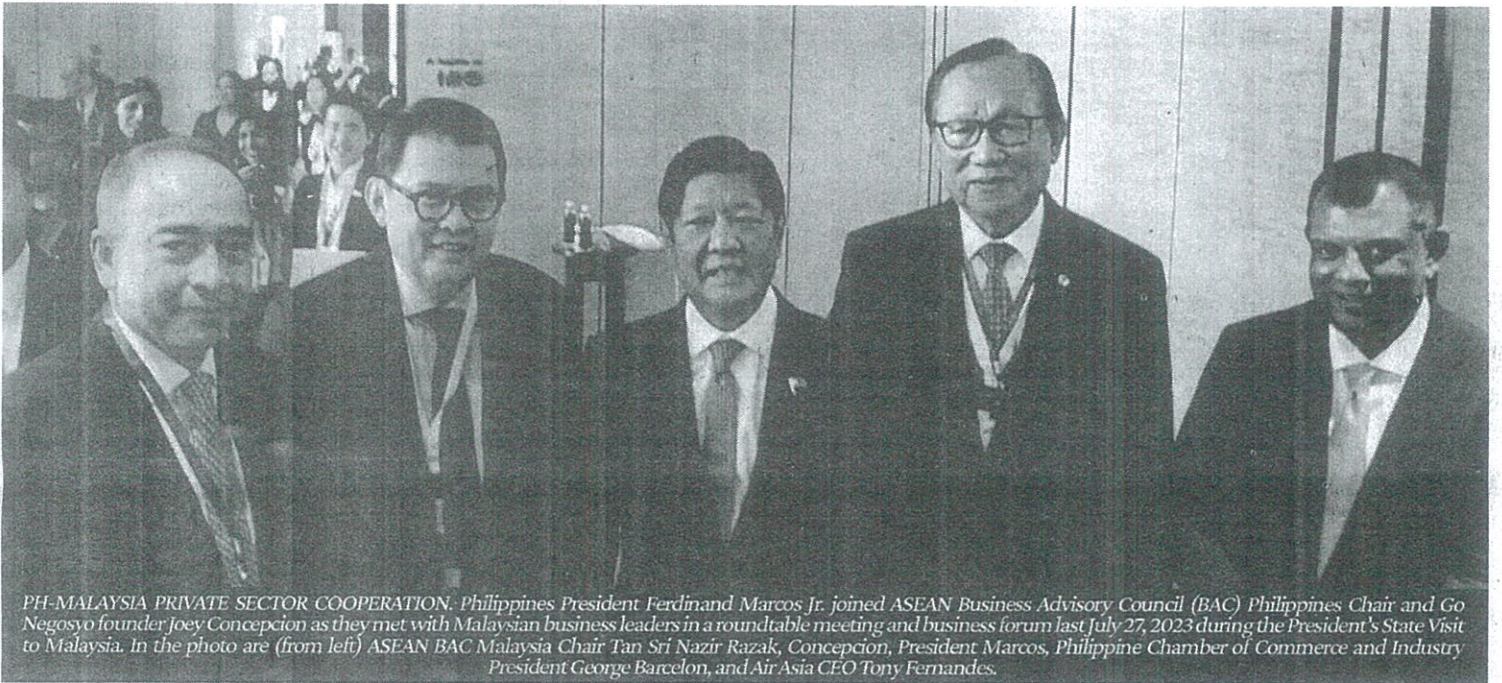
What was quite surprising, given its steamrolling victory in both Houses, the Maharlika Investment Fund seemed to have received a rather lackluster applause – one, and reluctant at best – after mentioning it.

Lastly, given his family’s history, I did not expect him to make any mention of anti-corruption efforts in his administration; but to his credit, he did. Perhaps he is aware that ease of doing business is not only buoyed by “green lanes” or better “back-end” functions and quieter structures of taxation. The anti-corruption campaign, with all seriousness, is primary.

“Bagong Pilipinas,” a bit cliché, captures what we all want to happen to our benighted country. But as long as Rodrigo Duterte’s bloody drug war stains all efforts at reform (it continues to this day) and the memory of martial law remains unresolved, “Bagong Pilipinas” may be too tall an order.

Government should not be in the business of erecting pipe dreams.

– philstarlife



PH-MALAYSIA PRIVATE SECTOR COOPERATION. Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. joined ASEAN Business Advisory Council (BAC) Philippines Chair and Go Negosyo founder Joey Concepcion as they met with Malaysian business leaders in a roundtable meeting and business forum last July 27, 2023 during the President's State Visit to Malaysia. In the photo are (from left) ASEAN BAC Malaysia Chair Tan Sri Nazir Razak, Concepcion, President Marcos, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry President George Barcelon, and Air Asia CEO Tony Fernandes.

PH, MALAYSIA ASEAN BAC EXPLORE AGRI COOPERATION AND MSME DEVELOPMENT

Two private sector groups representing Malaysia and the Philippines signed a Memorandum of Understanding here last July 27, 2023 to explore joint efforts in agriculture development, focusing on palm oil, rubber and other agricultural commodities that may thrive in the Philippines and Malaysia. The MOU was signed on behalf of ASEAN Business Advisory Council (ASEAN BAC) Malaysia and ASEAN BAC Philippines by their respective Chairs, Tan Sri Nazir Razak and Joey Concepcion. The signing was witnessed by Philippines President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. during his meeting with Malaysian business leaders as part of his three-day State Visit to Malaysia.

The initiative will aim to replicate an agri model similar to

Advisory Council members Antony Fernandes Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry President George Barcelon and Air Asia CEO Anthony Fernandes.

The MOU will also aim to identify the business requirements to develop trade and investment opportunities in palm oil, rubber, fruits, poultry, agricultural technology, and other agricultural products and services of Malaysia and the Philippines. "We are confident, that with this partnership with ASEAN BAC Malaysia and the leadership of Chairman Nazir Razak, that both our countries will benefit from sharing our experiences in these areas," said Concepcion.

Razak said that ASEAN-BAC Malaysia is happy to facilitate potential partnerships between prominent players in relevant fields from the two countries. "Food security is a major challenge for Malaysia, with imports of food accumulated to RM482.8 billion while our food export was only RM39 billion between 2012 to 2022," said Razak. "Malaysia needs to not only reduce our food import bills but also become competitive in food agriculture," he said.

Concepcion said he was elated that President Marcos was present to witness the signing, and vowed to continue in various efforts for MSMEs in the Philippines and in the region. Already, the ASEAN Mentorship for Entrepreneurs Network (AMEN), which is the Philippines's legacy project from its chairmanship, has already been rolled out to the ten ASEAN member-states



MOU SIGNED. President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. is presented with the signed agreement. Joining him are (seated, from left) DTI Sec. Fred Pascual, House Speaker Martin Romualdez and Finance Sec. Ben Diokno. Looking on are ASEAN BAC's Joey Concepcion and Tan Sri Nazir Razak, Air Asia CEO Tony Fernandes, and members of the Malaysian business community.

Kapadig Angat Lahat sa Agri Program (KALAP) to achieve inclusive and sustainable agriculture through the integration of small farmers into the value chain of large companies, and allowing them to benefit from the transfer of technologies and economies of scale. KALAP is an initiative of Go Negosyo, the non-profit founded by Concepcion to promote entrepreneurship and advocate for the development of Filipino MSMEs.

"Public-private partnerships are essential as we move toward regional economic integration and make our agriculture industries productive and competitive," said Concepcion. "We have already several of these big-brother models in the Philippines covering prime commodities like tobacco, coconut and rice, with large Philippine companies like Universal Leaf, Lionheart Farms and Yovel East successfully implementing their inclusive models in the communities where they operate," he said. Concepcion said they are aiming to encourage more big-brother companies to participate.

The MOU between the Philippines and Malaysia concerned specifically the possibility of jointly conducting studies and mentorship channels for potential agriculture, agriculture technology, food security, agripreneurship business models, and value chain development.

Also present during the private sector meet were Department of Trade and Industry Sec. Alfredo Pascual, and ASEAN Business



ASEAN BAC Philippines Chairman Joey Concepcion shares with Malaysian businessmen and President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. the Philippine experience with Kapatid Angat Lahat sa Agri Program, and how the MOU explores expanding it through the partnership with ASEAN BAC Malaysia.

after securing funding from the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund.

"With AMEN now ongoing and successful, we want to move a step further. We need to scale up our farmers, fix the land issues so that we achieve the minimum viable point of 24 hectares to achieve scale, and help farmers use technology and incorporate them into the value chain of big corporations while making sure they receive their equitable share," he said.

Concepcion said that similar agreements will be explored with countries that have a strong agriculture industry, such as Indonesia, Vietnam, Thailand, Cambodia and possibly Myanmar.

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Marcos eyes rice deal with India to avert rice shortage

By ARGYLL CYRUS GEDUCOS

President Marcos said he is looking to strike a rice importation deal with India for fear of a rice shortage after the agriculture sector took a toll from super typhoon Egay.

Marcos bared this when he presided over the situation briefing on the effects of Egay in Cagayan Valley on Saturday afternoon, July 29.

In his remarks, the President was alarmed by Egay's damage to the agriculture sector. Data from the provincial government of Cagayan showed that the estimated cost of damage in the agriculture sector was ₱539,442,500.93 as of July 28.

According to Marcos, who heads the Department of Agriculture (DA), the country would be left with no choice but to import **►5**

rice anew, which would not stop the price of the said commodity from increasing.

Marcos sees price increase

"Ninenerbyos ako tataas na naman ang presyo kahit mag-import tayo (I'm worried that the price would increase even if we import). That's the problem that I see," he said.

President Marcos said he will talk to the Indian government to see if it could provide the Philippines with rice since other countries like Vietnam are no longer exporting it.

"Ini-import lahat ng Indonesia, nagsara ang Vietnam, maghahanap na naman tayo ng bago (Indonesia is importing everything, then Vietnam closed down. We have to look for new ones)," he said.

"India nagsara (India closed down)—[but] I think I can make a deal with India. Baka meron tayong mapakiusapan doon (Perhaps, we can talk to someone there). But we have to start importing already," he added.

Data from the provincial government of Cagayan showed the

following estimated cost of damage to the province's agriculture sector as of 3 p.m. on July 28, 2023:

- Rice - ₱41,713,106.77
- Corn - ₱327,241,696.49
- High-value commercial crops - ₱123,272,550.00
- Fishery - ₱47,215,147.67

Region 2 is one of the regions in Northern Luzon that was severely affected by super typhoon Egay. It displaced more than 14,000 individuals from 250 barangays in four provinces within the region.

Meanwhile, during the situation briefing on the effects of Egay in Abra on Saturday, President Marcos said the government would focus on ensuring sufficient rice supply.

He noted the government has to find rice suppliers so the National Food Authority (NFA) can provide all the emergency support.

Since Benguet's vegetable farms were affected by the typhoon, the President also said local vegetable supply would be reviewed to determine remedial measures to stabilize prices.



Food producers reassured by focus on agri sector

LOCAL food producers on Friday said they found it reassuring that President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. devoted a huge portion of his second State of the Nation Address (SONA) to matters directly related to the agriculture sector.

Danilo Fausto, president of the Philippine Chamber of Agriculture and Food Inc. (PACAFI), told the Philippine News Agency that past presidents did not focus on the plethora of issues surrounding the key sector the way Marcos did in his SONA.

"We are really happy because he (the President) managed to stress just how important the agriculture sector is to his administration. In the past, we were not given so much attention," he said.

Fausto noted that PACAFI's membership is particularly encouraged that Marcos singled out smugglers, hoarders and price manipulators, and vowed to have appro-

priate charges filed against them.

He pointed out that legitimate investors in food production are often the victims of smuggling, hoarding and price manipulation, which is why "we would like to see the government do more than just file charges. They should not stop until those behind them are put behind bars."

Fausto cited as an example the supposedly rampant smuggling of agricultural goods, which often creates a supply glut, and competes in the local market to the detriment of domestic food growers.

Fausto said PACAFI also favors a review of the Philippine Fisheries Code in hopes of redrawing the borders between small-scale fishing and commercial fishing grounds, a proposal to which Marcos has indicated some flexibility.

He explained that current government policy dictates that municipal waters

extend up to 15 kilometers from shore, and is thus reserved for small-scale fishing activities, while in reality, small fishers "rarely venture beyond 5 kilometers from land."

Fausto said that PACAFI's members in the commercial fishing sector are appealing for the President's go-ahead to cast their nets in portions of municipal waters not often reached by small fishers.

For his part, Edwin Chen, past president of the Pork Producers Federation of the Philippines and incumbent PACAFI director, also welcomed the enhanced focus on the agriculture sector, particularly on livestock growers.

During his SONA, the President mentioned that tighter biosecurity measures would be implemented in response to a recent outbreak of livestock diseases like African swine fever and avian influenza (bird flu).

PNA



Marcos vows quick recovery of 'Egay-hit' areas

PRESIDENT Ferdinand Marcos Jr. on Saturday assured the public that the government was doing its best to restore normalcy to the areas affected by Super Typhoon "Egay" (international name: Doksuri) as soon as possible.

During the distribution of various government assistance to affected residents in Bangued, Abra, the President said that everything they need had been prepared by the government.

Marcos believed that the national government and local government units (LGUs) worked well together in responding to the typhoon, saying they have "good communication" and expressing confidence that basic services can be restored "immediately."

Prior to the distribution, the President presided over a situation briefing on the effects of Egay from the governors of Abra, Benguet and Mountain Province and various government agencies involved in disaster response efforts.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has provided P5.62 million worth of assistance with the help of the LGU of Abra and the Office of Civil Defense-Cordillera Administrative Region.

At least 8,375 family food packs and 5,926 other food and non-food items were also made available while 96 gallons of water and 1,142 hygiene kits were provided.

Marcos, the concurrent Agriculture secretary, has also made various forms of assistance available to the affected farmers and fishermen, such as seeds, medicines and biologics for livestock, poultry and fingerlings.

The Survival and Recovery Loan Program and the Quick Response Fund were also prepared by the Department of Agriculture (DA).

The President said the government was also ensuring a clean water supply for the affected areas but admitted having

difficulty restoring power due to felled electric posts.

He said he would ask other provinces to send linemen to help.

Marcos said that the government would also provide building materials to the affected families.

So far, he said they have yet to determine the amount of damage or the number of homes destroyed due to Egay.

Meanwhile, Marcos said that they were taking care of those who were in evacuation centers and that they were also looking for those who chose to

seek shelter elsewhere to help them.

"Those who left their homes and went elsewhere — we're also looking for them so we can provide help since they were also displaced," he said.

Marcos also said they were eyeing sending communication satellites to far-flung areas so they can report to the national government and request whatever they need.

According to Malacañang, the extensive flooding and damage to agriculture and infrastructure prompted the Provincial Government of Abra to place the

province in a state of calamity.

Around 46,000 families, or over 180,000 individuals, were affected by the super typhoon in Abra alone.

Among the assistance given during the ceremony are food packs and P10,000 in cash assistance from the DSWD; agricultural assistance to farmers from the DA; and cash assistance from the Office of the President to LGUs under the Cordillera Administrative Region.

Tuguegarao visit

The President also traveled to Tuguegarao City in Cagayan on Saturday afternoon and presided over a situation briefing with representa-

tives from the local government and concerned organizations.

Marcos also led the distribution of aid from the Office of the President, DA and DSWD.

Cagayan was one of the areas in Northern Luzon severely impacted by "Egay."

The super typhoon devastated 250 villages in four provinces, forcing more than 14,000 people to flee their homes.

The DA and Department of Public Works and Highways estimated damage to infrastructure and agriculture at P340 million and P1.15 billion, respectively.

CATHERINE S. VALENTE AND
JERICO JOSHUA M. KAHULUGAN

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Marcos, namigay ng ayuda sa mga residente na apektado ni Egay sa Abra

Personal na namahagi ng ayuda si Pangulong Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. sa mga residente sa Abra na lubhang naapektuhan ng Bagyong Egay.

Sa pagbisita ng Pangulo sa Abra, sinabi nito na tututukan ng pamahalaan ang pagsasaayos sa suplay ng tubig at kuryente para mabilis na

makabalik sa normal na pamumuhay ang mga residente dito.

Nangako naman ang Pangulo na hahanapan ng paraan para matulungan ang mga residenteng nawalan ng tahanan at ngayon ay nananatili pa rin sa mga evacuation centers.

Namigay din ang Pangulo ng pinansyal na

ayuda sa local officials para makatulong sa relief at recovery operations.

Kuntento naman si Pangulong Marcos sa pagtugon ng iba't ibang tanggapan ng pamahalaan sa bagyo.

Bukod sa Abra, binisita rin ng Pangulo ang mga nasalanta ng bagyo sa Laoag at Tuguegarao. (Gemma Garcia)



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Pilipino Star **NGAYON** Diyaryong disente ng masang intelihente

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Pinsala ni Egay, pumalo na sa P2-B *Death toll, 14 na*

Pumalo na sa P2 bilyon ang pinsala ni super bagyong Egay at habagat habang tumaas na rin sa 14 katao ang death toll, 13 ang nasugatan at 20 pa ang nawawala sa paghagupit nito sa bansa.

Ayon kay Office of Civil Defense (OCD)

Spokesman at National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council (NDRRMC) Executive Director Edgar Posadas, ang pinsala sa imprastraktura ay nasa P1.19 bilyon habang sa agrikultura ay umaabot sa P832 milyon.

Tumaas din ang bilang

Ni JOY CANTOS

ng mga naapektuhang indibidwal sa 582,288 katao o 164,430 pamilya mula sa 13 rehiyon, 45 probinsya, 306 munisipalidad at 1,752 barangays.

Kabilang sa mga lugar na dumanas ng mga pagbaha ang Ilocos Region, Cagayan, Central Luzon, CALABARZON (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal at Quezon), MIMAROPA (Mindoro, Marinduque,

Romblon at Palawan) at Western Visayas.

Nadagdagan naman ng isa ang bilang ng nasawi na 14 na, habang 13 ang nasugatan at 20 pa ang nawawala.

Sa agrikultura, umaabot na rin sa P832,645.48 ang nalulugi sa produksyon na tahasang nakapekto sa 75,997 mag-sasaka at 92,651.56 hektarya ng taniman. Ang pinsala sa livestock, poultry at pangisdaan ay

nasa P23,762.020.

Ayon kay Posadas sa kasalukuyan, umabot na sa P35,851,214.38 halaga ng tulong ang naibigay na ng pamahalaan sa mga apektadong pamilya.

Kabilang dito ay family food packs, hygiene kits, shelter repair kits, modular tents at iba pa.

Si super typhoon Egay ay lumabas na sa bansa nitong Huwebes ng gabi.

Sapat na suplay ng bigas sa mga sinalanta ng bagyo, titiyakin - PBBM

Titiyakin ni Pangulong Ferdinand Marcos Jr. na sapat ang suplay ng bigas sa bansa lalo na sa mga lugar na sinalanta ng bagyong Egay.

Sa situation briefing sa Abra, sinabi ng Pangulo na pabibilisan din ang pagbabalik sa suplay ng kuryente sa mga lugar na naapektuhan ng bagyo.

"Again, rice, for me, is the most important," pahayag ng Pangulo.

Anyang kailangan ngayon ng gobyerno na maghanap ng supplier ng bigas para makapagbigay ang National Food Authority ng emergency support.

Kailangan din na pag-aralan kung paano mareremedyuhan ang mga gulay na nasira ng bagyo sa Benguet.

Wala anyang polisiya ng gobyerno ang mag-angkat sa ibang bansa. Gagawin lamang ang importasyon kung hindi na stable ang presyo ng mga bilihin.

"Hindi 'yan magiging policy. We will not import any agriculture [product] unless we see that the supply is so low that the prices will become out of reach sa ordinary consumer," pahayag pa ni Marcos. (Gemma Garcia)



PBBM: Presyo ng bigas sisirit kay 'Egay', El Nino

Inamin ni Pangulong Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr. na posibleng tumaas ang presyo ng bigas dulot ng pagkasira ng mga pananim matapos ang pananalasa ng Super Bagyong Egay sa Cagayan at iba pang bahagi ng bansa.

Sa pakipagpulong kahapon ng pangulo sa mga lokal na opisyal sa pangunguna ni Cagayan Governor Manuel Mambra, lumitaw na umabot sa P539 million ang agricultural damage sa probinsya, kabilang dito ang palay, mais, high

value crops at maging ang fishery.

Ayon kay Marcos, ang agrikultura partikular ang palayan ang nagtamo ng matinding pinsala mula sa pananalasa ng bagyo na tiyak umanong makakaapekto sa supply ng bigas sa bansa. Isarin sa makakaapekto sa presyo ng bigas ay ang El Nino phenomenon.

"Ang hirap nito because 'yong palay, iniisip ko na ang supply natin 'pag nag-El Niño talaga. I'm thinking about the national supply for rice because ini-import lahat

ng Indonesia, nagsara ang Vietnam, India nagsara. We have to start importing already," ayon kay Marcos kasabay ng pagsasabi na kahit na magi-import umano ng bigas ay maaring tataas pa rin ang presyo nito.

"Everybody is preparing for El Nino, lahat ng Southeast Asia. Sabay-sabay nagbibilihan. Kaya ninenerbyos ako dahil tataas na naman ang presyo kahit nag-i-import tayo. That's the problem that I see in the world," dagdag ng pangulo. (Eralyn Prado)



'Egay' destroys P1.3B worth of agri products

By Jordeene B. Lagare
[@jordeenelagare](#)

Typhoon "Egay" (international name: "Doksuri"), which ravaged parts of Luzon and Visayas in less than a week, wiped out P1.3 billion worth of agricultural products, the **Department of Agriculture (DA)** said on Saturday.

In its latest bulletin, the DA said the typhoon took a heavy toll on the livelihood of 91,268 farmers and fisherfolk in the affected areas.

The volume of production loss was placed at 62,259 metric tons spanning 98,969 hectares of agricultural lands.

"The increase is due to the updated reports from Cordillera Administrative Region, Ilocos Region, Cagayan Valley, Western Visayas and Central Luzon," it said.

Egay destroyed rice, corn, high-value crops, livestock and poultry as well as agricultural facilities and fishing paraphernalia.

Corn accounted for 47.5 percent of the total with P648.2

million, hitting 38,401 MT of produce in 58,497 hectares of land.

Rice followed with P486.8 million, equivalent to a share of 35.7 percent and high-value crops with P182.4 million (13.3 percent).

Agricultural infrastructures sustained P20.8 million in damages; fisheries, P14.1 million and livestock and poultry, P11.9 million.

Egay's impact on the farm sector as of this writing was inching closer to the P1.3 billion damage brought about by the low-pressure area, Intertropical

Convergence Zone, shear line and northeast monsoon (*amihan*) early this year.

Won't affect prices

Despite the escalating losses due to the typhoon, the DA earlier said Egay won't affect retail prices and supply of food items since the planted crops were in the early growth stage.

To date, the price of a kilo of local commercial rice ranged from P37 to P60 as of Friday against last year's P38 to P50, based on the

DA's price monitoring.

Imported rice retailed from P42 to P58 per kg compared to P38 to P50 per kg. However, imported regular milled rice is not available.

Milkfish (*bangus*) is being sold from P140 to P240 per kg compared to P160 per kg a year ago. Tilapia is priced from P105 to P160 per kg from only P120 per kg previously.

Local round scad (*galunggong*) is sold from P220 to P260 per kg, almost the same as P240

per kg last year.

Imported round scad, available only in Guadalupe Market, is priced at P200 per kg. Indian mackerel (*alumahan*) is not available.

Bittergourd (*ampalaya*) is priced from P90 to P140 per kg from only P80 per kg a year ago while the price of eggplant reached P70 to P120 per kg from P90 per kg last year.

Cabbage ranged from P100 to P160 per kg compared to only P60 per kg the previous year. **INQ**

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Editor
Maria Edralyn L. Benedicto

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

REGIONS

Learn about aqua farming in this Dagupan backyard

PRODUCTIVE SPACE Former Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources Research Center chief Westly Rosario (left) says he started his urban integrated farm in his backyard in Dagupan City to show how even a small patch of land can grow fish, poultry, vegetables and other farm animals to sustain a family or help them earn extra. —YOLANDA SOTELO

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By Yolanda Sotelo

@yzsoteloINQ

DAGUPAN CITY—Transforming an empty, unproductive 1,000-square-meter backyard in his family compound at Tapuac District here has given Westly Rosario, former chief of the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Research Center in this city, a good reason to continue with his passion for fisheries education after his retirement from government service.

"The place was overgrown with weeds, with only an old mango tree standing there. No one went there because many believed that it was ghost-infested," Rosario said in jest during an interview this week.

That image is far from how the backyard looks now—every space is used and converted into several ponds for different aquatic plants and fish.

The area now hosts an aquaponics system, a "fish condo," an earth pond traversed by a mini bridge and enclosures for native chickens, ducks and a wild pig.

Despite retiring from government service in 2020, Rosario's passion for fishery and food production never waned, and he continues to teach anyone interested about the industry, right in his backyard.

His backyard urban farm, called FishTech Philippines Inc., was accredited by the Department of Agriculture-Agricultural Training Institute (DA-ATI) as a learning site for aquaculture and agriculture in 2020. It was upgraded to an agriculture and fisheries extension service provider in January 2023.

"I wanted to ensure that there is life after retirement. I earlier planned what I would do to keep me busy after I retire. And since all [throughout] my professional life I worked in fisheries, it was only logical that my postgovernment work would be on fisheries," the 67-year-old Rosario told the Inquirer.

At the farm's entrance, just right after an azolla pond, is a signboard that reads, "Urban Aqua Farming, Tuloy Po Kayo

(You're welcome)." Immediately, this makes anyone who comes for a visit or study feel the relaxing vibe of a provincial farm in the heart of an urban community.

Food production

"Whatever fishery technologies I have learned, I apply here. I wanted to show that in even small areas, one can establish a farm that can produce food for the family, and even earn from the sale of the produce," Rosario said.

The farm, he says, is "integrated," as it produces azolla, a type of aquatic fern, and kangkong (water spinach) to feed fish and animals. Waste from the farm's fish and animal stock, in turn, is used as fertilizer.

A major "showcase" at the farm is the "fish condominium," or stacked drums, where fish are cultured. Rosario developed this technology, called "fish-base integration," when he was leading the BFAR Research Center.

Aquaponics, another system that produces fish and vegetables, is featured beneath the fish condo.

In the fish condo technology which primarily produces fish, used water passes through simple mechanical filtration, or through the pipes planted

with kangkong, said Rosario.

Water is pumped into the top containers or drums filled with beach sand and volcanic rocks which cleanse the water, making it safe for the fish. The kangkong further cleanses the water through a process called biological filtration, Rosario said.

On the other hand, aquaponics' main crop is vegetables, with the fish used to enrich the water with nutrients. Waste excreted by the fish and unconsumed feed are converted into nutrients for the plants.

Both systems produce red tilapia and kangkong.

"We use kangkong in the systems because it has lots of roots, so it cleanses the water well. Water lilies are also effective, but they can't be consumed by humans," said Rosario.

FishTech does not sell its produce, except for azolla. A total of eight ponds, measuring 1 meter by 3 meters each, are dedicated to its production.

The farm, he said, is not operating commercially as it is used primarily as a laboratory for azolla culture.

Rosario said he learned about azolla while working at BFAR in Nueva Ecija province. "I learned the importance of azolla in other countries as fertilizer and fish and animal feed, but BFAR was focused



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on duck weeds then,"

So when he developed his backyard, he put up simple demonstration ponds to show how easy it is to grow azolla.

"I sell [azolla] at P100 per kilo, but not really for commercial purposes. I only wanted to give value to the aquatic plant to show that farmers and fishermen can earn from cultivating it. Otherwise, if these are acquired for free, they take it for granted and would not grow it," he said.

He said many who come to his farm buy azolla to start their own ponds.

Azolla does not need processing and is just given after harvest to the fish and the animals. Also known as mosquito fern, azolla is a versatile aquatic plant. Aside from being animal feed, it can be used as a biofertilizer on a variety of crops, as medicine and as a water purifier.

"I read somewhere that azolla is consumed by people in other countries, but not in the Philippines yet," he said.

Azolla, according to Rosario, is also called mosquito fern because mosquitoes cannot thrive on ponds or other bodies of water where it is grown. "Azolla covers the entire surface of water, preventing mosquitoes from penetrating through to the water to lay eggs," he said.

Hydrilla, also an aquatic plant, is widely grown on the farm. It is used as feed for native chickens and ducks, and for a lone native pig, which Rosario calls "a survivor of African swine fever."

As for the fish produced in the farm, Rosario said these are not sold but treated like pets.

He harvests kangkong and *alugbati* for consumption of family members and their workers. The rest of the harvest is fed to the pig and ducks in the farm.

Earth pond

Another interesting spot on the farm is the earth pond, crossed by a mini bridge, where giant gourami, red and regular tilapia, *pangasius* and African catfish live together. There are also two azolla floating beds to demonstrate that the plant can be grown in ponds with fish, as long as there is a net below the floating beds.

Deep in the farm is a pandan plantation, a "WesCafe" corner and a tower that overlooks the farm and where camote (sweet potato), *alugbati* and some ornamental plants, are grown in recycled containers.

"I wanted to show that one can grow vegetables in empty water containers or cans. In a corner of the tower is an

old yellow bathtub into which water from the earth pond is pumped, so there's no need to fetch water below for the plants grown there," Rosario shared.

"We have pandan in the farm and this is used in our bottled bangus. We grow eggplant, chili, okra, *katuray* and *kamayas* for family use. We have a supply of duck eggs from our ducks, which are fed with azolla at kangkong," he said.

Rosario said that after the farm was established, it did not need much funding to sustain operations.

Sometimes he hires senior high school students as helpers, but only during school breaks. Usually, he does all the farm work, like watering the plants and feeding the fish and chickens.

FishTech also produces Doc West Bio (Fish) Fertilizer, an organic foliar fertilizer produced from fish heads, tails, fins, scales and innards, which are discarded from a mini factory producing bottled bangus and run by Rosario's wife Joy. The foliar fertilizer is sprayed directly onto the leaves to improve plant health, stimulate root development, increase resistance to pests and increase harvest.

The DA-ATI gave him a grant of P150,000 to start the aquaponics system and fish condo. Rosario is regularly invited by the DA-ATI to train extension workers, and by private fish farm owners to lecture about fishery technologies. His professional fees are set aside for the farm's expenses.

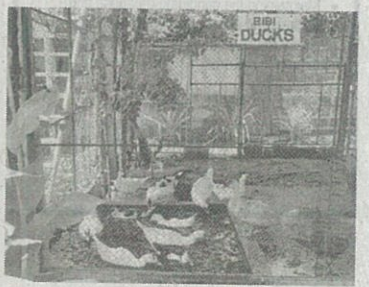
Rosario said anyone interested in learning about fishery technologies could visit the aqua farm and he would gladly sit down with visitors.

"[My experience demonstrates] how a family can have a sustained supply of basic plant crops, fish, few poultry and livestock in an urban-backyard farm," he said.

"Life goes on for a retired senior citizen like me. It is very relaxing to share my experiences, and I am happy to stay connected to former colleagues and workmates who come and ask for advice," he said. INQ



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OASIS The 1,000-square-meter FishTech Philippines demonstration farm features an earth pond where giant gourami, red and regular tilapia, “pangasius” and African catfish are raised. A “fish condo” that also features aquaponics is the farm’s major showcase (upper right). Chickens and ducks are also raised there and are being fed with aquatic plants (lower right). — **PHOTOS BY WILLIE LOMIBAO**

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'KADIWA ng Pangulo', buwanang gagawin sa DILG Central Office

Plano ni DILG Secretary Benhur Abalos Jr na gawin nang buwanan ang pagdaraos ng Kadiwa ng Pangulo sa DILG Central Office sa Quezon City.

Ayon kay Abalos, gagawin naman itong dalawang beses kada buwan habang papalapit ang panahon ng kapaskuhan.

Ito ay sinabi ni Abalos matapos dalhin ang murang produktong agrikultura at

iba pang produkto ng small and medium enterprises (SMEs) sa mga empleyado ng DILG at National Police Commission noong Biyernes.

Sinabi ni Abalos na ang proyekto ay ipinapatupad na sa mga local government units.

Itinakda ang Kadiwa ng Pangulo market days tuwing ika-15 at ika-30 araw ng bawat buwan.

Ang idinaos na Kadiwa ng Pangulo sa DILG Central Office ay bahagi ng pagdiriwang ng National Nutrition Month.

Kasama sa proyekto ang Department of Agriculture, Department of Social Welfare and Development, National Nutrition Council at Cooperative Development Authority. (Angie dela Cruz)

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Shellfish Bulletin No. 18
Series of 2023
28 July 2023

Shellfishes collected and tested from coastal waters of Dausi and Tagbilaran City in Bohol; and Dumanquilas Bay in Zamboanga del Sur are still **positive** for Paralytic Shellfish Poison (PSP) or toxic red tide that is beyond the regulatory limit.



All types of shellfish and *Acetes* sp. or alamang gathered from the areas shown above are **NOT SAFE** for human consumption. Fish, squids, shrimps, and crabs are safe for human consumption provided that they are fresh and washed thoroughly, and internal organs such as gills and intestines are removed before cooking.

The following areas continue to be **FREE** from toxic red tide: coastal waters of Cavite, Las Piñas, Parañaque, Navotas, Bulacan, and Bataan (Mariveles, Limay, Orion, Pilar, Balanga, Hermosa, Orani, Abucay, and Samal) in Manila Bay; mariculture areas in Infanta, coastal waters of Bolinao, Anda, Alaminos, Sual, and Wawa, Bani in Pangasinan; mariculture areas in Rosario, and Sto. Tomas in La Union; coastal waters of Pampanga; Masinloc Bay in Zambales; Pagbilao Bay, Pagbilao, and coastal waters of Walay, Padre Burgos in Quezon; Honda, and Puerto Princesa Bays, Puerto Princesa City, and coastal waters of Inner Malampaya Sound, Taytay in Palawan; coastal waters of Milagros and Mandaon in Masbate; Sorsogon Bay, and Juag Lagoon, Matnog in Sorsogon; coastal waters of Gigantes Islands, Carles, and Borongan, San Dionisio in Iloilo; coastal waters of Roxas City, Panay, President Roxas, and Pilar in Capiz; Sapián Bay (Ivisan and Sapián in Capiz; Mambuquio and Camanci, Batán in Aklan); coastal waters of Altavas, Batán, and New Washington in Batán Bay, Aklan; coastal waters of E.B. Magalona, Talisay City, Silay City, Bacolod City, Hinigaran, and Victorias City in Negros Occidental; Tambobo, and Siit Bays, Siaton; and Bais Bay, Bais City in Negros Oriental; coastal waters of Daram, and Zumarraga, Cambalutay, Irong-irong, Maqueda, San Pedro and Villareal Bays in Samar; coastal waters of Guiuan in Eastern Samar; coastal waters of Leyte, Calubian, Ormoc, Sogod, Carigara Bay, and Cancabato Bay, Tacloban City in Leyte; coastal waters of Biliran Island; Tantanang Bay in Zamboanga Sibugay; Murcielagos Bay in Zamboanga del Norte and (Sapang Dalaga, and Baliangao) in Misamis Occidental; Panguil Bay, Tangub City, and coastal waters of Ozamiz City in Misamis Occidental; coastal waters of Baroy in Lanao del Norte; Taguines Lagoon, Benoni, Mahinog in Camiguin; Balite, and Pujada Bays, Mati City in Davao Oriental; Malalag Bay in Davao Occidental and Davao del Sur; coastal waters of Nasipit in Agusan del Norte; Litalit Bay in Surigao del Norte; and coastal waters of Hinatuan, Cortes, Lianga, and Bislig Bays in Surigao del Sur.

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(PDI – July 30, 2023)



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... as economists see price index growth further easing to below 5%

By LAWRENCE AGCAOILI

Economists believe inflation eased for the sixth straight month in July after slowing to 5.4 percent in June.

They see inflation falling below five percent for the first time since April 2022 when headline inflation averaged 4.9 percent.

Bank of the Philippine Islands lead economist June Neri said inflation eased to 4.9 percent in July and could fall within the two to four percent target range of the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) by the fourth quarter of the year.

"Such a print suggests that a sub-four percent monthly print by October or November is possible and increases the chances that the BSP can keep policy rates steady for the balance of 2023," Neri said.

He said the upside risks on the reverse repurchase rate could come from toll, LRT or other utility fare hikes.

Neri pointed out that unfavorable weather conditions and the possibility of additional rate hikes by the US Federal Reserve from September to November could also add to upside risks.

Alvin Arogo, economist at Philippine National Bank, said inflation slowed to 4.9 percent despite the month-on-month increase due to the impact of the minimum wage hike in Metro Manila and rise in pump prices because of the spike in Dubai crude.

"We have cautious outlook regarding the persistence of second round effects, potential for weather/climate related disturbances, and impact of oil production cuts. Nevertheless, the favorable base effects will continue to be the main driver for the monthly print of year-on-year price growth to be lower than four percent in 4Q23," Arogo said.

For the August meeting, Arogo said the BSP's Monetary Board is likely to hold interest rates for the third time in a row.

"This is appropriate since inflation is trending downwards and the manufacturing sector's leading indicator is suggesting slower growth moving forward. If the exchange rate sharply weakens due to the lower BSP-Fed interest rate differential, however, then we believe that BSP will act fast. This can be in the form of a clear advance guidance or even an unscheduled meeting," Arogo said.

ING Bank lead economist Nicolas Mapa said headline inflation averaged 4.8 percent in July.

"BSP to consider this data point alongside the path of inflation against developments such as the recent Fed hike in its next decision," Mapa said.

Domini Velasquez, chief economist at China Bank, said inflation likely jumped down to 4.7 percent in July as lower utility rates offset higher prices of food and pump prices.

Velasquez said electricity rates in all

regions fell substantially from the previous month, especially in Mindanao and Batangas.

"This likely resulted in a negative month on month inflation rate for non-food items. On the other hand, we saw upticks in major food commodities such as rice, fish, fruits, and vegetables. This was likely brought about by the warmer weather in July," Velasquez said.

Recent typhoons, she said, could also negatively impact food prices in the coming months, especially rice and corn in the north due to Typhoon Egay.

According to Velasquez, a stronger peso in July could have also led to muted inflation rate for the month.

Security Bank chief economist Robert Dan Roces said inflation likely softened to 4.7 percent in July, with a range of 4.5 to 5.1 percent.

Roces explained further slowdown in the consumer price index (CPI) indicates a moderate level of inflation.




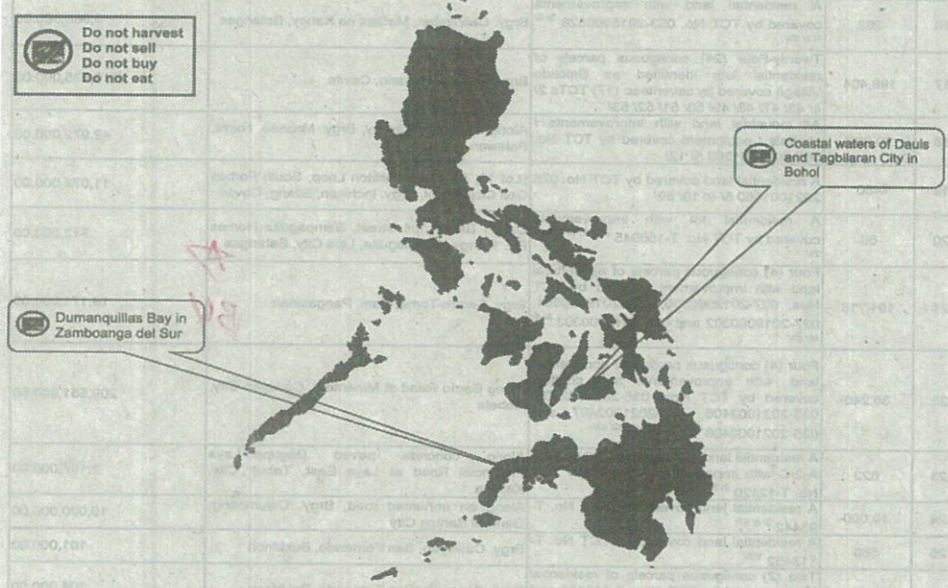
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Do not buy
Do not eat



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P.S. July 30, 2023



Be ready for 11 more typhoons

'Falcon' slows down, unlikely to make landfall

By PNA and MARTIN SADONGDONG

At least eight to 11 more typhoons may hit the country this year, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said on Saturday, July 29.

"We expect about eight to 11 more typhoons to enter the Philippine area of responsibility (PAR) this year," PAGASA Deputy Administrator for Administration

and Engineering Services Dr. Nathaniel Servando said during a weekly media forum in Quezon City.

The strongest typhoons are expected in September and October, Servando said.

On the positive side, he said, the country could have sufficient supply of water "as we are expecting more rain."

He said at least two storms may bring rains over Bulacan's Angat Dam, the main source of Metro Manila's potable water.

'Falcon' slows down

Meanwhile, Servando said tropical storm Falcon, which is already inside PAR, is unlikely to make landfall.

"It is expected to leave PAR in two to three days," he said.

PAGASA, in its 11 a.m. bulletin, said Falcon has decelerated upon moving westward over the Philippine Sea.

From 15 kilometers per hour (kph) during the 5 a.m. forecast, it slowed to 10 kph at 11 a.m. report.

Falcon was last spotted 1,315 kilometers (km) east of Central Luzon.

It was moving westward with maximum sustained winds of 65 kph and gustiness of up to 80 kph.

'Habagat' brings gusty condition

Due to enhanced southwest monsoon or "habagat," PAGASA said the following areas experienced gusty weather conditions on July 29: Zambales, Bataan, Palawan, Occidental Mindoro, Romblon, and most areas of Calabarzon, Bicol Region, and Western Visayas.

'Egay' leaves P2-B damage

Super typhoon Egay, meanwhile, left a trail of destruction and dealt P2 billion worth of damage to agriculture and infrastructure, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said Saturday.

NDRRMC spokesperson Edgar Posadas said the initial estimated damage to infrastructure amounted to P1,191,137,926.36 while agricultural loss reached P833,889,970.48.

Ilocos (Region 1) and Cagayan Valley (Region 2) bore the brunt of the typhoon as it registered infrastructure loss worth P643.5 million and P483 million, respectively. Bicol (Region 5) follows at P52.05 million, Mimaropa (Region 4B) at P10.9 million, and Western Visayas (Region 6) at P1.5 million.

In agriculture, Region 2 suffered the largest blow with an accumulated loss of P774 million, followed by Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) at P50 million, Region 6 at P9 million, and Calabarzon (Region 4A) at P213,500.

"Tataas pa po ito kasi mayroon pa kaming vina-validate sa Region 1 (This will further increase as we are still validating data from Region 1)," Posadas said in a radio interview with dzBB.

Death toll at 14

The death toll also increased to 14, six of them were confirmed, as one new fatality was included in the tally although Posadas said it was still being validated.

"Hindi pa po dito kasama 'yung ating unfortunate casualties sa Binangonan (Our unfortunate casualties in Binangonan are not yet included in our data)," Posadas said.

"For purposes of perspective,

nakahiwalay muna 'yung sa Binangonan kasi ito ay more or less attributable either kay Egay at sa enhanced habagat (For purposes of perspective, we separated [the casualties] in Binangonan because they are more or less attributable either to Egay or the enhanced southwest monsoon)," he explained.

At least 27 persons died while 43 others were rescued when motorbanca Princess Aya capsized off the waters of Binangonan, Rizal, on July 27. The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) had earlier attributed the incident to Egay and habagat.

Meanwhile, at least 20 persons were also missing, including four PCG personnel and seven crew of a tugboat that they were supposed to rescue in Aparri, Cagayan.

The PCG personnel went missing on July 26 when their aluminum boat capsized and they were swept away by raging waters off Cagayan River while trying to rescue the stranded crew of tugboat "Iroquois."

The nine other missing persons were reported in Benguet, Abra, and Apayao in the Cordillera region.

Affected families

A total of 172,293 families (608,979 individuals) have also been affected by the combined effects of Egay and habagat in 1,858 barangays in Regions 1, 2, Central Luzon (Region 3), 4A, 4B, 5, 6, Northern Mindanao (Region 10), Davao (Region 11), Soccsksargen (Region 12), Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM), CAR, and National Capital Region (NCR).

Of this, there were 3,288 families or 11,043 individuals who are staying in 241 evacuation centers. There were 9,248 houses that were either totally or partially damaged in Regions 1, 2, 3, 4A, 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, BARMM and CAR.

State of calamity

The NDRRMC said the province of Ilocos Norte in Region 1 was already placed under a state of calamity.

"Sa ngayon, officially may isang declaration ng state of calamity pero naririnig natin may ibang local government units na gusto po magdeklara ng state of calamity. May parameters ito at pinag-uusapan sa konseho (Right now, there is officially one declaration of a state of calamity, but we heard that there are other local government units that want to declare a state of calamity. There are parameters and this is discussed by their councils)," Posadas said.

Aside from Ilocos Norte, Abra and Mountain province were also reportedly placed under a state of calamity.

"It's good because this can mobilize additional resources for quicker response," he said. (With a report from Sonny Daanoy)



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P1 B damage to crops, infra in 13 regions

BY FRANCO JOSE C. BAROÑA

SUPER Typhoon "Egay" (international name: Doksuri) has exited but left behind a trail of death and destruction in at least 13 regions in the Philippines.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said on Saturday that damage to agriculture has been estimated at P833,889,970.48 and infrastructure at P1,191,137,926.36.

At least 155 roads, bridges, schools and government facilities were reported

to have been damaged at the height of the typhoon.

The fatalities have risen to 14, six of whom have been confirmed, while eight are being validated.

At least 13 people were reported injured, and 20 remain missing as of

press time, the NDRRMC said.

Most damage

Egay caused the most damage in Northern Luzon, mostly in Cagayan Valley.

A total of 76,093 farmers and fisherfolk and 91,651.56 hectares of crops were affected, the NDRRMC reported.

The total cost of damage to livestock, poultry and fisheries was pegged at P23,762,020.

Based on the NDRRMC report, a total

of 27 road sections and 31 bridges were affected by the typhoon. At least 29 percent of the affected roads are not passable to all types of vehicles as of press time.

Nearly 10,000 houses were also reported to have been damaged by Egay, with an estimated cost of P195,000.

The estimated cost of other damaged assets reached P9,971,216.22, the NDRRMC said.

Around 145 seaports were also affected, of which 32 percent are now operational.

➤ **DamageA2**

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STATE OF DEVASTATION

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. visits Abra and Laoag on Saturday, July 29, 2023, where he was briefed by local officials and concerned government agencies on the extent of the damage caused by Super Typhoon 'Egay' this week. With the President was Sen. Imee Marcos (left). Photo on the left is an aerial shot of the devastation. PHOTOS FROM PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE/FACEBOOK



■ DAMAGE FROM A1

P1B damage to crops

Currently, 687 passengers and 23 vessels remain stranded in various ports.

Although no airports were affected, at least 41 flights were canceled.

Meanwhile, 181 cities and municipalities throughout the 13 regions were left without electricity at the height of the typhoon. So far, power in 79 areas (49 percent) has been restored.

Classes in at least 448 cities and municipalities were suspended, while work in 353 areas was also canceled.

The national government has, so far, distributed a total of P39,696,419.33 worth of assistance.

Upside of Egay

While Egay has caused so much damage, it also brought rain that replenished Baguio City's dwindling reserves.

Baguio Water District General Manager Salvador Royeca reported improved water levels in two of the city's biggest sources: the Busol Rainwater Harvesting Facility and the Santo Tomas Rain Basin.

Royeca said the water level at the Santo Tomas Rain Basin went up to 10.70 meters as of 3 p.m. on Friday, July 28, from 8.91 meters on July 26 and 9.74 meters on July 27.

Tighter PCG inspections

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) said on Saturday that it would tighten inspections and protocol in ports to prevent another accident such as the capsizing of Princess Aya, a passenger boat, off Binangonan last Thursday that killed 27 people.

"This coming typhoon, we will be more strict in inspecting interisland ferries to avoid this kind of incident," PCG spokesman Rear Admiral Armand Balilo said in an interview.

An investigation is underway, but the ferry captain has admitted that they carried more passengers than what was declared in their documents, Balilo said.

"The captain obviously admitted his mistake. He submitted a manifest and then made the trip while the passengers were wearing life vests. So the ultimate goal is to file a case against the captain and crew," Balilo said.

"We already relieved our station commander [in Binangonan]. They are now at the headquarters, and so far the investigation is going on," he added.

PCG divers are still deployed for retrieval operations, said Balilo.