

DATE: AUGUST 25, 2020

DAY: TUESDAY

# DENR

## IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service

# DENR-NCR redesigns strategy in shores, waterways clean-up amid pandemic

Published August 24, 2020, 9:48 AM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources in the National Capital Region (DENR-NCR) has been redesigning its strategy to continuously clean up the region's shores and waterways amid the mobility restrictions imposed by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak.



(MANILA BULLETIN)

“As we can no longer do clean ups the way we did during pre-COVID times, we need to carefully redesign our strategy of cleaning our shores and adapt to the ‘new normal’ as we also need to ensure that we do not compromise the health of our workers while they are out in the field,” DENR-NCR Executive Director Jacqueline Caanacan said in a social media post.

Although there are challenges, Caanacan remains thankful that local government units (LGUs) have been active in cleaning up waterways within their jurisdictions.

“We have even received reports about river and estero cleanups conducted by barangays even during GCQ (general community quarantine),” she said.

The same can be said of the national government agencies, Caanacan added.

She said that the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority and the Department of Public Works and Highways have been staunch partners of the DENR in coastal cleanups.

In 2019, DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu launched the “Battle for Manila Bay,” a multi-sectoral effort to clean and rehabilitate Manila Bay pursuant with the Writ of Continuing Mandamus issued by the Supreme Court.

Last Aug. 20, Caanacan inspected the Manila Bay, particularly the entire stretch of the baywalk area, from the US Embassy to the Manila Yacht Club in Manila, and the back of the CCP Complex in Pasay City.

Accompanied by DENR-NCR assistant regional directors Al Orolfo and Ignacio Almira Jr., and Manila Bay Site Coordinating/Management Office focal person Haidee Pabalate, Caanacan made the visit to verify reports of water hyacinths and other wastes slowly accumulating in the area.

While her visit confirmed the reports, she said the presence of garbage in the area is partly due to the rainy season and the southwest monsoon or “habagat” that is blowing the garbage into the area.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/08/24/denr-ncr-redesigns-strategy-in-shores-waterways-clean-up-amid-pandemic/>

## Conservation Matters

with Errol A. Gatumbato

# Negros critically endangered mammals

Monday, August 24, 2020

Negros Island has the most number of critically endangered mammals in the country, based on the latest Red List of Threatened Species of the Philippines, issued by the Biodiversity Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Five of the eight mammals listed under this category are found in Negros.

Critically endangered is the highest level of threat assigned to species that are facing extreme danger to extinction in the wild.

These five species found in Negros are the Visayan spotted deer (*Cervus alfredi*), Visayan warty pig (*Susce bifrons*), Philippine bare-backed fruit bat (*Dobsoniachapmani*), Golden-crowned fruit bat (*Acerodon jubatus*), and Dugong (*Dugong dugon*). The three other species listed as critically endangered are the Tamaraw (*Bubalus mindorensis*) and Ilin hairy-tailed rat (*Crateromys paulus*), both species endemic to Mindoro, and the Dinagat cloud rat (*Crateromys australis*), a species restricted in the island province of Dinagat.

The Golden-crowned fruit bat and Dugong are similarly found in other areas of the country, and the latter is the only marine mammal listed as critically endangered.

The population of the Visayan spotted deer and the Visayan warty pig is presently limited in Negros and Panay since these two species are already extinct in their former range, specifically in Ticao, Masbate, Guimaras, and Cebu.

The Philippine bare-backed fruit bat, also known as the Negros naked-backed fruit bat, was formerly declared extinct because it has never been recorded since 1964. This species was known to occur in Negros until it was discovered in Cebu in 2001, and was later on rediscovered in southern Negros Occidental in 2003. This species of fruit bat remains critically endangered because its survival is still uncertain, especially that the lowland forests in Negros, where the species inhabits, are now very limited.

Having the most number of critically endangered mammals clearly indicates that the species found in Negros are not yet secured, and may soon get extinct in the wild if conservation measures should not be scaled up. The most critical action is the protection of these species from hunting as well as the protection and rehabilitation of their habitats.

It is, therefore, of paramount importance that habitat restoration shall be initiated in areas where the species are occurring.

There is no recent count as to the population of the critically endangered mammals found in Negros.

The International Union for the Conservation of Nature, an organization that has pioneered the classification of threatened species, has described critically endangered as those species that are facing extreme high risk of extinction in the wild in the near future. The DENR has adopted as well this definition on its list of threatened species. In addition, however, the DENR applies this threat category to species presumed to be extinct but was rediscovered.

The population of both the Visayan spotted deer and Visayan warty pig in Negros is spread in the Mount Kanla-on Natural Park, Northern Negros Natural Park, and Balinsasayao Twin Lakes Natural Park, as well as in Mount Talinis, also known as Cuernos de Negros, and South Western Negros Key Biodiversity Area, a mountain straddling Sipalay and Hinoba-an in Negros Occidental and Bayawan in Negros Oriental. These species have been widely hunted in the past for their meat.

The Negros Forest and Ecological Foundation Inc., with the late British wildlife biologist William Oliver, had made remarkable success in the captive breeding of the Visayan spotted deer and Visayan warty pig in Bacolod City. The captive breeding program of these two species and some other equally threatened species is now being administered and managed by the Talarak Foundation in what is now known as the Negros Forest Park.

One of the main purposes of captive breeding is to repopulate the species in areas where they formerly occurred but are now devoid of such species, or what we call reintroduction to vacant habitats.\*

Endangered centuries-old tree brings back

TITLE: nostalgia to residents

PAGE 1/ 1/2

August 25, 2020

DATE

# Endangered centuries-old Toog tree brings back nostalgia to residents

By [CHRIS V. PANGANIBAN](#) -AUGUST 24, 2020 1:59 PM

SAN FRANCISCO, Agusan del Sur (MindaNews / 24 August) — For local residents and conservationists, the country's tallest and oldest Philippine Rosewood tree (*Petersianthus quadrialatus*), locally known as Toog tree, in Barangay Alegria here was a nostalgic landmark that has been part of their lives in not so a distant past.

The towering 54-meter iconic tree is now facing imminent danger of being cut down because of the advancing state of decay on its buttress even as noted tree surgeons in the country have tried to find ways to stop it, believing the endemic tree species can still be treated and cured.

For Forester Jose Kanapi, Jr., vice president of the Society of Filipino Foresters, Inc. (SFFI) for Davao Region, the 300-year-old tree brings back fond memories whenever he visited this town, saying its gigantic sight would tell passersby that they are now nearing the town poblacion.

"The Toog tree that stands majestically above all other trees can be sighted 10 kilometers away at 5,000 meters altitude," Kanapi said, stressing that the tree served as a permanent forestry landmark since the early 1960s, way before it was formally recognized by local officials and conservationist in the mid 1980s.

Kanapi, who once worked with the Paper Industries Corporation of the Philippines (PICOP) in Bislig City, said the technical position of the Toog tree lies along the Bureau of Forest Reserve (BFFR) line that demarcates the boundaries of PICOP's timber license agreement or alienable and disposable land classification.

He said the Toog tree, aside from its importance as an aerial landmark, serves as a survey tying point whenever there is the need to pinpoint the BFFR line on the ground.

"When the Toog tree is sighted, the position of the BFFR line immediately registers on the mind of the pilot and the forest ranger conducting the aerial patrol," Kanapi noted.

Hermie Piedad, an old-time resident now working at the Philippine Economic Zone Authority in Manila, shared Kanapi's sentimental memories. He recalled that he was five years old when he first saw the giant tree that served as travel indicator that they are already near home from Barangay Mangagoy in Bislig City.

For her part, Agnes Pedrosa Marelid, who now lives in Abu Dhabi with her Swedish husband Stefan, said the Toog tree brought back beautiful memories in her childhood, reminiscing that it stood tall and sturdy whenever they played underneath it with a couple of cousins during summertime.

Marelid's grandparents, both maternal and paternal, are both long-time residents of this town. Her grandfather Gerardo Pedrosa, Sr. owns the 12-hectare farmland where the Toog tree stands.

"As a young child, anything more than 100 years old is incomprehensibly ancient. It is probably more than 300 years old but nevertheless, the significance of this tree is more than its age. It is the priceless and timeless memory of our yesteryears," she said.

Endangered centuries-old toog tree brings back

TITLE: nostalgia to residents

PAGE 1/ 2/2

August 25, 2020

DATE

The tree was set to be cut down on August 8 and 9 on orders of local officials based on the recommendations of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, which said the cavity on its buttress has worsened that “it might fall anytime soon.”

In a last minute effort, a local conservationist group, Save the Toog tree Please (STOP) movement, led by Engr. Mauro Bravo Jr., a retired district engineer of the Department of Public Works and Highways whose family is a town pioneer, had succeeded in suspending the scheduled cutting down.

Local officials, however, concurred during a consultative meeting on August 10 that they would pursue the Toog tree cutting only on the upper-half portion of the trunk to maintain a standing landmark memory.

This prompted STOP movement to seek support from SFFI and the Philippine Native Tree Enthusiasts (PNTE), a social media-based national conservationist group, that resulted into another suspension of the tree cutting as they plead Mayor Solomon Rufila, Agusan del Sur Gov. Santiago Cane, Jr and Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu to conduct a reevaluation and reassessment on the real health status of the Toog tree.



*Forester Jose Kanapi, Jr., vice president of the Society of Filipino Foresters, Inc. for the Davao region, checks on the buttress of the giant Toog tree while forester Raul Bunao videotaped live via a Zoom meeting with tree surgeons from the University of the Philippines – Los Baños. MindaNews photo by CHRIS V. PANGANIBAN*

Tree surgeons Armando Palijon, former forestry professor of the University of the Philippines – Los Baños, and Marcelina Pacho, former pathologist of DENR’s Ecosystem Research and Development Bureau, agreed to conduct the reevaluation and assessment via a Zoom live meeting with Kanapi and local SFFI member Raul Bunao, who followed the guidelines set by the experts while doing live discussions at the location of the Toog tree.

Palijon and Pacho could not personally visit the tree due to the difficulties of travelling as the country continues to grapple with the COVID-19 crisis, thus the Zoom meeting as an alternative procedure.

The findings and recommendations of the two tree surgeons are expected to be released this week and will be submitted to the Agusan del Sur Environment Council for Sustainable Development, DENR, and the local governments of San Francisco and Agusan del Sur. (Chris V. Panganiban / MindaNews)

# Mining ops na bahagi ng Masbate Gold Project, nanatiling sarado

By [Bombo Radyo Legazpi](#) - August 25, 2020 | 2:15 AM

LEGAZPI CITY – Nananatili pa sa lungsod ng Masbate ang team ng geologists sa Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) Bicol kaugnay ng imbestigasyon sa isang minahan na bahagi ng Masbate Gold Project.

Sa panayam ng Bombo Radyo Legazpi kay MGB Bicol Regional Director Guillermo Molina Jr., una ng inabisuhan na magsusupinde ng operasyon ang naturang minahan upang makita kung nagkaroon ng pinasala sa bahagi ng tailings nito.

Ang tailings ay parang malaking dam na humahawak ng mga dumi na mula sa minahan.

Isusumite naman ang mga nakalap na impormasyon sa Junta Provincial ng Masbate para sa pagtalakay.

Ipipinalisa rin ang mga nakolektang datos para makapagdesisyon kung papayagan nang muli na makapagbukas ng operasyon ang naturang minahan

## PIDS study seeks to 'rationalize' small-scale gold mining in PHL

By [Cai Ordinario](#)

August 25, 2020

State-run think tank Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS) has recommended the amendment of the Small-Scale Mining Act to formalize small-scale mining in the country and prevent industry outputs from disappearing in the black market.

In a Policy Note, titled "Bottlenecks to formalization of Small-Scale Mining in the Philippines," PIDS Senior Fellow Sonny N. Domingo and Research Analyst Arvie Joy A. Manejar said "testaments on the ground" claim that small-scale mining accounted for 70 percent of the country's total mining output.

Domingo and Manejar said amendments in the law should include a definition of small-scale mining and that subsector stakeholders should be made accountable to the public, the government, and environment.

"The different aspects of formalization should be addressed through a cohesive and comprehensive strategic framework, which should be anchored on clear policy. This would entail the passing of a new legislation that fills in the weaknesses of the current law," Domingo and Manejar said.

Based on the law, the authors said, small-scale mining activities use manual labor and do not rely on heavy mining equipment. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development also have a similar definition.

However, Domingo and Manejar said this no longer mirror the actual situation on the ground. Currently, small mining operations already employ heavy machinery and modern technology, such as heavy equipment, explosives and chemicals.

Further, they also pointed out that there's a conflict between the law and the Minahang Bayan activities. under the Minahang Bayan guidelines since local government units (LGUs) do not recognize the Minahang Bayan without clearance from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

"As such, there are Minahang Bayans that are locally declared, but are technically still illegal in designation. The devolution of regulatory functions has to be cleared between LGUs and the national government," the authors said.

Apart from the amendment of the law, Domingo and Manejar suggested the passing of legislation that will rationalizes taxation in the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas' (BSP) gold-buying activities.

The legal sale of gold from small-scale mining is done only through the BSP. However, the authors said there is a need to create an accreditation scheme by BSP for gold buying centers.

"This can also invigorate value-adding through other industries, such as jewelry-making which has an immense potential contribution to the economy," they said. "(This) promises the recapture of sales lost through the black market," they added.



PIDS study seeks to 'rationalize' small-scale gold

August 25, 2020

TITLE: mining in PHL

PAGE 1/ 2/2

DATE

The authors also recommended that a proper census be done to capture the extent of small-scale mining in the Philippines.

This will help ensure worker protection and capture the benefits of the industry on the economy. The census must include demographic information of the stakeholders, particularly the detailed profiles of mining operators and laborers.

The census should capture information about households and the details of workers. These details include incomes and expenditures, employment arrangements, and mining agreements.

Domingo and Manejar also said the census should also capture specifics of mineral production, such as volume and value of minerals, risk assessment, and market pathways.

“Albeit relatively unseen, it still contributes to the national and local economies through the circulation of resources and the employment of thousands of Filipinos. It is time that the bureaucracy put a stop to these losses and ensure that industry outputs do not disappear through the black market,” they said.

Data showed that the mining industry contributed around 0.8 percent to the Philippines’ gross domestic product in 2018. In that year, the mining sector’s production value reached P179.6 billion and employed at least 207,000 people.

However, Domingo and Manejar said these figures are conservative estimates and that the benefits from mining operations and production are not well documented.

# Aklan solon pushing for creation of Boracay agency

Published August 24, 2020, 9:19 AM

by [Charissa Luci-Atienza](#)

Aklan 1st District Rep. Carlito Marquez has sought the creation of the Boracay Island Development Authority (BIDA) in a bid to protect the island and its nearby frontier.



Boracay Island (Tara Yap/Manila Bulletin FILE PHOTO)

Marquez filed House Bill No. 7256, which calls for the setting up of the BIDA, which shall exercise regulatory and supervisory authority over the delivery of zone-wide services within Boracay island and Caticlan without diminution of the autonomy of the local government units (LGUs) concerning local matters.

“The concerns surrounding the enhancement of Boracay Island and nearby Caticlan are no longer a purely local matter but a national trepidation that require concerted national and local cooperation and synchronization of plans and programs,” Marquez said in his bill’s explanatory note.

“There is a need to re-establish and enhanced inter-agency or development authority which will formulate, implement, and oversee policies, as well as strictly enforce national laws and local ordinances, to ensure the rehabilitation and ecological sustainability of Boracay Island and nearby Caticlan,” he stressed.

HB 7256 provides that the Boracay Island and Catalan, which is composed of four barangays, shall be constituted into a special development and tourism zone, subject to direct supervision of the President of the Philippines.

Under the bill, zone-wide services under the jurisdiction of the BIDA are those services which have zone-wide impact and transcend local political boundaries or entail huge expenditures such as that it would not be viable for such services to be provided by the individual LGUs comprising Boracay and Catalan.

These services shall include: development planning, transport and traffic management, solid waste disposal and management, flood control and sewerage management; urban renewal, zoning, and land use planning, and shelter services; health and sanitation, urban protection and pollution control; public safety, and tourism.

“Rest assured that this proposed measure does not grant the BIDA with police power, let alone legislative power, and that all its functions are only administrative in nature. The BIDA is not a local government unit or a public corporation endowed with legislative power, it has no power to enact ordinances for the welfare of the community,” Marquez explained.

Under the bill, the governing board and policy-making body of the BIDA shall be the Boracay Island Development Council. The Council shall be composed of the governor of Aklan, the mayor of the municipality of Malay, the barangay chairmen of the Barangays Manoc-Manoc, Balabag, Yapak, and Caticlan in the municipality of Malay, and the president of the Boracay Foundation, Incorporated (BFI), the president of the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry-Boracay (PCCI Boracay and two representatives from non-governmental organisations (NGOs) concerning Boracay Island.



The Council shall be headed by the Chairman who shall be appointed by the President and who shall continue to hold office at the discretion of the appointing authority.

HB 7256 provides P2 billion funding for the initial operation of the BIDA. Thereafter, the annual expenditures including capital outlays of the BIDA shall be provided in the General Appropriations Act, it provides.

The three barangays of Boracay Island and Caticlan shall continue to receive the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) currently allocated to them, it said.

Marquez's measure empowers the BIDA to levy, fine and impose fees and charges for various services rendered.

"This proposed measure aims to regain the lost glory of the island paradise and put once again in the world tourism radar," Marquez said.



ABS-CBN News

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TINGNAN: Isang giant wild mushroom ang namataan ng isang park ranger sa Masungi Georeserve. Ayon kay park ranger Romeo, ito na ang pinakamalaking mushroom na nakita niya sa kaniyang buong buhay.

Nasa 13 inches ang laki ng cap ng mushroom at may tangkad na 6 inches. Pinaniniwalaang isang klase ng Collybia ang mushroom at susuriin pa kung maaari itong kainin. (Photo courtesy: Masungi Georeserve)



👍👀❤️ Dexter Arboladora and 5.2K others

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# Duterte's address to nation to air Tuesday morning

By: [Krissy Aguilar](#) - Reporter / [@KAguilarINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 11:44 PM August 24, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — The address of President Rodrigo Duterte to the nation will air on Tuesday, according to presidential spokesperson Harry Roque.

“Meeting is still on-going at 10:59 p.m. and will probably continue for at least one more hour,” Roque explained in a message sent to reporters on Monday.

Presidential Communications Operations Office Undersecretary Rocky Ignacio said the address would air 9 a.m. via People’s Television Network.

The President was supposed to speak to the nation on the [government’s expenses](#) related to its COVID-19 response.

Roque earlier said the President has asked government agencies to submit their expense reports to his office.  
[atm]

# Palace, DoH optimistic that curve will flatten

Published 3 hours ago on August 25, 2020 03:20 AM

By [Gabbie Parlade](#)



Malacañang and the Department of Health (DoH) on Monday expressed optimism on the possibility that the COVID-19 curve in the country will flatten by the end of August or September as told by experts.

But they reiterated that while it is possible, the number of cases may still change over time.

Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque Jr. said that although he is hoping for the possibility to be true, the results on the tally are yet to be seen.

“We will reserve whether we will congratulate the Filipino people for it or better luck next time,” he said in a televised briefing.

On the other hand, Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire noted that because the possibility is not yet a certain point, improved protocols should continuously be implemented.

“What they said was great and we really hope to attain that decreased rate in the number of cases,” she said.

Based on latest data, she said that despite the rising infections, the health system capacity has still managed.

She noted that the said “flattening” will only be seen if there will be a bend or a plateaued outline in the trend of cases reported.

On the results of the recalibrated strategies implemented within the two-week lockdown, Vergeire said that a longer period of monitoring is still needed to see whether there were changes in the system.

“Based on transmission rate and number of cases, let us try to monitor it for a longer period more if the trends run accordingly to what our colleagues from the academe are saying,” she said.

As a whole, both officials urged the public to continue practising the minimum health standards and to ensure that proper isolation is in place if symptomatic, in order to prevent the transmission and to control the disease.

Earlier, Dr. Guido David of the Octa Research Team said that the Philippines is seen to flatten the curve by end-August or September following a decrease in the country’s positivity rate which was attributed to the two weeks modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ).

Although David mentioned that a larger possibility to curb the pandemic may have been in place if the MECQ was extended for until the end of August.

“Right now we are hoping that it’s still possible by the end of August where we can still flatten the curve, or maybe around September it may also happen which is also okay, to flatten the curve slowly,” he said in a radio interview.

He said it was also due to the noticeable trend of decreased new cases which in the past few weeks were reported by the DoH.

Nonetheless, David reiterated that the flattening of the curve will not mean that the existence of the coronavirus disease in the country will be gone as cases may again rise if people lower their guard.

# 'Bayanihan 2' now only needs Duterte's signature

By: [Neil Arwin Mercado](#) - Reporter / [@NAMercadoINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 05:15 PM August 24, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — The proposed Bayanihan to Recover as One Act or the “Bayanihan 2,” which seeks to cushion the effects of the coronavirus pandemic, now only needs President Rodrigo Duterte’s signature to become a law.

This came after the House of Representatives ratified the bicameral conference committee report on the disagreeing provisions of the measure. The Senate already ratified the bill on August 20.

Since both chambers have already ratified the bill, it will now be transmitted to the Office of the President for Duterte’s signature.

Bayanihan 2 lays out the country’s COVID-19 response and recovery plan and allocates funds to help struggling sectors cope with the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic.

Deputy Speaker Luis Raymund Villafuerte, who authored the House version of the bill and is one of the heads of the bicameral conference committee, earlier said that Bayanihan 2 provides for a stimulus package worth P165 billion, higher than the funding initially proposed by both the Senate and House.

The P165 billion stimulus package consists of P140 billion in regular appropriation and P25 billion as standby funding.

“The final Bayanihan 2 bill has set aside the biggest share of the proposed P165-billion budget for soft loans to badly-hit groups such as micro, small and medium-scale enterprises (MSMEs), transport, tourism and agriculture sectors to help them get back on their feet at the soonest,” Villafuerte said.

Further, Villafuerte added that Bayanihan 2 allocates subsidies and allowances to qualified students in both private and public elementary schools, high schools, and colleges whose families were affected by work stoppage amid the lockdowns imposed; and one-time cash aid to displaced teaching and non-teaching personnel who have lost their jobs or who have not received their wages because of the coronavirus crisis.

The bill, Villafuerte said, likewise allots P13.5 billion for health-related responses, including the retroactive payment of the P100,000 hazard duty pay for healthworkers effective February 2020; continuous employment of existing emergency healthworkers; augmentation of operations of Department of Health (DOH) hospitals; and risk allowance of public and private healthworkers attending to COVID-19 patients.

A total of P3 billion is also allotted for the procurement of face masks, face shields and personal protective equipment (PPEs); and P4.5 billion for the construction of temporary medical isolation and quarantine facilities, said Villafuerte.

Funding is also allocated for digital education and infrastructure, assistance to LGUs, allowances for national athletes and coaches, and repatriation of OFWs.



Villafuerte said other salient provisions of the bill are as follows:

- Authority to reprogram and realign funds to fund purchase of PPEs, establishment of isolation facilities, field hospitals, vaccines/cure, testing, and subsidy for COVID-19 positive patients
- Authority for LGUs to realign local funds for COVID-19 response
- Authority for LGUS to increase their personnel services cap to enable them to hire more personnel for COVID response and recovery
- Direct the use of unutilized Municipal Development Fund for COVID-19 response
- Department of Social Welfare and Development and Department of Labor and Employment allowed through a MOA to transfer funds to the LGUs for assistance programs
- Issuance of guidelines on the establishment of private isolation and quarantine facilities of private enterprises
- Direct the discontinuance of unutilized automatic appropriations for debt service to allow more liquidity
- 60-day grace period for payment of loans
- Loan term extensions or restructuring shall be enticed to regulatory relief and is exempt from Documentary Stamp Taxes
- Encourage Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) and Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) to relax regulatory and statutory restrictions and requirements for one year
- BSP and SEC allowed to grant staggered booking of allowance for credit losses for individuals and business entities
- Removal of initial public offering tax
- Two-year exemption from compulsory notification for mergers and acquisitions with transaction values below P50-B and one-year exemption from motu proprio investigation
- Creation of a national online electronic application system accessible to everyone in each local government unit (LGU) to provide contact tracing capacity
- Exemption from import duties for PPE to be determined by Bureau of Customs and Bureau of Internal Revenue, provided that local preference is ensured
- Unutilized or unreleased balance in special purpose funds to be used for COVID-19 response
- Waived national permits, licenses, certificates for public and private projects that are nationally significant
- Waive Phase IV trials of vaccine/cure to expedite procurement subject to World Health Organisation recommendation, Food and Drug Administration to determine minimum standards for distribution
- Priority lending for Micro Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs), Cooperatives, Hospitals, Tourism Industry, and OFWs through GFIs

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# Labs told to inform LGU who are positive

Published 3 hours ago on August 25, 2020 03:30 AM

By [MJ Blancaflor](#)



The Department of Health (DoH) on Monday urged COVID-19 laboratories to inform local government units (LGU) who among their residents tested positive for the respiratory illness to facilitate contact tracing.

The agency's reminder came on the heels of criticisms against its current case reporting platform dubbed as "COVIDKAYA," after a Quezon City official said it has incomplete data of COVID-19 patients which supposedly impede tracing efforts of LGU.

"We have reminded our laboratories that they should also send test results to local government units and the DoH at the same time, so LGU can initiate contact tracing," Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said in a media forum.

The issue stemmed from a Twitter post of a social media user who criticized the Quezon City government, saying no one from the LGU reached out to her boyfriend who tested positive for COVID-19.

As a response, the QC official said the laboratory where the COVID-19 patient was tested neither provided the results, address, and other details to the COVIDKAYA system. She added the patient did not report to the LGU that he had contracted the disease.

The official said that there is an "urgent need" for the DoH to review its database so that all LGU which depend on it for contact tracing can efficiently do their jobs.

"How can our health workers do their jobs if we are not receiving enough information regarding the patients?" she said.

The QC official added that the COVIDKAYA system tagged some 8,000 individuals as Quezon City residents but provided no other information that could guide contact tracers to find them.

To address this, Vergeire said the DoH's central office will deploy a team in Quezon City to aid local epidemiologists and health personnel.

The DoH official added that the COVIDKAYA system is "continuously being improved."

"We had an agreement to have a team from the national office that will be deployed there so we can identify the missing information and close the gap, the difference between the national government and the local government data," she said.

Meanwhile, the QC official recently issued a memorandum ordering laboratories, hospitals and disease reporting units to immediately inform the City Epidemiology and Surveillance Unit about COVID-19 positive patients to avoid delays in contact tracing and isolation efforts.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/08/25/labs-told-to-inform-lgu-who-are-positive/>



# Working hand-in-hand with LGU

Metro Manila · Isko Moreno · Manila · Navotas, Metro Manila · Quezon City · Marikina · Pasay · Quezon, Bukidnon · Cavite City  
25 Aug 2020 [+2 more](#) Harry Roque

In this time of great adversity, collective action is a key element to winning against this epidemic. This is why the government's response to COVID-19 uses the whole-of-government approach to address the problems brought about by the crisis and to gradually recover as a nation.

Part of this whole-of-government approach is close coordination and cooperation between the national government and local government units (LGU). It is the same principle that applied when I and some fellow Cabinet members were assigned to LGU in Metro Manila and its nearby provinces of Rizal, Cavite, Laguna and Bulacan to support local chief executives in their COVID-19 response.

This "big brother/big sister" model was applied during the implementation of the modified enhanced community

to help improve testing capacity. Aside from this big brother/big sister strategy, the national government has been supportive of many LGU-led responses as some local chief executives have attested. Manila Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno"

Domagoso, who I once guested in one of my press briefings, has said that because of the presence of a molecular laboratory in his city and donations of equipment from the national government, they are able to provide free testing for their constituents and non-residents of the city as well. Mayor Joy Belmonte of Quezon City was also thankful to the national government through the National Task Force (NTF) for assistance and support on contact tracing and testing. Meanwhile, Marikina City Mayor Marcy Teodoro also acknowledged the national government's assistance, particularly with aggressive contact tracing, through enhanced tracing capacity support from the NTF as one of the key elements in the city's increased

quarantine in the National Capital Region (NCR) and its neighboring provinces following its success in Cebu. The assignment of Secretary Roy Cimatu as overseer of the government's COVID-19 response in the province had helped address the spike in cases, along with improvements in testing, contact tracing, isolation and treatment.

We at the Inter-Agency Task Force on the Management of Emerging and Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) want to see if we can duplicate the results in Cebu in the NCR and other hotspot areas to address the recent spike in cases. That is the rationale behind this "big brother/big sister" assignment to LGU.

As "big brothers" or "big sisters" to LGU chiefs, we were tasked to lend a supportive hand to help improve LGU re-

Most recently, Navotas City Mayor Toby Tiangco thanked the national government for its support for his city's COVID-19 response. Mayor Tiangco said that through the assistance from the national government in terms of testing and tracing, some 25,000 of its residents have already been tested, which is partly the reason also for a large drop in the city's positivity rate. Mayor Tiangco also acknowledged the national government's immediate response to his LGU's requests for assistance in the isolation of its residents who can no longer be admitted in the city's community isolation facilities. Since Navotas implements the "no-home quarantine protocol," the city sometimes runs out of beds in its local isolation facilities and often asks the national government for assistance in accommodating Navotas City residents in national government-designated temporary treatment and monitoring facilities. Even Metropolitan Manila Development Authority general manager Jojo Garcia attests to



sponse and slow down the increase in the number of COVID-19 cases. We are to ensure that the policies that we craft in the IATF are in sync with the implementation of response measures in the LGU down to the communities.

In my case, for example, being assigned to Pasay where I reside, I will be able to push forward the concerns of my LGU to the national government, particularly on the need for a molecular laboratory in the city

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the national government's support to Metro Manila LGU and assured that NCR mayors are united and are in sync in terms of their actions and responses to the epidemic.

Being in sync with the LGU and ensuring collective action are what the national government is hoping to achieve to win in this fight against COVID-19. With everyone's cooperation — the national government, the LGU, the private sector, and most importantly, every Filipino citizen — we do have a good fighting chance to triumph over COVID-19.

to LGU chiefs, we were tasked to lend a supportive hand to help improve LGU response and slow down the increase in the number of COVID-19 cases.

"Being

In sync with the LGU and ensuring collective action are what the national government is hoping to achieve to win in this fight against

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'Big brothers' or 'big sisters'

# PH values COVID aid from other countries

Published August 24, 2020, 5:54 PM  
by [Manila Bulletin](#)



The Philippines continues to rely greatly on its fellow Asian nations, notably China, in its ongoing response to the COVID-19 pandemic, it was highlighted in a webinar co-hosted by the Philippine Association for Chinese Studies (PACS) and the Philippine Studies Center (PSC) of Jinan University this July.

The Philippines was one of the first countries to send medical aid to the Chinese people when the coronavirus first emerged in Wuhan, Ambassador Chito Santaromana said. Subsequently, he said, when the virus had spread to the Philippines, over 50 Philippine Air Force planes flew to Xiamen, Quanzhou, Changsha, Shenzhen, and Shanghai to pick up medical equipment and supplies for the Philippines.

Dr. Tan Cho Chiong, president of the Philippine Academy of Acupuncture, highlighted the contributions of the private sector and non-government organizations. Chinese Filipinos, he said, raised some P300 million through the Filipino Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, World News, and Kaisa, which were donated to the UP Philippine General Hospital, TOWNS, and other centers and organizations for further distribution to 181 hospitals and 584 barangays throughout the country.

Dr. Jed Rabena, research fellow of the Asia Pacific Pathways to Progress, cited contributions of face masks and medical supplies valued at P14 million, through the Chinese military and corporate sector. There are, however, some negative images, he said, due in part to misbehaving Chinese nationals in the Philippines, illegal drugs, and conflicting claims in the South China Sea in international media coverage amplified by local social media.

Prof. Elmer Soriano, chairman of the Political Science Department of the Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP), presented the results of a "Survey on Filipino Perceptions of COVID-19," conducted with the Philippine Studies Center of Jinan University, in particular on the efforts of various countries in responding to the pandemic. Countries deemed to have performed well included Japan, Singapore, and China.

On the question of which countries and organizations are helping the Philippines against the pandemic, China was cited by 65.9 percent of the respondents, the World Health Organizations by 66.4 percent, and the United States by 34.6 percent.

The cooperation between the Philippines and China is one of the welcome rays of hope in these difficult times. The COVID-19 pandemic is far from over, but there is confidence among our people that we will soon overcome it.

## Patay sa COVID-19 sa Pinas lagpas 3,000 na; 4,686 pang dagdag-kaso naitala



August 24, 2020 @ 4:11 PM 15 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Malapit nang umabot sa 200,000 ang naitatalang kaso ng coronavirus disease (COVID-19) sa bansa.

Sa pinakahuling tala ngayong araw ng Department of Health (DOH) nadagdaga pa ng 4,686 ang kumpirmadong kaso dahilan para umabot na sa 194,252 ang kabuuang bilang.

Ang mga iniulat na resulta ay isinumite ng 95 mula sa 109 operational laboratory.

Nasa 729 naman ang naitalang recoveries kung saan umabot na sa 132,042 ang mga gumaling sa sakit.

Sa bilang ng bagong naitalang kaso, 4,045 ang iniulat mula August 11 hanggang 24.

Ang top regions na may mga bagong kaso ay ang NCR na may 2,242; sa Region 4A ay 723; at Region 3 na may 285.

Nakapagtala pa ng bagong 13 nasawi kung saan umakyat na sa kabuuang 3,010 ang mga pumanaw sa COVID-19.

Sa naturang bilang, tig-anim ang nasawi noong Hulyo at Agosto at isa naman noong Hunyo.

Mula naman sa NCR ang 8 sa nasawi habang sa Region 4A ay 2 at tig 1 naman sa Region 7, 5 at 11. *Jocelyn Tabangcura-Domenden*

# Quarantine violators reach 338,294

Published 10 hours ago on August 24, 2020 07:24 PM

By [Paula Antolin](#)



The total number of community quarantine violators have reached 338,294 from mid March to 22 August, Joint Task Force Covid Shield commander, Lt. Gen. Guillermo Eleazar, said.

Of the total number of violators tallied since 17 March to 22 August, 149,653 had been warned; 96,043 had been fined and 92,598 had been charged.

Luzon has recorded with the most number of violators at 198,394 followed by Visayas with 74,871 and 65,029 from Mindanao.

Meanwhile, the Department of Trade and Industry has recorded a total of 974 arrested suspects for hoarding, and profiteering or manipulating prices of essential goods as of August 22, 2020.

Eleazar also said that all violators who were arrested since March 17 were dealt with based on the anti-Covid-19 ordinance of the local government units (LGUs).

# Palace: Duterte won't give an inch of territory to other states

August 24, 2020 | 7:05 pm



PRESIDENT Rodrigo R. Duterte won't give an inch of Philippine territory to other states, the presidential palace said on Monday after Manila protested alleged Chinese aggression in the South China Sea.

"Our President is consistent, he will not give even an inch of our national territory or sovereign rights to any other state," Presidential Spokesman Harry L. Roque said at an online briefing on Monday.

The sea dispute won't affect bilateral talks on trade and investment with China, he added.

"Unresolved issues on our territory won't hamper our diplomatic bilateral relations with China," Mr. Roque said in Filipino. "Trade and investments can be pushed."

The Department of Foreign Affairs last week protested a three-month old incident at a disputed shoal in the South China Sea, where the Chinese coast guard allegedly seized fish aggregating devices from Filipino fishermen.

The shoal is a prime fishing site seized by Beijing in 2012 after a standoff that prompted Manila to sue China at an international tribunal.

China in response called out the Philippine government, asking it to "stop illegal provocations."

China claims more than 80% of the South China Sea based on old maps that it says are prove sovereignty. Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan also have claims.

Meanwhile, military commanders said the Philippines should maintain an "unequivocal" position over its claims in the South China Sea amid China's continuing encroachment.

“The first capability that we need is really the wherewithal to extend this message — that this government is serious about protecting it’s rights,” Southern Luzon Commander Lt. Gen. Antonio G. Parlade, Jr. told the Commission on Appointments.

“It doesn’t matter if we only have a few floating vessels, a few fighter jets. As long as we are clear and we are unequivocal about this position, then the message would be very clear to other governments,” he added.

Mr. Parlade, whose appointment was being considered by lawmakers, cited the need to integrate efforts among the Defense, Foreign Affairs and Environment departments and the Philippine Coast Guard in protecting Philippine waters.

The country loses \$79 billion in annual fish catch from Cagayan de Oro to Zambales alone, Mr. Parlade said, citing a University of the Philippines study.

“That’s because we don’t have maritime or fishery policies,” he said. “We don’t have enough security elements to protect our fishermen.”

DFA did not give any other details of the Scarborough Shoal incident, but also protested China’s “continuing illicit issuances of radio challenges to Philippine aircraft conducting legitimate regular maritime patrols.”

China’s coast guard routinely warns foreign planes and ships passing through international waters.

The Philippine protest came amid what the US and its allies see as provocative Chinese activities and military exercises in disputed parts of the waterway. Vietnam on Thursday complained about the presence of Chinese bombers on the Paracel islands.

Armed Forces spokesman Maj. Gen. Edgard A. Arevalo told lawmakers at the appointment hearing the agency needs more aircraft and patrol craft so it can continue sea patrols.

The appointment body later confirmed the appointments of Mr. Parlade, Mr. Arevalo and 13 other senior officers of the Armed Forces. — **NPA and Charmaine A. Tadalán**



# Senators welcome adoption of 'strategic concept' on West Phil. Sea

Published August 24, 2020, 3:26 PM

by [Mario Casayuran](#)

The Senate welcomed on Monday a proposal of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) for the adoption of a "strategic concept" to protect the country's maritime interests in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) by including other government agencies in this endeavor.



(AFP / MANILA BULLETIN)

Facing members of the national defense committee of the bicameral Commission on Appointments (CA) chaired by Senator Panfilo M. Lacson, Lieutenant General Antonio Parlade Jr. said the military establishment acknowledges the constitutional authority of the President to chart the country's foreign policy.

The CA, during its plenary session presided by Senate President Vicente C. Sotto III, later confirmed the appointment of Parlade and 14 other AFP ranking officers.

What is needed to protect the country's maritime interest following the rejection by the United Nations Arbitration Court of China's "historical" claim over most parts of the South China Sea, including the WPS, is "political will," Parlade stressed.

Parlade said the protection of the country's maritime interests and sovereignty should not be dependent upon the Armed Forces of the Philippines alone but should include, under "strategic" concept, other government agencies such as the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), Philippine Drug Enforcement Agency (PDEA), Department of Transportation (DOTr) and Bureau of Immigration (BI), among others.

"We deal with his political issue at the back of our heads," he added.

On Hontiveros' query regarding the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), Parlade said he supports efforts to establish international archipelagic sea lanes that should be open for all.

As China continues to reject the UN arbitration ruling, the US has been taunting China's claimed ownership over most parts of the South China Sea by sending its Navy to pass through the seas under the principle of innocent passage.

The AFP, according to Parlade, should not be faulted for the current territorial claims by both China and the Philippines in the WPS because the AFP, as early as 2013, had notified the executive branch of the start of the reclamation of the parts of the Philippine-claimed WPS.

These were documented, Parlade said, adding that the current China-Philippine territorial claim could have been averted.

The Philippines is conceded to be an ant compared to the elephant size of China's economy and military.

"We abide by what the President will tell us," Parlade added.

While the present foreign policy is designed for peace and stability in the WPS, Parlade said the military establishment is not foregoing the UN arbitral tribunal ruling upholding the Philippines' sovereignty claim over its expanded economic zone.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/08/24/senators-welcome-adoption-of-strategic-concept-on-west-phil-sea/>

## China accused of fake sea claims

posted August 25, 2020 at 01:10 am

by [Manila Standard](#)

China's "nine-dash line" used to claim most of the South China Sea is a fabrication, the Philippines' defense secretary said, as he accused Beijing of illegally occupying Filipino maritime territory.

The remarks late Sunday come amid a fresh row between Manila and Beijing over the disputed Scarborough shoal, which has long been a flashpoint between the two countries.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana last week lodged a diplomatic protest over what he said was the "illegal confiscation" by China's coast guard of fishing equipment near the shoal.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque on Monday said the government would not give up a single inch of the country's territory, including its claims in the disputed portions of the South China Sea.

He made the statement after China accused the Philippines of illegal provocations in the disputed waters, saying the Philippines had infringed on its sovereignty and security. He assured the public that the Philippines would not give up the West Philippine Sea.

Lorenzana has said the provocations in the hotly disputed areas in the South China Sea are coming from the Chinese, who have illegally occupied some features within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone.

He was responding to China's claims that the Philippines was doing "illegal provocations" by sending a patrol aircraft over the Spratlys and reefs occupied by Chinese forces.

"Illegal provocations? That area is within our EEZ. Their so-called historical rights over an area enclosed by their nine-line doesn't exist except in their imaginations," he told reporters on Sunday.

China seized Scarborough from the Philippines in 2012 following a tense standoff. Vito Barcelo with AFP  
The shoal, one of the region's richest fishing grounds, is located 240 kilometers west of the Philippines' main island of Luzon and 650 kilometers from the nearest major Chinese land mass, the southern island province of Hainan.

"That area is within our EEZ," Lorenzana told reporters in a text message, referring to the country's exclusive economic zone.

"Our fishermen are within our EEZ and likewise our ships and planes conduct patrol sorties within our area.

"They [China] are the ones who have been doing provocations by illegally occupying some features within our EEZ. Hence they have no right to claim they are enforcing their laws."

Beijing claims the majority of the sea, often invoking its so-called nine-dash line to justify its alleged historic rights to the key waterway that is also contested by the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, Taiwan and Brunei.

It rejected a 2016 UN-backed tribunal's ruling that its claims were without legal basis.

China's foreign ministry on Friday defended the coast guard, saying they had carried out law enforcement activities and "their actions are understandable".

It also accused Philippine military aircraft of invading Chinese airspace in another disputed section of the sea and urged Manila to "immediately stop illegal provocative activities".

Roque has played down the spat that comes as the coronavirus-ravaged country seeks to secure a coronavirus vaccine from China.

"Our diplomats routinely lodge protests like that if we believe our sovereign rights are violated," Harry Roque said Friday.

"But it will not affect the overall good relations between our country and China.

Philippine-China relations have improved under Duterte, who revived once-icy diplomatic ties after being elected in 2016 when he largely set aside maritime disputes in favor of wooing Chinese aid, trade and investment.

Source: <https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/332342>

# Nuclear plants need government subsidy—expert

posted August 24, 2020 at 07:05 pm

by [Alena Mae S. Flores](#)

An energy analyst said the country's planned nuclear power development carries a lot of risk and will need government subsidy to make it feasible.

"Nuclear, obviously has tail risks and as an analyst, I will look at it from a financial perspective...Nuclear in my view is totally uneconomic without government subsidy," Sara Jane Ahmed, an energy finance analyst at the Institute for Energy Economics and Financial Analysis, said during a forum by the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities.

Ahmed said that of the top 10 major nuclear developments in the world, most of them were 10 to 15 years behind schedule, "and they are double or triple the original investment and the cost to consumers are prohibitively expensive without a lock-in subsidy."

# Meralco assures no power disconnection until 31 October

Published 11 hours ago on August 24, 2020 07:11 PM

By [Keith A. Calayag](#)



The Manila Electric Co. (Meralco) will extend anew the period of no power disconnection to give more time for consumers to settle their outstanding obligations.

Meralco President and Chief Executive Officer Ray Espinosa made the announcement at the hearing of the House Committee on Good Government and Public Accountability on the spike in electricity bills on Monday.

According to Espinosa, Meralco will extend the suspension of disconnection activities from until 30 September to until 31 October.

“Bilang tugon sa inyong request, iextend ko po yung suspension ng disconnect hanggang end ng October para mas mabigyan ng panahon ang ating mga customers na makalikom ng sapat ng pambayad sa kanilang mga bills,” Espinosa said after the panel’s Chairperson Jose Antonio Sy-Alvarado appealed for an extension.

Heeding the appeal of House Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano, Espinosa also announced that Meralco will also give its 2.77 million lifeline customers or those who consume 100 kilowatt per hour and below P101 million discount on their electricity bills.

“Bilang tugon po sa mungkahi ni Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano, kami po ay magbibigay ng relief or ayuda sa kanila equivalent to a total of P101 milion mula sa aming distribution charge.”

“So makakatanggap sila ng diskwento sa kanilang distribution charge equivalent to a total of P101 million. ‘Yan po ay ibibigay natin as an additional credit sa kanilang bills na dadating,” Espinosa said.

Cayetano has earlier urged Meralco to shoulder the electricity bills or look into the option of providing at least 50 percent subsidies in the electricity bills of its lifeline customers.

Cayetano also said Meralco should study whether they can delay the payment for the sector that needs it the most.

According to Espinosa, Meralco has provided bill relief amounting to over P2.84 billion to its customers.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/08/24/meralco-assures-no-power-disconnection-until-31-october/>

230,000 Manila Water customers to face 6-hour water  
interruption

PAGE 1/ 1/2

August 25, 2020

DATE



# 230,000 Manila Water customers to face 6-hour water interruption

**Published** August 24, 2020 12:32pm

By JON VIKTOR D. CABUENAS, GMA News

Some 230,000 customers of the Manila Water Company Inc. are set to experience a six-hour service interruption this week, as the company will undertake leak repairs in Sta. Ana, Manila.

In an advisory released Monday, Manila Water said the interruption will start 10:00 p.m. on Tuesday, August 25, and will last until 4:00 a.m. on Wednesday, August 26, 2020.

"In preparation for a major pipe interconnection activity, Manila Water will undertake leak repairs in New Panaderos, Sta. Ana, Manila," the advisory read.

It will affect some 47,204 households, commercial, and business establishments in 105 barangays in the cities of Makati, Mandaluyong, and Manila.

Below is a list of the affected barangays:

## Manila City

763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 818-A, 819, 820, 866, 869, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905

## Makati City

- Carmona
- Kasilawan
- Olympia
- Poblacion
- Singkamas
- Sta. Cruz
- Tejeros
- Valenzuela
- Mandaluyong City
- Mabini-J. Rizal
- Namayan
- Vergara

230,000 Manila Water customers to face 6-hour water  
interruption

PAGE 1/ 2/2

August 25, 2020  
DATE

"Manila Water is advising residents of the said barangays to store enough water to supply their needs during the interruption period," the advisory read.

"After service is restored, customers are advised to allow a few minutes for flushing before using the water from their taps," it added.

Manila Water is the east zone concessionaire which services 23 cities and municipalities in Metro Manila and Rizal.

These include Mandaluyong, Makati, Pasig, Pateros, San Juan, Taguig, Marikina, and parts of Quezon City and Manila. The towns of Angono, Baras, Binangonan, Cainta, Cardona, Jalajala, Morong, Pililia, Rodriguez, Tanay, Taytay, Teresa, San Mateo and Antipolo in the province of Rizal are also part of the East Zone.—**AOL, GMA News**

# Quakes rock Visayas, Mindanao

[Helen Flores](#) (The Philippine Star) - August 25, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Earthquakes rocked parts of the Visayas and Mindanao yesterday, but no damage or injuries were reported, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said.

The first quake, with magnitude 4.9, occurred at 8:24 a.m., with its epicenter located 42 kilometers northeast of Baganga, Davao Oriental.

It was felt at Intensity 3 in Baganga, Manay and Cateel, all in Davao Oriental.

Intensity 2 was felt in Mati City, Davao Oriental; Lingig, Surigao del Sur, and Rosario, Agusan del Sur.

Instrumental Intensity 2 was recorded in Bislig City, Surigao del Sur, and Intensity 1 in Malungon, Sarangani as well as in Gingoog City, Misamis Oriental.

The second quake, a magnitude-4.2, occurred at 2:32 p.m. Its epicenter was located 23 km northeast of Guiuan, Eastern Samar. It was felt at Intensity 4 in Guiuan and Salcedo, and Intensity 3 in Tacloban.

# Magnitude 4.2 quake jolts Eastern Samar

By Sarwell Meniano August 24, 2020, 7:22 pm



**EARTHQUAKE.** The map showing the epicenter of the magnitude 4.2 earthquake in Guiuan, Eastern Samar on Monday afternoon (Aug. 24, 2020). The quake also shook some parts of Leyte. (*Phivolcs image*)

**TACLOBAN CITY** – A magnitude 4.2 earthquake shook some parts of Eastern Samar and Leyte provinces on Monday afternoon, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) reported.

There was no expected damage from the temblor that struck 15 km. northwest of Guiuan, Eastern Samar at 2:32 p.m.

The quake was felt at Intensity IV in Guiuan, Salcedo, and Mercedes in Eastern Samar; Intensity III in General MacArthur, Lawaan, Quinapondan, and Giporlos in Eastern Samar, and Tacloban City; Intensity II in Palo, Pastrana, Jaro, Julita, Dulag, Tanauan, Tolosa, Barugo, Burauen, Tabontabon, and Sta. Fe in Leyte; Maydolong and Borongan in Eastern Samar; and Intensity I in Can-avid, Eastern Samar.

Magnitude measures the energy released from the source of the quake, while intensity measures the strength of shaking produced by the earthquake at a certain location.

The Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council has not received initial reports of damage from local government units.

The tremor occurred less than a week after the magnitude 6.6 quake centered in Cataingan, Masbate that rocked several areas in the central Philippines on August 18. (**PNA**)



# Wildfires rage in NCalifornia

By [Associated Press](#)

August 25, 2020

**SCOTTS VALLEY, California:** Three massive wildfires chewed through parched Northern California landscape on Sunday (Monday in Manila) as firefighters raced to dig breaks and make other preparations ahead of a frightening weather system packing high winds and more of the lightning that sparked the huge blazes and scores of other fires around the state, putting nearly a quarter-million people under evacuation orders and warnings.

At the CZU Lightning Complex fire in the Santa Cruz Mountains, south of San Francisco, authorities announced the discovery of the body of a 70-year-old man in a remote area called Last Chance. The man had been reported missing and police had to use a helicopter to reach the area, which is a string of about 40 off-the-grid homes at the end of a windy, steep dirt road north of the city of Santa Cruz.



*INFERNO* Flames from the LNU Lightning Complex fires leap above Butts Canyon Road on Aug. 23, 2020 in Lake County, California. AP PHOTO

The area was under an evacuation order and Santa Cruz Sheriff's Department Chief Deputy Chris Clark said it was a stark reminder of the need for residents to leave the area.

"This is one of the darkest periods we've been in with this fire," he said.

The fatality was the first for the CZU fire and seventh fire victim in the state in the last week that has seen 650 wildfires across California, many of them sparked by the more than 12,000 lightning strikes recorded since Aug., 15. There are 14,000 firefighters, 2,400 engines and 95 aircraft battling the fires.

The Santa Cruz fire is one of three "complexes," or groups of fires, burning on all sides of the San Francisco Bay Area. All were started by lightning.

Fire crew made progress during the weekend, which saw a welcome break in the unseasonably warm weather and little wind. that allowed firefighters to increase what had been precious little containment.

But the forecast late Sunday was ominous — the National Weather Service issued a "red flag" warning through Monday afternoon for the drought-stricken area, meaning extreme fire conditions including high temperatures, low humidity, lightning and wind gusts up to 105 kph that "may result in dangerous and unpredictable fire behavior."

Mark Brunton, a battalion chief for the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (Cal Fire), said while he's confident firefighters did the most with the time they had to prepare, he's not sure what to expect.

"There's a lot of potential for things to really go crazy out there," he said.

The LNU Lightning Complex fire in wine country north of San Francisco and SCU Lightning Complex southeast of the city have within a week grown to be two of the three largest fires in state history, with both burning more than 500 square miles (1,295 square kilometers). The LNU fire has been the most deadly and destructive blaze, accounting for five deaths and 845 destroyed homes and other buildings. Three of the victims were in a home that was under an evacuation order.

Officials surveying maps at command centers are astonished by the sheer size of the fires, Cal Fire spokesman Brice Bennett said.

“You could overlay half of one of these fires and it covers the entire city of San Francisco,” Bennett said Sunday.

In Southern California, an 11-day-old blaze held steady at just under 50 square miles (106 square kilometers) near Lake Hughes in northern Los Angeles County mountains. Rough terrain, hot weather and the potential for thunderstorms with lightning strikes challenged firefighters on Sunday.

Authorities said their firefighting effort in Santa Cruz was hindered by people who refused to evacuate and those who were using the chaos to steal. Santa Cruz County Sheriff Jim Hart said 100 officers were patrolling and anyone not authorized to be in an evacuation zone would be arrested.

# This devastating spill is a big problem for oil

August 24, 2020 | 5:53 pm



*DRUMS filled with fuel oil waste and algae sit behind foam-filled oil containment booms on shore at Bois des Amourettes, Mauritius, on Aug. 14. The MV Wakashio leaked at least 1,000 tons of black sludge into the turquoise waters off the Indian Ocean island's southeastern coast after it ran aground on July 25. — KAMLESH BHUCKORY/BLOOMBERG*

By **Julian Lee**

DON'T DISMISS the leak of oil from the *MV Wakashio* that ran aground last month on a reef off the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius so quickly. The volume lost may seem tiny, but its location, mixed with other pressures already faced by the oil industry, means that it will have an impact far beyond its size.

The empty bulk carrier was 11 days into a month-long voyage from Singapore to Brazil, where it was due to pick up a cargo, when it ran aground just a mile off the island's southern tip on July 25. About three-quarters of the oil in its tanks — some 3,900 tons of very low-sulfur fuel oil, 200 tons of diesel and 90 tons of lubricant — was transferred off the vessel. The rest leaked into the sea — much of it coming ashore in the Ile aux Aigrettes nature reserve, home to the last remnants of Mauritius's dry coastal forest and the endangered species that depend on it.

Compared to the biggest oil spills from tankers hauling as much as 300,000 tons of crude across the world's oceans, the volume of oil that spilled from the *Wakashio* is a drop in the ocean. But size isn't everything.

The *Exxon Valdez*, probably the most infamous tanker spill in American waters, doesn't even make a list of the 30 biggest oil spills from tankers worldwide — it comes in at number 36. All spills are eclipsed by the 1.5 million tons of crude deliberately leaked into the Persian Gulf in 1991 by Iraqi forces seeking to forestall a possible amphibious invasion after their occupation of neighboring Kuwait. Even the fabled 1901 Spindletop discovery in Texas leaked more than three times as much oil as the *Exxon Valdez* before it was brought under control.

Mauritius, an island about the size of the city of Jacksonville, Florida, is located on the shipping lane between the southern tip of Africa and the northern entrance to the Strait of Malacca, which connects the Indian and Pacific Oceans. It's the route of choice between the huge markets and manufacturing centers of China, Japan, South Korea and the rest of Asia in the east and the resource-rich regions of West Africa and Latin America, or the markets of Europe and North America, in the west.

Blue Bay, where the ship ran aground, was the one remaining area of undamaged coral reef off the coast of Mauritius. Declared a marine park in 1997, it's the perfect place to spot colorful coral beds and an abundance of underwater life. The oil spill "may have caused irreversible environmental damage to the southeastern coast of Mauritius," oceanographer Vassen Kauppaymuthoo told my Bloomberg News colleague Kamlesh Bhuckory.

We don't know yet why the Wakashio was so close to shore that it hit the reef, but it wasn't an isolated incident. A similar accident happened four years ago at a spot less than 10 miles away.

Most vessels plying that route pass much farther from the island, with few coming less than 20 miles from shore. The Wakashio, like the MV Benita in 2016, got much closer. The reasons for its proximity will form part of the investigation that is now under way and has seen the arrest of the ship's captain.

Because the ship wasn't carrying oil as a cargo, Mauritius may have little hope of a big settlement if it wins one. Compensation could be limited to as little as \$18 million under the 2001 Bunker Convention, according to global law firm Clyde & Co. That's a pitifully small amount to offset the cost of the cleanup and the damage caused to fragile and unique species on Ile aux Aigrettes. (The ship's owner, Nagashiki Shipping, has said it "will respond in good faith to any damages in accordance with applicable law," according to an e-mailed statement.)

The accident will once again focus attention on the oil industry, as companies come under increasing pressure to bear responsibility for pollution caused by their product, as well as that resulting from their operations. Ships account for about 5% of global oil use and burn one of the heaviest, stickiest fractions of the barrel.

Steps have already been taken to reduce the amount of sulphur in ship fuel and targets set to halve the carbon footprint of shipping from 2008 levels by 2050. If that goal is to be met, we'll need to find a new, clean ship fuel within the next decade, according to the Getting to Zero Coalition.

As my Bloomberg News colleagues Ryan Hesketh and Jack Wittels wrote, there is no obvious alternative fuel for ocean-going vessels like the Wakashio on long voyages. Alternatives such as ammonia, hydrogen, natural gas, or nuclear reactors either take up much more space than oil to provide the same amount of energy, are far more dangerous to carry or are a lot more expensive.

One thing is certain, though, images of oil-fouled beaches and wildlife from a pristine Indian Ocean island will add more pressure for change and a move away from a fuel that is increasingly seen to be unsustainable for reasons of local, as well as global, pollution. Imposing exclusion zones around vulnerable islands may provide some protection, but this latest accident is another loud call for a shift to less polluting ship fuels.

# Rio Tinto CEO gives up millions over destruction of Aboriginal site

posted August 24, 2020 at 07:20 pm

by [AFP](#)

Sydney, Australia—Mining giant Rio Tinto stripped its CEO of US\$3.5 million Monday after the company destroyed a 46,000-year-old Aboriginal heritage site to expand an iron ore mine in Australia.

The Anglo-Australian firm blasted rock shelters in the Juukan Gorge in Western Australia's remote Pilbara region on May 24, destroying one of the earliest known sites occupied by Australia's indigenous people.

Rio Tinto chief executive Jean-Sebastien Jacques will forfeit 2.7 million pounds (US\$3.5 million) in performance bonuses as a result of the incident, the company announced Monday following a high-level review.

Head of the iron ore division Chris Salisbury and corporate relations head Simone Niven will also lose US\$792,000 and US\$687,000 respectively.

The board-led review found Rio Tinto had obtained legal authority to blast the sites but doing so "fell short of the standards and internal guidance that Rio Tinto sets for itself."

It found "no single root cause or error" directly led to the destruction, rather it was "the result of a series of decisions, actions and omissions over an extended period of time."

Rio Tinto chairman Simon Thompson said there had been "numerous missed opportunities over almost a decade" and the company had failed to respect local communities and their heritage.

"While the review provides a clear framework for change, it is important to emphasize that this is the start of a process, not the end," he said. AFP

"We will implement important new measures and governance to ensure we do not repeat what happened at Juukan Gorge."

Thompson said the company would work to rebuild trust with the Pinikura and Puutu Kunti Kurrama Aboriginal (PKKP) communities, who are the traditional owners of the region.

Rio Tinto initially defended its blasting in the Juukan Gorge as authorized under a 2013 agreement with the state government.

But emotional protests by Aboriginal leaders, who said they had not been informed of the planned blasting until it was too late to prevent it, led the company to issue an apology.

The cultural importance of Juukan Gorge was confirmed by an archaeological dig carried out at one of the rock shelters a year after Rio Tinto obtained approval to blast in the area.

The dig uncovered the oldest known example of bone tools in Australia—a sharpened kangaroo bone dating back 28,000 years—and a plaited-hair belt that DNA testing linked to indigenous people still living in the area.

Western Australia's state government is currently reviewing the laws governing mining operations near indigenous heritage sites.

Climate fund for poor nations vows to drive green

August 25, 2020

TITLE: Covid recovery

PAGE 1/ 1/2

DATE

# Climate fund for poor nations vows to drive green Covid recovery

Green Climate Fund backs host of new projects including strengthening buildings to withstand hurricanes in Caribbean.



Typhoon Haiyan, the most devastating storm ever to make landfall in all of history, left buildings, homes, and businesses in Tacloban City, Leyte, Philippines wiped out in its aftermath. Image: [Asian Development Bank](#), [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](#)

[Thomson Reuters Foundation](#)

Aug. 24, 2020

The Green Climate Fund has promised developing nations it will ramp up efforts to help them tackle climate challenges as they strive to recover from the coronavirus pandemic, approving \$879 million in backing for 15 new projects around the world.

At a four-day virtual board meeting ending late Friday, the fund added Afghanistan and Sudan to a list of more than 100 countries receiving a total of \$6.2 billion to reduce planet-heating emissions and enhance climate resilience.

The [Green Climate Fund](#) (GCF) was set up under UN climate talks in 2010 to help developing nations tackle global warming, and started allocating money in 2015.

Executive Director Yannick Glemarec said the fund had “a key role to play to maintain climate ambition in the era of Covid-19” and would aim to improve the speed and efficiency of its response to developing country needs.

Board co-chair Nauman Bashir Bhatti, from Pakistan, said climate finance would be crucial for recovery from the pandemic and the fund needed to increase support “even during these difficult times”.

Those promises came as small island states criticised the pace and size of GCF assistance, saying they were now struggling with the economic blow from the pandemic on top of climate change impacts such as rising seas and stronger storms.

Fiji’s UN Ambassador Satyendra Prasad said Covid-19 risked worsening the already high debt burden of small island nations, as tourism dived.

“The importance of the (GCF) ... in accelerating transformative climate action in this present decade cannot be understated,” he added.

He told the Thomson Reuters Foundation island nations were struggling to access other sources of finance and urged the GCF to boost aid to help them prepare project proposals and to release funding for approved projects faster.

Climate fund for poor nations vows to drive green

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PAGE 1/ 2/2

DATE

The Alliance of Small Island States said its members represented less than 10 per cent of total funding requests.

### *Job creation*

The GCF this week approved three new projects for island nations, including strengthening buildings to withstand hurricanes in Antigua and Barbuda, and installing solar power systems on farmland on Fiji's Ovalau island.

It also gave the green light to payments rewarding reductions in deforestation in Colombia and Indonesia between 2014 and 2016.

But more than 80 green groups issued an open letter ahead of the meeting opposing such funding.

They said deforestation had since spiked and countries should not be rewarded for "paper reductions" in carbon emissions calculated from favourable baselines.

Liane Schalatek, who leads climate finance work for the Heinrich Böll Foundation North America, said the fund should take a hard look at whether the forest emission reductions it is paying for would be permanent.

It should also ensure the funding protects and benefits forest communities and indigenous people, she told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

Other new projects included one for zero-deforestation cocoa production in Ivory Coast, providing rural villages in Senegal and Afghanistan with solar mini-grids, and conserving biodiversity on Indian Ocean islands.

The fund said initiatives like these would create jobs and support a green recovery from the coronavirus crisis.

The board also accepted Senegal's La Banque Agricole and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization as partners that can implement projects with fund money.

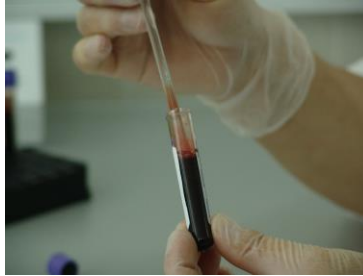
But Japan's Sumitomo Mitsui Banking Corporation (SMBC) put its accreditation application on hold after campaigners argued the GCF should not work with a company that lends to developers of coal-power plants, though it has ruled out backing new ones.

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# US authorizes plasma treatment against virus

Published 20 hours ago on August 24, 2020 10:06 AM

By [Agence France-Presse](#)



American authorities announced on Sunday an emergency authorization for doctors to use blood plasma from recovered coronavirus patients as a treatment against the disease that has killed over 176,000 in the US.

The move by the Food and Drug Administration comes as President Donald Trump faces intense pressure to curb the contagion that has hobbled the world's largest economy and clouded his once-promising prospects for re-election in November.

The plasma is believed to contain powerful antibodies that can help fight off the disease faster and help protect people from being seriously hurt by it.

"This product may be effective in treating COVID-19 and... the known and potential benefits of the product outweigh the known and potential risks of the product," FDA said in a statement.

While the treatment has already been used on patients in the United States and other nations, the extent of its effectiveness is still debated by experts and some have warned that it could carry side effects.

"Convalescent plasma probably works — though it still needs to be proven in clinical trials — but not as a rescue treatment for people who are already severely ill," said Len Horovitz, a pulmonary specialist at Lenox Hill Hospital in New York City.

## Trump faces tough campaign

He said that plasma would likely work much better right after a person was exposed to the virus, when the body is trying to neutralize the infection — the problem being that plasma supplies are limited, meaning it would be difficult to get enough to treat everyone in early stages of the disease.

Trump told reporters the therapy shows "an incredible rate of success" and "will save countless lives", but this went much further than his own health officials' cautious welcome of the treatment.

Challenged by a reporter to explain the apparent contradiction, Trump passed the question to one of his experts, then ended the press conference.

The FDA already allowed convalescent plasma transfusions for coronavirus patients under certain conditions, such as clinical trials and gravely ill people.

The Washington Post said that over 70,000 virus patients in the US have received such a transfusion.

Trump has been widely criticized for his handling of the coronavirus pandemic in the US, which remains the world leader in infections and fatalities.

He faces a tough re-election battle against Democratic challenger Joe Biden, with no effective treatment or vaccine expected before the vote on November 3.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/08/24/us-authorizes-plasma-treatment-against-virus/>



# WHO cautious on COVID-19 plasma as US issues emergency authorization

**Published** August 24, 2020 7:55pm

The World Health Organization on Monday was cautious about endorsing the use of recovered COVID-19 patients' plasma to treat people who are ill, saying evidence it works remains "low quality" even as the United States issued emergency authorization for such therapies.

"There are a number of clinical trials going on around the world looking at convalescent plasma compared to the standard of care," Soumya Swaminathan, WHO chief scientist, said.

"Only a few of them have actually reported interim results...and at the moment, it's still very low-quality evidence," she told a news conference. — **Reuters**