

DATE: August 29, 2020

DAY: Saturday

DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service

DENR, Army reservists boost CALABARZON for protection



Published 1 hour ago on August 29, 2020 04:07 AM By [TDT](#)



The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Philippine Army's 4th Regional Community Defense Group-Army Reserve Command (RCDG-ARESCOM) renewed its cooperation for the protection of forests in Southern Luzon amid the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic.

Said initiative is for the safekeeping of seized forest products and seedling replacements for trees affected by road widening projects of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).

One aspect of the partnership, whose memorandum of partnership (MoP) was signed by DENR-CALABARZON Regional Executive Director Nonito Tamayo and 4th RCDG-ARESCOM Group Commander Col. Romulo Satparam, is the utilization of a portion of 10-hectare Camp General Macario Sakay in Los Baños, Laguna as an impounding facility for the DENR's confiscated forest products, cut logs from DPWH road widening projects, and replacement seedlings.

A similar agreement was entered into by the DENR-CALABARZON and the Army reserve group in February last year.

"This partnership greatly benefits the government in terms of incurred savings since funds for building additional facility will no longer be needed," DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu stated.

Under the MoP, the DENR-CALABARZON will store replacement seedlings from cutting permits and seized illegal forest products to the designated depository area inside the Army reservists' camp.

The agency will also be in charge of the regular maintenance, monitoring, and inventory of said items.

RCDG-ARESCOM, on the other hand, shall designate and maintain a nursery shed for the replacement seedlings and seized forest products.

It will also provide assistance in the maintenance of these items, as well as manpower and security to the mobile cleanup drive of the DENR regional office and the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office in the area of Laguna.

DENR, Army reserve group magsasama para prc ang CALABARZON forests



August 28, 2020 @ 6:28 PM 10 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Upang palakasin ang kampanya sa reforestation at pagbibigay ng proteksiyon sa kagubatan sa CALABARZON region sa gitna ng coronavirus pandemic, muling nagsanib puwersa ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) at ang Laguna-based Army reserve group.

Ayon sa DENR, sa pamamagitan ng pagtutulungan ng 4th Regional Community Defense Group-Army Reserve Command (RCDG-ARESCOM) at ng DENR-CALABARZON ay maiingatan na ng maayos ang mga nakumpiskang forest products at replacement seedlings sa mga puno na naapektuhan ng road widening projects ng Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).

Sinabi ng DENR muling naglaan ng sampung ektaryang lupa sa Camp General Macario Sakay sa Los Banos, Laguna ang 4th RCDG-ARESCOM upang magsilbing impounding facility para sa mga nakumpiskang forest products ng DENR, mga pinutol na puno para sa road widening ng DPWH at mga replacement seedlings para dito.

Tinawag naman na “brilliant move” ni Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu ang naging alyansa ng DENR-CALABARZON at 4th RCDG-ARESCOM dahil matutulungan nito ang gobyerno na makatipid ng pondo sa pagpapatayo ng bagong storage facility.

“This partnership greatly benefits the government in terms of incurred savings since funds for building additional facility will no longer be needed,” pagdidiin pa ni Cimatu.

Ang memorandum of partnership (MOPA) ay nilagdaan nina DENR-CALABARZON Regional Executive Director Nonito Tamayo at 4th RCDG-ARESCOM Group Commander Col. Romulo Satparam.

Ito ay katulad rin ng nilagdaang MOPA ng DENR-CALABARZON at Army reserve group noong Pebrero ng nakalipas na taon.

Kaugnay nito nagpasalamat naman si Tamayo sa 4th RCDG-ARESCOM sa panibagong partnership nito sa DENR.

DENR, Army reserve group magsasama para protektahan ang CALABARZON forests

“This partnership will boost the efforts of the regional office in producing more replacement seedlings and confiscating logs from illegal traders because of the significant increase in area for storage,” sabi pa ni Tamayo.

Sa ilalim ng MOPA, maaaring ilagay ng DENR-CALABARZON ang mga replacement seedlings para sa cutting permits at mga nakumpiskang forest products sa inilaan na lugar sa loob ng Camp General Macario Sakay na pangangasiwaan ng 4th RCDG-ARESCOM. Sasagutin din ng ahensiya ang regular maintenance, monitoring at inventory ng mga ilalagay sa depository area.

Samantala, maglalaan naman ang Army reserve ng nursery shed, kasama na ang pagmiminte ng lugar na ito para sa replacement seedlings at mga nakumpiskang forest products. Magbibigay din ito ng assistance sa pagpapanatili ng lugar, kasama rin ang manpower at security para sa mobile cleanup drive ng DENR regional office at ng Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office sa Laguna. *Santi Celario*

Zobel de Ayala manager sued



By [Eireene Jairee Gomez](#)

August 29, 2020

PALAWAN's Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (Cenro) has filed charges against the farm manager of billionaire Beatriz Zobel de Ayala for alleged unlawful occupation of forest lands and cutting of a native tree within the Malampaya Sound Protected Landscape and Seascape (MSPLS).

Cenro, an agency under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), filed the charges before the Department of Justice against farm manager Stephen John Zaragosa and three others who were manning the structures built by the group of Zobel de Ayala in Sitio Maypa, Barangay Pancol in Taytay, Palawan.

Zaragosa, along with Cirilo Ledesma, Nicasio Ledesma and Mario Caahay, was named in the complaint for alleged violation of Sections 77 and 78 of Presidential Decree (PD) 705, as amended, or the "Revised Forestry Code of the Philippines."

Environment officials led by MSPLS Protected Area superintendent Clarissa Pador and Cenro officer Alan Valle earlier investigated reports that the group of Zobel de Ayala erected structures in the marine protected area.

"Pursuant to our office's existing procedures, specifically DENR Administrative Order No. 1997-32, Pador has conducted the necessary adjudication proceedings regarding the illegal cutting of a Bangar tree, and the Cenro of Taytay, Palawan, has already filed a complaint for violation of Sections 77 and 78 of Presidential Decree 705 against those who were positively identified by witnesses in the area," DENR Mimaropa Regional Executive Director Lourdes Ferrer said.

Section 77 of PD 705 imposes penalty for the crime of cutting, gathering and/or collecting timber or other forest products without license.

It provides that any person who cut, gather, collect, remove timber or other forest products from any forest land, or timber from alienable or disposable public land, or from private land, without any authority, or possess timber or other forest products without the legal documents as required under existing forest laws and regulations, shall be punished with the penalties imposed under Articles 309 and 310 of the Revised Penal Code.

Meanwhile, Section 78 imposes penalties for unlawful occupation or destruction of forest lands and grazing lands.

Earlier, a DENR monitoring team found two structures in the area being claimed by Zobel de Ayala.

Zobel de Ayala manager sued

The structures are made from light materials with cement post, a parking area made of metal frame, bamboo gate with metal frame, and a developed backyard garden.

The agency identified the area as a portion of Lot 1247 and 3556, CAD 841-D, which is within the timberland and MSPLS .

In a message to The Manila Times, Zobel de Ayala’s lawyer Angelmhina Lencio said, “Zobel de Ayala recalls having been informed about a wild almond tree near the staff house that posed a danger to life and property. Attempts were made to obtain clearance to trim or cut that tree to reduce the safety risks to the farm workers and visitors.”

“Due to a miscommunication and misunderstanding, it was believed that a verbal approval was sufficient. That verbal approval was obtained beforehand.”

The lawyer added, “She continues to coordinate with the DENR to ensure compliance with all relevant laws and regulations.”|

The MSPLS is a marine protected area, which covers 200,115 hectares of both aquatic and terrestrial environment with diverse ecosystems in Palawan.

MGB: Modify road after landslides

By [Mary Ruth R. Malinao](#) (The Freeman)

-August 29, 2020 - 12:00am



It made the recommendation following its investigation into the localized landslide along a steep road cut in Sitio Lower Agsungot last week, making the road section impassable.

STAR/File

CEBU, Philippines — The Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) has recommended to the Cebu City government to “modify” the slope of the road in the mountain barangay of Agsungot to prevent further landslides.

The bureau said landslide engineering interventions must be applied to minimize, if not totally eliminate, geohazard threats.

It made the recommendation following its investigation into the localized landslide along a steep road cut in Sitio Lower Agsungot last week, making the road section impassable.

Aside from slope modification, MGB also recommended the immediate removal of the large block, which is left hanging on the slope, to avoid untoward incidents.

An alternate route is also recommended pending the application/implementation of appropriate landslide mitigating measures to ensure the safety of the public.

“Close monitoring should be conducted for any development of large cracks or progressions of existing cracks and fissures in the area and its immediate vicinity,” the MGB report read.

Based on the MGB report, the type of landslide falls under the classification of a “rock fall” as large blocks of rocks were dislodged from an existing plane of an old fracture or cracks as indicated by the weathered surface of the landslide escarpment and the presence of seepages.

“Seepages noted in the area may aggravate slope failures as these serve as conduits and hasten the weathering and oxidation of the underlying rock. Seepages noted on the landslide escarpment also indicate that the fractures/joints are deep-seated and are present as inherent to the rock rather than a result of the slope modification activity during slope cutting and road opening,” read the report.

MGB: Modify road after landslides

Also, the report states the site is characterized by a steep to rugged terrain deeply dissected with creeks and rivers.

The underlying material is characterized by highly fractured and highly weathered volcanic rocks that are prone to slope failure, especially in areas with excessively steep slopes.

Councilor Jerry Guardo said they received a copy of the MGB report and the recommendations Tuesday evening.

Guardo said Mayor Edgardo Labella called for a meeting together with concerned departments like Cebu City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CCENRO), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), MGB, to name a few, the following day to discuss the said report.

Moreover, the local residents are advised to refrain from going near the area to avoid untoward incidents of rockfall and landslide even without weather disturbances.

They are urged to immediately report to the city's disaster office and MGB-7 if there is any development or progression of cracks within the area and its immediate vicinity. — **KQD (FREEMAN)**

Masbate governor demands temporary suspension of Filminera mining operations

Published August 28, 2020, 3:48 PM

[by Nino Luces](#)

MASBATE CITY – Governor Antonio Kho has demanded the temporary suspension of Filminera Resources Corporation’s operation while some issues on alleged environmental violations have remained unresolved after a strong quake hit the province last August 18.

In an interview with the Manila Bulletin, Kho said that the Sangguniang Panlalawigan (SP) has approved a resolution, requesting the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) to immediately halt the operation of Filminera mining in Aroroy town while it has yet to comply with the requirement of having an MGB-standard waste disposal facility.

“Filminera failed to upgrade their tailing pond containing wastes from 59 meters to 71 meters in elevation. This is susceptible to spillage that will pose serious risk to the community,” Kho said.

He added that once the company complies with this requirement, then it can resume its operations.

About 40,000 residents are in danger because of any spillage once a strong earthquake hits the province again, Kho disclosed.

On August 18, a 6.6-magnitude earthquake struck the southern part of Masbate, claiming at least one life and injuring hundreds of residents in the municipalities of Palanas, Cataingan, Pio V. Corpuz and Esperanza.

According to the Office of the Civil Defense (OCD) in Bicol, the earthquake caused a total of almost P280 million in damages to school buildings, learning facilities and materials, P29.96 million damages roads, bridges and other government buildings, and P55,000-damage to health facilities.

“We are also demanding that a third party consultant (be appointed) that will study and determine the capability of the tailing pond that will hold 69 million metric ton of wastes materials. Hindi pwede yung sa kanila, dapat independent at mga eksperto na hindi tayo lolokohin,” Kho said.

Board Member Jamon Espares, spokesperson of Provincial Bantay Kalikasan Task Force, said that based on the structural assessment of the Filminera mining tailing ponds, the structure’s quake resistance factor capability was only up to a magnitude-7 earthquake.

This could pose a serious problem because the province is right on the Philippine Fault System that could generate an earthquake of up to magnitude-8.6.

Masbate governor demands temporary suspension of Filminera mining operations

“Binibigyan sila (Filminera), kung natatandaan ko hanggang 2019 na i-elavate yung kanilang tailing pond, pero hanggang ngayon walang nangyari. Nag-try naman sila, kaso lang, yung gagawin nil asana, ipapatong nila sa kalsada ng DPWH. Kaya ni-re-route nila ang kalsada. Pagmamay-ari nila yung kalsada kaya lang hindi sila nagpa-alam sa probinsiya. Kailangan magpa-alam sila kasi lahat naman ng mga movement na ganyan may paalam sa local government, lalo na sa superior local government,” Espares told the Manila Bulletin.

Pagbabalik-operasyon ng minahan sa Masbate, 'OK' sa MGB; pero prov'l task force umaalma

By [Bombo Radyo Legazpi](#)

-August 28, 2020 | 7:32 PM

LEGAZPI CITY – Ipinag-utos na ng Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) Bicol ang pagbabalik-operasyon ng minahan ng Filminera Resources Corporation sa Aroroy na bahagi ng Masbate Gold Project.

Pansamantalang itinigil ang operasyon nito upang masuri ang tailing storage facility kung nagkaroon ng pinsala dulot ng lindol na tumama sa lalawigan.

Sa eksklusibong panayam ng *Bombo Radyo Legazpi* kay MGB Bicol Regional Director Danny Molina, naisumite na ang opisyal na report at sulat sa special session kasama si Governor Antonio Kho na mula pa sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Bicol.

Walang nakitang karampatang rason ang MGB team na nag-imbetiga upang palawigin pa ang suspensyon dahil stable naman ang malaking dam na humahawak ng mga dumi sa minahan habang wala ring minor damage sa istruktura.

Subalit, hindi kumbinsido dito ang Task Force Bantay Kalikasan ng provincial government kaya't magpapasok ng third party para sa isa pang pagsusuri.

Sa hiwalay na panayam sa tagapagsalita ng task force, Board Member Jamon Espares, bubuksan na ang public bidding sa mga darating na linggo para sa engineering company na tutulong sa panibagong assessment at ocular inspection.

Mining firms donate cash to quake-hit town

posted August 28, 2020 at 11:10 pm

by [Manila Standard](#)

Filminera Resources Corporation and PhilGold Processing & Refining Corporation turned over P5.29 million in cash plus 100 sacks of rice and 50 folding beds to the Municipality of Cataingan, following an earthquake in Masbate.

The donations were received by Cataingan Mayor Felipe Cabatana, Vice-Mayor Thelma Ang, and Sangguniang Bayan members.

Also, Filminera and PGPRC donated one million peso worth of relief goods and building materials to adjoining Masbate municipalities whose communities and households were severely affected by the earthquake.

Cataingan was hardest-hit by the quake, 6.6 on the Richter scale, last August 18th, which shook the entire Masbate province. The earthquake's epicenter is seven kilometers off Cataingan. The Filminera mine site in Aroroy is 150 kilometers away from Cataingan.

As a post-earthquake response, a team from Filminera and PGPRC joined Cataingan's Mayor Cabatana and the Municipal Engineer and the Municipal Administrator, to inspect and assess the damaged public structures in the municipality.

In a recent weekend inspection, environmental experts from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) visited Filminera's mine site in Aroroy, and reported in an exit conference that there were no cases of damage to property or injury to people at the mine site. Community stakeholders, the local government units, and Filminera and PGPRC representatives attended the conference.

Filminera President Cris Acosta pointed out that inspection results simply confirmed the earlier findings of in-house technical experts and third-party international consultant GHD that there was no damage to structures and equipment.

GHD has been an advisor of the Masbate Gold Project since 2007. GHD was initially engaged to carry out the detailed design of the Tailings Storage Facility (TSF), and has been providing detailed design and construction supervision services for the TSF development. GHD also provides geotechnical assessments, deposition modelling, embankment design and analysis, mine site water balance modelling, and design of the water treatment plant.

The management of Filminera and PGPRC temporarily stopped mining in August 21 to give way to the inspection team, and has since resumed normal operations in August 27.

Topics: [Filminera Resources Corporation and PhilGold Processing & Refining Corporation](#) , [Felipe Cabatana](#) , [Thelma Ang](#) , [Mines and Geosciences Bureau](#)

QC man nabbed for selling endangered wood product

[Friday, August 28, 2020 Hector Lawas](#)

THE National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) announced the arrest of an individual engaged in the selling of Agarwood, a forest product categorized as endangered, in Quezon City.

NBI Officer-in-Charge Director Eric Distor identified the arrested suspect as Rafael Fabia.

Distor said the operation stemmed from an intelligence report received by the NBI – Environmental Crime Division (NBI-EnCD) regarding a group of individuals in North Fairview, Quezon City allegedly trading and in possession of “Agarwood”.

NBI-EnCD agents conducted a surveillance where the informant gave operatives the suspect’s contact number to establish communication for a possible buy-bust operation.

On August 25, 2020, NBI-EnCD operatives contacted the suspect and agreed to buy Agarwood worth Php 40,000.00.

On the same day, NBI-ENCD together with DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau (DENR-BMB) and DENR-National Capital Region (DENR-NCR) proceeded to the area for an entrapment operation.

During the operation, NBI and DENR operatives seized 6.46 kilograms of Agarwood chips with an estimated market value of Php 1,055,557.54.

Suspect was presented before the Office of the City Prosecutor of Quezon City for inquest proceedings for violation of Section 77 (formerly Section 68) of P.D. 705, as amended by E.O. 277 and R.A. 7161, otherwise known as “Wildlife Forestry Code of the Philippines; and violation of Section 27 (e) and (f) of R.A. 9147 otherwise known as “Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act”.

Gov't allots P1B for resettlement of Manila Bay i settlers

By: Darryl John Esguerra - 9 mins ago

BAY LIVING Communities of informal settlers in sections of Manila Bay, like this settlement at the border of Cavite province and Parañaque City, have been blamed for polluting the waters shared by Metro Manila and its nearby provinces. —LYN RILLON

MANILA, Philippines — The government will set aside P1 billion in its 2021 national budget for the resettlement of informal settlers affected by the rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

In his budget message to Congress, President Duterte said the allocation is meant to help the urban poor and people living in inadequate housing conditions who were considered by the World Health Organization as among those vulnerable to COVID-19 outbreaks in urban settings.

Some P2.2 billion will also be infused in the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program under the budget of the Department of Social Welfare and Development, the President noted.

“This will be done by providing transportation and relocation assistance, transitory family support package, and livelihood settlement grants to 10,000 returning families and receiving community members. Moreover, a total of Po.6 billion under the budget of the Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development aims to improve our resettlement infrastructure support,” Duterte said.

“We will also allot P1 billion to the National Housing Authority for the resettlement of informal settler families (ISFs) affected by the rehabilitation and clean-up of the Manila Bay area; and P369 million to the Social Housing Finance Corporation to ensure safe and flood-resilient housing solutions for ISFs residing in danger areas in Metro Manila,” he added.

EDV

Gov't seeks P182-B for climate change-related projects in 2021

Published August 28, 2020 4:42pm

By VIRGIL LOPEZ, GMA News

Some P181.9 billion will be spent on climate change-related programs and projects in 2021, President Rodrigo Duterte told Congress on Friday.

The allotments include P0.8 billion for the Forest Protection Program, P5.2 billion for the National Greening Program, and P0.7 billion for the protection and conservation of key biodiversity and protected areas.

The government also proposed P500-million funding for electrification projects. Other projects include exploration and development of renewable energy resources and technologies (P133 million) and development of groundwater management plan as well establishment of groundwater monitoring stations in critical areas (P128 million).

“The COVID-19 pandemic impacted not only our economy and our people but also our environment,” Duterte said in his message to lawmakers on the proposed P4.506-trillion national budget for 2021.

“It has emphasized the importance of being able to protect and conserve our natural resources for future generations to come.” — **DVM, GMA News**

Tourism infra takes a back seat



[HIDDEN AGENDA](#) - [Mary Ann LL. Reyes](#) (The Philippine Star) - August 29, 2020 - 12:00am

It's just a matter of time before the proposed Bayanihan to Recover as One Act or Bayanihan 2 becomes a law.

Bayanihan 2, which lays out the country's COVID-19 response and recovery plan, and allocates funds to help struggling sectors cope with the impact of the pandemic, only needs the President's signature.

This, after the House of Representatives and Senate both ratified the bicameral conference committee report on the provisions of the measure.

One of the disagreements on the provisions prior to the bicameral report involved funds for the tourism industry. The Lower House had wanted P10 billion to be set aside for tourism infrastructure through the TIEZA. The Senate version prevailed so that of the P10 billion for the tourism industry, P6 billion will be earmarked for soft loans for MSMEs in the tourism sector, P3 billion will be given to the DOLE for displaced tourism workers, and only P1 billion will be turned over to the DPWH for tourism infrastructure.

Why did tourism infrastructure take a back seat in the bicameral conference committee report?

Some say that there are those who still believe that tourism infrastructure only refers to public toilets or beautification projects, or that tourism is about selling or marketing tourist sites and products. Tourism infrastructure, however, involves much more. Its presence or absence can mean the success or failure of a municipality, city, or province.

Take the case of Boracay. For a long time it lacked adequate investments in infrastructure, such as drainage systems and sewage treatment facilities, turning its used water into a cesspool. If not for the President's decisiveness in rehabilitating Boracay, things could have turned from bad to worse.

On the other side of the spectrum is the province of Iloilo, which largely benefited from infrastructure investments to boost its tourism prospects.

Sen. Franklin Drilon is said to have been the one who pushed for major infrastructure projects in Iloilo, including the convention center which had a price tag of P800 million, the P8.8-billion international airport, and the Iloilo River Esplanade, among others.

Then earlier this year, the Department of Tourism – through infrastructure arm TIEZA – allocated P347.5 million for tourism infrastructure projects in Iloilo, which include the restoration of three landmarks, namely, Arevalo Plaza, Molo Plaza, and La Paz Plaza, as well as the rehabilitation of the historical Jaro Belfry, the construction of a Tourism Information Center and Tourist Rest Area (Green Restroom) in Esplanade 3, improvements for the convention center, and the development of the Sunburst Park.

Tourism infra takes a back seat

Proof that tourism infrastructure can provide immediate benefits is shown by the increase in visitor arrivals in Iloilo City following the completion of its convention center. From 627,000 visitors in 2013, arrivals in the city doubled to 1.24 million in 2018.

Not so hidden agenda

STP INAUGURATION: The solar-powered sewerage treatment plant beside the Manila Yacht Club was inaugurated recently with unveiling of the historical marker. Fr. Efren Tawagan (left) officiated the blessing ceremony with MYC Commodore and Rotary Club of Manila president Robert Lim Joseph, DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, MMDA chair Danilo Lim, and RCM immediate past president Jackie Rodriguez witnessing the event. The STP has a capacity of 500,000 liters of dirty water from the outfalls of Remedios, Padre Faura and Estero de San Antonio Abad, so that only clean water will reach the Manila Bay.

Feliciano off for Bacolod mission

[Caecent No-ot Magsumbol](#) (The Freeman) - August 28, 2020 - 12:00am

CEBU, Philippines — After claiming success in “flattening the curve” of new infections in Cebu City, Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) deputy implementer for the Visayas Melquiades Feliciano is leaving the city soon for another mission.

Feliciano, a retired military general, assisted Secretary Roy Cimatu, who was designated overseer of COVID-19 response in Cebu. President Rodrigo Duterte sent them in July to help city officials control the spread of the virus following the hike of infections.

Considering Cimatu’s other responsibilities as secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), it was Feliciano who was left behind in Cebu most of the time.

City Councilor Joel Garganera, who was named Emergency Operations Center (EOC) deputy chief implementer, described Feliciano as a “great blessing” to Cebu City. Garganera said he would have wanted Feliciano to stay until the crisis is over.

“Kung kami lang, di pa gyud unta ko gusto. Like kahapon, ang cases namo seven na lang, unya karon 39. We still need his presence unta. Pero we cannot also be selfish as well kay naa puy laing nanginahanglan niya. General Feliciano, however, assured us that he will always be a phone call away or zoom meeting away,” Garganera told The Freeman.

Garganera said he understands that Feliciano is also needed in the other areas in the Visayas, most especially in Bacolod and Iloilo City in Western Visayas where COVID-19 cases are increasing.

Feliciano said he is set to return to Bacolod on Tuesday until the situation there stabilizes.

“Previously, there were already oriented. Nandiyan pa rin naman si Councilor Joel (Garganera) and tsaka yung sa City Health, si Dr.Ibones (Jeffrey) and cluster leaders. So sila na yung magkakaroon ng updates dun. So far, kayang-kaya na nila,” said Feliciano.

Feliciano reminded the Cebuanos to continue observing the health protocols to further minimize the infection.

“Nag-oopen yung Cebu further, so dapat more vigilant tayo. Yung COVID nandyan lang anytime. Without the breach of protocol, no one will be infected,” he added.

Feliciano said the people should exercise caution until the vaccine is available to prevent the spread of the virus. — **FPL (FREEMAN)**

Cebu formula' eyed to address Bacolod's COVID-19 woes

Published August 28, 2020, 1:42 PM

by [Philippine News Agency](#)

BACOLOD CITY (PNA) – The formula used by the team of Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu in Cebu City, which highlighted the cooperation of the public in the fight against coronavirus disease (COVID-19), is being considered as a strategy that will bring down the number of cases here.



Mayor Evelio Leonardia (left) and city administrator Em Ang (2nd from left) present the data on the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) situation in Bacolod City during a meeting with Environment Secretary Cimatu (3rd from right), Presidential Assistant for the Visayas Michael Lloyd Dino (2nd from right), and Inter-Agency Task Force-Visayas deputy implementer Gen. Melquiades Feliciano (right) on Thursday. The “Cebu formula”, which highlighted the cooperation of the public, is also seen as a strategy that will bring down the number of cases in Bacolod. (Photo courtesy of Bacolod City PIO via PNA)

“I would like to (take) this opportunity to encourage, not only encourage, but to make sure (that the people here) cooperate with your leaders. This is the formula that we had adopted in Cebu, bring down the battlefield to the barangay, and let the barangay captains do the rest,” Cimatu said in a video interview by the City Public Information Office on Tuesday night, following his visit to Bacolod.

Cimatu, Presidential Assistant for the Visayas Michael Lloyd Dino, and Inter-Agency Task Force-Visayas deputy implementer Gen. Melquiades Feliciano met with the city officials led by Mayor Evelio Leonardia and Vice Mayor El Cid Familiaran as a response to the mayor’s urgent appeal for assistance to President Duterte on Tuesday.

“We are here to help Bacolod, help the people, help the mayor because (he) sent a letter to the President asking for some assistance, manpower, and other equipment, including how to stop the rising cases in Bacolod,” he added.

Cimatu was deployed by Duterte to Cebu in June to oversee measures to curb the soaring number of COVID-19 cases in the Central Visayas capital.

“The average case here in Bacolod is 30, while during that time in Cebu it was 350 cases per day, (but now it’s only) 10 to 15, Here 30, we can easily bring (the number) down, with the cooperation of the people,” he said.

Cebu formula' eyed to address Bacolod's COVID-19 woes

As of Tuesday, Bacolod has 765 cases, including 17 deaths. There are 491 active cases and 257 recovered cases.

The data on the COVID-19 situation in Bacolod, such as the number of cases per barangay, the status of operation centers, the implementation of lockdowns, and the molecular laboratory operations, was presented by City Administrator Em Ang during the meeting.

Dino, who is based in Cebu, said they have “a very good plan for Bacolod,” including the deployment of an initial batch of 12 military healthcare workers, including doctors and nurses, to the city on Friday.

“We want to show you that the national government is here to help you. We want to boost your morale that's the reason why we are here. President Duterte and Senator Bong (Go) sent us here. Secretary Cimatu and General Feliciano, they are both here because they were already successful when we were having problems in Cebu,” he added.

Dino urged the Bacolodnons to follow the instructions of the city officials and exercise self-discipline to help curb the transmission of COVID-19.

Meanwhile, Leonardia thanked the President for the fast response to his call for assistance amid the increasing COVID-19 cases.

“I am thanking President Duterte for the big help. After writing the appeal on Tuesday afternoon, I got a response from Senator Bong Go in just a matter of hours,” he said.

4K new Covid-19 infections, active cases nearing 72K: DOH

By Raymond Carl Dela Cruz August 28, 2020, 6:29 pm



COVID-19 BULLETIN. The Department of Health's (DOH) Covid-19 daily bulletin on Friday (Aug. 28, 2020). The DOH reported 3,999 new cases of the disease, bringing the country's total to 209,544. (*Infographic courtesy of DOH*)

MANILA – The Department of Health (DOH) on Friday reported 3,999 new cases of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19), bringing the country's total active cases to 71,745.

In its daily Covid-19 bulletin, the DOH said the areas with the highest number of reported infections were the National Capital Region (NCR) with 2,097 cases, Laguna with 178, Cavite with 138, Batangas with 132, and Cebu with 125.

Of the active cases, it said the majority or 91.2 percent were showing mild symptoms of Covid-19, followed by those with no symptoms or asymptomatic at 6.8 percent, those in critical condition at 1.2 percent, and those with severe symptoms at 0.8 percent.

The new cases also bring the country's total Covid-19 cases to 209,544.

About 510 new recoveries were reported, bringing the total tally to 134,474.

Some 91 new deaths were also reported, bringing the country's total casualties to 3,325.

Meanwhile, about half of the total beds allotted for Covid-19 cases nationwide are occupied, with only 27 percent of the country's 2,100 ventilators currently in use.

Of the beds, the DOH said the country's 1,700 intensive care unit (ICU) beds are 50 percent occupied; the 13,000 isolation beds, 48 percent occupied; and the 5,300 ward beds, 50 percent occupied.

In the NCR, the availability of beds remains critical with occupancy of about 70 percent, while 43 percent of the region's 832 ventilators are currently in use.

Of the NCR's 658 ICU beds, 69 percent are currently occupied. Of its 3,700 isolation beds, 70 percent are occupied, while 76 percent of its 1,700 ward beds are in use.

In Calabarzon, Covid-19 beds are also critical with an occupancy of about 60 percent, while only 26 percent of its 258 ventilators are in use.

In Central Visayas, plenty of beds reserved for Covid-19 cases are still unoccupied, with about 28 percent currently in use; while 23 percent of the region's 190 ventilators are also in use. (*PNA*)

ELEKSYONG 22 MALAPIT NA; SIRAAAN AT GIMIK SIMULA NA RIN



August 28, 2020 @ 4:38 PM 13 hours ago

Palapit nang palapit ang halalang presidensyal sa Mayo 2022.

Kung pinag-aagawan ang posisyong Presidente, maaga ang pagpaparamdam ng mga gustong makasikwat nito.

At dahil may posisyong pang Bise-Presidente at senador, mas lalong marami ang magpaparamdam at maninikwat na kandidato.

Maaga silang kikilos sa paniniwalang daig ng maagap ang masipag.

Kasi nga naman, mga Bro, kung late kang magparamdam at maunahan ka ng iba, malamang na sa kangkungan o basurahan ka pupulutin.

Para sa mga nagtitipid na magparamdam at saka lang sila kikilos sa mga huling araw, malamang na sa pagmamadali nila, kung matinik sila ay malalim.

PAGREREHISTRO

Magsisimula na ang halalan dahil sa pagsisimula ng pagpaparehistro ng mga botante sa Commission on Elections sa darating na Setyembre 1, 2020.

Sa darating na Martes na 'yan, mga Bro.

Ang mga kapitan ng barangay ay very busy na nga sa kanilang panawagan sa mga hindi pa nakarehistro na pumunta ang mga ito sa Comelec sa kani-kanilang bayan o lungsod.

Malinaw na pinagdadala ang mga gustong bumoto sa 2022 ng mga sumusunod na pagkakilanlan sa kanila: Student ID o library card; employee's ID; Postal ID; Senior Citizen's ID; BIR ID; Driver's License; NBI clearance; Passport; SSS o GSIS ID; I.B.P. ID at P.R.C. ID.

Maaari ring magdala sila ng birth certificate o marriage contract o court order o certificate of no marriage kung may problema sila sa rekord dahil sa mga problema sa relasyon.

Pero kailangan na rin silang magdala at magsuot ng face mask at face shield at sumunod sa mga patakaran sa social distancing at iba pa.

ELEKSYONG 22 MALAPIT NA; SIRAAAN AT GIMIK SIMULA NA RIN

Para maiwasan ang siksikan, gaya ng nakaraang mga pagpaparehistro, maaaring ganapin ang okasyon hindi lang sa mga opisina ng Comelec kundi sa mga simbahan, kapilya, eskwela o gymnasium na walang taong biktima ng coronavirus disease-19.

AYUDA RITO, PAKAIN DOON

Ayon sa ating Uzi, mga Bro, hindi talaga maiiwasang sumawsaw ang mga politiko sa mga araw ng pagpaparehistro.

Naririyang ang mga nagpapadala ng mga tauhan, sasakyan at pera para sunduin ang mga gustong magparehistro.

At naririyang din ang katakot-takot na pagpapakain at pagiging mabait at maka-Diyos habang isinasagawa ang rehistro.

Siyempre pa, ang pagiging maalalahanin sa mga botante at sa mga taga-Comelec, eh, malaking bagay para sa mga gustong kumandidato, lalo na ang mga lokal.

Sina konsehal, vice mayor, mayor, bokal, vice governor, governor at kongresman.

Itong mga pambansang kandidato, may unti-unting pagpapadala na rin ng ayuda sa mga loyal nilang campaign leaders na lokal, nakaupo man o hindi.

PAMUMULITIKA, SIRAAAN AT GIMIK

Ang totoo, nagsimula na ang pagpaparami ng mga kasapiang ng mga partido.

Meron diyang nananalakay sa ibang partido habang ang iba, kusang lumilipat.

Lalo na sa alam nilang winner sa darating na halalan.

Ang winner na may pera pa ang pinaglalawayan ng nakarami sa mga politiko.

Meron namang ginagawang pahulaan kung kapwa babae ang mga pinakamatinding mag-away sa posisyong Pangulo.

Akalain mo bang nagiging madasalin din ang mga tao ngayon.

At nakapangingilabot-isipin na may mga politikong umaasa at nananalangin na kumilos ang coronavirus disease-19 laban sa kanilang mga kalaban.

At kung hindi nila makita ang kanilang mga kalaban kahit sa isang araw lang, may mga politikong tumatakbo sa korte para palabasin ang kanilang kalaban at malaman kung maysakit o buhay o patay na sa COVID-19 o iba pang dahilan.

‘Yung iba, wala nang makitang mabuti sa kanilang mga kalaban kundi kademonyohan at pawang may mga sungay ang bawat kalaban nila at sila lang ang mga anghel na hulog ng langit.

Anak ng tokwang mga politikong ire!

ELEKSYONG 22 MALAPIT NA; SIRAAAN AT GIMIK SIMULA NA RIN

MAGKANO BA?

Alam ba ninyong napakahalaga ngayon ang salitang “magkano ba” sa pulitikang darating?

Kasi naman, marami ang may gustong kumandidato ngunit binangkrap sila ng COVID-19.

May mga nalugi sa negosyo habang ang iba’y hindi makapagnakaw sa bilyon-bilyong pinakakawalan ng administrasyon ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte para ayudahan ang mga biktima ng COVID-19 at ibangon ang ekonomiya ng mahal kong Pinas.

Kita naman ninyo, gaya ng nagaganap sa PhilHealth, dinidiskaril mismo ni Pang. Digong ang mga korap at mandarambong.

Tatandaan na kumikita ang mga malalaking politiko sa bilyones na pondo sa mga pambansang pagawaing bayan at ayuda.

Ngunit takot silang malista ang kanilang ngalan sa mga posibleng imbestigahan ng mga pulis, National Bureau of Investigation at iba pang taga-imbestima ng pamahalaan sa mga korap at mandarambong.

Matindi ang seryosong banta ni Pang. Digong na kanyang ipalilitis at ipakukulong ang mga korap at mandarambong.

MGA DAPAT ISIPIN

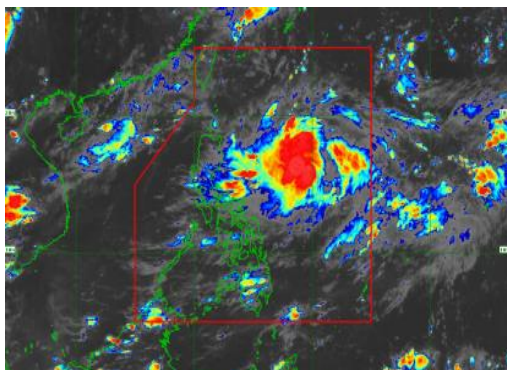
Kaya naman, sa rehistro ngayon, sana, isaisip ng mga magpaparehistrong botante ang mga magagandang gusto nilang gawin gaya ng pagluluklok sa pwesto ng mga karapat-dapat.

At hindi sila padadala sa sunda, pakain at iba pang gimik ng mga politiko ngayong mga araw ng pagpaparehistro.

Sana ang darating na pulitika ay nakatuon sa pagbangon ng ating buong bansa mula sa nakamamatay na sakit at nakasisira sa buhay ng lahat ng mamamayan.

'Julian' now a tropical storm

By Ma. Cristina Arayata August 28, 2020, 7:07 pm



(Image grabbed from PAGASA's Facebook page)

MANILA -- "Julian" has intensified into a tropical storm (TS) at 2 p.m. Friday, the weather bureau reported in its 5 p.m. bulletin.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said it expects Julian to continuously intensify throughout the forecast period.

Earlier, weather specialist Ariel Rojas said Julian may become a severe tropical storm by Saturday, and reach the typhoon category by Sunday.

The TS was last tracked 880 kilometers east of Tuguegarao City, Cagayan. It packs maximum sustained winds of 65 kph near the center and gustiness of up to 80 kph.

PAGASA expects Julian to exit the Philippine Area of Responsibility by Monday.

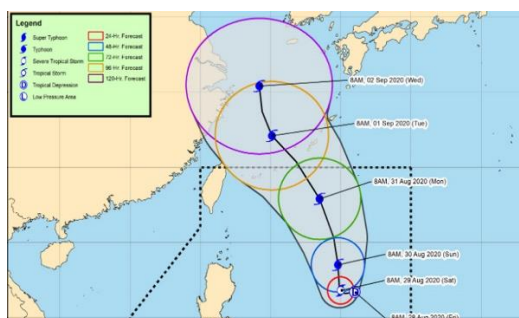
"The raising of tropical cyclone wind signal is unlikely throughout the forecast period. Furthermore, Julian is less likely to directly cause high impact weather over the country," the bureau added.

Meanwhile, the trough of Julian and the southwest monsoon affecting the Visayas and Mindanao will bring scattered rain showers and thunderstorms over Metro Manila, Calabarzon, the Bicol Region, Nueva Ecija, Bulacan, and Aurora.

The rest of the country will have isolated rain showers caused by localized thunderstorms.

The southwest monsoon is forecast to bring moderate to rough seas over the northern and western seaboard of Northern Luzon. Small seacrafts are advised to take precautionary measures while venturing out to sea, PAGASA said. **(PNA)**

#JulianPH lumakas pa



August 28, 2020 @ 6:19 PM 11 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Lumakas pa ang bagyong Julian na ngayon ay nasa kategoryang tropical storm na, ayon sa PAGASA.

Sa inilabas na severe weather bulletin ng ahensya, inaasahang lalakas pa si Julian at posibleng umabot sa kategoryang typhoon sa Linggo ng umaga, Agosto 30.

Huling namataan ang nasabing bagyo sa layong 880 kilometro silangan ng Tuguegarao City, Cagayan taglay ang lakas ng hangin aabot sa 65 kilometers per hour (kph) at pagbugsong 80 kph.

Kumikilos ang bagyong Julian pa kanluran hilagang kanluran sa bilis na 15 kph kung saan inaasahang lalabas ito sa Philippine Area of Responsibility sa Lunes ng gabi, Agosto 31.

Ayon pa sa PAGASA, ang pagtataas ng Tropical Cyclone Wind Signal ay hindi naman inaasahan dahil ang bagyo ay “less likely to directly cause high impact weather over the country.”

Samantala, Habagat naman ang magdudulot ng maalong karagatan sa hilaga at kanlurang baybayin ng Northern Luzon kaya pinapaalalahanan ang mga maliliit na sasakyang pandagat na mag-ingat. RNT/LF

Mild quake jolts Baguio folk



Published 10 hours ago
On August 28, 2020 07:13 PM
By [Aldwin Quitasol](#)



BAGUIO CITY- Residents of Baguio City turned on their social media page to post their shock as they felt a mild quake at around 5:42 p.m. Friday.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PhiVolcs) said the city was struck by a 3.5 magnitude quake, which epicenter was located west of Ambaguio, Nueva Viscaya.

Residents of some barangays of Baguio like Irisan which is about 79.3 South West from the epicenter, felt mild shaking. While in other parts of Baguio, especially those within the 40 kilometers West of epicenter, doors and windows rattled for a few seconds.

Duterte orders speedy OK of key water-resource projects

[Friday, August 28, 2020 People's Tonight](#)

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte has directed the speedy review and approval of key water-resource projects in the country to ensure the unhampered delivery of “clean, stable, adequate, and affordable water” to Filipinos.

Duterte signed Administrative Order 32 (AO) on August 26, as he acknowledged that agency processes and procedures have “routinely and excessively delayed the flagship projects on water security”.

“Persistent low water levels in existing reservoirs especially those servicing Metro Manila, along with increasing demand and competing use over limited water supply call for the development of new water resources, and acceleration of water infrastructure development as an overarching strategy in pursuit of water security,” read AO 32, which takes effect immediately.

Under AO 32, infrastructure flagship projects on water security are those included in the list of big-ticket projects approved by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), as of February 17 this year.

The water-resource projects, according to the order, will also cover other similar projects that will be approved and identified as such by the national government pursuant to relevant laws, rules and regulations.

“All agencies shall give priority to complete reviews and approvals of infrastructure flagship projects on water security, strictly within the processing time and deadlines established by law,” the AO said.

The application or request for issuance of license, clearance, permit, certification or authorization will be deemed “approved,” in case a government office or agency fails to act on it within the prescribed processing time, the order notes.

It will be considered approved so long as all the required documents have been submitted, fees have been paid, and no reason or explanation in writing has been provided.

“For this purpose, the Presidential Adviser for Flagship Programs and Projects (PA-FPP) and the NEDA shall directly coordinate with the head of the relevant issuing agency to establish, in a manner consistent with law, ways to expedite the issuance of pertinent licenses, clearances, permits, certifications or authorizations,” the order said.

AO 32 also mandates the Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA) to monitor and evaluate the compliance of agencies with Republic Act (RA) 9485 or the Anti-Red Tape Act of 2007, which was amended through RA 11032 or the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Act Government Service Delivery Act of 2018.

Duterte orders speedy OK of key water-resource projects

RA 11032, which supersedes RA 9485, mandates government agencies to process simple transactions within three working days, complex transactions within seven working days, and highly-technical transactions in 20 working days.

ARTA, under AO 32, can issue notices of warning to “erring and non-complying” government officials or employees.

ARTA is also directed to ensure that local permits and barangay clearances related to infrastructure flagship projects on water security would be “applied, issued, and obtained strictly in accordance with the prescribed processing time.”

Within 20 working days from the submission of complete requirements and every week thereafter, the relevant issuing agency is directed to submit a written report to the PA-FPP and the NEDA, copy furnishing the ARTA, regarding the status of the application.

The relevant issuing agency is also tasked to inform the PA-FPP, the NEDA, and ARTA, about the possible issues it may encounter and advice on the corrective measures that may be undertaken, as appropriate.

“Heads of relevant agencies shall, within the limits prescribed by law, accelerate the permitting process of all infrastructure flagship projects on water security and render assistance necessary to support the PA-FPP and the NEDA,” according to AO 32.

ARTA, within 30 days from the effectivity of AO 32, is designated to review and recommend to the Office of the President the repeal of “outdated, redundant and unnecessary” licenses, permits, certifications or authorizations being required by national government agencies and local government units.

“There is a need for the National Government to pursue institutional reforms such as streamlining processes of concerned agencies to encourage and guide investments in water supply, sewerage and sanitation, and expedite the approval and processing of infrastructure flagship projects on water security, while respecting property rights and protecting public safety and the environment,” AO 32 stressed.

The copy of AO 32 was released by the Palace on Friday. PNA

Lacson welcomes Locsin's statement on West Philippine Sea

Published August 28, 2020, 6:03 PM

by [Vanne Elaine Terrazola](#)

Senator Panfilo “Ping” Lacson on Friday welcomed Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) Secretary Teodoro Locsin, Jr. for saying he would “strongly” recommend the termination of contracts between the government and Chinese companies involved in reclamation activities in the West Philippine Sea.



Senator Panfilo M. Lacson (MANILA BULLETIN FILE PHOTO)

Lacson said such statement coming from the country's top diplomat is a welcome development particularly since the Chinese government is again displaying “arrogance” in the disputed maritime region.

“Kudos to DFA Secretary Teddy Boy Locsin for putting the Chinese foreign ministry spokesman in his place. Banning us from sending our military aircraft into airspace near Panatag Shoal surely deserves a strong rebuke. I'm proud that our top foreign policy implementor did it. Indeed it's long in coming by way of a statement from our DFA Secretary,” Lacson said in a statement.

“China's recent display of arrogance in the WPS by accusing us of infringing on China's sovereignty and security by sending our military aircraft into air space adjacent to Panatag Shoal or Bajo de Masinloc, even urging the Philippine side to immediately stop illegal provocations tops it all,” added the senator.

Locsin made the statement following the United States announcement it will impose sanctions and restrictions on two dozen Chinese companies and associated officials involved in the building of artificial islands in the disputed waters.

China has been insisting on its claims in the South China Sea (SCS), including parts of the West Philippine Sea.

China's foreign ministry spokesperson Zhao Lijian recently said the Philippines violated their sovereignty and security by sending military aircraft into airspace near islands and reefs they occupy.

Lacson welcomes Locsin's statement on West Philippine Sea

“If I find that any of those companies are doing business with us, I would strongly recommend that we terminate that relationship with the company,” Locsin had said in an interview over CNN Philippines.

Locsin said that if they are in any way involved in the reclamation, it becomes “consistent on the part of the Philippines to terminate any contract with them.”

Earlier, the DFA chief took exception to a Chinese foreign minister's comment welcoming the Philippines' decision not to join the US-led joint naval exercises in the SCS.

Locsin said Chinese ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin should “not read too” much into Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana's announcement that the Philippines would participate with other countries, including the US, in maritime drills in the South China Sea.

DFA chief trains sights on Chinese firms involved in SCS reclamation



By [Recto Mercene](#)
August 28, 2020



Secretary of Foreign Affairs Teodoro L. Locsin Jr.

THE Philippines will terminate its relationship with any Chinese company that was involved in the massive island-building reclamation conducted by China in the South China Sea, Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro L. Locsin Jr. said on Friday.

He made the remark one day after the United States slapped more trade sanctions on other Chinese entities, this time on those that were involved in the SCS dredging and construction that scientists said had damaged huge swathes of marine resources. The trade sanctions bar US companies from exporting products to the targets.

Locsin made his warning during a Zoom interview with Pinky Webb on CNN Philippines: “Yes, if I find that any of those companies are doing business with us, then I would strongly recommend we terminate our relationships with that company, if in any way involved in the reclamation.”

According to Locsin, the move to cease doing business with those companies that have contributed to the damage of marine resources in the SCS “becomes consistent within our part to terminate any contract with them.”

He added, “Of course, since the contracts have already been entered into, they could sue as back.”

However, Locsin added that he had to consult Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade to find out the names of the alleged companies that directly deal with the Chinese SCS projects.

The United States estimates that China had dredged about 3,000 acres to convert undersea features that were made into military fortresses in the contested waters.

The UP Marine Sciences Department estimates that from 2013 until today, the reclamation continues, “destabilizing the region, trampling on some countries sovereign rights, and causing massive environmental devastation.”

DFA chief trains sights on Chinese firms involved in SCS reclamation

The UP study said the damage on reefs along is estimated at P33 billion and the total estimated area since 2013 is estimated at P231 billion.

The Trump administration added 24 Chinese companies to a trade blacklist for helping China build islands in the SCS, which the United States has labeled as an illegal attempt to control an important shipping route. These firms, Washington said, “must be held responsible” and that individuals connected to these firms, including their immediate family members, will be barred from entering the US.

It is estimated that some \$5 trillion worth of goods sail through the SCS every year.

Trump’s blacklist, known as Entity List, is his administration’s crackdown tool on China, which now includes more than 300 Chinese entities.

China, which claims a major part of the SCS as its territory, has beefed up its defenses in the strategic waters, building barracks, runways and radar installations, according to various reports through the years.

Satellite photographs indicate that the People’s Liberation Army (PLA) has also installed surface-to-air missiles in these areas, triggering concerns from countries, such as the US, Japan and Australia.

The Philippines in 2013 challenged China’s legal basis for its “excessive claim” in the SCS before the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) in The Hague, Netherlands, and won the case in a landmark decision in 2016, invalidating Beijing’s historic assertions.

The Asian giant did not participate in the arbitration and either ignored or belittled the ruling, maintaining “indisputable” and “historical” claim over nearly the entire waters, which impinge a number of littoral states like the Philippines and Vietnam.

Locsin was grateful that former Foreign Affairs Secretary Albert del Rosario filed the case in the Hague during the Ninoy Aquino presidency, but said he would ignore del Rosario’s proposal to bring the PCA’s 2016 ruling before the United Nations again to get more support for its implementation.

“I am going to completely ignore his suggestion...because when you win something you do not appeal your victory; this is what del Rosario wants me to do,” the DFA chief said.

Locsin said he would not follow del Rosario’s suggestions because “China has the numbers there [the UN], and it’s about numbers, it’s not about law.”

He added, “And I can’t afford to lose our arbitral award, I don’t want to go down as the guy who lost it.”

Asked about another suggestion by del Rosario, backed by former Supreme Court Senior Associate Justice Antonio Carpio, to seize Chinese assets in compensation for the damages in the West Philippine Sea, Locsin said he had first to study the UP finding.



DFA chief trains sights on Chinese firms involved in SCS reclamation

On the other hand, the Harvard-educated lawyer said he had to consult with international lawyers also on what can be done about those claimed damages, “but I can assure you there is no hesitation on my part if I have the law on my side.”

According to the DFA chief, “as a country without any independent means to protect its own interests, it is imperative that we always rely on one thing, precision in facts, precision in law, and we will proceed by law because that is all we have now.”

Fires threaten the Amazon once again. What have we learned?

Data suggests an Amazon fire season worse than 2019's that shocked the world. So what are international investors doing about it?

By **Manuela Andreoni**, China Dialogue

Aug. 28, 2020



Forest fire blazing in Apui, Brazil's Amazonas state, in August 2020. Image: Amazon Forest Facebook page

This year's Amazon fire season is already breaking records. In July, there were [27 per cent](#) more fires in Brazil's portion of the world's largest rainforest than last year, when images of trees ablaze shocked the world. And the numbers are still rising.

The fires became an unwelcome hallmark of the administration of Jair Bolsonaro, Brazil's far-right president, after he took office in 2019. Though Brazil has invested millions in fighting fires in the Amazon since last year, the root of the problem remains intact.

Amazon fires typically follow deforestation, a problem Bolsonaro's administration has resisted fighting. Bolsonaro refused to strengthen the country's environmental protection agencies as increasingly large parts of the forest were converted to pasture and illegal mining sites.

The fire season comes as Brazil's soy and beef exports are booming, raising concerns among foreign investors and business leaders that they're profiting from the Amazon's demise.

"This story that the Amazon is burning is a lie," said President Bolsonaro [in a recent](#) meeting. But Brazil is struggling to change the narrative around the crisis. And this year's fire season has intensified the focus on its environmental problems.

So what, if anything, has changed?

Militarising deforestation-control is not efficient. They don't have the expertise.

Suely Araújo, former president, Ibama

What's different about the Amazon fire season this year?

In short, there is more dead wood available to feed the flames.

When political and business leaders across the globe expressed outrage last year at Brazil's inability to stop the Amazon burning, former army captain Bolsonaro sent in the military.

Fires threaten the Amazon once again. What have we learned?

Data suggests that helped curb fires in the ensuing months, but deforestation kept rising and the military didn't hold the perpetrators accountable. That means that this year, farmers and [land grabbers](#) are free to burn what they meant to last year, plus all the trees they've cut down since.

Research from the Amazon Environmental Research Institute (Ipam) [calculates](#) that roughly 9,000 square kilometres of destroyed forest have been left to burn as of August this year. If 60 per cent goes up in flames, this year's season will be as bad as last year's. If all of it burns, however, it could lead to "an unprecedented health calamity" in the region by adding to the effects of Covid-19, Ipam wrote.

Did the world's outrage last year make a difference?

Yes, but there have been no significant changes in policy or in farmers' profit margins.

Investors from Brazil and abroad reacted strongly to the government's inability to control deforestation and fires. Links between environmental destruction and the supply chains of major agribusiness players have also been spotlighted.

The government made setting fires in the Amazon illegal after a group of global investors said it was concerned about the country's environmental record. Yet inaction led Nordea Asset Management, the investment arm of Europe's largest financial services group, to drop JBS, the world's largest meat packer in July.

HSBC also warned investors about the risk of investing in JBS, arguing the company was unable to monitor its own supply chain for connections to illegal activity. China's Cofco, one of the biggest trading companies in Brazil, promised to make its soy supply chain fully traceable by 2023.

Still, there has been little sign that investors have taken significant amounts of money out of Brazil because of environmental issues, and exports of agricultural products are booming, even as their links to illegal deforestation become apparent.

While the Chinese press has acknowledged the increase in deforestation in the Amazon in recent months, Chinese investors and business leaders haven't mirrored US and European firms' threats to divest their Brazilian assets if the issue isn't effectively addressed.

Action from China could have major positive consequences, [researchers say](#), as the Brazilian meat industry's dependence on Chinese buyers continues to grow. Many farmers believe that if European firms boycott them, they can simply offset their losses by turning to China.

Chinese officials have so far avoided taking a stand against surging deforestation in Brazil. During last year's fire season, the number two ranking diplomat at the Chinese embassy in Brazil praised local environmental laws. And at a press conference earlier this year, Chinese diplomats ignored journalists' attempts to elicit comments on deforestation in the Amazon.

Suely Araújo, who was head of Brazil's main environmental protection agency, Ibama, until last year, said international pressure in the late 1990s was behind the country's most important law against environmental crimes.

Fires threaten the Amazon once again. What have we learned?

“If there is one way this government will improve its policies in this area, it is through international pressure,” she said.

What has the government done differently since last year?

The government’s move to put the military in charge of protecting the Amazon has been criticised by environmentalists as a lot more expensive and a lot less effective than empowering environmental agencies.

The government spends roughly 60 million BRL (US\$11 million) per month on its Amazon military task force, only a little less than Ibama’s annual budget for law enforcement.

Throwing money at the problem hasn’t worked so far. Deforestation has kept rising and [fewer environmental](#) crimes have been reported, as funding to the environmental agencies has been slashed. The Brazilian government has also repeatedly punished Ibama agents for doing their jobs – once firing the head of law enforcement after a massive, successful operation against illegal mining.

“Militarising deforestation-control is not efficient,” Araújo said. “They don’t have the expertise.”

Changing oceans reveal clear human thumbprint

Climate heating must have already begun to result in changing oceans. The next step is to confirm and monitor this change.

By Tim Radford, Climate News Network
Aug. 28, 2020



REV Ocean's research vessel arrives in the Norwegian port of Ålesund. Image: [Bogdan Vasilescu, CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

Humankind has already begun to reshape the biggest available living space on the planet and to leave its mark in the changing oceans.

New research suggests that [somewhere between 20 per cent and 55 per cent of the Atlantic, Pacific and Indian Oceans](#) now have temperatures and salt levels that should be measurably different because of climate change driven by profligate human combustion of fossil fuels.

And forecasts suggest that by mid-century the scale of human impact will only have increased – to between 40 per cent and 60 per cent. By 2080, human impact on the oceans will have begun to change between 55 per cent and 80 per cent of the blue planet.

Although the researchers – they report in the journal [Nature Climate Change](#) – have based their predictions on computer models, they are confident that the thumbprint of human-induced climate change began to leave its mark on the seas of the Southern Hemisphere as long ago as the 1980s.

“We have been detecting ocean temperature change at the surface due to climate change for several decades now,” said [Eric Guilyardi, of the University of Reading in the UK and the Laboratory of Oceanography and Climate in Paris](#), France.

Our results highlight the importance of maintaining and augmenting an ocean observing system capable of detecting and monitoring persistent anthropogenic changes.

“But changes in vast areas of the ocean, particularly deeper parts, are much more challenging to detect.”

The problem of measurement is simple: [the ocean is enormous. It covers 70 per cent of the planet to an average depth of 3.7 kms](#). It defines the planet.

It is almost certainly where [life on Earth first emerged; it was life's only home](#) for the first three billion years.

Changing oceans reveal clear human thumbprint

And it is in a state of constant change, [constantly evaporating, and continually replenished](#) with freshwater from rainfall, river flow and melting polar ice. So temperature and salinity change naturally, and with the seasons, and with much longer cyclic swings driven by the atmosphere.

Scientists have been [measuring surface conditions for many decades](#). The ocean at depth is a bit more of a challenge. The question the researchers put was a simple one: could temperature and salinity levels in parts of the ocean have risen or fallen higher or lower than they would in normal peaks and troughs?

Beyond natural variability

It's not an easy question: oceanography is expensive, the ocean is huge, [much of it has never been studied](#) and the ways in which the ocean layers mix is still a bit of a puzzle.

So the scientists started with two models, with and without the impact of human action. They then worked on an analysis of salt levels and temperatures to detect significant change, and then tried to predict the dates at which this change ought to declare itself.

Their readings tell them that changes beyond natural variability in the northern hemisphere – all the seas from the Arctic Ocean to the equatorial waters – could have emerged between 2010 and 2030. That is, change is already happening.

Their simulations also predicted that whatever shifts occurred at depth in the temperature and chemistry of the southern oceans, these could have been identified up to 40 years ago, had researchers had the technology, the funding, the people and the ships and submersibles to do so.

“Our results highlight the importance of maintaining and augmenting an ocean observing system capable of detecting and monitoring persistent anthropogenic changes,” they report.