

01 AUGUST 2021, SUNDAY



**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

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Jonas Leones, Department of Environment and Natural Resources undersecretary for policy, planning and international affairs, said there is no need to allocate a yearly budget for the project since it is almost finished, and that there will be no more available sources of dolomite.

## DENR: Manila beach nourishment done by October

[Rhodina Villanueva](#) (The Philippine Star) - August 1, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The controversial beach nourishment project for Manila Bay is set to be completed by October, an official said yesterday.

Jonas Leones, Department of Environment and Natural Resources undersecretary for policy, planning and international affairs, said there is no need to allocate a yearly budget for the project since it is almost finished, and that there will be no more available sources of dolomite.

The DENR earlier said that the crushed dolomite was sourced from a mine in Cebu.

Leones said the project has long been delayed because of issues concerning dolomite supply as well as due to the pandemic that restricted the movement of workers.

“The current health situation because of COVID-19 made it hard for workers to go out and report for work,” he added.

Leones also said the crushed dolomite will not be easily washed out by heavy rains, given the “geo-interventions” placed in the area.

According to an assessment by the DENR following heavy rains brought by the southwest monsoon and Typhoon Fabian several days ago, the geotubes and geotextiles installed to protect the beach are all intact.

“The dolomite sand has not been washed out and the dolomite pebbles were only pushed to the perimeter of the beach area,” the DENR said.

The P389-million beach nourishment project forms part of the Manila Bay rehabilitation program. It has received flak from the public because of its timing during the pandemic and alleged health risks.

The DENR however, defended the use of synthetic white sand as part of the rehabilitation program, saying it would help nourish Manila Bay.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/nation/2021/08/01/2116680/denr-manila-beach-nourishment-done-october>



## DENR-led summit adopts resolutions aimed at eradicating environmental crimes

Published on: July 31, 2021

By DENR

QUEZON CITY -- The 4th National Environmental Law Enforcement (NELE) Summit led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ended recently with the adoption of three resolutions to prevent and fight environmental crimes.

The NELE summit, held last July 14-16, resulted in the adoption of resolutions to approve a five-year indicative plan of the National Law Enforcement Coordinating Committee-Subcommittee on Environment and Natural Resources; to support the enactment of the proposed Environmental Protection and Enforcement Bureau (EPEB); and to request for immediate passage of a bill that will amend Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act.

Signatories of these resolutions include the DENR, Department of Agriculture, Philippine National Police-Maritime Group, Department of the Interior and Local Government, Department of Transportation, and Department of National Defense.

In his keynote message, Secretary Roy A. Cimatu emphasized the crucial role of DENR's partner agencies in the strict enforcement of environmental laws, as he urged them to "stay vigilant, assertive and cohesive as stewards and guardians of the environment."

He admitted that the DENR has limitations in enforcing the law, which is why it is important that partner agencies and other entities must cooperate to ensure the stringent and effective enforcement of environmental laws.

"During the current pandemic, restrictions on interzonal movements and numerous checkpoints have driven violators to become more creative. If we can use drones with cameras to monitor forests, the coasts and the seas, so too can the enemy," Cimatu said in his keynote address read by DENR Undersecretary for Attached Agencies and Chief of Staff Rodolfo Garcia.

"The DENR, by itself, cannot enforce all environmental laws across our archipelago. The challenge requires a whole-of-government response, as well as the cooperation of stakeholders outside the government, from host communities and the private sector to friends abroad," Cimatu added.

DENR Undersecretary for Enforcement Benito Antonio De Leon said the result of the summit is "the general framework for the effective and efficient enforcement of environmental laws for the next five years."



"The Summit gave an overview of major developments in each of the concerned sectors. Milestones on the enforcement of blue, green, and brown laws in the last 15 years were also presented," De Leon said.

According to De Leon, the NELE Summit participants were also "given brief information on transnational organized crime, the roles of the Bangsamoro Government in environmental protection and enforcement, and the creation of the EPEB."

"These inputs were used in the identification of gaps and development of an action plan that allowed us to finally craft the 4th NELE Action Plan for the next five years," he added.

The NELE Summit serves as a venue for updating about the latest developments on environmental law enforcement, such as new laws and policies, implementing guidelines, programs, and tools.

It also highlights the technology conceptualized, developed, and implemented by member agencies, and reporting by the member agencies of accomplishments and other activities implemented.

The summits have also been the venue for ensuring continuous coordination and cooperation among the environmental law enforcement agencies and giving recognition to partner agencies and institutions, as well as individuals. (DENR)



# 'Whole-of-gov't approach': DOST, DOF, DENR, CCC vow to end single-use plastics

Published July 30, 2021, 4:17 PM

by [Charissa Luci-Atienza](#)

The Department of Science and Technology (DOST) together with partner-agencies and institutions committed Friday, July 30, to end the country's dependence on single-use plastics by seeking better alternatives to these products while also promoting sustainable development, and economic viability.



Assorted wastes were recovered during a river clean-up and brand audit at the Panigan-Tamugan Watershed in Baguio District, Davao City last September 26. (Photo courtesy of Interface Development Interventions/ MANILA BULLETIN)

The pledge was made by the DOST, the Department of Finance (DOF), Climate Change Commission (CCC), and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) during the Joint Conference on Environment-Friendly Alternative Plastics hosted by the DOST-Philippine Council for Industry, Energy and Emerging Technology Research and Development (PCIEERD) on Friday, July 30.

"While the country has been labeled as a sachet economy mainly due to the "tingi" system that we have subsisted throughout the years, it is time to move on and discover and develop other materials, which possess the same properties as plastic and suitable for certain uses, but would be less threatening to the environment," DOST Secretary Fortunato T. dela Peña said in his message.

"We believe in a science-based approach in finding alternatives to plastics, giving utmost consideration to environmental protection, sustainable development, economic viability, and social acceptability."

He noted that in the last decade, the DOST has allotted a total of P532 million to support over 146 projects to respond to the plastic waste problem.

"We have ongoing collaborations with other government agencies, the academe, and industry in providing appropriate technologies, programs, and projects for this undertaking, and we are willing to partner with stakeholders who will support our mission to protect the environment," de la Peña said.

"We at the DOST believe that this is a good opportunity to strengthen scientific and technological research and deepen collaborations."

In collaboration with the DOF, CCC, and the DENR, the DOST sought to provide alternatives to single-use plastics in the market and accelerate the search for substitutes through research and development.





During the event, DOF Secretary Carlos G. Dominguez, concurrent CCC chairperson-designate, cited the need to urgently adopt a national policy banning single-use plastics as its share to global efforts to stop the unbridled plastics pollution of the world's oceans.

Dominguez laments the results of an international study putting seven of our country's rivers in the list of Top 10 plastic polluters of oceans, describing it as a "national shame".

"We need to be innovative and creative. It is high time for the government, industries, businesses, and advocates to work together to develop better alternatives. By not consuming plastics, our people will be able to do their part on a daily basis in saving the world's environment," he said.

DOST Executive Director Dr. Enrico Paringit threw his all-out support to harmonized pursuit in protecting the environment through research, development, and innovations.

"As we gear towards achieving environmental sustainability by substituting single-use plastics with ecologically neutral alternatives, we shall put out more efforts to collaborate with our partners in government, the academe and the industry to ensure that we will come up with viable solutions to address the challenges brought by single-plastics use," he said.



# Sugatang civet cat, nasagip sa Eastern Samar

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Jul 31 2021 01:41 PM



Agad din pinakawalan sa kaniyang natural habitat sa Guiuan, Eastern Samar ang civet cat na ginamot matapos magtamo ng mga sugat. *Larawan mula sa Guiuan Marine Resource Protected Landscape and Seascape*

Nasagip ng isang grupo ang isang sugatang civet cat sa bayan ng Guiuan sa Eastern Samar.

Ito'y matapos na makatanggap ng impormasyon ang grupo ng Guiuan Marine Resource Protected Landscape and Seascape mula sa isang concerned citizen para mailigtas ang sugatang civet cat noong Hulyo 24 ng gabi sa Barangay 08.

Ito ay dinala sa Community Environment and Natural Resources Borongan Sub-office - Guiuan para magamot ang sugat sa mata at bibig.

Ayon pa sa grupo, tinatayang nasa 5 hanggang 8 taong gulang na ang nasabing civet cat.

Pinakawalan naman noong Huwebes ang civet cat matapos na gumaling na ang mga sugat nito.

**- Ulat ni Ranulfo Docdocan**

Source: [https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/07/31/21/sugatang-civet-cat-nasagip-sa-eastern-samar?fbclid=IwAR0qJzsa\\_LpfwyO5JHdLVAL8sDjx\\_d-owS661eLaBaT\\_cwwDRp2v41Cd\\_BY](https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/07/31/21/sugatang-civet-cat-nasagip-sa-eastern-samar?fbclid=IwAR0qJzsa_LpfwyO5JHdLVAL8sDjx_d-owS661eLaBaT_cwwDRp2v41Cd_BY)



## Mambulao's small-scale gold miners in a hide-and-peek mode to avoid arrest

JUL 31, 2021, 9:22 AM

Alfredo P. Hernandez  
Writer

***The local mining industry in Mambulao, Camarines Norte struggles, says Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Officer Sarah Marie Pante-Aviado.***

**THE 3,000** small-scale gold miners in Mambulao, Camarines Norte, are engaged in a kangaroo mode of operations to evade arrest by mining laws enforcers.

The hide-and-peek affair across the municipality has been going on since the first two Minahang Bayan (MB) sites in the province were given go signals a few years ago to operate, Sarah Marie Pante-Aviado, Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Officer, told OpinYon.net in a video call interview on Thursday night (July 29).

Aviado is also an elected member of the Mambulao Sanguniang Bayan whose job is to take care of the town's environmental issues.

The two operating MBs are in the nearby towns of Labo and Paracale, covering 20 hectares and 26.4 hectares, respectively.

Under the MB rules, no mining could be done outside of a designated community mining site.

*"Kawawa naman ang mga magkakabod (gold panners-miners) kasi walang designated Minahang Bayan dito hanggang ngayon ... kaya nagtagago sila sa kanilang pagkakabod para di sila mahuli (I pity the magkakabod in our municipality ... they cannot operate legally as there is no designated Minahang Bayan yet where they can work,)"* says Aviado.

*"The usual penalty is P25,000 for the violation and this is usually shouldered by the "financier" (gold mine operator), who is already saddled with the high cost of his mining operations,"* she said.

### **Prone to extortion**

Usually, the accused miner would just plead guilty and post bail.

Often, offending miners are prone to alleged extortion by the arresting officers from the Philippine National Police (PNP) and Mines Geophysics Bureau (MGB).

*"The miners are struggling for recognition from the government by awarding them a Minahang Bayan site in which they could operate legally,"* says Aviado. *"Para hindi na sila tawaging illegal (miners)"*.





In their operations, they either bore tunnels or dug pits where they extract gold ores, which are processed in a facility in Barangay Sta Rosa.

But once they got a tip that a raiding team would be out for them, they just abandon the mining site and come back for it when the heat is off.

Since the operations are illegal, miners are not monitored for the damage they create to the environment.

Law enforcers just launch raids to haul them off to the local jail and book them for mining violations.

### **Minahang Bayan areas**

Operations within a Minahang Bayan are closely monitored by the people from the MGB for any mining rules violations.

Minahang Bayan areas are those where small-scale miners can operate legally, enabling the government to better monitor and regulate their extractive activities while helping promote the safety of these workers, protect the environment, and generate revenues for the government.

Declaring more Minahang Bayan areas nationwide increases the opportunity for the government to track small-scale mining. But this is easier said than done.

The MB will be subject to Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) which aims to identify, predict, interpret, and communicate information on the changes in environmental quality expected to arise from the proposed mining project.

Aviado said there is a little hope for Mambulao's first proposed Minahang Bayan to get okay as yet since its proponents are having a hard time with the required papers.

She said the proposed Minahang Bayan site in Barangay Luklukan Sur covering 36 hectares is struggling with its application with the Bureau of Mines and Geosciences (BMG) for lack of documentation.

The other proposed gold-rich MB sites are in barangays Luklukan Norte, Sta Rosa, San Rafael, Larap, San Isidro, Nakalaya, Sta. Elena, and Bagong Bayan.

Aviado said the groups applying for MB sites can't just produce the technical papers needed because people who do it are charging from Php1 million to Php1.3 million.

*"It's outrageous because the gold operators are just ordinary people with not much means to pay," she said.*

Usually, the application for a Minahang Bayan site is worked by a group composed of small gold operators with little capacity to pay for the technical documents.

*"This is one reason the five applications in Mambulao are stalled," she said.*

In a video conference on Thursday night of the Minahang Bayan supporters from gold mining provinces, they called on the government to speed up granting of awards to Minahang Bayan sites to help alleviate the poverty of many small-scale gold miners in the country.

Spearheaded by the BAN Toxics, the virtual national assembly was attended by stakeholders in the Philippine small-scale gold mining that included the small gold miners.

*"We call for the formalization of the ASGM sector to improve the working conditions of small-scale miners, transition them out of mercury use to protect both their health and the environment, and eliminate child labor in mining areas," BAN Toxics Executive Director Reynaldo San Juan said.*



Along with the small-scale mining groups, the event was also attended by representatives from government agencies such as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Mines and Geosciences Bureau, the Environmental Management Bureau, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Department of the Interior and Local Government and the Commission on Human Rights.

The assembly tackled issues plaguing the ASGM sector in the country, specifically the proposed amendments to Executive Order 79 and DENR Administrative Order 92-34, and the difficult acquisition process of obtaining a Minahang Bayan certification and mining contract.

Aviado, who attended the video conference, said that the small-scale gold mining industry in Mambulao is “struggling”.

The 3,000 or so displaced small-scale gold miners are having a hard time looking for other sources of livelihood.

Many of them are just part-time fishermen or farmers as they preferred working in the gold mines.

Aviado said the LGU helped some 100 gold miners’ families with livelihoods. However, only a few of them kept up with their projects while the rest returned to gold-panning and mining.

*“They had been in gold mining all their lives and a shift in livelihood was quite difficult for them,” she said.*

The local government of Mambulao can only do little about the gold miners’ activities, Aviado said.

Minahang Bayan affairs have remained the jurisdiction of the provincial government through the Provincial Mining Regulatory Board (PMRG), which carries out the rules on Minahang Bayan operations.

*“The LGU is just deputized to do some small functions.”*



# NAST PHL nixes 'smart city' project in Dumaguete City

BY EDWIN GALVEZ AUGUST 1, 2021



Rizal Boulevard, a popular tourist site in Dumaguete City.

BUILDING a 174-hectare "smart city" on lands to be reclaimed on "biodiverse-rich marine protected areas" (MPAs) of Dumaguete City does not sound smart at all.

Take it from our country's leading scientists at the National Academy of Science and Technology Philippines (NAST PHL) who have added their voices to the growing opposition over the "proposed massive reclamation project."

In a statement, NAST PHL—which counts among its 81 members the country's top marine biology and social sciences experts—said the project will directly or indirectly have a negative impact on the MPAs.

"Dumaguete City has historically committed to protect its marine ecosystems and secure the fisheries-based livelihoods of its constituents by legally establishing four marine protected areas over the past 20 years," the Academy said.

It added that the MPAs are part of a system of protected coral reefs, seagrass beds and soft-sediment ecosystems that boost fisheries productivity, conserve marine biodiversity and support tourism in Negros Oriental and the Central Visayas area.

The MPAs, the Academy said, have a total area of approximately 104 hectares and are situated off the barangays of Bantayan, Lo-oc, Mangnao, and Banilad.

Reportedly worth P23.35 billion but at no cost to the city government, the smart city project is building an off-shore island from Barangay Tinago to Barangay Banilad in the south and from Barangay Looc to Barangay Bantayan in the north.

The artificial island is planned to have its coastal wastewater treatment facility, shoreline slope, wave protection, esplanade, a marina, a modern ferry port, an open area for sports facilities, a hospital and a city administration hub, according to a Philippine News Agency report.

The Academy said that the reclamation project will also "disturb the vertical connectivity between the shore/shallow to deeper species assemblage," citing a marine biological study last year titled, "Shore-fish assemblage structure in the central Philippines from shallow coral reefs to the mesophotic zone."

Conducted by Rene A. Abesamis, Jean Asuncion T. Utzurum, Lucille Jean J. Raterta and Garry R. Russ at Apo Island, the study found that "connectivity between shallow coral reefs and adjacent deeper habitats may be crucial to reef ecosystem stability."





In its statement, the Academy cited Republic Act 7582, or the National Integrated Protected Areas System (Nipas) Act of 1992, which promotes and strengthens the management of protected areas in the Philippines.

The law also protects and conserves the country's rich biodiversity against various threats as it has declared it to be the policy of the State "to secure for the Filipino people of present and future generations the perpetual existence of all native plants and animals."

The law further stated that the "effective administration of these protected areas is possible only through cooperation among national and local government and concerned private organizations consistent with the principles of biological diversity and sustainable development."

The Academy then urged the proponents of the project to conduct an "Environmental Impact Assessment on adjacent ecosystems, including those in neighboring islands."

It also asked them to reveal to the "technical, legal, and due diligence reviews done on the sociology, ecology, and the economics of the project and for the government to hold public consultations/fora for the open discussion/scrutiny, verification, and validation of the project documents."

"As part of due process and in consonance with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the action to indorse and approve the contract for a project with potential significant environmental and socio-economic impacts should be rescinded until the exercise of transparent public reviews/consultations of all the areas that will be impacted by this project have been done with diligence, accountability and good governance ensured," the Academy said.

In a story published in the BusinessMirror, National Scientist Dr. Angel Alcala, who is also a former environment secretary; Silliman University (SU) President Dr. Betty McCann; and former SU president Dr. Ben Malayang III, who is also an environmentalist, had argued that the project will "destroy" and "bury" the few remaining marine ecosystems that support small-scale fishing in Dumaguete.

NAST PHL, whose roster includes 13 Academicians conferred with the Order of National Scientist, including Alcala, acts as an advisory body to the President and the Cabinet on policies related to science and technology.

The legislative and judicial branches of government also seek the advice of this collegial body, which is composed of National Scientists, Academicians and Corresponding Scientists.  
Image courtesy of Wikimedia Commons



# Beijing May Be Illegally Surveying WPS – UP Maritime Expert

BY THE MANILA JOURNAL STAFF POSTED ON JULY 31, 2021



Fishermen found an ocean bottom seismometer, or OBS, in a recent trip to the West Philippine Sea, about 239 kilometers northwest of Infanta, Pangasinan. The equipment, bearing Chinese characters and used in oil exploration, was recovered within the country's exclusive economic zone | IMG SOURCE: Inquirer

MANILA, Philippines — An expert from the University of the Philippines (UP) who specializes in Maritime Affairs stated that the presence of the Chinese ocean bottom seismometer (OBS) proved that Beijing may be illegally surveying the West Philippine Sea (WPS).

Last July 1, some fishermen found a device in the waters off Pangasinan. According to Jay Batongbacal, director of the UP Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea, the device was identical to the OBS manufactured by China Geological Equipment Group Co. Ltd.

In a Facebook post on Wednesday, Batongbacal said the OBS found by fishermen was “likely deployed either this year or last year.” Based on the information from the manufacturer, the OBS can operate from two to 15 months and retrieved six to 24 months later.

Batongbacal said there were at least three Chinese marine scientific research vessels monitored to be operating within the Philippine exclusive economic zone (EEZ): the Jia Geng (September 2020, May 2021); the Haiyang Dishu 12 (September 2020); and the Xiang Yang Hong 14 (July to August 2020).

Any of these vessels, or the R/V Shiyan 2 could have been deployed to conduct seismic exploration in the area.

“The installation of this instrument, even for a benign purpose such as monitoring the seabed, should have been with prior consent of the Philippines because (a) it is in the EEZ, (b) it can be used for exploration and exploitation of natural resources, so the Philippines has the right to withhold consent,” he said.

The maritime expert cited that China had, on at least two occasions, deployed OBS to conduct seismic surveys and explore the area west of Bajo de Masinloc (Scarborough Shoal), citing published journal articles written by Chinese scientists where OBS were used.

In 2011, 42 OBS devices were deployed inside Bajo de Masinloc to create a high-quality 3D tomographic map of the Zhenbei-Huangyan seamounts. Huangyan is the Chinese name for Bajo de Masinloc.



“Although these were deployed just outside Philippine jurisdiction, they demonstrate how China uses OBS to conduct detailed exploration of the [South China Sea],” Batongbacal said.

Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque at an online briefing last week expressed confidence that China is not conducting oil exploration within the Philippine waters.

He refused to make an “official reaction” to reports that are based on “speculation.”

“So for now, we’re confident that there are no exploration activities being conducted within Scarborough,” Roque said.





# Urgent climate action badly needed – Biden

By [Agence France-Presse](#) August 1, 2021



POTUS President Joe Biden delivers a speech in the South Court Auditorium on the White House campus on June 2, 2021 in Washington. AP PHOTO

DELAWARE: President [Joe Biden](#) spoke on Friday (Saturday in [Manila](#)) with governors of several western [US](#) states where severe wildfires are devastating communities, telling them the crisis highlights the urgent need for action to stem climate change.

In a teleconference from the [White House](#), the president saluted the "heroes" fighting the 66 wildfires now burning across parts of the scorched western landscape and said more resources must be used in fighting the blazes. "They need more help," Biden said.

"We can't ignore how the overlapping and intertwined factors of extreme heat, prolonged drought and supercharged wildfire conditions are affecting the country," Biden told the governors of seven western states, including [California](#), [Oregon](#) and [Montana](#).

"Overlaying all of this is the necessity to successfully confront climate change." Biden noted that since the last time he convened a meeting on wildfires one month ago, the burned acreage has doubled, to 3.4 million.

Several thousand firefighters are battling the blazes, often in dangerous conditions. At least two have died. Some fires, including the Dixie blaze in [northern California](#), have grown large enough that they are generating their own weather systems - and authorities are warning the conditions could deteriorate.

Biden turned to the governors to express his support and ask what they need in terms of federal assistance.

"You have your hands full, man," he told Republican Gov. [Greg Gianforte](#) of Montana, where 19 separate large-scale wildfires are raging. At times, the video conference sounded more like a team of generals firming up battle plans.

"I think it's all about aggressive initial attack and getting more proactive in our forest management," Gianforte told Biden, saying clearing more brush, which acts as kindling, is critical for reducing the threat.

Biden noted that climate change has raised temperatures in forested lands, allowing certain tree-eating beetles to thrive and create huge tracts of dead trees. "It's like, you know, dropping a match almost like in a pool of fuel," he said.

California Gov. [Gavin Newsom](#) said the crises "transcend politics," and that the firefighting operations need "more boots on the ground" and more air tankers that can drop flame retardant chemicals on the fires.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2021/08/01/news/world/urgent-climate-action-badly-needed-biden/1809197>

# Floods and heatwaves: Can we tell if extreme weather is linked to climate change?

As Italy, Germany and China experience floods, how much do we know about climate change's role in extreme weather?



A house hit by a landslide is seen after heavy rain caused flooding in towns surrounding Lake Como in northern Italy, in Laglio, Italy, 27 July 2021. Image: Reuters/ Flavio Lo Scalzo

## [Thomson Reuters Foundation](#)

July 30, 2021

Mudslides and flooding triggered by torrential rains hit towns surrounding Lake Como in northern Italy this week, blocking roads and trapping dozens of people inside their homes.

While there were no reports of deaths or serious injuries, photos from the popular tourist area showed widespread damage, with houses buried in debris and cars swept away by the waters.

With more rains expected, police urged people to stay indoors, while firefighters evacuated some buildings and tried to reach homes cut off by landslides.

This comes after deadly floods [upended life in both China and Germany](#) earlier this month, sending a stark reminder that climate change is making weather more extreme across the globe.

The floods are the latest in an accelerating pattern of extreme weather around the world, with Canada and western US states facing record-smashing high temperatures that have killed hundreds.

Even Siberia in Russia's far north has been [experiencing a heatwave and forest fires](#).

Climate experts say global warming is making weather extremes more likely and frequent.

But how much can we say about climate's role in a specific weather event? Here's what scientists had to say:

## **Can we know whether specific extreme weather events are driven by climate change?**

Climate change is never the sole cause of an extreme weather event, but it can sometimes be a significant contributing factor, according to specialists.

"An event is the result of many drivers. There are many factors that influence and may favour an extreme event," said Nikos Christidis, a senior scientist at Britain's Met Office. But global warming is making the world's weather hotter and more volatile in general, making it more likely that extreme events take place, said Maarten van Aalst, director of the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre.

Extreme events happen when climate change and natural weather variability come together - and may be influenced by other geographical factors, such as whether nearby rivers and lakes are empty enough to absorb water from heavy rains.

“The only way you can say if something is changing due to climate change is to say whether the odds of that really bad day are changing,” said van Aalst.

“There’s always an element of bad luck, but the chances of bad luck are increasing – quite rapidly in some cases.”

### **Can climate scientists calculate how much climate change influenced a particular weather event?**

Researchers at the [World Weather Attribution](#) (WWA) project say they can confidently assess how much more likely climate change has made individual major weather events such as heatwaves, intense rains and storms.

They gather key data, such as temperature readings or rainwater measurements.

They compare them to historical trends for similar weather in the area, and run computer simulations that model expected weather norms both with and without climate change.

The process takes between a week and two months depending on the complexity, said Geert Jan van Oldenborgh, one of the leaders of the WWA initiative.

The project’s findings can be stark. For instance, the extreme heat that killed hundreds of people in the Pacific Northwest earlier this month would have been “virtually impossible” without global warming, [they found](#).

### **What is the wider trend in climate-linked extreme weather?**

While it is not possible to pin the full blame for any single event on a heating planet, the wider trend is clear, with experts pointing to increasingly volatile weather and a [sharp rise in climate-linked disasters](#) over recent decades.

Global warming can also bring a few benefits, with harmful extreme cold events reducing even as record heatwaves become more common, said van Oldenborgh.

On average, though, “the net balance is very damaging”, he said.

### **Why does knowing climate change’s role in extreme weather matter?**

Understanding how a warming world is driving extremes and how those trends could develop in the future is vital to ensure we can adapt to coming conditions and try to reduce the risks, climate scientists said.

“These events are the wake-up calls that the world apparently needs,” said van Aalst.

With more people living in cities - many of them very vulnerable to floods, heatwaves, storms and other risks - the combination of strengthening climate change and growing populations in harm’s way needs more attention, he said.

“We’re setting ourselves up potentially for a double-whammy of rising climate risk, plus rising exposure and vulnerability,” he said. “But there’s also an opportunity there if we can increase awareness.”

Clear evidence of increasing risk can help unlock funding to curb threats and ensure officials create plans to protect their residents, said van Oldenborgh.





Evidence of climate risks also can help tackle scepticism among some people about the need to act on climate change, and drive wider action to reduce emissions.

“Showing that climate change is not some abstract thing in the future but is really affecting us right now helps to build support for mitigation - for reducing CO2 emissions,” he said.

“Of course, the big impacts will be in the future but showing there are already sizeable impacts now ... makes it more concrete to people.”

*This story was published with permission from [Thomson Reuters Foundation](http://news.trust.org), the charitable arm of Thomson Reuters, that covers humanitarian news, climate change, resilience, women’s rights, trafficking and property rights. Visit <http://news.trust.org/climate>.*

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**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

# **COVID-19 NEWS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**





# 9K new Covid-19 survivors in PH

By Joyce Ann L. Rocamora July 31, 2021, 4:47 pm



**MANILA** – Some 9,117 individuals have recuperated from coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19), the Department of Health (DOH) reported on Saturday, pushing the country's recovery count to 1,500,189.

In its daily bulletin, the DOH also logged 8,147 new infections, jacking up the active cases to 60,887.

The fatalities also rose to 27,889 following the addition of 167 new deaths.

The DOH has so far recorded 1,588,965 confirmed Covid-19 cases since the outbreak started, of which 3.8 percent are currently undergoing treatment, 94.4 percent have recovered, while 1.76 percent have died.

The agency said six duplicates were removed from the total cases, all of which were listed as recoveries.

Two cases previously tagged as recoveries have been validated to be active cases while 102 cases that were identified as recoveries were reclassified as deaths after final validation.

Of the active cases, DOH said around 93.8 percent have mild symptoms, 1.3 percent are asymptomatic, 1.3 percent are critical, 2.1 percent are severe, and 1.52 percent are moderate.

The DOH said 54,857 individuals were tested on July 29, at least 14.7 percent or 8,064 of whom turned out positive with SARS-CoV-2 (severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2).

On July 29, two laboratories also did not operate while one failed to submit their data to the Covid-19 Document Repository System.

These three laboratories make up at least 1.8 percent of all the samples tested and 1.6 percent of the positive individuals over the past 14 days.

The DOH also reported that about 59 percent of the 3,600 intensive care unit (ICU) beds are being used, along with 51 percent of the 19,500 isolation beds and 47 percent of the 12,400 ward beds dedicated for Covid-19 patients across the country.

In Metro Manila, occupied are 52 percent of the 1,100 ICU beds, 47 percent of 4,600 isolation beds, and 42 percent of 3,500 beds. **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1148944>



Residents of Batasan Hills in Quezon City line up to receive their financial assistance from the national government on April 7, 2021.

The STAR/Michael Varcas, file

## Up to 30,000 active cases in NCR projected by September 30

[Sheila Crisostomo](#) (The Philippine Star) - August 1, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Despite setting a stricter community lockdown in the coming weeks, the National Capital Region (NCR) may still see some 18,000 to 30,000 active cases of COVID-19 by the end of September, the Department of Health (DOH) said yesterday.

At a public briefing yesterday, DOH Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire noted that the numbers are initial projections of the FASSTER and Autumn, the data analytic groups of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Diseases (IATF).

“These are the modelers that have been helping us in providing forecasts and they gave us forecasts using different scenarios,” she said.

In the first scenario, the two groups made projections of cases if the region is under general community quarantine (GCQ) with heightened restrictions.

In another scenario the groups have shown the impact of having a hard lockdown for four weeks in the region.

“It was seen that there will be an increase of 18,000 to 30,000 even (if NCR) is under ECQ,” she said. Active cases pertain to the COVID-19 patients who have not recovered from the virus.

Based on the DOH Tracker, there were already 12,108 active cases in NCR as of July 30.

The DOH official said the projections are important as they are among the factors considered by the IATF in recommending harder community quarantine for NCR, along with the country’s vaccination levels.

She stressed that the projections do not mean the hard lockdown will be useless.

“These lockdowns will help us prepare the system but it is not going to control the spread of Delta variant,” she said.

Vergeire reiterated that minimum public health standards should be strictly implemented as the Delta variant is highly transmissible compared to other variants.

“A person who is infected with Delta variant has a viral load of around 1,000 compared to other variants of concern. They can easily infect others,” she explained.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2021/08/01/2116735/30000-active-cases-ncr-projected-september-30>





# More vax assured for NCR during 2-week ECQ

By Marita Moaje July 31, 2021, 6:34 pm



**LIFE-SAVERS.** A forklift operator loads government-procured Sinovac vaccines into refrigerated trucks at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 in Pasay City on Friday (July 30, 2021). The bulk of the China-made jabs will be deployed to the National Capital Region which is the most vulnerable to Covid-19 infections. (PNA photo by Jess M. Escaros Jr.)

**MANILA** – The national government will deliver 6.5 million doses of coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) jabs to local government units in the National Capital Region (NCR) Plus to intensify mass vaccination.

National Task Force (NTF) Against Covid-19 deputy chief Secretary Vince Dizon said NCR mayors asked for more supplies during the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) from August 6 to 20.

“Plus” provinces Rizal, Laguna Cavite, and Bulacan will also be supplied an additional 2.5 million doses.

“*Humingi ang NCR ng four million doses. ‘Yan ay ibibigay na ng national government. Ipinangako na ni (NTF chief) Sec. (Carlito) Galvez ang four million doses ng ibat-ibang bakuna nitong mga susunod na linggo. Magbibigay din ng 2.5 million sa ibat ibang probinsya sa Plus (NCR asked for four million doses. That will be given by the national government. Sec. Galvez promised four million doses of different vaccines for NCR these coming weeks. Also, 2.5 million for those in the Plus areas),”* Dizon said in an interview on Saturday during the launch of the Covid-19 drive-thru vaccination site in Manila at the Quirino Grandstand.

He said NCR mayors committed to finishing administering all four million doses, a combination of first and second doses, while under ECQ.

Dizon said the NCR accounts for 30 percent of the over eight million who are fully inoculated.

The A1 (medical front-liners) group is 95 percent vaccinated.

Aside from additional jabs, Dizon said vaccination sites should be increased and the inoculation process developed to make it more efficient. (PNA)

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1148954>



# ECQ, pampabagal sa pagkalat ng Delta variant - DOH

By [Ludy Bermudo](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon) - August 1, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Para mapabagal at mas mapaghandaan ang pagkalat ng COVID-19 lalo na ang mas mabagsik na Delta variant kaya isasailalim ang Metro Manila sa pinakamahigpit na community quarantine qualifications, ayon sa Department of Health.

“We can delay the spread and we can be able to better prepare,” paliwanag ni Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire nitong Sabado.

Nagpasiya na aniya ang IATF na isailalim ang NCR sa enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) matapos makita ang mga posibleng scenarios sa mga darating na mga linggo. Gayunman, iginiit ni Vergeire na hindi pa ito ikinokonsiderang ‘surge’

“Hindi pa natin nakikita ang large increase sa ngayon pero nakikita natin unti-unti nang tumataas ang mga kaso. It’s kind of anticipatory because of the projections na in a couple of weeks may ganitong numero na ipinakita ang ating eksperto na maaring mangyari kaya ating gusto nang isara to delay the spread,” aniya.

Sa Agosto 6-20 ang pagpapairal ng ECQ sa Metro Manila, na sa kasalukuyan ay nasa general community quarantine pa hanggang sa Agosto 5.

Nilinaw din ng opisyal na ang pinangangambahang pagkalat ng virus ay hindi lamang sa Delta variant, kundi sa iba pang strains ng COVID-19 kabilang ang Alpha at Beta na nasa bansa na rin ngayon.



Police officers man an alley at Barangay Batasan Hills in Quezon City on Thursday, July 29, 2021. One enclave in the village is on its third day of lockdown after several individuals tested positive for COVID-19.

The STAR/Michael Varcas

## August 2021 ECQ guidelines: What to expect as Metro Manila goes into lockdown

[Xave Gregorio](#) (Philstar.com) - July 31, 2021 - 10:38am

MANILA, Philippines — With the looming threat of the more contagious [Delta coronavirus variant](#), the government buckled under pressure from [experts](#), [business leaders](#) and [mayors](#) to place Metro Manila under enhanced community quarantine from August 6 to 20.

This third installment of ECQ over the capital region would already be familiar to residents as community quarantine guidelines have not changed since May 20.

But here's a refresher of ECQ guidelines for the impending August 2021 ECQ.

### Who should stay at home?

All households should observe strict home quarantine.

People below 18 years old, those who are 65 years old and above, people with immunodeficiency, comorbidity or other health risks, pregnant women must remain in their homes at all times.

They may only leave their homes if they will obtain essential goods and services, or if they will report for work in industries and offices which are allowed to operate even under ECQ, or for other activities permitted under ECQ.

### Are gatherings allowed?

Generally, gatherings are not allowed under ECQ. Even gatherings at homes which will include anyone outside of people's immediate household are not allowed.

Exemptions to this are necrological services, wakes, inurnment and funerals of people who died of causes other than COVID-19, which are allowed to be attended by their immediate family and by religious ministers who will perform religious services.

Also exempted are gatherings essential for the provision of health services, government services, or humanitarian activities authorized by the appropriate government agency or instrumentality.

### What establishments will remain operational?

Many establishments will have to shut down during ECQ, but hospitals, grocery stores, convenience stores and drug stores will all be operational at full capacity.



The following establishments will also be operating at full capacity:

- Public and private hospitals
- Health, emergency, and frontline services, including those provided by dialysis centers, chemotherapy centers, HMOs, health insurance providers, disaster risk reduction management officers, and public safety officers, and the like
- Manufacturers of medicines and vitamins, medical supplies, devices, and equipment including suppliers of input, packaging, and distribution
- Industries involved in agriculture (crops, fruits, vegetables, livestock, and poultry), forestry, fishery, and such other components of the food value chain and their workers, including farmers and fisherfolks
- Logistics service providers (delivery and courier services; cargo handling; warehousing; trucking; freight forwarding; shipping, port and terminal operators)
- Essential and priority construction projects, whether public or private, in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Department of Public Works and Highways
- Manufacturing related to food and other essential goods such as but not limited to soap and detergents, diapers, personal hygiene products, toilet paper, and wet wipes, and disinfectants
- Companies that manufacture, distribute, and/or supply equipment or products necessary to perform construction or maintenance works, such as cement and steel, or spare parts
- Essential retail trade and service establishments such as public markets, supermarkets, grocery stores, convenience stores, pharmacies or drug stores, hardware, office supplies, bicycle shops, laundry shops, and water-refilling stations
- Food preparation establishments such as kiosks, commissaries, restaurants, and eateries, but limited to take-out and delivery
- Public and private financial service providers involved in the distribution of government grants and amelioration subsidies
- Business process outsourcing establishments, and export-oriented businesses, including mining and quarrying activities
- Public transport providers and operators

Media establishments will remain operational at 50% capacity.

The following industries will be operational with a skeleton workforce:

- Dental, rehabilitation, optometry, and other medical clinics for the treatment of illness or injuries as long as there is strict observance of infection prevention and control protocols. Dental procedures shall be limited to emergency cases only and dentists must wear full personal protective equipment. Home service therapy for persons with disabilities are allowed.
- Veterinary clinics





- Banks, money transfer services, including pawnshops only insofar as performing money transfer functions, microfinance institutions, and credit cooperatives, including their armored vehicle services, if any
- Capital markets, including but not limited to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Securities and Exchange Commission, Philippine Stock Exchange, Philippine Dealing and Exchange Corporation, Philippine Securities Settlement Corporation, and Philippine Depository and Trust Corporation
- Water supply and janitorial/sanitation services and facilities, including waste disposal services, as well as property management and building utility services
- The energy sector (oil, gas, and power companies), their third-party contractors and service providers, including employees involved in electric transmission and distribution, electric power plant and line maintenance, electricity market and retail suppliers, as well as those involved in the exploration, operations, trading and delivery of coal, oil, crude or petroleum and by-products (gasoline, diesel, liquefied petroleum gas, jet oil, kerosene, lubricants), including gasoline stations, refineries, and depots or any kind of fuel used to produce electricity
- Telecommunications companies, internet service providers, cable television providers, including those who perform indirect services such as the technical, sales, and other support personnel, as well as the employees of their third-party contractors doing sales, installation, maintenance, and repair works
- Airline and aircraft maintenance, pilots and crew, and employees of aviation schools for purposes of the pilot's recurrent training for flight proficiency and type rating using simulator facilities; and ship captains and crew, including shipyard operations and repair
- Funeral and embalming services
- Security personnel licensed by the PNP - Supervisory Office for Security and Investigation Agencies
- Printing establishments authorized by the Bureau of Internal Revenue and other government agencies to print accountable forms and other security documents
- Establishments engaged in repair and maintenance of machinery and equipment, for households and essential permitted establishments
- Establishments engaged in repair and maintenance of motorized and non-motorized vehicles, including the sale of spare parts
- Leasing of real and personal properties
- Employment activities that involve the recruitment and placement for permitted sectors
- Teachers, professors and other staff for purposes of conducting online/offline, and flexible classes, completion of grades, and processing of student credentials, requirements and documents
- Lawyers who will provide legal representation necessary to protect rights of persons as well as legal services for permitted establishments



- All other establishments, to the extent necessary for the buying and selling of consumer goods or services online

Government agencies and instrumentalities will also be fully operational, but with a skeleton work-force on-site and the remainder of the workforce under alternative work arrangements.

**Will public transportation be operational?**

Yes, road, rail maritime and aviation sectors of public transportation shall be allowed to operate at a capacity which will be determined by the Department of Transportation.

**Will COVID-19 vaccinations continue?**

Yes, shots will continue to be administered even under ECQ, according to Malacañang.

**Will there be financial aid?**

It is not yet clear whether there will be cash aid for those who will be affected by ECQ in Metro Manila.

Malacañang is only saying that President Rodrigo Duterte has given a marching order to source funds for aid to those who would be adversely affected by this lockdown.

Fact Sheet
General Community Quarantine with Heightened Restrictions (GCQ-HR)



**1. Are dine-in and al fresco dining allowed?**

No. Only take-outs and delivery.



**2. Can I go to the spa?**

Yes. Personal care services such as salons, parlors, spas, and barbershops can operate at 30% capacity.



**3. Can I play sports in courts or go to indoor attractions?**

No. Sports courts, venues, and indoor tourists attractions may not operate.



**4. How about outdoor tourist attractions?**

Yes. Outdoor attractions can operate at 30% venue capacity.



**5. Wait, am I even allowed to go out?**

Only Authorized Persons Outside Residence (APORs) can travel between NCR Plus (Cavite, Bulacan, Laguna, Rizal).



**6. Will there be public transportation?**

Yes. Operation of active public transportation will continue.



**7. Can I still go to church?**

Only virtual religious gatherings are allowed.



**8. Am I allowed to hold a funeral for my loved ones?**

Wakes, inurnments, and funerals for those who died of causes other than COVID-19 are allowed but only for immediate family members.

**9. What areas are under GCQ-HR?**

August 1-5	August 1-15			
National Capital Region	Ilocos Sur	Laguna	Bacolod City	Davao City
	Cagayan	Lucena City	Capiz	Davao del Norte
	Bulacan	Naga City	Negros Oriental	Davao Occidental
	Cavite	Antique	Zamboaga del Sur	Davao de Oro
	Rizal	Aklan	Misamis Oriental	Butuan City

\*Based on IATF resolution No. 130-A



Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2021/07/31/2116602/august-2021-ecq-guidelines-what-expect-metro-manila-goes-lockdown>



## Border controls up in NCR Plus today; ECQ won't stop Delta spread: DOH

posted August 01, 2021 at 12:50 am  
by [Willie Casas and Maricel V. Cruz](#)

The Department of Health yesterday admitted the two-week hard lockdown starting Aug. 6 will not stop the spread of Delta strain—even seeing active cases in Metro Manila alone jumping to 30,000—but said heightened restrictions would help the health system prepare for the surge.



*TSUPERHERO. At least a thousand drivers and transportation workers receive life-saving COVID-19 vaccines at the Parañaque Integrated Terminal Exchange during the launch of 'Tsuperhero Kasangga sa Resbakuna' on Saturday, July 31, 2021. The Department of Transportation aims to vaccinate at least 5,000 drivers and transportation workers. Danny Pata*

“In our scenarios, we see an increase in the number of active cases from at least 18,000 to 30,000 plus cases assuming that we are already in ECQ [Enhanced Community Quarantine],” Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said.

“The lockdowns will help us prepare the health system but it is not going to control the spread,” she added.

As of July 30, the number of active cases in Metro Manila stood at 12,108.

The country logged 8,147 new cases Saturday, the second straight day that fresh COVID infections breached the 8,000-mark. This brought the total number of cases to 1,588,965, with 60,887 active cases and 167 new fatalities.

### **Border controls in NCR-Plus**

Interior Secretary Eduardo Año said the Philippine National Police will put up border controls in the NCR-Plus region (Metro Manila, Cavite, Bulacan, Laguna and Rizal) at 12 a.m. Sunday to ensure that only authorized persons can cross borders.

The quarantine border controls will restrict travel a week before the capital goes under ECQ, the strictest lockdown level, for a third time since the pandemic was declared in March last year.

Año said the PNP will only recognize pandemic task force IDs upon entry and exit in borders. Cargo vehicles will be allowed to travel, especially those carrying essential goods such as food.

“The implementation of strict border controls in the NCR Plus areas is critical to stopping the spread of the Delta variant,” Año said.



The Metro Manila Council will leave it up to the local government units whether or not to require quarantine passes, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority chairman Benhur Abalos said.

#### **4 million life-saving jobs for NCR**

Local governments in Metro Manila, home to 13 million residents, will be given at least 4 million COVID-19 vaccine doses once ECQ takes effect, National Task Force against COVID-19 deputy chief implementer Sec. Vince Dizon said.

“We will also give 2.5 million doses to the provinces covered by NCR Plus,” Dizon said. NCR Mayors have committed to continue with their target of 250,000 vaccinations a day during the two-week ECQ, Abalos said.

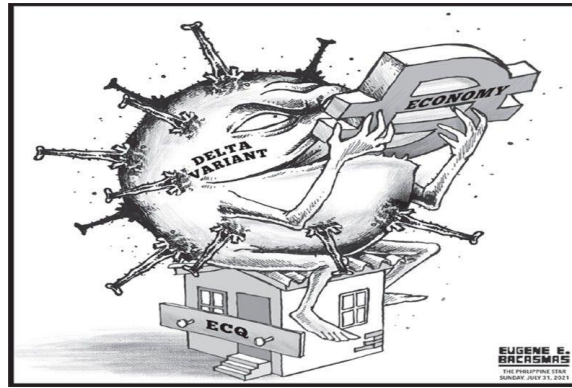
#### **1m families to get ayuda**

Meanwhile, more than one million families in Iloilo City, Cagayan de Oro City, and Gingoog City in Misamis Oriental that were placed under ECQ will receive case assistance of up to P4,000.

The financial assistance shall be released by the Department of Social Welfare and Development to the cities and municipalities under ECQ to provide emergency relief assistance to affected families.

Each of the beneficiary families shall receive P1,000 for each member, with a maximum amount of P4,000 per family.





## EDITORIAL - Make it worth the pain

(The Philippine Star) - August 1, 2021 - 12:00am

Although some members of the economic team reportedly supported the proposal to implement a two-week hard lockdown in Metro Manila, the economic cost has been placed at billions of pesos. The national government must make sure the displacement will be worth it.

The enhanced community quarantine begins in the National Capital Region on Aug. 6, after a week of “heightened” general community quarantine to allow businesses to prepare for the strictest restriction classification. The ECQ is intended as a circuit breaker against a possible COVID surge driven by the more infectious Delta variant.

Businessmen led by presidential adviser for entrepreneurship Joey Concepcion pushed for the circuit breaker, as endorsed by the OCTA Research Group, to prevent Delta from fueling another killer surge similar to the one last summer, and therefore to save the economy in the critical fourth quarter coinciding with the Christmas holidays.

The National Economic and Development Authority estimates the two-week hard lockdown to cause economic displacement amounting to billions of pesos. Local government units in the NCR, while supporting the hard lockdown, want the national government to ramp up vaccination and provide social amelioration funds for their residents whose jobs and livelihoods will be affected by the ECQ.

With the steep cost of the circuit breaker, the government must see to it that the lockdown is accompanied by heightened capacities for COVID containment. Apart from ensuring that people stay indoors except for essential activities and strictly adhere to health safety protocols, the government must improve access to testing, which remains expensive for many households.

Quarantine and isolation facilities have been expanded considerably, and both public and private hospitals have been alerted to expand their COVID facilities and equipment including ICU beds and oxygen tanks. More hospitals and doctors now offer home care services for asymptomatic and mild COVID afflictions.

But contact tracing – a critical component especially in containing the highly transmissible Delta – is one of the weakest aspects of the pandemic response, whether through the StaySafe app or the acutely limited number of persons employed for the task.

The country has confronted the spike in cases last year and the surge this summer, believed driven by other infectious variants. Lessons have been learned and must be applied as the NCR and the rest of the country brace for Delta. The two-week lockdown is going to be costly and must be worth the pain.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2021/08/01/2116793/editorial-make-it-worth-pain>



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