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NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



OPINION: There's a 20-year backstory in the Manila Bay project that people need to know

A former Manila resident says the pile of sand is there as the result of a process.

RAFAEL A.S.G. ONGPIN | Sep 06 2020

There's been a lot of noise since yesterday about a pile of sand on Roxas Boulevard. It's just a pile of sand, but it has begun to assume the proportions of the Sierra Madre.

The point of this piece is not to defend the government's actions, but try to examine this issue a little more objectively. In fact, let's talk about science, and numbers.

The pile of sand on Roxas Boulevard is a tiny component of a project that originated well before the pandemic was even on the horizon. This project, formally named the "Manila Bay Rehabilitation" was launched on January 26, 2017, by DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, and [you can read about it right here](#).



View from the ocean. The author on a sailing trip took this picture Saturday, September 5, around 3:30 PM.

[It should be noted that this project was forced upon the Executive Branch by the Supreme Court, in a decision dated December 18, 2008](#): The government commenced planning and data gathering for the project shortly thereafter. So any claim that the Dutertards might try to make about him being the only one having the political will to finally get this project rolling, rings hollow.

The Supreme Court decision above was the result of a petition by a determined group of private individuals calling themselves the "Concerned Residents of Manila Bay". The group included Atty. Jaime Agustin Oposa, who is the son of the legendary environmental activist Atty. Antonio Oposa, a Ramon Magsaysay awardee.

On January 29, 1999, the Concerned Residents of Manila Bay filed a civil suit at the Regional Trial Court of Imus, Cavite, to force government agencies to clean up Manila Bay, as they were mandated to, by their own policy. In response, the government sued them, and lost; the process took almost 10 years. In 2008, the Supreme Court ruled that the government had to do it. It took another 10 years before the project was actually implemented.

In other words, the pile of sand is there as the result of a process that stretches a full twenty years back into the past.

Again, the pile of sand is an almost insignificant component of the project. The main goal is to stop the flow of pollution into Manila Bay from Metro Manila and the eight provinces which border Manila Bay.

This is an enormous undertaking, as it involves finding these sources of pollution, and redirecting the solid components to places where they can be left to decompose in peace, and the liquid components into water treatment plants, which heretofore did not exist, and thus had to be built. The pollution, by the way, originates as far away as Pampanga and Tarlac and Bulacan in Central Luzon, although the great bulk of it is, of course, generated by the most densely populated city in the world, Metro Manila.



There is one such water treatment plant, solar-powered, by the way, just down the road from the pile of sand, right before the Manila Yacht Club. It takes the effluent from the open canal that runs from the slums of Leveriza, between De La Salle University and the Rizal Memorial Coliseum, under the Manila Zoo, and past the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas. This plant is a major milestone in attenuating pollution in the bay, although it was just put into operation in March. Yet, hardly anyone has noticed it, whereas a pile of sand...

The person, or “czar” (as this government likes to call them) responsible for the execution of this project is DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, formerly Chief Of Staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Cimatu is a demonstratedly competent manager and leader. He studied engineering in college before joining the Philippine Military Academy Magiting Class, where he graduated as the Baron, or valedictorian in 1970. He also earned a Master’s degree in Business Administration from the Ateneo de Manila, studied command management at Fort Leavenworth in Kansas, and is a licensed pilot for both fixed and rotary wing. He has an exemplary service record.

Mr. Cimatu, who I have interviewed in the past, is not a loquacious person. He prefers to do, not talk. He is not inarticulate, simply prioritizes action over explanation. After he, Sec. Ed Año, and Sec. Berna Romulo Puyat executed the Boracay cleanup, Duterte assigned Cimatu alone to clean up Manila Bay.



In this file photo taken on July 2019, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu mentioned the possibility that a portion of the Manila Bay may be fit for swimming by the end of the year or even earlier. Photo by Jekki Pascual, ABS-CBN News

Let’s talk about baseline data.

In 2018, at the start of the project, Cimatu noted that the inshore level of fecal coliform contamination found on the small strip of beach adjacent to Salas St., along Roxas Boulevard was 54,000,000 mpn per 100 ml. of water, whereas the maximum DENR safe level standard for swimming is just 200 mpn per 100 ml. “MPN” here means “Most Probable Number”, and is statistical jargon for “average”. Fifty four million mpn is 270,000 times as much fecal coliform bacteria as what’s considered safe, which is 200.

But 54 million mpn/ 100 ml. was just the median measurement. The raw water outlet leading from Leveriza Street and emptying into the Manila Yacht Club basin measured at— get this— 210 million mpn/ 100 ml, or about 4 times the median, and almost exactly a million times the safe level.

The next raw water outlet, leading from Remedios Street, measured 160 million mpn/100ml. This was the principal reason the DENR had to shut down water supply to the Aristocrat Restaurant in Malate, January 2019. The Laguna Lake Development Authority, with the DENR, issued the establishment, along with the Gloria Maris in CCP and the Esplanade San Miguel by the Bay, a cease and desist order for pollutive water discharge and not having a suitable wastewater facility.

Essentially, the baseline observed measurement was that Manila Bay, along the coastline, was liquid shit. I think you might agree that cleaning this up was something of a challenge.

In one year, Cimatu and the two or three dozen agencies involved in the task force, as well as the dozens of local governments along the 190 km of coastline of Manila Bay (not counting Corregidor), were, through various measures, able to reduce the median measurement from 54 million to 7 million. This was in January 2019.

In January, 2020, the DENR noted that the Padre Faura outfall was down to 920,000 mpn/100 ml, from its pre-rehabilitation level of 7.21 million mpn/100 ml., while the Rajah Soliman outfall went down from 35 million mpn/100 ml to 11 million mpn/100 ml.

Now, let's talk about the pile of sand.

I mentioned above that there is a small strip of beach outside the sea wall on Roxas Boulevard, adjacent to Salas St.(named after Rafael Salas, statesman). It has always been there, since the boulevard was reclaimed by the colonial American government. However, in the last few decades, it was so covered in plastic garbage that people simply forgot it was a beach. In fact, the famous staged photo of the DPWH/ DENR officials happened right there, after a cleanup, in which they removed dozens of truckloads of plastic garbage and uncovered the sand and rocks for the first time in decades.

Do people swim there? You bet they do. I lived in Malate for 20 years, and I would see sizeable crowds there on weekends. Notoriously, the Manila City government has always shrilly emphasized that swimming is not allowed in Manila Bay, but they never, to my knowledge, enforced it, and certainly not in that area. When Mayor Lito Atienza built the Baywalk, in fact, that part of it became choked with parked jeepneys and AUV's of the petit bourgeoisie and working class.

I went sailing with some friends, on Saturday, June 27, and saw that they were doing some earthmoving there. There was a couple of barges, a backhoe, a dredge, some sheet piles... a minor reclamation, actually. At the time, I thought nothing of it.

Well, guess what: that's what the pile of sand is for. It's not to create a beach, the beach was always there. It's to improve it. The goal of the Manila Bay cleanup is to reduce the level of pollution to what the law calls 'Class B, suitable for swimming, scuba diving and other aquatic activities.'



*People came to check out what a clean Manila Bay looks like in this photo taken last January 2019.
Photo by George Calvelo, ABS-CBN News*

Are people going to swim there? You bet they are, and the government cannot stop them, short of posting a battalion of Marines to guard the place. So what the government is doing is at least giving them a safe and somewhat comfortable place to swim in, in the future, when they have made the water clean enough.



Is this a cosmetic measure, lipstick on a pig? To some extent, for now, yes. But if the DENR achieves its target of maximum 200 mpn/100ml., i.e. safe to swim in, this beach will be a monumental achievement.

So, go ahead, throw your rotten tomatoes at the government, if you like. But to my mind, Sec. Roy Cimatu and his team are doing their job, and it's a big job. The pile of sand is merely a small and somewhat inappropriate symbol of what will be an actual Herculean achievement.

I'm not saying he is a hero. Maybe he is, maybe he isn't; you decide. But I can tell you this: to me, Roy Cimatu is a genuine public servant, and for that alone, I hope he will keep his chin up.

Permit issued to ship Cebu rocks for Manila Bay rehab – MGB in Central Visayas

By: [Dale Israel](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:16 AM September 06, 2020

CEBU CITY, Cebu, Philippines — The Central Visayas office of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB-) on Saturday said it had issued a permit to transport dolomite from Cebu province for the Manila Bay rehabilitation project, in response to questions raised by local officials who said they were left in the dark about the extraction and shipment of the rocks.

In a statement, MGB 7 Director Loreto Alburo said his office issued an ore transport permit on Aug. 26 to deliver at least 3,500 wet metric tons of dolomite rocks from Alcoy town in southern Cebu to the Manila Integrated Cargo Terminal in Manila.

“This dolomite shipment is the reported ‘white sand’ which had been spread along the shorelines of Manila Bay to enhance the aesthetic beauty of the bayfront,” Alburo said.

Dolomite Mining Corp. (DMC) quarried the dolomite at Barangay Pugalo in Alcoy, he added.

“The raw dolomite quarried by DMC was delivered to its sole buyer, the Philippine Mining Service Corp. (PMSC) for processing to various desired sizes and marketable products,” the regional office said.

The PMSC-Alcoy Plant has an existing mineral processing permit from the MGB and is currently on its second five-year term which will expire in 2023.

MGB 7 said dolomite products in Alcoy are regularly marketed to several buyers here and abroad, such as Taiwan and Japan. Locally, the dolomites in Cebu are shipped to Misamis Oriental, Pasig City, Davao City, Manila and other cities in Cebu.

“The dolomite materials sourced from Cebu have been extracted, produced and shipped out to various buyers following proper regulatory laws and procedures,” Alburo said.



FROM CEBU TO MANILA Workers continue to pour sand composed of crushed dolomite from Cebu province over the shores of historic Manila Bay. The rehabilitation project has drawn controversy over its cost as well as environmental concerns. —

MARIANNE BERMUDEZ

Minable deposits

The MGB 7 statement sought to address some of the questions that were left unanswered for two days after an official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) announced that a section of Manila Bay would be covered with “white sand” as part of its rehabilitation.



Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda later clarified that the sand was actually pulverized dolomite sourced from Cebu.

The Cebu Provincial Board on Friday questioned how the dolomite was transported out of the province without the knowledge of the local government.

Alburo said Cebu was one of the few provinces in the country that have economically minable deposits of dolomite. The main deposits are found between Alcoy and Dalaguete towns, he said.

Overpriced?

The towns of Alcoy, Dalaguete, Oslob and Boljoon are known for its white sand beaches. Alcoy, about 90 kilometers south of Cebu City, is a fifth-class municipality with an annual income of at least P25 million.

Also on Saturday, a nongovernmental organization which monitors public infrastructure projects said the Manila Bay “beach nourishment” project could be overpriced by as much as 55 percent.

Terry Ridon, convenor of Infracatch PH, said the approved budget of the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program was P397.897 million.

Infracatch PH, on its Facebook page, said the exact figure was P397,897,376.62, citing as its source Supplemental Bulletin No. 1 of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH).

Antiporda earlier said the project cost P349 million, but later issued a correction and placed the cost at P389 million.

“For this project,” Ridon said, “the bulk of the work are earthworks, particularly backfilling. There are no other major works for this project except earthworks.”

Citing the DPWH’s own backfilling cost estimate, he said the typical unit cost of backfilling work is “around P442.89 per cubic meter,” which he rounded to P500 per cubic meter “for simplicity.”

Since “[t]he project requires a total of 164,700 cubic meters of sand,” Ridon said, that total multiplied by P500 equals the cost of P82,350,000.”

Estimated price

He then estimated the price of dolomite at P600 per cubic meter. “Using the 2017 Mines and Geosciences Bureau pricing of dolomite at P600 per cubic meter, the total price of 164,700 units of dolomite is P98,820,000,” he added

“Adding the cost of backfill work and dolomite units yields a baseline total project cost of P181,170,000, Ridon said. Further, he pointed out, subtracting that total “from the approved budget yields P216,727,376.62 ... [or] a gross margin of 54.47 percent.”

Ridon said the “DPWH [only] allows a profit margin of only 8 percent of a project’s estimated direct costs.”



“Unless fully disclosed and clarified by the DENR, the estimated project return of the Manila Bay white sand project could reach a staggering 55 percent of its approved budget,” he said.

No plan to stop

In an Inquirer interview, Antiporda reiterated on Saturday that his department had no plans to stop the project despite mounting criticism from netizens and environmentalists.

He said the DENR and the DPWH had placed “interventions” to keep the transported sand in place. “Many have said it will wash away and we cannot change nature’s forces. Of course, there is a possibility that some [of the sand] will be washed away, but we have put in engineering interventions for the project. We have put geotubes,” Antiporda said.

Geotubes, or geotextile tubes, are large, specially made cloth bags that help prevent erosion, according to Geofabrics, a company that produces these materials. Apart from helping prevent shoreline erosion, they are also used for land reclamation, island creation, wetlands creation and other such constructions.

Source: https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1331789/mines-bureau-permit-issued-to-ship-cebu-rocks-for-manila-bay-rehab?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR2ZkXup2tvd2vhiH2c_xDy5_sui4iCtwQxU7II76NO3tULC4LMLiEtMvpg#Echobox=1599350652



Manila Bay makeover to benefit Filipinos' mental health

By Joyce Ann L. Rocamora **September 6, 2020, 12:14 pm**



File photo

MANILA – Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque defended the move to fill Manila Bay with artificial white sand, noting this could boost the public's mental health in the middle of the coronavirus pandemic.

"Sa gitna ng pandemya, kailangan din pangalagaan ang mental health. I think iyong pagpapasyal sa mga lugar kagaya ng Manila Bay na may white beach, hindi mo maku-quantify ang epekto niya pagdating sa mental health ng ating mga kababayan, 'yong kapayapaan na mag-isip at 'yong break (Amid the pandemic, we also need to take care of our mental health. I think walking along places like Manila Bay with white beach, you can't quantify its effect to the mental health, the peace of mind and break)" he said during an ambush interview on Saturday.

The official added that the makeover would further boost Manila Bay's image, which is famed for its beautiful sunset.

"With the white beach there, it would be one of the most picturesque sceneries in the whole world," Roque said.

Roque is confident that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) studied the white sand project or else it would not have pushed through with it.

According to the DENR, the "white sand" used in the Manila Bay beach area along Roxas Boulevard is crushed dolomite boulders extracted from Cebu.

The department and the Manila Bay Task Force are on Phase 1 of the Manila Bay beach nourishment project, with the overlaying of sand expected to be finished by September 19. **(PNA)**

‘White beach’ for people’s mental health – Palace

By [Reina C. Tolentino, TMT](#)

September 7, 2020

Setting up a “white beach” in Manila Bay would bring peace of mind to the people, according to Palace spokesman Harry Roque Jr.

Roque defended the plan of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to repair a section of the Baywalk along Roxas Boulevard that had eroded.



BAY WATCH A man watches as a construction worker spreads dolomite sand in Manila Bay. The bay’s beautification drew criticism and stirred debates. PHOTO BY ENRIQUE AGCAOILI

The plan was slammed by critics who said the money for beautifying Manila Bay was better spent bolstering the country’s response to the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic.

“I don’t buy that argument. Kasi alam mo, sa gitna ng pandemya, kinakailangan din na pangalagaan ang mental health (I don’t buy that argument. Because, you know, amid a pandemic, mental health should also be taken care of),” Roque said in an interview on Saturday.

He claimed that a white stretch of beach in Manila Bay could provide peace of mind.

Roque earlier clarified that what would be used to fill in the Baywalk’s 500-meter stretch was not white sand, but “crushed dolomite boulders.”

He said the Baywalk repair is part of the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program, which began even before the Covid-19 pandemic broke out.

Roque stressed that the DENR would not pursue the project without first doing a comprehensive study.

“Manila Bay is known for its sunset, probably the best sunset in the world. With the white beach there, it will be one of the most picturesque sceneries in the whole world,” he added.

The bay’s fecal coliform level was about 300 million mpn (most probable number per 100 milliliters) per 100 ml when rehabilitation began in 2018.

Vice President Maria Leonor Robredo described the P349-million Manila Bay makeover project as “insensitive.”

“Parang napaka-insensitive na gagawin mo iyan sa height ng pandemic, na ang daming nagugutom. Ang daming nag-hihirap, gagawin mo iyong pag-beautify (It seems so insensitive to do that at the height of the pandemic when a lot of people are starving. A lot of people are suffering),” she said.

She decried the government’s statement that there are no longer funds for providing assistance. She said the amount used for the makeover could instead fund her suggestion of providing P5,000 for each of the poorest families affected by the lockdown.



“Sa P5,000, ano iyan, mga 80,000 families ang matutulungan mo sa isang buwan. Ang laking bagay na matulungan mo na may makain sila, kasi maraming nagugutom ngayon (For P5,000 each, it could help for 80,000 families in one month. It would be a big help for them to eat because a lot of people are going hungry),” she added.

WITH DIVINA NOVA JOY DELA CRUZ



Manila Bay white sand makatutulong sa mental health ngayong pandemya – Roque



September 6, 2020 @ 10:25 AM 20 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Giniit ni Presidential spokesman Harry Roque na makatutulong umano ang rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay at paglalagay ng white-sand sa mental health ng makakikita nito sa kabila ng pandemya.

“I don’t buy that argument. Kasi alam mo, sa gitna ng pandemya, kinakailangan din na pangalagaan ang mental health,” pahayag ni Roque.

Giit naman nito ukol sa isyu na nakasasama umano ito sa kapaligiran na hindi ito pahihintulutan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) kung napatunayang may masama itong epekto.

Dagdag pa ni Roque na personal niyang inaabangan ang resulta ng rehabilitasyon dahil mahilig din umano siyang maglakad at umupo sa Manila Bay.

Punto pa nito na makadaragdag umano ito sa turismo ng bansa at maging tanyag ang Manila Bay sa mundo.

Samantala, ayon kay Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda na ito rin ay magbibigay ng magandang beach experience para sa mga Pilipinong walang kakayanang mag-travel. RNT



Radyo Singko 92.3 News FM

22h · 🌐

Naniniwala si Sec. Harry Roque na magiging world-class ang ganda Manila Bay sa oras na matapos ang proyektong paglalagay ng white sand ng DENR sa isang bahagi nito.



Source:

<https://www.facebook.com/News5Everywhere/photos/a.182218585268237/2174904769332932/?type=3&source=48>



News5
23h · 🌐

Hindi benta kay Sec. Harry Roque ang pagpuna ng ilang kritiko na dapat inilalaan na lang sa COVID-19 response ng gobyerno ang pondo ng DENR sa proyekto nitong paglalagay ng white sand sa isang bahagi ng Manila Bay.



NEWS 5

“
I don't buy that argument. Kasi sa gitna ng pandemya, kailangan din pangalagaan ang mental health. **I think iyong pagpasyal sa mga lugar kagaya ng Manila Bay na may white beach, hindi mo maqu-quantify ang epekto niya pagdating sa mental health ng ating mga kababayan.**
”

SEC. HARRY ROQUE
PRESIDENTIAL SPOKESPERSON
SEPTEMBER 5, 2020

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Boracay in Manila

[SKETCHES](#) - [Ana Marie Pamintuan](#) (The Philippine Star) - September 7, 2020 - 12:00am

Boracay... who doesn't want to have its white beach right at one's doorstep?

On the 19th, or just two Saturdays from now, the government tentatively intends to open for promenading and swimming a man-made white beach running the length of Manila's Baywalk – a stretch of Manila Bay's shoreline about half a kilometer long.

The "white" isn't as white as the dazzling powdery sand of Boracay, but closer to summer melon, because it's crushed dolomite boulders from Cebu. This is according to Benny Abante, undersecretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The program is part of the ongoing ambitious program to revive Manila Bay sufficiently enough to make most of its areas safe enough for swimming.

It includes a P384-million "beach nourishment" program for Baywalk – that promenade beside the US embassy compound that was once controversial for its "Sputnik lights" and eateries by the bay wall.

Can our cash-strapped country afford this beautification in the time of COVID?

Abante told "The Chiefs" last Thursday night on OneNews / TV 5 that the project was conceived long before the pandemic.

To reassure doubters, the DENR says the coliform count that is safe for swimming is 100 million most probable number or mpn per 100 milliliter. At the Raja Soliman/Remedios drainage outfall (beside Aristocrat), the coliform count, according to the DENR, is now down to just 11 million mpn per 100 ml.

At the nearby Padre Faura outfall beside the US embassy, the count is 920,000 mpn / 100 ml. On the other end of the Baywalk, at the Manila Yacht Club outfall, the count is now 54 million mpn/100 ml.

There are people who can't care less about coliform counts and oil slicks in the water. Until that area was walled off, hordes of people kept swimming in the area despite a ban and patrols by Coast Guard and DENR personnel.

* * *

I'm no aquatic expert, so I don't know if a bay can be cleaned up per section to allow for safe swimming only in certain parts. Isn't it the same body of water? Maybe there's aquatic engineering that allows certain areas to be cordoned off from the toxic waste seeping out of all the ships doing business in the Port of Manila, the black residue from the nearby charcoal making center of Barangay Ulingan, the agricultural waste from the farms in Bulacan, and the still continuing flow of industrial effluvia and household waste from Metro Manila, Cavite, and nearly 20 water tributaries that wash out into the bay.

There are also concerns about the reclaimed area being washed away, with the meter-high layer of off-white dolomite being the first to go, especially in case of a storm surge – the type that spawned a wave 20 feet high that smashed into the bay at the height of Typhoon Pedring in September 2011. The surge destroyed Sofitel's popular Spiral buffet restaurant and caused damage in the US embassy compound.

Abante told us that a breakwater is being constructed to protect the Baywalk from storm surges. I guess a breakwater will also make it easier to keep the water in the area clean enough for swimming.



He said certain portions of the bay, such as in Bataan and Cavite, have also passed the coliform cleanliness test. Swimming in fact has always been allowed in Corregidor, where visitors can have lunch during a day trip or spend the night in a hotel.

So yes, it's possible that the water quality off Manila's Baywalk, which the DENR apparently wants to turn into a showcase of the Manila Bay cleanup, can be sufficiently improved to make it safe for swimming.

And since it's going to be a showcase, I guess this is where the idea of creating a Boracay-type white beach emanated. The Chinese, after all, have shown that entire artificial islands can be durable, complete with faux white beaches. Did those artificial island beaches use crushed dolomite from the Philippines as well?

* * *

Abante says waste from the Pasig River and the tributaries that wash out into the bay from Metro Manila, including sewage from the Manila Zoo, have been addressed to allow the creation of the Baywalk white beach.

The question is the sustainability of the cleanup. Roxas Boulevard is my regular route to the office; I drive past Baywalk twice a day, six days a week. After every storm or heavy monsoon rain, wind and waves wash ashore tons of garbage. When the wind and waves are powerful enough, the garbage reaches even Roxas Boulevard.

On clear days, it takes longer for the solid waste to accumulate along the shores. But this showcase will need round-the-clock monitoring to keep out the garbage.

It will also need sentries to keep the area from being turned into a nighttime shelter for the homeless. As it is, authorities can't keep street dwellers off Roxas Boulevard even during daytime.

* * *

Despite all the flak the project is now getting, you can bet a white beach in Manila will draw a large crowd. This will raise other problems: preventing littering, and maintaining a carrying capacity especially amid a still raging killer pandemic.

As for the boulevard, my nightly drive home has become more pleasant with the installation of solar-powered LED lights to mark the lanes on the Manila portion of Roxas Boulevard. The cost is another story. But in terms of appearance, the lights are perfect for the start of our long Christmas season.

Unfortunately, it's a case of nice lights, lousy road. The pavement is uneven, and could get worse with the rains. Will I ever see durable, top-quality pavement on Roxas Boulevard? This seems to be as challenging as the complete bay cleanup.

The DENR reportedly intends to make Manila Bay clean enough not only for swimming but also for the commercial propagation of shellfish.

South of the bay, the lush mangroves in the Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area have become spawning grounds for marine life and a bird sanctuary.

Seeing this protected wetland thriving in the bay could make you believe cleaning up the bay area in the densely populated city of Manila is possible.

So get ready for Boracay in Manila.



BEAUTIFICATION NG MANILA BAY PAMBALANSE SA COVID-19



September 7, 2020 @ 1:40 AM 5 hours ago

BUKOD sa tuloy-tuloy na paglilinis ng basura sa baybayin ng Manila Bay, inuumpisahan na rin ngayon ang paglalagay ng puting buhangin sa kahabaan nito na kalauna'y magbibigay ng kakaibang buhay at siglang mala-Boracay sa lugar.

Maituturing na pambalanse ang proyektong ito na sa gitna ng suliranin ng mga mamamayan dulot ng COVID-19 ay may masisilayang bagong pag-asa at may magandang bukas na darating.

Ito rin ay nagpapakita na tinututukan ng gobyerno ang iba't ibang aspetong dapat pamahalaan bukod sa public health, peace and order, edukasyon at marami pang iba.

Sa pagkakataong ito ay ang pagpapahalaga sa kalikasan at beautification ng isa sa mga tanyag na pasyalan ng ordinaryong mamamayan sa Metro Manila.

Maaari ring ang proyektong ito ay matagal nang nakaprograma sa DENR bilang bahagi ng rehabilitation project para sa Manila Bay na noon pa ma'y isinasagawa na.

Ayon din sa DENR, ang proyektong ito ay dumaan sa konsultasyon sa mga eksperto upang masiguradong hindi masasayang ang pondo ng bayang ilalaan para rito.

Sa sandaling matapos na ang suliranin sa COVID-19 ng bansa, isa rin ito sa mga siguradong makatutulong para sa muling pagbabalik-sigla ng turismo sa bansa maging sa domestic o foreign tourist na magbibigay rin ng karagdagang trabaho o mapagkakakitaan sa ating mga kababayan.

Hindi rin maitatangi na kung matapos ang proyektong ito ay ibang bihis ang ibibigay nito sa Manila Bay at talagang mahihiya ang mga tao na tapunan ito ng basura o dumihan nang walang pakundangan.

Marami ang umaasa na mapananatili ang buhanging ilalagay rito kahit pa ulanin o bahain ang Maynila na sinigurado naman ng DENR.

Sa kasalukuyang lagay ng bansa na marami ang may mababang moral dahil talaga namang malaking dagok sa marami sa atin ang hagupit ng COVID-19, tila ba "ray of sunshine" ang programang ito na kinapapanabikan ng marami dahil sa kakaibang sigla at saya na ibibigay ng napakagandang tanawing ito.

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/beautification-ng-manila-bay-pambalanse-sa-covid-19/>



Group says DENR didn't follow laws on dumping of white sand at Manila Bay

Published September 6, 2020, 11:51 AM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

An organization focused on protecting the oceans said several laws have not been followed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources when it dumped synthetic white sand on the coast of the Manila Bay.



Workers pile the "white sand" to be laid on Manila bay.
(Jansen Romero / MANILA BULLETIN)

Under the Fisheries Code, Local Government Code, and the Environmental Impact Assessment System Act, government agencies are required to undergo Environmental Impact Study and Environmental Compliance Certificate for this kind of project, Oceana Philippines vice president Gloria Estenzo Ramos said.

She pointed out that these laws have to be done in a full blown participatory process.

"Ironically, it is the DENR that does not seem to follow the requirements set by law," she added. Oceana expressed alarm that the white sand does not appear to be a natural substrate of that portion of the bay. DENR had earlier clarified that the sand came from Cebu and is made of "crushed dolomite boulders," a variant of limestone.

The group said the government may not just be destroying the natural ecosystem in Manila Bay but also of the source of this white sand.

To cover the coast of Manila Bay with white sand, the government needs hundreds of tons of sand and this would have dire impacts to the coastal integrity of the source of this substrate, it added.

The Manila Bay rehabilitation project that started in 2018 has a total of P389 million, part of it was spent to fill a portion of the Manila Bay shoreline with synthetic white sand.

"This will be a total waste of people's money. Panahon na ng mga bagyo at malakas ang hampas ng alon sa Manila Bay kapag may bagyo. (It is now the typhoon season and strong waves hit Manila Bay when there is a typhoon). The sand will be simply washed away by the waves and will mix with the black sand which is the natural element of this part of Manila Bay," Ramos said.

"We want Manila Bay to be clean, safe, and healthy. Dumping white sand, however, is not the way to do it! White sand is not a natural feature of the Bay and it will fade away once it is hit by storms. Aside from the harm it may cause on the people and the fisheries and marine ecosystem, dumping sand at this area is also against laws like the Fisheries Code," the group added.

Ramos asked the DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau to step in to this planned project by the agency.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/06/group-says-denr-didnt-follow-laws-on-dumping-of-white-sand-at-manila-bay/>



DENR violated laws in 'beach' project—Oceana

posted September 07, 2020 at 12:30 am

by [Willie Casas](#)

Authorities violated several laws when they dumped crushed dolomite on a 500-meter stretch of the Manila Bay's naturally gray shoreline in Manila to make it appear like white sand, environmental group Oceana Philippines said Sunday.

Oceana Philippines vice president Gloria Estenzo-Ramos said among the laws that were flouted were the Fisheries Code and the National Cultural Heritage Protection Act.

The so-called "beach nourishment project, which costs around P349 million, also did not undergo environmental impact assessment, Ramos said.

"I'm aghast, appalled, considering we're facing a pandemic and public funds are used to prioritize a so-called beautification campaign. Many laws were violated by the agency mandated to protect the environment," she told ABS-CBN's TeleRadyo.

However, Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said no law was violated.

Antiporda said there was no Fisheries Code violation since authorities cleaned up Manila Bay and replaced the garbage with sand. He also denied the NHCP Act was violated since past administrations have also made improvements along the beach front.

Antiporda added that the funding for the project was already allocated last year, way before the pandemic. He also claimed dolomite, a sedimentary rock, will not affect Manila Bay's ecosystem.

However, Ramos said dolomite contains mercury and lead that could be harmful to marine life.

"Even scientists are saying this is a waste of taxpayers' funds. For sure rains will bring the sand to the ocean. And it's disheartening because this is fake sand – it has mercury and lead content," she said.

"Many laws were violated so we're also teaming up with other groups calling on the agencies to investigate actions taken by these officials," Ramos added.

The DENR is scheduled to inspect the project on Sept. 19, in time for International Coastal Cleanup Day.



Group: P389-M budget for Manila Bay rehab could be used to plant 13,000 hectares of mangrove forests

Published September 6, 2020, 4:12 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

A local fisherfolk group has said the budget allocated for the Manila Bay “beach nourishment” could be used to plant 13,000 hectares of mangrove forests to revive the water body’s marine ecosystem and biodiversity.



Workers pile the “white sand” to be laid on Manila bay.
(Jansen Romero / MANILA BULLETIN)

Pamalakaya said the P389-million budget to rehabilitate the Manila Bay is more than enough to install mangrove forests that will serve as fish sanctuary, pollution filter, and coastal communities protection.

“Compared to the baloney ‘white sand’ project along the 500-meter baywalk, mangroves serve many important purposes to marine environment and coastal communities,” Pamalakaya national chairperson Fernando Hicap said in a statement.

“Its amenities include community defense against strong waves, storm surges, flood regulation, sediment trapping, marine wildlife habitat, and nurseries,” he added.

Hicap said the government’s “failure to genuinely rehabilitate” the Manila Bay is “being white washed by the dumping of white sand.”

“Instead of a transformative and sustainable environmental intervention, the DENR is more invested in cosmetic surgery,” he added.

The fisherfolk group claimed that thousands of hectares of mangroves have been destroyed to give way for reclamation projects intended for commercial and industrial hubs.

From decades ago until 1995, the group noted that mangrove areas in Manila Bay used to cover 54,000 hectares but they have significantly shrunk to 2,000 hectares and at present, only less-than-a-500-hectare is left.

Pamalakaya also warned that the dolomite boulders, the synthetic materials being filled along the baywalk, could pose harm to the marine environment and humans, as it contains heavy metals such as aluminum, lead, and mercury, that could contribute to the pollution and acidity of Manila Bay.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/06/group-p389-m-budget-for-manila-bay-rehab-could-be-used-to-plant-13000-hectares-of-mangrove-forests/>



DENR should've used P389M for mangrove forest rehab-Group

By **Jonathan L. Mayuga**

September 7, 2020

The Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) said the P389 million used in overlaying “white sand” over a 500-meter portion in Manila Bay’s baywalk area along Roxas Boulevard could have been used for the massive rehabilitation of degraded mangrove areas.

Pamalakaya National Chairman Fernando Hicap said that with such money, reforestation of mangroves could have covered at least 13,000 hectares.

Citing a 2018 report, Hicap noted that planting mangrove costs at least \$607.7 or P28,881.6 per hectare, which means that the fund for Manila Bay’s “artificial rehabilitation” could plant a total of 13,469 hectares of mangrove forests.

Environmentalists had earlier criticized the project, which they said focused on aesthetics over genuine rehabilitation needs.

The budget was more than enough to install mangrove forests that will serve as fish sanctuary, pollution filter and protection of coastal communities.

“Compared to the ‘white sand’ project along the baywalk, mangroves serve many important purposes to marine environment and coastal communities. Its amenities include community defense against strong waves, storm surges, flood regulation, sediment trapping, marine wildlife habitat and nurseries,” Hicap said in a statement.

“The government’s failure to genuinely rehabilitate the degrading Manila Bay is being white-washed by the dumping of white sand. Instead of a transformative and sustainable environmental intervention, the DENR [Department of Environment and Natural Resources] is more invested in cosmetic surgery,” Hicap added.

The group claimed that thousands of hectares of mangroves were destroyed before to give way for reclamation projects intended for commercial and industrial hubs. From decades ago until 1995, the group further noted, mangrove areas in Manila Bay used to cover 54,000 hectares but have significantly shrunk to 2,000 hectares and at present, only less than 500 hectares are left.

Pamalakaya also warned that the dolomite boulders, the synthetic materials being filled along the baywalk, could pose harm to the marine environment and humans, as it contains heavy metals such as aluminum, lead, and mercury, that could contribute to the pollution and acidity of Manila Bay.

Lastly, the group said that several reclamation projects in Manila Bay, particularly in the coastal waters of Bacoor City in Cavite, Navotas City and Bulakan in Bulacan, have been given green light by the DENR, the lead agency of the government’s Manila Bay rehabilitation program.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/09/07/denr-shouldve-used-p389m-for-mangrove-forest-rehab-group/>



Leni says Manila Bay white sand project a misplaced gov't priority

Published September 6, 2020, 12:13 PM by [Raymund Antonio](#)

Vice President Leni Robredo said today that the white sand project at the Manila Bay is a misplaced priority by the government especially during this coronavirus pandemic.



Vice-President Leni Robredo
(OVP / Facebook / File photo / MANILA BULLETIN)

Speaking in her weekly radio show, Robredo called out the administration for spending P349 million for the project when it had repeatedly admitted the lack of funds for COVID-19 response.

“Napaka-insensitive na gagawin mo ‘yan sa height ng pandemic na ang daming nagugutom, ang daming naghihirap (It is very insensitive you will do that at the height of pandemic when many people are starving and suffering),” she said.

”Sa panahon ngayon na ang sagot sa atin wala tayong pera, nakakainsulto kapag nakikita ng tao ‘yung ganitong programa (At a time like this when their response to us is that we have no funds, it is insulting when people see this kind of program),” she added.

The Vice President suggested to give each of the 10 million poorest Filipinos families a monthly cash aid worth P5,000 to help them cope during the crisis but the government has no plans to implement it because it has no enough funds.

Robredo said the millions of funds used for the white sand project of Manila Bay could have been better spent to help 80,000 families in need.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has started to cover the 500-meter stretch of Baywalk on Roxas Boulevard in Manila with white sand that came from crushed dolomite boulders in Cebu.

This is part of the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program launched by DENR last year that cost almost P400 million.

Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said the white sand beach Manila Bay can help improve the public’s mental health amid criticisms the funds for it could have been used for COVID-19 response. But Robredo disagreed.

“Iyong makatulong sa mental health ng tao, tapusin na ang pandemya. Gawin natin ‘yung lahat para bumalik na tayo sa normal (What can help the public’s mental health is to end the pandemic. Let us do everything, so we can return to normal),” she said.

The lady official said the administration should reassess the 2020 budget towards the COVID-19 response to meet the pressing needs of the people during the crisis.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/06/leni-says-manila-bay-white-sand-project-a-misplaced-govt-priority/>



Robredo slams gov't for prioritizing Manila Bay white sand over aid for poor families

By: [Gabriel Pabico Lalu](#) - Reporter / [@GabriellLaluINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 08:55 PM September 06, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — Vice President Leni Robredo has questioned the government's 'insensitive' move to put white sand on Manila Bay when it cannot provide financial aid to the poorest families as she suggested.

Robredo said during her radio program on Sunday that the government sends a wrong message with the physical beautification of Manila Bay, which comes as the country's economy is reeling from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Even if the plan to place white sand on Manila Bay's shores along Roxas Boulevard is an old one, the Vice President believes it is wrong to prioritize this amid a health crisis that has placed a lot of people's livelihood and health at risk.

"Parang iyong news items, plano pa ito since 2019. Pero sa akin, parang napaka-insensitive na gagawin mo iyan sa height ng pandemic, na ang daming nagugutom. Ang daming naghihirap, gagawin mo iyong pag-beautify," Robredo said.

(I saw in the news items that this was a plan since 2019. But for me, it seems insensitive to do that at the height of a pandemic, where a lot is going hungry. A lot are struggling, but you prioritize beautification?)

"[...] Ang isa sa mga suggestions ko, na iyong mga pinakamahihirap na pamilya, bigyan sana ng parang pantawid-buhay man lang. Ang suggestion ko nga, 5,000 [pesos] to the poorest families habang naka-lockdown pa tayo. Ang sagot nila, walang pera. Parang sa akin, maling mensahe: Nagsasabi kayong walang pera, tapos nakikita iyong ganito," she added.

(One of my suggestions was to give the poorest families assistance that could make them stay afloat. My suggestion was to give P5,000 to the poorest families while we are still on lockdown. They said there is no money. But for me, this sends a wrong message as you said we have no money, but you can do these things.)

During her public address last August 24, Robredo urged the government to provide at least a P5,000 monthly assistance to the poorest families affected by the pandemic. It was one of several suggestions she made, aside from calls to empower workers and micro, small, and medium enterprises.

However, Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said a day after that such provisions are not feasible since the government's funds are already dwindling.

If the government decided to place the funds used to place the 'white sand' or dolomite at Manila Bay — amounting to P349 million — to give P5,000 aid, Robredo said that 80,000 families would have benefitted for at least a month.

Several observers believe that the budget used by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) could have been used to purchase gadgets that students doing online classes might need. For some, it could have been converted for the government's COVID-19 response.



Experts on the other hand said that there are several health concerns that come with dolomite sand, as it may contain harmful heavy metals like lead and mercury.

For Robredo, the P349 million could also have produced enough medical checkups for teachers doing online classes — especially since a Department of Education official admitted that it cannot shoulder the COVID-19 treatment of infected teachers.

“Halimbawa na lang, iyong mga mananahi namin, noong binisita namin, kaunti lang naman iyong kita nila per PPE na tinatahi nila, pero nagpapasalamat silang grabe kasi sabi nila ‘may pangkain na po kami, may pangbili na ng gamot’,” she said.

(For example, we have seamstresses whom we visited, who said that they are only earning small from the personal protective equipment they are making, but they are thankful because they have food to eat, medicine to buy.)

“Iyong iba naman na binisita namin, ‘noong wala pa po itong PPE, umaasa lang kami sa tulong ng barangay’. Tapos makikita iyong ganito. Parang napaka-insensitive sa kahirapan ng tao,” she added.

(Other people we visited said when the PPE tailoring programs were not in place, they relied on assistance from the barangay. Then we can see things like this. It’s like they are very insensitive to the people’s struggles and hardships.)

/MUF



Manila Bay funds could have fed poor families – Robredo

[Helen Flores](#) (The Philippine Star) - September 7, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The P349 million allocated by the government to transform a portion of Manila Bay into a white sand beach could have been used to feed 80,000 hungry families, Vice President Leni Robredo said yesterday.

“It’s insensitive that you’ll do it at the height of the pandemic when many people are hungry and suffering,” Robredo said.

She said President Duterte has repeatedly said the government had run out of funds to give cash assistance to Filipinos amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Vice President earlier urged the administration to provide P5,000 in subsidy to the poorest households severely affected by the health crisis.

“With almost P400 million (budget) at P5,000 for each family, you can help around 80,000 families in a month,” Robredo said.

The government is allowed to realign the 2020 budget due to COVID-19 crisis, she said.

“While it is true that this was part of the 2020 budget, it was done prior to COVID-19. Now that we are facing a pandemic, why not reassess the budget and prioritize assistance to hospitals, salaries of the frontliners, food for the poor and mass testing,” Robredo said.

She disagreed with presidential spokesman Harry Roque’s statement that the white sand beach in Manila Bay could improve the people’s mental health amid the pandemic.

“If we want to ease the mental health problem, we should do our job to end the pandemic,” she said.

The fisherfolk group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamalakaya ng Pilipinas slammed the white sand project, saying the funds could have been used to cover 13,000 hectares of the bay’s coast with mangroves. – **Elizabeth Marcelo**

Source: https://www.philstar.com/nation/2020/09/07/2040550/manila-bay-funds-could-have-fed-poor-families-robredo?fbclid=IwAR234QqlBXIT_PMiSesBa11YGZk2wDNbiaIPIKPAh8SsSBjaBx24fAVxEfk&utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook&utm_term=Autofeed



Funds for Manila Bay's 'white sand' project could have fed 80,000 hungry families - Robredo

By [Glee Jalea, CNN Philippines](#)

Published Sep 6, 2020 12:30:09 PM



Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, September 6) — The ₱389 million fund reportedly allocated for the government initiative to overlay 'white sand' on the shores of Manila Bay could have instead gone to over 80,000 poor families who were left hungry due to the pandemic, Vice President Leni Robredo said Sunday.

During her weekly radio show, Robredo called the move of the Department of Natural Resources (DENR) "insensitive," for focusing on the beautification of the area at the height of the pandemic.

"Napaka-insensitive na gagawin mo yan sa height ng pandemic na ang daming nagugutom. Ang daming naghihirap, gagawin mo yung pag-beautify," she said, noting that the government had even reasoned earlier on that it was running out of funds for COVID-19 response.

[Translation: It's really insensitive for you to do it at the height of the pandemic when so many people are getting hungry. A lot of people are losing money, but what you're doing is to beautify.]

Cebu provincial board members had also [sought a probe into the extraction of dolomite rocks](#) to overlay the "white sand" in Manila Bay along Roxas Boulevard for aesthetics without their knowledge.

According to Robredo, if the money was instead used to give ₱5,000 worth of subsidy for the poorest households who were badly hit by the crisis, the extent of its purpose would have gone a long way.

"Ano ba naman yung i-reassess yung budget?...bakit ito yung ipa-prioritize? (How difficult can it get to simply reassess the budget?...why would they prioritize this?)

She also slammed the recent remark of Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque that the "white sand" beach in Manila Bay could help improve Filipinos' public health and distract them from the crisis.

"Hindi ko alam kung matatawa ako o ano," she said. "Ang makaka-ease nito, tapusin na natin ang pandemya."

[Translation: I don't know if I find this funny or not, but why will surely ease their mental struggles is for the pandemic to be over.]

In an interview with CNN Philippines last week, DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda insisted that the Manila Bay project was done with "engineering intervention."

He also clarified that [the funding was not spent solely on the dolomite rocks](#).

Source: <https://www.cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/9/6/Manila-Bay-white-sand-80-000-hungry-families-pandemic.html>



Robredo calls Manila Bay white sand project ‘insensitive, insulting’

Published September 6, 2020 10:39pm

By JULIA MARI ORNEDO, GMA News

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR's) plan to cover Manila Bay with synthetic white sand was “insensitive” and “insulting” to Filipinos who were suffering because of the coronavirus pandemic, Vice President Leni Robredo said Sunday.

The DENR earlier said [it would spend P389 million](#) to put crushed dolomite boulders along Manila Bay to [discourage people from littering](#).

“Parang napaka-insensitive na gagawin mo ‘yan sa height ng pandemic na ang daming nagugutom, ang daming naghihirap, gagawin mo ‘yung pang-beautify,” Robredo said in her weekly radio show.

She also pointed out that the Duterte administration repeatedly rejected her suggestions on how to improve the government’s COVID-19 response, including giving P5,000 to the poorest families amid the lockdown, due to a supposed lack of funds.

“Kahit nga si presidente naririnig natin every press conference, sinasabi niya walang pera, so nakakainsulto ‘pag nakikita ng tao ‘yung ganitong programa na para bang hindi sensitive sa kahirapan,” she said.

“Ano ba naman ‘yung i-assess natin ‘yung dati nating mga programa na baka naman puwedeng gamitin muna ‘yung mga pera sa mga kailangan kaysa unahin ‘yung hindi kailangan,” Robredo added.

Environmental and fisherfolk groups earlier [slammed the white sand project](#) as an “aesthetic solution that “does not solve pollution at the source.”

Meanwhile, [Manila Mayor Isko Moreno](#) and [Senator Panfilo Lacson](#) backed the “worthwhile endeavor.” — **Julia Mari Ornedo/DVM, GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/754461/covering-manila-bay-with-white-sand-amid-pandemic-insensitive-robredo/story/?fbclid=IwAR1QaSGOe0MZrG-KkN7L-Wi-PnFewFRaqRke0tC2X6tSdAjljXYimkMdwFg>



Robredo: ‘Insensitive sa pandemya ang Manila bay beautification project’

By **Bombo Christian Yosores** -September 6, 2020 | 8:05 PM

Pinuna ni Vice President Leni Robredo ang paglalagay ng artificial white sand sa Manila bay, dahil umano sa pagiging impraktikal sa gitna ng krisis dulot ng COVID-19 pandemic.

“Parang napaka-insensitive na gagawin mo iyan sa height ng pandemic, na ang daming nagugutom. Ang daming naghihirap, gagawin mo iyong pag-beautify,” ani VP Leni sa kanyang weekly radio program.

Hindi ikinatuwa ng pangalawang pangulo ang depensa ni Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque sa proyekto na nagsabing makakatulong ang pagpapaganda ng Manila bay sa mental health ng mga Pilipino ngayong pandemya.

Ani Robredo, kung talagang seryoso ang gobyerno na matugunan ang pangamba ng publiko dahil sa krisis, ay gumawa ito ng paraan para matuldukan ang COVID-19 sa bansa.

“Napakatindi ng... napakatindi ng challenge sa mental health ng mga tao itong nangyayari sa atin ngayon. Pero ang makaka-ease nito, Ka Ely, tapusin na natin iyong pandemya. Gawin natin iyong lahat para bumalik na tayo sa normal.”

Wala naman daw masama sa plano ng gobyerno na pagandahin ang tabing dagat ng Maynila, pero hindi umano praktikal na bigyan ito ng panahon sa gitna ng mga problemang dala ng coronavirus disease.

“Kapag sinabi nating turismo, hindi naman... hindi naman iyon pagpapaganda lang eh. Mas malaking bahagi ng turismo iyong kampante na iyong tao na magbakasyon, iyong kampante na iyong tao na magbisita.”

Ipinaalala ni VP Leni ang nilalaman ng kanyang mga nakaraang rekomendasyon na pangangailangan ng mga teachers na magbabalik-eskwela sa susunod na buwan, tulong sa mahihirap na pamilya at suporta sa mga lokal na negosyo.

“Tapos makikita iyong ganito. 349—349 million [pesos]? 349 million [pesos], o— Dalawa, iyong kay Usec. Antiporda, 349 million [pesos], pero parang may nakita akong DPWH na... sa balita 397 [million pesos], so hindi ko alam kung alin iyong totoo. Pero sabihin na natin, Ka Ely, na almost 400 million [pesos]. Sa 5,000 pesos, ano iyan, mga 80,000 families ang matutulungan mo sa isang buwan.”



Manila Bay white sand overlay project

MANILA BAY BEAUTIFICATION

P389-M white sand project, hindi bagay sa kahirapang dulot ng pandemya —obispo

Setyembre 6, 2020 7:05pm GMT+08:00

Dismayado si Archdiocese of Manila Apostolic Administrator Bishop Broderick Pabillo sa hindi napapanahong proyekto ng pagpapaganda at paglalagay ng artificial white sand sa Manila Bay bilang bahagi ng rehabilitasyon nito sa gitna ng krisis na kinahaharap ng bansa mula sa COVID-19 pandemic.

Inihayag ng obispo sa panayam ng Radyo Veritas na hindi naaangkop na mas bigyang prayoridad at paglaanan ng pondo ang nasabing proyekto dahil marami ang dumaranas ng hirap at nagugutom sa epekto ng health crisis.

“Ngayong panahon po na napakaraming mga tao na walang trabaho, na walang pagkain, tapos kung gagawa ng ganyang project na aabutin ng higit P300 million para lang sa white sand, parang hindi po angkop sa ating panahon ngayon,” pahayag ni Pabillo sa Radio Veritas.

Iginiit rin ng Obispo na mas nararapat na ilaan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources ang pondo sa pagkakaloob ng trabaho at pagkain sa mamamayang lubos na apektado ng pandemya.

“So ‘yan po’y marami pong mga hindi tama sa paggawa po ng project at lalung-lalo na sa’ting panahon ngayon na hindi angkop sa kalagayan ng ating bayan. Kaya kung ang DENR ay may pera, itulong nya sana sa mga pagbibigay ng trabaho, pagbibigay ng pagkain sa mga nangangailangan,” dagdag ni Bishop Pabillo.

Ipinaliwanag ng obispo na hindi rin nakatitiyak na ang nasabing white sand ay magtatagal at mapapanatili ang kagandahan ng Manila Bay dahil mapupuno lamang ito ng basura kapag sinalanta ng bagyo ang bansa.

“Hindi pa naman natin sigurado na ang white sand na ‘yan ay mananatili kasi alam naman natin na kapag t’wing bumabagyo ay talagang pinapasukan ‘yan ng lahat ng mga dumi so, pansamantala lang ‘yung kagandahan nyan.” pahayag ni Bishop Pabillo.

Samantala, suportado naman ni Manila Mayor Isko Morenao ang proyekto.

Sinabi rin ng DENR na ang proyekto ay makaka-discourage sa mga tao na magtapon ng basura sa Manila Bay, at hindi rin umano makasisira sa kapaligiran ang white sand. —**LBG, GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/balitambayan/balita/754450/p389-m-white-sand-project-hindi-bagay-sa-kahirapang-dulot-ng-pandemya-obispo/story/>



White sand sa Manila Bay, delikado sa kalusugan

ni [Thea Janica Teh](#) | September 6, 2020



Hindi umano ligtas sa kalusugan ang artificial white sand na inilalagay sa Manila Bay, ayon sa Infracatch Philippines.

Sa pag-aaral ng mga ito, maaaring magdulot ng iritasyon sa mata, sakit sa baga at cancer ang dinurog na dolomite rock na ginagamit bilang artificial sand.

Hindi naman sumang-ayon dito si Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda at sinabing pinag-aralan itong mabuti at walang hazard lalo na sa kalusugan.

Bukod pa rito, sinabi rin ni Sen. Panfilo Lacson na maganda ang proyektong ito at kumonsulta muna sa mga eksperto bago sinimulan.

Ayon naman kay Carlo Arcilla, dating hepe ng National Institute of Geological Science, mas mainam gamitin ang dolomite sa sakahan para mas mapaganda ang fertilization ng lupa. Dagdag pa nito, kung gusto umanong puti ang ilagay sa Manila Bay, limestone na lang dapat dahil mas mura pa kaysa sa dolomite.

Sinabi naman ni Manila Mayor Isko Moreno na tutulong silang mapanatili ang kalinisan ng Manila Bay pati na rin ang mga estero sa kanilang lugar. Ang paglalagay ng artificial sand sa Manila Bay ay bahagi ng beach nourishment project ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources.



'White sand' na itinambak sa Manila Bay di umano ligtas sa kalusugan

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Sep 06 2020 03:20 PM | Updated as of Sep 06 2020 06:01 PM

MAYNILA - Naniniwala ang isang grupo na hindi ligtas sa kalusugan ang inilagay na artificial white sand sa Manila Bay.

Sa pag-aaral ng grupong Infracatch Philippines, sinabing ang dinurog na dolomite rock ay nagdudulot ng iritasyon sa mata, mga sakit sa baga at maging cancer.

Dinurog na dolomite rock ang ginamit bilang artificial white sand sa Manila Bay, na bahagi ng P389 milyon na beach nourishment project, ayon sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Pero pinabulaanan ni Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda ang pahayag ng grupo.

"Napag-aralan ito na... wala siya hazard, lalo naman sa health," ani Antiporda.

Para naman kay Carlo Arcilla, dating hepe ng National Institute of Geological Sciences, mas mainam na gamitin na lang ang dolomite sa mga sakahang lupa.

"Mas maganda pang ginamit 'yan doon sa agricultural lands na kailangang i-improve 'yong fertilization," ani Arcilla, isang geology professor sa University of the Philippines.

"Kung gusto nilang puti lang, puwede ka namang kumuha ng limestone... definitely mas mura ang limestone kaysa sa dolomite," dagdag niya.

Suportado ng lokal na pamahalaan ng Maynila ang paglalagay ng white sand sa Manila Bay.

Ayon kay Manila Mayor Isko Moreno, tutulong silang mapanatiling malinis ang Manila Bay sa kabila ng mga agam-agam na aanurin o madudumihan din ang puting buhangin.

"We will try in our own little way to be more efficient in cleaning up our estero," ani Moreno.

"Kami rin, bilang lokal na pamahalaan, we will do our part," aniya.

Sa isang pahayag, sinabi rin ni Sen. Panfilo Lacson na maganda ang proyekto, at malamang ay ginawan naman ito ng tamang pag-aaral at konsultasyon ng mga eksperto ng DENR.

-- Ulat ni April Raffles, ABS-CBN News



Unsettling justifications for ‘Boracay’ on Manila Bay project

By [Tita C. Valderama](#)

September 7, 2020

THE Environment department’s project to beautify Manila Bay smacks of insensitivity to the people’s difficulties in coping with the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) and contradicts President Rodrigo Duterte’s vow to spend public money judiciously, particularly in this time of pandemic.

No amount of excuses can justify the multimillion-peso rehabilitation project that includes covering a stretch of the baywalk on Roxas Boulevard with artificial white sand when around 5 million Filipinos just lost their jobs because of the community lockdown, at least 68,000 patients are fighting with Covid-19 and countless families can hardly make both ends meet.

It is an insult to the intelligence of the Filipinos for Palace spokesman Harry Roque Jr. to say that having white sand on the coastline could help improve the public’s mental health as it would distract them from the global health crisis.

Where is the reasonableness in that when people are advised to stay home and avoid public areas to help contain the spread of Covid? Does Roque plan to hold his daily online public briefings with the bay as backdrop so that his audience would be distracted from his updates on Covid?

While it is necessary to distract the public’s mind from the difficulties brought about by Covid and the incompetence of many government officials tasked to respond to the challenges of the health crisis and the corresponding economic slowdown, it is mind-boggling to even think that spending millions of pesos to create a “Boracay” scenery on the heavily polluted Manila Bay would help improve mental health.

It is because of crooked thinking like Roque’s in this case that I refrain from referring to him as presidential spokesman. Yes, he is the spokesperson of the president, but he is far from being presidential. The mere mention of his name brings to mind his disturbing Tik Tok dance posted on social media. Ugh!

Based on a supplemental bulletin released by the Department of Public Works and Highways, the total cost for the “beach nourishment, coastal restoration and enhancement” of the Manila Baywalk area has a budget of P397.9 million. Undersecretary Benny Antiporda of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources gave a different amount, P389 million, for the project which, he said, was started two years ago, long before the pandemic.

It is incomprehensible that the government would implement this cosmetic project at this time when Duterte has repeatedly been complaining about budget constraints for undertakings meant to ease the difficulties in dealing with the health pandemic, not to mention the perennial funding deficiencies for other basic services like education.

To parry criticisms that the amount could have been better used for Covid-related activities, Antiporda said it was unlawful to juggle the money. He seemed unaware that Section 4(v) of Republic Act 11469, or the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act, authorizes the President to “direct the discontinuance of appropriated programs, activities or projects of any agency in the Executive department, including government-owned and -controlled corporations, under the 2019 and 2020 General Appropriations Act, whether released or unreleased, the allotments for which remain unobligated.” Or, probably, the funding was in the 2018 budget.



Antiporda said the artificial white sand from crushed dolomite boulders extracted in Cebu would cover 1 hectare of the baywalk at one-meter thick. He said he did not know how much of the funds were for the white sand which, according to environment group Greenpeace Philippines, would easily be washed away by storm surges.

Antiporda disputed Greenpeace's assertion, saying that engineers used a "geo textile" to prevent the sand from being washed away and that putting up a breakwater has been considered to further protect it. That means spending more for a breakwater!

He somehow corroborates Roque's justification for the project, saying that it "will also sort of relieve our stress in this situation."

Granting that Antiporda and Roque were correct in saying that having a "Boracay feel" on the Manila Baywalk would improve mental health and relieve stress as we grapple with Covid, the warning from advocacy group Oceana Philippines that dumping sand on the bay could negatively affect its natural ecosystem is more unsettling.

The project has to be stopped pending a thorough review and consultation with all stakeholders. Meantime, perhaps it would be a big relief for the taxpayers if the likes of Antiporda and Roque in government are booted out and replaced with competent and dedicated people who will truly serve the public. I believe that there are many of them in the bureaucracy, but they are unrecognized for their hard work because they don't have political connections and are not media savvy.



Sand in our faces

posted September 07, 2020 at 12:25 am

"What would boost our mental health is the knowledge that the government is addressing problems at the core and not resorting to superficial solutions."

What would boost our mental health is the knowledge that the government is addressing problems at the core and not resorting to superficial solutions.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has implemented its brilliant idea of using synthetic white sand—crushed dolomite boulders from Cebu—to cover the baywalk of Manila Bay.

Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said his agency intended to bring the beach experience closer to Filipinos who could not travel amid this time of the pandemic.

He also said that the white-sand project would raise people's awareness of our common responsibility to take care of the environment. "We did this so people could see that when something is white, you should take care of it and not make it dirty," he added in Filipino.

Palace spokesman Harry Roque also defended the project, saying the white sand would improve people's mental health by distracting them from their thoughts about the pandemic. Going to places like Manila Bay would give people peace of mind. He himself, he volunteered, liked strolling along and sitting by the coastline.

Roque added that the white sand would make Manila Bay more picturesque because it would complement the beautiful sunset for which it is already known.

We wonder how these two officials can believe that we can take them seriously.

Foremost, the expense is just staggering. An infrastructure think tank estimated the cost P795,000 per coastline meter covered. Assuming a 500-meter beach, the whitening project could set Filipino taxpayers back by P397.5 million. Think of the many other worthy projects this amount could be spent on.

Second, health and environment groups have raised concern that the synthetic material could actually be bad for the clean-up—which is not even completed, anyway. Worse, dolomite in large amounts may be bad for the health. Effects include irritation, burning, and redness of the eye; dry and irritated skin, coughing and irritation of the lungs, and in extreme cases, silicosis, bronchitis, emphysema, and cancer.

Mr. Roque thinks the DENR would not have pushed through with the project without the benefit of studies. But we would like to hear from the agency's leadership: Is the white-sand project backed by credible study at all?

Finally, there is common sense. Filipinos are not babies who sulk about not being able to go to the beach. We know there is a public health emergency and we are willing to make sacrifices, just as we have done so for nearly six months now.

What would give us peace of mind is the knowledge that our officials know their priorities well, and that they exercise prudence in spending our money at a time when the future is uncertain and millions are losing their jobs.

What would soothe our anxieties and boost our mental health is the knowledge that our officials are doing their best to address problems environmental degradation, a weak hospital system, lack of accountability in public spending—instead of kicking artificial sand in our faces.



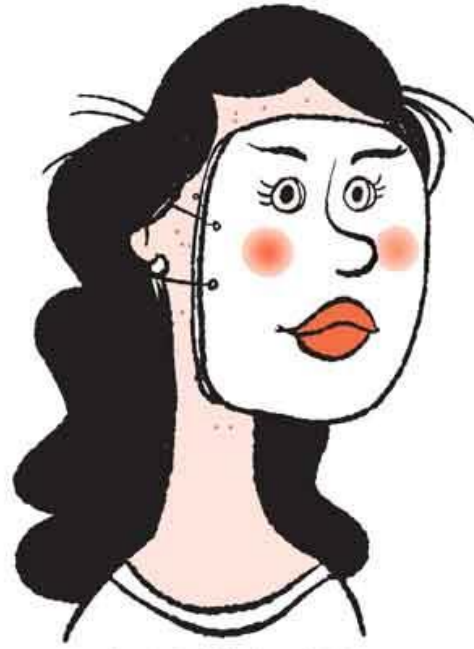
MANILA BAY WITH ARTIFICIAL WHITE SAND

By The Manila Times

September 7, 2020



MANILA BAY



MANILA BAY WITH
ARTIFICIAL WHITE SAND

MANILA BAY WITH ARTIFICIAL WHITE SAND



P181.9 B earmarked by gov't to protect PH from climate change in 2021 nat'l budget

Published September 6, 2020, 11:36 AM

by [Genalyn Kabiling](#)

The government is committed to strengthening the country's resilience to climate change and build "greener future," according to President Duterte.



President Rodrigo Roa Duterte

(KING RODRIGUEZ / PRESIDENTIAL PHOTO / FILE PHOTO / MANILA BULLETIN)

The President said the government has set aside P181.9 billion for programs to protect the environment under the 2021 national budget after recognizing the impact of the coronavirus pandemic. He said the government intends to curb the environmental risks "that may lead to future outbreaks."

"The COVID-19 pandemic impacted not only our economy and our people but also our environment. This experience has opened our eyes to the reality that everything has its limit," Duterte said in his recent budget message to Congress.

"It has emphasized the importance of being able to protect and conserve our natural resources for the future generations to come," he said.

In the budget proposal for 2021, Duterte said the P181.9 billion allocation will be used for "climate-change related expenditures identifying adaption and mitigation measures for climate change." The projects cover forest protection, tree-planting, development and use of renewable energy sources, and water security.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will receive a P26.5-billion budget for 2021, that includes P5.2 billion for the National Greening Program and P800 million for the Forest Protection Program. At least P700 million will be set aside for the Protected Areas Development and Management Program to help protect and conserve biodiversity areas and protected areas.

Around P2.1 billion will be go the Department of Energy "in our effort to build a brighter and greener future," according to the President. Of this amount, P500 million will fund the government's sustainable Total Electrification Project while P133 million will support the exploration, development, and utilization of renewable energy resources and technologies.

To ensure water security for Filipinos, Duterte said the National Water Resources Board under DENR will receive P128 million. The allocation will be used for the development of groundwater management plan and the establishment of groundwater monitoring stations for groundwater critical areas.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/06/p181-9-b-earmarked-by-govt-to-protect-ph-from-climate-change-in-2021-natl-budget/>




LOOK: Dolphins, dugong show up, frolic in Sarangani waters

By: [Carlo Jacob Molina](#) - Social Media Content Lead / [@CarloMolinaINQ](#)


[INQUIRER.net](#) / 01:15 PM September 06, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — Pods of dolphins in Sarangani Bay and other coastal areas of the province welcomed environmental authorities and advocates during their monthly marine mammal monitoring last week.

About 150 to 200 Spinner dolphins were seen near the coast of Malapatan, Sarangani while 18 Risso’s dolphins were sighted off the coast of General Santos City and Alabel town.




DENR Soccsksargen
last Monday






DUGONG AND DOLPHINS. Hundreds of dolphins and one dugong were spotted last August 25-28 in Sarangani Bay during the monthly marine mammal monitoring of the DENR-12 together with the Protected Area Management Office (PAMO) of Sarangani Bay Protected Seascape (SBPS), Sarangani Environmental Conservation and Protection Center (ECPC), Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources XII and General Santos City Environment and Natural Resources Office.

Joy C. Ologuin, protected area superintendent of the SBPS, said that the team spotted 150-200 Spinner dolphins (*Stenella longirostris*) near the coast of Malapatan and 18 Risso’s dolphins (*Grampus griseus*) close to the shores of Brgy. Bula in Gensan and Alabel town.

In Barangay Cablalan, Glan town, the team also sighted a Dugong (Dugong dugon) during their monitoring which was funded by the Governor’s Office of Sarangani. (MMMAulana) | Photos by: PAMO-SBPS



👍 272
💬 15
➦ 303



Meanwhile, regional environment officials have also caught sight of a Dugong off the coast of Glan town.

The aquatic mammals reappeared as tourism activities in the region remain prohibited and limited amid the coronavirus pandemic.

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Daily Tribune

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LOOK: The Protected Area Management Office of Sarangani Bay Protected Seascape, Sarangani Environmental Conservation and Protection Center, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources XII, and General Santos City Environment and Natural Resources Office spotted hundreds of dolphins and one dugong in Sarangani Bay during the monthly marine mammal monitoring last 25 to 28 August 2020. | 📷: PAMO-SBPS #dolphins #PAMO #DENR



👍❤️👎 59

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Nasa 150 hanggang 200 dolphin at dugong ang namataan sa Sarangani Bay at iba pang kalapit na coastal areas habang isinasagawa ang marine mammal monitoring ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Region 12 noong August 25-28.

📍: DENR Soccsksargen



👍❤️👉 3.4K

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Source:

https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=2175913115898764&id=163550757135020&fs=0&focus_composer=0



Repatriated Luzon bleeding-hearts to be released in northern Luzon watershed

Published September 6, 2020 10:30pm

The Luzon bleeding-heart doves brought back from Singapore are set to be released in a watershed in northern Luzon, following a conservation breeding agreement.

According to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), 10 of the Luzon bleeding-hearts [were brought home to the Philippines and are set to be released back to wildlife.](#)

"Nagpadala tayo ng mga pairing stock sa Singapore for the conservation breeding. Triny nila kung paano magkakaroon ng reproduction under the controlled environment," Ricardo Calderon, director of the DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau, said in a report on GMA's "24 Oras Weekend" on Sunday.

"Near-threatened na 'yung status niya, ibig sabihin hindi na ganon kadami yung population niya, so para hindi dumating sa level ng extinction," he added.

In the report, Calderon noted that importance of having a healthy bird population as this also signifies the health of the country's natural resources.

"Pag maganda at marami 'yung ating mga bird population, ibig sabihin maganda 'yung ating mga kagubatan at 'pag maganda 'yung ating mga kagubatan, ibig sabihin marami tayong tubig, may panglaban tayo sa climate change," he said.

Moving forward, Calderon called on the public to let the birds be and enjoy their habitat.

"Let the birds and wildlife stay in the wild. 'Wag nating hulihin, 'wag nating barilin, 'wag nating paglaruan kasi mas maganda at mas maayos sila na nandoon sila sa kanilang natural habitat," he said. — **Jon Viktor D. Cabuenas/BM, GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/scitech/science/754459/repatriated-luzon-bleeding-hearts-to-be-released-in-northern-luzon-watershed/story/>



DENR employee shot dead

[Ed Amoroso](#) (The Philippine Star) - September 7, 2020 - 12:00am

LAGUNA , Philippines — An employee of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources was shot dead by an unidentified assailant in Bay town in this province on Friday.

Joseph Erwin Blanca, land inspector, died at the scene from a gunshot to the neck, according to Maj. Jose Tucio, town police chief.

Blanca and his companion Ann Leonar Chico were in a Nissan Sentra when the assailant waylaid them in Barangay Masaya.

The assailant did not harm Chico.

Witnesses said the assailant fled on foot and boarded a waiting motorcycle.

Police have yet to determine the motive for the killing.

Source: https://www.philstar.com/nation/2020/09/07/2040542/denr-employee-shot-dead?utm_term=Autofeed&utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR3C8AkNBpuAimkrFvZmOtPoPkYOsspb-mgZExBwK000ZRM4Iyo9jEX-w18#Echobox=1599410212



5 illegal loggers apprehended in Bulacan

By [Frederick Silverio](#)

September 6, 2020

MALOLOS: Five illegal loggers were arrested in the mountain town of Donya Remedios Trinidad (DRT) by joint operatives of the DRT Police and Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (Cenro) personnel on Tuesday. Col. Lawrence Cajipe, Bulacan police director, identified the arrested illegal loggers as William Obinguar, 46; Jhay-Ar Legaspi, 22; Ramon Gomez, 57; Alvin San Luis, 34; and Ariel Marcelo, 20, who are all residents of Barangay Sapang Bulak, DRT, Bulacan. Initial investigation showed that the suspects were arrested in Sitio Tanapan, Barangay Camachin in the said town by joint operatives of the DRT Police Station, led by Cpt. Demosthenes Desiderio Jr., and members of Cenro in Baliwag town, led by EMs. Nelson Suetos. Seized from the suspects were three chainsaws and an undetermined volume of illegally cut logs that were hauled off to Cenro in Baliwag town for proper inventory.



New flowering plant *Begonia beijnenii* discovered in Palawan

Published September 6, 2020, 10:10 AM

by [Manila Bulletin](#)

By Yu Pin Ang

Pink flowers and striped leaves caught the eyes of conservationists trekking up a river in Palawan's Port Barton way back in 2012.



NEW FLOWERING PLANT — The *Begonia beijnenii* is the 24th of its species discovered in Palawan. It is endemic to the municipality of San Vicente, and is distinct from other begonia species for being miniature in size and bearing variegated leaves.

"I immediately recognized it as a new *Begonia* species," recalled Jonah van Beijnen, a Dutch environmentalist who previously helped discover seven other *Begonias*, plus new dragonfly species in Palawan.

Begonias are flowering plants native to moist tropical climates. Over 2,000 species have been described, many of which are kept as ornamental plants.

"The plants were growing on an exposed crop of limestone and looked absolutely stunning." In acknowledgement for his conservation efforts across Palawan and advocacy to raise the Cleopatra's Needle Mountain Range to protected area status, *Begonia beijnenii* is named after Jonah van Beijnen who discovered the population.

Begonia beijnenii is the 24th species recognized from the little explored island of Palawan.

It was discovered a little after *Begonia cabanillasii*, the 23rd species which was published in July, 2020.

Endemic to the municipality of San Vicente in Palawan, it is almost immediately distinctive from other begonia species by being miniature in size and bearing variegated leaves.

Begonia beijnenii was described with the aid of Philippine Taxonomic Initiative (PTI), under the directive of Rene Bustamante, by Yu Pin Ang, Danilo N. Tandang, Rosario Rubite, and he himself.

Palawan's moist forests host incredible levels of diversity with many species still awaiting discovery.

Sadly, its forests – particularly biodiversity-rich lowland forests – are currently threatened by mining, deforestation and tourism-fueled land conversion.

Just 3% of the country's lowland forest remains.



PTI races against time and works to help describe new species and catalogue the floral biodiversity of Palawan.

“I’m deeply honored to have the plant named for me. More important than discovering new species is protecting them properly,” says van Beijnen.

“Port Barton hosts some of the last pristine coastal lowland and beach forests in Palawan. We hope this discovery can spur more conservationists to continue protecting the forests of Palawan.”



Environmental, social and governance factors take center stage

September 6, 2020 | 6:42 pm

Suits The C-Suite

By Clairma T. Mangangey

We are increasingly seeing the need for accelerated change in businesses to pave the way for recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic. Digital transformation has become necessary for many to continue operations, and the rules for capital markets are being rewritten as the pandemic's economic and social impact plays out worldwide.

This poses the question of how investors will direct capital to support economic recovery. Based on the findings of the 2020 EY Climate Change and Sustainability Services (CCaSS) Institutional Investor survey, institutional investors are raising the stakes in assessing company performance through environmental, social and governance (ESG) factors as they look to build insight into long-term value. Companies unable to meet investor expectations in terms of ESG factors risk losing access to capital markets.

ESG information is more important than ever. The survey showed that investors were increasingly dissatisfied with the information received on ESG risks compared to 2018. At 98%, the majority of the investors surveyed signaled a move to a more rigorous approach to evaluating non-financial performance, while 91% also identified how non-financial performance played a pivotal role in investment decision-making.

To meet the expectations of investors, companies must prioritize building a more robust approach to analyzing the risks and opportunities from climate change, build strong connections between financial and non-financial performance, and instill discipline into non-financial reporting processes and controls in order to build confidence and trust.

A ROBUST APPROACH TO TCFD RISK DISCLOSURES

Capital markets are heavily considering the potent impact of environmental disruption, with the failure to consider social and environmental risks leaving many to wonder how well-prepared capital markets are to withstand such shocks. Investors from the survey are building their understanding of the ESG reporting universe, factoring in disclosures made as part of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) framework in their investment decision-making. While regulators look to companies to play a leading role in rebuilding global economies, investors are more concerned about whether risks such as climate change will be sufficiently addressed.

The survey notes that 72% of investors conduct a methodical evaluation of non-financial disclosures, which is a significant jump from the 32% who said that they used a structured approach in 2018. Though the research shifts toward a structured approach, the quality of the approach remains critical. The research also shows significant investor appetite for a formal framework that allows companies to communicate intangible value, allowing investors to evaluate long-term value-creation strategies. Companies should ensure a connection between nonfinancial and financial reporting to provide investors a comprehensive view of their plans to create, communicate and measure long-term value.

CONNECTING FINANCIAL AND NONFINANCIAL INFORMATION

Expectation gaps between investors and companies could come at a significant price, where companies may find it harder to access capital, and investors may respond to a lack of risk insight by raising a company's risk profile. Investors may come to their own conclusions should companies choose not to engage in ESG or weigh performance solely towards positive aspects. A growing area of disconnect is how companies disclose ESG risks in their current business models, and research shows dissatisfaction with risk disclosures rose across all areas since 2018.



Environmental risk in particular is a key issue for investors, and when asked, the TCFD framework emerged as the most valuable way companies can report on this ESG information. The research also points to concerns about the provided information, with risk management highlighted as the area where investors received the least developed information. Some companies disclose that they have processes to manage climate risks in their organizational risk management system but described in general terms without the necessary connection between climate-related risks and overall risk management.

BUILDING TRUST AND CREDIBILITY IN NON-FINANCIAL REPORTING

With ESG performance seen as a core element in investment decisions, it is likely that the trend of using non-financial information to determine the value of a business is likely to continue in the post-pandemic world. Investors look not only at the resiliency of a business, but also on its focus on long-term value creation.

Climate change plays a key role in investor considerations because investors seek to understand what it means to companies, as well as gauge how business leaders adapt to climate risk due to its potential to disrupt supply chains and damage infrastructure.

Because ESG risks will play a key role in how investors understand a company's resilience maturity, credible ESG disclosures will be essential. Investors will only find environmental and climate change disclosures useful if they have confidence in what is reported. The investor community will therefore play an active part in driving companies toward non-financial assurance, and companies that will want to communicate their story to investors to access capital must respond to this demand.

EINFORCING A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

With investors increasingly using non-financial factors when it comes to assessing a company's performance, they also seek a formal framework to measure and communicate intangible value, as well as establish closer connections between ESG and mainstream financial reporting.

Rather than distracting us from the necessity of driving a sustainable future, the COVID-19 pandemic actually reinforces it. Transitioning to a decarbonized future is a critical component to long-term company resilience as well as that of the economy, while strong ESG frameworks and strategies will be critical to recovery. Recovery itself will be closely observed by investors, and companies and national economies with an agenda for climate-resilient growth and the ability to withstand systemic shocks will have the highest potential of being seen as an attractive prospect.

This article is for general information only and is not a substitute for professional advice where the facts and circumstances warrant. The views reflected in this article are the views of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of SGV, the global EY organization or its member firms.

Clairma T. Mangangey is the Climate Change and Sustainability Services Leader of SGV & Co.



Usec. Vergeire Warns Of Sanctions Vs. Improper Disposal Of Healthcare Wastes



By [Featuresdesk \(MD\)](#) September 4, 2020

Healthcare facilities that improperly dispose of healthcare wastes and used rapid test kits face sanctions, a health official said Wednesday.

In a virtual media forum, Department of Health (DOH) Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said healthcare wastes should be placed in a separate container approved by the environment department because its disposal is different from ordinary waste products.

Vergeire issued the warning after residents in Sampaloc, Manila found a sack of used rapid antibody test kits along M. Dela Fuente Street.

“Let us try to understand that these rapid test kits are healthcare wastes. Katulad niyan nalaglag doon sa kalye o baka hinahawakan lang ng mga nagkokolekta na walang (Like those [kits] which fell on the street or the collectors may have touched them without) gloves and they can easily get infections and there’ll be harm among the people,” Vergeire said.

Apart from the test kits, personal protective equipment used by healthcare workers, and other items used for the treatment of patients must be disposed of properly following healthcare waste disposal protocols, Vergeire added.

“They should be placed in a bag with proper label that they are healthcare wastes and there are designated places for healthcare wastes as approved by Department of Environment and Natural Resources,” she said.

She urged healthcare facilities to ensure proper disposal of healthcare wastes, saying these are hazardous and could cause harm to people.

Healthcare facilities that fail to comply with healthcare waste disposal protocols will receive a warning on their first violation from the DOH.

“We will suspend you if you still fail to comply, and, final will be revocation of your license, and aside from that kung may iba pang tatamaan na batas (other sanctions for violation of other laws) with regard to this healthcare waste,” Vergeire said. (PNA)

Source: <http://thephilippinepost.com/usec-vergeire-warns-of-sanctions-vs-improper-disposal-of-healthcare-wastes/?fbclid=IwAR2f-P7ZcKV3uivfs9xO4WDyJth1VqHKO6zrGDvNEmY8Yoe-kznP6aUcGZM>



Cruise liners fold sail until April

BY RAFFY AYENG

The blue seas remain murky for Filipino merchant sailors serving the cruise fleet, as some deployments are seen to commence only by April 2021 when the dreaded COVID-19 pandemic that had pounded the world

Turn to page A6



DAYORONNIE/POND NEWS ASIA

New normal hazard Quarantine periods throughout the world lessened environmental pollution but a new menace from discarded masks and other health equipment is on the rise.



UP experts: COVID curve has flattened but...

By [Wendell Vigilia](#) -September 7, 2020



THE Philippines has flattened the curve of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) even if it now has more than 230,000 cases, a member of a University of the Philippines research group said yesterday.

Dr. Guido David of the UP OCTA Research Team said the virus' reproduction number of 1.02 has gone down to 0.99 and 0.94 last week.

“Actually na-flatten na siya (It’s actually flattened),” David told CNN Philippines. “So nag-de-decrease pa siya and that is very good news. Ibig sabihin, na-su-sustain natin ‘yung flattening of the curve (So it’s decreasing and that’s very good news. That means we’re sustaining the flattening of the curve),” he said.

Despite the development, David cautioned the public against being “overly excited” as he warned that the trend can change at any time because “trends are not irreversible.”

“Ibig sabihin (which means), we could have another surge,” David said. “The virus is still here, we’re still getting around 3,000 cases per day and so we have to sustain the momentum, to sustain the gain. So we have to keep doing the right things and to not falter.”

While case doubling time has been improving, the UP Research Team is still looking at a projected 330,000 to 375,000 cases by the end of September.

The reproduction number or r-naught is the number of new infections estimated to stem from a single COVID-19 case while case doubling time is the number of days it takes for the number of cases and deaths to double.

David said the virus' positivity rate is also going down, from an average of over 4,000 daily cases in mid-August to 3,000 in the past few days.

Last week, David said the country may take a wrong turn if the curve does not flatten this week.

Likewise, David urged the government not to act hastily on proposals to further ease restrictions in the National Capital Region (NCR), which is currently under general community quarantine until the end of September.

“If we ever relax to MGCQ (modified general community quarantine), we should evaluate this carefully, we should think about it carefully,” he said.

HOME QUARANTINE

The Department of Health (DOH) will continue to allow home quarantine for asymptomatic and mild cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire has said.



Vergeire said there have been no changes in the DOH's protocols in handling asymptomatic and mild COVID-19 cases, contrary to the statement of National Task Force against COVID-19 Chief Implementer Secretary Carlito Galvez Jr.,

“We did not change our protocol. We still allow home quarantine provided that people who will do the home quarantine can satisfy the conditions,” said Vergeire.

“They have their own room, have their own toilet, have no members of the vulnerable population at home, and can be properly monitored by the Barangay Health Emergency Response Teams (BHERTs),” she added.

Similarly, Vergeire said they do not agree that the home quarantine policy is solely to blame for the community transmission of COVID-19.

She said there are other factors that have contributed to the rise in COVID-19 cases in the country.

“We have noted that home quarantine is among those that have contributed. Many are even saying that it contributed greatly. But there are still other factors why we have this community transmission, and not just due to home quarantine,” Vergeire said.

Galvez had blamed the practice of home quarantine as one of the main reasons for the widespread community transmission in Metro Manila as well as in other parts of the country.

Galvez said that home quarantine for asymptomatic and mild COVID-19 cases would be disastrous for the country. – ***With Gerard Naval***



Government debt hits P1.86 trillion in 7 months

[Mary Grace Padin](#) (The Philippine Star) - September 7, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The government's gross borrowings from January to July soared by more than 121 percent to P1.86 trillion from P840 billion in the same period last year as the country borrowed more to meet its pandemic needs, according to the Bureau of the Treasury (BTr).

The amount is equivalent to almost 62 percent of the country's P3 trillion borrowing program for the whole of 2020.

For July alone, government debt reached P134.53 billion, a dramatic turnaround from last year's figure, which settled in the negative territory due to the net repayment of domestic securities.

The Philippines is ramping up its borrowings to plug the deficit in its budget, which is expected to widen to P1.82 trillion or 9.6 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) due to weak revenue generation and increased spending requirements amid the pandemic.

In the first seven months, the bulk or P1.38 trillion of total borrowings came from domestic lenders, 125 percent higher than last year's P611.06 billion.

About P417.86 billion of the amount came from the issuance of Treasury bonds (T-bonds), while P347.26 billion came from the issuance of Treasury bills (T-bills). Another P310.77 billion was raised through the recent Retail Treasury Bond (RTB) sale.

This also includes the P300 billion short-term loan from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) under a repurchase agreement with the BTr.

Meanwhile, external debt from January to July amounted to P481.15 billion, 110.39 percent higher than last year's P228.69 billion.

Treasury data showed that P280.04 billion of the amount came in the form of program loans, while project loans from the country's multilateral and bilateral partners amounted to P15.05 billion.

In a separate report, the Treasury said P157.13 billion of the total program loans came from the Asian Development Bank.

This was followed by the World Bank, which extended P85.78 billion in loan financing and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank, which provided another P37.13 billion during the review period.

The BTr said some P67.33 billion of the total foreign debt was also raised from the euro-denominated bond sale conducted by the Philippines back in February, while P118.74 billion came from the country's global bonds sale in May.



As the government continued to increase its borrowings to fund coronavirus response efforts, the country's outstanding debt reached a new record-high of P9.16 trillion as of end-July.

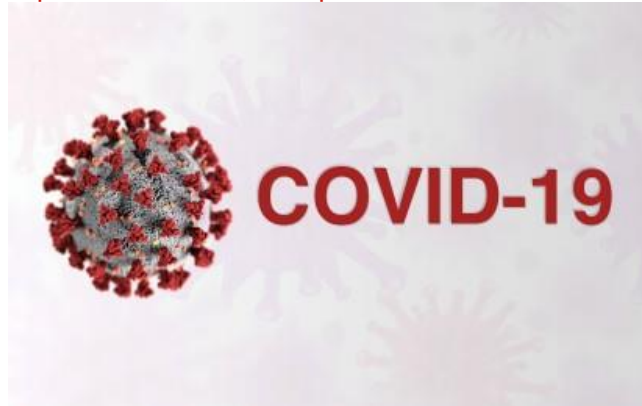
Budget documents showed that the debt pile is expected to hit P10.16 trillion by the end of 2020, before further increasing to P11.98 trillion in 2021.

These would translate to a debt-to-gross domestic product level of 53.9 percent for 2020 and 58.1 percent for 2021



PH logs 2,839 new Covid-19 cases; recoveries rise by 23K

By Ma. Teresa Montemayor September 6, 2020, 7:26 pm



MANILA – The Department of Health (DOH) on Sunday reported 2,839 new coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) infections, raising the overall tally to 237,365 with only 48,803 active cases.

The DOH said the additional cases reported were based on the total Covid-19 tests done by 96 out of 115 operational laboratories.

The 19 laboratories which failed to submit their data to the Covid-19 Data Repository System include: AFRIMS-Collaborative Molecular Laboratory (V. Luna), AL Molecular Diagnostic Laboratory, Amosup Seamen's Hospital, Bohol Containerized PCR Laboratory, Bulacan Medical Center, Butuan Medical Center, Calamba Medical Center, Dr. Jose N. Rodriguez Memorial Hospital and Sanitarium (Tala), Green City Medical Center, Ilocos Training Regional Medical Center (GX), Marilao Medical and Diagnostic Clinic, Mary Mediatrix Medical Center, Philippine Red Cross-Clark Mol Lab (Pampanga), Philippine Red Cross-Logistics and Training- Subic, Zambales, Philippine Red Cross- Molecular Biology Laboratory, Philippine Red Cross- PLMC Laboratory, Philippine Red Cross-Port Area, and Safeguard DNA Diagnostics.

It reported that of the active cases, about 88.6 percent are mild, 8 percent are asymptomatic, 1.4 percent severe, and 2 percent are critical.

The majority of the newly announced cases were from the National Capital Region (NCR) with 1,170 cases, Negros Occidental with 195, Laguna with 190 cases, Cavite with 182 cases, and Rizal with 154 cases.

"Of the 2,839 reported cases today, 2,302 or 81 percent occurred within the recent 14 days (August 24 - September 6, 2020) and the top regions with cases in the recent two weeks were NCR with 894 or 39 percent, Region 4A (Calabarzon) with 594 or 26 percent and Region 6 (Western Visayas) with 225 or 10 percent," the DOH said in its daily case bulletin.

The department also reported 23,074 new recoveries and 85 deaths, bringing the total number of recoveries to 184,687 and the number of deaths to 3,875.

"Of the 85 deaths, 29 occurred in September which is 34 percent, 33 in August which is 39 percent, 6 in July which is 7 percent, 3 in June which is 4 percent, 6 in May which is 7 percent, 7 in April which is 8 percent and 1 in March which is 1 percent and the deaths were from NCR with 41 or 48 percent, Region 7 (Central Visayas) which is 15 or 18 percent, Region 4A (Calabarzon) which is 9 or 11 percent, Region 8 (Eastern Visayas) which is 4 or 5 percent, Region 10 (Northern Mindanao) which is 4 or 5 percent, Region 3 (Central Luzon) which is 2 or 2 percent, Region 5 (Bicol) which is 2 or 2 percent, Region 2 (Cagayan Valley) which is 1 or 1 percent, Region 6 (Western Visayas) which is 1 or 1 percent, Region 9 (Zamboanga Peninsula) which is 1 or 1 percent, Region 12 (Soccsksargen) which is 1 or 1 percent, Region 4B (Mimaropa) which is 1 or 1 percent, BARMM which is 1 or 1 percent, Caraga which is 1 or 1 percent, and unknown region with 1 or 1 percent," the DOH said.

It added that some 44 duplicates that were removed from the total case count and of these, 28 recovered cases have been removed.



"Moreover, there were 27 cases that were previously reported as recovered but after final validation, they were deaths," the DOH said.

As of Saturday, the 89 licensed reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) laboratories and 28 licensed GeneXpert laboratories have conducted a total of 2,620,024 tests nationwide.

The DOH said it has a 21,000 total bed capacity dedicated to Covid-19 patients.

Occupied are about 48 percent of 1,800 intensive care unit beds; 44 percent of 13,500 isolation beds; and 49 percent of 5,700 ward beds.

About 29 percent of 2,200 ventilators are in use. **(PNA)**



6.4-magnitude quake hits Davao Occidental

Published September 7, 2020, 12:06 AM

by [Marjaleen Ramos](#)

A 6.4-magnitude earthquake struck Davao Occidental on Sunday night, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) reported.

The earthquake, which occurred at 11:23 p.m, was tectonic in origin and was traced 26 kilometers southeast of Don Marcelino, Davao Occidental.

The quake had a depth of 143 km, with the following registered intensities: Intensity V – General Santos City; Mati City; Intensity IV – Magsaysay, Davao del Sur; Koronadal City; Intensity III – Kidapawan City

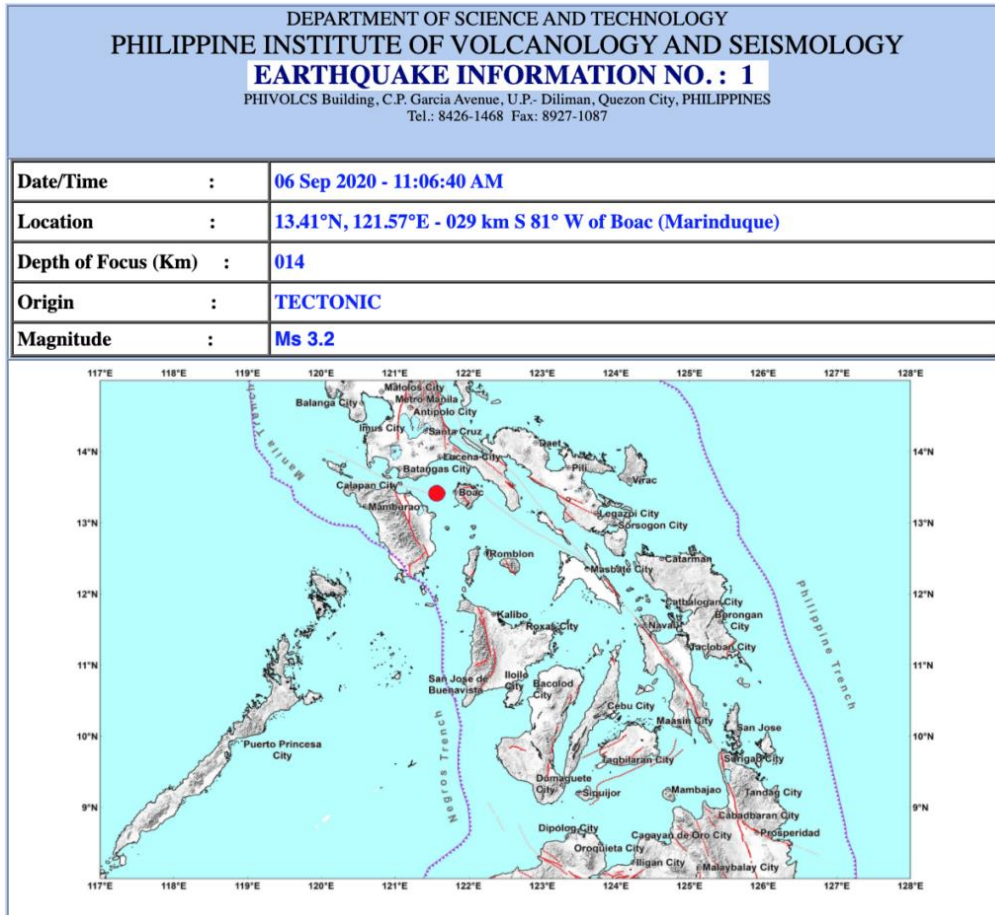
Phivolcs said the quake was also felt under the following instrumental Intensities: Intensity V – Alabel & Malungon, Sarangani; General Santos City; Intensity IV – Koronadal City, & Tupi, South Cotabato; Kiamba, Sarangani; Intensity III – Gingoog City; Intensity II – Bislig City; Intensity I – Cagayan de Oro City

The quake was not expected to cause any damage to property. However, aftershocks are likely to happen.



Boac, Marinduque niyanig ng lindol

By Ulat ng Bandera at Radyo Inquirer September 06, 2020 - 06:02 PM



Source: Phivolcs

Tumama ang magnitude 3.2 na lindol sa Marinduque, Linggo ng umaga.

Ayon sa Phivolcs, namataan ang episentro ng lindol sa layong 29 kilometers Southwest ng Boac bandang 11:06 ng umaga.

14 kilometro ang lalim ng lindol at tectonic ang origin.

Wala namang naidulot na pinsala sa Boac at iba pang karatig-bayan.

Sinabi rin ng Phivolcs na walang inaasahang aftershocks matapos ang pagyanig.



Water service interruption in QC barangays

Mark Demayo, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Sep 06 2020 01:27 PM



Residents in Barangay Holy Spirit, Quezon City collect water from a tanker on Sunday as certain areas in the city under water concessionaire Maynilad remain without water supply. At least 166,000 households in Quezon and Valenzuela cities will be affected as Maynilad announced the daily 14-hour interrupted service on Sept. 4-9 to repair a leak on one of their water pumps.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/multimedia/photo/09/06/20/water-service-interruption-in-qc-barangays>