

08 DECEMBER 2020, TUESDAY



**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**



# DENR OKs dredging of Cagayan River

Sandbars in 19 priority sites to be removed to ease water flow as gov't seeks long-term solution to flooding in Cagayan Valley

By: [Jhesset O. Enano](#) - Reporter / [@JhessetEnanoINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:35 AM December 08, 2020



**STOPPING FLOODS** Floodwaters topping the banks of the Cagayan River submerge the business center and residential areas of Tuguegarao City in this photo taken last month. The government will start dredging the river as an initial step to solve flooding in Cagayan Valley region. —DAVID TE/CONTRIBUTOR

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu has given the green light to dredge several sandbars along Cagayan River in a bid to widen the country's longest river after the widespread flooding caused by Typhoon "Ulysses" (international name: Vamco) in Cagayan and Isabela provinces last month.

The Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) identified 19 priority sites where sandbars could be cleared in last week's meeting of the Build Back Better Task Force, which was tasked with streamlining the government's posttyphoon rehabilitation efforts. 'Obstructions'

"Removing these obstructions is the most immediate measure that should be undertaken in order to avoid a repeat of massive flooding in the region, particularly the provinces of Cagayan and Isabela," Cimatu said in a statement.

The dredging operations will immediately improve water flow along the river while the government explores other medium- and long-term solutions for the flooding in Cagayan Valley, he said. A sandbar is a ridge or deposit of sand that is formed along the shore of the river through currents or waves.

Four of the 19 sandbars recommended as priority sites are in Alcala town, while two each are found in Tuguegarao City and in the towns of Solana, Iguig, Gattaran, Enrile and Amulung. A sandbar each has been identified in the towns of Aparri, Sto. Niño and Lal-lo.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said on Monday that the sandbars covered at least 270 hectares and could yield 8.1 million cubic meters of sand. River mouth

According to engineer Jerry Fano of the DPWH-Unified Project Management Office, Cagayan River has an average width of 400 meters, but areas with sandbars have narrowed the water body at an average of 180 m.



The sandbars have also affected river depth, according to the DENR. For instance, the river's mouth in Aparri town is now 1 m to 3 m deep in the estuary area. "It is imperative that we dredge the river mouth first," Fano said during the task force's meeting.

Following deadly floods across Luzon due to consecutive typhoons, the government has pushed for the dredging of the Cagayan and Bicol rivers to avoid a repeat of the disasters.

Cimatu earlier approved the request of Cagayan Gov. Manuel Mamba to dredge some 30 kilometers of Cagayan River. The project is set to check the bottleneck sites of the river known as "Magapit Narrows," which meanders through Lal-lo, Alcala and Gattaran.

Other solutions being eyed for Cagayan River are the construction of flood control dams, installation of retaining walls along its slopes, and reforestation of the watershed and easement areas. INQ



# Dredging of sandbars approved

By ...

-December 8, 2020

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has approved the dredging of sandbars in 19 priority sites along Cagayan River to prevent a repeat of the devastating floods in the region during the onslaught of Typhoon Ulysses last month.

The DENR said the sandbars can yield 8.1 million cubic meters of water with a coverage area of 2.7 million square meter or 270 hectares.

DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu said dredging of sandbars will immediately improve water flow velocity while medium and long-term solutions including the construction of flood control dams, installation of revetment structures along slopes and reforestation of watershed and easement areas are being laid out.

“We should begin removing these sandbars even while awaiting the selection of private contractors to do the dredging of the river,” Cimatu said.

Meanwhile, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) assured the availability of 35 dredging and excavation equipment for the effort, four of which were deployed in Tuguegarao City. – J. Macapagal



# DENR halts land development, construction inside Marikina ‘protected area’

By Jonathan L. Mayuga

December 8, 2020

Secretary Roy A. Cimatu has ordered a moratorium on building construction and other land development projects within the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape (UMRBPL) pending a comprehensive assessment of the Protected Area.

DENR Assistant Secretary for Climate change Ricardo L. Calderon, concurrent director of the DENR’s Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), said that the order covers the entire 26,125-hectare UMRBPL, except for those with tenurial instruments to show as proof of their occupancy in the protected area.

The decision came more than a week after the Rizal Provincial government temporarily suspended small-scale mining and quarry operations, including related land development activities within the UMRBPL.

In issuing the stop order, those with permits issued by the local government of Rizal, Governor Rebecca Ynares had issued an appeal to the DENR to do the same for companies with permits coming from the DENR.

Calderon, who joined a site inspection in the UMRBPL Wednesday last week, said Cimatu wants the agency to “sort out” the conflicting land claims in the UMRBPL, which is within the 67,409-hectare Marikina Watershed area.

Calderon said many areas in the Marikina Watershed are alienable and disposable land, and some are already titled private properties.

“There are government facilities there. There’s even a jail in the area,” Calderon said.

Upon the site inspection, Calderon confirmed the sorry-state of UMRBPL, particularly the multiple-use zone where tree-poaching, kaingin, and charcoal-making is reportedly rampant. These activities have long undermined the effort of the DENR to reforest the watershed, whose poor or sorry-state is being blamed for the flooding in Metro Manila, such as during the heavy rainfall-induced by Typhoon Ondoy in 2009 and the most recent, Typhoon Ulysses last month.

There are a total of 16 tenurial instruments and proclamations within the UMRBPL. This is on top of the 3,000-hectare Masungi Georeserve forged by a memorandum of agreement signed by former DENR Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez and the Masungi Georeserve Foundation Inc.

The UMRBPL is shared by 9 barangays of 5 towns in the province of Rizal. These are Barangays San Juan, San Jose and Calawis in Antipolo; Barangay Pinugay in Baras; Barangays Puray, Maskap, and San Rafael in Rodriguez; Pintong Bukawe in San Mateo; and Barangay Cuyambay in Tanay.

Calderon said technically, there are really illegal occupants in the UMRBPL whose land tenure instruments are questionable. This is on top of those who encroach and occupy portions of land in the Marikina watershed.



According to Calderon, the DENR chief also wanted a review of the current zoning of the UMRBPL with the hope of increasing the current 8,000-hectare under strict protection.

He said increasing the strict protection zone means somehow balancing it with the 17,000 hectares multi-use zone in the UMRBPL.

“Maybe we need to increase the strict protection zone in reference to the flooding, protection of natural habitat in the area,” he told the BusinessMirror in a telephone interview.

Calderon said upon ocular inspection last week, Cimatú has ordered a stoppage of the various activities inside the Upper Marikina River Basin, including the establishment of subdivisions, and building construction in the area.

The order will be implemented by DENR Regional Executive Director Gilbert Gonzales, who is the concurrent head of Protected Area Management Board of the UMRBPL.

“This moratorium is for areas with no appropriate tenures in the UMRBPL,” he said.

A memorandum is set to be handed down by DENR Undersecretary Juan Miguel Cuna to this effect, he said.

Next week, a composite team will visit the area together with the Build Back Better Task Force to validate the proposal for the various activities in the UMRBPL.

“There are several components, such as enhancing of existing forest cover in the easement areas, easement recovery and riverbank stabilization, soil water conservation measures to the establishment of a series of check dams in the tributaries of the main river system to minimize the siltation and enforcement of all environment and natural resources laws in the area,” he said.

The plan, he said, is consistent with the Marikina River Basin Master Plan and the Protected Area Management Board Master Plan.

The official said the plan will be submitted by the DENR chief to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) possibly for inclusion in the next budget cycle to allow the government to go full swing with the effort to rehabilitate the UMRBPL next year.

Calderon added that the DENR chief is working with the DBM to institutionalize funding for the protection of the UMRBPL, which he considers of utmost importance because of its proximity to Metro Manila.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/12/08/denr-halts-land-development-construction-inside-marikina-protected-area/>



# DENR may lift quarrying suspension

By: [Karl R. Ocampo](#) - Reporter / [@kocampoINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:26 AM December 07, 2020

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is considering lifting the suspension imposed on quarry operators in Albay, particularly those around Mt. Mayon, the country's most active volcano.

Last month, the agency recommended to the provincial government of Albay the suspension of quarry operations in the area until its task force—led by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB)—finished its probe on the extent and impact of quarrying on the river systems on the slopes of Mt. Mayon.

Some residents believe that the recent lahar avalanche from the volcano that killed at least six people and buried communities was triggered not only by Super typhoon “Rolly” (international name: Goni) but also by local quarrying operations.

But in a statement released by the DENR, it said there was now an “urgent need” to empty and restore the capacity of the river channels around Mt. Mayon, which was the basis of the MGB's recommendation to finally lift the moratorium.

MGB Director Wilfredo Moncano said that of the 106 quarry operators covered by the suspension, 91 were found to be compliant while only 15 have permit violations. INQ



# DENR greenlights first large-scale offshore mining in the country

By: [Karl R. Ocampo](#) - Reporter / [@kocampoINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 03:34 PM December 07, 2020



Image shows JDVC's offshore mining operation to be conducted off Gonzaga town in the province of Cagayan. Image from JDVC website.

MANILA, Philippines — The government has greenlighted the first large-scale offshore mining in the country set to begin operations in Cagayan in January next year – considered a boon for the mineral sector, but a bane to the residents who remain wary of how the gigantic project would affect their communities.

A statement was released to the press on Saturday stating that JDVC Resources Corporation, a majority-owned subsidiary of Apollo Global Capital, is now ready to proceed with its offshore mining operations after securing the necessary permits from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Under its Mineral Production Sharing Agreement, it is allowed to mine within an area of 1,903 hectares in the seabed off Cagayan, located 14 kilometers offshore from the municipality of Gonzaga.

The company also forged an agreement with billionaire Frank Lao of the Choi Garden restaurant group, who is also engaged in nickel trading. Lao is set to provide two deep-sea mining vessels for the operation, with a net capacity of 10,000 tons per day. Once the vessels arrive in January, the offshore mining will proceed.

Ore reserves in the area were projected to reach around 632 million tons of magnetite – a kind of iron-oxide mineral used to make steel.

According to JDVC's website, the extraction process would yield “no hazard at all and no social complication,” stressing that there would also be no explosives that would be used that may bring permanent damage to the seafloor.

## Locals not consulted?

But residents early on have been wary of JDVC since it operated in the province of Cagayan as part of its exploration activities.

In a previous report by the Inquirer in 2018, residents have been demanding answers from the government on how JDVC was allowed in their area without consultation with local communities.





Environmental groups also stressed that magnetite is toxic and that offshore mining may bring irreversible damage to the ecosystem.

Research on the effects of deep-sea mining has been scant that even the 168-nation International Seabed Authority under the United Nations' Convention on the Law of the Sea – of which the Philippines is a member – has yet to finalize a code that could eventually lead to such commercial mining.

In August, a study led by University of Hawaii oceanographer Craig Smith showed possible adverse effects that may be brought by mining the ocean floor.

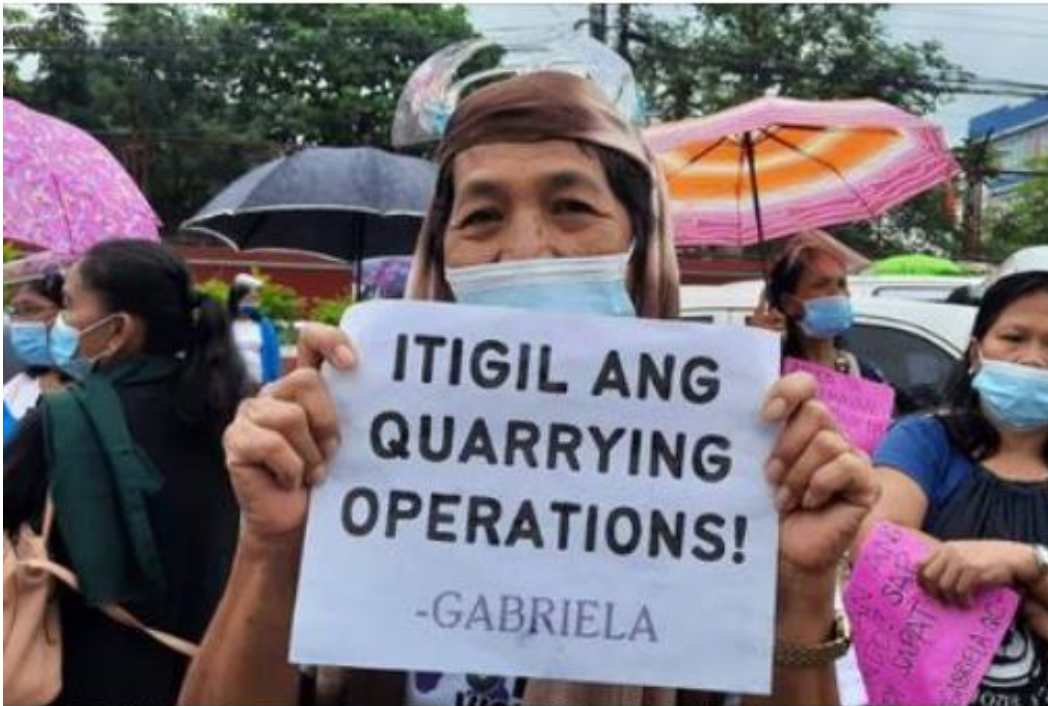
“Many deep-sea ecosystems will be very sensitive to seafloor mining, are likely to be impacted over much larger scales than predicted by mining interests, and local and regional biodiversity losses are likely with the potential for species extinction,” he said.

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Nagprotesta ang iba't ibang sektor sa harap ng tanggapan ng DSWD upang ipanawagan ang ayuda at hustisya para sa mga nasalanta ng sunud-sunod na bagyo. Naghain din si Gabriela Rep. Arlene Brosas ng resolusyon sa Kamara na naglalayong maglaan ng P10,000 na ayuda sa mga pamilyang naapektuhan ng mga bagyo. | via Ria Fernandez



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# 14 metro waterways are most improved estero finalists

Published December 7, 2020, 2:15 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

Fourteen waterways around Metro Manila have been chosen as finalists for the inaugural “Gawad Taga-Ilog: Search for Most Improved Estero in Metro Manila.”

Led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-National Capital Region (DENR-NCR), the search aims to recognize the contribution and efforts of local governments, barangays in particular, in keeping their esterros (waterways) and water bodies clean and trash-free.

It also recognizes the active participation of the Metro Manila local governments in the ongoing cleanup and rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

The 14 estero-finalists are:

- Amorsolo Creek – Makati City
- Bangkulasi River – Navotas City
- Pinagsabugan Creek – Malabon City
- Sapang Alat River – Caloocan City
- Park Creek 22 – Marikina City
- Magdaong River – Muntinlupa City
- Tartar Creek – Las Piñas City
- Ermitaño Creek – San Juan City
- Maytunas Creek – Mandaluyong City
- Estero de Paco – Manila City
- Parian Creek – Pasig City
- Lingunan Creek – Valenzuela City
- Ilang-Ilang Creek – Quezon City
- Estero de Sto. Niño – Parañaque City

According to the DENR-NCR, the 14 esterros will be evaluated according to the following criteria: physical improvement; social mobilization and transformation; sustainability and replicability; and partnerships.

The judges get to pick three winners based on the said criteria.

One estero will also get the chance to be chosen by netizens by, first, liking DENR-NCR’s Facebook page, and second, by hitting the “like” or “heart” button of the photo of the estero of their choice.

Voting will take place from December 3, 2020 to December 26, 2020 and the photo with the most number of likes/heart at the end of the voting period will win the People’s Choice Award.

The announcement of the winners will be on December 28, 2020.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/12/07/14-metro-waterways-are-most-improved-estero-finalists/>



# House panel okays creation of gov't agency to protect Sierra Madre

Published December 7, 2020, 4:51 PM

by [Charissa Luci-Atienza](#)

The House Committee on Government Enterprises and Privatization approved on Monday (Dec. 7) the proposed creation of a special government body that would oversee, manage, and protect the 500 kilometer-long Sierra Madre mountain range.

In a virtual meeting, the House panel, chaired by Parañaque 1st District Rep. Eric Olivarez approved House Bill No. 5634, which calls for the creation of a Sierra Madre Development Authority (SMDA). The measure is principally authored by House Assistant Majority Leader and Rizal 2nd District Rep. Fidel Nograles.

In his sponsorship speech, Nograles asked his colleagues to approve HB 5634, which seeks to enhance the protection and development of the Sierra Madre region.

“Through the Sierra Madre Development Authority, we can further strengthen not only the protection that the Sierra Madre deserves, but a wholistic approach to enhance development of indigenous resources in the Sierra Madre region to its fullest potentials for economic development in order to raise the standard of living of our people,” he said.

He laments that the lack of implementation of environmental protection laws vis-a-vis the lack of regulation for human activities in the area contribute to the continued forest degradation and dissipation of natural resources.

“It is necessary that all areas in the Sierra Madre region are clearly delineated and classified so that human activities are well-defined to determine whether these activities will be disallowed for conservation or allowed in the area for development, subject to the proper regulatory controls,” Nograles, a Harvard-trained lawyer, said.

“Those areas in the Sierra Madre region that can be used for economic activities also need immediate protection and proper regulation in order to further enhance development and economic growth, so that the general public can reap the full benefit of the bountiful resources,” he added.

Representatives from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) expressed full support to the measure.

Cagayan Governor Manuel Mamba also rallied behind the passage of Nograles' bill. It was Pangasinan 6th District Rep. Tyrone Agabas, who moved for the approval of the HB 5634 subject to style. The motion was seconded by Bataan 2nd district Rep. Jose Enrique Garcia III.

Under HB 5634, the proposed SMDA is tasked to conduct a comprehensive survey of the physical and natural resources of the Sierra Madre region and draft a comprehensive plan to conserve and utilize such resources in order to promote the region's social and economic development.

The SMDA is also mandated to provide the machinery for extending the necessary planning, management, and technical assistance to prospective and existing investors in the region; provide recommendations to the proper agencies regarding the financing and technical support to be given to agricultural, industrial, and commercial projects; and assess and approve all plans, programs, and projects proposed by local government offices/agencies within the region related to the development of the mountain range.



Among the other functions of the SMDA are to plan, program, finance and undertake infrastructure projects such as river, flood, and tidal control work, waste water and sewerage work, dams and water supply, roads, irrigation, housing and related work; and undertake studies on the conservation, improvement, exploration, development, and maintenance of the Sierra Madre Mountain Range.

Nogralles' bill provides that the SMDA will be led by a nine-man Board of Directors (BOD) to be chaired by the Executive Secretary and vice-chaired by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) Director General.

Sitting as members of the BOD are the secretaries of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Department of Trade and Industry, and the Department of Energy; the Chairperson of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples; a provincial governor representing the provinces comprising the Sierra Madre Region; a city or municipal mayor representing the cities and municipalities comprising the Sierra Madre Region; and the General Manager of the SMDA.

HB 5634 authorizes the President to appoint the SMDA General Manager who will be tasked to manage the operations of the Authority.



## Benguet Corporation's TSF dam opposed



**BARRICADE.** Itogon residents, particularly those from the lower stream, are opposing the raising of Benguet Corp's TSF dam 2 by another seven meters, fearing that the tailing pond might breach and spill toxic mine waste, endangering lives and properties. (JJ Landingin)

### [LAUREN ALIMONDO](#)

December 8, 2020

AS DUMP trucks carry loads of sand for the raising of the dam embankment of Benguet Corporation's (BC) Tailings Storage Facility 2 (TSF 2), stakeholders of Itogon piled up rocks to stop the project.

The lower downstream community composed of three barangays in the town joined for the call to stop the plan to raise the dam level of TSF 2 in Itogon, Benguet.

Last October, BC notified the community and Itogon officials before the implementation of the project and said considering all issues and concerns raised were clarified, they claim there are no other hindrances to further delay the implementation of the raising of the dam embankment of TSF.

The company said it will resume the dam raising activities the soonest time possible in order to conclude it before the onset of the heavy rains and typhoons, adding the dam raising is vital for the protection, safety, and integrity for the safe impoundment of tailings materials to the TSF 2 to avoid overspill.

The enhancement is up to a maximum of 775 meters but it will be used only up to 773 meters as the additional two meters will be maintained as a free board.

In a letter addressed to Itogon Mayor Victorio Palangdan, Lower Downstream Communities in Itogon, Municipal Council of Itogon, barangay officials of the three barangays on October 13, 2020, BC's Resident Manager Valeriano Bongalos Jr. and administrative manager Lawyer Froilan Roger Lawilao sai the Mines Geosciences Bureau-Cordillera Administrative Region (MGB-CAR), together with the Environment Management Bureau (EMB-CAR) and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP-CAR), has issued their respective answers regarding the issue.

On August 28, Palangdan lifted the stoppage order in reference to the raising of the dam embankment of the company's TSF 2, which was voluntarily put in abeyance by the company in compliance with the stoppage order issued by the mayor on August 5 pending acquisition of required permits and also for the clarification of issues and concerns raised by the Lower Downstream Communities, the local government unit and other stakeholders.

BC said that on September 10, the MGB-CAR responded that it has no objection for the dam enhancement activities as it fully authorized with the issuance of the Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) issued by the EMB and was approved by the Mine Rehabilitation Fund Committee.

"On September 7 this year, NCIP-CAR also issued legal opinion declaring that the occupation of the parcels of the land where the TSF2 is located constructed falls within the ambit of vested property rights under Section 56 of RA 8371 and the Company need not secure the Free Prior Informed Consent (FPIC)," BC said.



## Background

The EMB had issued an ECC to the company to raise the dam's level to 775 meters above sea level to accommodate more tailings to come from its existing operation.

The mining firm's current operation, the Acupan Contract Mining Project (ACMP) conceptualized on 2002, was formed after request from the community and endorsement from the local government and MGB-CAR, according to Lawilao.

It is a form of a community-based project, one-of-a-kind partnerships with the IPs and community who formed themselves into associations where they are allowed to mine identified mining areas at the underground.

The production after being processed and sold to the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas is shared 60 percent in favor of the community associations and the rest to BC.

The members of the community-based associations are small-scale miners/displaced miners or employees after the suspension of the big operation in 1992.

Lawilao said the company constructed three dams, TSF 1, 2, and 3, adding that the other two dams were used during their previous operations, with the TSF 2 utilized for their current operation.

The mining firm and MGB-CAR Director Fay Apil said the mining firm has the documents to implement the raising of the level of TSF dam 2 but the challenge lies on the opposition, as they claim the project is not safe.

Talks with the stakeholders of the town started since 2013 and led to issuance of a Memorandum of Agreement with the lower downstream communities, which involve Barangays Dalupirip, Poblacion and Tinongdan, who agreed to the raising of the level of the dam to two meters back in 2014.

On February 2, 2020, the lower downstream communities in a petition said the company commenced its dam raising activities for TSF 2 on February 1, and as a response, they called for the immediate stop of any activities and abandon the dam raising project.

"While we have been very supportive of the corporate initiatives and mining operations of BC for the past decades, we nevertheless deeply concerned about the structural integrity as well as social and environmental impacts of raising the Tailings dam no. 2 which constitute the reason for this petition," the petitioners stated.

Petitioners further asked for the various agencies to provide appropriate actions, including for EMB to revoke the ECC for the project, for MGB-CAR to withdraw order requiring BCI to increase the height of the structure, and for the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples to require and not to exempt the company in adhering the process of Free Prior and Informed Consent for the said project.

The mining firm was also asked to improve and construct the appropriate drain tunnels and penstocks to contain the volume of water and debris coming from Balatoc and Ambalanga rivers, complete the unfinished TD 2 Spillway, to submit an approved Final Mine Rehabilitation and Abandonment Plan with the corresponding approved budget, fully settle unpaid legitimate claims attributed to the dam's construction and to provide the funding requirement and implement the Social Development Management Programs backlogs due to the host communities.

The petition was also supported by the local government after it issued a stoppage order on August 5 to the activities in TSF 2 until such time the company secure necessary documents including a building permit.

## Third party consultant

A tailings storage facility is a structure built for holding mine wastes wherein large-scale mining companies are mandated by law to have their own TSF before the start of its operations.

After the mining company was given ECC, another assessment was conducted by a third-party consultant.

For the Tailings Storage Facility 1, 2, 3 of the mining firm, the AMH Philippines Consultants conducted an assessment of the stability of all the three tailings dams.

In its May 2017 report, AMH said the dams passed the standards and is stable.



BC reiterated that the raising of the dam embankment is not intended merely for the continuance of the Acupan Contract Mining Operation but it is a major component for the maintenance of the integrity and safe operation of TSF 2 meant to eliminate possible risks to the Lower Downstream Communities.

"Another re-assessment has been scheduled by the company as a regular means in checking the stability of the dam including the other existing environmental facilities in the company," BC added.

### **Decision of majority 'will prevail'**

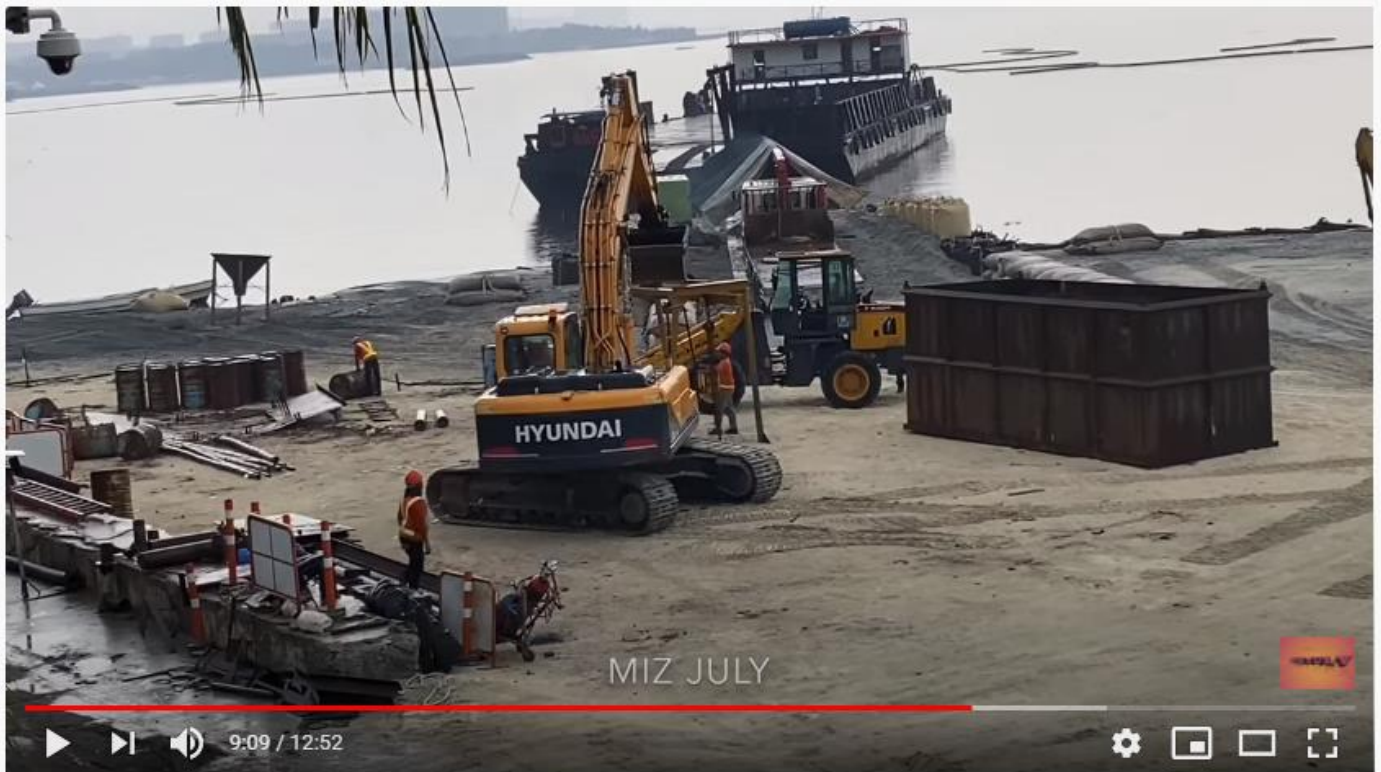
Addressing the residents of Itogon, Palangdan on December 6 said he understand the fear of the people that the dam will collapse and will destroy the river going to the three barangays.

"We should take this the legal process, because we have a court. We are still governed by laws and not by men. Dapat agfile tayu against the Benguet Corporation or datayu nga nagbarricade they can also file a case against us for coercion or some other cases," the mayor said.

He said the Municipal Council convened on December 7 together with the concerned agencies and the mining firm and concerned residents to clarify issues concerning the project.

"If you are a corporation going business (in Itogon) let us live together, nu ada madi, then it's the decision of the majority that will prevail," he said.





MANILA BAYWALK

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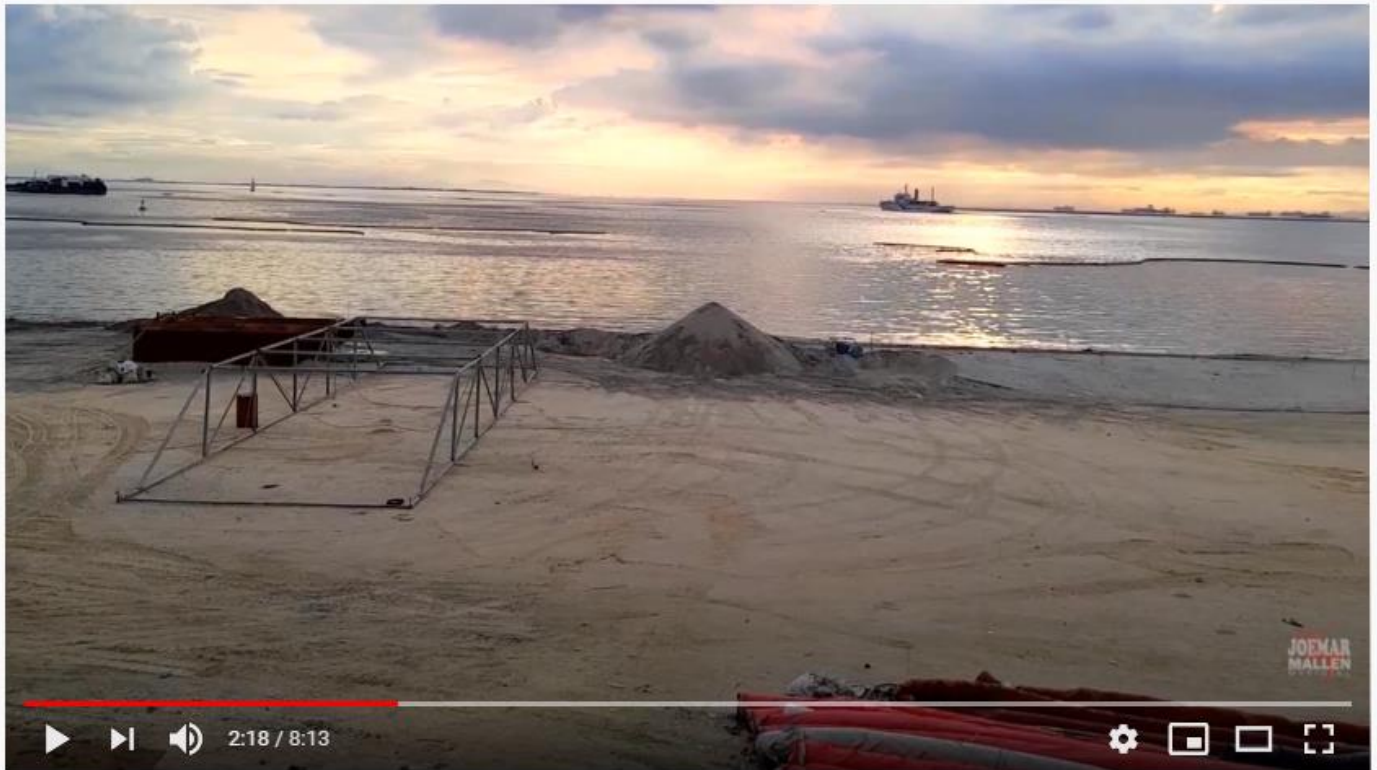
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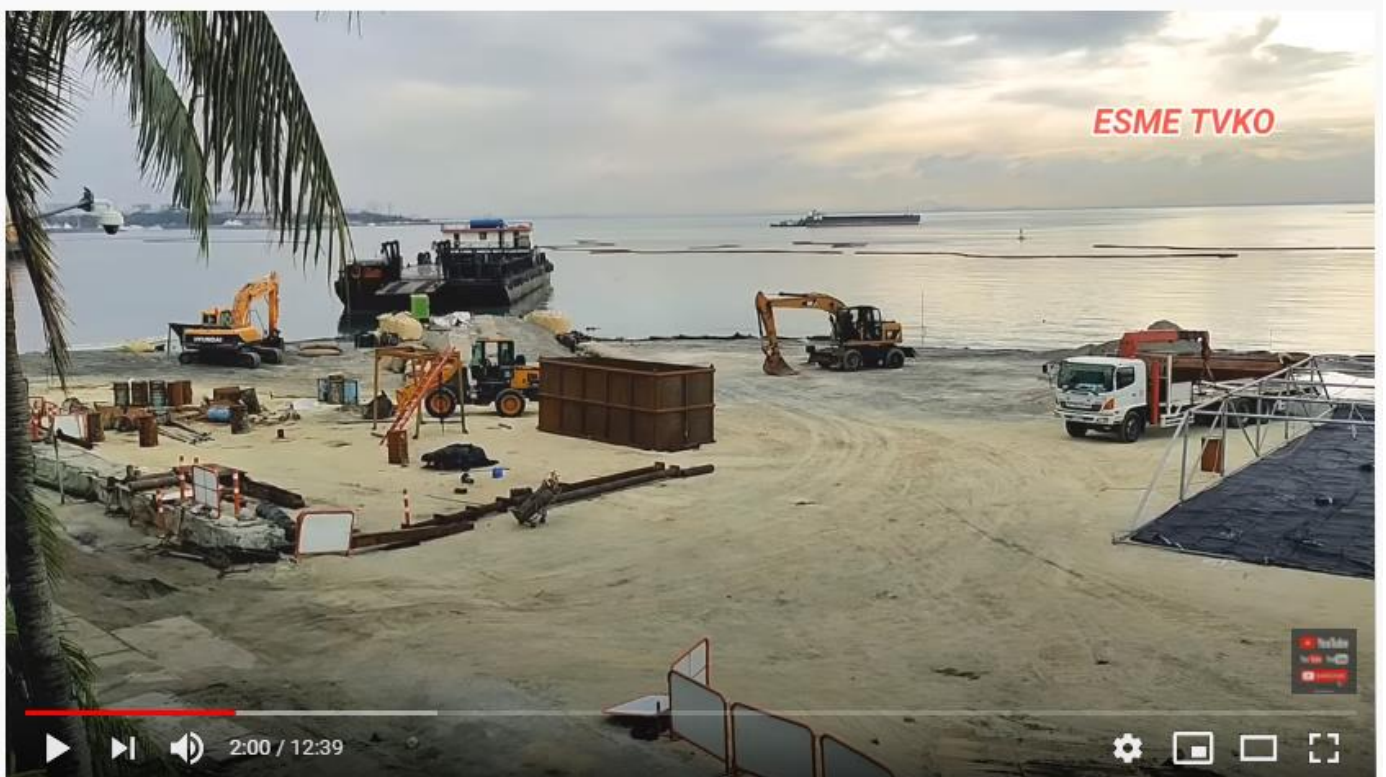
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MANILA BAY

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MANILA BAY

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# 'HUWAG PURO DOLOMITE' | Environmental group slams Congress, DENR for lack of climate change action

December 7, 2020 , 09:42 AM

(December 7, 2020) – An environmental group welcomed the adoption of resolutions declaring a climate change emergency after several typhoons battered the Philippines recently, but lamented the lack of concrete actions from the government.

Green Thumb Coalition spokesperson Jaybee Garganera said on Monday that while they acknowledge the House of Representatives' initiative to further protect the environment, there are still lots to be done, especially in preventing illegal logging and abusive mining.

"Mukhang meron pa tayong puwedeng gawin na mas maganda at mas kapaki-pakinabang sa lahat. Malaki ang kulang at gusto nating bigyan ng boses ang mga naapektuhan ng baha dahil sa pagtotroso at pagmimina. Mananawagan po kami. Baka may mahalaga o kongkretong hakbang ang gobyerno," said Garganera on *Ted Failon and DJ Cacha sa Radyo5*.

He also called out several members of the Congress who are part of mining companies, which hinders the conception of environmental restrictions.

"Ang mga Zamora may minahan, si Mike Defensor may mining company din. Ang mga Gatchalian, Pichay, Pimentel, Barbers, mga may-ari o major investors (sa mining companies). Kaya minsan o madalas hindi maalagaan ang kalikasan kasi ang mga gumagawa ng polisiya natin may corporate agenda o interests na conflict sa trabaho nila na gumawa ng batas," said Garganera.

He also blasted the Department of Energy and Natural Resources (DENR) for allegedly just sitting around.

"Dapat kumilos din ang pangunahing ahensya na nagpapatupad din nito. Hello, DENR kumilos naman po tayo! Hindi lang puro dolomite. May magagawa ang DENR para hindi na maulit ang Ondoy, Ulysses, pati mga pagbaha," said Garganera.

DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu asked President Rodrigo Duterte last month to certify as urgent a proposed measure creating an enforcement bureau that would ensure the enactment of environmental laws instead of just relying on the Philippine National Police or the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The stricter implementation of environmental laws is something the Green Thumb Coalition has also been passionately pushing for.

"Ang dami nating batas. Nangunguna tayo sa buong mundo pagdating sa environmental laws pero malaking kakulangan ang pagpapatupad. Baka tamad sila (government officials) o baka kakuntsaba sila," said Garganera.

(Kiko Demigillo/PM)

Source: [https://news.tv5.com.ph/breaking/read/huwag-puro-dolomite-environmental-group-slams-congress-denr-for-lack-of-climate-change-action?fbclid=IwAR31F1-9HaYkLIF\\_A9UJj-Rpu86oCwUfKXyPpPYg9QFyNsqTLBX7ARIYIFI](https://news.tv5.com.ph/breaking/read/huwag-puro-dolomite-environmental-group-slams-congress-denr-for-lack-of-climate-change-action?fbclid=IwAR31F1-9HaYkLIF_A9UJj-Rpu86oCwUfKXyPpPYg9QFyNsqTLBX7ARIYIFI)



## 5th anniversary of the Paris Agreement: A renewed call for urgent climate action

[DIPLOMATIC POUCH](#) - [Nicolas Galey](#) (The Philippine Star) - December 8, 2020 - 12:00am

Recently again, the Philippines was sadly and severely hit by extreme climatic events whose frequency and destructiveness continue to intensify year after year. Indeed, in a span of only a month, Typhoons Quinta, Rolly and Ulysses caused significant human and material damage in the country.

In response, the House of Representatives adopted a resolution calling for the declaration of a national climate emergency in the Philippines. This represents an acknowledgement of the reality of climate change and its causes in a world where too many people still believe that climate change does not exist, or is not caused by human activities.

On Dec. 12, 2015, during the COP 21 United Nations climate change summit held in Paris, 195 countries and the European Union adopted a historic agreement that deals with greenhouse gas emissions mitigation, climate change adaptation and green finance.

Under the Paris Agreement, each State signatory is called to outline its own actions to mitigate the impact of climate change by submitting its Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) – a reflection of the country's ambition for reducing its emissions while taking into account its domestic circumstances and capabilities. State parties are expected to submit their respective NDCs by the end of this year.

This Saturday, Dec. 12, 2020, we will celebrate the 5th anniversary of the Paris Agreement. It will be an important moment in an international climate calendar that has been disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and a major opportunity to put the climate back at the heart of the global agenda. On this occasion, France, the United Nations, the United Kingdom, Chile and Italy will co-host the Climate Ambition Summit – an international high-level virtual event that will gather world leaders in order to demonstrate new, enhanced ambitions in the fight against climate change.

On this same date, the French embassy in Manila, together with the German embassy and the regional representations of the European Union and the United Nations Development Program in Fiji, will co-organize an online celebration of this anniversary with the government of the Marshall Islands, which was the very first country in the world to submit an updated NDC in November 2018. This initiative aims to commemorate the adoption of the Paris Agreement five years ago through an event which will highlight the specific climate change-related challenges in the Pacific region.

While the Philippines is currently in the process of finalizing its Intended Nationally Determined Contribution (INDC) into a fully-fledged NDC, it is worth noting that the country has made ambitious announcements towards a stronger program in favor of sustainable development. One recent example is the issuance of a moratorium on new coal power projects, as well as allowing 100 percent foreign ownership for large-scale geothermal projects, which is a welcome signal for investors and signifies that the Philippines is taking a turn to embrace renewable energy.



In addition, the Philippines has become the first Asian country to join the Alliance for Rainforests – an open coalition of countries spearheaded by France and its partners that share the same advocacy for the conservation, restoration and sustainable management of the world’s tropical forests. The protection of biodiversity is of course part of a holistic response to climate change mitigation and adaptation.

As we move forward, 2021 will be a decisive year for global climate and biodiversity.

In January 2021, France will host a new edition of the One Planet Summit, which will be an opportunity to take action in favor of biodiversity and to raise the level of international action on environmental preservation and climate protection, while providing answers to questions arising from the current global health crisis.

Later in the year, the IUCN World Conservation Congress will be held in Marseille, France to bring together world leaders, set priorities and steer conservation and sustainable development efforts.

Last but not the least, the 26th Conference of Parties for Climate will take place in Glasgow, United Kingdom in November 2021 while the Conference of Parties for Biodiversity is scheduled to be held in May in Kunming, China.

In this very crucial time for the planet, it is more important than ever to build the world of tomorrow – one that is more inclusive, more sustainable and more resilient. All the commitments taken during international events, in the past and those to come, must be turned into concrete actions. As we have done for many years through the funding of the French Development Agency and other French institutions and through bilateral cooperation in the areas of climate, environment, agriculture and health, France stands ready to support the Philippines in the fulfilment of their projects.

Climate change knows no borders. It is our belief that multilateral cooperation, together with a shared sense of responsibility, is key to ensuring a better future. It is not too late to act. We welcome and support the Philippines’ commitment to continue to be an active partner in this vital endeavor.

\* \* \*

Nicolas Galey is Ambassador of France to the Philippines and Non-Resident Ambassador to the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Palau.





# Injured sea eagle rescued in Ilocos Norte

Published December 7, 2020, 8:23 AM

by [Philippine News Agency](#)

**LAOAG CITY (PNA)** – A wounded brahminy kite (*Haliastur indus*) or red-backed sea eagle was rescued on Saturday near the Padsan River in Barangay San Antonio, Sarrat, Ilocos Norte, and is now under the custody of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) office here for safekeeping.



An injured young brahminy kite eagle found and rescued by two teenage boys near a river in Sarrat, Ilocos Norte on Saturday (Dec. 5, 2020). A police officer brought the raptor to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources office in Laoag City. (Photo by Leilanie G. Adriano/ PNA/ MANILA BULLETIN)

According to Eugene Santos, head of the Wildlife Division of the DENR, the stray raptor will be turned over to the Fort Ilocandia Bird Sanctuary on Monday.

While strolling by the river at around 3 p.m. on Saturday, Dyrel Navales and James Lorens Pinuela, both 16 years old and residents of the said village, saw the stray raptor that appeared to be weak.

“It’s our first time to see a bird like that. Because it was not moving, we managed to get closer and we found out he couldn’t fly because his right wing was broken,” Navales said in an interview on Saturday.

Worried that the bird would die without proper treatment, the boys informed their friends and posted the bird’s condition on social media, hoping it would come to the knowledge of concerned government authorities.

After learning about the discovery of the injured raptor, Police Senior M/Sgt. Noel Abad, who happened to be near the area that time after leading a tree-planting activity, volunteered to pick up the bird and deliver it to the DENR office in this city.

Based on their inspection of the raptor’s features, local authorities established that it was a “young brahminy kite.”

The Fort Ilocandia bird sanctuary is the only wildlife rescue center in Ilocos Norte, which seeks to secure, protect and rehabilitate all wildlife species, such as those that are turned over, abandoned, surrendered or confiscated in the province.

The DENR reminded the public not to capture any wildlife species if they are in good condition and let them live in their natural habitat. But if they are injured, they must be turned over to the nearest DENR office to ensure their well-being.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/12/07/injured-sea-eagle-rescued-in-ilocos-norte/>



## 1K baby turtles to be returned to Tayabas Bay

December 7, 2020 2 min read

By Tracy Cabrera

**LUCENA CITY** — While promoting Sariaya as ‘home of sea turtles’, authorities here are set to release this month and until January next year more than 1,000 baby sea turtles, locally known as pawikan, to their natural habitat in Tayabas Bay fronting the coastal towns of Quezon province as part of government’s efforts to further propagate turtle populations across the archipelago.

According to fishery technician at the municipal government’s agriculture officer Sherwin Rosales, the hatchlings of different species were taken care of by fishermen, fish warden and the local government in four nesting sites in the villages of Castañas, San Roque, Guisguis and Bignay 2.

Rosales added that the turtles will be returned in batches to Tayabas Bay, which stretches from San Juan town in Batangas province to the towns of Sariaya, Pagbilao, Padre Burgos, Agdangan, Unisan, Pitogo, Macalelon, General Luna, Catanauan, Mulanay and San Francisco and Lucena City in Quezon.

The coastal villages are known nesting sites of the green sea, olive Ridley and hawksbill turtle species, which are considered endangered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. The turtles return to the beach from October to December and stay for 58 days throughout the nesting period.

Rosales said spectators would be welcomed every time turtles were freed to the sea, but they must strictly observe health protocols to prevent the spread of the coronavirus disease.

### Nesting sites

Most residents along the coast of Tayabas Bay in Quezon used to keep sea turtles as pets but Tanggol Kalikasan, a Lucena-based public interest law office that advocates environmental protection, has been conducting a campaign to educate the public on existing laws on environmental and wildlife protection.

Under Republic Act No. 9147, or the Philippine Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act, the hunting, selling and killing, as well as collecting of eggs, of endangered species are strictly prohibited and violations of its provision carry stiff penalties that include imprisonment and fines. *(AI/MTVN)*

Source: [https://maharlika.tv/2020/12/07/1k-baby-turtles-to-be-returned-to-tayabas-bay/?fbclid=IwAR3VbRpBEGMhXhIjbikeGDWzQnF-ziJ9ST\\_IcdZIr-soOitV\\_20LIXsiwyk](https://maharlika.tv/2020/12/07/1k-baby-turtles-to-be-returned-to-tayabas-bay/?fbclid=IwAR3VbRpBEGMhXhIjbikeGDWzQnF-ziJ9ST_IcdZIr-soOitV_20LIXsiwyk)



## Dambuhalang buwaya na nahuli sa Tawi-tawi, namatay na?

Disyembre 8, 2020 1:06am GMT+08:00

Marami ang nakaalala sa dambuhalang buwaya na si Lolong nang lumabas ang video sa pagkakahuli ng isa ring malaking buwaya sa Tawi-Tawi noong Oktubre na pinangalanang "Papa Dave."

Taong 2011 nang mahuli si Lolong sa Bunawan, Agusan del Sur, na may haba na mahigit 20 talampakan.

Pero makalipas ng dalawang taon, namatay si Lolong sa kaniyang kulungan.

At nitong nakaraang Oktubre, namangha ang marami nang mahuli naman sa karagatan ng Simunul, Tawi-tawi, dambuhalang buwaya na may haba na halos 18 talampakan na si Papa Dave.

Sa laki ng buwaya, halos hindi ito magkasya sa truck na pinagsakyan sa kaniya para ihatid sa crocodile sanctuary ng munisipalidad kung saan naroon naman ang 17 feet croc na si Papa Buls na unang nahuli noong 2017.

Pero ayon sa programang "Born To Be Wild," namatay si Papa Dave makalipas ang mahigit isang buwan matapos na mahuli at madala sa sanctuary.

Hindi pa raw alam ang dahilan ng pagkamatay ng dambuhalang buwaya, pero nananatili namang buhay pa si Papa Buls.

Ngunit ano nga ba ang dahilan na madalas umanong may mamamataang buwaya sa karagatan ng Tawi-tawi, at gaano nga ba sila kapanganib para sa mga tao kaya kailangan silang hulihin at alisin sa kanilang natural na tirahan?

Tunghayan ang pagtalakay ng "BTBW" tungkol sa naturang usapin at ano ang plano ng lokal na pamahalaan para sabay na maprotektahan ang mga tao at ang mga buwaya sa kanilang lugar. Panoorin ang video.

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/balitambayan/promdi/767138/dambuhalang-buwaya-na-nahuli-sa-tawi-tawi-namatay-na/story/>



UNTV News and Rescue

15h · 🌐



Tone-toneladang taklobo na nakakahalaga ng higit kalahating bilyong piso ang nakumpiska sa bahay ng isang kapitan sa lungsod ng Zamboanga.



YOUTUBE.COM

Higit P600-M halaga ng taklobo, nakumpiska sa Zamboanga City

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# Radioactive material in WPS corals, water baffles experts

By Lyn Resurreccion

December 8, 2020

## ELEVATED CONCENTRATIONS AND RATIOS OF THE RADIONUCLIDE IODINE-129 IN THE WEST PHILIPPINE SEA (WPS)

S. Limlingan, E. Enriquez, M. Bauyon, J. Munar, E. Dumalagan, H. Kusuno, C. Jaraula, F. Siringan, H. Matsuzaki, A. Bautista

### Introduction: What is Iodine-129 (129I), and why is it important?

Iodine-129 is a long-lived isotope that serves as a tracer for the transport of nuclear fallout material.

**SOURCE**  
Nuclear Bomb Testing  
Nuclear Fuel Reprocessing  
Nuclear Accidents

**MOVEMENT**  
Atmosphere  
Soil  
Oceans and Rivers

**ENVIRONMENT**  
Animals  
Rain  
Drinking Water  
Plants

### Methods: What was the process?

- 1 Seawater sampling all over the Philippines.
- 2 129I extraction from seawater by multi-stage solvent extraction.
- 3 129I measurement using Accelerator Mass Spectrometry and Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometry
- 4 129I data analysis using statistical methods.

**Fig. 1. Sampling map**  
Yellow: Philippine Rise, Red: WPS, Blue: Sulu Sea

### Discussion: Why do these happen?

**Fig. 3. Ocean currents around the Philippines. Blue & Orange: Seasonal Currents**

### Results: What does the data say?

**Fig. 2. Heatmap and distribution of 129I in collected seawater**

#### High 129I in WPS:

- 1) Possible existence of an 129I source in the area.
- 2) Accumulation of 129I from all over due to complex currents in the WPS.

#### Low 129I in Sulu Sea:

- 1) Limited input from global 129I due to geographical isolation.
- 2) Lowering of 129I ratios due to known upwelling in the area.

### Conclusion: So what does this mean?

- 1) 129I can help us see how nuclear fallout flows to the Philippines as transported by ocean currents.
- 2) A source of 129I possibly exists around the WPS, though this elevation may also be due to mere enrichment in the area.
- 3) While 129I is elevated in the WPS, it poses no danger. Nonetheless, we would still like to understand the elevation better by studying the area more extensively.

### References:

Bautista, A.T., Matsuzaki, H., Siringan, F.P. 2016. Historical record of nuclear activities from 129I in corals from the northern hemisphere (Philippines). J. Environ. Radioact. 164, 174–181. doi:10.1016/j.jenvrad.2016.07.022

### Acknowledgements:

DOST-PCAARRD for funding the Fukushima project under which the sample processing for the seawater samples have been concurrently conducted

ENVIRONMENTAL NUCLIDES LABORATORY

envnuclab sophiajobien@gmail.com

THE Philippine Nuclear Research Institute (PNRI) on Monday said that a radioactive material was found to exist in corals and water in the West Philippine Sea.

PNRI Director Carlo Arcilla told a virtual news conference that traces of iodine-129, a radioactive material, was found in corals in the sea.

Arcilla, in a follow-up phone interview with the BusinessMirror, said the radiation “is not dangerous but traceable.”



“The issue is what is it [radioactive substance] doing there? Are there nuclear activities going on in the area, or in North Korea?” he asked.

An online search showed iodine-129 is a long-lived radioisotope of iodine which occurs naturally, but also is of special interest in the monitoring and effects of man-made nuclear fission decay products, where it serves as both tracer and potential radiological contaminant.

The website of the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) said most iodine-129 in the environment came from nuclear weapons testing.

Atmospheric testing in the 1950s and '60s released radioactive iodine to the atmosphere, the EPA said.

Arcilla said the iodine-129 level in the WPS is higher than in surrounding areas.

He said, though, that further tests have to be done to determine its source.

Arcilla said the initial finding was made by PNRI scientist Dr. Angel Bautista III as part of his 2016 dissertation at the University of Tokyo on the effects of nuclear activities on the environment.

Bautista's study involved the monitoring of corals to check if they have radiation, including from the possible effect of Japan's Fukushima nuclear power plant accident in 2011.

The study found out that the radiation was not from Fukushima, so it might be caused by new activities, Arcilla said.

They might have come from nuclear-powered vessels, he said.

Bautista, in a phone interview, said that based on the history of the corals, they were found to have already had a high level of iodine-129 deposits “from the 1950s to the present.”

“So that means the corals had iodine-129 even before the Fukushima accident occurred in 2011,” Bautista said.

## High level in 2020

He said a separate study on the sea water in WPS and other sea water in the country this year also showed WPS has high level of iodine-129.

However, he said that it is yet to be determined if the contamination in the sea water was caused by natural concentration or other sources.

Bautista said he is continuing the studies on the coral and sea water contamination.

According to Arcilla, at the meeting of the Asean network of regulatory bodies on nuclear energy (Aseantom) in Vietnam last month, the countries were “very concerned” when he reported about the findings.

Arcilla disclosed that amid this development, it is important that the Philippines is building 10 environment stations fronting the WPS to check on environmental issues in the area.

He said they were supposed to be built this year but Covid-19 got in the way. They will be built soon.



Funded by the European Union, he added that more similar stations will be built in other Asean countries since some of these countries are facing the WPS.

The findings will have to be shared among Asean countries as an obligation with Aseantom.

China is claiming WPS, or almost the entire South China Sea, as part of its territory.

The area is home to abundant marine resources, from oil and gas reserves and an ecosystem rich in seafood.

The territorial issue has become an international concern, with the United States saying it stands with the Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries to uphold a rules-based order that ensures sovereign, sustainable, and productive access to the WPS and its resources.

Beijing has been harassing Filipino fishermen and offshore energy development within the area.

Under the 2016 Arbitral Tribunal Award, which China does not recognize, the Philippines enjoys sovereign rights and jurisdiction with respect to the natural resources in its EEZ.



## Biomaterial for plastic waste reduction wins pitch competition

December 7, 2020 | 3:56 pm



*Nanotronics founder and Chief Executive Officer Jerome Palaganas pitched a solution that turns renewable indigenous plants into sustainable nanomaterials called cellulose nanocrystals for use in industrial applications, including three-dimensional (3D) printing resin, lubricant additives, biodegradable packaging, specialty coatings, and water filtration materials.*

**Nanotronics** bagged the top prize at the recent Shell LIVEWire PitchFest, winning an equity-free prize of P500,000. The technology company offers nanostructured material products that reduce **plastic waste** while protecting the environment.

Only 14% of plastic packaging is recycled, said Nanotronics founder and Chief Executive Officer Jerome Palaganas, who pitched a solution that turns renewable indigenous plants into sustainable nanomaterials called cellulose nanocrystals for use in industrial applications, including three-dimensional (3D) printing resin, lubricant additives, biodegradable packaging, specialty coatings, and water filtration materials.

Nanotronics has eight intellectual properties, seven business-to-business (B2B) clients with earned revenues, and at least five company pilot projects. A total of US \$100,000 in grant funding and US\$45,000 in angel investments have been awarded to the tech startup. Its revenue streams come from plant productions, licensing agreements, and client joint venture partnerships.

“We are committed to making a significant difference in the environment and community, leveraging on our natural resources here in the Philippines. We see a good synergy with our products and the Shell ecosystem,” Mr. Palaganas said.

Shell’s LiveWIRE program launched this September in collaboration with the Philippine government. It provides innovators with opportunities for mentorship, financial assistance, technical expertise, and a chance to be part of Shell’s supply chain.

Apart from Nanotronics, two other local tech companies were chosen out of 155 candidates to participate in a start-up bootcamp: **uHoo**, which measures air quality to safeguard and enhance people’s health; and **Next Pay**, a digital banking platform aimed for small and medium-sized business owners.

Shell LiveWIRE also tapped three community enterprises to join its program, and each took home a cash grant of Php 75,000. These enterprises are MagzWheel Furniture, which transforms used rubber tires into furniture and apparel; Green Factory by Oro Handmade Innovations Inc., which produces handmade paper products; and Revolve Eco. Logical, which recycles used polyethylene terephthalate (PET) bottles to create new products.





“Most entrepreneurs still lack the resources to reach their full potential, especially as they adapt to a digital world. We bridge that gap by connecting them with government and fintech institutions as part of our LiveWIRE program. This is our contribution to nation-building,” said Cesar Romero, president and CEO of Pilipinas Shell, in a statement.

— **Patricia B. Mirasol**



## EDITORIAL - Another issue we have to deal with

(The Freeman) - December 8, 2020 - 12:00am



Volunteers recently gathered an estimated 41.6 tons of garbage from rivers and coastal areas in Cebu City during a coastal cleanup last Saturday.

In all, that's around the weight of 20 cars.

And this was just in areas targeted by volunteers. We can only imagine how much garbage there are in areas that aren't accessible to or areas that weren't visited by the volunteers.

This is a sobering reminder that there are still other issues we have to be mindful of and never forget. Even as we have to deal the problem of the pandemic, we should not forget that we also have to deal with the problem of improper garbage disposal.

For our editorial last Earth Day we wrote about how this pandemic would result in even more trash, owing to the face masks, face shields, personal protective equipment, and other items that have to be used to ward off COVID-19, as well as to treat those with the coronavirus.

Given this latest development, it seems our prediction isn't that far off.

Even as a lot of social activity has ceased, most of people forced to stay indoors, and most of business and other economic activities halted, there still seems to be a substantial number of trash finding its way into our rivers and seas. And since garbage doesn't have legs, that can only mean that humans placed them there, or disposed of them somewhere they shouldn't have and they ended up there as a result.

We also cautioned about the nature of the kind of trash that will become more common; these are plastics that will take practically years, if not decades, to biodegrade. Meaning they will stay longer where they end up. So that complicates the problem even more.

Improper waste disposal continues to be a huge contributing factor to flooding in many areas of the city. What makes this more alarming is that with nature seemingly serving up more and stronger storms, we can only expect worsening floods if we do nothing to address this issue.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/the-freeman/opinion/2020/12/08/2062325/editorial-another-issue-we-have-deal-with/amp/>





# DPWH chief: Circumferential road project, kayang maibsan ang mga pagbaha sa Boracay

By **Bombo Radyo Kalibo** - December 7, 2020 | 8:02 PM

KALIBO, Aklan – Umaasa ang Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) na maiibsan ang mga pagbaha sa isla ng Boracay matapos buksan ang phase 2 ng circumferential road project sa isla.

Ayon kay DPWH Secretary Mark Villar, napansin umano nila ang mabilis na paghupa ng tubig sa mga bahaing lugar sa isla kasunod ng naranasang malalakas na buhos ng ulan nitong mga nakaraang araw.

Sa kasalukuyan ay bukas na sa mga motorista ang Phase 1 at 2 ng proyekto at inaasahang sa taong 2022 ay matatapos na ang natitirang Phase 3 ng proyekto na tinatayang may habang 11 kilometro.

Sa nasabing proyekto, ginawa itong kongkreto, mas pinalawak ang kalsada, nilagyan ng drainage system, street lights, road safety markings at pinalapad pa ang pedestrian sidewalk.

Dagdag pa ni Sec. Villar sa sandaling makumpleto na ang nasabing proyekto, inaasahang aabot na lang sa 40 hanggang 45-minuto ang biyahe mula Cagban Port sa Barangay Manocmanoc hanggang Ilig-Iligan Beach sa Barangay Yapak mula sa kasalukuyang isang oras at 30 minuto.



## Pasig River Ferry service, Lunes hanggang Linggo na



December 7, 2020 @ 4:32 PM 14 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Inihayag ng Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) na ang kanilang Pasig River Ferry Service (PRFS) ay bukas sa mga mananakay tuwing araw ng Linggo para sa buong buwan ng Disyembre upang higit na makapaghatid at makapagbigay ng serbisyo sa kanilang mga parokyano ngayong panahon ng Kapaskuhan.

Sa abiso ng MMDA, maaaring makasakay ng libre ang mga parokyano ng PRFS mula Lunes hanggang Linggo, alas-6 ng umaga hanggang alas-6 ng gabi.

Ang mga istasyon ng PRFS na handang magbigay ng magandang serbisyo sa publiko ay ang Pinagbuhatan at San Joaquin sa Pasig City; Guadalupe sa Makati City; Hulo sa Mandaluyong City; Lambingan, Sta. Ana, Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP), Escolta at Lawton sa Maynila.

“The PRFS is requiring passengers to wear face masks and face shields and undergo temperature check as part of strict enforcement of health and safety protocols against coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19),” saad ng MMDA.

Sa loob naman ng ferry boat ay ipinapatupad ang “one seat apart” alinsunod na rin sa ipinapatupad na physical distancing measures.

Dapat punan ng mga pasahero ang isang manifest form at commuter information sheet bago sumakay sa mga ferry boat ng PRFS. **Jay Reyes**



## Bamboo bikes to pedal Guimaras' drive to become PH bike paradise



December 7, 2020

THE Province of Guimaras added new attraction to its Bike Paradise of the Philippines campaign with the launching of the Green Spark Project on December 7 at the Look-out Point 17, Barangay M. Chavez, San Lorenzo, Guimaras.

The Green Spark Project, which features bicycles made from bamboos or "Bambikes," promotes environmental awareness and sustainable tourism with the use of locally made bamboo.

The project was initiated by the National Grid Corporation of the Philippines (NGCP) in partnership with Guimaras Wind, Provincial Government of Guimaras, Bambike Revolution Cycles and the local government units (LGU) of San Lorenzo and Buenavista.

Reagahn Alcantara, lead specialist of the Corporate Initiatives and Advocates Division-Office of the President of NGCP, shared the rationale behind the initiative.

"Basically as the name connotes for itself 'green spark,' what we want to achieve here is to create a green revolution. We want to spark green revolution in the tourism sector. This Green Spark launching was supposed to happen on March kaso naabutan ng Covid-19 pandemic. This is one way of NGCP to contribute in a little way to the economy of Guimaras. We hope that through this Spark Project we could appreciate more the beauty of biking. This project was pushed through the efforts of the NGCP and the partner agencies," he said at the launching ceremony.

Green Spark aims to transform communities to green communities by generating sustainable livelihood while providing an ecotourism experience.

The project provides livelihood to local communities in the Municipality of San Lorenzo through ecotourism and low-impact development using the local renewable resource bamboo.

Elena Quezon, Provincial Economic Development officer, said the Province of Guimaras is grateful to NGCP for believing that the island has the potential of developing eco-tourism destinations.

"Bambike" is a social-enterprise that creates sustainable jobs in rural villages through hand crafted bamboo bikes.

Guimaras now offers Bambike Ecotours using these bamboo bikes to create unique and meaningful experiences off the beaten paths.

"Bambike" is also dedicated to growing the green economy and to sustain livelihood development.



Vice Mayor Constantino Cordero Jr. of the Municipality of San Lorenzo expressed gratitude to all the stakeholders behind the endeavor.

"Ginakalipay ko gid sang daku ang pagpakita ninyo sang supporta sa banwa sang San Lorenzo. Kay nakita gid namon ang inyu enthusiast sa pagbulig kag pagsuporta sa amon banwa. Madamo gid nga salamat kagkabay pa nga mauswagon ang ini nga proyekto," he said.

The program ended with a ceremonial biking headed by Lea Denise Belgira, gold medalist of women's downhill mountain bike event of the Southeast Asian Games 2019. **(PR)**



It also recorded 9,062 new recoveries, as the number of those who survived the disease increased to 408,634, which accounted for 92.9 percent of total cases. The number of active cases is at 22,646 or 5.1 percent of the total. A high 90.4 percent of active cases are mild and asymptomatic.

AFP/Yonhap

## Philippines COVID-19 cases rise to 439,834

[Mayen Jaymalin](#) (The Philippine Star) - December 7, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Confirmed coronavirus cases nationwide rose to 439,834 with the addition of 1,768 new cases, the Department of Health (DOH) reported yesterday.

It also recorded 9,062 new recoveries, as the number of those who survived the disease increased to 408,634, which accounted for 92.9 percent of total cases. The number of active cases is at 22,646 or 5.1 percent of the total. A high 90.4 percent of active cases are mild and asymptomatic.

The DOH also noted 29 additional deaths, bringing the number of COVID-related fatalities to 8,554. The figure represents 1.94 percent of total cases.

Quezon City posted the highest number of new cases with 112, followed by the provinces of Laguna with 94 and Rizal, 90. With 71 new cases, Davao City ranked fourth in the list of areas with high new cases while Benguet followed with 69.

The NCR remains on top among regions with high number of active and new COVID cases followed by the Calabarzon as of Dec. 4.

However, the DOH noted that 12 laboratories failed to submit their data to the COVID-19 Data Repository System (CDRS) on Dec. 5. COVID positivity is pegged at 8.85 percent, with over 5.5 million individuals nationwide tested for the infection.

DOH also reported that as of Dec. 4, the number of healthcare workers (HCWs) infected with COVID nationwide already reached 12,686.

Based on the DOH's COVID-19 Philippine Situationer, at least 12,387 of the HCWs who are positive for COVID have recovered while 223 of them remain active cases. Also, 76 were recorded to have died.

The DOH further reported that 11,101 of the 671,353 Filipinos who returned from abroad tested positive. Most or 6,970 of the COVID-infected returning overseas Filipinos (ROF) were land-based while 4,131 were sea-based. A total of 667,238 were already released from quarantine.

Of the data on ROF, DOH said 10,588 have recovered, 430 are still admitted in hospitals and six have died.

A total of 579 foreign nationals staying in the country also tested positive for COVID.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/12/07/2062024/philippines-covid-19-cases-rise-439834>





In a recent global research paper, the UK-based research firm said the overall long-term economic scarring would be worse in emerging markets than advanced economies because of labor market rigidities, economic structure, financial imbalances and limits to fiscal support.

Miguel De Guzman, file

## Economic scarring in Philippines among worst globally

[Czeriza Valencia](#) (The Philippine Star) - December 8, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Long-term economic scarring in the Philippines because of the coronavirus pandemic can be expected to be among the worst in the world, according to Oxford Economics.

In a recent global research paper, the UK-based research firm said the overall long-term economic scarring would be worse in emerging markets than advanced economies because of labor market rigidities, economic structure, financial imbalances and limits to fiscal support.

A scorecard for 162 economies based on 31 metrics showed that the Philippines, Peru, Colombia and Spain appear to be the most vulnerable to economic scarring in the long-term.

In contrast, Australia, Japan, Norway, Germany and Switzerland appear to be best placed to limit long-term scarring.

“We estimate overall long-COVID economic vulnerabilities are higher in emerging and frontier markets than they are in advanced economies. It will come as a surprise to many that advanced economies are underperforming emerging economies in terms of the most important indicator: crisis-year GDP growth declines,” Oxford Economics said.

“But we think the scarring mechanisms for a given shock are bigger in emerging markets in terms of labor market vulnerabilities, economic structure, fiscal imbalances, and lack of fiscal support,” it said.

Countries seen to perform weakly in the long-term are challenged by a potential long-run hit in consumer and investor confidence, resulting in diminished investment in physical and human capital.

As such, postponed investment may have long-run impact on growth potential.



These countries also have rigid labor markets that suffer from skills mismatch and extended period of output underperformance.

A high number of total deaths and weaker health system is also associated with long-term confidence effects.

Unemployment in the country eased further in October as community quarantine restrictions were further eased, but fewer working age Filipinos were returning to the labor market.

Preliminary results of the October 2020 round of the Labor Force Survey (LFS) showed that the unemployment rate eased to 8.7 percent in October from 10 percent in July.

This was equivalent to 3.8 million Filipinos without jobs nor livelihood in October, 800,000 fewer compared with 4.6 million in July when the country was just emerging from strict lockdowns.

While unemployment in October eased from July and April, this was still almost double the pre-pandemic rate of 4.6 percent in October 2019 when only two million Filipinos were out of work.

The number of confirmed cases in the country has so far risen to more than 400,000, around 22,000 of which are active cases. The number of deaths have so far remained low at more than 8,000.

The country is expected to remain under a less severe form of lockdown next year, while awaiting the rollout of vaccines.



# Disaster response command eyed in eastern Metro Manila

By Christopher Lloyd Calivan December 7, 2020, 11:12 am



(File photo)

MANILA – The Eastern Police District (EPD) is eyeing to build a command post in the eastern portion of Metro Manila to facilitate its disaster response missions.

EPD director, Brig. Gen. Matthew Baccay, said the purpose of the command post is to coordinate response before, during, and after a typhoon hits their area of jurisdiction that includes the cities of San Juan, Pasig, Mandaluyong, and Marikina.

"The command center will take all the reports on where the most affected areas are and what kind of help or rescue they need," Baccay said in Filipino during a phone interview Monday.

He added that he already met with Marikina Mayor Marcy Teodoro last week where they discussed efforts to improve disaster preparedness and response.

He said relief operations will be expedited as there will be better coordination and communications with affected communities once the command center is activated.

He added that once the proposal is completed, this will be presented to other mayors in Eastern Metro Manila.

Aside from the command post, local legislation for the funding on the disaster response was discussed.

"Local governments, they can produce their funding, they can appropriate so their role is very crucial," Baccay said.

Preparedness, he said, is needed to prevent huge casualties on lives and properties in wake of typhoons and other calamities.

Marikina was among areas that were badly hit by flooding caused by heavy rains from Typhoon Ulysses last Nov. 12.

Meanwhile, the Philippine Navy (PN) announced landing dock BRP Davao Del Sur (LD-601) left Manila South Harbor last December 5 to transport 76 tons of consolidated relief goods for typhoon-battered Cagayan.

PN public affairs office chief Lt. Commander Maria Christina Roxas said BRP Davao Del Sur is commanded by Commander Elmer Toriado.

She added that the 76 tons of assorted relief goods the ship is transporting were donated by various personalities, non-government organizations, and government.

"Said mission is spearheaded by the Office of the Civil Defense (OCD) and the Civil-Military Operations Group of the Philippine Navy (CMOG-PN)," Roxas said.

The PN, she said, will continue to deploy all available assets in support of relief and rehabilitation efforts intended for the populace gravely affected by the recent calamities. (with reports from Priam Nepomuceno/PNA)

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1123964>



# A resilience manifesto

By: [Ronald Law](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:04 AM December 07, 2020

With Typhoons “Rolly” and “Ulysses” exacerbating the COVID-19 pandemic, claiming poor lives anew after the onslaught of severe flooding in many parts of the country, and emotions still running high because of the supposed glamorization of people’s resilience and the eschewing of accountability by the government, let me put out a manifesto in defense of resilience.

The Philippines’ high exposure to multiple hazards, the extreme vulnerability of most of our people, the staggering risks of disasters to our society—these make it imperative to know and understand well what resilience is all about if we are to do the necessary actions to make things better. Resilience is having the capacity to withstand the negative effects and impacts of destabilizing events due to various disasters and even day-to-day interruptions that affect us.

Risk and resilience are a function of human exposure and behavior, prevention and response systems and policy processes of the government, and environmental changes.

While the real cause of the deadly floods cannot be determined with certainty—release of water from dams, swelling of rivers after continuous raining, deforestation, plain topography of catch basin areas, lack of early warning, failure of evacuation, poorly executed response, etc.—resilience should have saved the lives of people, but only if capacities to prevent, anticipate, prepare, and respond have been developed. Furthermore, capacities to build back better and bounce forward can help a lot during recovery.

Resilience-building should aim at enhancing three levels of capacities.

First, resilience entails improving the capacity of the communities for self-organization so they are empowered to do collective action. This includes enabling them to tap available resources within their reach and to harness their social capital so they are guided by shared values that can serve as impetus for purpose-driven initiatives.

Second, resilience means bolstering the capacity of the government for leadership and governance. This should generate effective strategies for disaster risk reduction and management to make sure people are out of harm’s way and shielded from the impacts of any disaster. Public accountability is a crucial element in this area.

Finally, resilience should spur the development of capacities to facilitate use of scientific evidence to educate and mobilize people and to aid in evidence-informed decision-making by leaders. This can also be catalyzed by efforts to institutionalize resilience in the curriculum and to embed it in our culture and way of life.

Evidence continues to come to the fore about resilient good practices, waiting to be learned and relearned. The opportunities and possibilities to live and thrive in the new normal, with resilience as guide and compass, are opening up. If resilience can teach us just a thing or two about how to go about our lives, these days and in the next generations to come, even in the most unforgiving of storms, then it would really make a big difference.

Let us build resilience in our communities. Let us demand resilience in governance. And let us drive resilience through science and education.

—————  
*Ronald Law is a physician-public health practitioner with expertise in health emergency and disaster risk management. A public health professor and academic, he is a former Australian leadership fellow and Fulbright scholar.*

Source: <https://opinion.inquirer.net/135936/a-resilience-manifesto>



# M5.4 quake strikes off Sorsogon

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Dec 07 2020 10:59 PM | Updated as of Dec 07 2020 11:30 PM



Phivolcs image

(UPDATED) A magnitude 5.4 earthquake struck off Sorsogon province in the Bicol Region at 10:37 p.m. Monday, Phivolcs said.

The undersea tremor, which was tectonic in origin, hit 37 kilometers northeast of Prieto Diaz.

It struck at a depth of 777 kilometers.

The quake was initially measured at magnitude 6.4 before Phivolcs revised its numbers.

Reported intensities:

Intensity V - Sorsogon City;

Intensity IV - Legazpi City; Virac, Catanduanes; Naga City; Catarman, Northern Samar

Intensity III - Bulusan, and Irosin, Sorsogon; Catbalogan City

Intensity II - Palo, Alangalang, Babatngon, Calubian and Dagami, Leyte

Instrumental intensities:

Intensity IV - Legazpi City

Intensity III - Sipocot, Camarines Sur; Borongan City, Eastern Samar; Palo, Leyte; Irosin, Sorsogon

Intensity II - Naval, Biliran; Jose Panganiban, Camarines Norte

Intensity I - Lopez, Quezon; Casiguran, Aurora

Phivolcs said the tremor is expected to produce aftershocks. - **With reports from Gerard Lorbes and Karren Canon**

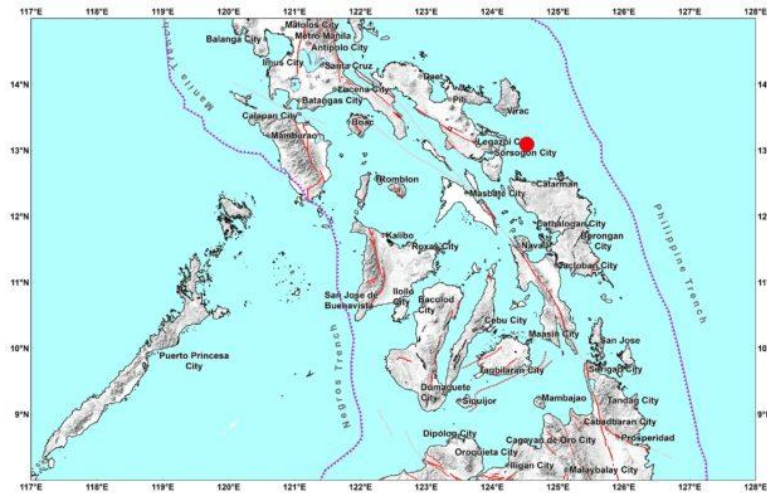
Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/12/07/20/m64-quake-strikes-off-sorsogon?fbclid=IwAR2XbqcKUYgVRnBsZ-9EZsWyNp1Kg8EQVVovIIuAqiliu32FBxSjclixkkE>



# Magnitude 6.4 quake hits Bicol provinces, felt in Northern Samar

By: [Rev Anthony Ostria](#) - Correspondent / [@RAOstriaINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 11:26 PM December 07, 2020



LEGAZPI CITY—A magnitude 6.4 earthquake rattled parts of the Bicol region on Monday (Dec. 7) around 10:37 p.m.

According to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs), the epicenter was 38 km northeast of Prieto Diaz town in Sorsogon province.

While no damage was expected, aftershocks may still occur, according to Phivolcs.

The earthquake, which was tectonic in origin, was felt even in Camarines Norte, the northernmost province of Bicol, and Northern Samar in Visayas, according to social media posts.

TSB

# Beijing may have built bases in the South China Sea, but that doesn't mean it can defend them, report claims

By [James Griffiths](#), CNN

Updated 0756 GMT (1556 HKT) December 7, 2020

**Hong Kong (CNN)** Beijing has spent years [turning islands and reefs in the South China Sea](#) into military bases and airstrips -- but such territory could be vulnerable to attack and nigh indefensible in the event of war, a new report has warned.

The bases are "lonely in the distant sea," and far from both the Chinese mainland and other islands in the vast disputed waters, which span some 3.3 million square kilometers (1.3 million square miles), said Naval and Merchant Ships, a Beijing-based magazine published by the China State Shipbuilding Corporation, which supplies the People's Liberation Army.

"Islands and reefs in South China Sea have unique advantages in safeguarding national sovereignty and maintaining a military presence in the open sea, but they have natural weaknesses with regard to their own military defense," it added.

China claims almost all of the South China Sea, and since 2014 has built up tiny reefs and sandbars into man-made artificial islands heavily fortified with missiles, runways and weapons systems -- [prompting outcry from the other governments](#). At least six other governments also have overlapping territorial claims in the contested waterway: the Philippines, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Brunei and Taiwan.



The United States -- which regards China's claims as illegal -- has countered by sailing warships close to features claimed or occupied by Beijing, in what it calls freedom of navigation operations. Washington and its allies say such patrols enforce the right of free passage in international waters, while China argues they are violations of its sovereignty.

Under international law, whoever owns the contested string of islands in the sea will have the rights to all the resources in its nearby waters like fish, oil, and gas. More broadly, whoever controls this sea will also hold power over one of the world's most valuable trading routes -- it hosts a third of all global shipping.



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Fiery Cross Reef, part of the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea. Photo: DigitalGlobe via Getty Images.

But while the distant bases expand Beijing's control over the area, they are also far from any help in the event of military action. Naval and Merchant Ships gave the example of Fiery Cross Reef, which is 1,000 kilometers (620 miles) from Sanya, a city on Hainan island, just off the southern Chinese coast, and 800 kilometers (500 miles) from the Paracel Islands, also controlled by Beijing.

"Even if the support fleet rushes at the fastest speed, it will take more than a day to reach it," the report noted.

While some islands are equipped with air strips, coverage across the sea is limited, and most jet fighters that could be deployed would struggle to reach another island quickly enough to be effective, expending most of their fuel in flying the long distances between bases. Beijing currently has [two aircraft carriers in operation](#), which could in theory be deployed to the South China Sea, but they too would have to be in range at the time of any incident.

The bases, the report added, are highly vulnerable to ambush, given their remote locations, and could be targeted by both US and Japanese long-range missile systems, or by naval forces in the region. And even were the islands themselves not attacked, they would be simple to blockade, starving forces of their supplies.

"Island shelters lack vegetation, natural rock and soil and other coverings, and the altitude is low, while the groundwater level is high. Personnel and resources cannot be stored underground for a long time," the report said, adding that any shelters built on the bases would have "very limited" anti-strike capabilities.



In this photo taken on June 15, 2016, a vendor stands behind a map of China including an insert with red dotted lines showing China's claimed territory in the South China Sea, in Beijing.

There are also other issues which make defense of the islands exceptionally difficult, said Malcolm Davis, a senior analyst in defense strategy and capability at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute.

"The harsh environmental conditions in the South China Sea -- salt water corrosion, poor weather -- make it almost impossible to deploy anything on the islands in a manner that could allow them to defend these bases," he said, adding that hugely expensive, complicated aircraft would be next to unserviceable "within a week or so on these islands."

He said that while some islands may be effective as shooting platforms, they would be among the first targets if a conflict was to occur in the South China Sea, and it is "just physically impossible to build an island that is essentially defensible" given the type of reefs and sandbars originally there.

"What the Chinese are trying to do is annex an international maritime space, to control and own international waters, and to do that they need to have a permanent presence there," Davis said. "But it is becoming evident that while they may have been enough to make the territorial claim, they're actually not a practical step in the long term because they can't actually defend those bases."





Of course, Beijing may rely on the fact that any attack against a base in the South China Sea -- even an outpost considered illegal under international law -- would be tantamount to an act of war against a nuclear power with vast military resources. The threat of retaliation may be sufficient to prevent the island bases from facing any attack.

Nor would China be the only country with vulnerable bases far from its mainland that are could [be taken out by early strikes](#). The US island of [Guam](#) and the Japanese island of Okinawa, where there are major US air bases, are both within range of Chinese missile attack, something Beijing has [reminded Washington of in the past](#).

Reporting contributed by CNN's Beijing bureau and Jessie Yeung in Hong Kong.



# Study: "Missing" Ocean Plastic Pollution May be Washing Up on Shore



BY [THE MARITIME EXECUTIVE](#) 12-06-2020 11:56:00

[By Britta Denise Hardesty, Chris Wilcox and Arianna Olivelli]

You've probably heard that our oceans have become a plastic soup. But in fact, of all the plastic that enters Earth's oceans each year, just one percent has been observed floating on the surface. So where is the rest of it?

This "missing" plastic has been a longstanding scientific question. To date, the search has focused on oceanic gyres such as the Great Pacific Garbage Patch, the water column (the part of the ocean between the surface and the sea bed), the bottom of the ocean, and the stomachs of marine wildlife.

But our new research suggests ocean plastic is being transported back onshore and pushed permanently onto land away from the water's edge, where it often becomes trapped in vegetation.

Of course, plastic has been reported on beaches around the world for decades. But there has been little focus on why and how coastal environments are a sink for marine debris. Our findings have big implications for how we tackle ocean plastic.

New research shows a significant amount of plastic pollution from our oceans ends up back on land, where it gets trapped.

## ***The hunt for marine pollution***

Our separate, yet-to-be-published research has found around 90 percent of marine debris that enters the ocean remains in the "littoral zone" (the area of ocean within eight kilometers of the coast). This new study set out to discover what happens to it.

We collected data on the amount and location of plastic pollution every 100 kilometres around the entire coast of Australia between 2011 and 2016. Debris was recorded at 188 locations along the Australian coastline. Of this, 56 percent was plastic, followed by glass (17 percent) and foam (10 percent).

Data was recorded approximately every 100 kilometers along the coast of Australia. Of the marine debris recorded, more than half was plastic.

The debris was a mix of litter from people and deposition from the ocean. The highest concentrations of plastic pollution were found along coastal backshores – areas towards the inland edge of the beach, where the vegetation begins. The further back from the water's edge we went, the more debris we found.

The amount of marine debris, and where it ends up, is influenced by onshore wave activity and, to a lesser extent, wind activity. Densely populated areas and those where the coast was easily accessible were hotspots for trapped plastics.

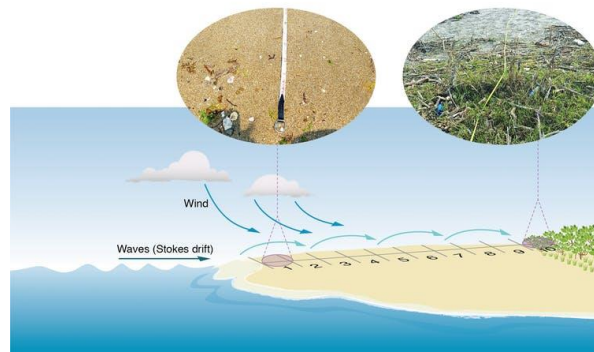
Think about what you see on your beach. Smaller debris is often found near the water's edge, while larger items such as drink bottles, plastic bags and crisp packets are often found further back from the water, often trapped in vegetation.



We also found more debris near urban areas where rivers and creeks enter the ocean. It could be that our trash is being trapped by waterways before it gets to the sea. We're finding similar patterns in other countries we're surveying around the Asia Pacific and beyond.

This pollution kills and maims wildlife when they mistake it for food or get tangled in it. It can damage fragile marine ecosystems by smothering sensitive reefs and transporting invasive species and is potentially a threat to human health if toxins in plastics make their way through the food chain to humans.

It can also become an eyesore, damaging the economy of an area through reduced tourism revenue.



*Onshore waves, wind and areas with denser human populations influences where and how much marine debris there is along our coastlines (CSIRO)*

### **Talking rubbish**

Our findings highlight the importance of studying the entire width of coastal areas to better understand how much, and where, debris gets trapped, to inform targeted approaches to managing all this waste.

Plastic pollution can be reduced through local changes such as water refill stations, rubbish bins, incentives and awareness campaigns. It can also be reduced through targeted waste management policies to reduce, reuse and recycle plastics. We found container deposit schemes to be a particularly effective incentive in reducing marine pollution.

Plastic in our oceans is increasing. It's clear from our research that waste management strategies on land must accommodate much larger volumes of pollution than previously estimated. But the best way to keep plastic from our ocean and land is to stop putting it in.

*Britta Denise Hardesty is Principal Research Scientist, Oceans and Atmosphere Flagship at CSIRO.*

*Arianna Olivelli is a Research Affiliate at CSIRO.*

*Chris Wilcox is Senior Principal Research Scientist at CSIRO.*

*This article appears courtesy of The Conversation and may be found in its original form [here](#).*



# Australia's 'black summer' bushfires killed or harmed more than 60,000 koalas - WWF

Reuters

Posted at Dec 07 2020 01:40 PM



A koala and her baby at the Raymond Island Koala and Wildlife shelter on Raymond Island in Australia, Jan. 6, 2020. As wildfires have killed at least 24 people, destroyed more than 1,400 homes and ravaged 15 million acres, they have also inflicted a grievous toll on Australia's renowned wildlife. *Christina Simons, The New York Times/File*

SYDNEY - More than 60,000 koalas were killed, injured or displaced in Australian bushfires last summer, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) has estimated, in what it called a deeply disturbing number for a species already in trouble.

Last summer's bushfires, which Prime Minister Scott Morrison has dubbed Australia's "black summer," also killed 33 people and razed over 24 million hectares (59 million acres) in the country.

Nearly 3 billion native animals would have been in the path of the bushfires, the WWF study said.

Even before the fires, koala habitats had been in rapid decline due to land clearing for agriculture, urban development, mining and forestry.

A 2016 report by a panel of koala experts had put the koala population in Australia at 329,000 but there have been bushfires annually since then, reducing the number further.

"That (60,000 figure) is a devastating number for a species that was already sliding towards extinction in Eastern Australia. We cannot afford to lose koalas on our watch," WWF-Australia Chief Executive Dermot O'Gorman said in the report.

South Australia's Kangaroo Island was the worst-hit area for koalas, with some 40,000 koalas impacted by the fires, the WWF said. Nearly 11,000 in Victoria and 8,000 in New South Wales (NSW) were also affected.

A NSW parliamentary inquiry in June concluded after a year-long inquiry that koalas in the state could become extinct by 2050 unless the government immediately intervened to protect them and their habitat.

The WWF aims to double the number of koalas in eastern Australia by 2050. The plan includes a trial of drones to disperse seeds of eucalyptus trees, which provide both food and shelter for koalas, and the establishment of a fund to encourage landowners to create koala safe havens.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/overseas/12/07/20/australias-black-summer-bushfires-killed-or-harmed-more-than-60000-koalas-wwf?fbclid=IwAR3evYMIoudWjAr4XOgNzJ8JapU5hH1Bo6bSIxonN6ddNyZQq7Ryue4KOIA>



## 'Wild' moves

Published 6 hours ago on December 8, 2020 12:05 AM

By [WJG](#)



China has clamped down on the local trade of exotic wild animals cooked as a delicacy or prepared for traditional medicine. The crackdown followed suspicion that bats sold in a Wuhan wet market were the source of the coronavirus that jumped into the human population, spawning a pandemic that has so far infected more than 67 million people and killed more than 1.54 million worldwide.

Denmark followed suit. After an outbreak of the coronavirus among its 15 million minks that are bred for their fur, authorities were recently forced to cull all of them to prevent a new outbreak.

However, in other countries, wildlife trade continues. Either authorities are undermanned in confronting wildlife traders or they still want to reap profits from it.

One such country is Myanmar whose Burmese pythons are coveted by foreign pet lovers. The snakes can be bought from \$500 to \$750 each, according to an online python store.

Buddhist monk Wilatha is against the trade of pythons. That's why he took it upon himself to protect these reptiles. The 69-year-old monk accepts and keeps constrictors brought to him at the Seikta Thukha TetOo Monastery in Yangon City.

Instead of killing or selling pythons, people who catch the snakes bring it to Wilatha to gain a blessing from him. In turn, he is able to protect the snakes, which he cares for and feeds himself. The monk relies on cash donations to sustain the snakes, which he later releases into the forest.

Ironically, in Namibia, authorities conserve the African country's rich wildlife by selling them. Recently, the government put up an advertisement in a newspaper announcing the sale because the animal population has increased and it would be difficult to protect them against poachers, traffickers and even security personnel protecting residential communities that the animals trespass.

Buyers, however, should know that the animals for sale are 170 elephants. The price per head of pachyderm is not indicated, but according to safari providers that offer game hunting packages to tourists, an elephant hunt costs about 900,000 Namibian dollars, or more than P2.8 million.

Aside from the hefty price, the seller requires the buyer to have a large area where he can keep the animals. Of course, that is understandable because of the size of an elephant.

For interested buyers, they should also be ready to buy a herd and not just one elephant to preserve the important social structure of elephant communities where infants or juveniles are not be left behind.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/12/08/wild-moves/>