

10 NOVEMBER 2020, Tuesday



NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



DENR chief pushes creation of enforcement bureau

Published November 9, 2020, 2:09 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu is hopeful that Malacañang would certify a proposed measure creating an enforcement bureau within the DENR as urgent, following the murder of another forest ranger in Agusan del Sur last Oct. 28.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
(MANILA BULLETIN)

“Regrettably, yet another one of our frontliners was killed last Oct. 28 during an anti-illegal logging operation in Bunawan, Agusan del Sur,” Cimatu said.

DENR forest guard Marianito Rufano was allegedly killed by armed men while leading a two-day retrieval operation of some 12,911 board feet of abandoned premium Lauan and Toog timber seized from an illegal logging activity on Sitio Kiatsan, Barangay Bunawan Brook.

Records from the DENR-Environmental Protection and Enforcement Task Force showed that four environmental workers have been killed while performing their duties in 2019.

Last May, forester Fernando Polenio was also shot dead by an unidentified assailant while doing field work in Palo, Leyte.

Cimatu reiterated that the establishment of the Environmental Protection and Enforcement Bureau will “help save the lives of our frontliners who are in the trenches of fighting environmental crimes.”

He said that further delay in the establishment of the EPEB “is putting the lives of our environmental frontliners at greater risks.”

The DENR chief said he will formally ask the President’s certification at the meeting of the Cabinet Cluster on Climate Change Adaptation, Mitigation, and Disaster Risk Reduction scheduled this month.



DENR chief pushes creation of enforcement bureau

“I am confident that the House and the Senate are behind the EPEB bill and that Malacañang will certify the same as urgent,” Cimatu said.

The President’s certification would allow Congress to immediately pass the proposed law on third and final reading.

Deputy Speaker and Antique Rep. Loren Legarda filed House Bill 6973 establishing the EPEB under the DENR last June 15 while Sen. Nancy Binay filed a counterpart measure, Senate Bill 1878, last Oct. 12.



DENR chief seeks Duterte's push to enact EPEB creation

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

November 9, 2020

Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu will ask President Duterte to certify as urgent a proposed measure creating an enforcement bureau under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

So far, two bills have been filed separately in the House of Representatives and the Senate. But Cimatu deemed President Duterte's certification will greatly boost its chances of being enacted into law.

The DENR is implementing various environmental laws, but it has no permanent enforcement bureau of its own and relies only on the help and support of the Philippine National Police (PNP), Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) and other law-enforcement agencies.

"I am confident that the House and the Senate are behind the EPEB [Environmental Protection and Enforcement Bureau] bill and that Malacañang will certify the same as urgent," Cimatu said in a news statement.

A former chief of staff of the AFP, Cimatu believes that a permanent enforcement bureau will "help save the lives of our frontliners who are in the trenches of fighting environmental crimes."

Cimatu is expected to formally ask for the President's certification at the meeting of the Cabinet Cluster on Climate Change Adaptation, Mitigation, and Disaster Risk Reduction (CCAM-DRR) this month.

Further delay in the establishment of the EPEB, Cimatu said, "is putting the lives of our environmental frontliners at greater risks."

"Regrettably, yet another one of our frontliners was killed last Wednesday [October 28] in Agusan del Sur during an anti-illegal logging operation in Bunawan town," Cimatu lamented.

DENR Forest Guard Marianito Rufano, 51, was killed by armed men on October 28 while leading a two-day retrieval operation of some 12,911 board feet of abandoned premium Lauan and Toog timber seized from an illegal logging activity at Sitio Kiatsan, Barangay Bunawan Brook in Bunawan town.

On June 15, Deputy Speaker and Antique Rep. Loren Legarda filed House Bill (HB) 6973 establishing the EPEB under the DENR, while Sen. Nancy Binay filed a counterpart measure—Senate Bill 1878—last October 12.

According to DENR-Environmental Protection and Enforcement Task Force (EPETF) Executive Director Nilo Tamera, support for the EPEB bill has been "gaining ground in Congress."

"HB 6973 now has four additional co-authors—Ang Probinsyano Party-list Rep. Alfred delos Santos, North Cotabato Third District Rep. Pingping Tejada, Cagayan Province First District Rep. Ramon Nolasco Jr. and Ilocos Norte Second District Rep. Angelo Barba. Capiz Second District Rep. Fred Castro has also manifested his plan to co-sponsor the bill," Tamera said.

EPETF records show that in 2019 alone, five DENR workers were killed in the line of duty believed to be connected to DENR's law-enforcement operations while one was killed in May 2020.



DENR-PLDT pact



Published 4 mins ago
on November 10, 2020 05:02 AM
By [Francis Wakefield](#)



Investments from the private sector and corporations will go a long way in the protection and conservation of the environment, particularly peatlands, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said.

DENR Assistant Secretary for Climate Change Ricardo Calderon, during the recent DENR-PLDT Peatlands Conservation virtual press conference, said the Philippines is working to preserve the Leyte Sab-a Basin in Alangalang and Sta. Fe in Leyte and the Caimpugan Peat swamp forest at the Agusan Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary.

“We cannot do it alone. PLDT gave more than P13 million that were deposited to the protective area account of the Agusan Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary,” he said.

Peatlands are wetlands whose soil consist of carbon-rich dead and decaying plant matter. Large amounts of carbon are locked away in peat soil, making them the largest terrestrial carbon store.



DENR, iniimbestigahan na ang quarrying sa paligid ng Bulkang Mayon

By [RadyoMaN Manila](#)
-Nov. 9, 2020 at 6:35am



Bumuo na ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ng composite team na siyang mag-iimbestiga sa quarrying operations sa paligid ng Bulkang Mayon na nagdulot ng mud at lahar flow sa kasagsagan ng pananalasa ng Bagyong Rolly.

Nabatid na aabot sa 300 bahay ang natabunan at anim na residente ang nasawi sa Guinobatan, Albay dahil sa mapaminsalang mud at lahar flow.

Ayon kay Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, ang team ay binubuo ng mga kinatawan mula sa Mines and Geosciences Bureau, Environmental Management Bureau at provincial government ng Albay.

Pinasuspinde rin ni Cimatu ang aktibidad ng 12 quarrying operators sa paligid ng bulkan.

Layunin ng imbestigasyon na masuri ang operasyon ng 12 quarrying sites para malaman kung tumatalima ang mga ito sa quarrying regulations.

Ang Provincial-City Regulatory Mining Board (PCRMB) ang nangangasiwa sa quarrying operations sa lalawigan.



COA backs DOF on uniform tax for mining firms

By [Peter Tabingo](#)

-November 10, 2020

THE Commission on Audit (COA) has voiced support to the proposal of the Department of Finance (DOF) prodding Congress to pass a law imposing a uniform five percent royalty rate in all mining operations in the country.

In its 2019 audit of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), an attached agency of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the COA said the government could have earned at least P55.4 billion from 2010 to 2019 if such a measure was in place.

“The government’s opportunity losses and/or foregone revenues from non-imposition of royalty fee to mining companies operating outside the MRAs (Mineral Reservation Areas) in the entire country for 2018 and 2019 alone, after COA recommended such measure, reached P13.229 billion,” the commission pointed out.

It noted that the DOF has already asked the Senate to pass the original proposal of a uniform royalty rate of five percent for all mining operations whether located inside or outside the MRAs.

“That is in line with the government’s reform objectives of making the country’s tax system simpler, more efficient and fairer to all taxpayers,” the COA added.

In its communication to the Senate Committee on Ways and Means, the DOF said it expects to raise P7.2 billion from the mining tax in the first year alone.

However, the MGB has submitted a contrary stand through a position paper submitted to the same committee insisting that the five percent royalty should only be imposed for minerals extracted within the MRAs.

It proposed that royalty payment for metallic minerals outside of the MRAs be pegged at three percent of market value on gross output and only one percent for non-metallic minerals on the same base computations.

In its report, the COA said the DOF position is more favorable to the government particularly with increased spending due to the COVID-19 response.

“We find the original proposal of a uniform royalty rate at five percent for all mining operations... of the DOF more advantageous to the government. The taxes that could have been collected... can be used by the government to finance its priority programs and projects especially in this time of financial crisis due to the pandemic,” the audit team said.

Based on a breakdown of collections attached to the audit report, mining companies paid P1.187 billion in royalty fees for operations inside MRAs in 2018 and P1.405 billion in 2019.

If the same rates were applied to mining operations outside MRAs, government auditors said the collections would have been P6.147 billion in 2018 and P7.081 billion in 2019.

The COA recommended that the MGB support the DOF on uniform royalty rate for all mining operations but the bureau insisted that it is backing the version of the House of Representatives under HB No. 8400 which proposes a lower rate for mining firms operating outside of MRAs.



DENR sees dolomite project done by year-end

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

November 9, 2020



Excavators fill the 500-meter stretch of the famed baywalk on Manila Bay with white sand as part of the bay's rehabilitation efforts in this file photo.

DESPITE the odds, an environment official is confident that the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) and its private contractor for the controversial Manila Bay Beach Nourishment Project can complete the project on time.

Undersecretary Jonas R. Leones of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said on Monday only around 5,000 metric tons or at least one barge of crushed dolomite is needed to complete the project and overlaying once the delivery is made. It can be done in a matter of days.

Leones, the DENR's Undersecretary for Policy, Planning and International Affairs and the designated spokesman of Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, expressed hopes that the issues raised by Cebu's provincial government and Alcoy town will be addressed soon so as to finally lift the ban on dolomite mining that has been causing the project's delay.

Either that, or the DPWH and its contractors may have to find another source of dolomite or alternative material to complete the P389-million project on time.

"Within the year, the beach nourishment should be completed. We need to increase the dolomite overlay by a meter to complete the project," Leones said.

The overlaying of the crushed dolomite by the DPWH and its contractor, a joint venture of MAC Builders and DragonHart Construction Enterprise Inc. hit a snag when the Cebu Provincial Government, citing environmental and tax concerns, issued a cease-and-desist order on the private mining firms —Dolomite Mining Corp. (DMC) and Philippine Mining Service Corp. (PMSC)—commissioned to produce the dolomite.

DMC and PMSC are also in trouble with the DENR for allegedly damaging corals caused by the spillover of materials during hauling into the barge.

According to Leones, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) is now talking to local officials of Cebu province and Alcoy town.



DENR sees dolomite project done by year-end

“There’s a complaint from Alcoy, first and foremost, about authority because it is a national government project, and there are questions about taxes. The complaint was relayed to the DILG and the DILG is now in talks with the Cebu Provincial Government,” he said.

He said once the ban is lifted, it will just be a matter of days to finish the project. “Once it is there, overlaying will be fast and easy,” said Leones.

If negotiations fail, it will be up to the DPWH and its contractors to find other sources of crushed dolomite or alternative dumping materials to suit the Boracay-like beach effect desired by the DENR when it first conceived of the project in 2019.

“It will be the call of the DPWH to find other sources of materials for the project in that case. Our concern is that they complete the project before the end of the year,” Leones said.

“Once we complete the dolomite overlay, we expect the washing in or washing out to be minimized,” he added.

Cebu Governor Gwendolyn Garcia enforced a ban on the extraction of dolomite for use as artificial white sand along Roxas Boulevard in order to prevent a repeat of a disaster such as the 2018 landslide that killed nearly 77 people.

Local officials also said they not give any permit and were not even consulted by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) for the mining of dolomite in Alcoy town. It was the MGB that allowed limestone extraction in Naga, Cebu, that resulted in the 2018 landslide.

The Cebu LGU and mining companies are entangled in a legal dispute over a local ordinance taxing the extraction of minerals.

The province wants a fair share of minerals being extracted by the mining companies in the province, particularly in dolomite mining, further complicating the situation.

As to the proposed construction of a breakwater to enhance the protection of the crushed dolomite, the consultation process with stakeholders is already in motion, said Leones.

“A letter was sent to the PRA [Philippine Reclamation Authority] and the Philippine Ports Authority [PPA]. The DPWH wrote the letter and we are waiting for their comments,” said Leones.

Meanwhile, Leones said the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority [MMDA] will be in charge of a separate infrastructure component of the project.

“We have already downloaded funds to the MMDA and they will be implementing the infrastructure projects like the proposed CRs [comfort rooms], souvenir shops and offices,” said Leones.

Leones said two souvenir shops, two offices housing the Mandamus agency and another for the law enforcers will rise along Roxas Boulevard soon.



DENR sees dolomite project done by year-end

The DENR is currently reaching out to critics of the project amid questions on the project's wisdom and timing. While it was planned and allocated a budget before the pandemic, it was implemented even after the declaration of the national public health emergency.

Aside from environmental and health concerns, critics said the P389-million fund for the beach nourishment project could have been channeled to boost the Covid-19 pandemic response or more meaningful rehabilitation projects like mangrove reforestation.

"We are reaching out to various sectors to let them know that the beach nourishment is not just about the dolomite sand. There are other components like mangrove reforestation, flood and erosion control," Leones said, adding that the project was done in good faith and in compliance with the Supreme Court's continuing mandamus to rehabilitate the historic bay waters.



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MANILA BAY UPDATE
November 9, 2020

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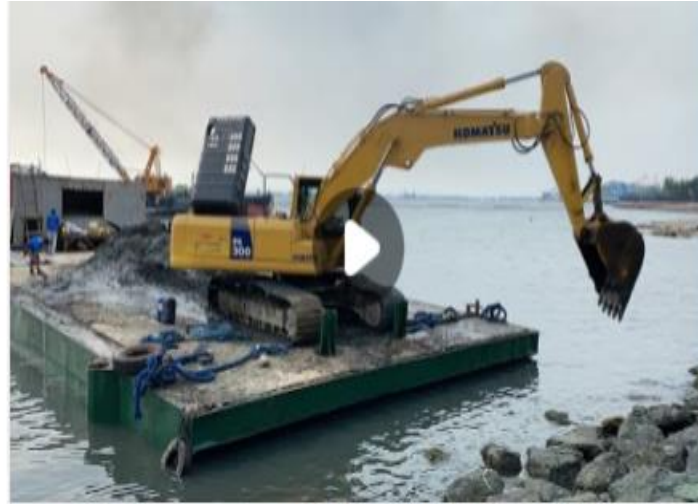
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‘Forest rangers’

[Monday, November 9, 2020](#) [People's Tonight](#)



ENVIRONMENTALISTS, nature lovers and even ordinary citizens have been raising the “*alarm signals*” that the country’s natural forest cover is gradually decreasing and degrading.

Admittedly, the alarming situation is due to various factors like logging (legal or illegal), “kaingin” farming (slash-and-burn agriculture), forest fires, volcanic eruptions and mining operations.

As a result of its declining forest cover, the Philippines, a nation of more than 100 million people, is now known to have the highest number of threatened species of flora and fauna in the world.

However, it is heartening to know that a well-meaning member of Congress, Buhay party-list Rep. Jose “Lito” Atienza, wants to hire more forest rangers to guard the nation’s remaining forests.

Not only that. Atienza, a former three-term Mayor of Manila and one-time secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), also wants to raise the pay of “*forest rangers*.”

In fact, Congressman Atienza has filed House Bill (HB) 2597, which seeks to increase the minimum base pay of “*forest rangers*” from P13,807 a month to P42,159 per month.

Likewise, the proposed legislation grants the guardians of the country’s forest and timber lands new employment benefits, including overtime, night differential, longevity and hazard pay.

Employed by the DENR, headed by retired Army Gen. Roy Cimatu, “forest rangers” enforce environmental laws against illegal loggers, poachers, wildlife traffickers and other environmental criminals.

In filing HB 2597, Atienza, a former member of the world famous and multi-awarded Bayanihan Dance Company, said these hard-working guardians of our forests “*deserve these long-overdue benefits*.”

Thus, members of two-chamber Congress – senators and congressmen – ought to quickly approve the proposed law if indeed they have the heart and mind for the good of the Filipino people.

'Plantdemic' hits PH as demand for greenery grows

Published November 9, 2020, 5:53 PM
[by Agence France-Presse](#)

A gardening craze dubbed "plantdemic" has spread across the Philippines after coronavirus restrictions fuelled demand for greenery, sending plant prices soaring and sparking a rise in poaching from public parks and protected forests.



This photo taken on October 28, 2020 shows pulling weeds from a bed of plants at a park in Baguio City, north of Manila, as a spate of plant thefts from public parks in the city prompted authorities to tighten security and issue a plea for people to leave the greenery alone.

(Photo by JJ LANDINGIN / AFP / MANILA BULLETIN)

Photos of delicate flowers and broad-leafed foliage cultivated in backyards and on balconies have flooded social media as housebound Filipinos turn to nature to relieve stress and boredom.

"It's unbelievable. People are super interested in plants these days," said landscape gardener Alvin Chingcuangco, who has seen prices for some varieties of monsteras reach 55,000 pesos (\$1,140) each, compared with 800 pesos before the pandemic.

Manila plant seller Arlene Gumera-Paz said her daily turnover tripled after she reopened her doors following months of lockdown.

Demand remained robust even as prices for the most popular varieties of indoor plants, such as alocasias, spider plants and peace lilies, doubled or even quadrupled.

"It's hard to understand people. When plants were cheap, they were ignored," said the 40-year-old, who buys her plants in bulk from growers in nearby provinces.

But as demand has grown, authorities have warned that many plants on the market may not have been legally obtained.

Rangers patrolling the forests of Zamboanga in the country's south for illegal loggers and wildlife poachers were ordered to watch out for plant thieves, after officials noticed some species posted on social media could only be found in the region's protected areas.



‘Plantdemic’ hits PH as demand for greenery grows

“Prior to the pandemic we hadn’t observed many plant poachers,” said Maria Christina Rodriguez, Zamboanga regional director for the Department of Energy and Natural Resources.

“This only became popular during lockdown.”

Removing threatened species from forests is illegal under Philippine law and carries hefty penalties. Collecting other native plants is allowed but only with a permit.

Thieves are targeting plant varieties popular on social media, such as staghorn ferns and pitcher plants, Rodriguez said.

But catching offenders is difficult — once the plant has been dug up and sold “it is hard for us to prove that it came from forests or our protected areas”, she added.

A spate of plant thefts from public parks in the northern city of Baguio prompted authorities to tighten security and issue a plea on Facebook for people to leave the greenery alone.

So far only five people have been caught for stealing flowers, said Rhenan Diwas, officer in charge of the Baguio City Environment and Parks Management Office.

“Maybe it’s because of boredom or they want to generate income,” he said.

‘Plantitos and plantitas’

The stress of lockdown and financial pressure caused by the pandemic have prompted many Filipinos to seek solace in their gardens, earning themselves the nicknames “plantitos and plantitas”, or plant uncles and aunties.

“The safest way to make yourself happy is through growing little things,” said Norma Karasig Villanueva, former president of the Philippine Horticultural Society.

Long-time gardener Ivy Bautista, 30, said tending her plants helped to “kill boredom” and earn some money by selling cuttings from her extensive collection.

But she opposes the “insane” prices charged by other sellers, fearing it could drive plant poaching.

“It’s ridiculous, a plant that I purchased for 400 pesos is now selling for 5,000 pesos,” said Bautista.

In an editorial titled “Plantdemic” last month, the Philippine Daily Inquirer decried the high prices being charged and urged buyers to get their plants from sellers “with legitimate, lawful sources”.

Rodriguez in Zamboanga said she welcomed the interest in gardening, but wished they would plant flowers or edibles instead of native flora.

“Be responsible plantitos and plantitas and be mindful of where the plants are coming from,” she said.

“We’re really serious about this because it creates an imbalance in the ecosystem once the species are plucked out of their natural habitat.”



'Plantdemic' hits Philippines as demand for greenery grows

By [Mikhail Flores](#) (Agence France-Presse)
- November 9, 2020 - 1:23pm



This photo taken on October 28, 2020 shows pulling weeds from a bed of plants at a park in Baguio City, north of Manila, as a spate of plant thefts from public parks in the city prompted authorities to tighten security and issue a plea for people to leave the greenery alone. A gardening craze dubbed "plantdemic" has spread across the Philippines after coronavirus restrictions fuelled demand for greenery, sending plant prices soaring and sparking poaching from public parks and protected forests.

AFP/JJ Landingin

MANILA, Philippines — A gardening craze dubbed "plantdemic" has spread across the Philippines after coronavirus restrictions fuelled demand for greenery, sending plant prices soaring and sparking a rise in poaching from public parks and protected forests.

Photos of delicate flowers and broad-leafed foliage cultivated in backyards and on balconies have flooded social media as housebound Filipinos turn to nature to relieve stress and boredom.

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Greening education boosts fight for environment, climate: CCC

By Catherine Teves November 9, 2020, 3:24 pm

MANILA – The Climate Change Commission (CCC) is seeking increased public-private cooperation on strengthening environmental and climate change awareness and education nationwide.

Secretary Emmanuel de Guzman, CCC vice chairperson and executive director, said such cooperation is necessary to better help the country pursue sustainable development and build resilience to threats like climate change and the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic.

"Now, more than ever, we must heed science and invest more in public awareness and education on greener, more environment-friendly and more sustainable ways of living," he said in his message for the 2020 National Environmental Awareness Month (NEAM) this November.

He said the continuing onslaught of Covid-19 pandemic raised urgency for the public and private sectors to increasingly undertake the matter.

The Covid-19, he said, is so far the strongest warning "we must reform the ways we live and ways we regard our environment."

"We simply cannot afford a return to business as usual," he said.

First reported in China in December last year, the Covid-19 evolved into a pandemic affecting the Philippines and many countries worldwide.

The World Health Organization (WHO) said available evidence so far indicate the virus causing Covid-19 has a zoonotic source or natural animal origin.

Republic Act 9512 or known as National Environmental Awareness and Education Act of 2008 set November of every year as NEAM.

"Consistent with the policy of the State to protect and advance the right of the people to a balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature, and in recognition of the vital role of the youth in nation-building and the role of education to foster patriotism and nationalism, accelerate social progress and promote total human liberation and development, the State shall promote national awareness on the role of natural resources in economic growth and the importance of environmental conservation and ecological balance towards sustained national development," RA 9512 read.

De Guzman called for full implementation of RA 9512 and RA 9729 (Climate Change Act of 2009), as educating people is necessary in inspiring public action for the environment and climate.

He noted RA 9512 provides the framework for inter-agency and multi-sectoral cooperation on integrating environmental education school curricula in all levels.

RA 9729, on the other hand, requires inclusion of basic climate change concepts in the country's primary and secondary education curricula, he continued.

He said full implementation of both laws "has never been this critical" given extent of environmental degradation nationwide, climate change's threats and danger of Covid-19.



Greening education boosts fight for environment, climate: CCC

Earlier, de Guzman warned the risks of climate change and pandemics escalate among the country's most vulnerable and marginalized sectors.

Such risks are particularly high in crowded urban informal settlements, he added. *(PNA)*



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Pasig River Coordinating and Management Office - PRCMO

13 hrs · 🌐

LOOK: PRCMO IN ACTION IN THE PASIG RIVER'S PORTION IN PAROLA

Here are the River Warriors displaying their all-out teamwork in the Pasig River's portion in Parola, Barangay 275, San Nicolas, Manila.

Apart from the regular cleanup operations in this area of the Pasig River near its confluence with Manila Bay, hauling operations are also continuous —with assistance from the Department of Public Services (DPS) of the Manila City Government.

PRCMO enjoins the public to continue showing their solidarity with us in our battle for the Pasig River, esteros, and Manila Bay. Through the practice of proper waste disposal and segregation-at-source and by adhering to the local ordinances of our barangay and city or municipality, we commit to cleaner and healthier waterways and environment and a safer and more sustainable future for all!

#PRCMO #DENR #PasigRiver #PusoParaSallogPasig





Villar bats for Nov. as environment month

posted November 09, 2020 at 11:05 pm
by [Macon Ramos-Araneta](#)

Senator Cynthia Villar is rallying the country to celebrate November as “National Environmental Awareness and National Clean Air Month,” saying protecting the environment will save people from disasters and calamities.

“Calamities are an added burden to us. They can make one poorer because all efforts would be futile,” said the head of the Senate committee on the environment, natural resources and climate change.

“Better results would be achieved through more people and groups’ collective efforts geared towards environmental protection,” said Villar who has been opposing projects that could result in environmental degradation.

She has been particularly objecting to reclamation plans along the coast of Manila Bay, which she maintains would be harmful to the Las Pinas-Paranaque Wetland Park, a declared national protected area under Philippines laws. She said those could compromise the livelihood of more than 300,000 fishermen in the nearby communities.

On the problems with plastic waste, Villar has been advocating implementing the extended producer responsibility, a measure being practiced in European nations to limit the use of plastic and asking producers of plastic waste to build recycling facilities for them.

To help reduce plastic waste, the Villar Sipag Foundation has built three facilities nationwide that convert plastic waste into chairs that are being distributed to public schools and farm schools all over the country. In the spirit of EPR, Coca-Cola Beverages Philippines is building a plastic bottles recycling facility in General Trias, Cavite, that will convert plastic bottle waste into new bottles.

“We have a lot of plastic waste here in Metro Manila. When disposed of improperly, they could clog our drainage systems and eventually cause flooding, which in turn could spread diseases,” Villar said.

As to the observance of the National Clean Air Month, Villar says maintaining the air clean should be a part of the “new normal” that the country should adopt following the coronavirus pandemic that the world is experiencing. She cited reports showing that the Philippines’ air quality had dramatically improved since the restrictions on mobility were imposed to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

“We should keep this positive momentum going. It should be part of the new normal we are talking about,” Villar said.

She says she plans to review the implementation of the 21-year old Republic Act 8749 or the Clean Air Act that aims to improve the air quality in the country.



Villar nakiisa sa pagdiriwang ng Environmental Awareness Month

[NATIONALNEWS](#)

On Nov 9, 2020



MALUGOD na nakiisa si Senador Cynthia Villar sa pagdiriwang ng “National Environmental Awareness and National Clean Air Month ngayong Nobyembre kasabay ng pagsabing ang pagbibigay ng proteksiyon sa kalikasan ang magliligtas sa mga Pilipino mula sa sakuna at kalamidad.

“Calamities are added burden to us. It can make one poorer because all efforts would be futile,” pahayag ni Villar, chairperson Senate committee on environment, natural resources and climate change.

“Better results would be achieved through more people and groups’ collective efforts geared towards environmental protection,” diin pa ng senadora na mariing tinutulan ang mga proyektong maaring makasira sa kalikasan.

Partikular na tinutulan ni Villar ang planong reklamasyon sa kahabaan ng baybayin ng Manila Bay na ayon sa kanya’y makakasira sa Paranaque Wetland Park, isang deklaradong protected area sa ilalim ng batas. Makukumpormiso din aniya ang kabuhayan ang mahigit 300,000 fisherfolk sa kalapit na mga komunidad.

Tungkol naman sa problema sa plastic waste, isinusulong ni Villa rang pagpapatupad ng extended producer responsibility (EPR), isang measure na ginagawa ng mga bansa sa Europa para limitahan ang paggamit ng plastic waste at ang pagtatayo ng recycling facility para dito.

Para makatulong na mabawasan ang plastic waste, nagpatayo ang Villar Sipag Foundation ng tatlong pasilidad para i-convert ang plastic waste sa silya na ipinamamahagi ngayon sa mga pampublikong paaralan at mga farm school sa buong bansa. Maging ang Coco-Cola Beverages Philippines, ayon kay Villar ay nagpatayo na rin ng recycling facility sa General Trias, Cavite na magko-convert sa plastic bottle waste sa bagong botelya.

“We have a lot of plastic wastes here in Metro Manila. When disposed improperly, they could clog our drainage systems and eventually cause flooding, which in turn spreads diseases,” babala ni Villar.



Villar nakiisa sa pagdiriwang ng Environmental Awareness Month

Sa paggunita ng National Clean Air Month, sinabi ni Villar na ang pagpapanatili ng malinis na hangin ay dapat maging bahagi ng “new normal” kasunod nang coronavirus pandemic na nararanasan sa buong mundo.

Binanggit nito ang ulat kung saan gumanda ang kalidad ng hangin sa Pilipinas sapul nang ipatupad ang community quarantine para mapigilan ang pagkalat ng COVID-19.

“We should keep this positive momentum going. It should be part of the new normal we are talking about,” ani ni Villar kasabay ng pagsabing plano niyang rebyuhin ang implementasyon ang 21-taong Republic Act 8749 o Clean Air Act na naglalayong i-improve ang air quality sa bansa.

Bilang mambabatas, nakapaghain si Villar ng mga panukalang batas na magsisilbing solusyon at magpapatupad ng istrategiya para matugunan ang patuloy na problema sa kalikasan.

Nauna nang inihain ni Villa rang Senate Resolution No. 329 o “The Plastic Waaste Leakage Into The Seas” para magtugunan ang problema sa plastik na basura na napupunta sa karagatan.

“I have also talked to consumer product companies who are big users of plastics to join the government’s efforts towards environment protection,” ani Villar.

Ininusulong din nito ang Senate Bill No. 1331 na naglalayong i-institutionalize ang paggamit ng EPR sa waste management, kasama na dito ang Senate Bill No. 333 o “Single-Use Plastic Product Regulation Act of 2019” na naglalayong kontrolin ang pagggawa, importasyon at single-use ng produktong plastik.

Bukod dito, bahagi rin ng itinutulak ni Villar ang proteksiyon at rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay. Inihain nito ang Senate Bill No. 334 na naglalayong pagtibayin ang integrated coastal management bilang national strategy para matiyak ang development sa coastal at marine environment resources ng bansa.

Noong 2018, pinangunahan din Villar ang pagpasa ng RA No. 11038 o Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System (E-NIPAS) Act na nagdedeklara sa 94 lugar sa bansa bilang protected area. **(Mylene Alfonso)**



Pagudpud school turns plastic wastes into 'eco-bricks'

By Leilanie Adriano November 9, 2020, 6:17 pm



'**ECO-BRICKS**'. A worker paints eco-tile bricks made of plastic waste materials in this undated photo. Personnel from the Luzong National High School in Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte recycle their plastic wastes and turns them into eco-bricks to be used for school beautification purposes while some are sold to the community. *(Photo courtesy of Thelma Ruiz-Sacsac)*

LAOAG CITY – Schools in the province of Ilocos Norte may be devoid of students due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic but it never runs out of "green ideas".

At the Luzong National High School (LNHS) in Pagudpud town, for example, the school has declared war on wastes by slowly converting their laminated packaging and other plastic wastes materials into something sturdy and pleasing to the eyes.

Known as eco-bricks, these have become a source of livelihood for some of the locals as the school is using them to beautify the school pavement if not sold to "*plantitos*" and "*plantitas*" who have grown so much interest in plants since the Covid-19 lockdown started.

"It all started with a contest on solid waste management last year sponsored by the North Luzon Renewable Corporation (NLREC). We joined the contest and we won the PHP10,000 prize. We then use the amount as seed money to buy molder and cement," said Thelma Ruiz-Sacsac, Master Teacher II of LNHS in an interview Monday who proposed the project with the support of her principal, Dr. Gladys A. Acoba.

NLREC is the owner and operator of the 81-megawatt wind farm in Caparispisan village, Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte which provides some incentives to green initiative projects and programs on a sustainable environment as part of their corporate social responsibility to host communities.

For every 50 to 100 pieces of plastics, one eco tile brick is produced, which is about five to six times stronger than a regular brick made of sand and cement. While the students are busy working on their self-learning modules at home, some parents and teachers are also using their spare time in school to lay the eco tile bricks, the school produced.

Pegged at PHP80-PHP100 per eco brick measuring 15 x 15 inches, Sacsac said they are also selling eco-bricks to interested buyers from the community.



Pagudpud school turns plastic wastes into 'eco-bricks'

“We are selling some of the eco-bricks to the community for sustainability,” she added.

In a draft provincial resolution certified as urgent by Governor Matthew Joseph Manotoc on Monday, the province of Ilocos Norte in partnership with the NLREC and Green Antz Builders plans to construct and develop an eco hub in the province.

The eco hub facility aims to collect and reuse discarded plastic materials and transform them into valuable resources like eco-bricks for construction.

According to board member Donald Nicolas, Green Antz Builders represented by its president and chief executive officer, Rommel Benig has already the technology in the manufacture of eco-bricks which can be adopted in the entire province.

The facility is also expected to benefit local communities not only on job generation but also to inspire more people to segregate their wastes properly, and eventually improve reduction at source. *(PNA)*



SMC, LGUs to build bike lanes out of recycled plastic

November 9, 2020, 4:08 pm



File photo

MANILA – Almost a year after it first built and started testing the country’s first asphalt road made with post-consumer plastic waste, San Miguel Corporation (SMC) is eyeing the next phase of its plan to widen the application of the environment-friendly material by building bicycle lanes made of recycled plastics in partner cities and provinces.

SMC president and chief operating officer Ramon S. Ang said the company is looking to work with technology partners and local governments willing to put up dedicated bike lanes to accommodate cyclists whose numbers have risen due to quarantine and transportation restrictions brought about by the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) global pandemic starting with its home base in Mandaluyong.

“It has almost been a year since we started our plastic road initiative and so far, our pilot site has held up very well. It’s in our logistics facility -- used heavily every day by large vehicles with heavy loads. Very soon, I think we can graduate it for light public use, specifically, for bicycle lanes,” Ang said in a news release on Monday.

Ang said the company hopes to apply the technology more widely someday, particularly for public use on roads, but development is still considered to be in the early stages, considering the need for continuous testing to determine its long-term viability.

SMC, which itself recently launched a program to help provide bicycles for employees and extended workforce across its facilities, said that while biking to work has now become a more viable alternative mode of transportation for many Filipinos, there is a need to make road conditions safer for people on bicycles.

“Because of social distancing and restrictions on transportation, more of our countrymen are now biking to work. It promotes health and fitness, lessens pollution and provides a cost-free way to get to one’s destination, and has also been embraced by many LGUS who have set special bike lanes on roads,” Ang said. “Our roads are not designed with cyclists in mind. What we hope to do is work with LGUs and technology partners to come up with solutions for people on bikes that are safe and cost-efficient.”

Since 2017, SMC has been known to initiate high-impact sustainability initiatives, including in helping address plastic waste. That year, it announced the discontinuation of its plastic bottled water business in favor of its sustainability goals.



SMC, LGUs to build bike lanes out of recycled plastic

In November 2019, the company, together with project partner Dow Philippines announced its first recycled plastics road initiative, built on a 1,500 square meter pilot test area at its logistics center in Gen. Trias, Cavite. Some 900 kilos of plastic waste were used as a binder, together with bitumen, in producing the asphalt.

Recently, SMC also announced that it would be buying up plastic wastes from assemblers and LGUs to process and use as fuels at its cement facilities, in a bid to lessen dependence on fossil fuels. **(PR)**



Surigao Sur town to plant 1.3 million trees by 2021

By Alexander Lopez November 9, 2020, 9:29 pm



A MILLION TREES. Mayor Carla Lopez-Pichay (sitting, right) of Cantilan town in Surigao del Sur leads the launching of the greening program in the area on Monday (Nov. 9, 2020) that seeks to plant around 1.3 million trees by 2021. The massive tree planting initiative is part of the 'cash for work' program of the municipality. *(Photo courtesy of the local government of Cantilan)*

BUTUAN CITY – The Surigao del Sur town of Cantila launched Monday a greening program that seeks to plant around 1.3 million trees in the area by next year.

Mayor Carla Lopez-Pichay, who led the launching, said the massive tree planting would be done through the Project Management Office (PMO) of the municipality with the support of the “cash for work” program of the Municipal Social Welfare and Development Office (MSWDO) in the town.

“A total of 1,500 residents from six barangays of Cantilan will be part of the project under our cash for work,” Ms. D U. Pasco of the MSWDO told the Philippine News Agency Monday.

Pasco said that at least 1,500 residents would be paid PHP2,400 each for a six-hour work per day for 10 days under the program.

“After 10 days, it’s the PMO that will continue the implementation of the project,” she said.

Tree species to be planted include those classified as indigenous in parts of Cantilan such as narra, falcata, and fruit trees to include mango, cacao, and guyabano.

Most of the tree seedlings would be planted in the watershed areas of Cantilan, particularly in Barangays Lubo and Cabangahan.

“We will also plant bamboos along with the river systems here in Cantilan for protection from soil erosion, especially along river banks,” Vincent Dueñas, the municipal administrator, said on Monday.

Dueñas said a total of 87,000 seedlings of mangroves would also be planted in the town's four coastal barangays.



Surigao Sur town to plant 1.3 million trees by 2021

To further protect the mangrove areas of the town, Dueñas said the Sangguniang Bayan of Cantilan is now working to establish a mangrove protection site and the construction of a PHP1-million, three-story watchtower.

“There will be no establishment of fish cages and other human activities in these mangrove protected areas,” Dueñas said.

Also, he said Cantilan is also working to plant a million abaca seedlings in the areas of Lubo and Cabangahan.

“These barangays are inhabited mostly by our Indigenous Peoples. Abaca production is among their sources of income. The planting of one million abaca seedlings is separate from the tree planting program of the municipality,” Dueñas said.

The abaca production is in partnership with the Kapit-Bisig Laban sa Kahirapan-Comprehensive and Integrated Delivery of Social Services (Kalahi-CIDSS) program of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), he added. *(PNA)*



WATER SECTORS SA GOBYERNO: REVOLVING FUND NA MAY MABABANG INTEREST RATE ILAAN



November 10, 2020 @ 12:20 AM 5 hours ago

NARARAMDAMAN na natin ang tumitinding epekto ng climate change, hindi naman maikakaila na bilang isang arkipelago, isa ang Pilipinas sa mga bulnerableng bansa na dumanas ng nag-iibang weather patterns/phenomenon katulad ng El Niño at La Niña, para na nga itong bahagi ng panahon sa ating bansa.

Kaya mahalaga na maipasok ang climate change adaptation and mitigation sa bawat pagpapalano ng water sector.

Ibinahagi ng Boracay Water District ang kanilang ginagawang coral reef assessment at vulnerability assessment lalo pa't isa silang isla na kayang palubugin ng tumataas na libel ng ocean water.

Para sa Manila Water, regular nilang ginagawa ang “retrofitting and maintenance” ng kanilang water assets gayundin ay obligado silang magsumite kada limang taon ng Service and Treatment Plan with Water Security Pillar sa MWSS na nakapaloob sa concession agreement.

Tingin naman ng Philippine Water Partnership, kinakailangan ang modernisasyon ng water sector para mas maging episyente ang serbisyo at distribusyon ng tubig sa mga sektor.

Malaki ang epekto ng nagbabagong panahon sa ating water resources kaya kinakailangan ang ibayo pang mga pag-aaral at mga konkretong mga solusyon at matitibay na polisiya para matugunan ang lumalaking problemang ito.

Tinanong din ng moderator na si Dr. De Guzman ang best practices ng water utilities kaugnay sa water service and supply.

Para sa Bocaue Water District, ito ang ginawang Bulacan Bulk Water na siyang namamahala sa distribusyon ng tubig sa mga munisipalidad ng lalawigan ng Bulacan.

Ipinagpapatuloy naman ng Tagbilaran Water District ang kanilang isinasagawang information and educational information campaign para sa pagtitipid at wastong paggamit ng tubig sa mga tahanan, mga tanggapan at mga establisimiyento.



WATER SECTORS SA GOBYERNO: REVOLVING FUND NA MAY MABABANG INTEREST RATE ILAAN

Panukala ng Village Water Supply Service, Inc. masisiguro lamang ang maayos na serbisyo kapag naging maayos ang water utilities lalo na ang mga pribado at mangyayari ito sa pamamagitan ng isang investment plan for water ng pamahalaan sa pamamagitan ng low interest loans.

Bukod siyempre sa teknikal na kaalaman at kapasidad, lubhang mahalaga ang pagpopondo para sa mga programa at proyekto kaugnay sa modernisasyon ng water sector.

Kaya suhestyon ng Bocaue Water District, maglaan ng revolving fund ang pamahalaan na siyang mapagkukunan ng pondo ng pribadong water utilities at hindi na umasa pa sa mga bangko na napakataas ng interes at kadalasang hindi interesado sa pamumuhunan sa mga ganitong proyekto ukol sa patubig.

Bagama't may "Saling Tubig" project ang DILG, limitado ito sa water districts at sa maliit na halaga lang, kaya kinakailangan talaga na mamuhunan ang pamahalaan lalo pa't malaking nagbabantang usapin ang kalagayan at hinaharap ng water sector sa bansa at sa buong mundo.

Kaya dapat kumilos ang Malacañang at ang Kongreso para mabigyang kaukulang pansin ang pangangailangan ng water sector sa puhunan.

Hindi na nga financial assistance ang hiling nila kundi magaan na financial loan para maging reyalidad ang mga proyekto habang may panahon pa para isaaayos ang lahat, mahirap kumilos at maghabol kapag huli na ang lahat at tuluyan ng natuyot ang ating water resources.

Tandaan natin, hindi natin madalas mabasa ang kilos at galaw ng kalikasan.

PH posts 2,058 new COVID-19 infections; total breaches 398,000

Jauhn Etienne Villaruel, ABS-CBN News
Posted at Nov 09 2020 04:06 PM



Children buy ice cream from a vendor at the Marcial O. Rañola Memorial School in Guinobatan Province of Albay on November 14, 2020. *Jonathan Cellona, ABS-CBN News*

MANILA — The Philippines' coronavirus cases as of Monday reached 398,449 after the Department of Health (DOH) reported 2,058 new infections.

The DOH also reported 182 recoveries pushing the total number of patients who recovered from the disease to 361,784.

Meanwhile, 108 additional fatalities were reported, bringing the death toll to 7,647.

Monday's number of reported deaths was the 9th highest announced in a single day, according to ABS-CBN Investigative and Research Group. It is the highest since Oct. 23, when DOH announced 132 deaths.

The country's active cases, meanwhile, stood at 29,018, or 7.3 percent of the cumulative total infections.

The DOH also rectified its records by removing 4 duplicates from the total case count, 3 of which were recovered cases.

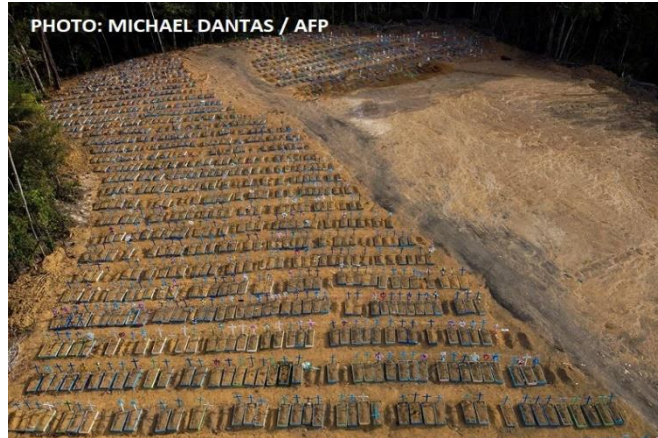
Moreover, 33 cases previously tagged as recovered were reclassified as deaths, the Health department added.

Read More: [COVID-19 update](#) [COVID-19 latest](#) [coronavirus](#) [COVID death toll](#) [COVID recoveries](#) [DOH latest](#) [COVID tally Nov 9](#)



Nasawi sa buong mundo dahil sa COVID-19 nadagdagan ng mahigit 5,000

By Dona Dominguez-Cargullo November 09, 2020 - 10:58 AM



Umabot na sa 1,261,980 ang bilang ng mga nasawi sa COVID-19 sa buong mundo.

Sa huling datos na nakalap ng Radyo INQUIRER, pinakamaraming bilang ng nasawi sa US na umabot na sa 243,768.

Umabot naman na sa mahigit 162,000 ang bilang ng mga nasawi sa Brazil.

Ang death toll sa India ay mahigit 126,000 na.

Habang ang death toll sa Mexico ay umabot na sa mahigit 95,000.

Umabot naman na sa mahigit 35.7 million na ang bilang ng mga naka-recover na sa sakit.

Habang nasa mahigit 13.6 million pa ang aktibong kaso.

Narito ang bilang ng mga nasawi sa iba't ibang ng mga bansa:

USA – 243,768

Brazil – 162,397

India – 126,653

Mexico – 95,027

UK – 49,044

Italy – 41,394

France – 40,439

Spain – 38,833

Iran – 38,291

Peru – 34,879

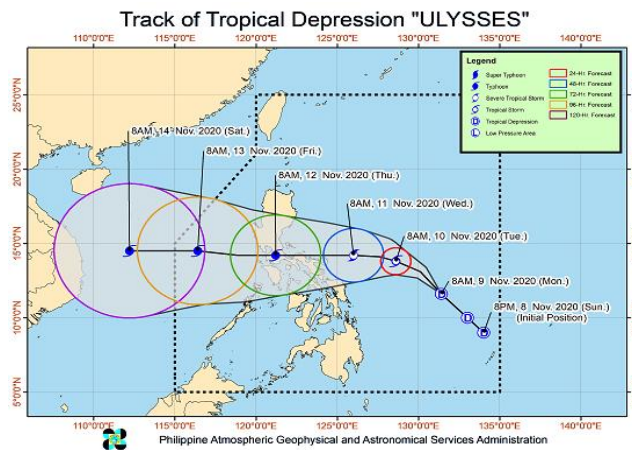
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'Ulysses' intensifies



By [Arlie O. Calalo](#)
November 9, 2020



TROPICAL depression Ulysses has intensified and will likely turn into a storm, the weather bureau said on Monday.

It is expected to make landfall in Bicol Region on Wednesday.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said that at 10 a.m. on Monday,

'Ulyses' was 635 kilometers east-northeast of Surigao City, Surigao del Norte or 605 km east of Borongan City, Eastern Samar.

It was packing maximum sustained winds of 55 kilometers per hour near the center and gustiness of up to 70 kph.

"It may reach typhoon category on Wednesday prior to its landfall," the weather bureau said.



NDRRMC calls on public to brace for 'Ulysses'

By Priam Nepomuceno November 9, 2020, 5:53 pm



MANILA – The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) on Monday urged the public to take necessary precautions as Tropical Storm Ulysses is expected to make landfall over the Bicol Region-Quezon area on Wednesday.

This, as the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA), in an emergency meeting with the NDRRMC, said "Ulysses" may intensify into a typhoon ahead of its landfall.

NDRRMC executive director Ricardo Jalad also reminded regional DRRMCs to make use of all available means of communication to ensure that warnings are well-cascaded to communities.

Regional disaster response agencies have been conducting pre-disaster risk assessment meetings to prepare the localities.

In particular, residents are warned against flooding and rain-induced landslides that may occur in highly susceptible areas during heavy rainfall.

Currently, no tropical cyclone wind signal (TCWS) has been raised but PAGASA noted that TCWS No. 1 may be raised over the provinces in the Bicol Region or Eastern Visayas beginning Monday night or early Tuesday morning in anticipation of the onset of a strong breeze to near gale conditions.

The tail-end of a cold front will bring moderate to heavy rains with at times intense rains over Cagayan including Babuyan Islands, Isabela, and Aurora.

The NDRRMC advised regional and local DRRMCs that might be affected to continue monitoring weather updates, intensify warning dissemination, and implement prescribed precautionary measures.

As of 4 p.m. Monday, "Ulysses" was spotted 575 km. east of Borongan, Eastern Samar. It has maximum sustained winds of 65 km. per hour (kph) and gustiness of up to 80 kph.

It is moving northwest at 15 kph.

Meanwhile, the NDRRMC, in its Monday afternoon update on Super Typhoon Rolly, reported that the number of fatalities attributed to the weather disturbance has now climbed to 25, with 399 injured, and six persons missing in Ilocos Region, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, and Bicol.



NDRRMC calls on public to brace for 'Ulysses'

Houses damaged by "Rolly" now reached 134,639 with 24,007 classified as totally damaged and 110,632 as partially damaged in Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Bicol, and the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR).

The NDRRMC also reported that damage to infrastructure was placed at PHP12.517 billion in the areas of Ilocos Region, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Bicol, Eastern Visayas, CAR, and the National Capital Region (NCR).

Meanwhile, damage to agriculture was estimated at PHP2.987 billion and these were reported in Ilocos Region, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, Bicol, Eastern Visayas, CAR, and the NCR.

A total of 65,897 hectares of agricultural land were also damaged by the super typhoon. **(PNA)**



Duterte likely to declare state of calamity in typhoon-hit areas

By Azer Parrocha November 9, 2020, 5:19 pm



President Rodrigo R. Duterte (File photo)

MANILA – President Rodrigo Duterte is likely to place areas successively ravaged by Typhoon Quinta and Super Typhoon Rolly under a state of calamity, Malacañang said Monday.

Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque made this remark after the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council recommended that Bicol, Region 4-A (Calabarzon), and Region 4-B (Mimaropa) be placed under a state of calamity because of almost PHP17 billion worth of damage wrought by back-to-back “Quinta” and “Rolly”.

“Most likely *po pero antayin na natin iyong papel mismo na manggagaling sa tanggapan ng Presidente* (but let’s wait for the document coming from the Office of the President),” he said in a Palace press briefing.

According to the NDRRMC, “Quinta” left at least PHP2.603 billion worth of damage to agriculture and infrastructure while “Rolly” caused PHP14.153 billion damage or a total of PHP16.756 billion for the two typhoons.

Reports from the Office of Civil Defense showed that more than 86,000 more houses were damaged or destroyed in Region 4-A, Region 4-B, Bicol, and some parts of the Visayas at the height of “Quinta”.

Meanwhile, over 160,000 houses were either damaged or destroyed in Bicol alone due to “Rolly”.

Last week, Roque said Duterte and the government is “on top of the rehabilitation effort” in typhoon-hit areas.

“Government was prepared for this. We have prepositioned even equipment from [Department of Public Works and Highways], and food packs. And number two, the President is on top of the rehabilitation effort. A task force may not be necessary because the President is personally attending to ensure that the rehabilitation of these devastated areas will proceed as soon as possible,” he said.



Duterte likely to declare state of calamity in typhoon-hit areas

He said Duterte was satisfied with typhoon preparedness of both local and national governments which helped limit casualties and minimize damage.

“We were able to limit the casualties, and it could have been more because this was a super typhoon. But he’s pleased to note that the local government units acted promptly in asking residents in low-lying areas to evacuate and thereby reducing, minimizing the number of casualties,” he added.

A declaration of a state of calamity hastens rescue, relief, and rehabilitation efforts of the government and the private sector, including any international humanitarian assistance.

It also effectively controls the prices of basic goods and commodities in the affected areas.

Currently, the entire country is under a state of calamity due to the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic.

Duterte has extended the state of calamity “for a period of one year”, or from Sept. 13, 2020 to Sept. 12, 2021, “unless earlier lifted or extended as circumstances may warrant”. **(PNA)**



Foreign dignitaries visit Albay for disaster response mission

By Mar Serrano November 9, 2020, 2:05 pm



INVESTMENT MISSION. Butch Meily, president of the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation; Jorge Moragas Sanchez, Ambassador of Spain; Gustavo Gonzales, UN Resident, and Humanitarian Coordinator; Steven Robinson, Ambassador of Australia; and Kristin Dadey, Chief of Mission of the International Organization for Migration (Left to right), are shown during a meeting with Albay Gov. Al Francis Bichara on Sunday (Nov. 8, 2020). The meeting held at The Pepperland Hotel in Legazpi City aimed to assess the impact of Super Typhoon Rolly and draw a long-term plan to cushion the impact of disasters and calamities. *(PNA photo by Mar Serrano)*

LEGAZPI CITY – Ambassadors of Spain and Australia have joined the United Nations (UN) and International Organization for Migration (IOM) in launching a Humanitarian Investment Mission Plan that would draw a long term scheme that would cushion the impact of disasters in Bicol.

The foreign dignitaries visited Albay on Sunday to conduct an assessment on the destruction wrought by Super Typhoon Rolly that hit the region last Nov. 1, killing 20 people and destroying billions of pesos worth of agriculture products, and public and private infrastructure.

As the group prepared the details of the investment plan, they commended Albay Gov. Al Francis Bichara and the Albay Public Safety and Emergency Management Office (APSEMO) for the province's early disaster warning system, and preemptive evacuation measures enforced before the onslaught of Typhoon Quinta in late October and Super Typhoon Rolly just a week after.

Gustavo Gonzales, UN Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator in the Philippines lauded Albay for its preemptive evacuation procedure that placed out of harm's way 480,000 villagers who are vulnerable to floods, lahar, landslide, and storm surge.

He explained that the Humanitarian Investment Mission Plan aims to involve international and national communities in a solidarity front to assist communities frequented by calamities such as typhoons, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and other forms of disasters.

The plan would also include addressing the impact of a global pandemic such as the coronavirus disease.

“The programs would be cost-effective in terms of investments in support involving the right infrastructure, power, water, and communication facilities,” he said.



Foreign dignitaries visit Albay for disaster response mission

The investment plan would also cover international and national assistance to address the impact of disasters on agriculture, health, and education, and build shelters for families whose dwellings were destroyed by calamities.

Steven Robinson, the Australian ambassador, gave full support to the humanitarian mission and commended the province for its disaster preparedness and response program.

He said the Australian government has granted PHP6.8 million in emergency assistance (PHP4.3 million in emergency assistance and PHP2.5 million in health and sanitation) to the typhoon victims and 60,000 family food packs.

Jorge Moragas Sanchez, ambassador of Spain, assured the province with support to overcome the disastrous situation the befell the region.

He said he gave a PHP10-million disaster response fund through the Philippine Red Cross.

Sanchez said he would meet with members of the European Union and ask them to assist in the response and recovery program in typhoon-affected communities with a focus on women, children, health, and shelter needs

The groups also visited the devastated town of Tiwi where "Rolly" made its second landfall on the morning of Nov. 1. (PNA)



Hundreds held in wildlife crime operation —Interpol

Published November 9, 2020 9:49pm

PARIS — A month-long operation against wildlife crime has yielded 699 arrests and the seizure of elephant tusks, a lion cub and live chimpanzees among more than 2,000 trafficked creatures and plants, police agency Interpol said on Monday.

"Further arrests and prosecutions are anticipated as ongoing global investigations progress," as a result of Operation Thunder 2020, which ended on October 11, it said in a statement.

In Cameroon, customs officers seized 187 raw elephant tusks from a truck crossing the border from Gabon, while in Mexico, law enforcement rescued an adult female white tiger, a jaguar and a four-month-old lion cub in Sinaloa, said Interpol.

Police in Zimbabwe thwarted the transfer of 32 live chimpanzees from the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Indian customs intercepted an 18-tonne shipment of red sandalwood destined for the United Arab Emirates.

Overall, Operation Thunder yielded over 1.3 tons of ivory and more than a ton of pangolin scales, representing some 1,700 slaughtered pangolins.

Officials also seized 1,400 live turtles and tortoises and 6,000 turtle or tortoise eggs, as well as 1,160 birds and 1,800 reptiles.

"Wildlife and forestry crime is the world's fourth largest illegal trade—a lucrative illegal business with far-reaching and devastating consequences not just for the environment but also for society, public health and global economics," said Interpol secretary general Jurgen Stock.

"Wildlife and forestry crime often occurs hand in hand with tax evasion, corruption, money laundering and even murder, with organized crime groups using the same routes to smuggle protected wildlife as they do people, weapons, drugs and other illegal products."

Interpol said the operation saw five police officers and three forestry police officers in North Macedonia attacked while attempting to prevent illegal logging activities. Two of them were seriously injured. — **Agence France-Presse**