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DENR

NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



DENR welcomes Senate bill on creation of environmental protection, enforcement bureau

Published October 19, 2020, 3:11 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

Secretary Roy Cimatu is more optimistic about the creation of an enforcement bureau within the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), as a bill seeking for its creation has been filed in the Senate.

Senator Nancy Binay has filed on Oct. 12 a counterpart bill in the Senate creating the Environmental Protection and Enforcement Bureau (EPEB) under the DENR.

“We extend our gratitude to Senator Binay for advancing the EPEB bill in the Senate, thus increasing the chances of the draft law making it into legislation,” Cimatu said.

He also expressed gratitude to Deputy Speaker and Antique Rep. Loren Legarda, who, on June 15, filed House Bill 6973 establishing the EPEB under the DENR. The measure is now pending with the House Committees on Government Reorganization and on Natural Resources.

Since last year, Cimatu has been advocating for the creation of an enforcement arm within the DENR following the successive killings of environment workers, mostly foresters, while performing their duties of protecting the environment.

He admitted that the agency still lacked teeth in enforcing the country’s environmental laws, while many DENR frontline workers remained at risk.

He said that by having a permanent enforcement bureau, the DENR will be more effective in stopping environmental crimes, such as illegal logging and smuggling of wildlife species.

Cimatu then appealed to the Senate and the House of Representatives to act “swiftly and decisively” on the two separate EPEB bills now pending in both chambers of Congress.

“Any delay comes at the risk of losing more precious lives of those within our ranks at the DENR and those of our partners in civil society (who are) at the frontlines fighting environmental criminals,” he pointed out.

Nilo Tamera, executive director of the DENR’s Environmental Protection and Enforcement Task Force, said the passage of the proposed EPEB Act is “equally crucial” in the implementation of the country’s development plan agenda amid the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.

“The establishment of the EPEB squarely addresses the requirements under the new normal setting as highlighted in the ‘We Recover as One’ report prepared by a technical working group of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases,” Tamera explained.

According to the report, the COVID-19 pandemic “is a manifestation of the chronic effects of human activity on wildlife resources and habitats at an unprecedented rate, resurfacing in more damaging impacts on environmental and public health.

“It calls for a combination of strengthened, scaled up, and innovative actions and solutions to curb the elevated environmental, climate, and health risks,” the report added.



DENR enforcement bureau seeing light

posted October 19, 2020 at 11:00 pm

by [Rio N. Araja](#)

The Environment department is optimistic about the passage of a bill creating its enforcement bureau, an official said Monday.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said the Senate now had its own version of the bill, raising hopes that the legislation could become a law soon.

By having a permanent enforcement bureau, the DENR would be more effective in stopping environmental crimes, such as illegal logging and the smuggling of wildlife species, he said.

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Topics: [Department of Environment and Natural Resources](#) , [DENR](#) , [Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu](#) , [enforcement bureau](#)



DENR Bataan cleans trash from coastal areas

posted October 19, 2020 at 10:20 pm

by [Butch Gunio](#)

Balanga City, Bataan—The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Bataan has led a coastal cleanup here of water lilies and other trash.

Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer Raul Mamac headed the removal of hyacinths and other wastes in coastal Sitio Looc, Brgy. Banawang, Bagac, Bataan.

Community Environment and Natural Resources Office-Bagac personnel headed by OIC Cenro Merliza Torre joined the cleanup. Barangay officials and residents participated in the activity.

Mamac said Penro and Cenro Dinalupihan personnel with respective barangay officials and some residents also conducted cleanups in the coastal areas of Hermosa, Orani, Samal, Abucay, Balanga City, Pilar, Orion, and Limay.

Bad weather last week led to the surge of water lilies in the coastal areas of the province.

Mamac said continuous cleanup of coastal areas will be conducted to lessen or eradicate water hyacinths that affect mangrove areas and block waterways. He said the cleanup is also in line with the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Project.

Topics: [Department of Environment and Natural Resources](#) , [Bataan](#) , [Raul Mamac](#) , [Merliza Torre](#) , [Manila Bay Rehabilitation Project](#)



Mandatory appointment of PENRO pushed

Published October 19, 2020, 12:43 PM

by [Charissa Luci-Atienza](#)

Recognizing that illegal logging activities remain rampant in some provinces, Siquijor Rep. Jake Vincent Villa has filed a bill seeking the mandatory appointment of Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer (PENRO).

He filed House Bill No. 7382 to amend the Local Government Code by making mandatory instead of optional the appointment of PENRO.

Villa sought to specifically amend Section 463 under Chapter 2, Title 4, Book 3 of Republic Act No. 7160, otherwise known as the Local Government Code of 1991, to ensure that there will be an official tasked to safeguard and promote environmental protection in the provinces.

“As time passes, changes to the environment in all provinces become readily apparent. From once a land of flora and fauna turned concrete jungle of buildings and infrastructures. As changes occur, in particular, climate change transformation of some of our forests lands into virtual savannas aggravated by illegal logging activities have scalped off the precious cover that in the past has served as protection against rampaging rain water during the typhoon season,” Villa said.

“The government should be enjoined to protect and preserve our precious forest reserves to avoid destructive flooding,” Villa said.

“It is also for the same reasons that the government should designate an official who should be responsible for ensuring that the lands in every province are protected from wanton and illegal cutting of logs and that in areas where reforestation is needed, the same shall be undertaken to avoid destructive flooding in the future,” he added.

HB 7382 also seeks to amend Article 115 (b) of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of RA No. 7160 by including PENRO in the list of appointive provincial officials.

At present, there are only 13 mandatory appointive provincial officials – Secretary to the Sangguniang Panlalawigan, provincial treasurer, provincial accountant, provincial budget officer, provincial planning and development coordinator, provincial engineer, provincial health officer, provincial administrator, provincial legal officer, provincial agriculturist; provincial social welfare and development officer, provincial veterinarian, and provincial general services officer.



DENR GAGAWING “ENR AMBASSADORS” ANG KWALIPIKADONG PUP STUDENTS



October 20, 2020 @ 12:10 AM 6 hours ago

PUMASOK sa isang kasunduan ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) at ang Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) sa Maynila para pakilusin at bigyan ng kapasidad ang mga estudyante ng PUP upang sila ay makatulong sa pagprotekta at pangangalaga ng kapaligiran at likas na yaman.

Bilang bahagi ng “partnership”, nagbigay si DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu ng 100 piraso ng tablet computers kay PUP Executive Vice President Alberto C. Guillo sa Ninoy Aquino Library and Learning Resource Center sa PUP Manila noong Oktubre 14.

Ang mga tablet computer ay ipamamahagi sa mga “environment and natural resources ambassador” ng isa sa mga tinuturing na “premier universities” sa bansa.

“Behavior change is difficult to achieve so we need the assistance of the education sector to help us effect change in the minds of the students and the youth, and to change their practices,” saad ni Cimatu.

“We will be working together, and with the ENR ambassadors, you can help us in our main effort which is to clean up Manila Bay by cleaning the esteros and rivers that flow into it,” dagdag pa nito

Noong Agosto 19 ay lumagda sa memorandum of agreement (MOA) si DENR-National Capital Region (NCR) Director Jacqueline Caanacan at PUP President Manuel Muhi para sa ENR Ambassador Project.

Layunin ng kasunduan na matukoy, mabigyan ng kapasidad, at tulungan na mapakilos ang mga kwalipikadong estudyante ng PUP na maging ENR ambassador at gawin silang “competent and credible champions” sa programa ng DENR sa information, education and communication (IEC) campaign.

Ang mga estudyante ay magsisilbi rin bilang mga advocate ng ahensya para sa proteksyon, konserbasyon, preserbasyon, rehabilitasyon at pagpapaunlad ng kalikasan sa NCR kabilang na ang Manila Bay region.

DENR GAGAWING “ENR AMBASSADORS” ANG KWALIPIKADONG PUP STUDENTS

Bilang ENR ambassador, tuturuan ng mga ito ang iba pang estudyante patungkol sa mga isyu na may kinalaman sa kapaligiran sa rehiyon, kabilang na rito ang polusyon, pagkasira ng kalikasan, at climate change. Kikilos rin sila upang kunin ang suporta ng sektor ng kabataan sa unibersidad para sa mga cleanup, rehabilitasyon, at proteksyon ng Manila Bay.

Nakasaad sa MOA na ang DENR-NCR ang magsasanay sa mga estudyante na maging partner nila sa proteksyon at konserbasyon ng kapaligiran at likas na yaman. Magbibigay ito ng mga kakailanganing kagamitan para sa kanilang “environmental advocacy” at upang mapabilis ang kanilang komunikasyon at koordinasyon sa DENR.

Ang ENR Ambassador Project ay proyekto ni DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns at Supervising Undersecretary for Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service Benny D. Antiporda, na nagsabi na mahalaga ang mga kabataan para sa promosyon ng mga programa, proyekto at aktibidad ng DENR.

“These ENR ambassadors will serve as our effective partners and force multipliers in changing behavior of the people towards environmental stewardship,” paliwanag ni Antiporda.

Sa kalagitnaan ng MOA signing noong Agosto ay ibinigay ni Antiporda ang 100 units ng pocket LTE-WIFI bilang tulong sa mga estudyante sa dahilang ang sistema ng pagtututuro ng mga unibersidad at paaralan ay naging face-to-face online learning dahil sa COVID-19 pandemic.

“By supporting their education, we can harness their skills and transform them into effective environmental educators and champions,” sabi pa ni Antiporda. “In the future, hindi lang ang DENR ang kikilos para sa kalikasan, kundi buong bayan na.”

Sa panig naman ng PUP, sasalain, ibeberipika, at sisiguraduhin nito ang magandang estado ng mga estudyante na naghahangad na maging ENR ambassador. Tutulungan din nito ang DENR-NCR sa pagsubaybay at pagsuri ng IEC at advocacy performance ng PUP ENR ambassadors at magrekomenda para mapaunlad pa ang proyekto.



Makikita sa larawan na iniaabot ni Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy A. Cimatu (ikatlo sa kaliwa) kay Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) Executive Vice President Alberto C. Guillo (pangalawa sa kanan) ang isa sa 100 tablet computers na gagamitin ng mga Environment and Natural Resources ambassador sa ilalim ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources-National Capital Region (DENR-NCR) ENR Ambassador Project. Kasama sa larawan sina (mula sa kaliwa): PUP Vice President for Branches and Campuses Pascualito B. Gatan, DENR-NCR Regional Executive Director Jacqueline Caancan, at PUP Vice President for Student Affairs and Services, Dr. Zenaida R. Sarmiento.

DENR namigay ng tablets sa PUP studes na environment ambassadors



October 19, 2020 @ 5:22 PM 13 hours ago

Manila, Philippines-Pormal nang ipinasa ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources ang 100 yunit ng tablet computers sa Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Manila para sa mga estudyante nito na magsisilbing ‘environment ambassadors’ na magtataguyod sa proteksyon at pangangalaga ng kapaligiran at natural resources.

Pinangunahan ni DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu ang poag-turnover ng mga tablet kay PUP Executive Vice President Alberto C. Guillo na isinagawa sa Ninoy Aquino Library and Learning Resource Center sa PUP Manila kamakailan.

Nabatid na ang naturang mga tablet ay ipamamahagi sa ituturing na “environment and natural resources ambassadors” mula sa isa sa mga pangunahing state universities sa bansa.

“Behavior change is difficult to achieve so we need the assistance of the education sector to help us effect change in the minds of the students and the youth, and to change their practices,” ayon kay Cimatu.

Magtutulongan umano ang DENR at ENR ambassadors sa hakbangin ng ahensya na linisin ang Manila Bay sa pamamagitan ng paglilinis sa mga estero at ilog na dumadaloy rito.

Matatandaan na lumagda sina DENR-National Capital Region Director Jacqueline Caancan at PUP President Manuel Muhi sa isang memorandum of agreement para sa ENR Ambassador Project noong Agosto 19, 2020.

Layunin ng kasunduan na kilalanin at pakilusin ang mga kwalipikadong PUP students para maging ENR ambassadors at gawin silang ‘competent at credible champions’ ng mga programa ng DENR sa kampanya nito sa impormasyon, edukasyon at komunikasyon.

Ang mga ito rin ang magsisilbing tagapagtaguyod ng protection, conservation, preservation, restoration, rehabilitation at development ng kapaligiran sa National Capital Region, kabilang ang Manila Bay region.



DENR namigay ng tablets sa PUP studes na environment ambassadors

Bilang ENR ambassadors, tuturuan nila ang iba pang estudyante sa mga isyung may kinalaman sa kapaligiran sa kanilang rehiyon, kabilang ang pollution, resource degradation at climate change. Magmomobilisa rin sila ng youth support sa cleanup, rehabilitation at protection ng Manila Bay.

Sa ilalim ng MOA, sasanayin ng DENR-NCR ang mga estudyante para maging partner sa proteksyon at konserbasyon ng environment at natural resources.

Ito rin ang magbibigay ng kinakailangang resources sa paggamit ng kanilang environmental advocacies at para mapabilis ang kanilang komunikasyon at koordinasyon sa DENR.

Ang ENR Ambassador Project ay pet project ni DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns and Supervising Undersecretary for Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service Benny D. Antiporda, na kumilala sa mahalagang papel ng mga kabataan sa promosyon ng DENR programs, projects at activities.

Sa isinagawang MOA signing noong Agosto, nagbigay si Antiporda ng 100 yunit ng pocket LTE-Wi-Fi bilang tulong sa mga estudyante na nag-shift na mula sa face-to-face tungo sa online learning dahil sa COVID-19 pandemic.

“By supporting their education, we can harness their skills and transform them into effective environmental educators and champions. In the future, hindi lang ang DENR ang kikilos para sa kalikasan, kundi buong bayan na,” ayon kay Antiporda.

Kaugnay nito, sasalain, beberipikahin at pipiliin ng PUP ang karapat-dapat na estudyante at tutulungan nila ang DENR-NCR sa pag-monitor at pag-evalute sa IEC at advocacy performance ng PUP ENR ambassadors at magrerekomenda ng mga pagbabago sa proyekto. **RNT**



Pushback on bully boys

By [Cito Beltran](#)(Philstar.com)

- October 19, 2020 - 12:00am

Traditionally, the job of a spokesperson has been to communicate and announce policies and decisions or to give clarifications when needed. Unfortunately, some twisted individuals in the past used the position to be propagandists and virulent defenders of those they represented primarily to ingratiate themselves or to curry favor from powers that be or as a means to stay in the limelight for publicity sake or in search of public office. Some chosen individuals have even parlayed or traded their reputation, looks and public persona to clients who had tattered reputations, devoid of integrity or people who had a face that not even their mothers could trust. Love, yes – but trust, No. After half a century, the profession, if we may call it that, has gone from professionalism and respect and deteriorated to something reminiscent of outlaw mining towns where mercenaries roam and practitioners shoot first while holding their press conferences or ambush interviews.

Of late, some individuals have been disparaging and combative in their reaction to perceived criticism or trespass of their domain. There was a time when people would say: “Don’t shoot the messenger” but in today’s world and politics it is the messengers in the person of spokespersons who do the shooting. Instead of merely delivering the message or politely and professionally making needed clarifications, they now act like Alpha animals “pissing” on people as they go about marking their territory and authority, dismissive and combative of the media or those who do not share their views, or those who have their own views and share with the public without so much as a “By your leave” from now offended spokespersons.

Of course there is a big difference between true professionals versus political appointees or court jesters. The true professional understands that while they may be the mouthpiece they are not necessarily “it” or the person in-charge. They are the messenger. They are not supposed to act as “lawyers” for the defense, political prosecutors or interpreters in a dialogue where everybody speaks the same language but not necessarily share the same values or politics. Whatever form it may be done, lawyering by spokespersons is a self-defeating exercise because you are no longer just a messenger, you are now a manipulator.

Unfortunately very few people in the Duterte administration seems to have read the wise counsel of our senior columnist Boo Chanco, who has repeatedly said the biggest mistake in choosing a spokesperson is to choose a lawyer. I know that Boo does not mean to disparage the legal profession but is simply pointing out that lawyers are trained to defend their client whether they are innocent or guilty and will use every trick in the book to do so. In effect, their training and credibility works against them. To such great advise I would add, media people or practitioners do not automatically qualify as spokespersons. Many of us can talk confidently until the sun comes down but that is in a controlled environment that we control, where we are asking the questions and where we are pushing the buttons. But in some cases, when it’s the other way around, some media people don’t react calmly or kindly when someone is pushing their buttons.



Pushback on bully boys

There is also the misconception that if you hire a media practitioner as a PR or spokesperson, they will immediately get the support and camaraderie of the media in general. Big mistake. The only time that happens is if the spokesperson decides to be chummy, fully transparent and practically hand feeds the media. Otherwise, he eventually gets treated like any public official and experiences regular doses of the medicine he or she use to dish out to government officials and public personalities. Unfortunately, a number of spokespersons of recent vintage have reacted combatively when critics and the public started challenging their views or positions. Rather than diplomatically handling incidents or misunderstandings, we have seen a couple of spokespersons publicly take swipes at reporters as well as fellow government institutions. This aggressive and intimidating behavior all falls under what we call Bully Boy tactics. It has reached a point that some government officials have copied President Duterte's style of publicly calling out people he does not like or disdain. The difference here is that spokespersons for government carry messages, communicate plans, etc. They are not the boss and nothing in the annals of public relations or job description of a spokesperson allows for ill manners, aggression or intimidation.

While they may disagree with me, these spokespersons are now beginning to reap what they sow if not the whirlwind of their ill manners. We have recently seen how two groups within the University of the Philippines have stood up and pushed back against the posturing or behavior of spokespersons Harry Roque and Benny Antiporda towards scientists in the academic community. Roque recently called out the UP OCTA group for making recommendations to help control the spread of COVID-19 in certain provinces. Antiporda, on the other hand, hit back at scientists who commented on the pointless use of dolomite sand on Manila Bay. But unlike before when members of the academe were easily intimidated if not scared of the Duterte shadow, people have learned to differentiate between the President and some political appointees who are either becoming full of themselves or trying to puff up their status. They now know who the fly is and who the carabao is. So we see and read pushbacks against the Bully Boys. When that happens, it's no longer fun in the playground for them.



Foul odor 24/7 from open dump



By [JAIME G. AQUINO, TMT](#)

October 20, 2020

DAGUPAN CITY: An open dump located along the shoreline of Tondaligan beach in Bonuan Gueset here has been denounced by local and foreign visitors and employees of the Hall of Justice because of the bad odor it produces that circulates day and night.

This was revealed to The Manila Times by Professor Salvador Singson-de Guzman, president of the Citizens Movement Against Corruption, Crime, Illegal Drugs and Gambling Inc., saying the dump also produces flies, mosquitoes and other insects that are invading residential houses and government offices, affecting the health of the residents.

The dump is located only about 300 to 500 meters away from the Hall of Justice, Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas, Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration station, Radyo ng Bayan AM Station, public cemetery and some hotels. Court employees and court judges and prosecutors have been complaining about the stinking smell coming from the dump.

The Tondaligan beach, a top tourist destination in Pangasinan, is now open for business again after it was ordered closed on March 17 by Dagupan City Mayor Brian Lim.

Lately, locals and visitors who went to swim and dine there, however, were disappointed because of the bad odor coming from the garbage.

“Matagal na namin na inirereklamo ang dump na iyan sa city government of Dagupan subalit parang bingi, pipi at bulag si Mayor Brian Lim dahil wala naman siyang aksyon (We have long called the attention of the city government of Dagupan but it seemed that Mayor Brian Lim was deaf, mute and blind because he has not acted on our complaints),” a prosecutor, who requested that he not be named, told De Guzman and his group.

De Guzman said Lim and other city officials are not only criminally liable for graft and corruption for their alleged failure to stop the operation of the open dump but also for violation of Republic Act (RA) 9003 or the “Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.”

He reminded the Dagupan City mayor that Section 2 of RA 9003 mandates local government officials to ensure the protection of public health and environment within their jurisdiction.

The law requires local government units to undertake an action plan for proper disposal of their waste, de Guzman said.

In an interview with The ManilaTimes, a newly married couple — George, a US citizen and his Filipino wife Mary Jane — said their parents, relatives and friends went on October 17 to the Tondaligan beach to swim, only to be met by the unsightly and smelly dump.



Foul odor 24/7 from open dump

“Napeke kami sa mga naka-post sa website ng City Information Office na maganda at malinis ang kapaligiran ng Tondaligan beach ngayon. Pero nang naliligo kami sa beach, sumasabay din ang mabahong hangin na aming naaamoy mula sa basura (We were duped by what is posted on the website of the City Information Office that Tondaligan beach is now looking good and clean. But when we were swimming, we were also breathing in foul air emanating from trash from the dump),” Mary Jane, who is working as a nurse in the United States, said.

She added that her guests some of whom were foreigners took pictures of the open dump.

“What we did, we decided to leave Tondaligan beach and we transferred to Lingayen beach where we saw the beautification of the shoreline” Mary Jane said.

Earlier the government’s Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA) tagged the mayor here for his alleged failure to act on a \$550-million waste-to-energy project to end the garbage woes in the city.

Former Mayor Belen Fernandez initiated the project and she approved the proposal of the proponent based on the recommendation of the Sangguniang Panlungsod (City Council) and other sectors.

A letter dated February 4, 2020, addressed to Mayor Lim and signed by ARTA Executive Director Marco Angelo Ballester, reminded the mayor of his “alleged failure to issue a notice of disapproval or failure to render government service related to the proposal submitted by the complainant Sure Global W2W PTE.Ltd. represented by Julia Courts Boughton.



**MALINIS AT MAGANDA
MANILA BAY BLACK SAND**



**KUDOS SA
NAGLILINIS**

[BLACK SAND MANILA BAY - KUDOS SA MGA
NAGLILINIS|| MANILA BAY UPDATE](#)

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7:40 PM



EPEKTO NG DOLOMITE SAND? IBA'T- IBANG ISDA
NANUMBALIK SA MANILA BAY!

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5:36 PM



**MANILA BAY BASECO BEACH UPDATE
OCTOBER 19, 2020**

**CONGRATS TEAM
DPS BASECO BEACH
WARRIORS**

**ANONG KLASING INSEKTO ITO
BUNHOK DAW TAWAG SA
BISAYA**

[MANILA BAY BASECO BEACH, ANONG KLASING INSEKTO ITO! BUNHOK ANG TAWAG SA BISAYA! Miz July](#)

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5:47 PM



Fishers group says Cavite province's Manila Bay reclamation project violates SC order

Published October 19, 2020, 2:25 PM
by [Raymund Antonio](#)

A local fishers group has called the attention of Cavite local officials about the 420-hectare reclamation project in Manila Bay for alleged violation of a Supreme Court order.

The Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) raised concerns on the potential damage of the project to the marine environment and resources.

“The local executives of Cavite are at risk of violating the highest court’s order to protect and restore the fishing waters of Manila Bay if they will not cease and desist from pursuing destructive reclamation projects,” Pamalakaya chair Fernando Hicap said.

“We are demanding Cavite Governor Juanito Victor “Jonvic” Remulla to heed his constituents in coastal areas to stop dump-filling the Manila Bay that will result to their displacement and destruction of fishing grounds,” he added.

In 2008, the SC issued a continuing mandamus directing various government agencies to clean up and rehabilitate Manila Bay.

The group urged the local officials to look into the installation of steel pipe revetment along the shores of the Manila Bay in the part of Bacoor City.

This is part of the 420-hectare reclamation project proposed by the local government together with the Frabelle Fishing Corporation.

Pamalakaya asserted the supposed violation of the mandamus since reclamation was never part of the rehabilitation.

Hicap said the reclamation project would destroy productive fishing grounds, including mussel (tahong) and oyster (talaba) farms.

“Moreover, it will wipe out a large number of fishing population who subsist in Manila Bay’s fishing waters by fishing and shellfish farming,” he added.

The fishers’ group warned they will hold Cavite local government accountable if the massive destruction and displacement of fisherfolk happen.



Pekeng puting buhangin nakaka-cancer, waldas

By [Jarius Bondoc](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon)

- October 20, 2020 - 12:00am

SAYANG ang P400-milyong synthetic na puting buhangin itinabon ng gobyerno sa kalahating kilometrong baywalk sa Roxas Boulevard, Manila. Kung tinamnan ng bakawan ang buong 190-kilometrong pampang ng Manila Bay, magkaka-pagkain, tanawin, at malinis na dagat at hangin ang milyun-milyong Pilipino.

Nakakapag-low cost housing ang Gawad Kalinga nang P125,000. Kung ipinang-relokasyon ng squatters ang P400 milyon, 3,200 pamilya sana ang naipabahay, para mapaagos muli ang binarahang estero.

Tatangayin lang ng alon ang pekeng buhangin. Kakalat at kokontamina sa 199,400 ektaryang Manila Bay, anang maka-kalikasang Greenpeace-Philippines. Tinakpan lang ang kapalpakan ng gobyerno sa pag-rehab ng Manila Bay, anang grupong mangingisdang Pamalakaya.

Pinulbong dolomite ang artificial sand. Masama ito sa tao. Maaring mahirapang huminga kung nasinghot, makasira ng tiyan kung malunok, at makairita ng mata at balat, ani Health Usec. Rosario Vergeire. May mas malala. Sa dalawang pag-aaral sa US na sinipi ni maritime lawyer Jay Batongbacal, ng Lehigh Hanson Inc. nu'ng 2012 at Lhoist North America nu'ng 2018, iwasan ang malimit at matagalang exposure sa dolomite silica. Kasi nakaka-kanser, seryosong sakit sa baga, at silicosis. Maaring humingi sa korte ang apektado ng Writ of Kalikasan, at danyos.

Kinuha ang dolomite sa Cebu nang walang pahintulot ng lokal na pamahalaan. "Para kaming ninakawan, kasi hindi namin alam, mali ang proseso," ani provincial board member John Borgonio. Walang bayad ang dolomite mula sa protektadong burol ng Alcoy at Dalaguete.

Hindi muna sinuri ng gobyerno ang epekto sa kalikasan. Nalabag ang Presidential Decree 1586 at Fisheries Code, ani Gloria Estenzo-Ramos, presidente ng Oceana-Philippines.

Ano ang tugon ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources sa lahat ng 'yan? Gagasta pa raw para patuloy magtambak ng fake sand.



Magtanim ng bakawan, huwag pekeng buhangin

By [Jarius Bondoc](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon)

- October 19, 2020 - 12:00am

Tamnan ng bakawan ang buong 190-kilometrong pampang ng Manila Bay. ‘Yan ang magpapasigla sa dagat -- hindi ang artipisyal na puting buhangin sa kalahating kilometro sa gilid ng Roxas Boulevard, Manila. Nawaldas ang P400 milyon ng gobyerno sa nakaka-cancer na fake sand.

Kung puro bakawan sa Bataan, Pampanga, Bulacan, Metro Manila, at Cavite, beberde ang pampang. Lalago ang isda, shells, alimango, ibon, at halaman. Magkaka-pagkain, tanawin, at malinis na hangin at dagat.

Magagawa ‘yon; ginagawa na nga. Malapit lang sa pekeng white beach ay may tunay na gubat ng bakawan. Sa gitna ito ng Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Eco-Tourism Area. Labing-isang species ng bakawan ang yumayabong doon, kasama ang maraming bungang-kahoy at kawayan. Merong 80 species ng ibon. Protektado ang pambihira na Black-Winged Stilt, Chinese Egret, at Philippine Duck.

Low-maintenance lang ang nature park. Dalawang dekada nang namumuno si Sen. Cynthia Villar ng pagbi-binhi ng bakawan. Pinipitas ito sa mga matatandang puno at pinalalaki nang konti. Pero miski hindi makialam ang tao, ang pahaba’t patulis na buto ay kusang babagsak at tutusok sa buhanging dagat, kaya yayabong.

‘Di masusukat ang epekto. “Mas maraming bakawan, mas lumalaki ang populasyon ng isda sa paligid,” pabida ni Villar. Nasisiguro ang kabuhayan ng 300,000 mangi-ngisda sa pook. May kita pa sa turismo.

Likas na panangga ang bakawan sa pagguho ng lupa, daluyong, at baha. Nu’ng 2013 kinilala ang nature park sa Ramsar Convention na isa sa pinaka-mahalagang wetlands sa mundo. Tulad ng Tubbataha Reefs sa Sulu Sea at Underground River sa Palawan, earth heritage site ito.

Panimula lang ang pagbabakawan. Dapat ipatupad ng gobyerno ang batas sa sewage treatment. Walang basurang didiretso sa kanal, imburnal, ilog patungong dagat. Ipagbawal ang plastik na di naaagnas. Ilipat ng bahayan ang squatters sa gilid ng mga estero, para mapaagos.



Invasive species Chinese softshell turtle found in QC

Published October 19, 2020, 2:58 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has renewed its call against the culture and propagation, as well as release into the wild, of Chinese softshell turtle (*Pelodiscus sinensis*), which is considered an invasive alien species that poses threat to local biodiversity.

The DENR-National Capital Region, through its East Field Office (EFO), recently retrieved a Chinese softshell turtle in Quezon City.

The reptile was first reported by a netizen who asked for assistance from the regional office, and was referred to EFO which immediately dispatched a team to retrieve the turtle.

According to the DENR-NCR, Chinese softshell turtles are considered invasive alien species under the DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) Technical Bulletin No. 2013-02 released in 2013.

An invasive alien species is described by the DENR-BMB as “organisms that are spread outside their natural distribution and become a threat to native ecosystems and biodiversity.”

They can be plants, animals, fungi, or microorganisms that are introduced by transport or human activity, thrive, and over time, compete with native species in the region or area where they are introduced, it added.

It also said that most invasive alien species grow rapidly, are good dispersers, and are highly adaptable to a wide range of conditions.

In its technical bulletin, the DENR-BMB pointed out that the overpopulation of Chinese softshell turtles poses a potentially significant threat to Philippine endemic and indigenous fish and aquatic animals, as well as to local fishponds and fishery operations.

The introduction of Chinese softshell turtles to wetlands and other areas of the Philippines “is unauthorized, illegal, and punishable with imprisonment of up to eight years or a fine of up to P5 million, or both.”



OBO finds 60 structures obstructing waterways



POLLUTED CREEK. Different kinds of trash floating on the Tinago-T. Padilla Creek are caught in an improvised boom made of plastic bottles on Oct. 18, 2020. (Amper Campaña)

October 19, 2020

BUILDING inspectors have initially found 60 structures that are obstructing waterways in Cebu City.

Most are residential and commercial buildings along Colon St. and Gen. Maxilom (Mango) Ave., Office of the Building Official (OBO) head Florante Catalan said on Monday, Oct. 19, 2020.

He said the structures were identified in a report that he will present to Cebu City Mayor Edgardo Labella on Tuesday, Oct. 20.

City officials have blamed the massive flooding in Cebu City on Oct. 13 on the obstructions in the waterways and the huge volume of garbage that clogged drainage systems, rivers and creeks.

Labella will meet with the owners of the identified establishments, together with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), to discuss measures to resolve the problem.

Easement rule

Catalan said the structures must be removed because these violate the National Building Code and the three-meter easement rule under the Civil Code of the Philippines and the Water Code of the Philippines.

He said those who fail to remove the obstructions will face charges.

“If they don’t remove (it), the City will file a case,” said Catalan.

Article 638 of the Civil Code states that “the banks of rivers and streams, even in case they are of private ownership, are subject throughout their entire length and within a zone of three meters along their margins, to the easement of public use in the general interest of navigation, floatage, fishing and salvage.”



OBO finds 60 structures obstructing waterways

Article 52 of the Water Code adds that “no person shall be allowed to stay in this zone longer than what is necessary for recreation, navigation, floatage, fishing or salvage or to build structures of any kind.”

Earlier, Cebu City Councilor Jerry Guardo said he will clarify with the DPWH whether permits were issued for the construction of these structures.

Garbage

Labella will also meet with the manufacturers of bottled water in the city on Oct. 20 to find ways to stop the indiscriminate disposal of plastic bottles.

Empty plastic bottles were among the tons of trash that clogged the creeks, contributing to the flooding.

During the two-day clearing conducted after the massive flooding, the Department of Public Services (DPS) collected a total of 235 tons of garbage, including empty plastic bottles, from the creeks.

Editha Peros, Cebu City Environment and Natural Resources Office (Cenro) officer-in-charge, admitted that Cenro failed to regularly clean up the city’s waterways.

She said they lacked the manpower because the Cenro staff were assigned to the Cebu City command center, which also deals with cases related to the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic on top of emergency situations.

Since the massive flooding on Oct. 13, DPS, Cenro and Department of Engineering and Public Works (DEPW) personnel have been clearing the Tejero Creek and other major creeks in the city. (JLL)



Tubbataha Reefs featured in UNESCO exhibit in Paris

Published October 19, 2020, 6:13 PM

by [Roy Mabasa](#)

Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park, known for its high diversity of marine life, is being featured as one of the main attractions at the ongoing United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) photo exhibition at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France from October 7-30, 2020.



Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park (Ron Van Oers / UNESCO)

Entitled “Protecting UNESCO’s Marine World Heritage through scientific research”, the photo exhibition was prepared in collaboration with the Monaco Explorations Campaign, a partnership agreement between the Paris-based UN agency, through its World Heritage Marine Programme, and the Principality of Monaco.

The photo exhibit features photographs taken in 2016 by the Monaco Explorations during a scientific exploration in UNESCO World Heritage marine sites, which includes the Philippines’ Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park.

Tubbataha Reefs is a UNESCO World Heritage Site located in the center of the Sulu Sea and covers the Tubbataha and Jessie Beazley Reefs.

It is home to a great diversity of marine life, including whales, dolphins, sharks, turtles, and Napoleon wrasse.

The reef ecosystems support more than 360 species of corals and almost 700 species of fish.

The reserve also protects one of the few remaining colonies of breeding seabirds in the region.

In April 2016, Sovereign Prince of the Principality of Monaco, Prince Albert II visited the Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park accompanied by Philippine Ambassador to France and Permanent Delegate to UNESCO Ma. Theresa P. Lazaro.

Other marine sites featured in the UNESCO photo exhibit were Malpelo Fauna and Flora Sanctuary in Colombia, Rock Islands Southern Lagoon in Palau, and Lagoons of New Caledonia.



Family calls for realignment of Davao-Samal bridge project to spare coral reefs

By [Gaea Katreena Cabico](#)(Philstar.com)

- October 19, 2020 - 3:44pm



This undated handout photo shows the rich marine life in Paradise Reef.

Paradise Island Beach Resort

MANILA, Philippines — A family whose properties will be affected by the construction of the Davao-Samal bridge is considering legal action in case the government ignores its continued appeal to move the project's landing site to protect the marine life in the area.

The Rodriguez family might be forced to file a petition for the writ of kalikasan to stop the Davao City-Island Garden City of Samal bridge project, which will connect the island to mainland Mindanao through Davao City, if the government issues an Environmental Compliance Certificate for it.

A writ of kalikasan is a legal remedy for persons or organizations whose constitutional right to a balanced and healthful ecology is violated or threatened.

The Rodriguez family owns the Paradise Island Beach Resort and Costa Marine Beach Resort—collectively referred to as “Paradise Reef”—which were chosen as the bridge’s final landing site in Samal Island, threatening the rich marine life in the area.

"After exhausting all amicable means, it will certainly file a writ as a final option of last resort," said lawyer Julito Sarmiento, chief executive officer and founder of Climate Change Adaptation Resettlement.

An Ombudsman case and a possible suit for mandamus are also in the offing.

"We are exploring all avenues for an acceptable win-win solution. At present, we are in stage of exhausting administrative remedies prior to launching a judicial action," he added.

The family has written letters to Department of Public Works and Highways Secretary Mark Villar, Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu and Davao City Mayor Sara Duterte-Carpio. It requested the intervention of the city council of Davao City to

Family calls for realignment of Davao-Samal bridge project to spare coral reefs

revisit the resolution endorsing the project since the landing site in Davao City is part of its own marine sanctuary.

The family also launched an online signature campaign seeking to realign the bridge to save Paradise Reef.

Bridge project

According to a 2019 project description report submitted to the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources, the land section of the bridge lies within a predominantly resort developed areas within the southern section of Barangay Caliclic and close to the border of the adjoining Barangay Limao from the side of Samal Island. The DPWH is the project proponent.

The alignment of the bridge project will be positioned between the Paradise Island Beach Resort and Costa Marina Beach Resort and will be near Mercado Subdivision, which are said to be the indirect impact areas in Samal Island.

The report said the bridge will enhance the economic activities in Davao City and the Island Garden City of Samal.

“The benefits of the project include a resilient and solid transportation, access to education, employment and business opportunities as well as other services the two cities can and will offer,” the report read.

“Through this proposed bridge, [Island Garden of City Samal] may even become one of the world-class tourist destinations in the long run,” it added.

The report also stated that demolition, excavation, pile driving and bridge structure construction may result in “changes in channel beds and impacts on fish and aquatic life resulting from demolition.”

To address the issue, the proponents said it will strictly implement Site Protection and Rehabilitation Program for soil erosion control measures and observe “best” practices in proper construction procedures.

‘Irreversible’ destruction

But the Rodriguez family stressed that the project will destroy Paradise Reef’s coral reefs and marine life ecosystem.

The study led by marine biologists Dr. Filipina Sotto and Dr. Cleto Nanola found that Paradise Island Beach Resort has rich benthic (on or near the seabed) communities composed of coral reefs, seagrass meadows and reef fish population. The assessment was commissioned by the Rodriguez family.

The marine scientists also found that the bridge’s current realignment will “irreversibly, irreparably and incalculably” destroy coral reefs in the area. They said that Hong Kong-based consultant Ove Arup “wrongly selected” the landing site for the bridge.



Family calls for realignment of Davao-Samal bridge project to spare coral reefs

“Corals in the benthic communities are not just trees but the rainforests of the seas and oceans that protect, preserve and nurture entire marine ecosystems and provide health habitats for reef fish and other marine fauna and flora that in turn provide livelihood and food not only for fishing communities but entire human populations,” the study read.

“Definitely, the process of removal and replacement of benthic communities, including corals will cause direct damage, destruction, fragmentation and loss of aquatic habitats and ecology,” it added.

Other sites

The marine scientists conducted a study on the environmental impacts of the bridge project on three stations: El Paril Beach Resort, Bridgeport Damosa and Paradise Island Beach Resort.

They recommended that Bridgeport be selected as the landing site for the bridge as it was found to be the “least biologically productive area.”

In the event that Bridgeport is not economically or technically feasible as an alternative landing site, the Rodriguez family offered to donate the El Paril Beach Resort in Barangay Caliclic to the government as a compromise option. This alternative landing site is said to be shorter, cheaper and with “much less environmentally adverse impact alignment.”

DPWH Undersecretary Emil Sadain, however, told [BusinessWorld](#) in September that the alignment identified in the study was final.

Coca-Cola pushes sustainable solutions for plastic recycling

By ...

-October 20, 2020



COCA-COLA has been steadily contributing to collective action as it leverages on its expansive scale. The company announced its World Without Waste global vision in 2018: an ambitious goal to collect and recycle every single bottle and can it sells by 2030.

All of Coca-Cola's primary packaging in the Philippines, from returnable glass, to PET plastic bottles, and aluminum cans, are 100 percent recyclable. The iconic Coca-Cola glass bottle which represents approximately 50 percent of the company's total business in the country, with many found in sari-sari stores in far-flung areas, are continuously collected, washed, and reused in a virtuous supply chain cycle.

The company has also implemented light weighting of its PET plastic packaging, resulting in a huge reduction in its plastic consumption but still ensuring the same top quality of its beverages. Packaging for single serve (500ml and 330ml) Wilkins and Viva are now approximately 20 percent lighter.

With the goal of using 50 percent recycled material in its packaging, the company has introduced the country's first beverage bottle made from 100 percent recycled plastic, the Viva! eco-bottle.

Launched in June 2019, Viva! mineralized water is the first brand within Coca-Cola's portfolio to transition toward this packaging redesign. In September 2019, the Company transitioned its green Sprite packaging to clear PET and also offered the lemon-lime carbonated drink in bottles made from 100 percent recycled plastic. This is aligned with the roadmap to increase the recyclability of its packaging—as clear bottles have the highest recyclability rate compared to others.

Coca-Cola Beverages Philippines, Inc. (CCBPI)—the bottling arm of Coca-Cola in the country—has partnered with Thailand-based Indorama Ventures, a global leader in recycling and green technologies, to establish PETValue, the biggest state-of-the-art, bottle-to-bottle PET recycling facility in the country.

“PETValue Philippines represents Coca-Cola's first investment in a recycling facility in Southeast Asia, demonstrating the Company's genuine commitment to its World Without Waste vision...to establish a circular economy for our recyclable PET plastic packaging,” said Gareth McGeown, chief executive officer and president of CCBPI.



Coca-Cola pushes sustainable solutions for plastic recycling

Located in General Trias, Cavite and set to be operational by the first quarter of 2021, PETValue will employ the safest and most advanced technologies to process used PET plastic bottles—thereby allowing an endless loop of recycling. Its projected capacity, or the amount of used plastic bottles it can process, is 30,000 metric tons of PET bottles per year, or equivalent to approximately 3 billion bottles.



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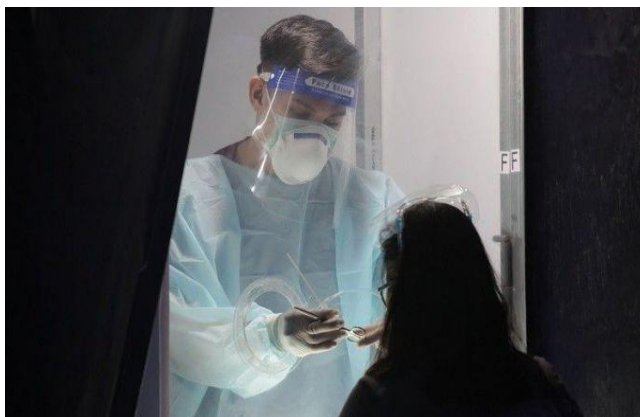
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5:24 PM

COVID-19 cases halos 360,000 na matapos ang 2,638 bagong pasyente

By [James Relativo](#)(Philstar.com)

- October 19, 2020 - 2:51pm



Nagsasagawa ng RT-PCR swab test ang mga medical technologist na ito sa Philippine Red Cross, Mandaluyong City noong ika-24 ng Setyembre

The STAR/Michael Varcas, File

MANILA, Philippines — Mahigit-kumulang 12 araw bago magtapos ang kasalukuyang quarantine classifications, tuloy-tuloy pa rin ang pagdagsa ng panibagong coronavirus disease (COVID-19) patients ang mga pagamutan, ayon sa Department of Health (DOH).

Iniulat kasi, Lunes, ng kagawaran ang 2,638 pang kumpirmadong pasyente ng sakit, bagay na nagtutulak sa kabuuang talaan sa 359,169.

Karamihan sa mga bagong reported cases ay galing sa mga sumusunod na lugar:

- Quezon City (141)
- Cavite (140)
- Laguna (128)
- Batangas (120)
- Rizal (108)

Kapansin-pansin na hindi ipinagsama-sama sa talaan ang National Capital Region (NCR) ngayong araw, bagay na karaniwang libu-libo ang naitatalang kaso tuwing maglalabas ng case tally.

Naabot ang mga bilang na 'yan matapos maisagawa ang COVID-19 testing sa mahigit 4.13 milyong katao sa Pilipinas. Sa kanila niyan, 16 laboratoryo pa ang hindi nakapagsumite ng kanilang datos sa COVID-19 Data Repository System (CDRS) noong Linggo.

"87 duplicates were removed from the total case count. Of these, 76 recovered cases and 3 deaths have been removed," sambit ng DOH sa isang pahayag.

COVID-19 cases halos 360,000 na matapos ang 2,638 bagong pasyente

"Moreover, 5 cases previously tagged as recovered were reclassified as deaths."

Kung iaawas diyan ang mga gumaling at namatay na sa nasabing virus, 42,191 na lang ang matitira — ang tunay na mahalagang datos na kung tawagin ay "active cases."

Samantala, patay naman na mula sa kinatatakutang karamdaman ang 6,675 kaso sa bansa. Mas marami 'yan ng 26 kumpara sa naibalita nitong Linggo.

Pero sa kabutihang-palad, higit na mas marami pa rin ang nagre-recover sa COVID-19 sa bansa na pumapatak na sa 310,303. Nasa 226 dito ay ngayong araw lang inireport.

Sa kasalukuyan, nasa P2.5 bilyon ang perang iginugugol ng gobyerno para sa mga paparating na bakuna laban sa pandemya. Gayunpaman, maaaring kulangin pa raw ito kung tutuusin.

Bukod sa mga priority populations at healthcare workers, sinabi raw kasi ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na dapat maisama sa popondohang mabigyan ng COVID-19 vaccine ang mga mahihirap na senior citizens at vulnerable population.

"Noong kinompute natin lahat-lahat 'yan, isasama natin sa mabibigyan ng bakuna, it totalled to P12.1 billion," sabi ani Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire, Lunes.

"So kulang tayo ng mga about P10.5 billion sa budget na 'yan."

Aniya, may mga estimates na ng costs na ibinigay sa kanila, ngunit inisyal na costing pa lang ito. Sinasabing aabot sa 20% ng populasyon ang mabibigyan ng COVID-19 vaccine.

Una nang binanatan ni Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Zarate ang "napakaliit" na P2.5 bilyong pondo, lalo na't nasa gitna ng health crisis ang Pilipinas.

"Habang binabarat ang ating kalusugan ay tumatagingting naman sa kabilang banda ang P19 billion na ilalaan sa National Task Force to End Local Communist Armed Conflict (NTF-ELCAC) na tinawag natin general's pork barrel," sabi niya sa isang pahayag, Biyernes.

"Bilyon bilyon ang inilgay dito na hindi naman isang line agency."

Humantong naman na sa pagtuntong sa 39,596,858 ang kabuuang kaso ng COVID-19 sa buong daigdig. Sa taya ng [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), lagpas 1.10 milyon na sa kanila ang namamtay.



Global coronavirus cases surpass 40M

October 19, 2020, 7:25 pm



ANKARA – The number of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) cases in the world has surpassed 40 million early Monday, according to Johns Hopkins University data.

More than 1.11 million people have lost their lives around the world from Covid-19 so far.

The US still leads the world in the number of Covid-19 cases with over 8.15 million, while deaths are at almost 220,000.

In India, more than 7.55 million people contracted the virus with a death toll of over 114,600. Brazil has more than 5.22 million cases and a death toll exceeding 153,600.

China, the birthplace of Covid-19, has close to 91,000 cases with 4,739 deaths.

The UK's Scientific Advisory Group for Emergencies said Sunday more than one coronavirus vaccine will be available at the beginning of 2021.

American pharmaceutical firm Pfizer said Friday it may know the effectiveness of its vaccine by the end of October, and it is planning to submit safety data on the final dose of the vaccine to the US Food and Drug Administration in the third week of November.

A vaccine candidate developed by the Beijing Institute of Biological Products, affiliated to the state-owned China National Pharmaceutical Group (Sinopharm), elicited antibody response in recipients, according to a study published Thursday in the Lancet Infectious Diseases journal.

Meanwhile, Russian President Vladimir Putin said Wednesday that a second coronavirus vaccine, EpiVakKorona, has been granted regulatory approval.

There are more than 170 vaccines around the world that are candidates for Covid-19 and tracked by the World Health Organization, but none has been approved for general use yet. *(Anadolu)*



GCQ until year-end still subject to IATF approval: Palace

By Azer Parrocha October 19, 2020, 7:13 pm



File photo

MANILA – Even if Metro Manila mayors want to keep the region under general community quarantine (GCQ) for the rest of the year, Malacañang on Monday said a shift to a less stringent modified enhanced community quarantine (MGCQ) is still possible with a decrease in coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) cases.

In a Palace press briefing, Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque acknowledged that Metro Manila mayors have agreed to a continued GCQ instead of recommending a downgrade to MGCQ.

Interior Secretary Eduardo Año also agreed with the mayors' decision, stressing that further relaxing quarantine restrictions in the metropolis may lead to a spike in Covid-19 cases.

However, Roque noted that the recommendation to remain under GCQ until the end of the year is still subject to the approval of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID).

“Well, *iyan po ang parang nabubuong consensus pero siyempre po hindi ko pupuwedeng pangunahan* ‘no (that seems to be the consensus, but I can’t preempt it) because it is a collegial decision,” he said.

He said more industries have been allowed to resume operations, as long as health and safety protocols are observed.

According to Roque, downgrading to MGCQ will only be possible if Covid-19 infections continue to lower.

“*Ang sinabi ko naman po pupuwede kung patuloy na bumaba ang numero* ‘no. *Bumababa po talaga ang numero* ‘no pero monthly naman po ang ating desisyon so hindi pa naman tapos ang Oktubre (What I said is that it’s possible if numbers continue to decrease. Numbers are really decreasing but we make decisions monthly and October hasn’t ended yet),” he said.

He also admitted that the IATF is hesitant about further relaxing quarantine restrictions as it may result in the public being too relaxed over the prevailing Covid-19 threat.

Luckily, he said the public continues to follow health and safety quarantine protocols such as wearing face masks and face shields, frequent handwashing, and physical distancing.



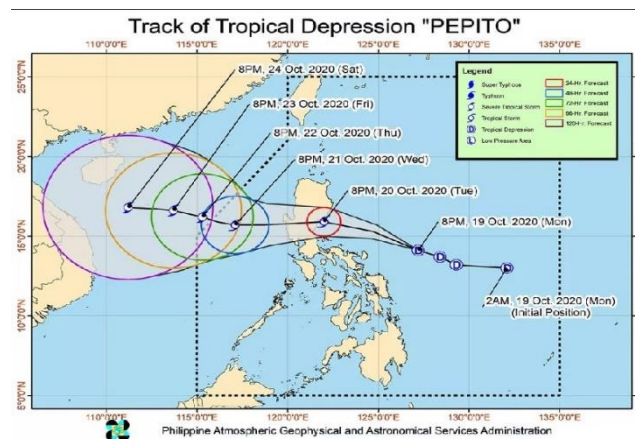
GCQ until year-end still subject to IATF approval: Palace

As of Monday, the Department of Health (DOH) logged 2,638 new Covid-19 cases, pushing the national case tally to 359,169.

Recoveries increased to 310,303 with 226 more patients cleared of the infection, while the death toll hit 6,675, with 26 new deaths. *(PNA)*

#PepitoPH inaasahang magla-landfall sa Aurora-Isabela area; Metro Manila, kabilang sa mga lugar na nakataas sa Signal no. 1

By Angellic Jordan October 20, 2020 - 12:09 AM



Patuloy na binabantayan ng PAGASA ang Tropical Depression Pepito sa loob ng Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR).

Batay sa huling severe weather bulletin, huling namataan ang bagyo sa layong 305 kilometers Silangan ng Virac, Catanduanes dakong 10:00 ng gabi.

Taglay na nito ang lakas ng hanging aabot sa 55 kilometers per hour malapit sa gitna at pagbugsong aabot sa 70 kilometers per hour.

Tinatahak ng bagyo ang direksyong pa-Kanluran Hilagang-Kanluran sa bilis na sa 20 kilometers per hour.

Dahil dito, nakataas ang tropical cyclone wind signal no, 1 sa mga sumusunod na lugar:

- Isabela
- Quirino
- Nueva Vizcaya
- Kalinga
- Mountain Province
- Ifugao
- Benguet
- La Union
- Pangasinan
- Aurora
- Nueva Ecija
- Tarlac
- Zambales



#PepitoPH inaasahang magla-landfall sa Aurora-Isabela area; Metro Manila, kabilang sa mga lugar na nakataas sa Signal no. 1

- Bulacan
- Pampanga
- Bataan
- Metro Manila
- Rizal
- Northern portion ng Quezon (General Nakar, Infanta, Real) kabilang ang Polillo Islands
- Extreme northern portion ng Camarines Norte (Vinzons)
- Catanduanes

Ayon sa weather bureau, inaasahang magla-landfall ang bagyo sa Aurora-Isabela area, Martes ng gabi (October 20) o Miyerkules ng madaling-araw (October 21).

Posibleng lumakas pa ang bagyo at maging tropical storm bago tumama sa kalupaan.

Matapos dumaan sa kalupaan ng Luzon, posibleng lumakas pa ang bagyo at umabot sa severe tropical storm category sa Huwebes (October 22).

Hanggang Martes ng gabi, asahan ang katamtaman hanggang malakas na ulan sa Bicol Region, Northern Samar, Quezon, Aurora, Cagayan, at Isabela.

Iiral naman ang mahina hanggang katamtamang pag-ulan na may mabigat na pag-ulan sa Metro Manila, CALABARZON, Cordillera Administrative Region, nalalabing bahagi ng Cagayan Valley at Central Luzon, Zamboanga Peninsula, Bangsamoro, Northern Mindanao, Caraga, Samar, Eastern Samar, Romblon, at Marinduque.

Read more: <https://radyo.inquirer.net/270377/pepitoph-inaasahang-magla-landfall-sa-aurora-isabela-area-metro-manila-kabilang-sa-mga-lugar-na-nakataas-sa-signal-no-1#ixzz6bM6OTO1M>

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'Pepito' continues to bring rains as it slightly intensifies

By Ma. Cristina Arayata October 19, 2020, 7:54 pm



(file photo)

MANILA – Tropical Depression Pepito slightly intensified and continues to bring rains over most parts of the country, the weather bureau said on Monday afternoon.

Pepito now packs maximum sustained winds of 55 kph near the center, and gustiness of up to 70 kph.

It was last seen 410 kilometers east of Virac, Catanduanes, moving west-northwestward at 20 kph.

As per the latest Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) forecast, light to moderate with at times heavy rains over Quezon, Bicol Region, Eastern and Central Visayas, and Mindanao are likely to prevail until Tuesday.

Flooding and rain-induced landslides may occur during heavy or prolonged rainfall, especially in areas highly susceptible to these hazards.

As of 5 p.m., tropical cyclone wind signal No. 1 was raised over Isabela, Aurora, Quirino, eastern portion of Kalinga, eastern portion of Mountain Province, Ifugao, Nueva Vizcaya, Nueva Ecija, and northern portion of Quezon.

Strong to near gale force winds will be experienced in these areas within 36 hours.

Meanwhile, the northeasterly surface wind flow partly enhanced by Pepito may bring strong force to near gale force winds with occasional gusts over Batanes, Babuyan Islands, and the coastal and mountainous areas of northern Ilocos Norte, Apayao, Cagayan, Isabela, Aurora, Quezon, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Albay, Sorsogon, and Northern Samar.

Gale warning is still hoisted over the seaboard of Batanes, Cagayan, Ilocos Norte, Ilocos Sur, and Isabela due to rough to very rough seas.

Moderate to rough seas will be experienced in the next 24 hours over the eastern seaboard of Central Luzon and Bicol Region, and the seaboard of Northern Samar and Eastern Samar, PAGASA said. **(PNA)**



House introduces institutional amendments to 2021 budget



AMENDMENTS. Members of the small committee in the House of Representatives meet to tackle the amendments to the proposed 2021 national budget on Monday (Oct. 19, 2020). The small committee introduced institutional amendments to next year's spending bill amounting to PHP20 billion divided among departments and agencies that need more funding. *(Photo courtesy of Albay Rep. Joey Salceda)*

MANILA – The House of Representatives has introduced institutional amendments to next year's spending bill amounting to PHP20 billion divided among departments and agencies that need more funding.

House committee on appropriations vice chair Joey Salceda said the small committee, tasked to receive and resolve amendments to the proposed PHP4.5-trillion national budget for 2021, has reached a consensus to only include institutional amendments and consider all individual amendments during the bicameral conference committee meeting with the Senate.

"The House version of the 2021 budget is now ready for submission to the Senate as the small group had the consensus to consider only institutional amendments, departmental errata, and consider individual amendments during the bicam," Salceda told reporters after the meeting of the small committee on Monday.

With this development, Salceda said the probability of a reenacted budget for next year is zero.

"[The 2021 national budget] empowers the government to confront socioeconomic impacts of the pandemic and restore the Philippines as a nation state to its trajectory of growth, maintain macroeconomic stability and make growth gains sustainable," Salceda said.

He said the PHP20 billion will be sourced from the unprogrammed funds of the Department of Transportation.

He noted that a total of PHP5.5 billion will be allocated for the procurement of Covid-19 vaccine, PHP2 billion for the Health Facilities Enhancement Program, and PHP300 million for implementation of mental health program.

Also part of the institutional amendments aimed at boosting the country's Covid-19 response efforts are the PHP4-billion funding for the Tulong Panghanap Buhay sa Atang Disadvantaged/Displaced Workers (TUPAD) program of the Department of Labor and Employment; PHP2-billion allocation for the Department of Social and Welfare and Development to assist Filipino families critically impacted by the pandemic; PHP1.7-billion allocation will be



House introduces institutional amendments to 2021 budget

added to the budget of the Department of Education to provide internet connection for public schools.

Meanwhile, PHP2 billion will be given to the Armed Forces of the Philippines for the acquisition of two C-130 airplanes and PHP100 million will be provided to the Philippine National Oil Company for renewable energy and energy sufficiency programs.

The Philippine National Police-Department the Interior and Local Government will receive an additional budget of PHP2 billion, while the Energy Regulatory Commission will receive an additional P100 million. *(PNA)*

Lifting of oil exploration ban to pump prime PH amid pandemic

By Kris Crismundo October 19, 2020, 7:47 pm



DOE Secretary Alfonso Cusi

MANILA – The government’s unilateral decision to lift the moratorium on oil and gas exploration in the West Philippine Sea will bring investments that create jobs in the next five years, the top energy official said Monday.

In a Palace briefing, Department of Energy (DOE) Secretary Alfonso Cusi said the lifting of the oil and gas exploration has allowed service contract holders to resume their exploration of new energy sources in the West Philippine Sea.

Cusi said there were five service contract holders doing oil and gas exploration in the West Philippine Sea before the ban on oil and gas exploration.

He added these service contractors have work programs that will run for five to six years, and that translate to new investments and job generation.

Last week, the DOE said service contract holders are estimated to pour in USD25 million upon lifting the moratorium, and increase these investments to USD78 million as they fulfill their work commitment programs.

“Those are important things that will pump-prime us amid the pandemic,” Cusi said.

The DOE chief said there are three other applicants for service contracts in the West Philippine Sea that the DOE is evaluating on top of the five awarded deals.

“It gives hope for all of us to find a new source of energy that would ensure our energy security in the future,” he added.

Matured relation with China

The Aquino administration imposed the moratorium on oil and gas exploration in the West Philippine Sea in 2012 due to tensions with Beijing over the disputed waters.



Lifting of oil exploration ban to pump prime PH amid pandemic

Cusi said that since President Rodrigo Duterte took office, the country's bilateral relations with China have improved and "reached maturity".

Cusi added he has not heard any "adverse reaction" from China about the unilateral decision of the Philippines to lift the ban on oil drilling activities in the West Philippine Sea.

"Because of the maturity of our relation, if there will be (a) protest, it will be done diplomatically. And the Philippines, in our Constitution, we have our own obligations to respond accordingly," the DOE chief said.

In 2018, Manila and Beijing signed a memorandum of understanding that served as a blueprint to move forward discussions on oil and gas cooperation.

Exercise of sovereign rights

Cusi further said the decision to lift the moratorium is an exercise of the Philippine government's sovereign rights.

"(T)o explore the joint development program or cooperation with China in no way weakens or gives away our sovereign rights," he added.

Meanwhile, Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said the government, as part of its sovereign rights, has the power to decide to share its exclusive rights.

"Although sovereign rights is defined as the exclusive right, that exclusive right may be shared by others. The decision to share it is part of the sovereign rights," Roque said. **(PNA)**



Navy to protect PH ships engaged in WPS oil exploration

By Priam Nepomuceno October 19, 2020, 2:36 pm



(File photo)

MANILA – The Philippine Navy (PN) on Monday said it is ready to protect Filipino ships that would conduct oil exploration and survey in the West Philippine Sea (WPS).

"I cannot predict, what will happen next but I (would like) to inform you that the PN is ready to protect our vessels conducting oil exploration or conducting surveys in our areas, in our areas within the 200-nautical mile Exclusive Economic Zone, within the 350-nautical mile Extended Continental Shelf in the Benham Rise," said Navy chief, Vice Admiral Giovanni Carlo Bacordo, in a virtual presser.

Bacordo added that protecting such initiatives is "part and parcel" of the PN's task to protect the country's waters.

When asked how the PN plans to protect oil explorations and surveying teams authorized by the Department of Energy (DOE), the PN chief said this will be done by the conduct of "continuous EEZ patrols" and "continuous conduct of maritime and air patrols".

Aside from this, this can be done by the ongoing improvements of facilities in the WPS so that the PN can be more efficient in monitoring and in its response time to vessels conducting these explorations.

"We will be prepared for whatever contingencies," Bacordo said.

Last week, President Rodrigo Duterte approved the recommendation of the DOE to lift the suspension of energy exploration activities in the disputed waters.

Under Republic Act 7638 or the "Department of Energy Act of 1992", the DOE has the authority to regulate the exploration of the country's indigenous energy resources.

Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi said his office has issued a "Resume-to-Work" order to Service Contractors doing petroleum-related activities in the areas of SC 59, 72, and 75 in the WPS.



Navy to protect PH ships engaged in WPS oil exploration

The activities there were suspended on the ground of “force majeure” due to the WPS dispute. SCs 59 and 72 are operated by the Philippine National Oil Company-Exploration Corp. (PNOC-EC) and Forum Ltd., respectively, while PXP Energy Corp. operates SC 75.

Cusi pointed out that the lifting of the suspension will infuse the economy with fresh foreign direct investments and generate high-skilled jobs, both of which are needed to boost economic recovery following the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic. **(PNA)**

Sharks have killed 7 people in Australia this year, the most since 1934. Climate change could be a factor

By Jessie Yeung, CNN

Published Oct 19, 2020 3:50:59 PM



(CNN) -- One morning in early October, a now-familiar scene unfolded on a beach in Western Australia.

A shark had attacked a surfer, who was missing. Authorities sent drones into the sky for aerial surveillance, emergency workers jumped onto boats to scour the area, and medics waited on shore.

Days of searching uncovered the man's surfboard, but his body was never found. He was counted as Australia's seventh shark attack victim this year -- an alarming spike that hasn't been seen in the country for 86 years.

This year's attacks have taken place in a number of different states, including Queensland and New South Wales. Among them is a diver who also went missing in January after a suspected great white attack. His body was never found.

To put this year's spike into perspective, there were no shark attack deaths in Australia in 2019. The years before that only saw one or two deaths annually. The last time the country had seven shark attack deaths a year was 1934, according to a spokesperson from the Taronga Conservation Society Australia. The highest annual figure on record dates back to 1929, with nine deaths.

"In Australia, (this year is) a bit of a blip," said Culum Brown, a professor at Macquarie University's Department of Biological Sciences in Sydney. "And in fact the long-term average is one -- one fatality per year. So seven is a long way above that, there's no doubt."

That average of one death per year has stayed stable for the past 50 years, the Taronga spokesperson said.

It's not that there has been a sharp increase in shark attacks in Australia overall -- there have been 21 shark incidents this year, which is normal and consistent with previous years. The difference is in the fatality rate.

There are a number of possible explanations -- several experts have pointed out that year-by-year figures always fluctuate, and this could be simple bad luck. But there's another possible culprit: the climate crisis.



Sharks have killed 7 people in Australia this year, the most since 1934. Climate change could be a factor

As oceans heat up, entire ecosystems are being destroyed and forced to adapt. Fish are migrating where they've never gone before. Species' behaviors are changing. And, as the marine world transforms, sharks are following their prey and moving closer to shores popular with humans.

Australia is a hotspot for global warming

On land, Australia's climate crisis has led to raging bush fires, extreme heatwaves, and one of the worst droughts on record.

But it has also slammed the oceans with acidification and rising temperatures, which can wreak havoc on entire ecosystems. In particular, Australia's southeast region is on the front lines of the climate crisis -- near-surface waters there are warming at about four times the global average.

The Great Barrier Reef, a vital marine ecosystem along the east coast, has experienced such widespread repeated bleaching that more than half the coral on the reef are dead. Massive stretches of mangrove forests have also died in the past decade.

"Those two ecosystems alone are responsible for a massive diversity in marine ecosystems -- so you're seeing huge ecosystems disappearing and/or moving," Brown said.

This all means that animals are migrating further south than normal in search of a suitable environment. Species like yellowtail kingfish, which are typically seen in northern tropical waters, are appearing in droves near the southern island state of Tasmania. The common Sydney octopus has shifted from the northeastern state of Queensland down to Tasmania. Even plankton and plant life like kelp are moving south.

These types of "marine tropical vagrants" often travel up and down the coastline, Brown said, riding the Eastern Australian Current famously depicted in the movie "Finding Nemo." But now, climate change means winters are warm enough for these fish to survive the season -- so some species are choosing to permanently stay in the southern waters.

"I spend a lot of time in boats off the coast and this year I don't remember a year where I've seen so many bait fish aggregations so close to the coast," Brown said. Researchers still aren't exactly sure what drives the movement of many of these species -- but Brown added, "there's no doubt the sharks are just responding to where the bait fish are."

Sharks follow water temperature

The ocean is by no means a stagnant mass; the surging currents mean there are areas of warm and cold water. The Eastern Australian Current is a major player in this dynamic -- it has also grown much stronger in recent decades, meaning it's pumping more warm tropical water down the coast.

But because the current is more intense, it's also pushing cold nutrient-rich water toward some eastern shores.



Sharks have killed 7 people in Australia this year, the most since 1934. Climate change could be a factor

These dynamic, shifting water temperatures are perhaps also why sharks are beginning to move into human spaces. Some species, like bull sharks, like warm water -- so they're spending more time in the warm southern waters, said Robert Harcourt, a researcher of shark ecology and director of Macquarie's marine predator research group.

Meanwhile, species like great whites that prefer lower temperatures are drawn closer to shores where pockets of cold water also hold abundant prey. Tiger sharks, too, are typically found further north -- but have ventured down as far as Sydney, likely also affected by the current.

These three species -- bull, great white, and tiger sharks -- are responsible for most of Australia's shark attack deaths.

"I would foresee that there's going to be greater movement, an increase in geographic range, in a lot of these species," Harcourt said. "That's because the dynamics of climate change mean their suitable habitat in terms of water temperature and prey distribution is changing as well. And these animals are large, far-ranging apex predators."

"They will potentially come more in contact with people, and at the same time, human use of the ocean is increasing all the time," he added.

There are other possible factors

Modern technology, improved medical care, and faster emergency response times mean the fatality rate of shark attacks has dropped significantly in the past decade -- which is why this year's spike is "a real anomaly," Harcourt said.

But climate change aside, there might also be other factors at play. Luck is a major one: there have been several close calls in recent years where the victim was saved because there happened to be a medical worker close by at that time, said Brown.

"We managed to save several people over the last couple of years, just by the fortune of having somebody qualified on site to deal with the trauma immediately, and that makes a massive difference," he added.

It also depends where the victim is bitten. "One centimeter to the left, if you get bitten on the leg, and you can die in seconds or minutes at least," said Harcourt. "You know, one centimeter to the right, you get a terrible scar and a lot of pain but if you don't go into shock you've got a good chance of survival."

There's also a chance people are just spending more time in the water this year due to work-from-home conditions during the Covid-19 pandemic, or because it's been particularly hot in Australia lately, Harcourt said -- thus raising the chances they could run into a shark.

We're in a new era of unpredictability

Brown and Harcourt cautioned that the 2020 fatality rate of shark attacks is only based on a single year's data; given shark figures can fluctuate year by year, it's difficult to say whether climate change is directly causing this year's spike. It could be a simple matter of bad luck; we just can't



Sharks have killed 7 people in Australia this year, the most since 1934. Climate change could be a factor

know until a few years down the line, when there is enough data to determine if it is a trend or an outlier.

But both experts agreed on one thing: the ocean is changing, and sharks are changing with it. Climate change has devastated the world's natural environments and thrown everything off balance, disrupting how marine ecosystems live, move, and potentially interact with humans.

"You can't draw any conclusions about anything based on (just one year), but there's no doubt that we're moving into a period of the unknown, effectively," Brown said.

"All the old distributions of species and how we interact with them -- you can pretty much throw that out the window. Whatever coming in the future is going to be new."