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DENR

NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

Cimatu reminds Cebu City barangays to sustain gains in fight vs COVID

By: Morexette Marie B. Erram - Multimedia Reporter - CDN Digital|September 26,2020 - 04:20 PM



Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu. | file photo

ALCOY, Cebu — Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu renewed his reminders to local officials in Cebu City not to let their guard down yet on the fight against the coronavirus.

Cimatu, who was in Alcoy town in southern Cebu last Friday, September 25, [confirmed to reporters](#) that he met with barangay captains in Cebu City through a video conference shortly before his visit here.

“We must continue and sustain our fight against (the coronavirus disease 2019 [COVID-19] pandemic). We should not and will not relax our health measures until we have reached zero cases or until there’s a vaccine,” said Cimatu in a mix of English and Tagalog.

The secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) was appointed by President Rodrigo Duterte as the chief implementer of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-MEID) in the Visayas.

His task was to intervene and provide support to the city government in bringing the COVID-19 pandemic to manageable levels after experts noted a surge in new cases last June.

To recall, the IATF-MEID last June reverted Cebu City to the strictest mode of community quarantine — enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) — due to rapid transmission of the virus that caused a spike in new cases, deaths, and has even overwhelmed hospitals.

Cimatu said his recent reminders to village officials came after he noticed some barangays in Cebu City recording double-digit in the number of new COVID-19 cases after the city downgraded to modified general community quarantine (MGCQ).

“While indeed we have observed a massive drop in the cases, and saw single-digit instances. But I’m concerned about some barangays reporting double-digits,” said Cimatu.



“This is why I gathered the barangay captains and talked to them. And reminded them that our target for Cebu City to be placed under the ‘new normal classification’ is for it to reach zero COVID cases,” he added.

CDN Digital has opted not to reveal the names of the barangays the Cabinet member is referring to until they have responded to the issue.

Meanwhile, Cimatu said he had yet to look into the position of the Department of Health in Central Visayas (DOH – 7) that thumbed down the Cebu City government’s proposal to establish a new cemetery in Barangay Pulangbato for residents whose relatives passed away in relation to COVID-19.

Cebu City has been under MGCQ since September 1.

As of September 25, data from the Department of Health in Central Visayas (DOH – 7) showed that the city has documented a total of 9,963 confirmed COVID-19 cases.

Of this number, exactly 8,900 have already recovered. However, 672 others have passed away. Cebu City’s active cases are now at 961, DOH – 7 said. /dbs



2 dolomite mining company sinuspinde ng DENR



September 26, 2020 @ 9:35 AM 20 hours ago

Cebu – Sinuspinde ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources ang operasyon ng dalawang kompanya na nagmimina ng dolomite sa lalawigan ito.

Mismong si Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu ang nagpataw ng suspensyon sa Dolomite Mining Corp. at Philippine Mining Service Corp. na nagmimina sa bayan ng Alcoy, Cebu.

Napag-alamang nagmumula sa mga kompanyang ito ang dolomite na ginagamit para sa rehabilitasyon at pagpapaganda sa isang bahagi ngayon ng Manila Bay na sakop ng Lungsod ng Maynila.

Ginawa ni Cimatu ang suspensyon habang pinag-aaralan ng DENR kung nakasisira sa katubigan, hangin at coral ang dolomite sa kapaligiran ng minahan.

Inutusan nito ang Environment Management Bureau sa lugar para isagawa ang pag-aaral.

Tugon na rin umano ng DENR ang pansamantalang pagpapatigil sa operasyon ng mga kompanya sa sinasabi ng Knights Stewards of the Sea, isang environment watchdog group, na nakasisira sa mga coral ang mga nalalaglag na dolomite sa karagatan habang ibinibyahe ito. **RNT**

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/2-dolomite-mining-company-sinuspinde-ng-denr/?fbclid=IwAR3yGltUUJrkZLLVxuRGgYCYCT4oiKKhrCtVYm6CS6Jsl1lga5kSoRkeLIX>



DENR suspends dolomite mining by two firms in Cebu

Published September 26, 2020 12:17am

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu has suspended the mining of dolomite in Alcoy, Cebu.

According to a report on State of the Nation with Jessica Soho, Cimatu suspended the operations of the Dolomite Mining Corp. and the Philippine Mining Service Corp.

The dolomite crushed for use in the DENR's white sand project in the Manila Bay came from Cebu.

Cimatu said the DENR wanted to determine whether dolomite mining was adversely affecting the water, air, and corals in the area.

He ordered the Environment Management Bureau in the area to study the air and water quality, as well as the condition of the corals in the nearby waters.

The environment watchdog group Knights Stewards of the Sea recently said that the transportation of dolomite damages the corals when they fall into the sea. **-NB, GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/regions/757275/denr-suspends-dolomite-mining-by-two-firms-in-cebu/story/?fbclid=IwAR2ZiwrhjVWr6WUEfEskt2wTpqzcxwTLUenvxtewOj8KXsDquxBvMPBijGsk>



Pagpapatigil sa operasyon ng mining firm sa Alcoy, Cebu, ikinatuwa ng gobernadora

By **Bombo Radyo Cebu** -September 26, 2020 | 12:29 PM



CEBU CITY – Malugod na tinanggap ni Cebu Provincial Governor Gwendolyn Garcia ang kautusan ni Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu na naghinto sa operasyon ng dalawang mining and extraction firms sa bayan ng Alcoy, Cebu.

Ayon kay Garcia na nagbunga ang isinagawang imbestigasyon ng mga kinauukulang ahensya sa lawak ng pagkasira ng kalikasan dulot ng naging operasyon ng Philippine Mining Services Corporation (PMSC) at Dolomite Mining Corporation (DMC).

Napatunayan, aniya, ng mga ahensya na may paglabag umano ang nasabing mining firms sa Environment Compliance Certificate (ECC) at water discharge permit.

Nakita sa naganap na site inspection na malaki ang pagkasira ng seabed sa nasabing bayan at nagkaroon ng heavy siltation dahil sa dolomite export.

Dahil dito, pinasalamatan ni Garcia si Cimatu dahil sa agaran nitong aksyon laban sa dalawang kompanya.



Closure order

posted September 26, 2020 at 08:48 pm



Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu (center with helmet, pointing finger) orders the suspension of two dolomite companies in Alcoy, Cebu, after an inspection conducted Friday, pending the results of the investigation for their alleged coral reef damage, water quality monitoring, and ambient air quality. The dolomite from Cebu is being used to whiten the so-called Manila Bay Sands. DENR Photo



DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu and Manila Mayor Isko Moreno implement President Duterte's Manila Bay rehab project.

Manila Bay's white sand beach to be like Brazil, according to Mayor Isko?

[WILL SOON FLOURISH](#) - [Wilson Lee Flores](#) (The Philippine Star) - September 27, 2020 - 12:00am

Will Manila Bay's recent temporary opening of its white-sand beach, which sparked a #ManilaBayChallenge meme craze on Instagram, Facebook, TikTok and Twitter, plus the planned Oct. 1 reopening of Boracay and Baguio City, finally mark the beginnings of a much-awaited Philippine tourism revival amidst a global pandemic?

Is the 500-meter stretch of white sand beach in Manila Bay a crazy, hare-brained and outlandish idea? Or is it actually feasible and smart?

By the way, today, Sept. 27, has been celebrated as the United Nations' World Tourism Day since 1980, with the purpose of raising awareness on the importance of tourism and to demonstrate how it affects social, cultural, political and economic values worldwide.

I believe that after this bleak pandemic of 2020 (and probably early 2021) is over, just as after the Great Plague of 1918, the Philippine economy and tourism industry will prosper again along with the rest of the world, like it did during the exuberant 1920s era known as "The Roaring Twenties" and "The Jazz Age." That post-pandemic period of economic recovery in the west was known in France as "Les Années Folles" ("The Crazy Years"). So be hopeful.

At a recent webinar dialogue of Manila Mayor Isko Moreno with top officers of over 170 regional Filipino Chinese chambers under the Federation of Filipino Chinese Chambers of Commerce & Industry, Inc. (FFCCCI) led by president Dr. Henry Lim Bon Liong, a forum which this writer moderated, tourism was among the topics discussed. Apart from asking Mayor Isko about his many reforms on reviving businesses, beautifying the city and improving law and order, some businessmen also asked about the new Manila Bay beach.



The Manila Bay Challenge meme of Anne Curtis as Dyesebel, by a fan account and approved by Anne Curtis



Manila's version of Rio's Copacabana Beach?

Mayor Isko Moreno gushed with excitement about Manila Bay's new white beach, optimistically saying that it can hopefully attract more tourists. He cited Rio de Janeiro's world-famous Copacabana Beach or the Eiffel Tower in Paris as top tourist draws. He said he hopes this white-sand beach will boost hotels and restaurants in the Manila Bay area, even as he appealed to the public to revive businesses and generate jobs while adapting to the global pandemic with responsible health and safety protocols.

Mayor Isko Moreno pointed to the Copacabana Beach promenade as the world's most famous promenade. Built in 1906 by Mayor Pereira Passos with a design inspired by Rocio's Square in Lisbon, all the stones used to build Copacabana's promenade in fact came all the way from Portugal.

In reply to criticisms by some politicians and environmental groups questioning the P389-million Manila Bay white sand project, Mayor Isko cited the Eiffel Tower in Paris, which was also criticized when it opened in 1889. He pointed out that it has since become the No. 1 reason tourists go to Paris and is now the world's most popular paid monument for tourists to visit, attracting seven million visitors.

Congratulations to the soft-spoken ex-general and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu for efficiently implementing President Duterte's bold idea to rehabilitate the once blighted yet still scenic and historic Manila Bay with an overlay of artificial white sand made of crushed dolomite rocks from Alcoy town in south Cebu.

On Sept. 21 in Davao City at a cabinet meeting, Duterte said on national TV: "Let us begin by congratulating Secretary Cimatu. I remember that meeting (in Davao City) — I think everybody was there —when I said: 'Can you clean this up?' And the answer was very curtly given. He said: 'I can work on it.' People now are really enjoying the reclaimed area with the white sand, at least. He impressed me; he accepted my dare. He just said he would do it. And people are now enjoying the benefits of the determined action of a Cabinet member to do good."

Is a manmade white-sand beach really a good idea, or is it just outrageous? Is Mayor Isko Moreno correct in his optimism for Manila tourism with this out-of-the-box idea?

Manila Bay joins famous manmade beaches

Based on my research, including asking foreign friends who have messaged me about this, I'm pleasantly surprised to discover that there are actually various past examples of successful manmade beach projects in other parts of the world and they're now tourist attractions. Here are some:

- A Singaporean businessman reminded me that their popular Sentosa Island is a manmade theme park and weekend holiday oasis for Singaporeans and tourists wanting a relaxing respite from city life. Sentosa's three main beaches stretch a mile and include Palawan Beach, Siloso Beach and Tanjong Beach, and they're all artificial with imported sand from Malaysia and Indonesia.
- Other unique manmade islands are Palm Jumeirah (Palm Islands) and The World Islands of Dubai in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Most of the plots and houses there are owned by billionaires. One of the manmade isle's owners is seven-time Formula One World champion Michael Schumacher, who was presented this gift by Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum on the occasion of his final Grand Prix in Brazil in October 2006.



- Another place world-famous celebrities and super-rich jetsetters love to visit for its manmade white-sand beach is the unabashedly named Artificial Beach in the Maldives' capital city of Male. It is a fun place for tourism, water sports, live music, entertainment and carnivals.
- Monaco's manmade Larvotto Beach is its only public beach, located in front of the city's pre-existing seafront. Travel Channel describes this glitzy beach, lined at the back with luxury apartment buildings, as "perhaps the single most glamorous beach in the world... where women may go without their bikini tops, but wouldn't dare to be seen without their jewels." Wow!

* * *

Thanks for your feedback at willsoonflourish@gmail.com! Follow [@wilsonleeflores](https://www.instagram.com/wilsonleeflores) on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook. Read also <https://investment.fwd.com.ph/experts/asia-s-business-leaders-and-what-we-can-learn-from-them>.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/lifestyle/sunday-life/2020/09/27/2045289/manila-bays-white-sand-beach-be-brazil-according-mayor-isko>



Bandera Pilipinas

8h · 🌐



LOOK: Matapos ang dalawang buwan, nakitaan na ng pagbabago ang water quality ng Manila Bay sa tulong ng bago at kauna-unahang sewerage treatment plant sa bansa.



👍❤️👎 42

22 Shares



Dolomite beyond Manila Bay

By: [Ar. Vittoria Mawis-Aliston](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

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



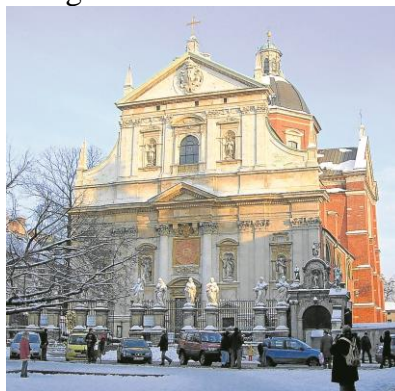
Dolomite, a naturally-occurring mineral, has been used in construction for centuries.

Dolomite is a material that has been around for ages, but it was only recently that it sparked the interest of many Filipinos.

Earlier this month, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) pushed through with its plan of covering a 500-meter stretch of Manila Bay's shoreline with dolomite sand—a move that drew both praise and criticism.

Unbeknown to many, dolomite is actually all around us. It is frequently used in the production of concrete, exterior cladding, roads and garden paths. While its use as artificial beach sand in Manila Bay raised some eyebrows, this is not the first time that dolomite was used for this purpose. Manmade beaches in France and Singapore have also been built with the same material. In addition, many heritage buildings in Italy, Germany and the United Kingdom were also made out of dolomite limestone, some of which still stand today.

If you're one of those curious about the controversial material and would like to know more about its effects on the environment, history would be a good place to look at some examples. Read on to discover existing dolomite sites around the world, and determine for yourself if the Manila Bay project would prove to be a wise move in the long run.



The Saints Peter and Paul Church in Krakow, Poland, features a dolomite façade.

Heritage structures prove dolomite's durability

As far back as the 16th century, dolomite was already used as a construction material in Europe. Italian writer Francesco Milizia even wrote instructions in 1781 on how to choose and identify dolomite limestone suitable for building. At that time, concrete, as we know it today, has not been developed yet. Rock, limestone and other naturally occurring minerals were the materials of choice for construction.

Dolomitic limestone was preferred by many builders of the past not only for its abundant supply and easy availability, but also because of the material's durability. In Italy, Spain, France, Germany and England, dolomitic structures built from the 16th to the 17th centuries still survive.



According to Rita Vecchiattini, a scholar from the Università degli Studi di Genova in Italy, “archive documents and empirical datum that dolomitic limestone-based mortars do very well in the test of time” made the material the primary choice of many ancient builders. While the method of constructing and mixing mortar has varied over the years, dolomite remained a primary building material for ancient buildings.

Today, ancient dolomitic structures in the world still stand, attesting to the material’s innate strength. One famous example of this is the Saints Peter and Paul Church in Krakow, Poland. Its façade is made of dolomite and features the Baroque style of building. In Jerusalem, dolomitic limestone makes up the face of every building in the city by law. The material has become commonly known as “Jerusalem stone” as it has been used in many of the region’s most iconic structures, including the Wailing Wall in the Old City. These structures show that dolomite is capable of withstanding the test of time.



The French Riviera consists of numerous man-made beaches that use dolomite sand.

Manila Bay isn’t the first beach to feature dolomite

Located in the northwestern Mediterranean, the French Riviera is a popular tourist spot that is made up of both natural and artificial shorelines. While the space in the original site is quite limited, population boom and tourist demand in the late 20th century led to the development of man-made beaches.

Today the French Riviera is made up of 21.5 percent artificial shorelines serving as tourist beaches, yachting harbors and reclamation fill. These shorelines were created out of fine sand or gravel quarried from limestone, sandstone and dolomite. They not only added space to the French Riviera, but they were also used to upgrade existing natural beaches to make them more attractive to tourists.

According to an article written by the French scholar E.J. Anthony for the Journal of Coastal Research in 1994, the artificial beaches had both pros and cons. On the upside, they did succeed in extending the existing beach length to cater to the rising number of residents and tourists in the area. These man-made shorelines, however, require regular maintenance, which include protective measures and “renourishment” of the shore. These procedures incur high expenses, which have led some to view them as an unnecessary indulgence. The rise of tourism in the area has also led to the increase of water pollution especially during the summer tourist season.

Nevertheless, Anthony states that “artificial beaches have compensated for less than 1 percent of net loss of natural beaches.” Majority of this loss can be attributed to the reclassification of rocky shorelines, as these were upgraded to accommodate yachts and beachgoers. He also states that the “creation of these artificial beaches has allowed for enhancement of the recreational quality of the transformed natural shore.”

Dolomite construction reveal effects on human health

Those who are specifically interested in the effect of dolomite on human health would probably take a look at the use of dolomite in the construction industry for answers. While the material is generally classified as non-toxic, several studies have revealed that some respiratory disorders are associated with exposure to high amounts of dolomite dust.



The Larvotto Beach in Monaco is one of the manmade dolomite beaches that compose the French Riviera.

A study published in the Iranian Red Crescent Medical Journal in 2012 showed that “symptoms such as regular cough, phlegm, wheezing, productive cough and shortness of breath were significantly more prevalent among exposed workers” using dolomite in a dam project. The same study, however, stated that “no significant abnormalities were observed in the chest radiographs of both exposed and non-exposed individuals.” These findings suggest that while minor respiratory problems can be caused by dolomite dust, the study could not prove that prolonged exposure to the materials would cause significant illnesses in the long run.

Overall, Manila Bay would probably continue to remain controversial as long as it features dolomite on the beach. Love it or hate it, dolomite is everywhere. More likely than not, you probably have encountered the material before without even realizing it. Only time can tell whether this aggregate would be a benefit or nuisance to Manila. For now, however, it’s here to stay.



The Western Wall in Jerusalem is one of the oldest examples of dolomitic buildings still standing

References:

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Source: https://business.inquirer.net/308266/dolomite-beyond-manila-bay?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR2FfMhEfX585rNyNUQSz0y4yeejHWiQjeIC88ol4P5RUrhmBDnCbhtpryI#Echobox=1601074077



LIFESTYLE

Would you dare visit ‘Manila Bay Sands’?

Published 1 day ago on September 26, 2020 01:30 AM

By **Raye Sanchez** @tribunephil_raye

Life under quarantine for the past six months must have been so boring to the city folks who flocked to Roxas Boulevard for a glimpse of the artificial white sand or dolomite that was being poured on the shore of Manila Bay as part of the government’s “beautification” project.

Officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said the white sand — it looked more like beige — was meant to discourage the further degradation of Manila Bay which, for many years, has suffered from pollution.

Netizens had a blast on social media as they poked fun at the fake sand. The memes dripped with sarcasm.

In one instance: a photo of Boracay and, below it, a snapshot of Manila Bay dubbed “Burakay.”

Somebody thought of an alternative name: Manila Bay Sands.

The thing is, a United States cement company and the Philippines’ Department of Health (DoH) said dolomite is a health risk.

The Texas-based cement supplier Lehigh Hanson said, in a 2012 safety data report (www.lehighhanson.com/docs/default-source/safety-data-sheets/sds-dolomite.pdf?sfvrsn=66124d22_4), that dolomite — which is used in the manufacture of bricks, mortar, cement, concrete, plasters, paving materials and other construction materials — may cause cancer and lung damage through prolonged or repeated exposure.



CITY folks flocked Roxas Boulevard to have a glimpse of the artificial white sand or dolomite that was being poured on the shore of Manila Bay. PHOTOGRAPHS BY BOB DUNGO JR. AND YUMMIE DINGDING FOR THE DAILY TRIBUNE

Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said that dolomite can cause pain in the stomach and diarrhea when ingested.

Yikes! But wait, maybe that was the intention — to scare people from frolicking again in Manila Bay by pouring fake sand.

Gosh! We hope nothing happened to that lady in a red swimsuit who posed on the sand for pictures just before authorities closed down the area.

As for the curious mob that was packed cheek by jowl on the pedestrian overpass, God forbid anybody caught the COVID-19 virus.

Source: https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/09/26/would-you-dare-visit-manila-bay-sands/?fbclid=IwAR3NXjOQGFq-69-GuwmXLgBfRHuGy-O-2ROHBjXL_BGhGabVHt0NfmT0GHE



DoH insists on face

Watching over Under strict police monitoring, visitors to the Manila Bay Sands take a quick glimpse atop the footbridge for some souvenir shots of the controversial project.

PHOTOGRAPH BY YUMMIE DINGDING FOR THE DAILY TRIBUNE @tribunephil_yumi



Suspend Manila Bay white sand project, Infracatch PH appeals to Duterte

Published September 26, 2020, 8:13 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

Infrastructure-oriented thinktank Infracatch PH appealed to President Duterte to suspend the implementation of the Manila Bay white sand project as the engineering intervention of the project has supposedly failed with the edges of the artificial beach leeching into the surrounding waters.

Infracatch PH convenor Terry Ridon said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has not only violated its own regulations, but also failed to get local government approval for the extraction and dumping of dolomite in Cebu and Manila, respectively.

“Sections 26 and 27 of the LGC (Local Government Code) require consultations and the prior approval of the sanggunians in the affected local government units of Cebu and Manila. Both LGUs (local government units) have not issued resolutions approving the extraction and dumping of dolomite in their areas. It is therefore imperative for Manila Mayor Isko Moreno to suspend project implementation unless and until the Manila City Council has approved the dumping of dolomite in their jurisdiction,” Ridon said in a statement.

Ridon, who studied growth economics at the Harvard Kennedy School and finance at the Harvard Business School, also pointed out that he does not need lecturing on Math 101 as DENR officials insist.

“We also find amusing the absolutely erroneous calculations being foisted on the public by DENR officials. We reiterate that regardless of any construction standard, whether by length (cost per km), volume (cost per cubic meter), or as DENR officials insist, by area (cost per square meter), the contract price remains high given estimated costs. DENR officials should note that overpricing remains constant, even if the divisor is changed (i.e. by area or by cubic meter) because overpricing is reflected by the difference between the cost and the price,” Ridon said.

“Even if DENR’s project calculation on a per area basis stands at P12,267 per square meter, it will remain overpriced if the contract price remains forty-fifty percent above market costs,” he added.

Ridon said he still considers DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda as an old friend despite the personal attacks in his defense of the Manila Bay project, “so I urge him to just stick to the debate on the project’s lack of an environmental compliance certificate and concerns on project costs.”

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/26/suspend-manila-bay-white-sand-project-infracatch-ph-appeals-to-duterte/>



Youth group twits DENR official on common sense and critics of 'white sand'

Published September 26, 2020, 8:17 PM

by [Raymund Antonio](#)

The use of common sense is needed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in dealing with critics of the Manila Bay "white sand" project, a youth group said.

Akbayan Youth called out DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda for his recent remark over their criticisms on the dumping of crushed dolomites along Manila Bay.

"Hindi porke't tinutuligsa namin ang dolomite sand dumping ay gusto namin ng basura. Ibig bang sabihin kapag pinuna namin ang bako-bakong highway, gusto namin na hindi ito sementado? Konting common sense naman, Mr. Antiporda," (It's not because we criticize the dolomite sand dumping, that we want a pile of garbage. Does it mean if we have something to say about a rough highway, we want it unpaved? How about a little common sense, Mr. Antiporda)," Akbayan Youth chair Dr. RJ Naguit said.

Antiporda had criticized Akbayan after it filed a motion last Thursday urging the Supreme Court to cite DENR in contempt for dumping hazardous dolomites along Manila Bay.

Akbayan asked the High Tribunal to declare the DENR's action as a direct violation of its order to the government to clean up, rehabilitate, and preserve Manila Bay.

Naguit is among the petitioners, along with Akbayan chair emeritus Etta Rosales and Akbayan-Manila Youth Leader Rafaela David.

The DENR official claimed that Akbayan has done nothing concrete in saving the degrading status of Manila Bay.

"If they call the dolomite overlaying as 'dumping', what do we call the pile of garbage and silt that was recovered in that area? Can we call it 'caring' for Manila Bay," Antiporda said.

But Naguit denied this: "Our organization and members have joined numerous coastal clean-ups and other environmental efforts throughout the years."

The group reiterated that Manila Bay "needs to be saved, but it has to be saved the right way."

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/26/youth-group-twits-dnr-official-on-common-sense-and-critics-of-white-sand/>



EDITORIAL - Ngayon lang napansin ang pinsala ng dolomite

(Pang-Masa) - September 27, 2020 - 12:00am



MATAGAL nang nagmimina ng dolomite sa Alcoy, Cebu pero ngayon lang nakita na may pinsala pala itong idinudulot sa mga coral. Ayon sa Cebu Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office ang mga corals na nasa layong 500 meters sa dalampasigan ng Bgy. Pugalo. Napinsala ang corals dahil sa latak ng dolomite. Dinudurog ang dolomite para maging buhangin at saka ikakarga sa mga barges para dalhin o ideliber sa mga nag-order nito. Isa ang dalampasigan ng Manila Bay sa mga nilagyan ng dolomite para sa beautification project ng DENR. May pondong P389 milyon ang Manila Bay project. Noong nakaraang linggo binuksan sa publiko ang Manila Bay white sand beach at dinumog ng mga tao. Nasira ang health protocol kaya isinara muli ito.

Ipinag-utos ni DENR Sec. Roy Cimatu na suspen-dihin ang operasyon ng dalawang mining companies na nagmimina ng dolomite para maimbestigahan kung may paglabag ang mga ito. Ang dalawang mining companies ay ang Dolomite Mining Corp. (DMC) at Philippine Mining Service Corp. (PMSC). Inatasan ni Cimatu ang Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) na magsagawa ng test sa kalidad ng hangin at tubig sa lugar kung saan nasira ang mga coral. Mananatili ang suspension ng dalawang mining companies hangga't hindi natatapos ang masusing imbestigasyon ng EMB. Mananagot umano ang dalawang kompanya kapag may paglabag na nagawa. Ayon sa report, ang DMC ay may 25-year mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA) kung saan may kabuuang 524 hectares ang sakop ng pagmimina sa Alcoy samantalang ang PMSC ay may processing permit hanggang 2023. Sabi ng dalawang mining companies, makikipag-cooperate sila sa imbestigasyon ng DENR.

Nakapagtataka naman kung bakit ngayon lang pumiyok ang mga opisyaes ng Cebu provincial government kabilang si Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia. Kung kailan mayroon nang nasirang corals saka sila biglang nag-ingay gayung matagal na palang nagmimina. Kung hindi pa pumutok ang balita na ang dinurog na tone-toneladang dolomite ay ibiniyahe sa Maynila para itambak sa dalampasigan ng Manila Bay.



Kung kailan mayroon nang napinsala saka lamang nagreklamo. Nagpapatunay lamang na hindi nagsasagawa ng pag-iinspeksiyon ang mga opisyal ng Cebu sa kanilang nasasakupan. Marami nang nasira pero ngayon lang sila naging maingay sa isyu. Ganunman dapat tutukan ng DENR kung may nagawang pagkakamali ang dalawang mining companies.



Komiks (Setyembre 26, 2020)

(Pilipino Star Ngayon) - September 26, 2020 - 12:00am

SPORTS MANNY

NI RENE ARANDA





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FLOATING GARBAGE A containment boom stops garbage floating around Manila Bay from spoiling its new crushed dolomite sand beach near the seaside US Embassy in Manila. Critics say the government should focus on removing the garbage instead of spending money for the beautification of a tiny portion of the 190 kilometer-long Manila Bay coastline. 🇵🇭 Richard A. Reyes/Philippine Daily Inquirer



PHILIPPINE DAILY
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/RICHARD A. REYES

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Rotary support

posted September 26, 2020 at 08:43 pm



Rotarians led by District Governor Odie F. Tarriela (6th from left) present a Pledge of Support and sign a memorandum of understanding with Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu (center) on behalf of 115 Club Presidents of Rotary District 3810. The group will develop projects with the assistance of Global Rotary clubs, engage in education work among Barangay Chairmen, actively protect the environment, and recognize unsung heroes.



Don't hunt wild birds, DENR warns public

Published September 26, 2020, 1:15 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources warned the public against hunting migratory birds amid the onset of migration season in the Philippines.

DENR Assistant Secretary for Climate Change and concurrent Director of the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) Ricardo Calderon said the annual bird migration season in the Philippines commences around September every year when migratory birds go on southward migration and ends when they go northwards to return to their breeding grounds in March of the following year.

The Philippines is part of the East Asian-Australasian Migratory Flyway, hosting a number of migratory birds in protected areas, such as the Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Ecosystem Area, Naujan Lake National Park in Oriental Mindoro, and Olango Island Wildlife Sanctuary in Cebu.

During the season, Calderon said the migratory birds stop briefly along wetlands – swamps, marshes, intertidal, coastal areas, rivers, ponds, lakes, as well as forests throughout the country, to rest and refuel for their onward journey.

The Philippines serves as habitat to more than 80 species of migratory birds that visit the country every year.

Migratory birds are major players in the ecosystem as they pollinate plants, disperse seeds, and consume insects and small mammals.

“We call on the public to help protect these birds. Hunting of wildlife including birds is illegal and is punishable under the provisions of Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act,” Calderon said.

Violators may face a maximum imprisonment of two years and one day to four years and a fine of P30,000 to P300,000, he pointed out.

The DENR-BMB chief explained that certain migratory birds, such as wild ducks, gulls, and shorebirds are susceptible to avian influenza virus (avian flu).

The public is therefore further advised not to handle any wild dead birds that may be found near wetlands, he said.

“If you have knowledge of anyone who killed, inflicted injury, or is engaged in collecting, hunting, transporting, or trading of these birds, among other illegal acts as provided for under the Wildlife Act, or encountered any incidences of dead birds, please inform the nearest DENR field office, local government unit, or police officer in your area,” Calderon said.

Information can also be sent to the Biodiversity Management Bureau through telefax No. 02-89258946 or by email at wrd@bmb.gov.ph.



Radyo Singko 92.3 News FM

13h · 🌐

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Isang Philippine hawk-eagle (*Nisaetus philippensis*) ang pinakawalan sa wild ng DENR - PENRO Catanduanes noong September 16 sa Virac, Catanduanes.

Panawagan ng DENR sa publiko, i-turn over sa kanilang tanggapan ang mga ganitong wildlife species.

🏠 PENRO Catanduanes

FULL POST: <https://bit.ly/333KTNT>



👍❤️👎 161

15 Comments 4 Shares



Asean Heritage Parks: Woes, hope amid pandemic

By Jonathan L. Mayuga

September 27, 2020



Picture-perfect corals of varying shapes and colors attract divers in Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park, one of the best dive spots in the world. It is one of the nine Asean Heritage Parks in the Philippines.

Protected areas closed for months, tourism income lost, reduced mobility of park rangers and increasing pressure on the environment with communities left with no other options but hunt animals for food, or harvest wildlife resources to put food on the table.

These situations are happening in the middle of the health crisis brought by Covid-19, and it is now taking its toll on Southeast Asia's rich biodiversity.

Among those hit hard in varying degrees are Asean Heritage Parks (AHPs), considered the cream of the crop of protected areas in Southeast Asia.

Protected areas and AHPs

Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) Executive Director Theresa Mundita S. Lim said there are 2,652 protected areas in the Asean region covering an accumulated total of more than 800,000 square kilometers.

These are in Brunei Darussalam, one; Cambodia, two; Indonesia, nature; Lao PDR, one; Malaysia, three; Myanmar, eight; Philippines, nine; Singapore, two; Thailand, six; and Vietnam, 10.

The ACB identifies the areas that are declared AHPs, a flagship program of the Asean.

Lim gave these information during a webinar, titled "Asean Heritage Parks and Covid-19 Pandemic: Impact, Responses, and Recovery," held via Zoom recently by the ACB and the Directorate General of Nature Resources and Ecosystem Conservation (NREC) of the Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF) of Indonesia.

Known for their unique biodiversity, ecosystems wilderness and outstanding values, AHPs are given the highest recognition because of their importance as areas of conservation.

The AHP Programme encourages the Asean member-states to set aside and conserve more areas in the region that are of high conservation importance.

To be recognized as an AHP, a protected area undergo a stringent process to pass the discerning criteria of ecological completeness, naturalness, having high conservation importance and representing a wide variety of ecosystems of species typical of the particular region.



Heritage, life-support system

Ir. Wiratno, M. Sc., director general of Indonesia's MoEF-NREC, said AHPs are something the region should be proud of.

In his message, Wiratno said protected areas in Indonesia are very important life-support system, like fresh water for consumption and agriculture.

He said they provide various support, regulating, provisioning and cultural services.

“I would like to remind [everyone] that protected areas are very important as a life-support system like fresh water for consumption and agriculture,” he added.

Indonesia's One Health concept

Ibu Indra Exploitasia, DVM, director, and Nining Ngudi Purmaningtyas, deputy director, respectively, of Biodiversity Conservation Directorate General of MoEF-NREC in Indonesia underscored the importance of protecting the forest to promote a healthier environment.

They shared Indonesia's One Health concept, wherein the health of the environment, humans and animals are directly connected.

They believe that damage to the environment eventually affects animal and human health.

The establishment of protected areas, they said, is a strategy to heal, and provide therapy to Indonesia's damaged environment.

Biodiversity-rich Asean region

Home to an abundance of diverse biological resources, 18 percent of the world's known fauna and flora are found in Asean, Lim said.

Lim highlighted the importance of biodiversity conservation in the region, and cited Asean's recognition of the immense role of the region's biodiversity-rich areas, both as a solution to preventing future pandemics and for the region's recovery post-Covid-19.

“These biodiversity areas provide resources for nourishment, shelter and even medicine. People and communities depend on biodiversity for their livelihood and survival; hence the sustainable use of these resources is essential for the present and future generations,” Lim said in her opening remarks during the webinar.

Mitigating, preventing disease outbreaks

A former director of the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in the Philippines, Lim said establishing and effectively managing protected areas is regarded as the most effective tool in ensuring the conservation of the region's rich ecosystems and biodiversity.

But more than their breathtaking views and the valuable ecosystem services that they provide, Lim said natural parks and protected areas have much more to offer as they could also be the key to mitigating the impacts of disease outbreaks, and more important, even preventing them.



A licensed veterinarian and expert in zoonotic diseases, Lim said the Covid-19 pandemic is a reminder that many wildlife species could be natural virus reservoirs.

Hence, she said that when habitats are encroached on or destroyed, these reservoir species are driven toward human settlements, increasing the risk of virus transmission to domestic animals, and eventually to humans.

Best solutions

Calling conservation efforts at the ecosystem level as best solutions to preventing future disease outbreaks, Lim said it can decrease habitat loss and keep the wildlife species and their inherent viruses in the safety of their natural habitats.

This is the reason why the Asean and with the support of ACB are working on establishing more protected areas, she said.

The ACB head said the establishment of more protected areas while sustaining the management of existing ones become even more crucial in building a new normal amid the ongoing pandemic.

Tourism sites

Lim said being the cream of the crop of national parks and protected areas in the region, AHPs are popular tourism areas. About 80 percent of AHPs, she said, are considered ecotourism sites.

But like other tourism areas affected by Covid-19, AHPs are severely affected by the ongoing community quarantines or lockdowns.

A preliminary online survey among protected area managers conducted by ACB from April 26 to June 16 revealed the impact of Covid-19 to protected areas in the region.

About 76.9 percent of park officials surveyed said their protected areas have been closed to tourists and visitors because of the pandemic, while 62 percent said their protected areas incurred tourism income losses as a result of the closure.

Meanwhile, more than 50 percent of the respondents said their enforcement activities were affected.

Lockdown woes

During the webinar, park managers shared experiences how the Covid-19 lockdowns have affected their operations.

Angelique Songco, protected area superintendent of the Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park, said because of Covid-19 they only received 139 visitors from March to June, a sharp decline from 3,400 visitors in the same period last year.

“We are expecting a revenue of \$21,000 over the total amount that we got last year. We lost this revenue because of Covid-19 pandemic, along with the opportunity to educate and inspire people to support the conservation of Tubbataha and other marine ecosystems,” Songco said.

For her his part, Abdul Jalil Abd Rahman, a representative of the community in Taman Negara National Park in Malaysia, said the 86,000 tourists they received last year were practically lost because of the pandemic.



Fortunately, he said members of the communities who have lost their livelihood have been receiving aid from the government.

Tam Tanh Nguyen of Vietnam's Hoang Lien National Park also lamented the fact that the lockdown resulted in zero income from tourism for their park.

Productive amid Covid-19

Reduced mobility brought by the community quarantines or lockdowns is a major challenge to park authorities. Despite that, the park managers said they are able to continue performing their functions, including law enforcement.

In Tubbataha, marine park rangers have been rotated and deployed on time, while the scheduled management trips and research activities were pushed through.

The management of Kepulauan Seribu National Park in Indonesia, on the other hand, tapped the locals to patrol and conduct monitoring in the park as the mobility of its staff was affected by the suspension of public transportation.

On a positive note, the managers of AHPs and protected areas, however, are finding ways to be productive even during the lockdowns, Lim noted.

She said park managers have also been consulting and coordinating with indigenous peoples and local communities (IPLCs), whose livelihoods have been gravely affected by impacts of Covid-19.

Fortunately, she said despite grappling with the difficulties, the communities remain protective of their environment and have stepped up active roles in monitoring and surveillance activities.

“It is important to note, therefore, the essential role of the IPLCs and take them into consideration as we prepare for the ‘new normal’ in ecotourism activities,” she said.

Lim said alternative livelihoods must be part of the contingency plan in the event of future outbreaks.

Image credits: [ACB photo](#)



Recycling, donation center ng e-waste isinulong ni Lapid



September 26, 2020 @ 12:09 PM 18 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Naghain ng panukala si Senador Lito Lapid sa pagtatag ng mga lugar para sa recycling at donasyon ng mga e-waste o basura gaya ng mga sira o lumang gadget.

Kabilang sa mga gadget ang mga sira o lumang cellphone, laptop, tablet, desktop at iba pa.

Sa Senate Bill 1846 na may pamagat na “Electronics Donation and Recycling Act”, inatasan ang lahat ng nagtitinda at gumagawa ng nasabing mga gadget o gamit na magtayo ng mga recycling at donation center o lugar sa kanilang mga pwesto.

Ayon sa pag-aaral ng University of the Philippines, sa cellphone lamang, aabot sa 24.9 milyon ang ibabasura hanggang 2021.

Sinabi ni Lapid na tiyak na may mapupulot sa mga basurang ito gaya ng mga segunda mano ngunit gumagana pa at maaaring magamit ng mga estudyante sa ilalim ng Department of Education.

Maituturing umano ang mga gumaganang gadget na tulong sa mga maralitang estudyante at kahit papaano hindi sila mapag-iiwanan sa edukasyon.

Ipasasakamay naman ang mga talagang sira na sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources para sa tamang pagtatapon bilang basura. RNT



Environment group urges Duterte to ‘walk the talk’ on promises

Published September 26, 2020 9:50pm

By JOAHNA LEI CASILAO, GMA News

An environmentalist group on Saturday called on President Rodrigo Duterte to “walk the talk” after the President encouraged other world leaders to implement the Paris Agreements on climate change.

Fr. Pete Montallana, convenor of Save Sierra Madre Network Alliance (SSMNA), said that the current administration has yet to seriously implement the Paris Agreement on climate change.

“We hope that what you said is what you really meant, and it is no joke. But Until now your administration right in your backyard has not seriously implemented the Paris commitments in the Philippines,” Montallana said in a statement.

Duterte [signed the Paris Agreement on Climate Change](#) in March 2017.

“Instead of implementing our laws to use renewable energy, your administration continues to rely on the use of coal-fired power plants which are the worst carbon emitters,” Montallana said.

“Instead of protecting our forests which are carbon sinks, you have not put an end to mining despite your promise in 2016 to end mining,” he added.

He further claimed that the president allowed the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to approve mine applications without thought to the destruction of the environment.

“[I]nstead of protecting our biodiversity which is recognized as our protection from the ravages of the pandemic, you encourage the building of the Chinese Funded Kaliwa Dam,” he said.

Montallana said that the dam will destroy the Sierra Made Mountain Range, which will also cause suffering to the Indigenous people.

Further, he said that the president allowed the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples to “manipulate the IPS and disregard” their rejection of the Kaliwa Dam.

He also alleged that the president placed more value over Chinese interests when making decisions.

“Chinese interest seem to have greater weight on your decisions despite the fact that it is subverting our Philippine territories by disregarding the international ruling that you yourself mentioned in your UN speech,” Montallana said.

“Mr. President – please – walk your talk! Stop the Kaliwa Dam, Stop the continuing destruction of our environment,” he added. — **DVM, GMA News**

Source: https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/757348/environment-group-urges-duterte-to-walk-the-talk-on-promises/story/?just_in



Villar asserts that Paranaque reclamation project would cause flooding in 3 areas

Published September 26, 2020, 11:43 AM

by [Mario Casayuran](#)

Sen. Cynthia A. Villar asserted that the reclamation project being pushed by the Paranaque City government would cause flooding in Cavite, Paranaque, and Las Pinas City and would be detrimental to the viability of the Las Pinas-Paranaque Wetland Park.



Sen. Cynthia Villar (Senate of the Philippines / MANILA BULLETIN)

Villar, chairperson of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, issued this statement in response to the public hearings being called on Oct. 1 and 2 for the creation of a 287-hectare artificial island along the coast of Manila Bay in the territorial jurisdiction of Paranaque.

“The Paranaque Reclamation Project will be building on the buffer zone of the Las Pinas-Paranaque Wetland Park. This should not be allowed to proceed because it will hamper the free flow of water which is critical to the survival of the wetland ecosystem,” Villar said.

In addition, it will destroy 35 hectares of mangrove forest which is the spawning ground of fish supporting the livelihood of 300,000 fisherfolk in Manila Bay.

Villar disputed project proponent and Paranaque Mayor Edwin Olivarez’s claim that the flooding would be prevented by the Imus catchment basin, saying that the infrastructure was constructed for the existing problem in Cavite brought about by the Cavite Expressway.

She said the Paranaque reclamation project was not considered when this was planned.

“According to former DPWH (Department of Public Works and Highways) Secretary (Rogelio) Singson, the Cavite Expressway is supposed to be a viaduct according to plan but instead, they reclaimed Manila Bay and constructed the expressway on top of the reclaimed road which causes so much flooding in Imus, Bacoor, and other places in Cavite.

“To address this, DPWH built the Imus catchment basin. This project is not intended to solve flooding in Paranaque and Las Pinas,” Villar said.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/26/villar-asserts-that-paranaque-reclamation-project-would-cause-flooding-in-3-areas/>



Villar: Parañaque reclamation project will harm Las Piñas-Parañaque Wetland Park

By: [Consuelo Marquez](#) - Reporter / [@ConsINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 04:37 PM September 26, 2020



BIRD SANCTUARY Egrets are among the migratory birds that regularly flock on the waters of the Las Piñas-Parañaque Wetland Park, which has been added as one of 94 new National Integrated Protected Areas (Nipas), that now enjoy government protection under a newly signed law. —RICHARD A. REYES

MANILA, Philippines — Senator Cynthia Villar on Saturday said the reclamation project being conducted by the Parañaque City government will harm the viability of the Las Pinas-Parañaque Wetland Park.

“The Parañaque Reclamation Project will be built on the buffer zone of the Las Piñas-Parañaque Wetland Park. This should not be allowed to proceed because it will hamper the free flow of water which is critical to the survival of the wetland ecosystem,” Villar, who is the chair of the Senate committee on environment and natural resources, said in a statement.

Villar warned that the reclamation plan will destroy 35 hectares of mangrove forest, the spawning ground of fish in Manila Bay which supports the livelihood of 300,000 fisherfolks.

Under the law, the 175-hectare wetland in the south of Manila Bay is a protected area.

It is also considered as one of the seven areas in the Philippines declared as wetlands of “international importance by the Ramsar Convention because of its critical role in the survival of threatened, restricted-range and congregatory bird species.”

/MUF

Source: https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1340516/paranaque-reclamation-project-to-cause-floods-in-nearby-areas-says-villar?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR0uZZ15s6Bw6coTbdnh4upkHXS9XXXJIHyCl-RpNJLQbzdRfrjxUfPLSU#Echobox=1601110602



Senator Cynthia Villar

Parañaque reclamation plan to cause floods, environment damage —Villar

Published September 26, 2020 3:08pm

Senator Cynthia Villar on Saturday warned that the reclamation project being pushed by the Parañaque government will cause flooding in Cavite, Parañaque, and Las Pinas and will be detrimental to the viability of the Las Piñas Wetland Park.

Villar, chairperson of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, made this statement ahead of the public hearings being set on October 1 and 2 for the creation of a 287-hectare artificial island off the coast of Manila Bay in the territorial jurisdiction of Parañaque.

“The project will be building on the buffer zone of the Las Pinas-Parañaque Wetland Park. This should not be allowed to proceed because it will hamper the free flow of water which is critical to the survival of the wetland ecosystem,” Villar said.

Moreover, she said the project will destroy 35 hectares mangrove forest which is the spawning ground of several species of fish in Manila Bay, supporting the livelihood of 300,000 fisher folk.

Also, Villar disputed the claim of the project proponent and Parañaque Mayor Edwin Olivarez that flooding will be prevented by the Imus catchment basin.

She pointed out that the infrastructure was constructed for the existing problem in Cavite brought about by the Cavite Expressway, and the reclamation project was not considered when the road was planned.

“According to former DPWH Secretary Singson, the Cavitex Expressway is supposed to be a viaduct according to plan but instead, they reclaimed Manila Bay and constructed the expressway on top of the reclaimed road which causes so much flooding in Imus, Bacoor and other places in Cavite. To address this, DPWH built the Imus catchment basin. This project is not intended to solve flooding in Parañaque and Las Piñas,” Villar said.



Villar appealed to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to consider the buffer zone of the wetland park before approving any reclamation in the area.

Further, she voiced her opposition to the 320-hectare Bacoor reclamation project which also proposes to build on the wetland's buffer zone

Under Republic Act 11038 or the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Act, the 175-hectare wetland situated South of Manila Bay is a protected area. It is also listed as one of the seven areas in the country declared as a wetland of international importance by the Ramsar Convention because of its critical role in the survival of threatened, restricted-range and congregatory bird species. —**LBG, GMA News**



Florida man sentenced for smuggling PHL lizards

By [The Associated Press](#)

September 27, 2020

TAMPA, Florida—A Florida man has been sentenced to 90 days of home detention and 288 hours of community service for his part in trafficking of live water monitor lizards that were stuffed into socks and concealed inside electronics to be smuggled from the Philippines to the United States.

Akbar Akram, 44, was sentenced earlier this month in Tampa federal court.

He pleaded guilty in January to one count of wildlife trafficking in violation of the Lacey Act and the the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species Treaty, court records show.

Akram admitted to illegally importing more than 20 live water monitor lizards from the Philippines in 2016, a US Justice Department statement said.

He avoided customs authorities by placing the lizards in socks, which were sealed closed with tape and concealed inside electronic equipment and shipped under a false label.

The equipment was transported through commercial carriers to Akram's associate in Massachusetts.

As part of his plea, Akram admitted that he knew the monitor lizards he received had been taken in violation of Philippine law and that the import violated US law, according to the statement.

Akram also admitted that upon receiving the monitor lizards, he sold some of them to customers in Colorado, Connecticut and Massachusetts.

Approximately 70 monitor lizard species are characterized by elongated necks, heavy bodies, long-forked tongues, strong claws and long tails.

Water monitor lizards are native to South and Southeastern Asia. The yellow-headed water monitor, the white-headed water monitor and the marbled water monitor are found in the Philippines.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/09/27/florida-man-sentenced-for-smuggling-phl-lizards/>



Illegal loggers caught

Four men and a minor suspected of engaging in illegal logging activities were arrested by authorities in Laoang, Northern Samar, on Saturday.

Laoang municipal police chief Capt. Al-Shamir Hamin said the suspects were apprehended when their motorboat loaded with lumber was intercepted in Barangay La Perla.

The anti-illegal logging operation was conducted based on an intelligence report, he added.

Arrested were boat operator Zyril Dojillo, 23; Christian Dacillo, 23; Melchor Villocero, 38; and Ricky Novio, 25, all residents of Barangay Talisay. Their 16-year-old companion was turned over to the municipal social welfare officer.

The motorboat was carrying 25 pieces of 2x4x20 and 50 slabs of 2x6x20 lumber from Toog tree (Philippine rosewood), a tropical rainforest specie, with a total board feet of 1,400 and total market value of P56,000.

ELMER RECUERDO



Philippine Star

September 25 at 1:47 PM · 🌐

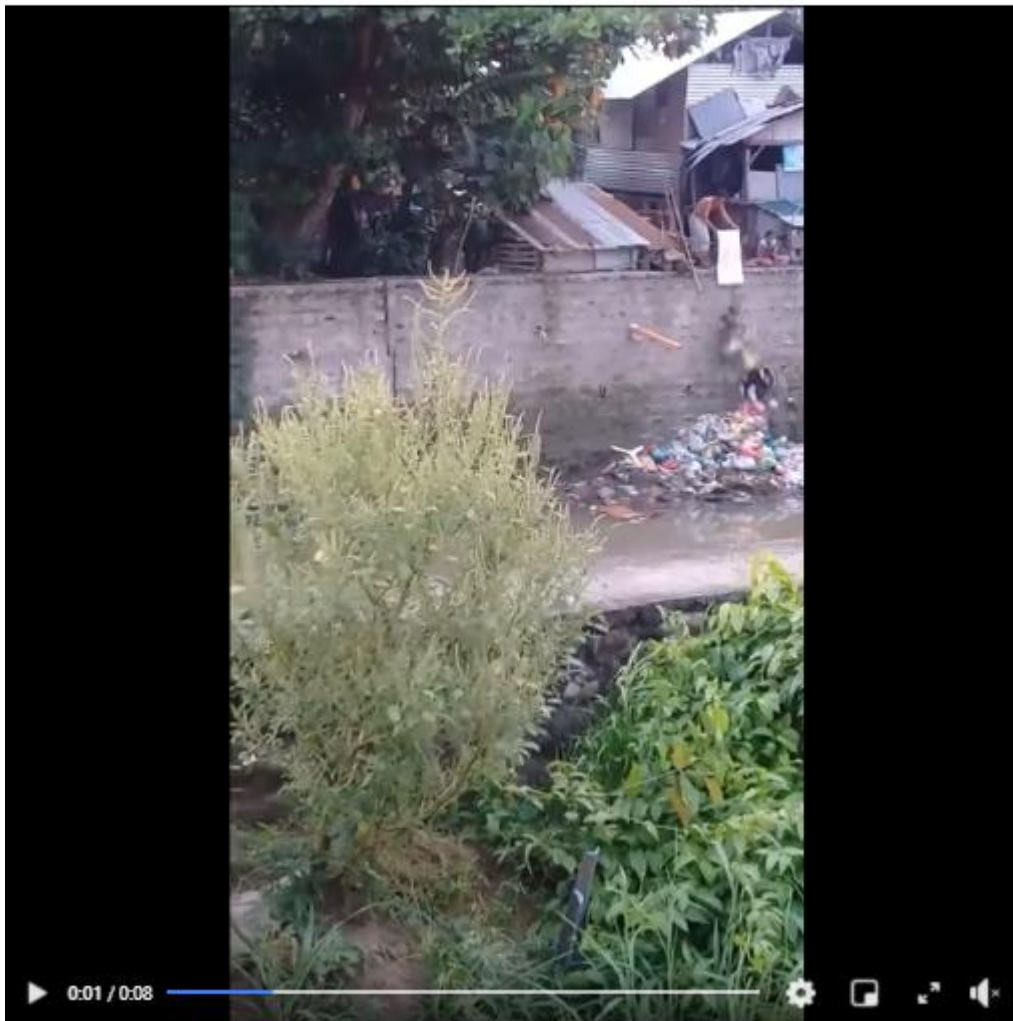
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WATCH: A concerned citizen of Barangay Singcang, Bacolod recorded this footage of a man throwing a sack of trash into a nearby river on Thursday afternoon.

The uploader shared that the matter has been reported to authorities but said that no action has been taken.

"We've reached out to both the city and barangay officials and somehow there was never a response," she told The Philippine STAR. (Contributed video)

If you have a story, picture, or video you wish to share, you may join our community page. bit.ly/3efsm3Z



👍👎🗨️ Florante Lugo Aseo, EJ Munsayac and 8K others

2.1K Comments 3.8K Shares



New, 'endangered' PH endemic plant species discovered in Palawan forest

Published September 26, 2020, 10:19 AM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

A new plant species that is endemic to the Philippines has been discovered in the subalpine forest of Palawan.



Pastor Malabrigo Jr., a professor at the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) College of Forestry and Natural Resources, and curator of the UPLB Museum of Natural History, recently described the new species in the international scientific journal Springer Link.

Named *Scaevola subalpina*, the new species of plant was discovered in the Mount Mantalingahan Protected Landscape.

It is so far the only Philippine-endemic species of four species of the genus *Scaevola* that are native to the country, Malabrigo said in the journal.

Scaevola subalpina is seen as “most similar to *Scaevola glabra*, a species endemic to the Hawaiian archipelago.”

“Both species grow at high elevations and share solitary or few-flowered inflorescences and yellow corollas but can be differentiated by flower size and structure. The flowers of *S. subalpina* are much shorter, and the corolla is half open from the base (as in most other species of the genus), whereas in *S. glabra* the corolla is fused to form a tube that splits open in only the distal portion to form lobes,” described Malabrigo.

Moreover, *S. subalpina* is described as an erect shrub, with spirally arranged leaves. Its flowers are a combination of solitary-flowered to few-flowered inflorescences, completely glabrous stems and leaves, externally glabrous corollas, with yellow coloration, lilac ridges, and yellow to purple lobes.

Malabrigo said the new species “appears to be critically endangered,” the most threatened conservation status assigned by the International Union for Conservation of Nature or IUCN to a species that still exists in the wild.

The discovery of the new species was made possible by a project funded by the Forest Foundation Philippines in partnership with the Pro-Seeds Development Association Inc., Mt. Mantalingahan Protected Landscape, and Palawan Council for Sustainable Development.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/26/new-endangered-ph-endemic-plant-species-discovered-in-palawan-forest/>



Environmental group sees zero waste with closure of cemeteries this Undas

Published September 26, 2020, 10:58 AM

by [Christina Hermoso](#)

An environmental group lauded the closure of cemeteries on All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day as it cited its benefits both as a preventive measure against COVID-19 as well as the accumulation of garbage.



(JANSEN ROMERO / MANILA BULLETIN)

According to Rodney Galicha, Living Laudato Si Philippines executive director, the closure of cemeteries will not only help keep people safe from the virus. "It also has ecological benefits," Galicha said over Radio Veritas.

"When people are discouraged from crowding in cemeteries, there will definitely be less garbage, most of which are actually wastes from the food that we bring, candle wrappers, and the usual stuff that we bring with us when we visit the graves of our loved ones," he added.

"Remembering and offering prayers for our departed loved ones, the essence of the annual tradition, may be done at home this year because of the pandemic," Galicha said.

As a safety precaution, all cemeteries and columbaria around the country will be closed from Oct. 29 to Nov. 4 this year to avoid crowds in cemeteries. Instead, the public is advised to visit another time or better yet, to just offer their prayers for their departed loved ones at home.

Tons of garbage are usually collected from cemeteries every year during the observance of Undas despite the provisions of waste baskets and the repeated requests made by authorities for visitors not to litter.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/26/environmental-group-sees-zero-waste-with-closure-of-cemeteries-this-undas/>

First Gen employees hold 'hi-tech' tree-planting activity, raises funds for indigents in Batangas town

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Sep 26 2020 06:12 AM



Members of two community organizations in Lobo, Batangas wave their hands to Lopez Group employees. *Handout*

MANILA - First Gen Corp employees held a "hi-tech" tree-planting activity, raising thousands of pesos for indigents in a Batangas town whose means of livelihood were hit by the coronavirus pandemic.

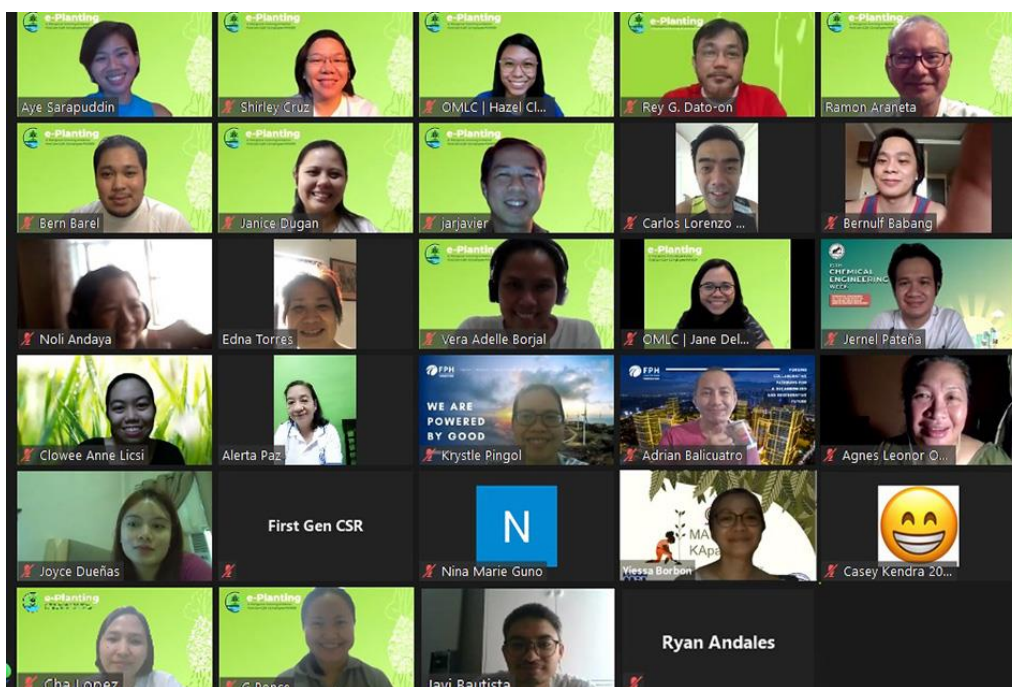
Employees of First Gen and other volunteers from parent firm First Philippine Holdings Corp planted over a thousand mangrove saplings in Lobo, Batangas virtually, the Lopez-led power unit said in a statement.

Volunteers of the Employee POWER (EmPOWER) Program conducted the "e-planting" activity on Sept. 19, with some employees joining the project from as far as Mindanao, First Gen said.

Volunteer employees get to choose their mangrove planting spot like "a theater seat booking" process, said Adrian Balicuatro, a volunteer of EmPOWER - the Lopez Group employees' arm which implement civic and community projects.

Employees can choose their preferred mode of payment and "adopt" a mangrove seedling which costs P150 per piece, Balicuatro said.

Names of the volunteers are imprinted on a bamboo slat, placed beside the seedling as its marker, he added.



Employees who joined the tree planting in Lobo as virtual participants from Metro Manila and other parts of the country. Through an innovative e-Planting platform, the Lopez Group employees "booked" their participation by donating P150 for each tree sapling they adopted for the tree-planting activity. During the tree planting, the employees joined virtually through the Facebook and the Zoom software applications. *Handout*



Community recipients in Lobo belonging to organizations Olo-Olo Seaside Workers Association and Samahan ng Maliliit na Mangingisda sa Pangangalaga ng Kalikasan sa Brgy. Lagadlarin physically planted the seedlings, the firm said.

Donors joined the planting activity via Zoom and Facebook, First Gen said.

“The e-Planting highlights the spirit of Bayanihan through volunteerism. It has raised funds for families in Lobo whose means of livelihood from eco-tourism activities have been largely affected by the pandemic. At the same time, e-Planting allows us to express and reaffirm the Lopez Group’s commitment to a decarbonized and regenerative future,” said First Gen vice president Ramon Araneta.

Lobo, located 140 km south of the capital Manila was a popular tourist destination known for its white sand beaches until the pandemic halted tourist arrivals.

The group has raised funds for a total of 1,204 seedlings during the event, the company said.

The e-platform took shape with the help of pro-environment groups Project Center of Center and Create for the Climate initiatives. It provided a link between the FPH and First Gen volunteers and other organizations such as the local government of Lobo, the ABS-CBN Lingkod Kapamilya Foundation, and the Lobo Marine Environment Conservation Federation.

DOH: Covid-19 cases pass 300,000 mark



MANILA. A man wears a mask to curb the spread of the coronavirus as he peddles vegetables at the outskirts of Manila, Philippines on Friday, September 25, 2020. (AP)

September 26, 2020

THE Philippines now has more than 300,000 cases of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19), seven months after the first infection was recorded in the country.

Based on the Sept. 26, 2020 case bulletin of the Department of Health (DOH), 2,747 additional Covid-19 cases have been reported. This brought the total count to 301,256.

Majority of the new cases came from the National Capital Region (NCR), with 1,115, said the DOH.

Also seeing high number of cases are Negros Occidental (196), Cavite (153), Laguna (112), and Cebu (107).

The DOH also reported 88 new deaths that brought the total number of mortalities to 5,284.

Majority of the new deaths were recorded in the NCR with 36.

Other deaths were recorded in Calabarzon (15), Central Visayas (six), Soccsksargen (six), Central Luzon (five) and Western Visayas (five).

The number of recoveries, meanwhile, has increased to 232,906, with 787 new recoveries.

The DOH reported the first case of local coronavirus transmission in the country in March.

In Cebu City, Barangay Apas has the most number of active Covid-19 cases at 63, as of Wednesday, Sept. 23.

City Councilor Joel Garganera, deputy chief implementer of the Emergency Operations Center, assured that all the positive individuals have been quarantined, including those living in Camp Lapu-Lapu, headquarters of the Armed Forces of the Philippines Central Command (Centcom).

Alfe Naingue, a member of the Apas Barangay Health Emergency Response Team, said most of the barangay's cases were construction workers living in the Centcom barracks. However, Naingue did not say how many.

Last Sept. 17, 15 active Covid-19 cases were reported at Centcom.

Garganera said 10 Covid-19 patients completed their 14-day quarantine on Sept. 26. Another 10 patients will be allowed to go home on Sunday, Sept. 27.

In an earlier interview, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, who had been ordered by President Rodrigo Duterte to oversee the Covid-19 situation in Cebu City, expressed his concern over the growing number of positive cases in Barangay Apas.



During his visit on Sept. 25, Cimatu met with Cebu City barangay captains for an update on their efforts against the rise of cases in their respective jurisdictions.

“We succeeded in bringing down the cases so this should be sustained but I’m very much worried with Apas. Most of those living there are from the military and I even scolded them and reminded them to take care of the barangay,” Cimatu told reporters.

While the rest of the barangays saw their Covid-19 cases go down, Apas’ numbers doubled, he said.

“While we are reducing some more, my target for Cebu City’s new normal is for it to have zero cases. That’s my aspiration for Cebu City because I’m very attached to the city, especially because of their reaction in our initial direction and coordination which we had support and cooperation,” he said.

Cimatu said Cebu City became a role model for cities like Iloilo and General Santos because of the significant drop of its Covid-19 cases, attributing the success to the grassroots level.

“If the barangay captain performs his job well, our positive cases will continue to go down. We have no time for relaxation. Unless there’s no vaccine yet, we have to do our part,” he said.

“So the bottom line of our effort is we are much, much better than the other areas and other cities. I’m very proud of Cebu City,” Cimatu added. **(HDT, JTM, SunStar Philippines, JLL, JOB)**

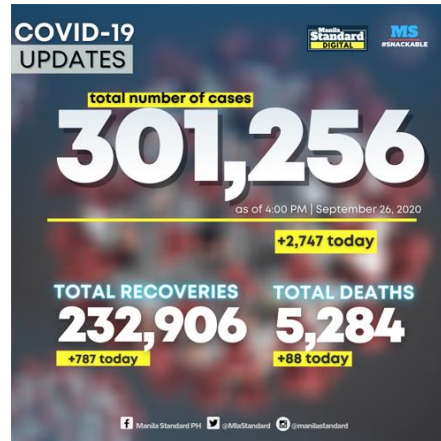


PH breaks 300k virus mark; experts warn against relaxing GCQ

posted September 27, 2020 at 01:20 am

by [Willie Casas](#)

The Philippines breached 300,000 coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases on Saturday as the Department of Health logged an additional 2,747 new infections.



With the total infections now at 301,256, the DOH also announced 787 recoveries on Saturday, bringing the total number to 232,906.

With 88 new fatalities, the death toll now stands at 5,284.

The top regions with cases in the recent two weeks were the National Capital Region (962 or 39 percent), Region 4A (419 or 17 percent) and Region 6 (233 or 9 percent). Top areas by newly announced cases are NCR, 1,115; Negros Occidental, 196; Cavite, 153; Laguna, 112; and Cebu, 107.

Active COVID-19 cases are at 63,066 nationwide, with 87.3 percent of cases classified as mild; asymptomatic, 8.8 percent; 1.2 percent at severe; and 2.7 percent at critical.

The DOH said three labs were not able to submit their data to the COVID-19 Data Repository System on September 25—Dr. Jorge P. Royeca Hospital, Philippine Heart Center, and Safeguard DNA Diagnostics.

Premature downgrade

Reported COVID-19 cases daily are on a plunge—for the fifth consecutive day on Saturday, in fact—but experts from the OCTA Research Team warned the national government against prematurely downgrading community quarantines, particularly in Metro Manila.

In its latest report, the OCTA team said the premature downgrade of the quarantine status in the NCR might increase the risk of a surge in the number of COVID-19 infections in December.

“The national government must sustain the GCQ status in the NCR coupled with further improvements in its testing, tracing and isolation programs not just to sustain the gains of the last MECQ but to also prevent a surge, especially around Christmas time,” the report said.

The OCTA research team is made up of experts from the University of the Philippines, University of Santo Tomas, and Providence College.

The OCTA research team showed that the number of daily cases reported decreased from 4,300 in early August to 2,988 in late September.

They added the rate of transmission, number of cases, positivity rate, and measures for hospital resource utilization are all on a downward in Metro Manila.

The UP OCTA research team also projected that the number of COVID-19 cases in the Philippines may increase to a minimum of 380,000 to a maximum of 410,000 by October 31.

“The current trajectory (as of September 25) shows between 310,000 and 315,000 cases by September 30. It is likely we will reach the lower range of the previous projections, a very positive sign that we are headed in the right direction,” it said.



High-risk areas

Meanwhile, the experts said the number of new cases reported in high-risk areas decreased in comparison to figures from last week. The areas include Bulacan, Batangas, Cavite, Laguna, Negros Occidental, and Rizal.

According to the team, the positivity rate in Calabarzon was recorded at 14 percent while the positivity rate in Bulacan was recorded at 11 percent over the past week.

In Bacolod City, the reproduction number is 0.94 while its positivity rate is at 10 percent.

The researchers previously said that to flatten the curve, the reproduction number should be less than one while a number higher than one indicates that the virus is spreading.

Meanwhile, the current COVID-19 hotspots, regions where newly reported cases increased over a two-week period, are Benguet, Iloilo, Leyte, Misamis Oriental, and Nueva Vizcaya.

Hospital capacity

The team also advised the government to monitor as well as to expand the capacity of hospitals in NCR as well as other hotspots.

According to the researchers, the COVID-19 beds in Valenzuela, Makati, and Muntinlupa have reached the critical level, wherein over 70 percent have been occupied.

Eighty-two percent of the COVID-19 beds in Valenzuela are occupied, 71 percent of the beds in Makati are occupied, and 81 percent of the beds in Muntinlupa.

“Given the experience of the last surge, there is an urgent need to scale up capacities of our health care system,” they said.

They also advised the government to ensure the increased capacity of the national health care system; sufficient testing capability; sufficient supply of personal protective equipment for frontliners; more isolation facilities in the NCR and nationwide; and effective and aggressive contact tracing.

Robredo appeal

Vice President Leni Robredo has urged Presidential spokesman Harry Roque to review her suggestions on curbing the coronavirus pandemic after he challenged her to come up with a solution.

Robredo also urged, in an interview on radio show Basta Batas, Roque to issue “unifying” remarks during the health crisis instead of speaking along partisan lines.

“He should set aside the issue of who is an ally, who is not, refrain from remarking, this politician is yellow, don’t listen to him. He further polarizes the people,” Robredo said.

Roque earlier this week told Robredo: “I am challenging VP Leni. If she has a solution (to COVID-19) that doesn’t need a vaccine and a cure, reveal it and I’m sure she might just become president immediately if she could find one that doesn’t need a vaccine or medicine.”

Critical care

The need for critical care among COVID-19 patients in hospitals in Metro Manila has eased, among “good indications” health officials are seeing amid the country’s continuing battle against the coronavirus pandemic.

Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said Saturday that the critical care utilization rate in COVID-19 epicenter Metro Manila has “gone down to about 60 percent” from a high of up to 81 percent— a level considered the “danger zone”— in August.

Critical care utilization rate refers to the number of beds in hospitals’ intensive care units, COVID-19 wards and ventilator facilities, reflecting the number of coronavirus patients in need of critical care.

Vergeire, in a briefing on state-run television, said: “Critical care utilization, use of ICUs, isolation beds, ventilators, we reached the danger zone in August, almost 80-81 percent. But now, critical care utilization is already down.”

Source: <https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/335236>



Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said the monitoring of COVID-19 cases in the National Capital Region (NCR) has shown both “good indications” on the one hand and a “clustering of cases” on the other.

Miguel De Guzman, file

DOH warns vs further easing Metro Manila quarantine

[Mayen Jaymalin](#) (The Philippine Star) - September 27, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Caution against immediately relaxing the quarantine in Metro Manila was raised yesterday by the Department of Health (DOH), saying an “improving situation” is not a signal for complacency.

Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said the monitoring of COVID-19 cases in the National Capital Region (NCR) has shown both “good indications” on the one hand and a “clustering of cases” on the other.

“We need to see that, on one hand, there are places here in Metro Manila where a clustering or rise in cases has been observed,” Vergeire said in Filipino at the latest “Laging Handa” public briefing.

As such, easing up to a modified general community quarantine (MGCQ) in Metro Manila should require careful study by the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Disease (IATF), she said.

“While there are good indications, this has to be balanced out when the IATF makes a decision,” Vergeire said, referring to IATF’s recommendation on the quarantine status in Metro Manila by Oct. 1.

The IATF’s recommendation, she said, will be based on all indicators such as the capacity of the health system and case and mortality doubling time.

From a high of 81 percent in August, the critical care utilization rate in Metro Manila has already improved, with the ICU beds utilization rate down to 63 percent and isolation beds occupancy further down to 53 percent.

The case and mortality doubling time in Metro Manila also increased to more than 10 days, while the transmission rate is less than one, DOH figures showed.

“These are all good indications,” Vergeire said, noting that the health system can accommodate more of those who are needing medical services.

Notwithstanding these improvements, the health official stressed the need for the public to continue observing minimum health protocols to prevent transmission of the potentially deadly infection.



“We cannot be complacent, we must remain vigilant,” she said.

Concerning a survey that ranks the Philippines at 66th among 91 countries in terms of efforts against the pandemic, Vergeire said the DOH is using it as guide to further improve the government’s anti-COVID response.

‘GCQ with flexibility’

Meanwhile, Marikina City Mayor Marcelino Teodoro favors maintaining the GCQ status in Metro Manila, but appealed for more flexibility from the national government to boost the economy.

“Our position is we remain at GCQ, but we could be flexible in our policies in terms of economic activities,” he said when interviewed by “The Chiefs” on TV5 and Signal TV’s One News channel last Friday night.

Teodoro cited as an example allowing businesses to reopen – especially small-scale retail enterprises, but keeping certain limits imposed on public transportation.

He proposed that government add more routes for public utility vehicles to ease the burden of workers rather than cutting the distance protocols between passengers.

There are at least 2,219 COVID-19 cases listed in Marikina, but Teodoro said only 330 of them, or 14.87 percent, are active cases. Sixty-three have died while the rest have recovered.

The mayor attributed the low rate of infection in the city to the implementation of “maximum” health protocols such as requiring people to wear face masks and face shields as well observance of physical distancing protocols in work places.

“We are physically reconfiguring the work settings of our plants,” he said, referring to the installation of exhaust fans in manufacturing and industrial plants.

Unlike the national government’s policy of declaring COVID-19 cases as recovered after undergoing a 14-day quarantine, patients in Marikina must still be tested to ensure they won’t be infecting others, said Teodoro. – **Emmanuel Tupas**



PH commits to resolve SCS dispute peacefully — Navy chief

Published September 26, 2020, 12:27 PM

by [Martin Sadongdong](#)

The Philippine Navy (PN) has maintained its position that the best way to settle the maritime dispute at the South China Sea (SCS) is through peaceful means and adherence to international laws.



(Photo from Philippine Navy)

Vice Admiral Giovanni Carlo Bacordo, PN Flag Officer in Command, emphasized this during his participation in a virtual key leaders engagement with the chiefs of 14 regional navies hosted by the United States Pacific Fleet on Friday.

“The Commander-in-Chief’s guidance to the Armed Forces of the Philippines is crystal clear. But in doing so, we reaffirm our commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes and the adherence to international laws,” Bacordo told his counterparts.

Aside from the Philippines and US, the virtual meeting was also attended by the navy chiefs of Bangladesh, India, Japan, South Korea, Australia, Fiji, France, New Zealand, Tonga, Brunei, Malaysia and Singapore.

Bacordo went on to echo the remarks of President Duterte at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) last September 22 that the award issued by the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague, Netherlands “is now part of international law, beyond compromise and beyond the reach of passing governments to dilute, diminish, or abandon.”

The award, issued by the PCA in 2016, rejected China’s “nine-dash line” claim in a major portion of South China Sea on the basis of its inconsistency with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), and was, therefore, deemed an intrusion in the Philippines’ 200-nautical mile exclusive economic zone (EEZ) now known as the West Philippine Sea (WPS).

Bacordo’s raising of the arbitral win at the top level meet of navy chiefs was a “manifestation of [the PN’s] unfaltering commitment and firm dedication in promoting stability and cooperation in the region,” said Lieutenant Commander Maria Christina Roxas, acting director of the naval public affairs office.

Roxas added that it was also a way to bolster the Philippines’ ties and friendship with the other navies.

Aside from the arbitral award, Bacordo also discussed the role of the navy in helping the government fight the COVID-19 pandemic and mitigate its impact in Manila’s international defense and security engagements with its allies.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/26/ph-commits-to-resolve-scs-dispute-peacefully-navy-chief/>



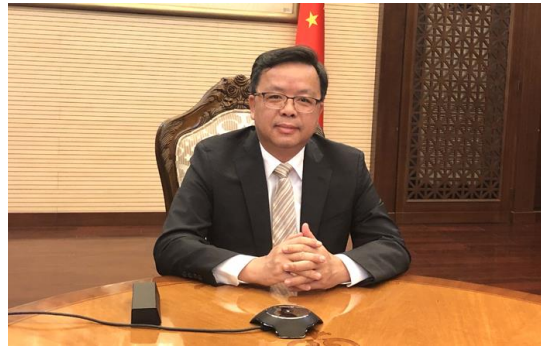
China denies SCS ruling anew

Envoy: 'Consensus' reached by Xi, Duterte is to 'put aside' arbitral decision

posted September 27, 2020 at 01:30 am

by [Manila Standard](#)

China has underlined its non-recognition of the 2016 international arbitral ruling favoring the Philippines and nullifying Beijing's nine-dash line claim over nearly all of the South China Sea, only days after President Rodrigo Duterte described this in a speech before the United Nations General Assembly as a legal victory.



Chinese Ambassador to the Philippines Huang Xilian

In a virtual forum organized by the Association for Philippines-China Understanding Inc., Chinese Ambassador to the Philippines Huang Xilian cited the "consensus" allegedly reached between Duterte and Chinese President Xi Jinping to shelve maritime disputes and manage the situation through dialogue and cooperation.

"China's position on the so-called arbitral ruling has been very clear: We do not accept, and we do not recognize this so-called ruling. It has been agreed by our two presidents that we should close the old chapter and shelve differences," said Huang.

Huang said the consensus of Duterte and Xi to "put aside" the maritime disputes and manage the situation through bilateral consultations should be "vigorously implemented by both sides" so that the "sound momentum of our relations as guideposts to the way forward will be preserved and enhanced."

He said dialogue mechanisms such as the bilateral consultation mechanism is "working well to manage differences and explore practical cooperation" and that China was "committed to speed up" consultations on a code of conduct between ASEAN and China as a way of promoting peace and stability.

There was no immediate reaction from Malacanang on the latest Chinese claim.

The July 2016 decision on the arbitration case by The Hague-based Permanent Court of Arbitration recognized the Philippines' sovereign rights in its exclusive economic zone in the resource-rich waters, which China claims in almost its entirety.

France, Germany, and the United Kingdom recently reasserted the 2016 Hague ruling that China's 'historic claims' in the South China Sea are illegal.

"The award is now part of international law, beyond compromise and beyond the reach of passing governments to dilute, diminish or abandon. We firmly reject attempts to undermine it," Duterte said, thanking other countries supporting the ruling.

Meanwhile, the Philippine Navy reaffirmed its commitment to the adherence to international law in settling of disputes in the South China Sea.

Navy Chief Vice Admiral Giovanni Carlo Bacordo made the assurance during the Virtual Key Leaders Engagement with Chiefs of Regional Navies hosted by the US Pacific Fleet late Friday.

Bacordo echoed the earlier statement of President Rodrigo Duterte during the 75th United Nations General Assembly and said: "The Commander-in-Chief's guidance to the Armed Forces of the Philippines is crystal clear."

"But in doing so, we reaffirm our commitment to the peaceful settlement of disputes and the adherence to international laws," he added.



Bacordo added the Navy was playing a major role in helping the government contain the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

Duterte, who had pivoted towards China in the early months of his presidency in 2016, said the Philippine commitment in the disputed part of the South China Sea was in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) and the 2016 Hague ruling.

“We must remain mindful of our obligations and commitment to the Charter of the United Nations and as amplified by the 1982 Manila Declaration on the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes,” Duterte said in his first-ever address before the world body.

The Philippines, China and Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) members Malaysia, Vietnam and Brunei lay separate claims to parts of the South China Sea.

The Philippines lays claim to the West Philippine Sea, which is in the eastern part of the South China Sea.

China wants to settle the disputes bilaterally rather than through multilateral or international platforms and had refused to participate in the Hague arbitration, a process that was in accordance with the UNCLOS, and rejected the tribunal’s decision.

Prof. Jay Batongbacal, director of the University of the Philippines Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea, said he believed Beijing’s continued and increased aggression in the disputed South China Sea in the past year might be the reason Duterte raised the award before the international community.

But Huang said external powers should not be allowed to derail Philippine-China relations as he claimed that countries “enjoy freedom of navigation in South China Sea in accordance with international law.”

He also dismissed “misleading accusations” over the so-called Chinese “debt trap.”

“In fact, there was no evidence that Chinese projects threaten Philippine security. In fact, these projects are contributing to your national building,” Huang said.

Critics have said the Philippines has entered into onerous deals with China, with former Supreme Court Senior Associate Justice Antonio Carpio warning that Beijing could seize natural gas deposits in the Reed Bank (Recto Bank) in the disputed waters if Manila is unable to pay the \$62-million Chinese loan for the Chico River Irrigation Loan Agreement.

Carpio is a long-time advocate of the Philippines’ sovereignty and a vocal critic of what he calls China’s “creeping invasion.”

Bacordo also informed all participants on the impact of the unprecedented situation on the PN regarding its international defense and security engagements in the region.

US Pacific Fleet commander, Admiral John Aquilino, invited the regional heads of Navy in a virtual conference to discuss the outlooks and perspectives in the COVID-19 environment.

The Navy chiefs of Bangladesh, India, Japan, South Korea, Australia, Fiji, France, New Zealand, Tonga, Brunei, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, and the United States participated in the multilateral engagement.

The PN’s participation is a manifestation of its unfaltering commitment and firm dedication in promoting stability and cooperation in the region and strengthening ties and friendship with other navies, Bacordo said.



‘No solution to SCS row in our lifetime’

[POSTSCRIPT](#) - [Federico D. Pascual Jr.](#) (The Philippine Star) - September 27, 2020 - 12:00am

President Duterte was still reaping hometown praises for telling the world Tuesday that the Philippines stood by the 2016 arbitration award affirming its sovereign rights within its maritime areas when his spokesman rose to say that there was no policy change at all.

The President said in his address beamed electronically from Manila to the 75th United Nations General Assembly in New York that the Philippines “firmly rejects attempts to undermine” the award handed down by the Permanent Court of Arbitration at The Hague.

Duterte declared that the award rejecting China’s claim over much of the South China Sea, including parts of the Philippines’ exclusive economic zone, “is now part of international law, beyond compromise and beyond the reach of passing governments to dilute, diminish or abandon.”

“We welcome the increasing number of states that have come in support of the award and what it stands for – the triumph of reason over rashness, of law over disorder, of amity over ambition,” he said. “This, as it should, is the majesty of the law.”

The President’s assertion, made toward the end of his 23-minute address, was a departure from his usual line that he would not invoke the arbitral ruling in his talks with China President Xi Jinping, who he said had hinted at warlike consequences if he did.

But he also said once that the time will come when he would raise the ruling. The time seemed to have come Tuesday at the UN despite advice that it was useless to elevate the matter to the General Assembly where China reportedly held sway.

His spokesman Roque cut the short-lived cheering of the woke Manila crowd that included former Supreme Court associate justices Antonio Carpio and Conchita Carpio-Morales, and former foreign secretary Albert del Rosario – who pressed Malacañang for follow-up action.

In an online press briefing, Roque said the President merely reiterated what has been “the Philippine policy on China na hindi natin pwedeng balewalain ang panalo natin sa (that we cannot neglect our win at The) Hague.”

He said: “We will move on matters that we could move forward on, including trade and investments, and we will for the time being set this (the PCA ruling) aside because I don’t think the resolution of the territorial dispute is forthcoming in our lifetime.”

That sounded like the arbitral award, which has never been recognized by China that at the outset questioned even the jurisdiction of the PCA, was given the Mona Lisa treatment – “they just lie there, and they die there.”

Roque said Duterte’s remark that the Philippines rejects attempts to undermine the country’s arbitration victory only means that there is nothing China can do to overturn the PCA ruling. But he did not say either what can or must be done to enforce it.

He explained that whatever military facilities China had installed on the artificial islands it has built in Philippine waters will remain part of the country’s exclusive economic zone and their foreign occupation will never ripen into a valid legal title.



Also crammed into Duterte's 1,200-word address were the COVID-19 pandemic, human rights, climate change and other problems besetting most of the 193 sovereign UN member-states.

He opened his address by focusing on the COVID-19 pandemic, a pestilence that does not respect ideologies nor geographical boundaries. The scourge has infected more than 32.8 million and killed more than 995,000 worldwide. Of those infected, around 300,000 are in the Philippines.

He called attention to problems that the pandemic poses to countries that may not be able to afford a vaccine or compete for adequate supply, especially now that rich countries have made advance payment for their orders.

On COVID-19, he said: "The invisible enemy has brought about an unfamiliar global landscape and unleashed a crisis without precedent. It is the biggest test the world and the UN faced since World War II. We are at a crossroads. How we address COVID-19 will define our future."

He called for a global health agenda with sufficient resources and policy space for the World Health Organization that should be "quick to coordinate and quicker to respond." He promised that the Philippines will do its part.

Duterte is still waiting for the COVID-19 vaccine that Xi Jinping had promised to share with Filipinos before Christmas. It was not clear which of several Chinese pharma firms working on their respective vaccines would be the source.

He is also waiting for the Sputnik V vaccine promised by Russia President Vladimir Putin, for which Duterte volunteered to take the first local shot. After that offer made headlines worldwide, Roque clarified that the vaccine must pass first its mass testing on humans and be approved by the Food and Drug Administration.

On human rights, a key issue raised by his critics abroad, Duterte said: "The Philippines will continue to protect the human rights of its people, especially from the scourge of illegal drugs, criminality and terrorism.

"A number of interest groups have weaponized human rights; some well-meaning, others ill-intentioned. They attempt to discredit the functioning institutions and mechanisms of a democratic country and a popularly elected government which in its last two years still enjoys the same widespread approval and support.

"These detractors pass themselves off as human rights advocates while preying on the most vulnerable humans; even using children as soldiers or human shields in encounters. Even schools are not spared from their malevolence and anti-government propaganda."

Those remarks drew barbed rejoinders from human rights groups and other sectors who have been denouncing extrajudicial killings related to the administration's bloody campaign against illegal drug trafficking and abuse.

* * *

Nota Bene: All Postscripts are archived at manilamail.com. Author is on Twitter as [@FDPascual](https://twitter.com/FDPascual). Feedback can be emailed to fdp333@yahoo.com

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2020/09/27/2045330/no-solution-scs-row-our-lifetime>



Pilot whales in Australia: Nearly 500 stranded, 380 dead

By [The Associated Press](#)

September 27, 2020



A member of a rescue crew stands with a whale on a sandbar near Strahan, Australia, on September 22.

HOBART, Australia—More pilot whales were found stranded in Australia on Wednesday, raising the estimated total to nearly 500, including 380 that have died, in the largest mass stranding ever recorded in the country.

Authorities had already been working to rescue survivors among an estimated 270 whales found Monday on a beach and two sandbars near the remote coastal town of Strahan on the southern island state of Tasmania.

Another 200 stranded whales were spotted from a helicopter on Wednesday less than 10 kilometers to the south, Tasmania Parks and Wildlife Service Manager Nic Deka said.

All 200 had been confirmed dead by late afternoon.

They were among 380 whales that had died overall, 30 that were alive but stranded and 50 that had been rescued since Tuesday, Deka said.

“We’ll continue to work to free as many of the animals as we can,” he said. “We’ll continue working for as long as there are live animals.”

About 30 whales in the original stranding were moved from the sandbars to open ocean on Tuesday, but several got stranded again.

About a third of the first group had died by Monday evening.

Tasmania is the only part of Australia prone to mass strandings, although they occasionally occur on the Australian mainland.

Australia’s largest mass stranding had previously been 320 pilot whales near the Western Australia state town of Dunsborough in 1996.

The latest stranding is the first involving more than 50 whales in Tasmania since 2009.

Marine Conservation Program wildlife biologist Kris Carlyon said the latest mass stranding was the biggest in Australia “in terms of numbers stranded and died.”

Why the whales ran aground is a mystery. The pod may have been drawn into the coast to feed or by the misadventure of one or two whales, which led to the rest of the pod following, Carlyon said.



“It’s really likely this was the one stranding event of a big group. This would have been one big group offshore,” he said.

Marine scientist Vanessa Pirotta said there were a number of potential reasons why whales might become beached, including navigational errors.

“They do have a very strong social system, these animals are closely bonded and that’s why we have seen so many in this case unfortunately in this situation,” Pirotta said.

And rescuing them doesn’t always work “because they are wanting to return back to the pod, they might hear the acoustics for the vocalizations of the sounds that the others are making, or they’re just disoriented and in this case extremely stressed, and just probably so fatigued that they in some cases don’t know where they are,” she added.

In neighboring New Zealand, more than 600 pilot whales washed up on the South Island at Farewell Spit in 2017, with more than 350 dying.

Image credits: [Brodie Weeding/Pool Photo via AP](#)



Numerous stranded whales are seen along the coastline near the remote west coast town of Strahan on the island state of Tasmania, Australia, September 23, 2020. AAP Image/Patrick Gee/The Mercury/via REUTERS

Australia begins disposal of about 350 dead whales as rescue efforts end

Published September 26, 2020 3:29pm

By COLIN PACKHAM, Reuters

SYDNEY - Australian wildlife officials began disposing of hundreds of dead pilot whales on Saturday after concluding there was no longer any hope of rescuing any more.

In Australia's biggest whale beaching, 470 whales were first spotted on a wide sandbank during an aerial reconnaissance of rugged Macquarie Harbour in Tasmania state on Monday.

After days of difficult and dangerous rescue attempts, Australia said they rescued 108 whales, with the rest now believed to have died.

Rob Buck, Incident Controller and Parks and Wildlife Service manager, said 15 whales have already been disposed of at sea, but the operations to dispose of the remaining near 350 mammals was expected to take several days at least.

"Collection and disposal is being undertaken with the assistance of aquaculture companies whose equipment and expertise on the harbour is essential for a timely and effective outcome," Buck said in an emailed statement.

The bodies of the dead whales were being separated into groups and enclosed with water booms to try keep them in one place and isolated from sharks and other predators.

Most of the released whales, a gregarious species that lives in deep waters, were expected to "regroup" and recover from the traumatic event, officials said. —**Reuters**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/world/757327/australia-begins-disposal-of-about-350-dead-whales-as-rescue-efforts-end/story/>



- Headline
- Editorial
- Column
- Opinion
- Feature Article



ONE OF 380.
A pilot whale, one of at least 380 stranded that have died, is seen washed up in Macquarie Harbour on Tasmania's west coast on September 24. **AFP**

Biden mocked for 'staying in' ahead of polls

NEWPORT NEWS—With just 39 days until the US election, President Donald Trump ramped up his campaigning with back-to-back events Friday in battleground states—a frenetic pace in contrast with the more sedate approach of Democratic rival Joe Biden.

The 74-year-old president's gru-



Poverty, joblessness drives wildlife poaching in South Africa — study

Agence France-Presse / 06:05 PM September 26, 2020



Threatened: Rhinos are major targets for poachers. Image: AFP/Stefan Heunis

Most people convicted for wildlife poaching and trafficking in South Africa commit the crimes due to poverty and joblessness, a study by an international wildlife conservation group has shown.

A report published Thursday and compiled after interviews with 73 convicted wildlife offenders incarcerated in South Africa's jails, concluded that 70% of them were forced into crime just to make a living.

"A variety of reasons led offenders to become involved in illegal wildlife trade, one frequent motivation being a desire to provide for their families given the lack of viable legal economic alternatives," said TRAFFIC.

One study respondent told TRAFFIC: "I just wanted to give my children a better life than I had." Another said he just wanted to send his "firstborn to school so that he could get education. I wanted him to have the opportunity which I was denied as a child".

"If I were working, I would not have gone and done this," regretted another respondent. Yet others took the risk just to keep up with well-to-do friends.

"My friends... used to poach. They were driving cars and I wished to be like them," said another, adding "so I ended up doing illegal things. I was fooled, and I regret what I did."

Offenses committed included poaching, transporting, processing, storing and selling the illegally-gotten wildlife commodities.

Seventy-four percent of the surveyed offenders were serving sentences for rhino-related offenses and the rest for crimes linked to abalone and cycad trafficking.

South Africa, which for years has battled a scourge of rhino poaching fuelled by the insatiable demand for their horns in Asia, is also facing high unemployment levels of more than 30 percent.

At least 8,200 rhino have been poached for their horn in the past decade in South Africa, according to TRAFFIC. **IB**

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1340528/poverty-joblessness-drives-wildlife-poaching-in-south-africa-study>



Hundreds of anti-coal protesters break into German mine

Associated Press / 06:56 PM September 26, 2020



Activists are surrounded by police on the Garzweiler power plant grounds in Grevenbroich, western Germany, Saturday, Sept. 26, 2020. Anti-coal protesters have entered a mine to protest the continued extraction and use of fossil fuels. (David Young/dpa via AP)

LUETZERATH, Germany — Hundreds of anti-coal activists staged protesters in and around a mine in western Germany on Saturday, demonstrating against the continued extraction and use of fossil fuels by Europe's biggest economy.

Environmentalists oppose the German government's decision to allow the mining and burning of coal in the country until 2038, a deadline the activists say is too late to effectively tackle climate change.

Activists, dressed in colored overalls and braving wind and rain, were also protesting the planned destruction of several villages to make way for the expansion of the Garzweiler strip mine, west of Cologne.

An Associated Press reporter witnessed some protesters break through police lines early Saturday before being detained by officers. Utility company RWE said some protesters also entered coal storage facilities.

The Garzweiler mine and nearby power plants have been a focus of protests for several years. Environmentalists say they are among the biggest sources of harmful pollution and greenhouse gas emissions in Europe.

In her weekly video message, German Chancellor Angela Merkel called Saturday for sustainable development, including to confront the threat of global warming.

Merkel cited Germany's increase in renewable energy production as an example of the measures her country has taken. She did not mention coal mines.

/MUF

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1340539/hundreds-of-anti-coal-protesters-break-into-german-mine>



More violent storms from rising pollution

Published September 26, 2020, 3:59 PM

by [Manila Bulletin](#)



Scientists have long established that rising temperatures around the world are spawning more violent storms while melting more ice in the polar regions. And the world is getting hotter because of the carbon emissions billowing daily into the atmosphere from factories of the industrial nations.

Last Monday, Oxfam said new research shows that the richest 1 percent of the world's population is responsible for more than twice as much carbon pollution as the poorest half. This poorest half consists of some 3.1 billion people mostly living in remote areas of the globe.

Oxfam disclosed the fresh findings of the Stockholm Environment Institute that there is an ever widening "carbon inequality" in the world today. The most pollution is coming from the two most industrialized countries on the globe — the United States and China. Unfortunately for us, their carbon emissions do not stay over their lands; they spread to other countries. And the rising heat they cause also spreads around the world.

The heat is melting icebergs at the poles, causing ocean levels to rise which, in turn, threatens low-lying islands around the world, such as some of our own in the Philippines. The heat has also spawned more and more violent storms.

The US itself has been recently hit repeatedly by hurricanes, two of them causing considerable destruction and death in Louisiana. Another one is now threatening Texas. Meanwhile, forest fires are raging in California, partly caused by the hotter climate. Way down south, fires have caused so much damage to the Amazon forest in Brazil.

There is extreme economic inequality in the world today and it is causing an ever-widening "carbon inequality" which, in turn, is causing extreme weather impacting all the nations of the world, both rich and poor.

At the 2015 Paris climate conference, every nation submitted individual plans to reduce its carbon emissions, some through greater use of renewable energy to replace highly polluting coal and gas. We can only hope that all these nations, including our own, will strive harder to carry out their plans and pledges.



‘Masks up, emissions down’ as climate demos restart

Who is going to demand our right to a livable future, if not us?

Published 6 hours ago on September 27, 2020 12:20 AM

By [Agence France-Presse](#)

BERLIN, Germany (AFP) — Thousands of young people across Europe joined a global day of climate protests on Friday, many wearing masks and keeping their distance against the coronavirus.

The rallies marked the resumption of street protests by the “Fridays for Future” movement, which had kept its actions mainly online in recent months because of the pandemic.

Swedish climate activist Greta Thunberg, who launched the school strikes two years ago, led the protest in Stockholm.

The goal was to “build up this pressure on people in power so that something happens,” the 17-year-old said outside the Swedish parliament, wearing a white mask emblazoned with the Fridays for Future logo.

With Sweden’s coronavirus rules limiting crowd sizes to 50 people, Thunberg said the demonstrations would “focus on being few people in many places and keeping distance.”

Posting pictures from protests held around the world, Thunberg later tweeted satisfaction with the response.

“What a huge success! With masks and socially distant, hundreds of thousands returned to the streets, demanding climate action, in over 3,200 places on all continents, including Antarctica! “The fight for a future doesn’t end here. This is just the beginning,” Thunberg wrote.

Previous global Fridays for Future demos have seen millions of young people pour into cities to demand action against global warming.

In Germany, police said some 10,000 protesters braved the rain to gather at Berlin’s Brandenburg Gate. Organizers estimated the figure to be twice as high.

Demonstrators clutched umbrellas and carried signs to highlight the climate crisis, while some scribbled messages on their face masks such as “Not a single degree more” and “Unite behind the science.”

A Berlin police spokesperson said participants were adhering to hygiene regulations imposed to contain the virus spread, with many demonstrators standing or sitting at least 1.5 meters apart.

Who if not us?

Elsewhere in Germany, some 7,000 people turned out in the western city of Cologne, while the cities of Freiburg and Hamburg each drew around 6,000 demonstrators.

Bad weather across the country however was believed to have dampened the overall turnout somewhat.

A large protest planned in the southern city of Munich had to be cancelled because of a regional spike in coronavirus infections, and was replaced by a smaller event outside the city center.



Climate strike organizers in Austria said that 6,000 people had attended a demonstration in the capital Vienna despite heavy rain and organizational hurdles posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Vienna's police department estimated turnout at 2,500.

Protest organizers said a further 2,000 people had rallied in other parts of Austria using the slogan: "Masks up, emissions down!"

"We don't know when the pandemic will be over, but we do know that the climate crisis is getting worse every day and is endangering human rights," said Vienna-based activist Klara Butz. "Who is going to demand our right to a livable future, if not us?" she asked.

Greenpeace meanwhile marked the day by releasing a photo recently taken in the Arctic of 18-year-old ornithologist Mya-Rose Craig, known as "birdgirl."

She is pictured standing on an ice floe holding a poster reading "Youth Strike for Climate" — in what the environmental campaign group said was the world's most northerly climate strike.

"I'm here because I want to see for myself what's at stake as this crucial protector of the planet, the Arctic Ocean, melts away at a terrifying rate," she said from the Svalbard archipelago in a statement.