

DENR chief: Resolve illegally arrested workers incident

Published 10 hours ago on June 12, 2020 08:45 PM

By **TD**



Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu on Friday urged authorities to swiftly resolve the case involving the illegal arrest and police brutality suffered by a team of environmental enforcers at the hands of Puerto Princesa City Police Director Col. Marion Balonglong.

In a statement, the DENR chief stressed that while he feels outraged, the incident is an isolated case and it would not affect the “cordial relationship and collaborative partnership” between the DENR and the Philippine National Police (PNP) in enforcing environmental laws.

“As much as I’m furious at what happened to my men, I hope this incident won’t affect the cordial relationship and collaborative partnership the DENR has with the PNP in the fight against environmental crime,” Cimatu said.

To recall, Balonglong reportedly caused the unlawful arrest and detention of eight employees of the DENR and two others while they were doing field work at Barangay Iwahig in Puerto Princesa City on 10 June.

Cimatu noted that he already brought the matter to Department of the Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo M. Año, who has supervisory authority over the PNP.

Initial reports that reached the DENR Central Office in Quezon City revealed that the DENR workers — together with a representative from the city government’s Bantay Bakawan and a barangay watchman – are conducting an investigation on the illegal occupation and massive mangrove cutting at Sitio Bucana.

It was when they were intercepted by Balonglong and his men.

The DENR employees, who are assigned at the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) in Puerto Princesa City, consisted of three foresters, four forest rangers and one forest protection officer.

At first, the DENR team thought Balonglong’s group was the police security they requested to assist them in their operation until they were suddenly subjected to full body search and told to lie down on the ground.

DENR chief: resolve illegally arrested workers

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Balonglong even repeatedly kicked and punched at gunpoint one of the forest rangers, Roldan Alvarez, whom he accused of stealing galvanized iron sheets.

After the body search, all 10 of them were ordered to board a police service vehicle which brought them to a vacant lot supposedly owned by Balonglong. There, the police chief made Alvarez to kneel while he and his companions were being interrogated on their purpose of going to the mangrove site.

They were later brought to the police station in Barangay San Pedro where CENR Officer Felizardo Cayatoc, who approved of the DENR operation, pleaded for their release.

Balonglong ordered their release following a long dialogue and after Cayatoc agreed to sign a document stating that the DENR personnel were in good mental and physical condition when they were turned over to him.

Members of the DENR team were harassed, arrested and detained by Balonglong and his men in the absence of a warrant and without citing any violation. Alvarez sustained wounds and bruises due to Balonglong's alleged beating.

"It is totally unacceptable that these environmental enforcers who continue to perform their duties despite the COVID-19 pandemic have to suffer violence at the hands of the police, who should be assisting them in their operations," said Cimatú.

The former Armed Forces chief said the DENR will assist its employees in pursuing legal action against Balonglong and his men.

Cimatu slams Princesa's top cop

posted June 12, 2020 at 11:00 pm

by [Rio N. Araja](#)

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, a retired Army general, on Friday hit the police director of Puerto Princesa City, Palawan for the "illegal" arrest and "police brutality" on his environmental officers.

He slammed Col. Marion Balonglong, expressing "outrage" for such an "isolated case."

He, however, said he still believes the incident would not affect the agency's working relationship with the Philippine National Police.

According to Cimatu, Balonglong reportedly caused the unlawful arrest and detention of eight agency employees and two others while they were doing field work in Barangay Iwahig on June 10.

"As much as I'm furious at what happened to my men, I hope this incident won't affect the cordial relationship and collaborative partnership the DENR has with the PNP in the fight against environmental crime," he said.



Mabilis na resolusyon, hiling ni Cimatu sa iligal na pag-aresto sa DENR workers

June 12, 2020 @ 6:06 PM 15 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Dahil sa paglabag sa karapatang pantao hiniling ni Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu ang mabilisang resolusyon sa kasong iligal na pag-aresto at police brutality sa grupo ng environmental enforcers sa kamay ng mga tauhan ni Puerto Princesa City Police Director Col. Marion Balonglong.

Nabatid sa ulat na si Balonglong ang sinasabing dahilan sa iligal na pag-aresto sa walong (8) empleyado ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) at dalawang iba pa habang ginagawa ng mga ito ang kanilang trabaho sa Barangay Iwahig, Puerto Princesa City noong Hulyo 10, 2020.

Bagama't nakaramdam ng galit ay sinabi ni Cimatu na isa lamang itong "isolated case" at hindi makaaapekto sa maayos na relasyon ng DENR at ng Philippine National Police (PNP) lalo na sa pagpapatupad ng environmental laws.

"As much as I'm furious at what happened to my men, I hope this incident won't affect the cordial relationship and collaborative partnership the DENR has with the PNP in the fight against environmental crime," ani Cimatu.

Isinangguni na rin ni Cimatu ang kaso kay Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo M. Ano na siyang mayhawak sa PNP.

Base sa nakarating na ulat sa DENR Central Office sa Quezon City, kasalukuyang nagsasagawa ng imbestigasyon ang mga tauhan ng DENR kasama ang representante ng Bantay Bakawan at isang tanod tungkol sa walang pakundangang pagpuputol ng bakawan sa Sitio Bucana nang harangin ang mga ito ni Balonglong at ng kanyang mga tauhan.

Ang mga naturang DENR employee na nakatalaga sa Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) ay kinabibilangan ng tatlong forester, apat na forest ranger at isang forest protection officer.

Ayon sa DENR, noong una ay inakala ng grupo ng DENR na ang dumating na mga pulis ay ang kanilang magiging police security na kanilang hiniling sa PNP sa kanilang gagawing imbestigasyon ngunit laking gulat ng mga ito nang bigla silang kapkapan sa buong katawan at agad na pinadapa sa lupa.

Mabilis na resolusyon, hiling ni Cimatú sa iligal na
pag-aresto sa DENR workers

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Sinipa pa umano ni Balonglong ang isa sa mga forest ranger na si Roldan Alvarez na pinagbintangan nito na nagnakaw ng galvanized iron sheets.

Matapos ito ay sapilitang isinakay ang sampung katao sa police service vehicle at dinala sa bakanteng lote na pag-aari ni Balonglong at pagsapit dito ay inutusan ng police chief si Alvarez na lumuhod habang ang mga kasama nito ay tinatanong kung ano ang kanilang layunin sa pagpunta sa mangrove site.

Nang dalhin sa police station sa Barangay San Pedro ang DENR team ay agad na gumawa ng aksiyon si CENR Officer Felizardo Cayatoc na mapalaya ang sampung inaresto at ito rin ang nagpatunay na siya ang nag-utos sa mga ito na magsagawa ng operasyon sa naturang lugar.

Matapos ang mahabang pag-uusap ay pinalaya din ni Balonglong ang mga inaresto kapalit ng paglagda sa kasulutan na ang mga DENR personnel na inaresto ay nasa maayos na kondisyon.

Ang mga tauhan ng DENR ay hinaras, inaresto at ikinulong ni Balonglong at ng mga tauhan nito ay iligal dahil sa kawalan ng warrant o kahit na anong kasulutan ng paglabag. Si Alvarez ay nagtamo ng galos at pasa dahil sa ginawa sa kanyang pambubugbog.

“It is totally unacceptable that these environmental enforcers who continue to perform their duties despite the COVID-19 pandemic have to suffer violence at the hands of the police, who should be assisting them in their operations,” sabi pa ni Cimatú na hindi naitago ang nararamdamang galit.

Dahil dito ay tutulungan ni Cimatú na dati ring hepe ng Armed Forces of the Philippines, ang mga empleyado ng DENR sa pagsampa ng kaso laban kay Balonglong at sa mga tauhan nito. **Santi Celario**

DENR's Cimatu fumes as Balonglong "requests" own relief as City PNP chief

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DENR's Cimatu fumes as Balonglong "requests" own relief as City PNP chief

Jun 13, 2020 Palawan News Team

"It is totally unacceptable that these environmental enforcers who continue to perform their duties despite the COVID-19 pandemic have to suffer violence at the hands of the police, who should be assisting them in their operations," Cimatu said in a statement.

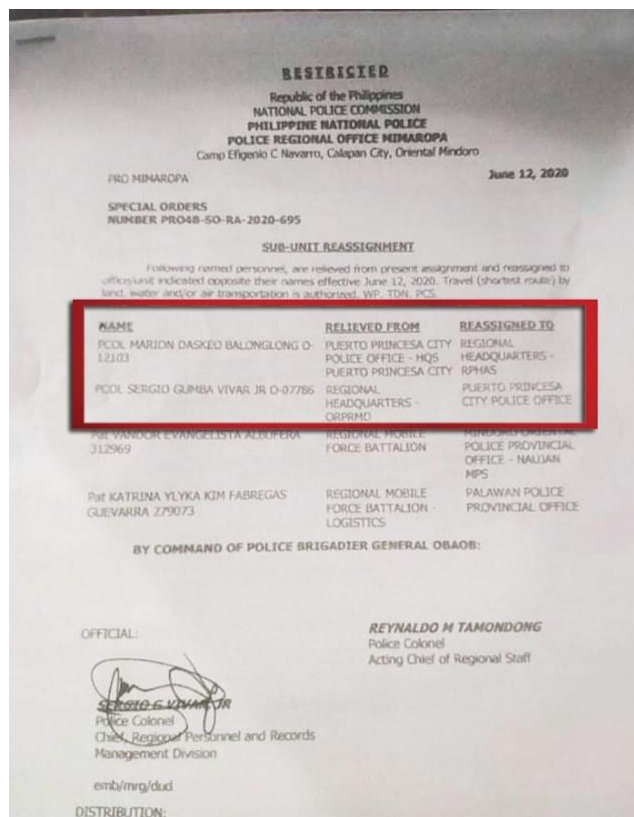


Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu has demanded a "swift resolution" of the reported arrest and manhandling of DENR personnel who led an operation Wednesday against illegal settlers in a mangrove area at the city outskirts.

In a statement, Cimatu condemned the action of the City PNP led by P/Col. Marion Balonglong as "totally unacceptable."

"It is totally unacceptable that these environmental enforcers who continue to perform their duties despite the COVID-19 pandemic have to suffer violence at the hands of the police, who should be assisting them in their operations," Cimatu said in a statement.

This developed as the city government announced Friday that Balonglong has already been relieved and replaced by a new city police chief.



According to city information officer and anti-crime task force head Richard Ligad, Balonglong had personally requested his relief and transfer.

"Nabanggit niya sa akin na siya na ang nagpa-relieve sa sarili niya. Ni-request niya na magpalipat na siya. Yun ang sabi niya sa akin," Ligad said.

Lawyer Arnel Pedrosa, city administrator, expressed dismay on the reported incident but reiterated that the city government would not be involved with the investigation.

"We are not happy, of course, and the city government will not tolerate any wrongdoing. Administratively, no jurisdiction kami kay Col. Balonglong," Pedrosa said.

"Nasa level na ng Philippine National Police (PNP) ang investigation so we will wait for the result," he added.

Neither the City PNP nor the City government have released a copy of Balonglong's relief order.

Ligad, when asked to comment on the allegations being thrown against Balonglong, maintained that he had a good working relationship with him.

"Nalulungkot tayo kasi sa ibang operasyon nakasama naman natin siya at maayos naman, sa operations, sa drugs, okay naman. Kaso sa environment, hindi ko masabi kasi may issue, pero sa ibang aspeto naman wala naman akong naging problema sa kanya," Ligad said.

Environment lawyers condemn incident

Members of the DENR team were "harassed, arrested and detained" by Balonglong and his men in the absence of a warrant and without citing any violation. Alvarez sustained wounds and bruises due to Balonglong's alleged beating.

The DENR Lawyers Guild Inc. (DENRLGI), in a separate statement, condemned the "unfortunate" incident citing that the PNP is supposed to be the DENR's partner in enforcing environmental laws in the province.

"What is more distressing is that this incident happened on June 10, the DENR's 33rd anniversary," said Atty. Camilo D. Garcia, president of (DENRLGI).

Disputed lands

Levi Evangelista, technical corrections officer II and information officer of the Iwahig Corrections Facility (ICF), confirmed that there were "illegal settlers" in the parcels of land, which the penal farm has legal claims to.

"Nakailang operations kami diyan at nakita naman natin how devastated 'yong area that's why ang magiging aksyon natin na bakuran 'yong buong territory ng Iwahig Penal Prison Farm (IPPF)," Evangelista said.

Evangelista stressed that the ICF is set to protect portions of the land after several disputes were raised.

"Babakuran na lang namin 'yong aming territory para ma-protektahan naman ito sa pagpasok ng mga illegal settlers. Nakakalbo ang kagubatan ng IPPF," Evangelista added.

Past controversy

Balonglong, former Las Piñas City Police chief, along with 36 members of his station's Drug Enforcement Unit (SDEU) were relieved from their posts by the National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) chief director Guillermo Eleazar in 2018 because of an abduction-extortion case from an arrested drug suspect.

DENR's Cimatu fumes as Balonglong "requests" own
relief as City PNP chief

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Balonglong is set to be replaced by P/Col. Sergio Vivar Jr., the chief of personnel management office in the PNP regional office. He is expected to arrive on Monday (June 15).

The incident

Balonglong was being accused of repeatedly kicking and punching at gunpoint one of the forest rangers, Roldan Alvarez, whom he accused of stealing galvanized iron sheets.

Three Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) foresters, four forest rangers, and one forest protection officer along with two barangay watchmen were conducting an investigation on the illegal occupation and massive mangrove cutting at Sitio Bucana when they were intercepted by Balonglong and his men.

The DENR team initially thought Balonglong's group was the police security they requested to assist them in their operation until they were suddenly subjected to full body searches and told to lie down on the ground.

After the body search, all 10 of them were ordered to board a police service vehicle which brought them to a vacant lot supposedly owned by Balonglong. The police chief made Alvarez kneel while he and his companions were being interrogated regarding the purpose of their visit to the mangrove site.

They were later brought to the police station in Barangay San Pedro where CENR officer Felizardo Cayatoc, who approved of the DENR operation, pleaded for their release.

Balonglong ordered their release following a long dialogue and after Cayatoc agreed to sign a document stating that the DENR employees were all in good mental and physical condition when they were turned over to him.

(With reports from Romar Miranda, Ruth Rodriguez, Jayra Joyce Taboada, and Celeste Anna Formoso)

DENR condemns illegal arrest, police brutality against environmental law enforcers in Palawan

By [Danielle Nakpil, CNN Philippines](#)

Published Jun 12, 2020 9:34:02 PM



Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, June 12) — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has denounced the reported illegal arrest and police brutality endured by a team of environmental law enforcers in the hands of Puerto Princesa City police on Wednesday.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said he is "furious" and demanding a "swift resolution of the case" involving Puerto Princesa City Police Director Col. Marion Balonglong and his men.

"It is totally unacceptable that these environmental enforcers who continue to perform their duties despite the COVID-19 pandemic have to suffer violence at the hands of the police, who should be assisting them in their operations," Cimatu said in a statement issued on Friday.

The Puerto Princesa City police director reportedly arrested and held at gunpoint eight employees of the DENR and two others, who were doing their field work at a coastal village at Barangay Iwahig in Puerto Princesa City, Palawan on June 10.

According to reports, the DENR personnel were conducting an investigation on the illegal occupation and massive mangrove cutting at Sitio Bucana when they were intercepted by Balonglong and his men.

Balonglong allegedly kicked and punched at gunpoint one of the forest rangers identified as Roldan Alvarez.

The environmentalists were reportedly brought later to the police station in Barangay San Pedro, and were released following a dialogue between Balonglong and Felizardo Cayatoc, an officer of the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO), who approved the DENR operation.

When queried about the incident, Philippine National Police spokesperson Brigadier General Bernard Banac told CNN Philippines that investigators are still obtaining an official report from the police regional office in MIMAROPA regarding the case.

Cimatu said he has forwarded the matter to Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo M. Año, who has supervisory authority over the PNP.

"As much as I'm furious at what happened to my men, I hope this incident won't affect the cordial relationship and collaborative partnership the DENR has with the PNP in the fight against environmental crime," Cimatu said.

Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/6/12/DENR-condemns-police-brutality-Palawan-.html>



The Palawan Star

8 hrs · 🌐



DENR - "It is totally unacceptable that these environmental enforcers who continue to perform their duties despite the COVID19 Pandemic have to suffer violence at the hands of the police, who should be assisting them in their operations"

Pahayag ni DENR Sec.Roy Cimatu, hinggil sa ilegal na pagaresto at pambubugbog umano ng sinibak na Hepe ng City PNP na si Col.Marion Balonglong.

Ipinahayag din Sec.Cimatu ang agarang resolusyon ng imbestigasyon hinggil sa insidente at desidido itong sampahan ng kaso ang mga sangkot na Pulis ng City PNP sa pangungina ni Col.Balonglong.

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LOOK || Narito ang pahayag ng DENR Lawyer's Guild Inc.,kung saan ay kinundina nito ang ilegal na pagaresto at ilegal na pagditine sa kanilang Forest Protection Officers sa Lungsod noong June 10,2020, ng City PNP sa pangunguna ng kanilang dating Hepe na ngayon ay sinibak na sa pwesto na si Col.Marion Balonglong.

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DENR LAWYERS GUILD, INC.

Visayas Avenue, Diliman, Quezon City

DENR LAWYERS GUILD, INC. CONDEMNS THE UNLAWFUL ARREST, ILLEGAL DETENTION OF FOREST PROTECTION OFFICERS IN PUERTO PRINCESA, PALAWAN AND UNLAWFUL OCCUPATION OF FOREST AREAS

The DENR Lawyers Guild, Inc. (DLGI) strongly condemns the unlawful arrest and illegal detention of the employees of the DENR Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) Puerto Princesa City, a representative from the City Government Bantay Bakawan, and an official from Brgy. Matahimik Resettlement Area, who were investigating the unlawful occupation and illegal cutting of mangrove trees at Sitio Bucana, Brgy. Iwahig, Puerto Princesa City, Palawan on June 10, 2020 by the members of the Philippine National Police (PNP).

The DENR Team was in the performance of its task in investigating the unlawful occupation of forestlands and cutting of mangrove trees when they were, without any warrant, accosted by the police officers led by Director of PNP Puerto Princesa Marion Balonglong. Despite introducing themselves as employees of the DENR and Puerto Princesa City Environmental and Natural Resources Office, the Team was subjected to full body search, ordered to drop on the ground for 10 minutes, and one of them received blows and kicks, and interrogated at gunpoint. The DENR Team was then brought to the PNP Station in Brgy. San Pedro where they were detained for hours before they were released.

It is unfortunate that the PNP is supposed to be the DENR's partner in enforcing environmental laws, and not its adversary or protector of violators of environmental laws. What is more distressing is that this incident happened on June 10, the DENR's 33rd Anniversary.

As an organization of lawyers advocating environmental justice, this attack against our own DENR employees and environmental defenders should not be countenanced. We call on the PNP to investigate the matter and cleanse its ranks of police law-breakers, unfitting to implement the laws. Making these abusers of power within the PNP and other law enforcement agencies accountable and getting rid of misfits will reinforce the rule of law to all. No one is above the law.

More than that, the DENR Lawyers Guild, Inc. extends its full support to DENR MIMAROPA Region and CENRO Puerto Princesa City to file the appropriate cases against those involved in the incident.

Today, as we celebrate the country's independence, we join the call to be truly independent and rid of corrupt officers. May we never cease to protect our Motherland and Mother Nature! Protection of the environment is a shared responsibility. Let us remain vigilant in protecting our home!

ATTY. CAMILO D. GARCIA
President
DENR Lawyers Guild Inc.

DENR LAWYERS GUILD, INC.

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Nambugbog na hepe pinasisibak sa DILG

June 12, 2020 @ 12:11 AM 1 day ago

Manila, Philippines – Nakatakdang sulatan ni Puerto Princesa Mayor Lucilo Bayron si Department of Interior and Local Government Sec. Eduardo Año, upang hilingin ang agarang pagsibak kay Puerto Princesa Police Chief Col. Marion Balonglong na nanakit at nanutok ng baril sa mga tauhan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources, tauhan ng city government at mga barangay tanod.

Nabatid na nagsagawa ng inspeksyon ang mga tauhan ng DENR-Community Environment and Natural Resources Office sa pamumuno ni Roldan Alvarez kasama ang mga tauhan ng city government at barangay dahil sa nakarating na impormasyon na mayroon umanong pinagpuputol na bakawan (Mangrove) sa Bucana, Brgy. Matahimik, Puerto Princesa City.

Habang nagsasagawa ng inspeksyon, bigla umanong dumating si Col. Balonglong na kasama ang mga tauhan nitong naka-full battle gear, agad umanong tinutukan ng baril ang mga nag-iinspeksyon sa nasabing lugar saka umano pinosasan, sinampal at tinadyakan si Alvarez ng naturang hepe.

Base sa panayam sa mga naging biktima ni Balonglong, galit na galit umano ang naturang hepe dahil siya umano mismo ang sumakop sa naturang lugar at nagpatanggal ng mga bakawan dito.

Magugunitang ipinagbabawal sa batas ang pagsira o pagputol sa bakawan nang walang permiso galing sa DENR.

Sa ginawang pagsisiyasat ng Remate, nabatid na hindi ito ang unang pagkakataon na nasabit sa aberya ang nasabing opisyal.

Noong taong 2018 ay nasibak umano ito sa Las Piñas Police Station makaraang makaladkad ang pangalan nito sa isang operasyon ng droga na naging sanhi ng kanyang pagkakasibak bilang hepe.

Kaugnay nito, inihahanda na rin ng DENR Region 4B ang mga kaukulang kaso na isasampa laban kay Balonglong sa ginawa nito sa kanilang tauhan. **Remate Reportorial Team**

Source: https://remate.ph/nambugbog-na-hepe-pinasisibak-sa-dilg/?fbclid=IwAR0p-W_NGoPEcC_hsPjFHIa5xmviNBYbTdFvhbGEBZzWOzrqKmlsTHIFuns

Ang DENR at ang COVID pandemic

By [Al G. Pedroche](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon)

- June 13, 2020 - 12:00am

MAY mabuti ring ibinubunga ang global COVID-19 pandemic sa environment, ayon kay Department of environment and Natural Resources Sec. Roy Cimatu.

Sa pansamantalang paghinto sa operasyon ng transportasyon at industriya, malaki ang nabawas sa level ng carbon dioxide na sumisira sa ozone layer at kumonti ang basura ng naitatapon sa mga daluyan ng tubig sa pansamantalang pagtigil sa operasyon ng mga restaurants. Ayon kay Cimatu, luminis ang hanging ating nilalanghap at ang ginagamit nating tubig. Pati ang wildlife ay bumuti rin ang kalagayan.

Ani Cimatu, “The stay-at-home orders and other restrictions have somehow allowed our environment to quietly return to its natural pristine state, and we hope these positive environmental changes will form part of the new normal.”

Ngunit gaano man katagal umiral ang pandemya, hindi puwedeng panatilihin ang paghinto ng industriya at transportasyon na unti-unti nang ibinabalik sa kapakanan ng ekonomiya at mga taumbayan na dapat maghanap-buhay.

Tulad ng iba pang organisasyon, sinabi ni Cimatu na hindi maglulubay ang DENR sa mandato nito bilang tagapangalaga ng kapaligiran at likas na yaman. Gayunman, may mga modification sa pagpatupad ng mga programa nito. Tulad halimbawa ng pagdaraos ng DENR ng taunang Philippine Environment Month sa buwang ito na ginaganap “on-line,” dahil pa rin sa banta ng COVID-19.

Ani Cimatu, ito ay magandang oportunidad para makapagbulay ang taumbayan sa halaga ng malinis na kapaligiran lalo na sa panahong ito na ipinaiiral na ang new normal.

Pagbuti ng kalidad ng tubig sa Boracay, ikinatuwa ni

June 13, 2020

TITLE: Cimatu

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Pagbuti ng kalidad ng tubig sa Boracay, ikinatuwa ni Cimatu

June 12, 2020 @ 11:41 AM 22 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Sa pagbubukas ng Boracay para sa mga lokal na turista mula Western Visayas sa Hunyo 16, mahigpit na binabantayan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources ang kalidad ng tubig sa isla.

Ikinatuwa ni DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu ang kasalukuyang kalidad ng tubig ng Boracay.

“Malinis na kung maka 100. Kung mas mababa yan sa 100, mas malinis, so ang average na nakukuha ko dito ay 1.0, from February. Pinakataas lang dito ay 20, so yan ang standard ngayon ng water quality dito sa Boracay. Wala na yung cesspool, gumanda na lalo pa na walang nag si-swimming,” pahayag niya sa isang briefing.

Sa usapin ng drainage at connectivity ng sewers sa isla, sinabi ni DENR Director at General Manager of Boracay Inter-Agency Rehabilitation Management Group Natividad Bernardino, na mula sa unang araw ng pagsasara ng isla, ni-require nila sa lahat ng commercial establishments na kumonekta sa sewerage system o magkaroon ng sariling sewerage treatment plant (STP).

Aniya, sa bahagi ng Department of Public Works and Highway (DPWH), nasa 70 porsyentong kumpleto na ang ahensya habang nasa 60 porsyento naman nang kumpleto ang Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA), sa pagpapahayag niya ng pag-asang matatapos ang lahat ng pangunahing structure projects sa pagtatapos ng kanilang isang taong extended term.

“Ang kailangan namin sa mga houses, kailangan lagyan ng mga clusterized STP para connected na rin sila but so far lahat ng commercial establishments hindi pwedeng mag operate kung hindi sila connected or kung wala silang sewage treatment,” aniya.

Ayon naman kay TIEZA Regulatory Office Director Darren Fernandez, intensyon nilang makumpleto ang sewerage connections para sa residential houses, ngunit problema nito kung saan nila ilalagay ang sewer line.

“For Boracay water, (for) residential only about 11 percent lang ang sewerred, (for) commercial, ang sewerred ay 60, so ang total, 24 percent ang sewerred, pero kung volume double sya, its about 48 percent ng volume ang nati-treat.”

Pagbuti ng kalidad ng tubg sa Boracay, ikinatuwa ni

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TITLE: Cimat

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Para naman sa Boracay forest lands, sinabi ni Cimat na sa ngayon, marami pa ring nakatayong istruktura sa lugar.

Sinabi nitong binigyan na ng ultimatum ang mga may-ari ng istrukturang ito na alisin ang mga itinayo sa mga lugar, ngunit dahil sa pandemya, ipinagpaliban ang pagpapatupad nito.

“They should really make their presence there legal by making an appeal para ma-legalize yung presence nila otherwise ma-demolish talaga yung kanilang building,” ani Cimat. **RNT/MM**

Reopening to help Boracay recoup PHP12-B loss from Covid-19

By Gail Momblan June 12, 2020, 5:19 pm



REOPENING. The world-famous Boracay Island prepares for reopening on June 16. Malay Mayor Frolibar Bautista on Friday (June 12, 2020) said reopening the island would help gradually recover the estimated PHP12-billion losses incurred due to the Covid-19 crisis. *(PNA file photo by Gail Momblan)*

ILOILO CITY – The approved reopening of Boracay to tourists from Western Visayas starting June 16 will greatly help lift the economy and the lives of locals, the mayor of Malay town in Aklan province said Friday.

Malay has lost about PHP12 billion after it was closed to tourists due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) health crisis, Mayor Frolibar Bautista told the Philippine News Agency (PNA).

The closure of the PHP47-billion industry had a domino effect that caused unemployment and loss of income.

“The town has lost its income. The labor sector and the private sector were badly hit,” Bautista said, adding that the town has been preparing for the island’s reopening to tourists.

Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat said accommodation establishments on the island would have to submit a letter of intent to operate.

As of Thursday, the government has received 90 letters of intent out of some 390 accredited establishments, Bautista said.

The local government unit will also ensure that tourists have pre-booked their hotels to avoid a surge in the number of visitors.

“One cannot enter Boracay without pre-booking. Tourists will be screened at the Caticlan port and they will be required (a) confirmation voucher (from the accommodation establishment where they will stay),” he said.

Bautista also assured that minimum health protocols, such as wearing face masks and observing strict physical distancing and proper hygiene would be practiced.

Since the global outbreak of the disease, Malay has one confirmed case who had already recovered, he said, assuring that the island is free from the virus.

“We will be opening for Region 6 (Western Visayas). Boracay is not only ours. It belongs to Region 6. We should love it as the tourism industry can help us a lot,” Bautista said, thanking the people for their cooperation in making the quarantine protocols successful.

“We are happy because, in spite of the happenings, the cooperation of our locals helped us achieve the objectives. We are surpassing the problem on Covid-19,” he said. *(PNA)*

Boracay opens to WV tourists on June 16

posted June 12, 2020 at 07:15 pm

by [PNA](#)

The Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) has approved the reopening of Boracay to tourists from Western Visayas starting June 16.

This was announced by Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu, citing the island's readiness to accept local travelers.

"The local government (of Aklan) passed a resolution before the BIATF today, the task force approved the recommendation of the local government unit (LGU) of the opening of Boracay for tourism effective June 16 this year but will only be applicable to tourists coming from Western Visayas," he told reporters during a BIATF-hosted virtual presser.

Among the factors considered in the reopening was the progress of Aklan in controlling the coronavirus infections, said Interior Secretary Eduardo Año.

"Boracay is zero coronavirus disease, in fact, the whole Aklan. They've had positive cases who are returning Filipinos, but these cases have been managed already," he said in Filipino.

While tourism resumes, Año said restrictions such as curfew may still be imposed within the discretion of LGU. "They can still impose curfew under MGCQ (modified general community quarantine)."

The BIATF has yet to enumerate the tourism activities allowed on the island but the general idea is anchored on "no contact" movements. Those below 21 years old and above 60 years old would also be denied entry in compliance with the existing MGCQ guidelines.

With Boracay under the "new normal", Tourism chief Bernadette Romulo-Puyat said the same protocols applied for MGCQ areas will serve as rules for hotel operations.

Under said guidelines, accommodation establishments are required to impose stringent measures for physical distancing.

All hotels in Boracay had been accredited by the Department of Tourism (DOT) following its previous six-month closure but Romulo-Puyat said they would have to submit a letter of intent to operate in the reopening.

"We are just waiting for the letter of intent. We are ready to give certificates to operate to all the hotels. It's also good news that there are zero-COVID cases in Boracay for more than a month... Ready na ready na actually ang Boracay and Aklan (Boracay and Aklan are actually ready [to accept guests])," she said.

She also hailed the protocols being set in place at the Bolabog Hospital as well as the nearly finished COVID-19 testing laboratory in Aklan.

"Their protocols upon entry are good so we are quite excited to showcase Boracay again not only of sustainable tourism but (of being) COVID-free," she told reporters.



Boracay, bubuksan na sa mga turista sa W. Visayas sa June 16

June 12, 2020 @ 9:52 AM 24 hours ago

Aklan – Papayagan na ang Boracay na tumanggap ng turista na magmumula sa mga probinsya sa Western Visayas sa susunod na linggo, ayon sa Boracay Inter-agency Task Force.

“The local government here, Governor [Florencio] Miraflores and Mayor [Floribar] Bautista filed a resolution before the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force today and the task force approved the recommendation of the opening of Boracay for tourism starting June 16 this year, and will only be applicable for tourist coming from Western Visayas,” lahad ni Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu.

Pinayagan na rin aniya ang mga residente sa Aklan na makapaglangoy sa beach noon pang June 1.

Hindi naman pahihintulutan na makapag-travel dito ang 60-anyos pataas at 21-anyos pababa.

Samantala, sinabi naman ni DILG Undersecretary Epimaco Densing III na hindi papayagan ang lahat ng aktibidad sa Boracay ay papayagan dahil pananatilihin pa rin ang social distancing.

“Kung banana boat, it may not be allowed, particularly beach activities,” giit ni Densing. **RNT/FGDC**

Boracay gagawing modelo sa muling pagbubukas ng operasyon – DOT

By [Bombo Radyo Kalibo](#)

-June 12, 2020 | 10:57 AM



Boracay island (photo courtesy from Bombo Ness Cayabyab-Mercado)

KALIBO, Aklan – Balak ng Department of Tourism (DOT) na gawing modelo ang isla ng Boracay sa muling pagbubukas ng operasyon ng turismo sa buong bansa.

Ayon kay Aklan Governor Florencio Miraflores, bumilib umano si Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat sa paghahanda ng isla lalo na sa pagpapatupad ng health protocols at maayos na paglabas at pagpasok ng mga turista sa ginawang inspeksyon.

Sa ginawang pulong kahapon sa isang hotel sa Boracay, binigyan na ng green light ng Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) ang isla na tumanggap ng mga turista simula sa Hunyo 16, ngunit pawang mga taga-Western Visayas pa lang muna ang papayagan.

Dagdag pa ni Miraflores, maliban sa domestic tourists ay mangunguna rin aniya ang Boracay sa pagtanggap ng mga dayuhang turistang magmumula sa mga bansang “cleared” na sa coronavirus disease (COVID-19) dahil sa kakayahan ng Kalibo International Airport na tumanggap ng mga malalaking eroplano.

Sa kabila nito, hinikayat niya ang mga mamamayan na patuloy na maging maingat kahit na niluwagan na ang mga travel restrictions na layuning muling mapalakas ang sector ng turismo.

DENR bares initiatives in fight against COVID-19

By Pilar S. Mabaquiao Published on June 12, 2020

SAN JOSE, Antique, June 12 (PIA) - - Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer Andres Untal shared the initiatives of DENR-Antique in the fight against coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Untal said at the radio program PIA News Service of the Philippine Information Agency that during the lockdown period or Enhanced Community Quarantine wherein people have to stay at home and adopt alternative work mode, DENR employees have made their time productive.



"The office has initiated a lot of activities in partnership with the Philippine Red Cross in the production of face shields for the frontliners," he said.

Their office also collaborated with the University of Antique for the collection of containers for hand sanitizers, hand dips and footbaths solutions.

The employees of DENR-Antique also donated 10 percent of their salary to fund various endeavors relating to the fight against COVID-19 and they have generated the total amount of P272, 695.

The collected amount was used to buy protective equipment for the frontliners and purchase of food packs for the upland and indigenous communities affected by the pandemic.

Food packs were given to residents from the upland barangays who were required to stay at home due to the community quarantine.

Untal added that in partnership with the Philippine Red Cross, DENR also established communication system in Pandan quarantine areas to provide access to and improve communication linkages in northern Antique border.

DENR also provided a VHF external antenna for far flung barangays in Pandan, Antique so they can have a means of communication facility to connect with their local disaster risk reduction and management office.

Meanwhile, he reminded everyone that despite the hard life encountered by the people because of the pandemic, it should also be considered as an opportunity to further appreciate the environment and adopt to the "new normal" which should be the "better normal". (JBG/psm/PIA6 Antique)

Source: <https://pia.gov.ph/news/articles/1044631>

Antique environment month celebration feature arts,
essay tilt

TITLE :

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Antique environment month celebration features arts, essay tilt

By Pilar S. Mabaquiao Published on June 12, 2020

SAN JOSE, Antique, June 12 (PIA) - - The province of Antique joins the rest of the nation in the observance of Environment Month with the theme "Protect Nature, Sustain our Future #WeHealNature4OurFuture".

Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer Andres Untal said during the PIA news service radio program that the celebration in Antique focuses on arts and essay writing contest as a campaign for the care and protection of the environment, since taking care of the earth is everyone's responsibility.



Since mass gathering of people is restricted in compliance with the mandatory COVID-19 health protocol, DENR Antique devises activities in adherence to the safety measures.

The Poster Making Contest with the concept of Mother Earth, COVID-19 and Me, Essay Writing Contest: The joy and the pain of being a frontliner, Virtual Environmental Quiz Contest and Photo Exhibit are among the activities of PENRO Antique to highlight this year's celebration in the province, he said.

He added that there will also be a painting contest for children ages 10-18 years old in relation to the celebration of the Coral Triangle Initiative Day.

The mechanics of the contest can be found at the DENR-PENRO Antique Facebook page.

PENRO is urging Antiqueño artists and writers to join the different contest categories to showcase their talents and express their care for the environment.

On the part of DENR employees, they will also conduct clean-up drive and tree planting activities.

He also enjoined the people to sustain the gains earned during the community quarantine by promoting sustainable lifestyle, adopting food security measures and complying with the guidelines on proper waste disposal especially on garbage generated relating to the fight against coronavirus disease.

TITLE: Antique environment month celebration feature arts,
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Meanwhile, the theme of this year's celebration is taken from the global theme of World Environment Day which is "Time for Nature".

In 1998, then President Corazon C. Aquino signed Proclamation No. 237 declaring the observance of the Philippine Environment Month. (JBG/psm/PIA6 Antique)

6 endangered green sea turtles released

Published 1 hour ago on June 13, 2020 05:20 AM

By **Jonas Reyes**



AFTER ensuring that they don't have injuries, the trapped green sea turtles were released back into the sea. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF DENR

BALER, Aurora — Six endangered female green sea turtles were released into the sea of this town by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Friday.

The releasing of these endangered marine mammals is part of the annual celebration of the Philippine Environment Month.

According to DENR Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) chief Merliza Torre, these green sea turtles were accidentally trapped in a fish corral owned by a local resident in Ditinagyan coastal village.

“Upon rescue, we immediately examined the turtles and found no injury incurred among them,” Torre said. The rescued animals were measured with having an average carapace length of 42 centimeters.

After further inspection by the CENRO of Casiguran, they deemed the animals are in good condition and were released with help from the Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office of Casiguran, Aurora State College of Technology and Samahang Bantay Kalikasan ng Casiguran.

Mary Jane Aragon, forest technician of CENRO Casiguran, explained that turtles were tagged to primarily identify them as “individuals.”

She said this will provide more information on the number of green sea turtles in the area, their habitat residency, movement patterns, and other information that are vital in the marine turtle conservation.

Torre said that since January of 2020, they have released 53 green sea turtles in the waters of Casiguran. Forty-four of these were tagged, while the other nine turtles were untagged due to immaturity.

“Our green sea turtles are important to our ecosystem. Their existence is an important indicator of a balanced and healthy marine life,” Torre said, urging local residents to help the DENR in protecting marine species and other wildlife.

The CENRO chief urged the public to report activities, especially illegal trade of wildlife, to the DENR.

Of the seven species of marine turtles in the world, five of them are found nesting in the coastal towns of Morong in Bataan, San Antonio in Zambales and in the coastal areas of Aurora.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/06/13/6-endangered-green-sea-turtles-released/>

Benguet mines lose P300M due to COVID-19;

June 13, 2020

TITLE: Baguio braces for ecozone retrenchments

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Benguet mines lose P300M due to COVID-19; Baguio braces for ecozone retrenchments

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 05:00 AM June 13, 2020



STEADY The Padcal gold operations of Philex Mining Corp. were unhampered during the Luzon lockdown that froze all industries, including several mines in Benguet. One of the country's oldest mine projects, the Philex Padcal mine was upgraded in 2013, as shown in this photo. —EV ESPIRITU

BAGUIO CITY—The country's oldest mines, which operate in Benguet province, lost almost P300 million in revenues and investments when Luzon was forced to lock down due to the new coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources here said on Wednesday.

Of four mining projects, only Philex Mining Corp. continued processing gold and copper ore when most industries were shuttered following the enhanced community quarantine in Luzon in March, Fay Apil, Cordillera director of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), told the Inquirer.

Apil said Philex enforced a total lockdown preventing anyone from entering or exiting its Padcal mine. Philex was established in 1955.

Managers at the Pacdal mine instituted local quarantine rules to prevent the transmission of COVID-19 while workers continued with their tasks, she said.

Gradual resumption

When Benguet shifted to modified general community quarantine on June 1, other mining projects gradually resumed.

These projects were those of the Itogon-Suyoc Resources Inc. (Isri), Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. (LCMC) and Benguet Corp., the oldest mine established in 1907.

Their combined losses of P278.8 million included the impact of the shutdown on community and environmental protection programs as well as other obligations to their host governments, MGB data showed.

LCMC reported the biggest revenue loss of almost P220 million, while Isri reported a loss of P75 million.

Benguet mines lose P300M due to COVID-19;

June 13, 2020

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A total of 1,915 miners of Benguet Corp.'s Acupan project were affected by the lockdown while 214 Isri workers lost their jobs, according to the MGB.

The Acupan miners were hired by Benguet Corp. contractors, which had a sharing deal with the company for ore they were able to extract, Apil said. Staying afloat

The Baguio government is also faced with retrenchments at the Baguio City Economic Zone (BCEZ).

Mayor Benjamin Magalong said a top manufacturer at the BCEZ was retrenching 508 workers to remain afloat following the lockdown. The manufacturer, one of the top three performing companies globally, "broke the record last year by reaching 2 million production hours." Its employees were given huge benefits in December last year.

"Then came COVID-19, so two weeks ago their manager informed me that he was forced to retrench 508 workers," Magalong said at a separate news briefing.

He said most business process outsourcing companies, which operated during the quarantine, could take some of the retrenched workers.

"The quarantine set them back by 10 years, and it will take them another two years before they can slowly pick up again," he said of companies operating at the BCEZ.

This year, the Philippine Economic Zone Authority, which manages the ecozone here, paid the city government P60 million, which is below the average P200 million it received from ecozone proceeds. —VINCENT CABREZA



275,000 Kilong Isda Namatay Sa Laguna De Bay

Last updated Jun 11, 2020

Tinamaan ng fish kill ang may 90,000 ektaryang Laguna de Bay.

Ang naturang lawa ang pangunahing pinagkukunan ng freshwater fish ng Metro Manila.

Ayon sa Laguna Lake Development Authority noong Martes, nasa 275 na tonelada o 275,000 kilo ng tilapia at karpa ang namatay sa fish kill na nagsimula noong nakaraang buwan.

Umaabot ang halaga ng nawalang isda sa P11.5 milyon.

Nag-report din ng fish kill ang mga fish pen owner sa Talim sa Binangonan, Rizal kung saan daang tilapia ang nakitang palutang-lutang na sa katubigan. (IS)

DENR probe urged on El Nido reclamation

By [Eireene Jairee Gomez](#)

June 13, 2020

PALAWAN-BASED Environmental Legal Assistance Center (ELAC) urged the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to conduct an investigation into the alleged use and occupation of untitled lands and ancestral domains in El Nido, Palawan by a scion of the Zobel de Ayala clan.

The group claimed the reclamation activities, allegedly directed by Beatriz Zobel de Ayala and her associates, have not gone through the appropriate consultations and environmental impact studies, and have led to, among others, the destruction of mangrove areas in El Nido, Palawan.

“There is growing concern that the entry and occupation of these entitled properties in protected areas and in ancestral domains in the provinces of Palawan will continue unless the DENR will intervene and initiate the appropriate legal actions,” said lawyer Grizelda Mayo-Anda, executive director of ELAC, in a June 5, 2020 letter submitted to Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu.

The group also claimed the DENR City Environment & Natural Resources Office and Protected Area Management Board offices were aware of these developments “but have not done any concrete actions to address these problems.”

In an interview with The Manila Times, DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda admitted the DENR main office had not yet taken any action regarding the alleged reclamation activities of Zobel de Ayala’s group as the agency was still “studying” the matter to identify if there were violations committed and would immediately launch an investigation over the issue once the plans were finalized.

Felipe Valones, chieftain of indigenous people’s (IP) group Nagkakaisang Tribu Tandolanon Barangay Pancol, said several large century-old trees were cut in Sitio Maypa, Barangay Pancol, Taytay, Palawan.

The reports were submitted to Clarissa Pador, protected area superintendent for Malampaya Sound Protected Landscape and Seascape, who vowed to inspect the area and check if there were century-old trees that were cut in the site.

But she clarified that private individuals could apply for special permits to use a part of a protected area as long as they pay annual rent to the government.

Malampaya Sound Protected Landscape and Seascape covers 200,115 hectares of both aquatic and terrestrial environment with diverse ecosystems in Taytay. It was declared a marine protected area in 2000.

Meanwhile, ELAC expressed optimism that the DENR would closely look into the issue and prove that environmental protection and conservation is its utmost priority.

When sought for comment, Zobel de Ayala, through her counsel lawyer Christopher Louie Ocampo, belied all the accusations against her.

“While we received word of a complaint filed by the Chieftain of the Indigenous Peoples about her alleged cutting of a tree in the area, this complaint has since been retracted. The complaint was not made on behalf of or in representation of the Indigenous Peoples in Taytay, Palawan,” said Ocampo.

The lawyer added that Zobel de Ayala’s activities in Taytay are with the “full knowledge, consent, and participation of the [IP] communities” in the area.

Gov't hints keeping GCQ in place

Published 6 hours ago on June 13, 2020 12:07 AM

By **Francis Wakefield**



Malacañang on Friday dropped broad hints the quarantine restrictions set up over the National Capital Region (NCR) and places like Cebu and Davao will likely remain in place when President Duterte announces the decision on Monday.

This is based on latest reports showing the number of COVID-19 infections has not been convincingly arrested and has in fact been growing and forecast by experts to expand from more than 24,000 at the moment to over 40,000 by the end of the month.

Health officials under Department of Health (DoH) Secretary Francisco Duque and colleagues at the Inter-agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) consistently maintained that adjustments in quarantine restrictions would always be “data-driven” and science based as millions of lives are at stake.

Equally at stake is the economic health of the \$356 billion economy already forecast to slip into a period of recession because of non-economic restraints.

Malacañang acknowledged the continued rise in COVID-19 cases does not lend kindly to the hoped-for end of socioeconomic restrictions imposed on businesses and the population under general community quarantine (GCQ).

“Well, I would say it does not inspire relaxation. But the announcement, as I said, is subject to appeal and will be announced by the President” himself on Monday afternoon, presidential spokesman Harry Roque said.

There are those who anticipate an easing of restrictions when the strictures under GCQ at present is finally eased to modified GCQ and those who fear a reversion into the more restrictive modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) that only recently ended.

Roque also acknowledged the IATF has already taken a position and has made its recommendation known to President Duterte.

“The IATF has made its recommendation to the President,” Roque said in a broadcast interview Friday morning, without detailing any of it.

What is known is that COVID-19 cases in the Philippines rose to 24,175 after the DoH logged 443 additional cases.

The University of the Philippines previously released a study projecting the coronavirus disease infections in the country hitting 24,000 by mid-June should government ease up on the quarantine restrictions.

Roque would not want to second guess President Duterte, emphasizing only that whatever the decision might be would be based on immutable data.

Nevertheless, he likewise said the question of lifting or keeping the quarantine restrictions in place has to be balanced by need for the economy to breath again and for businesses to pick up where they left off.

He reiterated hard data is important in decision-making and it could be that the UP experts are correct in their forecast.

“We have acknowledged before that the infection numbers will rise as long as there is no vaccine against the virus. But we are concerned more of the country’s capacity to provide medical intervention for those who are stricken versus the need to reignite the economy, for people to engage in productive labor again because while we may not die of COVID-19 we might perish from hunger for the lack of fruitful endeavor,” Roque said in Filipino.

According to the presidential spokesman, the IATF has made the correct decision to reopen the economy, albeit on limited capacity and said the death rate from the infection is single digit only and that most of the sick were mild cases that allowed the health infrastructure to provide adequate critical care.

Roque, at the same time, advised those who leak documents from the IATF to let the President announce the decision himself as nothing is final until Duterte bares it himself.

Some areas in PH may be under ‘new normal’ by July — Año

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

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 02:03 PM June 12, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — Some areas in the country may shift to “new normal” by July, which means coronavirus lockdown is lifted but minimum health standards are still in place, Interior Secretary Eduardo Año said Friday.

“Ang MGCQ (modified general community quarantine), kapag bababaan mo na, ito ‘yung tinatawag natin na bagong normal o new normal pero sa tingin natin (government) sa kabuuan ng June, wala pang lugar ang ready na pumunta sa bagong normal kasi kailangan nang masusing pag-aaral pa diyan dahil yung paligid niya may mga cases pa rin,” Año, vice chair of Inter Agency Task Force (IATF) on the Management of Emerging Infectious Disease, said over dzBB when asked about the fate of community quarantine in the Philippines.

(If you downgrade the MGCQ, it will shift to a new normal but we think that in the whole of June, there are no areas yet ready for the new normal because we need to evaluate as some areas still have cases.)

“Sa tingin natin sa July pa magkakaroon ng new normal (We think that some areas will be under new normal by July),” he added.

Año, however, did not identify the areas that could be placed under the new normal.

Under new normal, minimum public health rules will still be imposed, while the coronavirus outbreak remains without a cure or vaccine.

[President Rodrigo Duterte](#) will have a meeting with the IATF on June 15 to decide whether to lift, extend, or modify coronavirus quarantine in the country.

Currently, Metro Manila, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Pangasinan, Albay, Western Visayas, Cebu City, Mandaue City, and Davao City are currently under [GCQ](#) while the rest of the country is under MGCQ until June 15.

As of Thursday, coronavirus cases in the Philippines soared to [24,175](#), of which, 1,036 have died while 5,165 have recovered from the disease.

EDV

DILG chief sees ‘likely’ extension of GCQ in Metro Manila

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

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 11:03 AM June 12, 2020



(RICHARD A. REYES)

MANILA, Philippines — Interior Secretary Eduardo Año on Friday bared that Metro Manila may most likely remain under general community quarantine (GCQ) status after June 15, 2020.

“Para sa akin 50/50 pero mas lamang mag-re-remain ‘yan (Metro Manila) sa GCQ,” Año, vice chair of government’s inter agency task force on coronavirus efforts, said in a CNN Philippines interview.

Año also warned that shifting from GCG to modified GCQ may lead to a significant increase in COVID-19 infections.

“If we are going to relax quarantine measures now, we may see a spike in cases,” he said.

As of Thursday afternoon, COVID-19 cases in the Philippines soared to 24,175.

Año said mayors in the National Capital Region will meet on Saturday to discuss their recommendations to the Inter Agency Task Force (IATF) on the Management of Emerging Infectious Disease.

President Rodrigo Duterte is scheduled to meet with IATF members on Monday, June 15 and decide on quarantine restrictions in Metro Manila and other parts of the country.

Metro Manila, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Pangasinan, Albay, Western Visayas, Cebu City, Mandaue City, and Davao City are currently under GCQ while the rest of the country is under MGCQ until June 15.

GSG

Metro Manila likely to remain under GCQ – Año

By [Melissa Luz Lopez, CNN Philippines](#)

Published Jun 12, 2020 10:37:18 AM

Updated Jun 12, 2020 5:23:00 PM



Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, June 12) – Interior Secretary Eduardo Año thinks it may be best to keep Metro Manila under general community quarantine after June 15 to hold off a spike in COVID-19 infections, but Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana personally prefers shifting to a modified GCQ.

The two officials, both part of the inter-agency task force in charge of the government's COVID-19 response, spoke ahead of President Rodrigo Duterte's decision that will be announced also on June 15.

Speaking to CNN Philippines' The Source on Friday, Año admitted that the recent daily rise in the number of confirmed cases do not bode well for a relaxation of quarantine rules.

"Para sa akin, 50-50 pero mas lamang, magre-remain 'yan (Metro Manila) sa GCQ," Año said Friday.

[Translation: For me, there's a 50-50 chance but it's more likely for Metro Manila to remain under GCQ]

There are 12,916 COVID-19 cases in Metro Manila, with 83 new cases reported on Thursday.

Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque also said Thursday that latest COVID-19 cases reported in the capital do not "[inspire relaxation](#)" of existing quarantine protocols.

Metro Manila was among the first regions in the country to go on lockdown, being the epicenter of the local outbreak. Most businesses went dark since mid-March until restrictions were eased in May to allow more firms to operate.

The capital region was downgraded to GCQ on June 1, which meant an easing of stay-at-home rules for workers although outside travel is still restricted.

"Ang aking pananaw kasi, although i-compare mo 'yung trend, mas mababa 'yung numero kung overall pero wala pa siyang downtrend eh, patuloy pa ring may mga fresh or new cases," the Cabinet official added. "If we are going to relax it now, baka mabulunan o madapa. Baka kung okay na tayo pero dahil niluwagan mo, bumalik na naman at magkaroon ng mas marami (na kaso)."

[Translation: In my view, although you can see that the number of cases are lower overall, there's still no downtrend since we continue to see fresh or new cases. If we are going to relax it now, we might break the progress. If we're doing okay and you ease the rules, we might fall back and see even more cases.]

Meanwhile, during the regular Laging Handa virtual briefing, Lorenzana, who also heads the National Task Force Against COVID-19, said he personally prefers that the capital region be placed under modified GCQ. But the level of quarantine restrictions will still depend on the situation in the coming days, he added.

"[A]lthough halos lahat kami ay gusto nang pumunta sa MGCQ, (pero) depende pa rin yun sa mga darating na araw, kung ano yung development ng infection sa Metro Manila," he explained

[Translation: Although most of us already want (Metro Manila) to shift to MGCQ, it still depends on what will happen in the coming days and how the infection will be developing within Metro Manila.]

[Translation: In my view, although you can see that the number of cases are lower overall, there's still no downtrend since we continue to see fresh or new cases. If we are going to relax it now, we might break the progress. If we're doing okay and you ease the rules, we might fall back and see even more cases.]

Modified GCQ would allow up to 75 percent capacity for establishments.

Año said it will still depend on the President's decision expected on Monday, but added that the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases is currently consulting mayors and governors regarding the fate of various local government units for June 16 onward.

The IATF is focusing on Metro Manila, Cebu City, and provinces in regions 2, 3, and 4-A, the official said.

Metro Manila mayors will also meet on Saturday to firm up their recommendation to the IATF, which will be a basis for their suggestion to the President come their Monday meeting. The DILG chief added that Metro Manila had a "unique" setup since local officials have long asked that they be treated as one unit and subject to one quarantine classification only.

Año noted that Cebu City also remains a big concern for the task force, as it has already outnumbered the COVID-19 case tally in Quezon City, the largest in the country in terms of land area.

"Ang nakikita natin ay hindi maganda ang numero, kaya kailangan ay pag-aralan natin... Ang titingnan natin, gaano ba kapuno ang mga ospital diyan sa Cebu City? Kaya pa ba nila kung sakaling magtuloy-tuloy umakyat?," he added, noting that COVID-19 national task force chief implementer Carlito Galvez, Jr. and his deputy BCDA President Vince Dizon are inspecting facilities there.

[Translation: We're seeing that the numbers are not good so we need to study it better. We're checking how full are hospitals in Cebu City. Can they handle more patients in cases the number of infections continue to rise?]

Meanwhile, the official pointed out that Quezon province appears better off compared to the rest of Calabarzon with "very few cases."

There are 24,175 confirmed COVID-19 cases in the country as of Thursday afternoon, of which 17,974 are active cases. Some 5,165 patients have recovered while 1,036 died from the disease.

Virus, economy at core of Duterte-Xi convo

Published 6 hours ago on June 13, 2020 12:05 AM

By **Francis Wakefield**



President Rodrigo Roa Duterte talks on the phone with People's Republic of China President Xi Jinping at the Presidential Guest House in Panacan, Davao City on 11 June 2020. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF MALACAÑANG

Philippine President Duterte and Chinese President Xi Jinping committed to work together on Friday in fighting the coronavirus disease as part of global efforts to limit and contain the spread of the virus.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said the commitment was shared by the two leaders following President Duterte's telephone conversation with Xi Jinping Thursday night which lasted for 38 minutes.

Roque said the two leaders discussed progress in combating COVID-19 and their strategies to restart their respective economies.

He said the President mentioned to his Chinese counterpart the need for cooperation in clinical trials for the COVID-19 vaccine development and underscored the importance of making such vaccine accessible and affordable to all countries.

President Xi assured President Duterte of his country's commitment to make the vaccine available for all, adding that the Philippines, as a friendly neighbor, would certainly be a priority.

"Both leaders also took the occasion to review Philippine-China relations, emphasizing the friendship of the two countries and the significant increase in mutual cooperation in a wide range of areas," Roque said.

Chief of Presidential Protocol and Presidential Assistant on Foreign Affairs Robert Borje, said the two leaders discussed progress in their respective fight against COVID-19 and crucial strategies to restart economies under the new normal.

Borje said President Duterte received President Xi's full support in ensuring supply chain connectivity, particularly in critical medical supplies and equipment, promoting the free flow of goods and resuming and completing priority infrastructure cooperation projects in the Philippines.

President Xi, meanwhile, expressed his gratitude for Manila's support for China's own fight against COVID-19, including the Philippines goodwill donation to the city of Wuhan, describing this as acts of kindness that shall be returned many times more.

“The two leaders likewise reviewed Philippines-China relations, noting the value of the friendship and the significantly increasing cooperation in wide areas of mutual interest,” Borje said.

During their conversation, Borje said both leaders expressed appreciation for each other’s warmly written messages on the occasion of the 45th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations.

“The exchange of letters demonstrated shared commitment to strengthen comprehensive strategic cooperation and articulated the resolve to uphold peace, stability, prosperity and principles of international law, including the rule of law,” Borje said.

“President Xi likewise extended warm wishes to President Duterte and the Filipino people on the occasion of the 122nd anniversary of Philippine Independence,” he said.

LATEST

COVID-19 calls for gallantry, unity — Rody

Published 22 hours ago on June 12, 2020 08:51 AM

By **TDT**



PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte

President Rodrigo Duterte on Friday, 12 June, led Filipinos across the nation and all over the world in commemorating the 122nd anniversary of the proclamation of Philippine independence. In his Independence Day message, the President said that the occasion calls for all Filipinos to remember “our forefathers” who fought for freedom against tyranny.

“Today, we honor them for their bravery, heroism, and sacrifice, as well as we thank them for the gifts of democracy and freedom,” Mr. Duterte said.

“As we wage united battle against Covid-19, we now have the opportunity to demonstrate that we possess the same gallantry of spirit and the nobility of character as the heroes of our past,” he added.

The President enjoined the nation to “move forward with courage, hope, and optimism as we overcome this pandemic.”

“Mabuhay tayong lahat. Mabuhay ang Republika ng Pilipinas,” he said

Covid cases in PHL still rising, now at 24,787

By [Claudeth Mocon-Ciriaco](#)

June 12, 2020



Repatriated Filipino workers who have gone through the mandatory 14-day quarantine period and who had tested negative for coronavirus disease 2019 wait at Naia Terminal 2 to board government-provided sweeper flights to their respective provinces.

The number of confirmed Covid-19 cases in the country rose to 24,787, the Department of Health (DOH) said on Friday.

As of 4 p.m. of June 12, a total of 615 cases were reported. Of the number 336 were logged as fresh cases while 279 were validated as late cases.

Friday's fresh cases are based on the daily accomplishment reports submitted by only 45 out of 54 current operational labs.

The DOH clarified that three duplicate cases were removed from the total cases reported as of 11 June 2020.

“Total cases reported may be subject to change as these numbers undergo constant cleaning and validation,” the DOH said.

The DOH also announced that there were 289 recoveries. This brings the total number of recoveries to 5,454.

Sixteen deaths were reported bringing the total number of death to 1,052.

Meanwhile, the DOH said that it has updated its interim guidelines on expanded risk-based testing of Covid-19 cases. Department Memorandum No. 2020-0285 was adopted in view of the increased RT-PCR (Reverse Transmission Polymerase Chain Reaction) testing capacity of the country.

“With the invaluable support from our partners, the hardworking DOH family, and the active participation of all our laboratories, we have significantly increased our testing capacity. We have thus updated our guidelines to be attuned to the needs of all those needing to be tested. With adequate testing,” Health Secretary Francisco T. Duque III said.

The new subgroups broadens the coverage of persons to be tested to include suspect cases, individuals with travel history and exposure (whether symptomatic or asymptomatic), and healthcare workers with possible exposure (whether symptomatic or asymptomatic).

The following list of subgroups of individuals are considered at-risk and are eligible for testing, arranged from greatest to lowest need for testing:

- Subgroup A: patients or healthcare workers with severe/critical symptoms, and relevant history of travel or close contact;
- Subgroup B: patients or healthcare workers with mild symptoms, with relevant history of travel or close contact and who are considered vulnerable. These vulnerable populations include the elderly and those with pre-existing medical conditions that predispose them to severe presentation and complications of Covid-19;
- Subgroup C: patients or healthcare workers with mild symptoms, and relevant history of travel or close contact;
- Subgroup D: patients or healthcare workers with no symptoms but with relevant travel history and close contact;
- Subgroup E: frontliners indirectly involved in healthcare provision in the response against Covid-19; and
- Subgroup F: other vulnerable patients such as those with comorbidities, those who will undergo high-risk, elective surgical procedures, those living in confined spaces, and others

In particular, those in Subgroup E includes the following:

- a. personnel manning temporary treatment and quarantine facilities;
- b. personnel manning control points;
- c. National/Regional/Local Risk Reduction and Management teams;
- d. Barangay Health Emergency Response Teams and barangay officials providing barangay border control;
- e. personnel of Bureau of Corrections and Bureau of Jail Management and Penology; f. personnel serving at Covid-19 swabbing center;
- g. social workers providing amelioration and relief assistance to communities and performing Covid-19 related tasks

Meanwhile those in Subgroup F include the following:

- a) pregnant patients who shall be tested during the peripartum period
- b) dialysis patients and immunocompromised patients with HIV, those chemotherapy or radiotherapy

Gov't can handle debt, not another ECQ

By [Jocelyn Montemayor](#) -June 12, 2020



Karl Kendrick Chua, acting NEDA director (Photo from PCOO)

Acting Planning Secretary Karl Chua yesterday the country can pay off the new loans that it acquired from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) despite the economic slowdown it is experiencing due to the new coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

At the Laging Handa press conference yesterday, Chua also indicated economic growth in the second quarter “will look really bad” compared to the first three months of the year due to the imposition of the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ)

“We can repay our loans,” he said, adding the country a good credit standing when the pandemic started.

Last week the Department of Finance signed a \$500-million loan with the World Bank and \$400 million loan with the ADB.

Chua said prior to the pandemic, the Philippines was on its way to becoming an upper middle income country apart from being one of the fastest growing economies with an average of 6.6 percent growth from 2016 to 2020.

He said the country also had a BBB+ rating which is a notch below the A- rating.

Chua said the ECQ shut down 75 percent of the economy for the most part of the second quarter making the recovery “very uncertain.”

The economy shrank by 0.2 percent in the first quarter of the year.

Chua also reiterated the need to pass certain legislative measures to further strengthen the economy, boost the performance and financial standing of the different industries and eventually help the country get back on track to the pre-pandemic levels.

These measures include the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises, the Rural Agricultural and Fisheries Development Financing Systems Act, the Financial Institutions Strategic Transfer and Government Financial Institutions Unified Initiatives to Distressed Enterprises for Economic Recovery.

At the virtual general membership meeting of the Philippine Exporters Confederation Inc. early this week, Albay Rep. Joey Salceda said while it is easy for the economy to recover financially from the pandemic, “we cannot afford another lockdown.

Salceda said “every 10 days of lockdown costs 2 percent of GDP.”

He said the country’s credit rating “is still okay.”

“Our problem is the 9.1 percent deficit in GDP when we thought we have a lot in savings,” he said.

Salceda, chair of the House Ways and Means Committee, said the second and third quarters will be the worst, but next year’s budget will be anchored on a growth rate of 9.1 percent.

In the same briefing, Health Undersecretary Rosario Vergeire said the country should be ready in the likelihood of a second wave of COVID infections.

The probability of a second wave happening will be known next week, Vergeire said.

Analyses of data gathered in the previous two weeks will show whether COVID cases increased and if they were caused by the easing of the lockdown. –*with Paul Icamina*

Between saving lives & reviving the economy

EDITORIAL

Published June 12, 2020, 11:00 PM



Nations around the world have had to navigate a very difficult route between saving lives and saving economies in the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Lockdowns – restricting all movements of people — have been resorted to so that the virus would not have the normal opportunity to jump from person to person. Many lives have been saved because of the restrictions. But it has been at the expense of great economic losses — big industries slowing, small operations closing down, families running out of food and other basic needs, and national economies contracting to unprecedented levels.

The World Bank (WB) last Monday reported that the world economy has now contracted by 5.2 percent, with all countries suffering economic losses worse than any recession in the last 80 years. It expects the crisis to drive 70 to 100 million people into extreme poverty.

The forecast for the United States economy, the world's largest, is a contraction by 61 percent; for the Eurozone, by 9.1 percent; for Japan, by 6.1 percent; for Brazil, by 8 percent; for Mexico, by 7.5 percent; and for India, by 3.2 percent.

The World Bank said only China, the world's second largest economy, may see a modest growth of 1 percent this year. Its slowdown will, however, hinder the recovery of many developing countries which export to China, the WB said.

The World Bank's assessment of the Philippine economy this year is a contraction by 1.9 percent. Along with Malaysia and Thailand, the Philippines suffered the fastest contraction in economic output in Asia due to disruptions in tourism, trade, and manufacturing in the lockdowns.

Our own National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), headed by Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Karl Chua, estimates a contraction of the national economy by 2 to 3.4 percent. It expects the economy to start recovering in the third quarter of the year – July, August, September – as the ongoing lockdown restrictions are gradually eased.

But strict health standards continue to be enforced, he said, and any further easing will depend on a system of standards based on the number of COVID-19 cases. If there is a deterioration in the rise of cases, the quarantine restrictions will not be relaxed.

Between saving lives and reviving the economy, the former is still the more important consideration.

Source: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/06/12/between-saving-lives-reviving-the-economy/>

EMB pushes for Arise's quick passage

By [Anna Leah E. Gonzales](#)

June 13, 2020

The Department of Trade and Industry's Export Marketing Bureau (DTI-EMB) is pushing for the passage of House Bill 6815, or the Accelerated Recovery and Investments Stimulus for the Economy of the Philippines (Arise Philippines) Act, to help exporters recover from the negative effects of the coronavirus pandemic.

"As the primary government agency for export promotions, our priority is to help exporters affected by the pandemic. While we continue our services, we are also advocating for the immediate implementation of Arise Philippines to provide financial assistance to businesses and employees," EMB Director Senen Perlada said in a statement on Thursday.

Formerly called the Philippine Economic Stimulus Act, the measure seeks to offer various forms of assistance to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), as well as other key sectors, including exports, affected by the pandemic while rebuilding consumer confidence.

Exports of goods plunged by 50.8 percent to \$2.8 billion in April from \$5.7 billion in the same month last year.

"There is weak demand abroad due to [the] fear factor [raised by the coronavirus]. The lockdowns and quarantine measures also decreased the consumption of discretionary goods and services, and caused brick-and-mortar stores and restaurants to close down," Perlada explained.

The biggest contributors to the huge drop of export sales in April were seven of the top 10 major export commodities for the month, led by other manufactured goods (-64.0 percent); machinery and transport equipment (-63.6 percent); and coconut oil (-55.5 percent).

Abdulgani Macatoman, Trade undersecretary for the Trade Promotions Group and Special Concerns, said that, based on the recent exporters' survey, many exporters were unable to operate due to disruptions in the supply chain, especially the availability of raw materials and packaging.

"Now that we are in the 'new normal,' the DTI is exploring digital marketing, like online business-matching, to help exporters find new markets or expand to other destinations. Even after the pandemic, the shift to online trade may remain and we must be prepared for that," Macatoman said.



NEW NORMAL O ABNORMAL

June 12, 2020 @ 8:46 AM 1 day ago

NEW normal, 'yan ang paliwanag ngayon ng mga gifted child sa nangyayari sa ating kapaligiran dahil sa pandemyang COVID-19.

Maraming mababago partikular na sa pamumuhay, sa trabaho at siyempre, sa araw-araw na gawain, isama na natin diyan ang edukasyon.

Maraming maepal na mas matalino pa sa matsing pero mukhang 'di naman yata dumaan sa isipan bago pinagpasyahan.

GALING ECQ NAGING GCQ

Napaniwala ng mga gifted child ang ating Pangulong Rodrigo Roa Duterte na kailangang pagulungin ang ating ekonomiya, dahil malamang na makalusot sa COVID-19 ang taumbayan, pero sa gutom ay makasasalubong naman nito si kamatayan.

Hayun, ang ECQ ginawa nang GCQ para naman kahit papaano ay mapagulong natin unti-unti ang ating ekonomiya.

Pero ang nakabitin na tanong sa ating isipan ngayon ay...ano na ang plano para sa mga manggagawang pabalik sa trabaho?

May kongkreto ba tayong plano para sa kanilang kapakanan at kaligtasan?

Kapag tinamaan sila ng COVID-19, anong pakete meron sila para maisalba ang sarili nilang buhay?

Anong pakete naman meron ang kanilang mga kasama na paghihinalaang nahawa rin sa COVID-19 sa oras ng trabaho?

'Yan po, ay kailangang maitala sa plano para sa kinabukasan ng ating sambayanan dahil 'yan na po ang "new normal" at kapag wala po n'yan, maaari na po nating tawagin 'yan na "abnormal."

CONSISTENT 500 CASES PATAAS

Walang sablay, mga Ka Bro, consistent tayo sa 500 bagong kaso ng COVID-19 araw-araw.

Kamakalawa ay umabot pa ito ng 700 mahigit. Tsk! Tsk! Tsk!

Ang tanong naman ngayon: 500 na lang araw-araw?

Sa madaling salita, may 3,500 kaso sa isang linggo.

Ilan po bang ospital meron tayo?

Ilang kama ba sa ospital ang pwedeng gamitin ng ating mga COVID-19 patient?

Mabubulunan na ba tayo sa rami ng pasyente gaya ng nabubulunang crematorium natin sa rami naman ng sinusunog na bangkay?

Deklarado ang mga namatay sa COVID-19 na sinusunog, pero 'yung mga namatay sa heart attack, kidney failure at pneumonia ay hindi idinedeclarang COVID-19 patient.

Ooops! Huwag n'yong i-deny DOH, may kamag-anak ako at kaibigan na namatay sa COVID-19 pero hindi naideklara, BAKIT?

Dahil daw sa raket ng mga ospital! (Sa susunod na kolum natin ito babanatan.)

Siguro, magandang humingi na tayo ng tulong sa lahat ng may-ari ng hotel, motel, lodging inn, pension house, etc. para masiguro nating meron tayong paglalagyan ng ating mga pasyente sakaling dumating 'yung malaking numerong kinatatakutan natin.

'Yan po ang "new normal" pero kapag nag-positive at pinauwi ng mga gifted child para mag-self quarantine, 'yan po 'yung tinatawag na "abnormal."

ONLINE CLASSES

Sa computer, desktop, laptop, tablet o cellphone na lang magtatapos ang aralin sa semestrong ito.

Ang galing naman ng ating mga estudyante na nakasabay kaagad sa sistema ng new normal.

Pero 'yan 'yung mga estudyanteng may pambili ng gadget, pambayad ng wifi at siyempre, 'yung meron ding internet connection dahil marami pa ring lugar sa bansa na kahit may pambayad ka ay wala namang koneksiyon ang mga telco.

Meron pang mas malala... 'yun naman 'yung walang pambili ng gadget o pambayad sa wifi dahil sa hirap ng buhay.

Ihalintulad na lang natin ang mga estudyante sa Polytechnic University of the Philippines (PUP) na karamihan sa mga estudyante ay nagmula sa pamilyang isang kahig, isang tuka.

Paano na kaya sila? Paano na ang kinabukasan nila?

May plano na ba tayo para sa kanila, gaya ng suportang gadget o wifi na nagmula sa pamahalaan at kapag hindi naman kaya ng pondo ng gobyerno dahil sa problema natin sa COVID-19 ay maaari na tayong humingi ng suporta sa pribadong sektor para pautangin man lang ang mga estudyante sa kanilang pangangailangan?

'Di hamak na matipid ang isang tablet at wifi kumpara sa araw-araw na pagpasok sa paaralan na nangangailangan ng pamasahe, baon at marami pang gastos para sa mga proyektong pang mag-aaral.

Sana naisip na nila ang kinabukasan ng ating mga estudyante, partikular na ang kanilang kaligtasan.

'Yan ang "new normal" pero kapag ipinilit ninyong papasukin sa eskwela 'yang mga 'yan sa ganitong sitwasyon, abay "abnormal" na ang tawag diyan.

MGA SALOT NA GIFTED CHILD

Sa mga salot na "gifted child" sa administrasyong ito, sana naman ay reyalidad ang gawin ninyo para sa taumbayan, hindi 'yung tsamba-tsamba lang, ika nga nina Luis Manzano at Alex Gonzaga.

Pati nga gamot sa kili-kili ay bawal ang tsamba-tsamba, sa buhay pa kaya ng tao?

ABNORMAL po ang tawag d'yan, hindi NEW NORMAL.

Anti-terror bill could worsen threats against environmental activists

by [Newsdesk](#) [June 11, 2020](#) in [News](#)



Environmental defenders and activists could face more serious threats should the proposed anti-terror bill be signed into law, environmental groups said.

According to a Philstar report, 46 environmental defenders [were killed](#) in the country in 2019 — a 53 percent increase from 30 deaths recorded in 2018.

The report also cited Vicky Tauli-Corpuz, UN Special Rapporteur for Indigenous Peoples, who said that there is a global phenomenon of “land and environmental defenders, a significant number of whom are indigenous peoples, are [declared terrorists, thugs or criminals for defending their rights.](#)” She added: “This violence is a human rights crisis but it is also a threat to everyone who depends on a stable climate.”

During the coronavirus lockdown, at least 172 environmental defenders experienced abuses which included red-tagging, illegal arrests, and the denial of humanitarian release from jails.

More attacks against this group are feared once President Rodrigo Duterte signs the current version of the anti-terror bill into law, groups said.

“The provisions of the proposed bill alone are telling of how it could exacerbate widespread human rights violations experienced by environmentalists on the ground from both private and state actors,” the Center of Energy, Ecology and Development (CEED) said Monday.

The controversial bill is awaiting the President’s signature after Congress sent the enrolled copy of the bill Tuesday.

A dangerous precedent

Lawyers, rights watchdogs, members of the academe and environmentalists sounded alarm over the pronouncements in the bill such as the broad and vague definition of terrorism, prolonged period of detention without warrant, and the removal of liabilities against wrongful persecution.

“We cannot simply trust that abuses will be kept in check, especially when penalties against such abuses have either been reduced or completely removed,” CEED said.

“Ultimately, at the root of this mistrust is the track record of the present administration characterized by inaccessibility of justice, a propensity to label individuals and groups as terrorists without credible basis, and a pattern of abuse of power, including unacceptable instances of vilification of dissent, police raids without warrants, and planting of evidence against alleged violators,” it added.

The fear that environmental workers may be wrongly labeled as terrorists or rebels is not unfounded.

In November 2010, botanist Leonard Co and his two assistants were killed in Kananga, Leyte. While the Army claimed they were killed in a shootout, the Commission on Human Rights later found that soldiers had mistaken the botanists for rebels.

“There was a failure to distinguish civilians from alleged combatants. There was a failure to provide prompt medical attention to the wounded victim... who died as a result,” it said then.

Leon Dulce, national coordinator of Kalikasan People’s Network for the Environment, said the proposed legislation “will institutionalize human rights abuses already affecting defenders” opposed to Kaliwa Dam, Manila Bay aerotropolis, and mines such as Oceanagold in Nueva Vizcaya and TechIron in Homonhon in Eastern Samar.

Earlier, environmental defenders and climate activists launched an online platform to “hound” legislators who voted for the anti-terrorism bill. ##

HEADLINES

Duterte leads Independence day rites

Published 6 hours ago on June 13, 2020 12:05 AM

By [Francis Wakefield](#)



Kawit mayor Angelo Emilio G. Aguinaldo, the great great great grandson of Emilio Aguinaldo, the first Philippine President, led the flag raising ceremony at the 122nd celebration of Philippine independence day in Kawit, Cavite 12 June 2020. Social distancing, one of the protocols preventing the spread of COVID-19, is observed during the celebration. EMERITO ANTONIO/POND NEWS ASIA

President Duterte in Davao City on Friday at the 122nd anniversary of the proclamation of Philippine Independence said the present-day Filipino possesses the same gallantry of spirit and the nobility of character as the heroes of the past.

“One hundred twenty-two years ago our forefathers proudly proclaimed the birth of the Filipino nation. Today, we honor them for their bravery, heroism and sacrifice, as well as we thank them for the gifts of democracy and freedom,” the President said.

“As we wage a united battle against COVID-19, we now have the opportunity to demonstrate that we possess the same gallantry of spirit and the nobility of character as the heroes of our past.”

“Let us now move forward with courage, hope, and optimism as we overcome this pandemic. Mabuhay tayong lahat. Mabuhay ang Republika ng Pilipinas,” he said.

Presidential Peace Adviser and National Action Plan (NAP) Against COVID-19 Chief Implementer Carlito Galvez Jr. led a small contingent of officials at the Rizal Park where also asked Filipinos to fight a different kind of war, one against the coronavirus disease or COVID-19 pandemic.

Galvez said on this day 122 years ago, the Philippine flag in vibrant blue, red, yellow, and white was raised with great pride and honor as the national anthem was played for the first time.

“It was a defining moment in our nation’s history. And to this day, the same ideals embodied by our beloved forefathers who fought for our freedom — patriotism, gallantry, and selflessness — remain burning within the hearts and minds of every Filipino,” Galvez said.

“(But) This year is an extraordinary one, for as we raise our flags in pride and solidarity, we are once again called to fight a different kind of war. But in this war, we are facing an unseen enemy that lurks in the shadows and strikes its victims without warning.”

“We must not lose hope. Rather, we must muster every ounce of courage within ourselves and confront this enemy head-on,” he added.

Galvez said as Filipinos raise the flag, he urged paying tribute to the brave health sector front liners — nurses, doctors and medical personnel — who put their lives on the line every day to serve their countrymen and save lives.

“As we raise our flags today, let us (also) thank our hard-working social workers, barangay volunteers, local officials, soldiers and policemen, who go beyond the call of duty to provide essential government services and keep our communities safe,” Galvez said.

“And we raise our flags today, we let us cheer each and every Filipino who is silently doing their part to help prevent the further spread of the disease, and aid our less fortunate brothers and sisters.”

“This is a battle that we cannot fight individually, but should be fought collectively — as one people and one nation,” he added.

Galvez said as the nation moves forward and transition to the ‘new normal,’ let Filipinos remember the lesson left behind by our forefathers.

“Let us therefore work hand-in-hand and shoulder to shoulder, as we fight this enemy and banish it from our shores,” Galvez said.

“There is no doubt, we shall win this battle and regain our freedom from the clutches of this disease. We are Filipinos. The blood of our forefathers run through our veins. We shall overcome and heal as one. Maligayang Araw ng Kasarinlan sa ating lahat!” he said.

Senator Christopher Lawrence “Bong” Go greeted Filipinos on Independence Day, saying the nation’s heroes fought for our freedom in their time.

“On this day, we remember how they live and emulate their sense of country. Let us honor their sacrifices and the freedom they made possible for everyone. Now that we are challenged by the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic, may we not forget to honor the spirit of the bayanihan,” he said.

Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said only a small, 10-man contingent was permitted at the Rizal Park rites consistent with health protocols in place helping arrest or limit the spread of the coronavirus disease.



EDITORIAL - Independence

(The Freeman) - June 12, 2020 - 12:00am

Even as our country celebrates its 122nd Independence Day today, there are still those who ask if the occasion is still worth observing, or even if we are still independent in the first place.

They mention our sovereignty which is continuously being challenged by a country our leaders insist is our friend despite their frequent incursions.

They mention a bill that seems set to be signed into law that many believe will stifle personal freedoms and lead to the arrest of those who will criticize the government.

They mention a pandemic that has managed to keep many of us prisoners in our own homes, away from our loved ones and our means of livelihood.

They mention a chronic poverty that seems to shackle more and more people in an infinite loop of being poor and needy.

Despite all these, the answer is still yes.

As long as we are still free to determine the course of our nation we are still independent.

As long as we are still free to choose our next leaders and heads of government we are still independent.

As long as we are still free to choose our own path when it comes to our pursuit of happiness and economic stability for ourselves and our family we are still independent.

As long as we are still free to express our opinions we are still independent.

Obviously, there will be others who have a different definition of what being independent means. The mere fact that they can disagree and put forward their own ideas means they have a certain degree of freedom some people in other places in the world don't have.

We are by no means saying that we have nothing to worry about. A lot still has to be done when it comes to improving the country, for our own sakes as well as for our less-fortunate brothers and sisters. However, let us not be fooled into thinking that independence has been robbed from us, or that it is no longer worth celebrating or remembering.

Solon wants to promote green, blue economies in infra program

By Filane Mikee Cervantes June 12, 2020, 3:26 pm



Deputy Speaker Loren Legarda

MANILA – Deputy Speaker Loren Legarda is pushing for green and blue economy approaches in the administration’s “Build, Build, Build” program to achieve sustainable development.

During an online streaming of “Stories for a Better Normal: Pandemic and Climate Pathways” on Thursday, Legarda said it is high time for the government to pursue a holistic approach in its infrastructure program, which translates into the establishment of bike lanes, sidewalks, and other sustainable mobility initiatives.

A green economy approach is a low carbon, resource-efficient, and socially equitable with an end-goal of reducing ecosystem degradation. Meanwhile, a blue economy approach focuses on coastal and marine resources.

“What we want now is nothing less than the liberation of the 88 percent of Metro Manila households who, because they do not have the fortune of owning cars, remain imprisoned by the lack of inclusive sustainable mobility options,” Legarda said.

“And as long as we in government prioritize the minority, which is only 12 percent of households who own cars, how can we call ourselves free?” she added.

She was referring to the study that 88 percent of households in Metro Manila and the rest of the Greater Manila Area do not own cars, while only the remaining 12 percent own at least one.

“The words dignified, fair, and equitable should be applied to bikers and pedestrians. The roads are our common areas, which must be shared with people who cannot afford a million-peso car. Those who walk five or more kilometers have rights just like anyone who can afford a car,” said Legarda.

In May, the House Committee on Transportation approved a proposal promoting the use of bicycles as a mode of transportation, including the protection of the riders’ rights and their safety on roads, amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Bicycles are considered as a safer alternative for the “new normal” as the threat of the coronavirus disease pandemic persists. **(PNA)**

Smart's green programs lauded in latest GSMA global report

By [BusinessMirror](#)

June 12, 2020

Wireless services provider Smart Communications Inc. (Smart) earned new feathers in its cap for initiating environmental protection programs that utilize innovative technologies.

In its report, "Digital Dividends in Natural Resource Management," released on World Environment Day, GSM Association (GSMA), the global industry organization of mobile network operators, commended Smart in two out of its three featured environmental programs.

The study highlighted Smart's innovations that protect rainforests and restore coastal communities, which are under the PLDT Group's "Gabay Kalikasan" effective environmental stewardship sustainability pillar.

Conducted under the GSMA CleanTech program, the study explored the "Digital Dividends" of applying various types of technology to natural resource management (NRM).

The report emphasized how digital solutions can significantly improve the efficiency, responsiveness and efficacy of NRM activities.

"Innovative approaches to environmental concerns are believed to contribute to at least 10 of the 17 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, as natural resources, livelihoods and poverty are interlinked," said Chaye Cabal-Revilla, PLDT-Smart chief sustainability officer and concurrent PLDT SVP and group controller and Smart chief financial officer.

Guarding the rainforest

Launched in the first quarter of 2020, the Rainforest Connection Program is a collaboration of Smart, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and Huawei Technologies Philippines (Huawei).

It has been successfully deployed in five DENR-designated areas in Palawan, which is recognized as the "last ecological frontier" of the country.

The program uses an Internet of Things (IoT) solution that taps mobile technology to record sounds in the rainforest in order to detect illegal logging and poaching activities in the country's rainforests.

Developed by a US-based NGO of the same name, Rainforest Connection makes use of old cell phones, all powered by solar panels and wireless technology, to monitor and record ambient sounds of DENR-identified priority forest areas.

The bio-acoustics are then uploaded to a cloud service using Smart's mobile network connectivity.

Findings based on the collected data are accessible via a mobile app and may be used by key community stakeholders to interpret patterns of forest activity and to guide their course of action.

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Restoring mangroves with Ericsson, LGUs

Smart's Connected Mangroves partnership with network vendor, Ericsson, that is also featured in the 2020 GSMA Digital Dividends report, was lauded in its Case for Change initiative in 2019, as one of the global mobile industry's contributions to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The IoT for mangroves protection uses wireless connectivity to collect critical data relevant to the survival of these plants, such as water level, temperature, soil moisture, and other conditions in the mangrove area.

The information, which is being collected by the mangrove sensor system, is transmitted over a cloud system to a dashboard accessible to the fisherfolk communities and authorities.

Mangrove forests are deemed important in the protection of seaside communities from typhoons, flooding, erosion and other coastal hazards, and serve as a vital habitat for various aquatic life forms.

The newly established Sustainability Office of PLDT-Smart aims to scale up the project for 2020, following its 2017 deployment in the Sasmuan Bangkung Malapad Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area in Pampanga.

Besides Rainforest Connection and Connected Mangroves, most NRM projects that GSMA studied also leverage data collected through satellites, drones or connected devices.

One in five uses artificial intelligence to discover, explore and derive insights from datasets.

Supporting GSMA's #RaceToZero

These recognitions coincide with PLDT-Smart's announcement that it is supporting the GSMA's Race to Zero campaign, as a member of the organization's Climate Change Task Force.

The movement highlights broad-based commitment to zero emissions from all stakeholders, building back better from the Covid-19 context.

Race to Zero aims to mobilize leadership and support from business cities, regions, and investors for a net zero greenhouse-gas emissions economy by 2050, preferably earlier.

Smart's green programs lauded in latest GSMA global

June 13, 2020

TITLE: report

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DATE

PLDT-Smart aims to do this by progressively improving operational efficiencies, turning to green technologies this 2020, and pursuing the use of renewable energy in its facilities.

This is on top of the various partnerships established to help protect and conserve our rainforests, mangroves and marine life—all leveraging on digital technology and the PLDT-Smart network.

“For us, ‘The Race To Zero’ has already begun, we have hit the ground running,” said PLDT Chief Revenue Officer, and Smart President and CEO Alfredo S. Panlilio in a video message.

“We realize this is not a sprint but a marathon. So, we will run this race at a steady pace, keep our eyes focused on our goal, and stay determined to see it through to the finish line,” Panlilio added.

“This is the larger mission before us—the purpose that drives our organizational will and energy toward sustainability on the triple bottom line of profit, people, and planet,” said PLDT Chairman, President and CEO Manuel V. Pangilinan.



Globe joins zero emission campaign

posted June 12, 2020 at 09:00 pm

by [Darwin G. Amojelar](#)

Globe Telecom Inc. said it joined a global campaign for zero carbon emissions by 2050 spearheaded by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and COP26 Presidency and supported by the GSMA, the global mobile industry body.

“We are one with global mobile operators in helping the mobile industry achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. We acknowledge that this requires a collective effort to realize large-scale positive impact,” said Globe president and chief executive Ernest Cu.

“We thank the GSMA for this initiative and for utilizing scientific measures to ensure a low carbon future benefiting our entire ecosystem,” he said.

The Race To Zero was launched on June 5 in time for the World Environment Day celebration. The campaign, which involves a major multi-stakeholder coalition of leaders, aims to send a resounding signal to governments that businesses, cities, regions and investors are united in achieving net zero emissions and in creating a more inclusive and resilient economy.

Pinatuyong sea horse, sea dragon nakumpiska sa Palawan; 6 timbog

Diana Lat, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Jun 13 2020 12:33 AM



Courtesy of Palawan Provincial Police Office

PALAWAN – Arestado ang 6 na suspek na nahulihan ng kilo-kilong pinatuyong sea horse at sea dragon sa Taytay, Palawan nitong Miyerkoles ng gabi.

Nasabat ng mga pulis ang nasa P700,000 halaga ng pinatuyong hayop sa checkpoint sa Barangay Poblacion.

Unang nahuli ang 5 katao na sakay ng pickup na dala ang mga karton ng patay na sea horse at sea dragon. Kalaunan, dumating ang isang babae na nagsabing siya ang nagmamay-ari ng negosyo kaya't inaresto rin siya ng mga pulis.

Ayon sa Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD), matagal nang pinagmamanmanan ng mga awtoridad ang ilegal na negosyo.

Inihahanda na ng PCSD ang pagsasampa ng kaso sa mga suspek. Iniimbestigahan naman ng mga awtoridad na sangkot din sa ilegal na gawain ang isang Chinese national.

"May mga follow-up investigation pa rin kaming gagawin dahil nga hindi natin ma-locate itong partner allegedly na Chinese," ani Jovic Fabello, tagapagsalita ng PCSD.

Paalala ng PCSD, walang medikal na basehan na gamot sa hika ang sea horse at sea dragon.

Ang mga naturang hayop ay protektado ng batas dahil kasama na ito sa mga endangered species.

"Ang kaso rito ay maipapailalim dito sa Wildlife Act kung saan sila ay in possession ng economically important and threatened species ng wildlife," dagdag ni Fabello.

Recycled plastics used to manufacture foot baths,
TITLE: sanitizer dispensers

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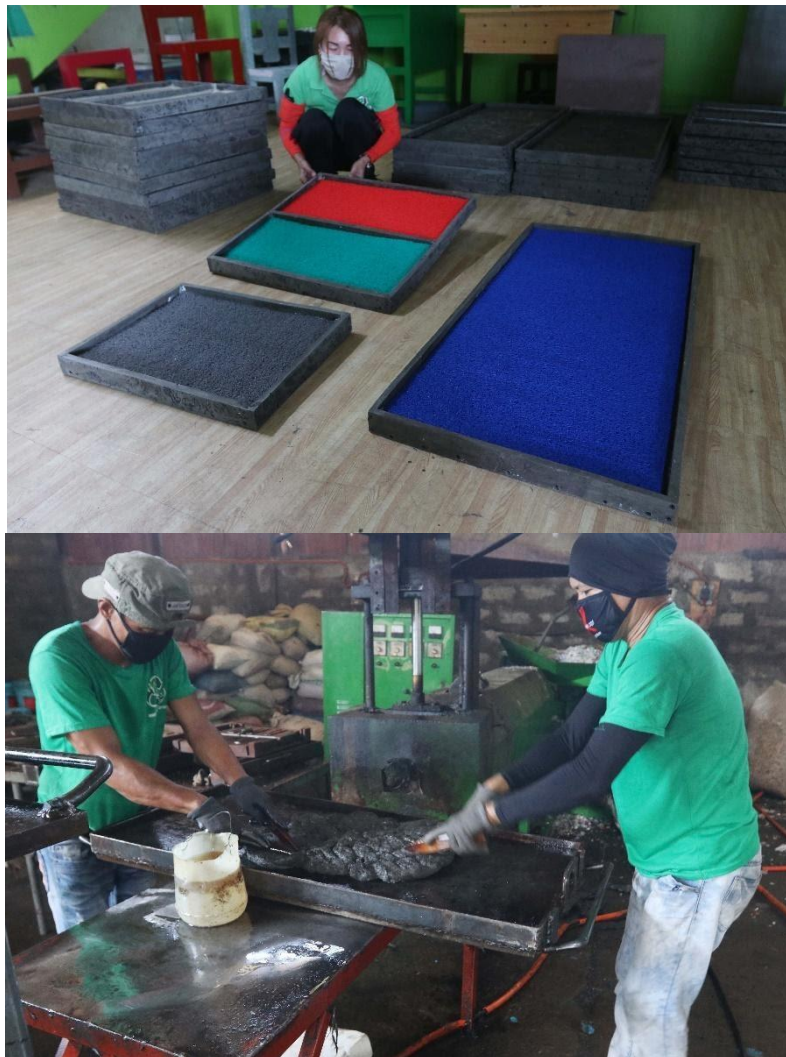
June 13, 2020
DATE

Recycled plastics used to manufacture foot baths, sanitizer dispensers

Published June 12, 2020, 11:44 AM

By Zea Capistrano

DAVAO CITY – It's like hitting two birds with one stone after Winchester Lemen thought of producing foot baths and hand sanitizer dispensers with discarded single-use plastics like water bottles and food packaging.



(Keith Baongco / MANILA BULLETIN)

Lemen said he had been collecting and recycling single-use plastics for 20 years, trying to turn them into other different products that could be used in daily life. But it was during the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic that he found two new products so that the plastics he has been collecting could be re-used.

A mechanical engineering graduate, who got his degree at the Mapua Institute of Technology while playing for its varsity basketball team in the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA), Lemen found it easy to turn the discarded plastics into the foot baths and sanitizer dispensers that are now in-demand.

"I wanted to produce recycled foot baths to send the message that we can win this battle not only by eliminating the transfer of virus through footwear before entering our residence but also by saving the environment," said Lemen, who has put up Winderful Foot Bath, and is one of the owners of Winder Recycling Company.

Recycled plastics used to manufacture foot baths,
TITLE: sanitizer dispensers

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According to him, the foot bath and the newly launched foot-operated sanitizer dispenser are all made of laminated plastics, junk food packaging, candy wrappers, sando bags, plastic cups, water bottles, and other plastics that are often just left piling up in the landfill.

To produce one foot bath, the recycling company uses about eight kilograms of recycled single-use plastics.

Lemen said they produce 40 to 50 pieces of foot baths, which roughly amounts to a minimum of 320 to 400 kilograms of single-use plastics recycled every day.

To produce these, the plastics are shred into flakes, which are later washed, dried and melted to form molten plastic. The molten plastic is then poured into molds in the shape of the footbath.

“The cost of the footbath is P600 in Mindanao, since our main plant is located in Mindanao, and P1,000 for Visayas and Luzon,” Lemen said.

Currently, the company has produced 600 sets of footbaths which amounts to over five tons of single-use plastic wastes recycled.

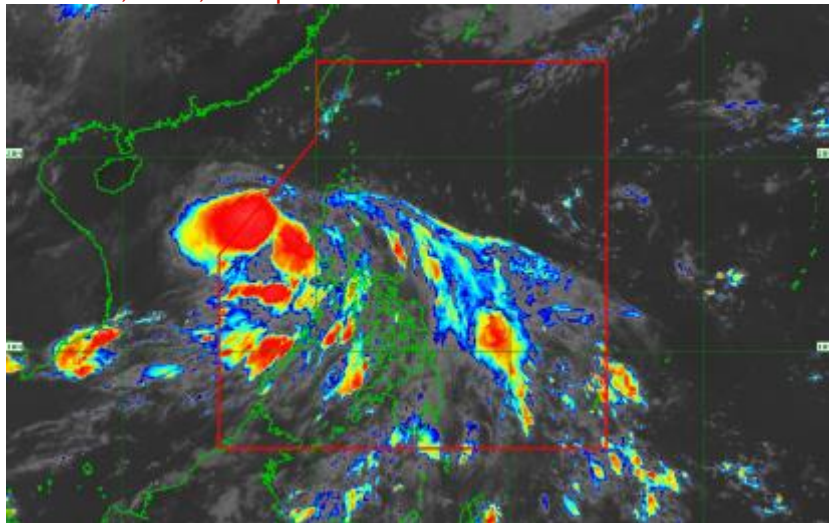
Compared with other foot baths available in the market, Lemen said the Winder Foot Baths are sturdier because it is thicker at $\frac{3}{4}$ inch.

Meanwhile, a foot-operated dispenser uses 15 kilograms of plastic waste, and costs P2,000 each.

“Now that businesses use footbaths and sanitizer dispensers as part of their protocols to control the spread of the coronavirus, the demand for footbaths is already there. But Winderful Footbaths appears to have an appeal to customers who are eco-friendly and would like to contribute to the solution to plastic pollution,” Lemen said.

Tropical cyclone wind signal lifted; 'Butchoy' intensifies

By Ma. Cristina Arayata **June 12, 2020, 1:12 pm**



Track of tropical depression "Butchoy" (Image grabbed from PAGASA's Facebook page)

MANILA – The tropical cyclone wind signal (TCWS) was lifted even as Tropical Depression Butchoy slightly intensified on Friday, the weather bureau said.

“Butchoy” is packing maximum winds of 55 kph near the center and gustiness of up to 70 kph, heading west-northwest at 25 kph, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said in its 11 a.m. bulletin.

It was last eyed 140 km. west-northwest of Iba, Zambales, or 165 km. west of Dagupan City, Pangasinan.

PAGASA forecast “Butchoy” to intensify into a tropical storm within 24 hours but also expects it to leave the Philippine area of responsibility either Friday night or Saturday.

Despite the lifting of the TCWS, the bureau said northern and central Luzon, as well as the western part of southern Luzon and the Visayas, may still experience occasional gusts due to the southwest monsoon.

Moderate to heavy rains may still be experienced over Zambales, Bataan, Pangasinan, the northern portion of Palawan, including Calamian and Cuyo Islands, and Occidental Mindoro.

Light to moderate with at times heavy monsoon rains are expected over the rest of Luzon and Western Visayas.

Flooding and rain-induced landslides may occur during heavy or prolonged rainfall, especially in areas that are highly susceptible to these hazards. **(PNA)**

Tropical Storm Butchoy exits PAR

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published Jun 12, 2020 5:40:47 AM

Updated Jun 13, 2020 12:37:00 AM



(FILE PHOTO)

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, June 13) – “Butchoy” is now a tropical storm and already exited the Philippine Area of Responsibility, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration's (PAGASA) latest update.

Signal No. 1 has also been lifted in all areas.

The center of Butchoy was last seen at 415 km west northwest of Dagupan, Pangasinan or 380 km west of Sinait, Ilocos Sur at 10pm.

It has maximum sustained winds of 65 kilometers per hour and a gustiness of up to 80 kph.

PAGASA also said that light to moderate rains at times heavy rains will be experienced in Zambales, Bataan, Pangasinan, the northern portion of Palawan including Calamian and Cuyo Islands, and Occidental Mindoro, between Friday night and Saturday morning.

Metro Manila will have improved weather conditions by Sunday or Monday, the bureau earlier noted.

The tropical depression made landfall yesterday over Polilio Islands and Infanta, Quezon.

Rainy days are here

It is official. The rainy days are here.

PAGASA declared Friday the onset of the rainy season.



The occurrence of scattered thunderstorms, Tropical Depression "BUTCHOY" and the Southwest Monsoon (Habagat) during the last five days have brought significant amount of rains over the western sections of Luzon and Visayas," the bureau said in a statement, adding that "this satisfies the criteria of the start of the rainy season."

But PAGASA weather forecaster Ana Clauren said in a media briefing that the country would still experience dry periods or monsoon breaks.

Rainy season is here — Pagasa

By: [Neil Arwin Mercado](#) - Reporter / [@NAMercadoINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 01:50 PM June 12, 202



Commuters brave the rain with umbrellas while waiting for scarce transportation along Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City on a rainy Thursday morning, June 11. The state weather bureau PAGASA said a low pressure area will dump rains in Luzon which is still under quarantine due to the coronavirus. -INQUIRER/GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE

MANILA, Philippines — The rainy season has officially started, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said Friday as tropical depression Butchoy dumped rains over parts of the country.

TD Butchoy and the southwest monsoon or “habagat” recently brought “significant amounts of rain” in the western sections of Luzon and Visayas, which “satisfied the criteria of the start of the rainy season,” PAGASA said in a statement.

This will bring “scattered to widespread rains and thunderstorms” that may be interrupted by dry periods or monsoon breaks for several days up to 2 weeks, said the weather agency.

Pagasa announced the onset of the rainy season as “Butchoy” continues to move away from Luzon.

As of 11 a.m. update, the state weather bureau said Butchoy was located 140 kilometers west northwest of Iba town in Zambales or 165 kilometres west of Dagupan City in Pangasinan.

It has maximum sustained winds of 55 kilometers per hour (kph) near the center and gustiness of up to 70 kph.

Rainy season explained

According to Pagasa, there are four climate types in the country.

Type I climate or the western regions of the country have two pronounced seasons—the dry season which is usually from November to April, and the wet season which is the rest of the year.

The three other climate types usually experiences rainshowers.

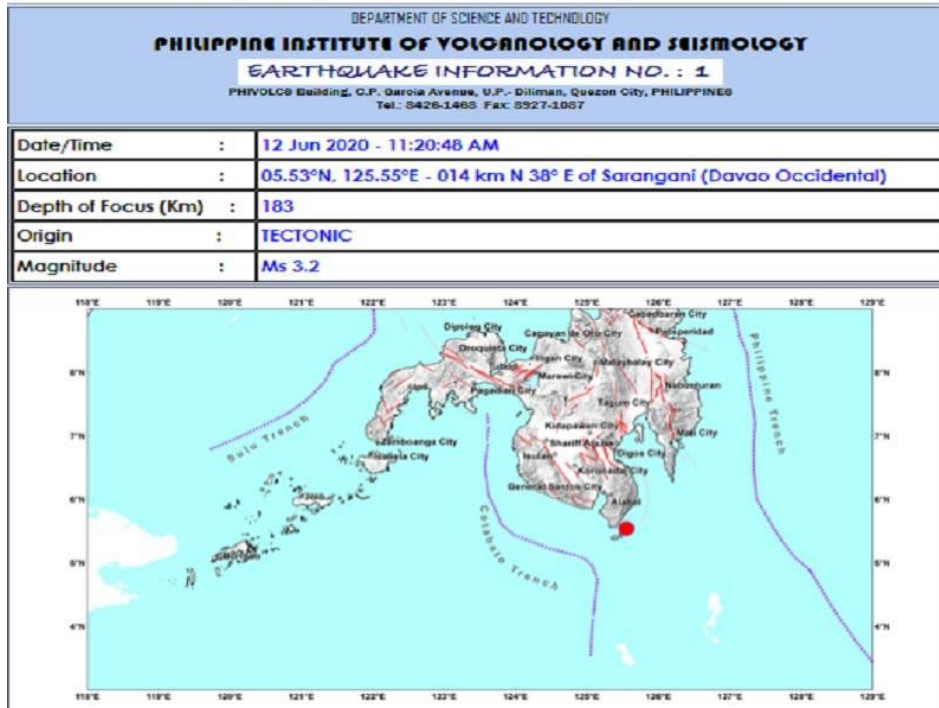
Because of this, the state weather bureau focuses in areas under Type I climate in announcing the beginning of the rainy season.

In a phone interview with INQUIRER.net, Pagasa said that if more than 50 percent of their stations in the Type I climate areas report significant amount of rain for three consecutive days in a five-day period, then it signifies the beginning of the rainy season.

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1290541/rainy-season-is-here-pagasa>

Sarangani, Davao Occidental muling niyanig ng magnitude 3.2 na lindol

By Mary Rose Cabrales June 12, 2020 - 12:51 PM



Niyanig ng magnitude 3.2 na lindol ang lalawigan ng Davao Occidental.

Ayon sa Phivolcs, naitala ang pagyanig sa 14 kilometers northeast ng bayan ng Sarangani, alas-11:20 ng umaga ng Biyernes (June 12).

May lalim na 183 kilometers at tectonic ang origin ng pagyanig.

Wala namang inaasahang pagkasira sa nga ari-arian, intensities at aftershocks.

Pangolin released into wild under China's new

June 13, 2020

TITLE: protections

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Pangolin released into wild under China's new protections

Associated Press / 05:32 PM June 12, 2020



In this photo taken June 11, 2020, and released by CBCGDF, a worker from China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Foundation, or CBCGDF, holds the Pangolin named Lijin before its release from the Jinhua wild animal rescue center in eastern China's Zhejiang province. (CBCGDF via AP)

BEIJING— Activists in China have released a pangolin into the wild to celebrate new protections for the armadillo-like animal whose numbers in the country have dropped to near extinction levels.

Volunteers had rescued and rehabilitated the pangolin nicknamed Lijin after it was found by a fisherman in the eastern Chinese province of Zhejiang.

“This is a good start ... but this is not good enough,” said Zhou Jinfeng, secretary-general of the China Biodiversity Conservation and Green Development Fund, the group behind the lone pangolin's release on Thursday.

Just last year in Zhejiang, authorities arrested 18 smugglers and confiscated 23.1 tons of pangolin scales sourced from an estimated 50,000 creatures, according to Chinese state media.

After volunteers unlocked a transport crate, the foot-long pangolin crawled onto the lush forest floor outside Zhejiang's Jinhua city. Its brown scales and pink paws quickly disappeared in the emerald underbrush.

“We will release a lot more soon,” said Zhou, who has vowed to free all pangolins in captivity in China.

The U.S.-based group Save Pangolins said [China's granting of top-level protected status](#) earlier this month was “a massive win for pangolins” after years of weak enforcement of existing restrictions. Pangolin scales are an ingredient in traditional Chinese medicine and its meat is considered a delicacy by some.

Environmental groups say that poachers had regularly circumvented the original regulations to sell illegally hunted pangolin scales and meat, often sourced from Africa and Southeast Asia.

That has made pangolins “one of the most illegally traded mammals on the planet” with an estimated 1 million sold in the past 15 years, according to the Environmental Investigations Agency. Seizures have been recorded from Belgium to Singapore to Australia and the Philippines.

China's increased protection forbids the raising of pangolins in captivity and the use of their scales in the nation's mammoth traditional medicine industry.

Zhou said that efforts to halt the sale of pangolins in China were buoyed by a raise in global awareness of the wildlife animal trade linked to the outbreak of the coronavirus in the central Chinese city of Wuhan.

The June 5 order from the National Forestry and Grassland Administration did not explicitly mention the outbreak as a reason for the measure, but the timing appears to indicate it could be part of China's nationwide crackdown on the wildlife trade following the pandemic.

Scientists say the coronavirus was most likely transmitted from bats to humans via an intermediary animal such as the pangolin.

Trade in wildlife including bats and pangolins has been linked to so-called zoonotic diseases that leap from animals to humans, and China quickly cracked down on the industry in a series of measures long-promoted by environmental groups.

Zhou said China's native pangolins have been all but wiped out. Over the past five years, Zhou and volunteers found only five where hundreds of thousands lived just three decades ago.

Zhou said the new protections give groups like his the right to sue businesses and individuals selling pangolin scales. However, he wants to go a step further by releasing into the wild all captive pangolins in China and burning all confiscated pangolin scales, similar to how Kenya incinerated seized elephant tusks in a bid to end the illegal trade that continues to this day.

Return of the otter: How reintroduced predators benefit ecosystems

Published June 12, 2020, 7:28 AM

By *Agence France-Presse*

These little guys think there's something you otter know.

Shellfish-munching sea otters have been the bane of fishermen's existence ever since they were reintroduced to Canada's west coast in the 1970s — but a new study indicates they bring more economic benefits than losses.

The research was led by teams from the University of British Columbia and Vancouver Island University and published in the journal *Science* on Thursday.



(AFP / MANILA BULLETIN)

The study offers an example of what might happen if other apex predators — like wolves or bison, which were once plentiful — are brought back to their original habitats over the objections of farmers.

Toward the end of the 19th century, otters in the northwest Pacific were hunted almost to the point of extinction due to a demand for their thick, luxurious fur — the densest coat in the animal kingdom, used by the aquatic mammals for insulation in freezing cold waters.

Otters prey mainly on invertebrates such as crabs, clams, and urchins. Don't challenge these chonky critters to an eating contest, as they consume about a quarter of their body weight every day. With the otters gone the shellfish fishing industry exploded.

The Canadian government however decided to reintroduce otters in the 1970s — without consulting the local population, including the native First Nations.

The otters began devouring the main source of fishermen's livelihoods, in what initially seemed to be a textbook example of ecological-economic conflict.

But it's not so straightforward, said the new paper's authors. The return of the otters also led to indirect effects on the ecosystem known as "trophic cascade."

Otters eat sea urchins, which had devoured kelp on the ocean floor. The size of these algal forests have now multiplied by a factor of twenty, said the researchers.

And kelp provide protective habitats for a number of fish species like herring, which, in turn, benefits the fishermen.

Not only that, kelp also sequesters carbon dioxide, reducing ocean acidification and the amount of the greenhouse gas in the atmosphere.

Wolves, foxes and ticks

The biggest direct financial benefit has come through tourism.



Return of the otter: How reintroduced predators benefit

June 13, 2020

TITLE: ecosystems

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“The sea otter is a very charismatic species,” said Russell Markel, a co-author of the paper who runs Outer Shores Expeditions. “Tourists love being able to see them in the wild and, importantly, are willing to pay for this experience.”

The study authors estimate the dollar profit from having the sea otters is seven times greater than the losses to the shellfish industry.

“When you restore a predator, it usually is controversial. And this arises largely because predators end up competing with people for resources,” said Jane Watson, a professor at Vancouver Island University.

But the return of kelp forest “increases near-shore productivity” and “creates habitat for kelp dependent species,” she said.

“Countless ecosystems around the world are a shadow of their former glory, held back by missing key ecological players just as the sea otters were missing from this coast for decades,” added Kai Chan, the paper’s senior author, from the University of British Columbia.

“Thus we are seeing elsewhere how reintroducing wolves can trigger ripples of benefits for a large number of species and also for humans across the US and even in Europe,” he added.

How might bringing wolves back help humans? Their extermination from the midwestern and eastern United States benefited coyotes, which in turn led to a reduction in the population of foxes.

Foxes prey on small mammals, whose population has exploded as a result — leading to a surge in ticks, and of Lyme disease.

The new paper underscores the need to analyze ecosystems in their totality, rather than looking solely at what reintroducing predators will mean in terms of livestock losses.



India buoyed by jump in rare Asiatic lion numbers

Published June 12, 2020, 7:27 AM

By *Agence France-Presse*

The population of rare Asiatic lions in India has jumped by nearly a third in the past five years to almost 700, an official survey said, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailing the increase as an “excellent feat”.



A young Asiatic lion rests after a kill at the Gir Sanctuary in Gujarat, only place they are found in the wild (AFP/File / INDRANIL MUKHERJEE / MANILA BULLETIN)

Asiatic lions — slightly smaller than their African cousins and with a fold of skin along their bellies — are only found in the wild in the Gir sanctuary in western Gujarat, Modi’s home state.

“Population of the majestic Asiatic Lion, living in Gujarat’s Gir Forest, is up by almost 29 percent,” the Indian leader tweeted Wednesday.

“Geographically, distribution area is up by 36 percent. Kudos to the people of Gujarat and all those whose efforts have led to this excellent feat.”

The survey of the lion population, which is conducted every five years, was due to be held in early June.

But restrictions imposed by India’s ongoing coronavirus lockdown meant the full survey could not be carried out.

Instead, an observation survey was conducted during the full moon last week that involved about 1,400 people, just under half of the usual number of participants, with a smaller group of experts.

“The population of Asiatic Lions has thus shown a steady increase with a population of 674 individuals with an increase rate of 28.8 percent,” Gujarat’s chief wildlife warden Shyamal Tikadar said in a report.

The Asiatic lion population was estimated to be 523 in 2015 and 411 in 2010.

The big cat was listed as critically endangered in 2000, with its population under threat due to hunting and human encroachment on its habitat.

Priyavrat Ghadvi, who is on Gujarat’s wildlife board, said the estimate appeared to be fairly accurate and was encouraging.

“It is a scientific process and the figures are encouraging,” Ghadvi told AFP, crediting local efforts for the population increase.

“This shows that the conservation program has been successful.”

Forest trees are growing shorter and dying younger

Temperatures could get too high for tropical forests, and forest trees everywhere are changing in response to human action.



View of a forest in the northern province of Bokèo in Laos. Forest trees are not growing as tall now, nor living as long as they used to. Image: [patrikmloeff, CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

By Tim Radford, Climate News Network

June 12, 2020

There are limits to what forest trees will tolerate; many tropical forests, for instance, can cope with climate change – but only up to a point. Again, they will go on storing carbon from human greenhouse gas emissions – but only to a degree.

But [at around the 32°C threshold, tree growth halts](#) and [trees start to die more frequently](#), putting carbon back into the atmosphere, to accelerate more global heating, according to a detailed study of trees in more than 800 tropical forests.

And a second, unrelated study of forests worldwide finds separate evidence of the impact of climate change. Thanks to human action, [forest trees are now younger – and shorter](#).

The point of the first study is that, in their natural and undisturbed state, the world's tropical forests can take the heat, but there may be a limit to their capacity for change, and that limit is a daytime maximum of 32.2°C.

A collective of 225 researchers in South America, Africa and Asia report in the journal [Science](#) that they made 2 million measurements of 10,000 tropical tree species in sample plots in 24 countries to examine the capacity of forests to absorb atmospheric carbon in a rapidly heating world.

Safety zone

“Our analysis reveals that up to a certain point of heating, tropical forests are surprisingly resistant to small temperature differences. If we limit climate change they can continue to store a large amount of carbon in a warmer world,” said [Martin Sullivan, a geographer](#) at the University of Leeds, and at Manchester Metropolitan University, who led the study.

“The 32-degree threshold highlights the critical importance of cutting our emissions to avoid pushing too many forests beyond the safety zone.

“For example, if we limit global average temperatures to a 2°C increase above pre-industrial levels, this pushes nearly three-quarters of tropical forests above the heat threshold we identified. Any further increases in temperature will [lead to rapid losses of forest carbon](#).”

The finding suggests that overall, and independently of species of tree, tropical forest carbon declines with higher temperatures. In all forests, trees flourish and absorb carbon, die back and release it again. But at their best, forests on balance absorb and store away for centuries more carbon than they release – until the thermometer starts to rise and goes on rising.

A co-author, [Beatriz Marimon of the State University of Matto Grosso](#) in Brazil, said: “Each degree increase above this 32-degree threshold releases four times as much carbon as would have been released below the threshold.”

The message is that [tropical forests need to be protected](#) from climate change, deforestation and wildlife exploitation: that way, [they protect biodiversity, protect themselves, and protect humankind](#), for future generations. They can adapt to warming temperatures, but this takes decades, perhaps centuries.

But according to another study, also in [Science](#), forest trees the world over are now changing. They are responding to ever higher levels of atmospheric carbon – in effect, they are being fertilised – but also wildfire, drought, windstorm damage, insect attack and disease have become more frequent and more severe with climate change.

And then there has been the direct impact of human economic demand: clearance, disturbance and economic exploitation.

In consequence, US and European scientists conclude, from detailed satellite data and from reviews of more than 160 previous studies, that there has been a “pervasive shift” in forest dynamics, and a dramatic decrease in the age and stature of the forests. The world’s trees on average are younger, and shorter.

Drastic change

“This trend is likely to continue with global warming,” said [Nate McDowell, of the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory](#), who led the research.

“A future planet with fewer large, old forests will be very different than what we have grown accustomed to. Older forests often host much higher biodiversity than young forests, and they store more carbon than young forests.”

So direct and indirect human action have – in the big picture – affected the way forests shelter new seedlings, the growth of all trees, and the rate of death of those trees. Mortality is going up, while recruitment and growth are faltering.

“Unfortunately, mortality drivers like rising temperature and disturbances are on the rise and are expected to continue increasing in frequency over the next century,” Dr McDowell said.

“So reductions in forest age and height are already happening, and they’re likely to continue to happen.”

A 50,000-year old lake in India just turned pink and experts don't know exactly why

By Rishi Iyengar and Sugam Pokharel, CNN

Published Jun 12, 2020 12:31:09 PM



(CNN) — What caused the lake to turn pink?

That was the question on people's minds across India after Lonar Lake in the state of Maharashtra suddenly changed hues in recent days.

Experts believe that the change is likely due to either increased salinity in the water, the presence of algae or a combination of both -- [like parts of Utah's Great Salt Lake](#) or [Lake Hillier in Australia](#).

Gajanan Kharat, a local geologist, said in a video posted to [Maharashtra Tourism's Twitter feed](#), that this has happened before, but was not as prominent.

"It's looking particularly red this year because this year the water's salinity has increased," he said. "The amount of water in the lake has reduced and the lake has become shallower, so the salinity has gone up and caused some internal changes."

Kharat said that researchers are also investigating if the presence of red algae caused the color change.

Samples are being sent to several labs, he said, and "once they have studied it we will be able to definitively say why the lake's water has turned red."

The lake, which is located about 500 kilometers (311 miles) east of Mumbai, formed after a meteorite hit the Earth some 50,000 years ago, [according to CNN affiliate CNN News 18](#). It's a popular tourist attraction and has been studied by scientists across the globe, CNN News 18 reported.

This story was first published on CNN.com "[A 50,000-year old lake in India just turned pink and experts don't know exactly why.](#)"