

DENR, pumalag sa fake news kay Cimatú vs ex-CFO  
chair Imelda Nicolas

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## DENR, pumalag sa fake news kay Cimatú vs ex-CFO chair Imelda Nicolas

June 27, 2020 @ 4:15 PM 15 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Pumalag ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa umano’y walang basehang akusasyon ni dating Commission on Filipinos Overseas (CFO) chair Imelda Nicolas sa umano’y pagpapakalat ng fake news hinggil kay DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatú sa pagtungo nito sa Cebu City kamakailan.

“That’s nothing but fake news,” ayon kay DENR Undersecretary and Spokesperson Benny D. Antiporda sa alegasyon ni Nicolas sa Facebook nitong nakalipas na Hunyo 25, 2020.

Ayon sa Facebook post ni Nicolas “70 rooms ang nireserve umano sa Seda Hotel para sa grupo ni Cimatú at ang pinaka murang kuwarto sa hotel ay nagkakahalaga ng P5,000.”

“That’s P300,000 a day. For 1 week, that’s 2.240M,” saad pa sa post.

Nabatid pa sa isang pahinang press statement ng DENR sinabi pa umano ni Nicolas na ang naturang presyo ay gastos lamang sa kuwarto at wala pa ang pagkain at transportation.

“How many PPEs at test kits can that buy? How many sacks of rice can that buy” Is this how you rid yourself of blame? Is this how you save lives?” lahad pa ni Nicolas.

Pinabulaanan din ni Antiporda ang akusasyon ni Nicolas at sinabing wala itong basehan, walang batayan, walang katotohanan at malisyoso.

“What 70 rooms she was talking about? Si Secretary Cimatú ay nagpunta sa Cebu na isang aide lamang ang dala,” paliwanag pa ni Antiporda.

Idinagdag pa nito si Secretary Cimatú ay isang desenteng lalaki. Bilang isang dating sundalo pinaunlad niya ang kanyang kasanayan at good judgment sa paggamit ng mapagkukunan at kilala rin siya bilang mabait at hindi gastador.

Nabatid pa sa ulat na si Cimatú ay pinadala sa Katimugan simula Hunyo 23 hanggang 25 na bahagi ng kanyang trabaho bilang Covid-19 response chief sa Visayas.

Ayon pa kay Antiporda, hindi naapektuhan si Secretary Cimatú ng mga maling alegasyon upang siraan ang pagsisikap ng gobyerno para labanan ang COVID-19.

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Pinag-aaralan na aniya ng DENR ang posibleng pagsasampa ng kasong cyber libel laban kay Nicolas dahil sa pagpapakalat nito ng maling impormasyon sa social media.

“We are looking at filing a case laban sa kanya (Nicolas).” RNT/**Santi Celario**

# DENR refutes 'fake news' on Cimatu's Cebu City trip

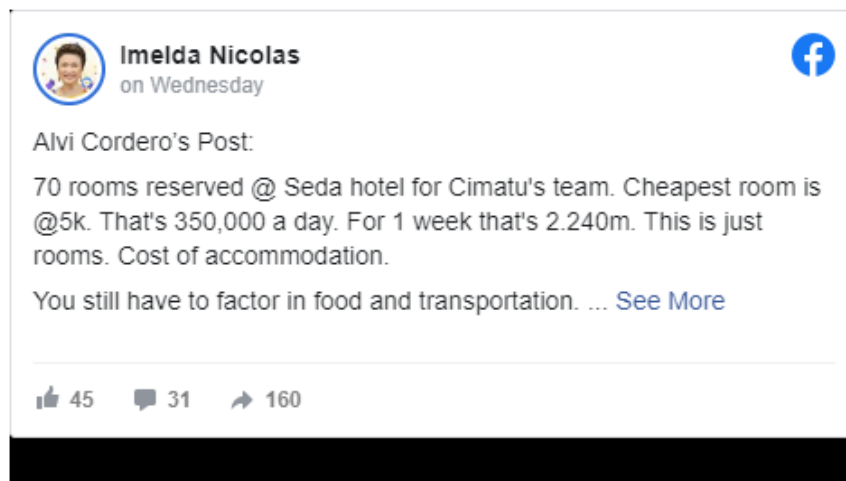
By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published Jun 27, 2020 7:45:36 PM



**Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, June 27)** — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has denied a Facebook post alleging Secretary Roy Cimatu's recent trip to Cebu City incurred huge hotel accommodation expenses.

The post in question was made by former Commission on Filipinos Overseas chairperson Imelda Nicolas, the department said in a statement on Saturday.



Nicolas started her status by indicating it is a post of a certain Alvi Cordero. "70 rooms reserved @ Seda hotel for Cimatu's team. Cheapest room is @5k. That's 350,000 a day. For 1 week that's 2.240m. This is just rooms. Cost of accommodation," it said. The post went on to say food and transportation expenses have yet to be factored in aside from accommodation costs. "How many PPEs and test kits can that buy? How many sacks of rice can that buy?," it read.

"Is this how you rid yourself of blame? Is this how you save lives?" asked the status.

DENR Spokesperson and Undersecretary Benny Antiporda also came to Cimatu's defense and refuted the said claims in the Laging Handa virtual briefing on Saturday morning.

Cimatu, who was assigned by President Rodrigo Duterte to lead the COVID-19 fight in Cebu City, only stayed there for two days, explained the environment official. The Environment chief was only accompanied by his aide, meaning the accusation that the number of reserved rooms reached to 70 is nonsense, he added.

"Hindi po totoo iyan at hindi po marangyang tao si Secretary Cimatu, dati po itong sundalo at kung ano po iyong matitipid ng taumbayan ay ginagawa po niya para po magamit sa tama ang pondo po ng kaban ng bayan," said Antiporda.

[Translation: That is not true and Secretary (Roy) Cimatú is not an extravagant person. He was a former soldier and he will do everything he can to ensure thrifty spending of public funds so these may be used correctly.]

"So, *huwag po tayong maniniwala sa mga ganiyang mga tsismis, iyan po ay isang paninira para sirain po iyong kredibilidad ng ating Kalihim Roy Cimatú,*" he added.

[Translation: Let's not believe such gossip, for it is an attempt to destroy our Secretary Roy Cimatú's credibility.]

Antiporda likewise said the agency is looking into filing a cyber libel against Nicolas for spreading false information on social media, read the DENR's statement.



Leader News Philippines

14 hrs · 🌐

DENR pumalag sa "fake news" kay Cimatu

Kinondena ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) si dating Commission on Filipino Overseas (CFO) chair Imelda Nicolas dahil sa pagpapakalat nito ng pekeng balita hinggil sa katatapos na biyahe ni Secretary Roy A. Cimatu sa Cebu City.

"That's nothing but fake news," ang reaksyon ni DENR Undersecretary at Spokesperson Benny D. Antiporda sa alegasyon ni Nicolas na inilabas sa Facebook noong Hunyo 25.

Base sa alegasyon ni Nicolas sa Facebook post nito, 70 kuwarto ang nakareserba sa grupo ni Cimatu sa Seda Hotel at ang pinakamura umano na silid ay nagkakahalaga ng P5,000.

"That's P300,000 a day. For 1 week, that's 2.240m," sabi pa ni Nicolas sa kanyang post.

Dagdag pa nito: "This is just rooms. Cost of accommodation. You still have to factor in food and transportation."

"How many PPEs and test kits can that buy? How many sacks of rice can that buy? Is this how you rid yourself of blame? Is this how you save lives?"

Agad namang kinontra ni Antiporda ang pahayag na ito ni Nicolas at sinabi pa ng opisyal na isa itong kasinungalingan at malisyosong pahayag.

"What 70 rooms she was talking about? Secretary Cimatu went to Cebu with just one aide," paliwanag ni Antiporda.

Sinabi pa niya: "Secretary Cimatu is a decent man. As a former soldier, he has developed a skill and good judgment in the use of resources. He is known to be prudent, not extravagant."

Si Cimatu ay nagtungo sa binansagang Queen City of the South mula Hunyo 23 hanggang 25 bilang bahagi ng kanyang responsibilidad upang mapigilan ang paglaganap ng COVID-19.

Inatasan ni Pangulong Rodrigo Roa Duterte ang dating Armed Forces chief sa Cebu City upang mapigilan ang paglaganap ng COVID-19 na biglang tumaas ang bilang ng mga nagkakaroon ng sakit.

Sinabi pa ni Antiporda na hindi mapipigilan ng maling alegasyon ang trabaho ni Cimatu upang maipatupad ang mga plano ng gobyerno para labanan ang COVID-19.

Aniya, pinag-aaralan na ng DENR ang posibilidad na pagsasampa ng kasong cyber libel laban kay Nicolas dahil sa pagpapakalat nito ng maling impormasyon sa social media.

"We are looking at filing a case against her (Nicolas)," ani Antiporda.

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Usec. Antiporda, pinabulaang sinosolo ni Cimat

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TITLE: ang laban sa COVID-19 sa Cebu City

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## Usec. Antiporda, pinabulaanang sinosolo ni Cimat ang laban sa COVID-19 sa Cebu City

June 27, 2020 @ 2:12 PM 18 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Pinabulaanan ni Department of Environment and National Resources Undersecretary Benny Antiporda na magsosolo si DENR Sec. Roy Cimat na labanan ang coronavirus disease o COVID-19 sa Cebu City.

Nilinaw ni Usec. Antiporda na ang lahat ng ginagawa ni Sec. Cimat ay ipinararating nito sa Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) at irirekumenda “for approval” pa rin.

Mayroon aniya kasing mga agam-agam na sinasabi na si Sec. Cimat ay magsosolo sa gagawin nito sa paglaban sa covid 19 pandemic.

“Hindi po totoo iyon at wala pong ganiyan,” ayon kay Usec. Antiporda sa Laging Handa public briefing.

Aniya, maipagmamalaki rin ng lahat na sa kauna-unahang pagkakataon sa kasaysayan at gaya na rin aniya ng sinabi ni Cebu City Vice Mayor Michael Lopez Rama na sa ilalim ng administrasyong ito ay nagkaisa-isa ang lahat ng lider politikal para tulungan ang Cebu City at nagsama sa isang lugar para pag-usapan kung paano susolusyunan itong COVID-19 pandemic.

“Kung kaya’t... although masakit po sa atin na ika nga’y isang karamdaman ito ng mga biktima, masaya po tayo at nagkakaroon ng unity ang lahat para lang ho magawan ng solusyon,” ayon kay Usec. Antiporda.

Sa kabilang dako, naniniwala naman si Usec. Antiporda na ang importante talaga sa ngayon ay pagkakaisa at iisang galaw ng bawat lider para hindi malito ang taumbayan.

“Gaya na rin po ng lumabas na mga datos medyo meron pong konting discrepancy yung numero ng local at noon pong national na health office ‘no, kung kaya’t ito ay sinasabi nga ho ni Secretary Cimat na kailangan magtugma-tugma lahat ng numero para magkaroon ng karampatang aksyon ang bawat leader dito ‘no. And at the same time makikita din po natin na rumekta po sa barangay level ang ating Kalihim para ho alamin ano ba talaga ang nangyari bakit umangat ng ganiyan iyong numero ng bawat barangay. So sa nakikita po natin ngayon is iyong concerted effort ng lahat ang magbibigay solusyon po rito,” dagdag pa ni Usec. Antiporda.

Usec. Antipoorda, pinabulaang sinusolo ni Cimatú

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Batid naman aniya ng lahat na maraming political issues na unang-unang ginagawan ng solusyon ni Sec. Cimatú.

“And along the way ay tuluy-tuloy na po iyang trabaho niya.” **RNT/Kris Jose**

# Politics seen in Cebu COVID fight

Published 5 hours ago on June 28, 2020 01:00 AM

By [Keith A. Calayaq](#)



COVID-19 response chief for Visayas and Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu is trying to solve “political issues,” specifically the alleged lack of coordination among officials in Cebu City, now considered by the national government as a virus hotspot.

Thus said Department of Environment and National Resources (DENR) Undersecretary Benny Antiporda during a Laging Handa public briefing on Saturday.

“There are so many political issues there and that’s what our Secretary is trying to solve,” Antiporda said.

“As we assessed the situation in Cebu, we found out there is no coordination, no response from the barangay level to the local government units. They are not one,” he explained.

Aside from politics, Antiporda said the Secretary is solving issues as to the discrepancies in COVID-19 numbers between the national and local and national health offices.

“As what Secretary Cimatu is saying, the numbers must add up so that the leaders here will promptly act,” he said.

During the briefing, Antiporda appealed to the public to give Cimatu a chance to lead COVID-19 efforts in Visayas as he said that handling special assignment is not new to the Secretary.

He also assured that Cimatu is not acting alone and all his actions and recommendations are subject to IATF approval.

Antiporda said Cimatu is set to make his recommendations as to the community quarantine classification in the region after 30 June.

“He’ll make his recommendation to the IATF, I think it would be this Monday to once and for all solve this problem.”

President Rodrigo Duterte earlier said Cimatu’s appointment was necessary to ensure anti-COVID measures in Cebu will be on track.

Cebu City is now considered COVID-19 hotspot as 61 of its 80 barangays have posted new cases of COVID-19 in the past 14 days, according to the Department of Health.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/06/28/politics-seen-in-cebu-covid-fight/>



# Cebu officials urged to disregard political differences to focus on COVID-19 response

Published June 27, 2020, 4:35 PM

By *Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz*

Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu, who was sent to oversee the Inter-agency Task Force (IATF) pandemic response in Cebu, seeks to address the inadequate coordination between barangay officials and city, municipal, and provincial officials amid a spike in coronavirus cases in the metropolis in the past few weeks.

Speaking on behalf of Cimatu, DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda during the Laging Handa briefing on Saturday pointed out the need to set aside political differences among the local officials of Cebu to provide a collective action to fight COVID-19.

"After they disregard their political differences, it follows that the increasing cases of coronavirus in Cebu can be easily addressed," he pointed out.

"Isantabi muna ang usaping politikal. Magsama-sama muna ang lahat para mailigtas natin ang buhay ng ating mga kababayan sa Cebu. (Put aside the political issues first. Let's all come together so we can save the lives of our fellow citizens in Cebu)," Antiporda said.

"Very simple lang. Pagkakaisa-isa ang galaw para di malito ang taumbayan. (It is very simple. There should be a coordinated action so that they do not confuse the people)," he added.

Also noting that there are discrepancies in the COVID-19 data, the DENR spokesperson said there is a need to reconcile the coronavirus data from the local and national health offices to be able to provide effective solutions to the problem.

Antiporda said the DENR chief will be giving to President Duterte his recommendation on Cebu City quarantine status after June 30.

He also assured that Cimatu's actions in Cebu are still subject to the approval of the IATF, noting concerns that the DENR secretary would be acting on his own in addressing the issues in Cebu.

# Cimatu notes 'lack of coordination' among Cebu officials amid COVID-19 spike- official

Angela Coloma, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Jun 27 2020 12:12 PM



A police officer mans a checkpoint along a road in Cebu City, June 24, 2020, after the government tightened its enhanced community quarantine restrictions as COVID-19 infections increase. *Alex Badayos, AFP*

MANILA - The national government seeks to fix an apparent lack of coordination among local government officials in Cebu province as coronavirus cases in one of its cities spiked over the past few weeks, an official said Saturday.

In a briefing on state television, Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, who spoke on behalf of Cebu coronavirus management overseer Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, said that while there are no political issues in Cebu, the official had noted "walang buong pagkilos (there was lack of collective action)" among Cebu local officials to address the problem.

"Well actually wala hong definite na political issues as we assessed na the situation sa Cebu [lumalabas na] walang coordination, walang buong pagkilos from the barangay level to the local government units to the provincial government," Antiporda said, in response to a question on what political issues Cimatu is fixing in Cebu.

(There are no definite political issues on the situation in Cebu but there is a lack of coordination. No collective action from the barangay level to the local government units to the provincial government.)

"Hindi po buo ano, so ito po 'yung binuo ng ating kalihim na ngayon ay isantabi muna ang usaping politikal kung hindi magsama-sama muna ang lahat para mailigtas natin ang buhay ng ating mga kababayan sa Cebu," Antiporda added.

(This is what the secretary (Cimatu) came up with, to set aside political issues and coordinate with each other to save lives.)

Last week, President Rodrigo Duterte placed Cebu City back under enhanced community quarantine, the strictest lockdown, after two weeks of general quarantine. This limits economic activity to utility services, food, water, and other essential sectors.

Duterte also tapped Cimatu, a former military chief, to oversee the quarantine of the city whose COVID-19 cases recently breached the 4,400-mark.

Cebu is releasing new number-coded quarantine passes to limit the movement of residents as COVID-19 infections continued to rise.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/06/27/20/cimatu-notes-lack-of-coordination-among-cebu-officials-amid-covid-19-spike-official?fbclid=IwAR33szTk3bMpHPol2ydqDRwCbQI4dBxBetbEmpgyCZKbVGd5md5rcpj0HWw>

Only granular lockdowns: No Martial Law in Cebu

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Police personnel get a pre-deployment briefing Tuesday night on the strict implementation of ECQ protocols after the Cebu City government cancelled the validity of quarantine passes.

Romeo D. Marantal

# Only granular lockdowns: No Martial Law in Cebu City

[Mitchelle L. Palaubsanon](#), [Mary Ruth R. Malinao](#) (The Freeman) - June 25, 2020 - 12:00am

CEBU, Philippines — There is no martial law in Cebu City despite the deployment of soldiers to enforce quarantine measures, Malacañang said yesterday.

The city reverted to the strictest lockdown scenario last June 15 as its health care capacity is in danger of being overwhelmed by the rising number of persons with coronavirus disease 2019 or COVID-19.

Duterte has directed Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, a retired military general, to oversee the situation in Cebu City and to use all powers of the government's COVID-19 task force to contain the virus.

The designation of Cimatu and the stronger presence of government troops have sparked fears that martial law will be declared in Cebu City, which now has more than 4,400 COVID-19 cases.

"This is not martial law. This has been decided upon by the Supreme Court, and this is as far as enforcing the ECQ (enhanced community quarantine) in Cebu is concerned," Roque told ABS-CBN News Channel.

"Normally, we have the police enforcing it but if the police is not enough, then the Armed Forces can also enforce the lockdown," he added.

Roque said the Supreme Court ruled in *Sanlakas versus Executive Secretary* that the government can order soldiers to patrol shopping malls and other civilian duties.

Roque said Cimatu is expected to make recommendations and to implement what he thinks should be done in one week. Duterte, Roque said, would issue executive orders to give legal validity to Cimatu's actions if necessary.

"He (Cimatu) has to do whatever that has to be done. There's now a hierarchy of laws that we're following here. And, of course, the mandate of General Cimatu comes from the President himself backed up by an executive order. He can exercise all powers that the President can exercise, he has been the beneficiary of delegated authority from the President," Roque said.

"He gets to exercise all the extraordinary powers of the Office of the President in dealing with the pandemic in Cebu City," he added.

For Cebu City Councilor Nestor Archival, this move of the national government is long overdue.

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"I would say that the takeover is long overdue considering that many of our constituents have died already and many are suffering on the immediate cancellation of the passes and lockdown of certain barangays," he said.

Councilor Phillip Zafra, meanwhile, does not see the presence of Cimatú as a takeover by the national government.

Zafra said the President was very categorical in saying that he is sending a team in the city headed by Cimatú to look into aspects where the national government can be of more help in order to address the crisis.

"In fact, they have acknowledged our preparations and our programs," Zafra said.

Councilor Prisca Niña Mabatid said she concedes to the wisdom of the president.

"We really need help before a downfall can happen," Mabatid said.

She called on residents of the city:

"Let's be calm because the help that we need is already here. We will get through this," she said.

### **No Hard Lockdown**

Last night, Cimatú said there will be no city-wide lockdown in Cebu City but granular lockdowns will be implemented by barangay captains in areas where there is a rise in the number of COVID-19 cases.

"Granular lockdown in Cebu City para maliit na lang, not the full city," he said during a press conference.

He asked the Department of Health (DOH)-7 to reconcile its COVID-19 data with the numbers coming from the barangays.

He also asked Mayor Edgardo Labella to account for the locally stranded individuals (LSI) in Cebu City so they can be made to undergo quarantine before they will be allowed to return to their local government units.

Cimatú said he will recommend to reduce the quarantine classification of Cebu City as long as the number of cases will go down in the weeks ahead, and if the barangay level lockdowns will be successful.

"I am very optimistic... medyo several weeks pa siguro, there will be a dramatic reduction, I will recommend the reduction of the level of quarantine classification," Cimatú said.

He said he has challenged the city and the barangays to aspire for a continuous reduction of cases in a day.

The past three days saw the least number of cases the city reported in a day since it returned to ECQ, as low as 30 cases on June 30.

### **ECQ passes**

At 10 p.m. on Tuesday, upon instruction of the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), the Cebu City government cancelled the 250,000 quarantine passes it has issued its residents.

"(If it's) just too many that's allowed to go out...that defeats the purpose of an ECQ," Roque himself said.

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Only essential services like health care and food production, export-oriented businesses, and business process outsourcing are allowed to operate in areas under ECQ.

During the presscon with Cimatu last night, Labella admitted that the quarantine passes given out during the first round of ECQ in the city were not distributed strategically. There were reportedly families that received up to five passes.

He said City Hall will correct this and is now devising a system that would ensure one household will get only one quarantine pass.

It is yet to be decided when the new passes will be distributed but said they will be distributed by the barangay captains with the help of the police.

"The issuance will be strategic and selective," Labella said.

Joshua Tan, a government employee from Barangay Pahina Central said he was shocked upon learning that the passes were cancelled as it was made late at night without prior warning.

"Cebuanos were staying at their homes that night because of the existing curfew. They must also take into consideration that we don't have enough time to prepare," he said.

Nevertheless, as a city resident, Tan said he must abide by the authorities' decision given the surging cases of COVID-19 cases.

"I'm hoping for workaround and set-up for access to go out in the coming days to buy our essential needs. It's premature to worry about what ifs this early so better to trust the process," he said.

Clyde Ivan Dolores, a college student residing in Barangay Capitol, shared the sentiment.

"Okay man ni nga decision, no, pero announcing it almost midnight... Small percentage of the population ra ang makahibaw ani... samot nga dili tanan Sugbuanon naay tarong access sa internet kay ara man jud na una mogawas," Dolores said.

(The decision is okay but it should not have been announced almost midnight when only a small percentage of the population knew, especially that not all Cebu City residents have good access to the internet where the news comes out first.)

"Unta man lang, ila tani nang giingon og buntag or bisag three days before lang para maka-prepare ang mga tao hilabi na tong mga tawo nga wala juy masulod sa ilahang tiyan," he added.

(They should have announced it in the morning or even three days before so people could prepare, especially those who barely have anything to eat.)

Dolores appealed to the city government to listen to the public's voice.

"Dili lang usa or pipila ka tawo ang magtinabangay aning kasoha; kita tanan dapat aron masulbad ni. You won't know unless you are not one of us or ingnon nato'g mga tao nga wala gyuy gahom para maka-sustain sa ilang panginabuhi matag adlaw," he said.

(This is not the work of just one or a few people. All of us should help solve this problem. You will not know if you are not one of us or if you are not one of those who can hardly sustain their livelihood every day.) **Philippine Star News Service, JMO (FREEMAN)**

DENR Sec. Roy Cimatu wants to relocate some isolation facilities in Cebu City sa some are "too close to communities"

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News5

June 26 at 10:30 PM · 🌐

#TheBigStory | DENR Sec. Roy Cimatu wants to relocate some isolation facilities in Cebu City as some renters are "too close to communities."



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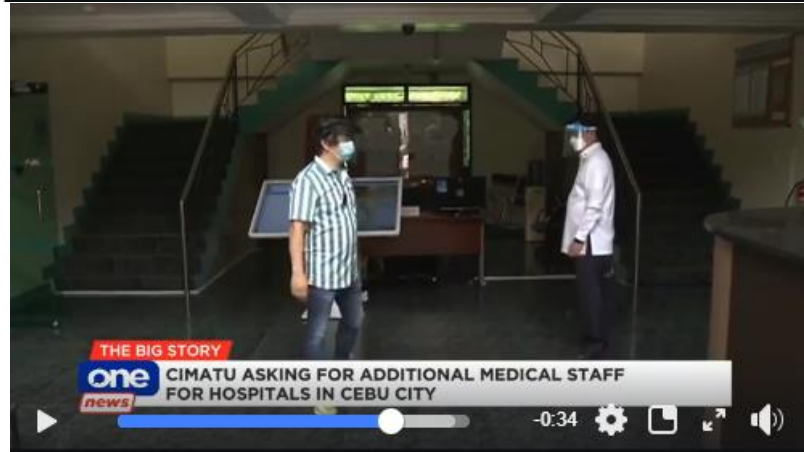
DENR Sec. Roy Cimatu wants to relocate some isolation facilities in Cebu City sa some are “too close to communities”

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# Why send environment secretary to handle a health issue — Zubiri

Published June 27, 2020, 7:31 PM

By **Vanne Elaine Terrazola**

Senate Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri admitted on Saturday that he wondered why Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu — and not Health Secretary Francisco Duque III — was tasked to handle the COVID-19 situation in Cebu City.



Senate Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri  
(Juan Miguel Zubiri Official Facebook page / MANILA BULLETIN FILE PHOTO)

While saying that he respects President Duterte's prerogative in choosing Cimatu, Zubiri noted that the problem is a health issue that should be managed by a health expert.

"Personally, hindi dapat si Cimatu ang dinala doon. Anong alam ni Cimatu sa health protocols — magaling na general 'yon, magaling na secretary — pero dapat 'yong Health Secretary ang pinadala niya (Personally, I think Cimatu should not be the one sent there. What does he know about health protocols — he's a competent general, he's a competent secretary — but the President should have assigned the Health Secretary there). That's the responsibility of the Health secretary, di ba (isn't it)?" he said, referring to Duque.

Zubiri surmised that Duterte may have seen Cimatu's performance, particularly when he led the government's clean-up and rehabilitation efforts for the Boracay Island and when he tasked the environment secretary to oversee the repatriation of overseas Filipino workers in the Middle East during the tension between the United States and Iran.

"Pero ito nga ay health pandemic (But this is a health crisis). So 'pag health pandemic, ang go-to department natin ay ang Department of Health (DOH), so nakakapagtaka ba't pinadala si Sec. Cimatu (Since this is a health crisis, the go-to department should be the DOH, so it's confusing why was Sec. Cimatu the one assigned for this). But of course that's the prerogative of the President. Nakita niya kasi performer si Cimatu, na magaling (He saw that Cimatu was a performer, that he was competent)," Zubiri said.

He said Duque and the DOH should take Cimatu's assignment as a challenge to "step up" in handling the COVID-19 outbreak.

"I think the best way is for the DOH to take responsibility, na kailangan talaga magstep up kami, 'yong sa contact tracing lalo na sa testing, kailangan damihan (that we need to step up, the contact tracing, especially the testing, we have to improve)," Zubiri said.

Senators have repeatedly slammed Duque for his supposed failure of leadership and negligence in handling the coronavirus pandemic. A resolution calling for his resignation was signed by at least 15 senators last April.

Duterte, however, has also defended his Health Secretary and vouched for his competence several times.

Last June 23, the President appointed Cimatu to oversee and implement the government's COVID-19 response programs in Cebu City, which recorded over 4,000 cases of coronavirus infections.

Source: [https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/06/27/why-send-environment-secretary-to-handle-a-health-issue-zubiri/?fbclid=IwAR21D57vLHrf8KAH0m61FGgPUTBKvLPtguWBJpj5SuX\\_NzkMJ1XeGpT9\\_ls](https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/06/27/why-send-environment-secretary-to-handle-a-health-issue-zubiri/?fbclid=IwAR21D57vLHrf8KAH0m61FGgPUTBKvLPtguWBJpj5SuX_NzkMJ1XeGpT9_ls)





## Abala man sa Cebu City: Sec. Cimatu, 'hands on' pa rin sa DENR

June 27, 2020 @ 2:52 PM 17 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Sa kabila ng pagiging abala sa Cebu City para pangunahan ang paglaban sa coronavirus disease o COVID-19 ay “hands on” pa rin sa Department of Environment and National Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu sa mga proyekto at programa ng departamento.

Sa Laging Handa public briefing ay sinabi ni DENR Usec. Benny Antiporda na personal pa ring pinangangasiwaan ni Sec. Cimatu ang mga proyekto at programa ng DENR.

“Well personal po siya, hands on po siya rito, wala po siyang itinatalaga,” ayon kay Usec. Antiporda.

Binigyang halimbawa ni Usec. Antiporda ang pagpunta ni Sec. Cimatu sa Cebu City kasama lamang ang kanyang aide.

“Actually, noong pumunta nga po siya diyan sa Cebu eh mag-isa lang siya at kasama lang po iyong iisang aide. Dalawa lang po silang pumunta roon para ho tingnan itong sitwasyon at mapag-aralan nga kung ano iyong mga aksiyon na gagawin,” saad pa nito.

Ayaw naman aniya nilang pangunahan kung ano ang magiging decision ng IATF subalit makasisiguro aniya ang publiko na nagsumite ng rekomendasyon ang Kalihim.

“I think it will be this Monday para ho once and for all mabigyan ng solusyon diyan. But basically, hindi po lalayo doon po sa mga naging desisyon din dito sa Maynila kung saan nako-control na po natin iyong numero rito,” ang pahayag ni Usec. Antiporda. **RNT/Kris Jose**

Trabaho, serbisyo ng DENR, tuloy pa rin kahit naka-lockdown: Usec. Antiporda

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## Trabaho, serbisyo ng DENR, tuloy pa rin kahit naka-lockdown: Usec. Antiporda

June 27, 2020 @ 3:02 PM 17 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Tuloy pa rin ang trabaho at serbisyo ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) dahil 95% ng operasyon nito ay online na.

Kaya nga ayon kay DENR Usec. Benny Antiporda, walang dapat na ipag-alala ang taumbayan dahil tuloy ang operasyon ng departamento kahit naka-lockdown

“Well, when it comes to our responsibilities, huwag ho kayong mag-alala. Dito po sa EMB, almost 95% of our operation eh online na po ‘no so wala pong dapat ipag-alala ang atin pong taumbayan, tuloy po ang operasyon kahit na po naka-lockdown ang ating mga opisina,” ayon kay Usec. Antiporda sa Laging Handa public briefing.

Para naman aniya sa kailangang makipag-ugnayan sa kanila ay sinabi ni Usec. Antiporda na makatatawag ang publiko sa hotline o maaari ring makipag-ugnayan sa Facebook ng DENR maging sa kanilang Twitter o website ng DENR.

“Lahat po kami ay—karamihan naman po naka-work-from-home ngayon and at the same time skeletal force po iyong nandoon po sa DENR ano po. So sakali man pong magkaroon ng self-quarantine o ano pa man pong sitwasyon, eh iyan po skeletal force ‘no. But sad to say, malaking dagok din po sa amin ‘to, but again we assure the people na tuloy po ang serbisyo ng DENR kahit na po mayroon tayong ganitong sitwasyon,” ayon kay Usec. Antiporda.

Samantala, tiniyak din ni Usec. Antiporda sa publiko na na-sanitize na ang buong compound ng DENR sa Visayas Avenue sa Quezon City habang parehong naka-isolate ang dalawang empleyado na hanggang sa ngayon ay hinihintay pa ang resulta ng COVID-19 test.

Sinabi ni Usec. Antiporda, na nag-sanitize sa environment office makaraang lumabas sa rapid test na positibo ang dalawa sa COVID-19.

Giit nito, ang isa sa mga ito ay nag-negatibo naman sa confirmatory test at ang isa ay hinihintay pa ang resulta ng RT-PCR (reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction) test.

Trabaho, serbisyo ng DENR, tuloy pa rin kahit naka-lockdown: Usec. Antiporda

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“Although naka-lockdown tayo, sabi ng kalihim, personal niyang pinangasiwaan ito kahapon, siya mismo nagpa-sanitize sa buong compound, ‘di lang building ng Environment Management Bureau kundi ‘yung buong compound ng DENR,” ayon kay Usec. Antiporda.

“Yung isa pang hindi pa lumalabas ang PCR test nasa medical facility. ‘Yung isa naman naka-quarantine naman kahit negative siya sa PCR.”

Ang lahat ng empleyadong nakasalamuha aniya ng dalawa ay naka-home quarantine habang hinihintay ang resulta ng PCR test. **RNT/Kris Jose**

# DENR compound na-sanitize na sa gitna ng COVID-19 lockdown

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Jun 27 2020 12:47 PM



DENR Facebook page

MAYNILA - Nasanitize na ang buong compound ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources sa Visayas Avenue sa Quezon City habang naka-isolate pa ang 2 empleyado nito na tinitiyak pa ang resulta ng COVID-19 test.

Sabi ni DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda nitong Sabado, nag-sanitize sa environment office matapos lumabas sa rapid test na positibo ang 2 sa COVID-19.

Ang isa sa mga ito ay nag-negatibo naman sa confirmatory test at ang isa ay hinihintay pa ang resulta ng RT-PCR (reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction) test.

“Although naka-lockdown tayo, sabi ng kalihim, personal niyang pinangasiwaan ito kahapon, siya mismo nagpa-sanitize sa buong compound, ‘di lang building ng Environment Management Bureau kundi 'yung buong compound ng DENR,” ani Antiporda.

Sa virtual Laging Handa presser ng pamahalaan, binanggit ni Antiporda parehong naka-isolate pa ang dalawang empleyado.

“Yung isa pang hindi pa lumalabas ang PCR test nasa medical facility. 'Yung isa naman naka-quarantine naman kahit negative siya sa PCR,” sabi nya.

Aniya, lahat ng empleyadong nakasalamuha ng dalawa ay naka-home quarantine habang hinihintay ang resulta ng PCR test.

Dagdag ni Antiporda na tuloy pa rin ang trabaho sa EMB dahil 95 percent ng operasyon nito ay online na.

“Wala pong dapat ipag-alala ang ating taumbayan, tuloy po ang operasyon kahit naka-lockdown ang ating opisina,” sabi niya.

Source: [https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/06/27/20/denr-compound-na-sanitize-na-sa-gitna-ng-covid-19-lockdown?fbclid=IwAR3tbC2I-pXLHVkF9zJn-avbB\\_bhYSEN\\_rNyAiRfhOVM9YsiUPLOfgZSkv4](https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/06/27/20/denr-compound-na-sanitize-na-sa-gitna-ng-covid-19-lockdown?fbclid=IwAR3tbC2I-pXLHVkF9zJn-avbB_bhYSEN_rNyAiRfhOVM9YsiUPLOfgZSkv4)

# DENR, some courts under lockdown

By: [Jhesset O. Enano](#), [Meg Adonis](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:02 AM June 26, 2020

The entire compound of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) central office in Quezon City will be placed on lockdown, after two employees of one of its line bureaus tested positive for the new coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda on Thursday said the employees were from the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB), which was among the offices located within the agency's compound in Visayas Avenue, Diliman.

In an online press briefing with reporters, Antiporda said Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu ordered the immediate lockdown of the compound for its thorough sanitation.

## Delay in transactions

"To the people transacting with EMB, please bear with us since there might be some delays. We ask for your patience," he told reporters.

Antiporda said the DENR central office will coordinate with its general services division to decide if all other employees need to undergo rapid testing for the coronavirus.

He did not say until when the compound will be closed.

The compound is also where the Mines and Geosciences Bureau and National Solid Waste Management Commission, among other agencies, are located.

## Affected staff

The Quezon City Hall of Justice and Quezon City Police District headquarters were previously placed on lockdown after their personnel tested positive for COVID-19.

The Mandaue City Hall of Justice in Cebu province was also closed earlier, following the death of a prosecutor who had tested positive.

Earlier this month, the Supreme Court announced the temporary closure of the New Hall of Justice in Mandaluyong City and the Old Ombudsman Building along Taft Avenue in Manila until June 29 after a prosecutor tested positive for COVID-19.

The Supreme Court confirmed that the prosecutor also visited the building in Manila, which prompted the 14-day lockdown.

The Valenzuela Regional Trial Court (RTC)-Bulwagang Katarungan will be on temporary lockdown until July 9 after a staffer reportedly interacted with a patient who tested positive for COVID-19.

In a memorandum released on Wednesday and made public on Thursday, Executive Judge Maria Nena Santos said judges and court personnel must undergo the mandatory 14-day quarantine period.

## Continue as scheduled

Bulwagang Katarungan in Barangay Malinta was renovated and reopened last year. It houses several RTCs and metropolitan trial courts.

During the two-week lockdown that began on Thursday, Santos said court hearings and raffle of cases will continue as scheduled through video conferencing, while other proceedings will be acted upon by the court, in coordination via email with other branches and the Office of the Clerk of Court.

“If the result [of] the swab test of the person who had contact with a COVID-19-positive [patient] turns out negative, in-court proceedings and other transactions will resume immediately,” Santos said.



## Balik-ops ng suspended mining companies, pinag-aaralan pa ng DENR-Usec. Antiporda

June 27, 2020 @ 3:27 PM 16 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Patuloy na nagsasagawa ng malalim na pag-aaral ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa pagbabalik-operasyon ng suspended mining companies.

Sa Laging Handa public briefing, sinabi ni DENR Usec. Benny Antiporda na alam naman ng lahat na ang kanilang pangunahing layunin ay protektahan ang kalikasan kung kaya't sinisiguro nila na compliant o sumusunod muna ang lahat ng kompanyang ito bago sila payagang magbukas uli.

"But sad to say with this kind of situation, isa rin pong malaking source of income natin ito pong mining companies kung kaya't minamadali rin po namin 'no. But rest assured that the first priority of our secretary is the protection of our environment," ayon kay Usec. Antiporda. **RNT/Kris Jose**

Source: <https://remate.ph/balik-ops-ng-suspended-mining-companies-pinag-aaralan-pa-ng-denr-usec-antiporda/?fbclid=IwAR2iEfRO8V-ejJMBwKk0a-2KQsTnXzWiWMLm6I3POUDZM84m8LzZBVyh2dw>

Habang quarantine: DENR, nakatutok sa wildlife  
illegal trade

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## Habang quarantine: DENR, nakatutok sa wildlife illegal trade

June 27, 2020 @ 4:03 PM 16 hours ago  
Views: 153

Manila, Philippines – Nakatutok ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa wildlife illegal trade na sinasamantala ngayong community quarantine.

“Iyan, eh talaga hong nakatutok kami at nakabantay ano po. Hindi ho makakawala sa amin iyan, mas lalo po kaming nagiging vigilant kapag ganito po ang sitwasyon dahil alam po namin na mayroon pong magti-take chance dito sa ganitong sitwasyon,” ayon kay DENR Usec. Benny Antiporda sa Laging Handa public briefing.

Napaulat kasi na may ilang indibiduwal ang sinasamantala ang community quarantine para makapagsagawa ng illegal trade ng mga natural resources.

Kamakailan ay napaulat na may tinatayang 20 kilograms o katumbas ng halagang P3.2 milyon ng Agarwood na isang mamahaling raw material na ginagamit sa paggawa daw ng perfume ang nasabat sa apat na indibidwal.

“Well, una ho iyong tungkol po rito sa atin pong operasyon dito sa mga lumalabag sa ating environment and natural resources laws ‘no. Makikita ninyo naman po na lalo pong tumapang ang environmental enforcers natin kasama po natin ang National Bureau of Investigation na talaga po namang kahit na mayroong ganitong COVID-19 ay talagang hindi po kami nagpapahinga at tuloy po iyong laban namin diyan po sa mga illegal traders ng mga natural resources na iyan,” tugon ni Usec. Antiporda.

May parusang kulong at mga multa ang mga mahuhuling gagawa ng ilegal at lalabag sa batas.

“Kaya’t huwag ho tayong magpakasiguro na gumawa ng iligal lalo na against the environmental laws dahil kami po’y laging nakabantay, hindi po nagpapahinga ang DENR kasama na rin po ang mga enforcement agencies na tumutulong po sa atin gaya ng NBI,” lahad pa ni Antiporda.

At sa tanong kung tumaas o nadagdagan ang bilang ng mga nasangkot sa illegal trade ng natural resources, sinabi ni Usec. Antiporda na hindi tumaas ang numero at hindi rin aniya dumami pero lumaki ang volume.



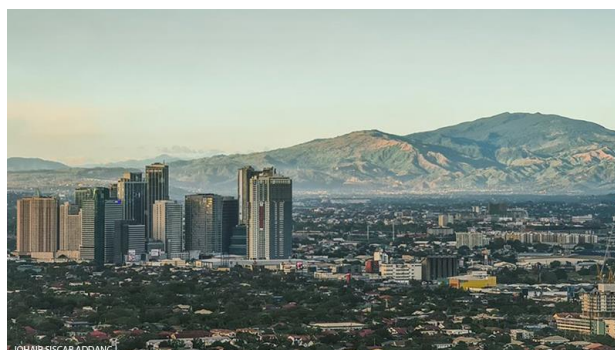
Habang quarantine: DENR, nakatutok sa wildlife  
TITLE: illegal trade

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“Kasi ho mas naniwala sila na puwede silang mangapital at bumili ng mas malaking bulto noong iligal na mga bagay gaya nitong Agarwood at ang akala nila ay one-time mailulusot nila at kikita sila rito ‘no. Lyon ho iyong napansin natin na hindi nila alam na kahit na ganito ay mayroon po tayong mga impormante na nakakalat po diyan sa mga probinsya na pinanggagalingan niyang Agarwood na iyan at nakakarating po sa mga kinauukulan iyong ginagawa nila,” paliwanag ni Usec. Antiporda.

“Dahil iyang Agarwood na ho iyan, kapag kinuha ho nila sa isang puno iyan, namamatay na ho iyong buong puno. Would you imagine napakatandang puno na, kukunin mo iyan tapos mamamatay lang nang ganun-ganun at wala siyang nagiging kapalit. Lyon po ang—ganoon ho nagsa-suffer ang ating forest tuwing kukunan ng Agarwood.” **RNT/Kris Jose**



## Air quality index, nagkaroon ng pagbabago: Usec. Antiporda

June 27, 2020 @ 3:51 PM 16 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Inamin ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Usec. Benny Antiporda na medyo may pagbabago sa air quality index ng bansa lalo na sa Metro Manila.

Sinabi ni Usec. Antiporda sa Laging Handa public briefing na sa ngayon ay 'fair' na ang air quality index dahil sa public utility vehicles (PUVs).

"Well, ang air quality index po natin, dati po lumalaro lang po siya sa good and fair 'no; majority noong ating monitoring areas ay good talaga. So, napakasarap lumabas at sumimoy man lang malinis na hangin. Pero sad to say ngayon po ay medyo sumama ng kaunti, nasa fair po tayo ngayon. Karamihan nasa fair po tayo, pero may mga lugar na good pa rin," ayon kay Usec. Antiporda.

Sinabi ni Usec. Antiporda na ang nakikita nilang salarin sa pagiging 'fai' ng air quality index ay ang public utility vehicles.

"Iyong gumagamit ng mga surplus na mga sasakyan iyong problema po natin sa air. Dahil noon pong wala pa po itong COVID ang atin pong air quality ay lumalaro sa fair to unhealthy 'no, sometimes very unhealthy pa siya kapag iyong traffic iyong area talaga at naiipon iyong usok sa isang lugar," ayon kay Usec. Antiporda.

Kaya, nananawagan si Usec. Antiporda sa mga kababayan na jeepney operators at drivers na sa tuwing makikita ng mga ito na may diperensiya ang sasakyan ay huwag na aniyang hintayin ang emission testing para masabing kailangang magpagawa pa.

"Baka puwedeng ipagawa lang po natin ang ating mga sasakyan and at the same time malinis na po natin ang ating mga exhaust system para po hindi naman po masira pa ang ating air quality," saad pa nito.

Dapat aniyang palaging tandaan na wala pa aniyang umiiral na filter para sa hangin.

"Napakahirap po mayroon man tayo, hindi po ganoon kalakas na makina na kaya ng isang kuwarto na i-filter, pero iyon pong air natin sa labas, sa kalsada at sa mga open air areas, aba'y napakahirap po talaga dahil wala po tayong panlinis diyan po, kaya't ang tinatamaan po niyan ay baga natin and always remember, sa COVID-19 po, baga rin po ang tinitira ng sakit na iyan kung kaya't pangalagaan po natin ang ating baga by means of taking care of our air quality." **RNT/Kris Jose**

Source: [https://remate.ph/air-quality-index-nagkaroon-ng-pagbabago-usec-antiporda/?fbclid=IwAR0jl-YaQsqf3Gc98vQrI\\_Vz3nXHIKdIdiRxouTBxvrJzyS96cMAILAYjpl](https://remate.ph/air-quality-index-nagkaroon-ng-pagbabago-usec-antiporda/?fbclid=IwAR0jl-YaQsqf3Gc98vQrI_Vz3nXHIKdIdiRxouTBxvrJzyS96cMAILAYjpl)



ABS-CBN News

10 hrs · 🌐

#NewsPatrol Unti-unti nang sumasama ang kalidad ng hangin sa ilang bahagi ng bansa.

Ayon kay DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, nasa 'fair' na ang kalidad ng hangin sa karamihan sa mga monitored areas sa Luzon, Cebu at Davao.

BASAHIIN: <https://bit.ly/3dHwh8S>



👍 🤔 😲 498

53 Comments 24 Shares



# Dagdag na suporta, apela ng online petition vs pagputol ng higit 50 pine trees sa Baguio City

By [Bombo Radyo Baguio](#)

-June 27, 2020 | 8:53 PM

BAGUIO CITY – Tuloy ang panghingi ng suporta ng isang online petition na humihiling sa pagpapahinto ng isang kompanya sa pagputol ng mga puno sa Outlook Drive sa siyudad ng Baguio.

Dahil dito, inumpisahan ng environmental activist na si Michael Bengwayan ang nasabing petisyon na humihingi sa pagtatalakay ni Baguio Mayor Benjamin Magalong sa isyu lalung-lalo na at nakakuha na ang kompanya ng tree-cutting permit mula sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Umapela sila kay Magalong dahil alam nila na kinikilala ng alkalde ang halaga ng mga puno sa siyudad at umaasa sila na may magiging aksyon ito sa nasabing petisyon.

Una rito, ibinigay ng DENR ang Special Private Land Timber Permit sa Vista Residences Incorporated na pumapayag sa pagpuputol sa 53 na Benguet Pine at isang Norfolk Island Pine sa pribado na lote ng kompanya sa Outlook Drive.

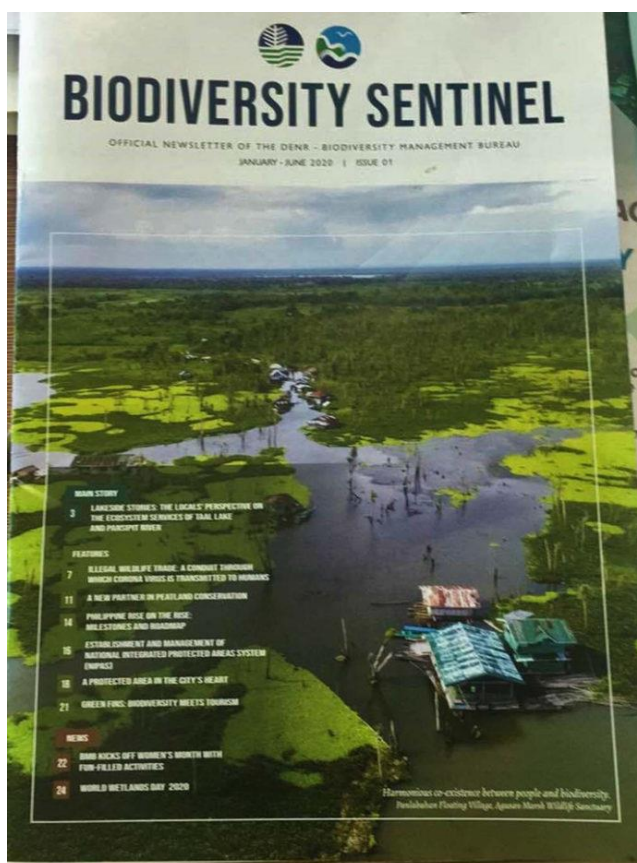
Batay sa record ng DENR-Cordillera, nag-apply ang property owner ng nasabing permit noong 2018 at naipasailalim ito ng mahabang proseso at sumunod naman ang mga ito sa pagkuha Environmental Clearance Certificate, barangay certificate at mayor's clearance.

Napag-alaman na dodoblehin ng kompanya ang 5,400 na unang itinakdang bilang at dami ng Benguet Pine Seedling na ipapalit nila sa mga puputulin nilang puno.

# DENR-BMB launches 'Biodiversity Sentinel' newsletter

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

June 28, 2020



The Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Biodiversity Management Bureau (DENR-BMB) has launched last week the maiden issue of Biodiversity Sentinel, the newsletter of the agency's biodiversity bureau.

The launching of the newsletter aims to further promote the country's rich biodiversity, and communicate the policies and programs of the DENR-BMB.

The magazine-type newsletter will contain sections such as News and Features, Questions and Answers, Infographics, and semi-technical articles of BMB biodiversity activities, and possible contributions from the regions.

It will be published every six months to share information to DENR personnel and partners.

Assistant Secretary Ricardo Calderon, the concurrent director of the DENR-BMB, said with the newsletter, they will be able to further boost the effort to protect and conserve the country's rich biodiversity, as well as highlight the protected areas and the unique but threatened species.

"We will be able to reach out to our frontline Penros [Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officers] and Cenros [City Environment and Natural Resources Officers] and Pasus [Protected Area Superintendents], providing them relevant information and update," Calderon said.

For the maiden issue, Biodiversity Sentinel will feature the Agusan Marsh, highlighting the ecological importance of wetlands.

Meanwhile, the “PA Talk: Protected Areas for a Protected Future,” a program promoting the country’s 107 legislated Protected Areas began streaming live at 10 a.m. on June 22 on the social-media platform Facebook.

Organized by the DENR-BMB, in partnership with the Climate Change Commission and the Office of Deputy Speaker Loren Legarda, the program aims to highlight the beauty of the country’s protected areas and the efforts to preserve and protect them against degradation, climate change, and other threats.

The pilot episode featured the following protected areas: Mount Hamiguitan Range Wildlife Sanctuary in Davao Oriental; Siargao Island Protected Landscape and Seascape in Surigao del Norte; Balinsasayao Twin Lakes Natural Park in Negros Oriental; Peñablanca Protected Landscape and Seascape in Cagayan; Mount Isarog Natural Park in Camarines Sur; and Mounts Iglit-Baco National Park in Oriental Mindoro and Occidental Mindoro.

The show was launched on the occasion of the second anniversary of the enactment of the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 2018.

The law substantially increased the number of protected areas from 13 to 107 that were backed with legislation.

# After two decades of mining, Canatuan mined area coming back to life

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

June 28, 2020



*The Sulphide Dam at the Canatuan mine.*

After more than 25 years of mining, the diverse flora and fauna in Sitio Canatuan is finally starting to return.

Once the site of one of the country's large-scale open-pit mines, the area is now teeming with rich vegetation—tall trees and shrubs—surrounding a large body of water is back, and so are the wildlife—the wild birds and ducks have come in flocks and the native monkeys have returned to forage.



*A monkey sits at a branch of a tree in the forested area of TVIRD's Sulphide Dam.*

Environmentalists consider mining a menace because of their destructive nature.

The so-called legacy mines in the Philippines—abandoned open-pit mines left behind by mining companies after mining operations—are a testament to the ugly scar irresponsible mining leave behind.

## Gold, silver producer

Situated in Sitio Canatuan in the municipality of Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte, the Canatuan mine of TVI Resource Development (TVIRD) Philippines Inc., which produced gold and silver in the early years, and later on, operated a copper and zinc processing facility—is claiming to have successfully rehabilitated the mining area, proving that responsible mining is possible.

TVIRD was the first company to operate under the Philippine Mining Act of 1995. The law aims to revitalize the country's mining industry and introduced progressive rehabilitation working toward full restoration of mined-out areas upon the end of the life of the mine.

After two decades of mining, Canatuan mined area

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Canatuan mine's operation was credited for the once-sleepy agricultural town's phenomenal growth and development as it achieved the status of a first-class municipality, the company said in a news release.



*Wild ducks are commonly found at TVIRD's Sulphide Dam. Local officials are eyeing to transform the area into a tourist destination once the MPSA is turned-over to the government.*

## Progressive rehabilitation

Six years ago, after the mining contract expired, TVIRD started working on its final mine rehabilitation. The company claimed it has practiced the so-called progressive rehabilitation—immediately working to rehabilitate disturbed areas after mining activities.

To date, achieving 94-percent completion as confirmed by the Multipartite Monitoring Team (MMT) that oversees its accomplishment, TVIRD has fulfilled its obligation, the company said.

The firm said its final rehabilitation is, likewise, considered a true test of the mining law, boosting mining industry's claim that responsible mining is possible, as it has become a reality in the case of the Canatuan mine.

## Devastated by small-scale mining

A wide-scale environmental cleanup and rehabilitation in Sitio Canatuan before starting the mining operation was conducted by TVIRD. It found out that the area was already "in bad shape," owing to decades of illegal small-scale mining, the company said.

Mount Canatuan in Siocon municipality was a picture of heavy devastation in the late 1980s as illegal miners from Zamboanga Sibugay and other provinces in Mindanao dug holes to extract gold in the area. In the process, cutting down trees without replanting.

Small-scale backyard processing facilities also polluted the creeks and rivers with hazardous chemicals. The mountain was riddled with hundreds of unengineered tunnels and shallow ponds that served as makeshift tailings pond for close to 50 mill plants.

The tailings were laced with deadly cyanide, mercury and nitric acid

In 2002, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau reported its findings to the Zamboanga del Norte local government unit, which prompted the provincial government to order the dismantling of illegal mining operations in the village.

## Reforestation

Throughout its operating years, TVIRD's Environment Department started rehabilitating the denuded parts of Mount Canatuan as well as mined-out areas turned over by its Mines Department, the news release said.



After two decades of mining, Canatuan mined area

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By the end of its mining operations in February 2014, TVIRD has planted more than 348,000 trees as part of its progressive rehabilitation.

With an additional 63,000 trees during final rehabilitation, the company has planted a total of 411,000 trees within its Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA) area, which is part of the Subanon tribe's ancestral domain.

Fast-growing and endemic trees, as well as rubber trees intended for the Subanons' livelihood, were planted. Among these are close to 30,000 rubber trees, which are a good source of future income for the tribe.

Of the 508-hectare area, 167 hectares comprise the total rehabilitation area.

## Bird census

Last year, the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (Cenro) of Siocon conducted its Annual Asian Waterbird Census and traveled to TVIRD's Tailings Storage Facility (Sulphide Dam) to count the number of wild ducks found in the area.

In a news release by TVIRD, Ecosystem Management Specialist Muhammad Faz'l Ur-Rahman Werble reported some 950 wild ducks at that time.

In 2018, during the previous year's count, it registered only 500.

"It means there's life at the waste disposal facility of the company," said Cenro Team Leader Efren T. Cardenas in the same news release.

Besides wild ducks, they also found hawks, eagles, squirrels, bats and a variety of snakes, including the Philippine cobra.

## Shared responsibility

Interviewed via e-mail, TVIRD Chief Environmental Officer Krystell Banaag and Community Relations Manager Lullie Micabalo said environmental protection and conservation and livelihood activities initiated by TVIRD were intertwined.

They were implemented in partnership with the government and the community as the rehabilitation of the mine was considered their shared responsibility.

TVIRD established the rehabilitation design, operational protocols and monitoring program to ensure that the mine closure goals will be achieved.

Its environment department commenced progressive rehabilitation activities during the operations stage.

A multidisciplinary Mine Closure Team remains on site to implement the approved Final Mine Rehabilitation and Decommissioning Plan.

On the other hand, the involvement of the community started in the planning stage of the Post Mining Land Use Concept—which they agreed to be of mixed land use—which consists primarily of a retained forest, diversified reforestation and agroforestry areas.

After two decades of mining, Canatuan mined area

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“Their participation continued through the rehabilitation stage, particularly in the monitoring of rehabilitation progress through their membership in the [MMT]. Community benefit will be in the form of sustainable livelihood from an agri-business program that will be introduced by the company. Part of this program is providing the infrastructure needed and capacity building through training and network establishment,” Banaag said.

On the other hand, the government, through the Contingent Liability and Rehabilitation Fund Committee, Mine Rehabilitation Fund Committee and MMT, acts as the licensing agency and regulators.

## Good biological indicator

Banaag said the return of the wildlife in a mine’s disturbed area is an indication that the rehabilitation efforts and protection of the remaining forest areas within the mining tenement are effective and successfully carried out.

She said most of the species found in the mined-out area are birds, which are fruit and insect eaters, playing a significant role in seed dispersal and insect control.

The smaller mammals, such as fruit bats, are a big help as they also participate in seed propagation and insect control

“There were also invertebrate-eating birds, omnivorous mammals and snakes, suggesting that prey animals, such as lizards, small mammals, frogs and fish and others are thriving in the area,” Banaag explained.

“The presence of the Philippine duck is noteworthy since they are not visible in the area before and during mine operations. They were seen in the Sulfide Dam beginning in 2016—two years into TVIRD’s final mine rehabilitation stage,” Micabalo said for her part.

## Teeming with wildlife

Banaag said the rehabilitated areas is now “a forest teeming with wildlife.”

The latest Fauna Inventory conducted by SGS Philippines in 2018 recorded a total of 75 species of terrestrial vertebrates, the majority are birds (51), followed by amphibians and reptiles (16) and mammals (8), she said.

Banaag added that it is expected that more individuals from the existing species will be back in the area once rehabilitation is completed.

“To date, the rehabilitation work is 94 percent complete but some of the plantation areas are relatively young, needing another three to five years to fully mature. Matured plantation will likely provide better vegetation cover for habitat and better food source,” she said.

According to Micabalo, a long time ago, before small-scale mining caused its destruction, Mount Canatuan used to be a hunting ground where deer roam freely.

She said that with the availability of a more sustainable livelihood and income source for the local community, it is not impossible that deers will return to Canatuan forests.

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“It is also said that the Philippine eagle can thrive in the thick forests of Canatuan,” she noted.

## Livelihood program

Interviewed by the BusinessMirror through e-mail that was translated by Micabalo, the members of the Subanon indigenous people (IP) in Sitio Canatuan and other areas in Siocon said they have benefited from mining and expect to benefit from the mine’s rehabilitation.

Marelyn Taconing, who has been with TVIRD since 2003, and her husband, Dadao Taconing, own the land where the company’s Exploration Camp is located.

They are among the Subanon beneficiaries of the company’s livelihood programs. They are likewise land claimants under the Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title.

Taconing currently works in TVIRD’s Administration Department and in charge of its Exploration Camp.

## Back to farming

Taconing said Subanons are currently engaging in farming upland rice, corn, root crops, coconut trees, bananas and rubber trees.

TVIRD provided the Subanons with free rubber tree seedlings, technologies and coconut seedlings. He said around 1,400 families who are all Subanon benefit from TVIRD’s livelihood programs. Of the number, around 1,600 were employees during the company’s recent operations.

Currently, a family earn an average of P5,000 from farming in either rubber, upland rice, bananas or copra from coconut lands.

Since Subanon IPs are farmers, Taconing is confident that the livelihood program introduced by TVIRD will be sustained.

Image Credits: [TVIRD](#)



## Nature's display

posted June 27, 2020 at 09:08 pm



The Department of Environment and Natural Resources posted on its Facebook account this photo of a series of lightning strikes in Manila Bay captured from Limay, Bataan on June 23. Anthony Mungcal

Source: <https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/327204>

# Group bucks operation of smoke-belching jeepneys

June 27, 2020 6:08 PM by [DZRH News](#)



*Special on Saturday host Cesar Chavez with guest Dr. Leo Olarte (Clean Air Movement of the Philippines Inc)*

MANILA—A group advocating clean air opposes the operation of smoke-belching public utility jeepneys (PUJs) once the government allows them to ply their routes in Metro Manila and all over the country.

Lawyer Leo Olarte, MD, president of Clean Air Movement of the Philippines Inc. (CAMPI), expressed his opposition against the re-entry of PUJs that belch smoke citing the hazard they pose to public health, during an interview in the DZRH Special On Saturday (SOS) program.

Olarte said there are about 250,000 PUJs operating all over the country and if the government allows them back in the roads the smoke belchers must be prohibited because he claimed that the smoke belched from these PUJs can damage human DNA.

He said about half of the number of PUJs in Metro Manila are smoke belchers.

Olarte said the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) has pledged to allow PUJs to ply their routes if they are road worthy.

He added that their group is willing to extend food assistance to jeepney drivers affected by their demand against the operation of smoke-belching PUJs.

## Good for your lungs

posted June 27, 2020 at 08:58 pm



Greenpeace Philippines has joined called on the government to establish not just protected but also healthy bike lanes to minimize air pollution.

Source: <https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/327202>

Villar: proper Waste management Should Be the  
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# Villar: Proper Waste Management Should Be the Norm In The New Normal

Experts cite continuity of recycling efforts is important during and after the Covid-19 pandemic  
Argie Aguja Saturday, June 27, 2020



Senator Cynthia Villar, chairperson of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, said the ongoing pandemic due to the coronavirus has shown that there is really a direct link between environment or nature and the spread of diseases. The most critical of which is in protection of wildlife habitats and solid waste management.

She has earlier called the public's attention on how the protection habitats and biodiversity can prevent another pandemic. Thus, there should be stricter implementation of environmental laws specially on protected areas.

"It is not only destruction of natural habitats that can cause the spread of infectious and zoonotic diseases, improperly disposed wastes are causes of infection and contamination. So, we should to take proper waste disposal and management even more seriously," said Villar, who has established programs and projects that protect the environment since she was a congresswoman during the early 2000s.



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She spent nine years of her public life, as a congresswoman from 2001 to 2010, in saving the Las Piñas-Zapote River. It even won for her the 2011 United Nations (UN) Water for Life Best Water Management Practices. Her very popular livelihood projects, which have been duplicated nationwide, are a result that river rehabilitation project. That started her advocacy to promote proper waste management until now as a senator.

“We should encourage Filipinos to be responsible stewards of the environment. There should be a shared responsibility among us when it comes to waste management. There is no exception because we all generate wastes,” said Villar.

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), “If solid waste is not dealt with quickly, serious health risks will develop which will further demoralize the community already traumatized by the emergency”. Moreover, the International Solid Waste Association cites that “Waste Management is one of the most important sanitary barriers to prevent dissemination of illnesses and diseases.”

“Whether there is a community quarantine/lockdown or not, proper waste management is important. It becomes even more crucial now because some waste collection activities and services were disrupted. But the amount of wastes produced, especially in households, continues to increase,” cited Villar, who has established projects that help process solid wastes innovatively and sustainably.

The raw materials used in Villar’s livelihood projects are from wastes. These are water hyacinths for the waterlily handicraft-weaving enterprise and the handmade paper factory; waste coconut husks for the coconet-weaving enterprise and the charcoal-making factory; kitchen and garden wastes for the organic fertilizer composting facility; and plastic wastes for the waste plastic recycling factory that produces school chairs. The senator has set up over 3,000 livelihood projects nationwide.



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/27254475167/posts/10158511628410168/?app=fbl>



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Villar believes that there should be greater private sector and public participation in the development waste management programs. Her projects are implemented by the Villar Social Institute for Poverty Alleviation and Governance or Villar SIPAG. It has established barangay-based livelihood enterprises that are models of proper waste management and good examples of how garbage can be turned into useful end-products.

The coconet weaving enterprises turn coconut husks that clog rivers and waterways into materials as such as coconets, which are used as riprap materials in construction projects to prevent soil erosion. “Initially, coconets are the only products, but we also discovered that we can also use the coco dusts to produce organic fertilizers and the enterprise has also started making charcoal brisquettes out of them,” cited Villar.

The workers extract fiber and coco peat from the waste coco husks using a decorticating machine. The fiber is used for making coconet and the coco dusts are mixed with household wastes to make organic fertilizers that are distributed for free to farmers and urban gardeners.

A decorticating machine can extract fiber and dust from up to 8,000 waste coconut husks daily . The fibers are then made into twines by women workers. Each twine is eight meters long. Another group of workers weave the loom of twines. The twiners and weavers earn P3,000 to P13,000 a month on piece work basis. Vista Land is the biggest buyer of coconets, which is priced P2,500 per roll. The Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) is giving out decorticating machines as one of their programs.

There is also a composting facility set up by Villar that produces compost organic fertilizer, the use of which is environment-friendly since it keeps the soil healthy. It is also the first step in organic farming. The facility uses two methods — rotary composting and vermicomposting.

“We must remember that 95 percent of our food comes from the soil. People can help by simply bringing nutrients back to the soil by composting and using organic fertilizer. We should compost our kitchen and garden wastes,” said Villar.

The intensive and excessive use of chemical fertilizers and insecticides cause damages to crops, decrease crop production and result to loss of soil fertility. In fact, soil degradation in the country has reached 38 percent.

Villar facilitated the establishment of composting centers in barangays and she facilitated the collection of kitchen at garden wastes in the households to be brought to the composting facility. It now has 80 composters utilized by 80,000 households.

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She is giving out seeds with organic fertilizers from these composting facilities to those establishing urban gardens.

She has also worked with the Bureau of Soils and Water Management (BSWM) in providing Small Scale Composting Facilities (SSCFs) to farmer-beneficiaries in various parts of the country, so they can produce their own organic fertilizer.

Villar also addressed the worsening problem of plastic pollution by recycling plastic wastes, which the UN has in fact called a “planetary crisis.” Based on a University of Georgia study, the Philippines ranked, next to China and Indonesia (among 192 countries surveyed), in terms of volume of plastic wastes produced by the population. Thus, efforts to reduce or eliminate plastic wastes are very important and crucial.

The senator, through Villar SIPAG, put up a Waste Plastic Recycling Factory in 2013 in Barangay Ilaya, Las Piñas City. It converts waste plastics into chairs, thus it helps solve another perennial problem — lack of school chairs.

One school chair can be produced out of 20 kilos of waste plastics such as sachets and wrappers. It takes less than 30 minutes to produce a chair. Monthly production is around 1,100 plastic chairs. Since 2013, the Las Piñas factory has produced over 30,000 chairs, which are distributed for free to various public schools all over the country.

In 2017, two other factories have been set up by Villar SIPAG in Iloilo and Cagayan de Oro cities to cover the Visayas and Mindanao regions. Both factories can produce 300 plastic chairs per month.

Over the years, Villar’s waste management initiatives have inspired other organizations and LGUs to duplicate its initiatives. Among which is the Philippine Alliance for Recycling & Materials Sustainability (PARMS) and the City of Parañaque. They also established a plastics recycling factory similar to Villar SIPAG’s.

Solid wastes experts such as ISWA said ensuring the continuity of recycling efforts are important during and after the COVID-19 pandemic because if households and businesses stop handling recyclables, “the overall waste system will be saddled with between 30 and 50 percent more materials and there is a risk of system failure.” It warned that “if any authority call a halt to all recycling collection during the crisis, the message to citizens will be that it is not important.”

Villar also emphasized that environmental protection, particularly proper waste disposal and handling, is very important with or without a pandemic. She cited that in the new normal, it should be as normal as hand-washing and wearing face masks.

# COA flags Pangasinan's solid waste project over health concerns

Published June 27, 2020, 9:26 PM

By **Ben Rosario**

The Commission on Audit (COA) has flagged Pangasinan's Solid Waste Management program after discovering that "pathologic, hazardous, and infectious" wastes from various hospitals have not been "regularly disposed of" and may have posed a threat to the environment and public health.



Commission on Audit (MANILA BULLETIN)

To make matters worse, auditors said the provincial government spent P65,991,800 for three district hospitals' sterilization machines that remained "idle" since these were delivered by the supplier. The machines work by treating hospital medical waste and kill microorganisms to drastically reduce contamination risks to people.

State auditors also noted "deficiencies" in the implementation of various infrastructure projects and procurement of goods amounting to P365,383,889.18. It also flagged 64 parcels of land worth P221.26 million that are supposed to be owned by the provincial government.

In the recently released 2019 Annual Audit Report (2019 AAR) covering the province's disbursement for the year, COA reported that there had been inadequate internal control procedures in the tax collection on quarry resources.

The audit body's review of the Solid Waste Management program of the province disclosed that it did not "maintain its own engineered Sanitary Landfill and Materials Recovery Facility for segregation of biodegradable and non-biodegradable" materials.

"Likewise, pathologic, hazardous, and infectious wastes generated by the devolved hospitals under the provincial government were not regularly disposed of; hence, could be a threat to the environment and health hazard to the public in general," auditors warned.

In relation to this finding, the COA Value for Audit report noted that the provincial government has failed to use three units of waste management equipment purchased for P65,991,800.

"Three units of medical waste autoclave/microwave with built-in shredder and housing with a total acquisition cost of P65,991,800 remained idle from the time of delivery and acceptance due to the electrical/technical deficiencies, thus resulted in failure to attain their intended purposes," the audit body reported.

The machines purchased from the Variance Trading Corporation were supposed to be used as "sterilization agent to kill microorganisms and treat hospital waste."

Nevertheless, auditors said they appreciated the provincial government's action in making the equipment operational.

A copy of the 2019 AAR that contained the adverse audit findings was forwarded to Pangasinan Governor Amado Espino III.

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The report noted that audit of payments, contracts, and other supporting documents of various procurement of infrastructure projects and goods violated provisions of Presidential Decree 1445, the Government Procurement Act and audit rules.

The questionable transactions involved P365.38 million in public funds. However, it was indicated that most of the issues raised concerned completion of documentary requirements.

One of the projects questioned was the incomplete documents in the implementation of the Hospital Facilities Enhancement Program of the Department of Health amounting to P61.46 million.

# Boracay businessmen hit proposed garbage collection fees hike

Joyce Ann Clavecillas, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Jun 27 2020 04:43 PM

BORACAY ISLAND, Aklan - While the island's tourism industry has yet to recover due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the business sector faces another hurdle on their path: a proposed ordinance hiking garbage collection fees for commercial establishments.

In a position letter issued on Saturday, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) Boracay strongly opposed the proposed garbage collection charge.

Elena Brugger, president of PCCI Boracay, questioned the local government of Malay over the additional fees when such is supposedly covered when firms process and pay for their business permit annually.

The fees they pay are based on the number of rooms in one establishment or number of tables in a restaurant, she said.

"They try to propose P10 per kilo which is, for us, it's repressive... in Sec. 17 of the local government code, basic services including solid waste should be the responsibility of the local government," she said in an interview with ABS-CBN News via Zoom.

Brugger added that there are no clear guidelines as to how this ordinance would be implemented once passed.

"How does it work? There is no guideline, there is no proper collection point where should the people go?" said Brugger.

A public hearing was held last week and the proposed P10 per kilo charge was reduced to P8 pesos per kilo of garbage.

Malay acting Mayor Frolibar Bautista explained the breakdown of the proposed garbage fee.

"In the proposed P8, P6.84 will go to the hauler. The P1.16 will go to the LGU which we will be spent on the cleanup of debris in the shoreline," said the mayor.

"Every Habagat season, a lot of debris can be found in the shoreline and nobody pays for the cleanup of the debris. We will use the P1.16 for that purpose."

Bautista told ABS-CBN News in a phone interview that the annual fees paid by the establishment owners are not enough to cover garbage fees they pay to the private contractor in charge of trash collection on the island.

The LGU has a contract with ECOS, which hauls garbage from the island to the sanitary landfill at the Malay mainland.

"The garbage fee we collect every year is only P30 million and it's not enough. We have a big requirement for the payment of garbage," said Bautista.

The acting mayor says in just one month, hauling fees reach as high as P12 million.

At the height of tourist activity on the island, trucks of garbage are collected every day from establishments.

For the PCCI, the LGU should instead focus on implementing measures that would revive the tourism industry on the island.

Boracay, a world-renowned beach destination, reopened on June 16 to tourists from within Western Visayas after over two months of closure because of the coronavirus pandemic.

The island was also closed for 6 months in 2018 for massive rehabilitation.

Source: [https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/06/27/20/boracay-businessmen-hit-proposed-garbage-collection-fees-hike?fbclid=IwAR0D\\_yUJYz106-Me1347TLyikuxyH-ERcTr9FNnB6eAFGIUU9gAvCKDUkWk](https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/06/27/20/boracay-businessmen-hit-proposed-garbage-collection-fees-hike?fbclid=IwAR0D_yUJYz106-Me1347TLyikuxyH-ERcTr9FNnB6eAFGIUU9gAvCKDUkWk)

# Silliman biologist discovers new butterfly subspecies

Published June 27, 2020, 12:29 PM

By *Minerva Newman*

**DUMAGUETE CITY** – A biologist and instructor at the Silliman University (SU) Biology Department discovered a new butterfly subspecies—the *Appias phoebe nuydai* that could be found in Mt. Talinis, Negros Oriental.



(Photo courtesy of SU-OIP/Melita Aguilar / MANILA BULLETIN)

Dr. Jade Aster Badon said that the *Appias phoebe* was an endemic butterfly species in the Philippines that can only be found in higher elevations, and *Appias phoebe nuydai* was a subspecies unique to Mt. Talinis.

Badon named the new butterfly subspecies after Justin Nuyda, a visual artist and lepidopterist. He examined Justin Nuyda's butterfly specimens in Manila.

"This butterfly is important because aside from being endemic to the Philippines, they can only be found at higher elevations, at least 1,500 meters above sea level. This means you must climb to the peak of Mt. Talinis to find this unique butterfly," Badon added.

It was not known before that this butterfly existed in Mt. Talinis. The discovery proved that the species and a new subspecies exist in Mt. Talinis, and occurrences and distribution of species were very important in the conservation and preservation of remaining important habitats, he explained.

Badon first discovered the butterfly in 2012 during a research expedition at Mt. Talinis. Seven years later in 2019 during the Annual Biodiversity Symposium at the Visayas State University, Badon realized that the specimen he collected was a new subspecies of the *Appias phoebe* after scanning his copy of "Field Guide to the Butterflies of the Philippines."

"When I scanned through the pages and ended on that page where the specimens of *Appias phoebe* were illustrated, I thought that these specimens looked different from the ones I examined in other museums and publications, Badon revealed.

After that, according to Badon he wrote the manuscript and sent it to his co-author from the University of Florida, and then after writing, reviewing, and editing, they submitted it to the German journal for publication, he added.

The entomological journal *Nachrichten des Entomologischen Vereins Apollo* published the discovery this month, citing Badon and Dr. Jacqueline Y. Miller as authors.

Badon graduated from SU in 2011 with a BS Biology degree. He then completed his master's and doctorate degree in entomology and nematology at the University of Florida. He is also the president of the Philippine Lepidoptera Butterflies and Moths, Incorporated.

Source: [https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/06/27/silliman-biologist-discovers-new-butterfly-subspecies/?fbclid=IwAR0MSNvn6Rr3xUfEsFRK\\_lukw7nRRhw6z1AfNx-dDZwuhiP9A2ZimwSVJig](https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/06/27/silliman-biologist-discovers-new-butterfly-subspecies/?fbclid=IwAR0MSNvn6Rr3xUfEsFRK_lukw7nRRhw6z1AfNx-dDZwuhiP9A2ZimwSVJig)

# Metro Manila should remain under GCQ, says Zubiri

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

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 07:10 PM June 27, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — The nation’s capital region should remain under general community quarantine (GCQ) after June 30, Senate Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri said Saturday, pointing out that COVID-19 infections continue to rise in the country.

“I would fear kung ganito pa rin numbers na 1,000 numbers a day, I think we should maintain in GCQ napakahirap mag-MGCQ,” Zubiri said in an interview with DWIZ when asked if the National Capital Region (NCR) or Metro Manila should already shift to a more relaxed modified general community quarantine (MGCQ).

For Zubiri, MGCQ’s more loose protocols may pose a risk to the health of Filipinos.

Senator Nancy Binay, meanwhile, encouraged the public to follow and be used to health protocols as if COVID-19 is part of daily life.

“At the end of the day, matuto tayo na mamuhay nang nandiyan ang COVID-19. Napakasimple ng requirements na dapat natin gawin, magsuot ka ng mask, mag-practice ng social distancing at maghugas ng kamay palagi,” Binay said when asked if the coronavirus quarantine in Metro Manila should be relaxed.

(At the end of the day, we should just learn to live like COVID-19 is just there. The requirements that we must follow are so simple, wear face masks, practicing social distancing, and always wash hands.)

To recall, the government extended GCQ in Metro Manila until the end of June. The coronavirus quarantine in Metro Manila was first eased on June 1 to gradually reopen the economy.

As of Saturday, the Department of Health said a total of [34,803 COVID-19 cases have already been documented in the country](#). This includes 1,236 deaths and 9,430 recoveries, DOH added.

KGA

# NCR likely to remain under GCQ

Zubiri warns easing lockdown further will be 'very dangerous'

posted June 28, 2020 at 12:50 am

by [Willie Casas](#)

Quarantine protocols will not likely be eased next week, the Department of Interior and Local Government said as the majority of Metro Manila mayors are also inclined to keep the region under General Community Quarantine.

"Here in Metro Manila, based on the situation we see, we should not get our hopes up that there will be an easing of quarantine," Interior Undersecretary Jonathan Malaya said in a radio interview.

Parañaque Mayor Edwin Olivarez, chairman of the Metro Manila Mayors Council, said GCQ will likely remain in effect until July 15.

"That is our position. But whatever the Inter-Agency Task Force will recommend, we will implement," Olivarez said.

Senators also appealed to the government to keep Metro Manila's GCQ status amid fears that relaxing lockdowns further will result in a surge in cases.

"Our economy is already in a very difficult situation, and many of our countrymen are going hungry because they cannot go to work and cannot resume the operations of their businesses. But at the same time, the threat of coronavirus disease infection is scary," Senate Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri said, adding that shifting to Modified GCQ will be "very dangerous."

"We have to be very, very careful in opening up our economy in the next few weeks," Zubiri said.

Senator Sherwin Gatchalian said the GCQ is a good "middle ground" to boost economic activity while trying to arrest the spread of the pandemic.

"A GCQ set up is a good middle ground because our people can work and earn, and at the same time, we can manage the increase of positive. I would recommend by July a GCQ set-up for another 15 days," Gatchalian said.

President Rodrigo Duterte is set to announce on or before Monday new quarantine classifications.

"There is already a recommendation but this is still subject to review by the President," presidential spokesman Harry Roque said.

On Saturday, the number of COVID-19 cases reached 34,803 with 738 new infections, of which 560 are "fresh" or newly-validated cases.

Among the fresh cases, 212 are from Metro Manila, 184 are from Central Visayas, and 164 are from other areas across the country.

Metro Manila was placed under GCQ on June 1. Cebu City, on the other hand, has been placed under Enhanced Community Quarantine, the highest lockdown level, while Talisay City was put under Modified ECQ.

Malaya, for his part, appealed to Filipinos to practice individual discipline, saying the government has already done all it can to arrest the spread of the pandemic.

"The government has already done everything possible to stop the spread of COVID-19. We are one of the first countries to make face masks mandatory. We are one of the first countries to declare a lockdown. We did all we could given the situation," he said.

"Now is the time for people to practice individual discipline. People should exercise individual responsibility – practicing social distancing and wearing of face masks. At the end of the day, we have to do all we can to beat COVID," Malaya added.



Mas maluwal pang quarantine sa Metro Manila,

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# Mas maluwal pang quarantine sa Metro Manila, malabo pa-DILG

By [Mer Layson](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon)

- June 28, 2020 - 12:00am



Ayon kay DILG Undersecretary at Spokesperson Jonathan Malaya, nakikita naman ng lahat ang kasalukuyang sitwasyon sa Metro Manila, kung saan patuloy ang pagtaas nang naitatalang COVID-19 infections, kaya't mas makabubuti kung huwag na munang umasa na magkakaroon ng 'easing' o pagluwag sa ipinatutupad na quarantine.

MANILA, Philippines — Naniniwala ang isang opisyal ng Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) na posibleng hindi pa maisailalim sa mas maluwal na community quarantine ang Metro Manila sa susunod na linggo dahil sa kasalukuyang sitwasyon ng coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) sa rehiyon.

Ayon kay DILG Undersecretary at Spokesperson Jonathan Malaya, nakikita naman ng lahat ang kasalukuyang sitwasyon sa Metro Manila, kung saan patuloy ang pagtaas nang naitatalang COVID-19 infections, kaya't mas makabubuti kung huwag na munang umasa na magkakaroon ng 'easing' o pagluwag sa ipinatutupad na quarantine.

Paglilinaw naman ni Malaya, ito ay kanyang personal na opinyon lamang at ang desisyon naman hinggil sa pagpapairal na quarantine measures ay base sa mga siyentipikong datos. Aniya, isang technical working group (TWG) ang nag-aaral ng mga datos at saka magbibigay ng rekomendasyon sa Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID).

"Meron po tayong tinatawag na Technical Working Group on Data Analytics at sila'y nagbibigay ng recommendation sa IATF. Itong mga rekomendasyon ay binibigay sa ating Pangulo. At napag-usapan po doon sa meeting ng IATF na it will be the President who will make that announcement (on quarantine measures)," ani Malaya, sa panayam sa radyo.

"Dito sa Metro Manila, nakikita natin ang sitwasyon. Huwag na po tayong umasa na magkakaroon ng easing of quarantine," aniya pa.

Mas maluwa pang quarantine sa Metro Manila,

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Nabatid na binibigyan naman ng abiso ang mga local government units (LGUs) hinggil sa rekomendasyon sa IATF, upang magkaroon sila ng pagkakataon na iapela ito.

Matatandaang sa Hunyo 30 ay magtatapos na ang umiiral na general community quarantine (GCQ) sa Metro Manila at inaasahang maglalabas ng desisyon si Pang. Rodrigo Duterte kung magpapatupad ito ng mas istriktong modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) sa rehiyon o pananatilihin ito sa GCQ o isasailalim sa mas maluwa na modified general community quarantine (GCQ).



Presidential spokesman Harry Roque Jr. made the statement after Senate minority leader Franklin Drilon reminded law enforcers that they cannot use the Bayanihan Act as a reason to randomly arrest people, especially those they consider violators of quarantine rules.

Presidential Photo/Yancy Lim

## 'Duterte will still exercise powers to defeat COVID'

[Christina Mendez](#) (The Philippine Star) - June 28, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Despite the expiration of the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act, President Duterte will continue to exercise necessary powers to ensure public safety and health are not compromised amid the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque Jr. made the statement after Senate minority leader Franklin Drilon reminded law enforcers that they cannot use the Bayanihan Act as a reason to randomly arrest people, especially those they consider violators of quarantine rules.

"While the Bayanihan Act may have lapsed, this will not prevent the National Government from addressing the threat of COVID-19," he said.

"The President continues to exercise all and every means at his disposal to protect public safety and the lives of our citizenry in the state of public health emergency and the state of calamity which unquestionably exist to this day," Roque said.

He emphasized that curfews in some areas will continue despite the expiration of the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act or Republic Act 11469.

He noted that some cities and municipalities have passed local ordinances to effect curfews on minors.

"Although the law has lapsed, it is not accurate to state that the government can no longer enforce curfews or any prohibitions on mass gatherings. As we previously articulated, local ordinances that remain in effect may still be enforced," Roque said.

Drilon earlier reminded law enforcers they can no longer arrest violators under the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act since the law has already expired. Congress did not approve the proposed Bayanihan to Recover as One Act or Bayanihan 2 when it adjourned last June 4.

Roque also noted that with the expiry of the Bayanihan Act, the President can no longer use emergency powers to realign the budget and use the money to implement programs to address COVID-19.

But even without the Bayanihan Act, Duterte is still empowered to address COVID-19 crisis through the declaration of State of Calamity under Proclamation No. 299.

The State of Calamity is effective for six months beginning March 16. A provision in the proclamation states that it may be lifted or extended based on prevailing circumstances.

The President's proclamation gave the national government and local government units "ample latitude to utilize appropriate funds" including the Quick Response Fund, for response efforts.

Under the proclamation, all law enforcement agencies, including the military, are directed to undertake all necessary measures to ensure peace and order in affected areas.

Meanwhile, senators said holding a special session for the approval of Bayanihan 2 would be a waste of time unless the executive department and Congress agree on a mutually acceptable measure to address the socioeconomic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the people.

"Before a special session is called, it is best for the Executive Department and Congress to first agree on a mutually acceptable legislative measure to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the social and economic problems that beset our country. That way, we won't be wasting our time," Sen. Panfilo Lacson said.

"However, as long as the Department of Health is incompetently led and the health issue cannot be addressed appropriately, we will be in a Sisyphus-like situation. Worse, we will just be throwing away our country's very limited resources that could bring us neck-deep in debt with no solution in sight," said Lacson.

"It's bad enough that we will be forced to scrounge and even borrow just to augment our already limited funds. It's infuriating if we lose it all – and more – to incompetence," Lacson added.

Senate Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri echoed Lacson's statement, saying the executive department, the Senate and the House of Representatives have different measures for the Bayanihan 2.

Zubiri said he was still clueless on the target date for the special session and he would ask Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea about it.

"But of course, I hope before any special session, the finance team should first determine the amendments they want to see included in the Bayanihan 2," he said.

Zubiri said the Senate version of the Bayanihan 2 has lower allocation of P140 billion – from the initial P236 billion – since officials of the Department of Finance (DOF) had claimed there was not enough budget.

"It would be better to discuss the measure first before the special session so as not to waste time. I think TWG (technical working group) will be good which will include House Speaker, the finance team and other key personalities," said Zubiri. "We will wait for the final package." **Cecille Suerte-Felipe**



## Pagpapasa ng batas na magpapalakas sa pagtugon vs. COVID-19, panawagan ni P Du30

June 27, 2020 @ 8:47 AM 23 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Hihilingin ni Pangulong Rodrigo Roa Duterte sa Kongreso na magpasa ng batas na magpapalakas sa ginagawang pagtugon ng bansa laban sa coronavirus disease o COVID-19 pandemic.

Nanawagan si Pangulong Duterte para sa pagtatatag ng national preparedness and response mechanisms for pandemic at iba pang panganib gaya ng paglikha ng medical reserve corps at stockpile ng strategic at critical materials.

Kailangan din na amiyendahan ng Pilipinas ang decades-old Labor Code, palakasin ang social protection system at i-update ang economic regulations para sa nakikitang pagsulong sa digital economy.

“COVID-19 is likely to stay with us in the foreseeable future. As we transition to the new normal and move towards recovery, we will once again need the support of the legislative branch,” ayon sa Pangulo sa virtual address sa harap ng mga kinatawan ng ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly sa idinaos na 36th ASEAN Summit, araw ng Biyernes, June 26.

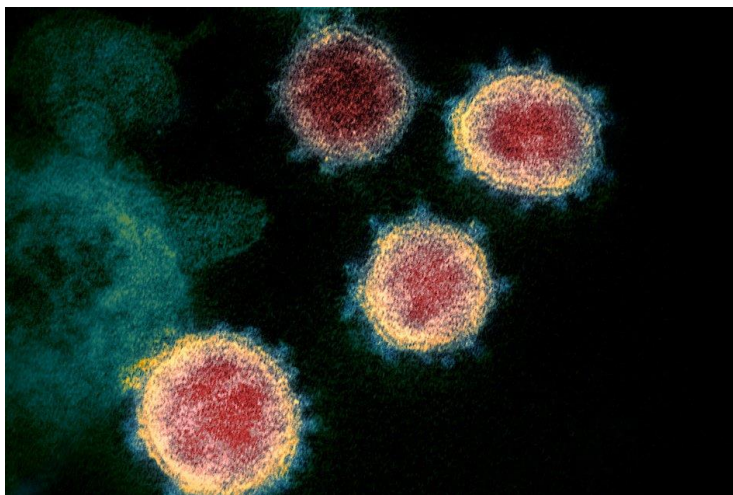
Samantala, ang pahayag na ito ng Pangulo ay matapos na mapaso ang Bayanihan to Heal as One Act, na nagbigay sa kanya ng special powers para sa tatlong buwan para epektibong matalakay ang public health emergency. **RNT/Kris Jose**

Source: <https://remate.ph/pagpapasa-ng-batas-na-magpapalakas-sa-pagtugon-vs-covid-19-panawagan-ni-pdu30/?fbclid=IwAR1uUSIptvklfCjkHEK97KvqObjEoSfByfL9JHTYCI4sfpmETZ3ID8wszkY>

# Philippines adds 738 new COVID-19 cases; total now 34,803

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Jun 27 2020 04:38 PM | Updated as of Jun 27 2020 05:57 PM



The ultrastructural morphology exhibited by the 2019 Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV), which was identified as the cause of an outbreak of respiratory illness first detected in Wuhan, China, is seen in an illustration released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta, Georgia, US, Jan. 29, 2020. *Alissa Eckert, MS; Dan Higgins, MAM/CDC/Handout/Reuters*

**MANILA (UPDATE)**--The Philippines on Saturday reported 738 new confirmed COVID-19 cases, taking the nationwide total to 34,803.

Of the new infections, some 560 were classified as "fresh cases" and 178 as "late cases," [the Department of Health \(DOH\) said in its latest bulletin](#).

Under the agency's new reporting system, fresh cases are those validated within the past 3 days, while late cases refer to test results that were released to patients 4 days ago or more.

Fresh cases spiked in Metro Manila with 212, followed by Central Visayas with 184. Some 164 others came from other regions.

"Today's fresh cases are based on the daily accomplishment reports submitted by only 49 out of 67 current operational labs," the agency said in a statement.

Meanwhile, of the 178 late cases, some 85 came from Metro Manila, 23 in Central Visayas and 70 in other regions.

The nationwide death toll went up to 1,236, with 12 new fatalities reported in the past 24 hours, the DOH said.

Meanwhile, the number of people who have recovered from COVID-19 rose by 249 to 9,430, official figures showed.

The Philippines has logged more recoveries from the COVID-19 since its outbreak in January. Each day for the past 17 days, more than 210 people have survived the illness.

To date, the country has 23,667 active cases, of which 95 percent are exhibiting mild symptoms. Some 871 are asymptomatic, 123 are severe and 24 are critical.

Worldwide, the novel coronavirus, which began in Wuhan City in Hubei province, China, has sickened 9.8 million people and claimed more than 494,000 lives, a running tally from the US-based Johns Hopkins University showed.

Source: [https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/06/27/20/philippines-adds-738-new-covid-19-cases-total-now-34803?fbclid=IwAR36uUtYEUG39ngFTzkRvTbuo6b71C3zXqY89I10Da8ynWw1zYBOMTYVc\\_U](https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/06/27/20/philippines-adds-738-new-covid-19-cases-total-now-34803?fbclid=IwAR36uUtYEUG39ngFTzkRvTbuo6b71C3zXqY89I10Da8ynWw1zYBOMTYVc_U)

# Public turn to stem virus escalation

Published 6 hours ago  
on June 28, 2020 12:05 AM

By [Elmer N. Manuel @tribunephl Imer](#)



The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) on Saturday stressed that the government has done all it can to address the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) and it is time for the public to practice individual discipline.

In a radio interview, DILG Undersecretary Jonathan Malaya noted that the public should also realize that the government is looking out for the welfare of the country's economy and people need to go back to work to jumpstart the economy amid the pandemic.

This comes after the DILG official was asked about the fact that more public transportation vehicles, particularly UV Express and traditional jeepneys, will be allowed to go on the road next week.

"Government has already done everything possible to stop the spread of COVID. We are one of the first countries to make face masks mandatory. We are one of the first countries to declare a lockdown. We did all we can, given the situation," Malaya said.

"But now, I think it is time for the public to also look out for their health and safety by exercising individual responsibility — social distancing, face masks — things we need so that at end of the day, we have to do all to defeat COVID-19," he added.

To recall, the government used a gradual calibrated approach in allowing the resumption of public transportation, first allowing buses, taxis, trains and modern jeepneys before UV Express units and traditional jeepneys, as part of measures to prevent the further spread of COVID-19.

This follows as the country had 1,006 new cases reported on Friday, of which 788 are "fresh" or newly validated and 218 are late, bringing the total to 34,073. Total recoveries rose to 9,182 while the death toll climbed to 1,224.

It can also be remembered that the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) announced on Friday that jeepneys will be allowed on the streets next week after a three-month ban amid the quarantine protocols implemented due to COVID-19 pandemic.

## UV Express greenlighted

Meanwhile, the LTFRB has given the go-signal for the resumption of almost a thousand UV Express servicing 47 routes in Metro Manila and other nearby provinces beginning Monday.

LTFRB chairman Martin Delgra III over the weekend said the approved guidelines rationalizing the deployment of the 980 UV Express is in line with the gradual, calibrated and calculated approach of the Department of Transportation (DoTr) on the resumption of public transportation.

Under LTFRB Memorandum Circular 2020-025, UV express routes should be terminal-to-terminal. Drivers should maintain no pickup and drop off of passengers, and not pass through nor traverse EDSA and Commonwealth Avenue, except to cross.

The guidelines also ruled out the likelihood of a fare increase. Drivers and operators should maintain P2 per kilometer.

Failure to comply with any of the conditions set forth by the Board may warrant the imposition of fines and suspension or cancellation of their franchise, Delgra said.

The government used a gradual calibrated approach in allowing the resumption of public transportation, first allowing buses, taxis, trains and modern jeepneys before UV Express units and traditional jeepneys.

Moving forward, LTFRB said it remains open to deploy additional modern and traditional jeepneys to augment the mass transit's capacity to match the growing demand of passengers.

In a briefing last week, Malacañang clarified that public safety is paramount even as lockdown restrictions ease in the transport sector to help restart the economy.

This comes after jeepney operators expressed concern over the continuing ban of their vehicles due to health risks posed by the jeepney's design on public health.

In a broadcast interview, presidential spokesman Harry Roque stressed that regulators agreed to allow the resumption of trains, bus, taxi, and ride-sharing services in areas under general community quarantine (GCQ) and modified GCQ after strict lockdowns shutdown public transport for two months.

The Palace official explained that the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) is still focused on upholding public health safety and that is why as far as transportation is concerned, it's not just private cars that are given priority.

LTFRB chairman Martin Delgra made the statement a day after presidential spokesman Harry Roque said that he has yet to approve the return of jeepneys, which the government views as a risk for getting COVID-19 since passengers sit face-to-face inside it.

Buses and modern public utility vehicles have been allowed to ply the streets to serve commuters since 1 June, and based on the hierarchy set by the government, UV Express and jeepneys will only be allowed to operate if there is not enough public transportation available.

Jeepney drivers have appealed to the government to allow them to operate, citing loss of livelihood. Many of them have resorted to begging on the streets.

**with Maria Romero  
@tribuneph1\_mbr**



# Gov't eyes P436-B loan for pandemic response

Published 6 hours ago on June 28, 2020 12:07 AM

By [Elmer N. Manuel @tribunephi Imer](#)



The Department of Finance (DoF) on Saturday revealed that the Philippine government is aiming to raise around P436 billion or roughly \$8.72 billion in loans from foreign sources for its coronavirus disease (COVID-19) response and economic recovery efforts.

In a radio interview, DoF Assistant Secretary Antonio Lambino disclosed that the P436-billion target in foreign loan financing for the whole year is anchored on the administration's sound debt management strategy.

"Our loans are getting bigger since we are fighting COVID-19," said Lambino. "Truthfully, we were not able to have a budget on this because even the whole world was surprised with the emergence of COVID-19."

"So just like other countries, we need to get loans for our pandemic response," he added.

Lambino, however, stressed that despite the plan to raise loans, the Philippines will not default on its foreign debt despite the pandemic as the country has a good standing as a borrowing country.

In the middle of the health crisis, the Japan Credit Rating Agency Ltd. upgraded the country's foreign currency long-term issuer rating to 'A-', noting that the Philippines' fiscal soundness is expected to be impaired, as its fiscal deficit is "justifiable" and government debt is "comparatively subdued."

Likewise, the S&P Global Ratings maintained its BBB+ credit rating for the country as it expects the economy will rebound after the pandemic.

Lambino noted that the amount of the country's debt compared to the size of the economy is also at a "respectable" level because as of the first quarter of the year, the government's debt-to-gross domestic product ratio dropped to 41.8 percent from 42.0 percent year-on-year.

## Favorable ratio

The Finance official explained that a lower debt-to-GDP ratio is generally seen as favorable, as it indicates that the country is able to repay its debts even as economic managers have projected that revenue collection this year will be lower at 13.6 percent of the gross domestic product (GDP) at P2.61 trillion compared to expected spending level at P4.18 trillion or 21.7 percent of GDP due to the economic fallout resulting from the health crisis.

Lambino added that it led to a projected increased deficit level at P1.56 trillion or 8.1 percent of GDP, higher than the earlier assumed 5.3 percent in March and to finance the deficit, economic managers see an increase in borrowing which will be around 50 percent of GDP.

To recall, the World Bank said that a debt level equivalent to half of the size of the economy is still a safe or manageable level for the Philippines as the government intends to increase debt level to augment funds for COVID-19 response and recovery efforts.

As of 11 June, the government has raised a total of \$6.4 billion (more than P300 billion) from loans extended by the World Bank, AIIB and the Asian Development Bank (ADB) as well as the recent dual-tranche issuance of US dollar-denominated global bonds, according to President Rodrigo Duterte's report to Congress recently.

The President noted that of the total amount, \$6.2 billion represented "newly contracted loans" from the World Bank, ADB and the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) as well as the dual-tranche issuance of US dollar-denominated global bonds.

National Treasurer Rosalia de Leon also confirmed a DoF report that of the \$6.4 billion in foreign loans raised around \$4.05 billion were already disbursed to the government or is now in the state's coffers.

### **Vaccine funding eyed**

Meanwhile, The House of Representatives is looking at allocating funds for the procurement of COVID-19 vaccine in the proposed 2021 budget.

According to House Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano funds should already be allocated for the same so the Executive won't have to ask Congress for supplemental budget once a vaccine becomes available.

"We know they are being cautious about the deficit, but funds should already be allocated for the COVID-19 vaccine."

"And we can label it as COVID-related programs so that if the vaccine is not yet available, they can use the money for testing or procurement of medical supplies. They won't have to go back to Congress for additional appropriation," Cayetano said in an ambush interview on Friday.

Cayetano said members of the House of Representatives "want to enter 2021 fully aware that the country has to meet the challenges of COVID-19 head-on."

Aside from vaccine funds, Cayetano said the House is eyeing the inclusion of a stimulus package in the 2021 budget for sectors impacted by COVID-19 pandemic.

"We're already talking about what part of the 2021 budget is stimulus as well," he said.

According to Cayetano, members of Congress is now speaking with officials of the Department of Finance as to the Bayanihan to Recover as One Act or the Bayanihan II — the law which would replace the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act.

He admitted however that Congress has yet to reach a consensus on the proposed law, specifically on the stimulus package.

On Friday, presidential spokesman Harry Roque said President Rodrigo Duterte will ask the Senate and the House of Representatives to convene in a special session to pass the bill as soon as Congress agrees on the amount of the stimulus package.

Cayetano said the initial funding estimate needed to implement the Bayanihan II may be from P140 billion to P200 billion.

with Keith Calayag  
@tribunephil\_kit



BSP Governor Benjamin Diokno said GDP will likely shrink by 5.7 to 6.7 percent in the second quarter, worsening from the 0.2 percent contraction in the first quarter, as containment measures amid the COVID-19 pandemic stifled business and consumer spending.

STAR/KJ Rosales/ File

## 'Philippines sinks into recession'

[Lawrence Agcaoili](#) (The Philippine Star) - June 28, 2020 - 12:00am

### GDP slump worsens in Q2 — BSP

MANILA, Philippines — A deeper economic slump looms in the second quarter, with gross domestic product (GDP) contracting by as much as 6.7 percent due to the full impact of the tight lockdown aimed at preventing the spread of the coronavirus disease, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipnas said.

BSP Governor Benjamin Diokno said GDP will likely shrink by 5.7 to 6.7 percent in the second quarter, worsening from the 0.2 percent contraction in the first quarter, as containment measures amid the COVID-19 pandemic stifled business and consumer spending.

"The negative impact of the COVID-19 crisis is harsher than what was originally thought," Diokno told reporters via Viber.

Two consecutive quarters of GDP contraction will put the economy in recession. The economy ground to a halt after Malacañang placed the entire Luzon under an enhanced community quarantine in mid-March but was gradually relaxed to a general community quarantine last June 1.

Economic managers through the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) expect GDP to contract by two to 3.4 percent this year from a growth of six percent last year. This would end more than two decades of growth as the GDP last contracted by 0.5 percent in 1998 during the height of the Asian financial crisis.

On Friday, S&P Global Ratings announced a deeper GDP contraction of three percent instead of 0.2 percent this year after the Philippines implemented one of the world's longest tight lockdowns to combat COVID-19.

"The S&P forecast for the Philippines falls within the government's revised projection that the economy will contract between two and 3.4 percent," Diokno said.

He said the projected GDP of the Philippines is right in the middle of the growth forecasts for the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) with Vietnam and Indonesia growing by 1.2 percent and 0.7 percent, respectively, and the economies of Singapore and Thailand contracting by five percent and 5.1 percent, respectively.

The BSP chief added the deeper contraction seen by S&P should be seen in a positive light as it is better than the revised forecasts of multilateral lenders.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) downgraded Philippine GDP to a 3.6 percent contraction instead of growing by 0.6 percent this year as it sees the global economy shrinking by 4.9 percent instead of three percent due to the pandemic.

On the other hand, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) is now looking at a contraction of 3.8 percent instead of a two percent expansion as growth across Asia Pacific is seen falling to a 59-year low.

For 2021, Diokno said S&P expects a strong recovery for the Philippines, with GDP growing by 9.4 percent, better than the eight to nine percent growth penned by the DBCC.

"The other good news is that the rating agency sees a strong rebound for the Philippine economy next year, as it forecasts that the economy will bounce back by 9.4 percent as economic activities resume," Diokno added.

S&P has affirmed the country's BBB+ credit rating – a notch below A grade -and stable outlook last May, while Moody's Investors Service also retained the country's Baa2 rating – two notches above minimum investment grade – and stable outlook.

On the other hand, Fitch Ratings lowered the country's outlook to stable from positive but retained its BBB rating in early May due to the expected economic fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, the Philippines finally attained the much coveted A grade after receiving an upgrade from Japan Credit Rating Agency to A- from BBB+, reflecting the resilience of the Philippines amid the health crisis.

# PRC opens Phl's biggest molecular lab

Published 19 hours ago on June 27, 2020 11:23 AM

By **TDI**



THE PHILIPPINE Red Cross molecular laboratory in Port Area, Manila, the biggest in the country, can test 14,000 samples per day. (PRC Facebook)

The Philippine Red Cross will inaugurate Saturday the biggest molecular laboratory in the country as a coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) testing center at the PRC's former headquarters in Port Area, Manila.

PRC chair and chief executive officer Senator Richard Gordon said the laboratory is equipped with seven ribonucleic acid with 14 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) machines that are capable of testing 14,000 samples per day.

"This will really help us ramp up our testing capacity so that more people will get tested all over the country. With more testing capacity, we can easily identify those who are positive and segregate them from those who were tested negative," said Gordon.

Gordon has been consistently pushing for a massive testing so that those who are tested negative can go back to work and help revive the country's economy.

"Testing is the key. The whole testing in the Philippines right now is at 0.4 percent and that is very far from the 13-percentage standard of the World Health Organization. We have not tested enough but we have the capacity. We have to move our economy and so we have to move testing," he said.

The Manila laboratory, where the PRC's Hemodialysis Center is also located, received its accreditation from the Department of Health as a certified COVID-19 testing center on 15 May.

As of posting time, it has tested over 18,000 samples out of the 149,116 specimen samples.

Other PRC testing centers are located in Mandaluyong, Pampanga and Zambales. Twenty six percent of the country's total tests so far were done by the PRC.



## Pinakamalaking testing center vs COVID-19 sa Maynila, binuksan ni Gordon

June 27, 2020 @ 1:26 PM 19 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Pormal nang binuksan ni Senador Richard “Dick” Gordon ang pinamalaking molecular laboratory kasabay ng pagbubukas din ng Coronavirus disease (COVID-19 testing center dating headquarter ng Philippine Red Cross (PRC) sa Port Area, Manila.

Sa pahayag, sinabi ni Gordon, chairman at chief executive officer ng PRC na malaking tulong ang molecular laboratory ng Red Cross sa Maynila sa pagsugpo ng COVID-19 sa bansa dahil mas maraming testing ang puwedeng gawin.

“Our molecular laboratory in Manila is equipped with seven (7) RNAs with 14 polymerase chain reaction (PCR) machines that are capable of testing 14,000 samples per day. This will really help us ramp up our testing capacity so that more people will get tested all over the country. With more testing capacity, we can easily identify those who are positive and segregate them from those who were tested negative,” ayon kay Gordon.

Patuloy na iginigiit ni Gordon na magkaroon ng massive testing para sinuman malaman na negatibo, puwede nang bumalik sa trabaho partikular ang mga nawalan ng hanapbuhay sa panahon ng pandemya at para makabangon na ang ekonomiya ng bansa.

“Testing is the key. The whole testing in the Philippines right now is at 0.4 percent and that is very far from the 13-percentage standard of the World Health Organization. We have not tested enough but we have the capacity. We have to move our economy and so we have to move testing,” aniya.

Tumanggap ng accreditation mula sa Department of Health (DOH) ang molecular laboratory ng PRC sa Maynila, na kung saan andoon din ang Hemodialysis Center, bilang sertipikadong COVID-19 testing center noong Mayo 15.

Habang isinusulat ito, umabot na sa 18,000 sample mula sa 149,116 specimen samples ang naproseso ng PRC.

Bukod sa Manila, may testing center din ang PRC sa Mandaluyong, Pampanga, at Zambales. Umabot sa 26 porsiyento ng total test na isinagawa sa bansa ay galing sa PRC. **Ernie Reyes**

Source: <https://remate.ph/pinakamalaking-testing-center-vs-covid-19-sa-maynila-binuksan-ni-gordon/?fbclid=IwAR1hEqGwvyio0P6Ek2tW5O1r5ahHicj-bFdIK-JRcFTcUPpCFcIldmVTp5k>

# Cebu City health facilities near critical levels

Cebu City, which has the highest number of cases in the country and also been identified as a COVID-19 hotspot, has 61 out of its 80 barangays having reported infections in the past 14 days.

Published 5 hours ago on June 28, 2020 02:00 AM

By [Gabbie Parlade](#)



Amid the sudden spike of cases, the Department of Health on Friday revealed that the health system capacity of Cebu City is approaching its critical level with more patients of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) being tended to in hospitals.

Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said that more than half of the city's healthcare utilization rates have already been occupied and reaching critical levels at 70 percent.

She shared that intensive care unit beds are at 55 percent occupancy and ward beds are at 64.9 percent occupancy, while isolation beds have already reached 84 percent occupancy.

"With these findings, we looked at the capacity of the healthcare system and we found out that facilities in Cebu City are approaching critical level," Vergeire said during a media forum.

Cebu City, which has the highest number of cases in the country and also been identified as a COVID-19 hotspot, has 61 out of its 80 barangays having reported infections in the past 14 days.

President Rodrigo Duterte specifically instructed focus on the city as officials from the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF), including Health Secretary Francisco Duque III and newly-designated Regional Implementer Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, visited areas in Visayas with spikes in cases.

Dr. Evelyn Alesna, former president of the Philippine Society for Microbiology and Infectious Diseases, revealed that most of the hospitals in Cebu City have apparently been operating at full or over-capacity during the pandemic.

Alesna cited that in some instances, emergency rooms (ER) were required to triple the number of patients being accommodated despite the limited space, leading to some patients being treated outside the ER or outside the hospital.

In Cebu City Medical Center, she said that ambulances had to queue and wait before their patients were accommodated.

Alesna pointed out that even medical practitioners were compelled to handle more than 40 patients per day from different hospitals, all of whom have the virus or co-morbidities.

On 30 May, the IATF placed Cebu City under GCQ after approving Cebu City Mayor Edgardo Labella's request to downgrade the city's status starting 1 June after earlier months of having the city under strict protocols with enhanced community quarantine.

However, the city reverted back to ECQ again on 16 June given the increase in virus cases. At present, Cebu City now has over 4,000 cases.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/06/28/cebu-city-health-facilities-near-critical-levels/>

# Cebu nurses cry for help

We wish to inform you that Chong Hua Hospital, despite having the greatest number of beds allocated for COVID-related cases among private hospitals, is currently full in our COVID-19 capacity.

Published 4 hours ago on June 28, 2020 02:00 AM

By [Rico Osmeña](#)



Most private hospitals in Cebu are already filled with coronavirus patients and many nurses in these hospitals are contemplating on resigning over health and safety issues.

This was bared Friday by the Cebu Medical Society (CMS), a federation of Cebu-based medical practitioners.

Dr. Peter Mancao, CMS public relations officer, urged government to provide the correct personal protective equipment (PPE) for health workers to boost their morale.

“Our problem is also the staffing, the nurses are afraid. I was talking to our CCO (chief clinical officer) nurse, they’re going to resign because they’re afraid. I think we have to... if you’re in a war, we should retreat first, re-arm, morale among nurses are very low,” he said.

“Give them the proper masks, I’m speaking for all health workers here, proper PPE, maybe increase their salary so they can eat well and they are healthy. As far as the hospitals, maybe an incentive for them to take in more COVID patients,” Mancao told media.

Chong Hua Hospital, one of Cebu’s premier hospitals, disclosed that it has already reached full capacity.

“We wish to inform you that Chong Hua Hospital, despite having the greatest number of beds allocated for COVID-related cases among private hospitals, is currently full in our COVID-19 capacity,” Chong Hua said in a statement issued on 24 June.

“Presently, we are caring for over 183 COVID-19 confirmed, probable and suspect patients while having more than 200 of our very own staff are on quarantine.”

Of the 183 patients, 42 of these are confirmed cases, 111 are probable cases and 30 are suspected.

While of 203 medical staff under quarantine, 52 are doctors, 82 are nurses and 69 are other health workers.

Chong Hua Hospital has 175 dedicated COVID-19 regular beds and 167 are occupied while there are 18 Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds and 16 are occupied.



Mancao proposed that COVID-19 designated hospitals to focus on the virus for a month as he said some are retrofitting their regular ICUs to accommodate more patients.

“If you go to the ER practically anybody there is intubated. The waiting time to get in, speaking from personal experience from my relative, they called in at 11a.m., they were admitted to the ER at 8 in the evening. By 10 p.m. the patient was intubated,” Mancao narrated.

“My take is if patients who come to ER are taken care of, the system is taken care of, there is no waiting time, nobody will complain, we are okay. But I think we have to correct that before we go back to GCQ or normal,” Mancao suggested.

In a separate interview, Department of Health (DoH)- 7 regional director Dr. Jaime Bernadas disclosed that DoH had deployed 50 registered nurses and 100 underboard physicians-medicine graduates, who will serve as post-graduate interns under supervision of licensed doctors.

“This is in response to the shortage of healthcare workers in private hospitals that experienced a downturn of admission at the beginning of the pandemic. DoH will shoulder honorarium and medical benefits,” he reiterated.

# WHO notes slow contact tracing

Published 6 hours ago on June 28, 2020 12:05 AM

By [Elmer N. Manuel @tribunephi Imer](#)



The World Health Organization (WHO) on Saturday disclosed that the Philippines is “slow” in its implementation of contact tracing which is vital to containing the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

In a statement, Dr. Socorro Escalante of WHO Philippines stressed that the country’s contact tracing is slow and there is a need to push harder and work harder since it should be done within two days once a patient is confirmed positive with COVID-19.

The WHO official explained that contact tracing is a process that identifies who the COVID-19 patients have interacted with so they can be immediately be isolated and not contaminate other people.

But in the case of the Philippines, the international organization said that it usually waits for the test results of the COVID-19 case to start contact tracing and the results come out only after days or even weeks.

WHO recommended that there should be at least one contact tracer for every 800 people. This means that the country should have at least 135,000 of them. However, only 50,000 are available to deal with 100 million Filipinos.

Apart from the shortage in contact tracers, there is also a lack in meticulous tracing and to recall, the first three cases in the country, who were all tourists from Wuhan, China, were able to interact with over 1,195 people.

Only half of those people — or 552 — were interviewed and observed. Over 60 of them showed signs of COVID-19.

The Department of Health (DoH), on the other hand, urged the public to be honest in filling out contact tracing forms and according to Health Promotion and Communication Service director Dr. Beverly Ho, correct information is vital to the success of contact tracing.

“We encourage everyone to be honest when filling out contact tracing forms and information like phone numbers should be correct,” Ho said.

The Philippines on Friday reported a total of 34,073 COVID-19 cases with 9,182 recoveries and 1,224 fatalities.

## Targeted goal

The DoH on Saturday announced that the targeted goal of achieving about 1 million tests will be made possible by the end of July.

In a public briefing, Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said that this will be allotted for only almost one percent of the total nationwide population.

However, she said that the increase in the number will still only focus on high-risk groups as mandated under the DoH's protocol of expanded testing.

"The priority of this expanded testing is we need to start first with sub groups A to D and then we can test sub groups E and F, subgroup E includes our other frontliners," she said.

Among the subgroups A and D included in the protocol are those with asymptomatic and mild symptoms but had initial exposure to a COVID-19 patient, those with severe or critical symptoms, the elderly, and people with preexisting medical conditions that are predisposed to severe complications of COVID-19.

In its latest guidelines, the DoH has also included under subgroups E and F other frontliners aside from health workers such as social workers and barangay health emergency response teams, as well as pregnant women, and patients who are immunocompromised such as those with HIV/AIDS or are undergoing chemotherapy.

Vergeire said that currently more than 600,000 tests had already been conducted out of the operating laboratories in the country.

with **Gabbie Parlade**  
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# Bike lanes back on Commonwealth

George Calvelo, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Jun 27 2020 12:16 PM



Bike riders use the protected bike lane set up by the MMDA and various groups along Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City on Saturday. The road sharing initiative, which private groups already began earlier in June but was stopped by the MMDA, will run until 8pm of June 29 as a way of promoting sustainable mobility.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/multimedia/photo/06/27/20/bike-lanes-back-on-commonwealth?fbclid=IwAR2LLFN0Cdk5G9eQRv2Nd1DU9aMOrtMJu1tddIL9x8Da4DXwTICba1bL5-8>

# Sen. Go: Ensure fair power charges

Published 19 hours ago on June 27, 2020 11:46 AM

By **TDI**



The Department of Energy, Energy Regulatory Commission and other concerned agencies must look into growing complaints on alleged cases of unjust electricity bills from power distribution utilities.

Senator Christopher Lawrence “Bong” Go urged concerned agencies and the Manila Electric Company (Meralco) to further clarify the reason behind whopping electricity bills amid the community quarantines when actual meter reading was not possible.

“Dapat pangalagaan ang interes at kapakanan ng mga ordinaryong Pilipino lalo na ngayon na hirap na hirap na ang mga tao dahil sa krisis na dulot ng COVID-19,” Go urged.

“Maraming mga reklamo hinggil sa mataas na electricity bill na natanggap ng consumers. Kailangan ipaintindi ng maayos ang pinagbasehan nito. Importanteng masiguro na tama at patas ang aplikasyon nito para hindi dumagdag sa pinapasan ng ating mga kababayan.”

In a statement, ERC Chair Agnes Devanadera said they have been bombarded with complaints on Meralco’s alleged high billings covering the past three months.

“(W)e need to look into these consumers’ allegations (and so) we required Meralco to submit to us data or information for us to validate the accuracy of their billing calculations,” Devanadera stated.

Go then asked the ERC to investigate the issue further and ensure that consumers are charged the right amount without overburdening them in this time of pandemic.

“Naghihirap na ang mga Pilipino at marami nang nagkakasakit, dadagdagan pa ng sakit sa ulo dahil sa pag-intindi ng hindi klarong mga patakaran ukol sa bayarin,” he lamented.

Go emphasized that while Meralco has made efforts to explain the reason behind the increased amount of electricity bills through their public statements, further clarifications and corrective measures are necessary to give consumers the assurance they were not overcharged.

Go emphasized that now, more than ever, profits should not be prioritized over the welfare of the general public. The government, he said, should not tolerate any unfair business practices at a time when people’s lives are at risk.

“Nananawagan din ako sa Meralco na ipaliwanag ng maayos sa simpleng paraan at ibigay ang kumpletong impormasyon upang maintindihan ng mga tao. Huwag baliwalain ang mga reklamo, pakinggan niyo ang hinaing ng ordinaryong mamamayan. Tulungan po natin sila at pangalagaan ang kapakanan ng mga bumuhay sa inyong negosyo,” Go said.

Go also requested —power companies to defer disconnection should some of their consumers fail to pay their electricity bills incurred during the quarantine periods.

“Tatlong buwang pinagbawalan natin ang karamihan na makapagtrabaho at maghanapbuhay. Tatlong buwan nating pinilit na manatili lang sila sa kanilang mga bahay. Dahan dahan pa lang na nagbubukas ang mga negosyo at trabaho. Huwag naman sana natin dagdagan pa ang bigat at hirap na dinadala ng ating mga kababayan,” he added.

Earlier, Go urged the private sector to help alleviate the woes of workers and citizens amid the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic by giving them enough leeway in the payment of their utility bills.

Go emphasized further that threats of COVID-19 to the safety and lives of our people continue to grow. While the government is doing its best, a whole-of-society approach is needed to help the whole country overcome the crisis.

“Magtulungan at magbayanihan po tayo. Walang dapat mapabayaan. Unahin natin ang kapakanan ng mga ordinaryong mamamayan,” he stressed.

DOE Secretary Alfonso Cusi, as early as 15 May, sought Meralco’s explanation regarding complaints from consumers. On May 26, DOE met with executives of Meralco who personally explained the spikes.

Another meeting was held on 3 June to discuss the implementation of earlier suggestions to issue new electricity bills to consumers. During the meeting, Meralco informed DOE they will be issuing advisories explaining the May and June billings, through letters, social media posts and print media notices.

DOE also attended several meetings called by the Joint Congressional Energy Commission and House Committee on Energy to discuss the “bill shock” issue.

To date, Meralco has re-issued June billings based on the actual meter readings with customer-specific explanations on the computation and how it will be paid on installment basis.

Cusi assured that DOE is working continuously with Meralco and ERC in monitoring the developments to ensure that the interests of consumers are protected at all times.

# Kanlaon still 'no entry zone'

Published 1 day ago on June 27, 2020 03:00 AM

By **TDT**



The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) on Friday reiterated that entry to Kanlaon Volcano's danger zone remains prohibited as the volcano is still under Alert Level 1.

"(The) public should strictly follow recommendation not to enter the 4-km. radius Permanent Danger Zone, as the volcano is abnormal," Phivolcs director Renato Solidum Jr. told the Philippine News Agency in a message.

He added that while there was no significant change in the volcano's volcanic activities in the past 24 hours compared to the previous day, the volcano's tectonic earthquakes at the western slope still persist.

There were 25 volcano tectonic earthquakes recorded in the western flanks in the past 24 hours, lower than the 44 volcano tectonic quakes recorded the previous day.

For the past two days, moderate emission of white steam-laden plumes that rose 200 meters before drifting northeast and northwest was observed.

Sulfur dioxide emission was measured at an average of 237 tonnes/day on 24 June.

# PHIVOLCS: Kanlaon Volcano showing magmatic activity, Alert Level 1 stays

**Published** June 27, 2020 10:56am

Hydrothermal or magmatic activity is occurring beneath the Kanlaon Volcano edifice on Negros Island, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology said Saturday.

In its 8 a.m. [Kalaon Volcano bulletin](#), PHIVOLCS said it monitored six volcano-tectonic earthquakes on the western flanks, and one volcanic earthquake in the summit area during the 24-hour observation period.

Also, it recorded moderate emission of white steam-laden plumes that rose 200 meters before drifting northwest. Sulfur dioxide (SO<sub>2</sub>) emission was measured at an average of 237 tonnes per day on 24 June 2020.

Meanwhile, ground deformation data from continuous GPS measurements indicate a slight deflation of the lower and mid slopes since January 2020. Short-term electronic tilt monitoring on the southeastern flanks recorded continuing deflation on the lower slopes but inflation on the mid slopes since April 2020.

All these parameters, according to PHIVOLCS, indicate that hydrothermal or magmatic activity is occurring beneath the edifice.

It reminded the public that the volcano is at Alert Level 1, which means that it is at an abnormal condition and has entered a period of unrest.

Moreover, it said, local government units around the area and the public are strongly reminded that entry into the 4-kilometer radius Permanent Danger Zone (PDZ) must be strictly prohibited due to the further possibilities of sudden and hazardous steam-driven or phreatic eruptions.

Civil aviation authorities must also advise pilots to avoid flying close to the volcano's summit as ejecta from any sudden phreatic eruption can be hazardous to aircraft. —**LBG, GMA News**

Source: [https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/scitech/science/744428/phivolcs-kanlaon-volcano-showing-magmatic-activity-alert-level-1-stays/story/?utm\\_source=GMAnews&utm\\_medium=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR343le87Bzd65dLPij3Ppdrp74yt-cXGxjM4ZGxQ0wM64ttHk\\_CzU54f28](https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/scitech/science/744428/phivolcs-kanlaon-volcano-showing-magmatic-activity-alert-level-1-stays/story/?utm_source=GMAnews&utm_medium=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR343le87Bzd65dLPij3Ppdrp74yt-cXGxjM4ZGxQ0wM64ttHk_CzU54f28)



A coronavirus vaccine is still months away, but an  
antibody treatment could be closer

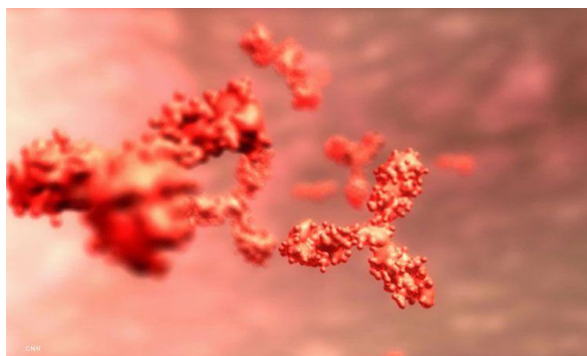
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DATE

# A coronavirus vaccine is still months away, but an antibody treatment could be closer

By Jen Christensen, CNN

Published Jun 27, 2020 9:17:15 PM



**Vaccines have gotten all the attention in the race to fight COVID-19, but there is a major push in the United States to develop antibody therapies to treat coronavirus. (FILE PHOTO)**

**(CNN)** — Vaccines have gotten all the attention in the race to fight COVID-19, but there is a major push in the United States to develop antibody therapies to treat coronavirus. There's so much of a push that some scientists think these treatments may be available this year, even before a vaccine.

Antibodies are the proteins the body makes to fight infection.

Since the Victorian era, scientists have harnessed this natural protection for treatments.

During the 1918 flu pandemic, doctors proved convalescent plasma — antibody-filled blood plasma from patients who recovered from the disease — could fight flu. Convalescent plasma has been used to treat severe flu, MERS and SARS and now some US doctors are starting to see some success treating Covid-19, too.

Since there isn't enough donated plasma to treat all patients, modern medicine can fill in the gaps and maybe even improve the process. Scientists can create what are called monoclonal antibodies: lab-made antibodies created specifically to target an infection.

Vaccines have the advantage of working longer than an antibody treatment. Antibody therapies potentially last a month or two and then wear off, but they can be used to temporarily protect vulnerable populations such as nursing home residents or healthcare workers or people with chronic conditions. The therapies could also treat people who are already sick with Covid-19.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases and a member of the White House coronavirus task force, said these therapies will be essential in the fight against Covid-19.

"Right now we have a major push on a program to develop monoclonal antibodies, convalescent plasma, and hyperimmune globulin, all of which are founded on the same principle of using an antibody that is directed against the virus for either prophylaxis or treatment," Fauci said in an interview with JAMA on June 8. "I think you're going to see it's going to be for both. We'd like to have available for those who are at risk—the elderly and those with underlying conditions—either monoclonal antibodies or convalescent plasma. That's a very, very high priority."

Currently there are at least 102 Covid-19 antibody treatments in various stages of development, according to David Thomas, vice president of Industry Research at BIO, the trade association representing the biotechnology industry. Thomas does the research that goes into his organization's Covid-19 therapeutic development tracker. He said there are so many treatments under development, it's hard to keep up.

"I never looked at it to grow this big, this fast, and I've worked on all different therapeutic areas from Alzheimer's to cancer, and to see a pipeline of this size and this breadth is amazing," Thomas said.

Thomas said some therapies are designed to treat the secondary effects of Covid-19 such as inflammation. Others are being designed to kill the coronavirus itself.

Compared to other diseases, the research and development of Covid-19 treatments are moving at "light speed," Thomas said.

A coronavirus vaccine is still months away, but an  
antibody treatment could be closer

TITLE :

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June 28, 2020

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Four monoclonal antibody treatments made to treat and possibly even prevent Covid-19 infection already went into human trials in June.

Indianapolis-based pharma giant Eli Lilly has two. One was developed in collaboration with AbCellera, a biotechnology company based in Canada. Another was developed with Junshi Biosciences.

The antibody Lilly developed with AbCellera called LY-CoV555 is now in a Phase 2 clinical trial of non-hospitalized patients. That study is currently enrolling patients. Lilly said in the future it will also test additional antibodies and experiment with different combinations to see which work best.

Regeneron is testing its antibody cocktail in patients in the US. The New York-based biotech company is enrolling hospitalized and ambulatory patients with Covid-19 in the initial safety/virology phase of the trial, spokesperson Alexandra Bowie said this week. The company hopes to have preliminary data in the next one to two months. They are scaling up manufacturing to create hundreds of thousands of doses by August 2020, dedicating their entire manufacturing plant in upstate New York to the effort.

There is also another effort from Tychan, a biotech company based in Singapore, that has launched a Phase 1 clinical trial in hospitalized patients there. The company said this part of the trial will take about six weeks.

It's likely, if all goes well in the first phases of the trials, therapies could advance to the next phases sometime this summer, the companies said, and treatments could potentially be available by the fall. Although, some scientists say, not everything works as planned in real life.

"Sometimes antibodies that work in the lab and neutralized really well aren't as effective when they are used in animal models or humans, so it's always a little bit tricky," said Phyllis Kanki, a professor of immunology and infectious diseases at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Sometimes it can take time to get the antibody cocktail right, Kanki said.

However, Thomas of BIO, said the industry has built up a lot of antibody therapy development expertise over the years in creating treatments to fight cancer and autoimmune disease.

In addition to therapies specifically designed to fight the novel coronavirus, companies are also looking to repurpose some of their existing monoclonal antibody treatments as potential Covid-19 treatments.

Novartis, for example, is in a phase 3 trial of the drug canakinumab against coronavirus. This interleukin-1beta blocker is FDA-approved to treat certain rare types of periodic fever syndromes, also called auto-inflammatory syndromes.

The company hopes canakinumab can be used to treat patients whose Covid-19 infection has caused a condition called cytokine release syndrome, or cytokine storm, where the body's immune system overreacts to the infection and harms the body. That trial is currently enrolling patients in the US.

China-based biotech company I-Mab said it also hopes to have the results by August from its trial of an antibody therapy, which it is currently testing on cytokine storm patients, so it could potentially offer a treatment by early fall.

Humanigen's lenzilumab also seems to be working against cytokine storms, according to a small study from scientists at the Mayo Clinic. That Phase 3 trial is ongoing.

Several other therapies are still being tested in the lab. A South Dakota company, SAB Biotherapeutics, said it plans to start human trials with its antibody treatment derived from the plasma of cattle in July.

Most experts think that the world could have an antibody treatment sooner than a vaccine, although vaccine development is moving along at a record pace, too.

"There's a lot of excitement around what these antibody therapies can do, at the animal level anyway," Thomas said. "They were showing neutralizing activity and we're seeing a lot of positive data."

*This story was first published on CNN.com "[A coronavirus vaccine is still months away, but an antibody treatment could be closer](https://www.cnn.com/2020/06/27/antibody-therapies-covid-19.html)"*

Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/world/2020/6/27/antibody-therapies-covid-19.html>