

DENR issues violation notice vs. barge owner in

July 06, 2020

TITLE: Iloilo City

PAGE 1/ 1/2

DATE

# DENR issues violation notice vs. barge owner in Iloilo City

Published July 5, 2020, 1:22 PM

by Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz

A notice of violation (NOV) will be issued against the owner of a barge that exploded off the coast of Iloilo City last Friday due to violation of environmental laws, an official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said on Sunday.



(MANILA BULLETIN)

Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said the issuance of a NOV against AC Energy Corporation is based on Republic Act 9275 or the Clean Water Act of 2004.

“A technical conference will be called to address the oil spill focusing on the clean-up operations. Then the case will be endorsed to the PAB (Pollution Adjudication Board) for computation of fines against AC Energy Corporation,” he explained.

Antiporda pointed out that the company, in coordination with a third-party, Harbor Star Shipping Services, will be conducting the clean-up operations in the affected area.

“Clean-up must be conducted following the national oil spill contingency plan and clean-up operations shall be supervised by the Philippine Coast Guard,” he said.

“The regional incident management team has been created to monitor all aspects of the clean-up from the affected community, health impacts, environmental impacts, and waste management,” he added.

The Philippine Coast Guard earlier reported that approximately one hectare of mangrove area has become a “proximate sensitive area” to the oil spill.

Antiporda said the recommended clean-up of heavy bunker fuel in mangroves is to allow wave action to disperse the oil and collect them from the sea.

“Sorbents and manual clean-up are recommended but must be strictly monitored so as not to disturb the mangroves in the area which may causes more harm than good,” he said.

Meanwhile, he noted that the use of dispersant in the mangroves should not be recommended due to adverse effects to the mangroves.

DENR issues violation notice vs. barge owner in

July 06, 2020

TITLE: Iloilo City

PAGE 1/ 2/2

DATE

“The priority action for the clean-up is to contain the spill within the barge area and prevent them from going into the shoreline where it is harder to clean and collect,” he added.

AC Energy in a statement said it immediately undertook containment procedures after the incident last Friday. However, high ocean waves they said caused some of the oil to spill out of the confinement area.

The company assured that the containment stage had been completed last Friday evening. They have also started the skimming operations.

“We have also established a team to closely coordinate with the barangay for the needs assessment of the affected people so we can provide the needed support,” AC Energy said.

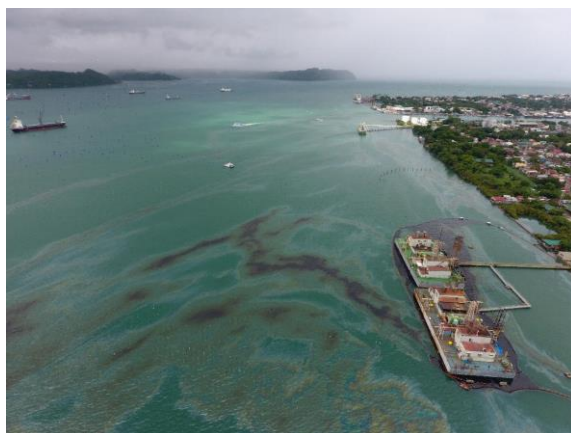
At least 63 households have been evacuated to the nearby elementary school due to toxic fumes from the explosion.

“As of this time, we are conducting an investigation of the incident and a reputable third-party firm will be engaged to conduct a thorough investigation as to the root cause of the explosion that ignited the fuel gases inside the sealed tank, in order to avoid similar situations from happening in the future,” the firm said.

# DENR to serve notice of violation to power barge that spilled oil in Iloilo City

By: [Daphne Galvez](#) - Reporter / [@DYGalvezINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 01:43 PM July 05, 2020



Leaked bunker fuel spreads from a damaged power barge off the coast of Iloilo City (Photo courtesy of Leo Solinap)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will serve a notice of violation to the owner of the power barge that spilled oil off the coast of Iloilo City last Friday, July 3.

On July 3, an explosion damaged the power barge docked at the village of Barrio Obrero owned by AC Energy Corp. which caused it to [spill an estimated 40,000 liters of bunker fuel](#). Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said a technical conference will be convened to address the oil spill focusing on the clean-up operations.

“The case will be endorsed to PAB (Pollution Adjudication Board) for computation of fines against AC Energy Corp.,” he said in a message to reporters on Sunday.

The owner of the power barge is tasked to clean up the oil spill, and Antiporda said it has tapped a third party to conduct clean-up operations in the affected area.

Antiporda also said the priority is to contain the spill from the barge and prevent it from going to the shoreline. The barge, owned by AC Energy Corp., is estimated to be carrying 200,000 liters of bunker fuel.

The clean-up operations are being supervised by the Philippine Coast Guard, he added.

For its part, PCG said it will file a criminal case against AC Energy Corp. “if warranted.”

It added that the PCG’s legal affairs team will fly to Iloilo City to assist in the probe.

More than 300 residents living along the coastal areas in the area [have been evacuated from the area](#) due to fumes from bunker fuel spilled into the waters of the Iloilo River.

JE

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1302093/denr-to-serve-notice-of-violation-to-power-barge-that-spilled-oil-in-iloilo-city>

May-ari ng barge sa Iloilo oil spill, parurusahan ng

July 06, 2020

TITLE: DENR

PAGE 1/ 1/2

DATE



## May-ari ng barge sa Iloilo oil spill, parurusahan ng DENR

July 5, 2020 @ 4:54 PM 14 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Posibleng isyuan ng notice of violation para sa paglabag sa RA 9275 o Clean Water Act ang may-ari ng barge dahil sa tumapon na litro ng langis sa karagatan ng Iloilo City nitong nakalipas na hapon ng Biyernes, Hulyo 3.

Ayon kay Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, bukod sa notice of violation dahil sa paglabag sa polusyon, maaari rin umanong isyuan ng multa ang kompanyang AC Energy Corp. dahil sa pagtagas ng kanilang langis sa karagatan ng Iloilo.

Nauna rito magugunitang mahigit 40,000 litro ng langis ang tumapon sa karagatan sa bisinidad ng Barangay Lapuz, Iloilo City matapos sumabog ang tangke ng isang power barge.

Ayon kay Usec. Antiporda, inindorso na ang insidente sa Pollution Adjudication Board (PAB) hinggil sa multa na dapat panagutan ng AC Energy Corp. matapos tumagas ang kanilang langis sa karagatan.

“Notice of violation based on RA 9275 (Clean Water Act) will be issued. A Technical Conference will be called to address the oil spill focusing on the clean-up operations. Then the case will be indorsed to PAB for computation of fines against AC Energy Corp.,” pahayag ni Antiporda sa isang mensahe sa mga reporter.

Idinagdag pa ni Antiporda na matapos ang insidente agad nagsagawa ng clean-up ang AC Energy Inc. ang may-ari ng barge at nakikipagtulungan na ito sa 3rd party nito ang Harbor Star Shipping Services para magsagawa umano ng oil spill clean-up at operasyon sa apektadong lugar ng karagatan na sinubaybayan naman ng Philippine Coast Guard ang naturang clean-up.

“Clean-up must be conducting following the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan and clean-up operations shall be supervised by the Philippine Coast Guard. The Regional Incident Management Team is created to monitor all aspects of the clean-up from the affected community, health impacts, environmental impacts, and waste management,” ayon sa opisyal.

“Recommended clean-up of heavy bunker fuel in mangroves is to allow wave action to disperse the oil and collect them from the sea. Sorbents and manual clean-up are recommended but must be strictly monitored so as not to disturb the mangroves in the area which may causes more harm than good. Use of dispersant in the mangroves should not be recommended due to adverse effects to the mangroves,” dagdag pa nito.

Magugunitang sa inisyal na ulat ng Philippine Coast Guard, sumabog umano ang isa sa apat na tangke ng Power Barge Number 102 sa Zone 3, Bo. Obrero, na may 48,000 litro ng langis.

Bunsod nito, patuloy ang assessment ng CENRO kung gaano kalawak ang pinsalang naidulot ng oil spill lalo sa marine life sa lugar.

“The priority action for the clean-up is to contain the spill within the barge area and prevent them from going into the shoreline where it is harder to clean and collect,” giit ni Antiporda.

Nabatid pa sa DENR ang Regional Incident Management Team ay binuo para i-monitor ang lahat ng aspeto para sa clean-up mula sa apektadong komunidad, kalusugan at epekto sa environment at waste management ng naturang pagtagas ng langis sa karatagan.

Samantala, nang tanungin naman kung mapananagot ang NAPOCOR at kung nakausap na ito ng ahensya, iginiit ni Antiporda na hindi ito ang may-ari ng barge at bagkus, kasama pa ito sa pagpupulong nitong Sabado.

“AC Energy Inc. and not NAPOCOR are the owner of the barge and they joined us during the meeting with the Philippine Coast Guard on July 4, 2020. They are conducting clean-up operations at present and they are being supervised by the PCG,” ayon kay Antiporda. **Santi Celario**



## May-ari ng barge na sangkot sa Iloilo oil spill pagmumultahin ng DENR

July 5, 2020 @ 3:48 PM 14 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Pagmumultahin ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang may-ari ng barge na dawit sa oil spill sa Iloilo nitong Biyernes, ayon kay Undersecretary Benny Antiporda nitong Linggo.

Sa isang pahayag, iginiit ni Usec. Antiporda na maglalabas ng notice of violation ang ahensya sa AC Energy para sa paglabag sa Clean Water Act o Republic Act (RA) 9275.

“Notice of violation based on RA 9275 (Clean Water Act) will be issued. A Technical Conference will be called to address the oil spill focusing on the cleanup operations,” aniya.

Dagdag nito, ipadadala rin ang kaso sa Pollution Adjudication Board (PAB) para sa pag-assess ng multa.

“The case will be endorsed to PAB for computation of fines against AC Energy,” dagdag pa ni Antiporda.

Aniya pa, nagsasagawa ng cleanup operation ang AC Energy sa apektadong bahagi ng katubigan sa tulong ng Harbor Star Shipping Services.

Susunod naman aniya ang cleanup operations sa National Oil Spill Contingency Plan sa pangangasiwa ng Philippine Coast Guard (PCG).

“The Regional Incident Management Team is created to monitor all aspects of the cleanup from the affected community, health impacts, environmental impacts, and waste management,” pahayag ng opsiyal.

“Sorbents and manual cleanup are recommended but must be strictly monitored so as not to disturb the mangroves in the area which may causes more harm than good,” ayon kay Antiporda.

“Use of dispersant in the mangroves should not be recommended due to adverse effects to the mangroves.” **RNT/MM**

Source: [https://remate.ph/may-ari-ng-barge-na-sangkot-sa-iloilo-oil-spill-pagmumultahin-ng-denr/?fbclid=IwAR2Dm0nB-R5jW6P38Wg83aO7gwcV\\_sclHt\\_PZNjIEUj8-kR74qpD1GmGgOk](https://remate.ph/may-ari-ng-barge-na-sangkot-sa-iloilo-oil-spill-pagmumultahin-ng-denr/?fbclid=IwAR2Dm0nB-R5jW6P38Wg83aO7gwcV_sclHt_PZNjIEUj8-kR74qpD1GmGgOk)

DENR to impose fines on owner of barge in Iloilo oil

July 06, 2020

TITLE: spill - Antiporda

PAGE 1/ 1/2

DATE



## DENR to impose fines on owner of barge in Iloilo oil spill —Antiporda

**Published** July 5, 2020 3:47pm

By JOVILAND RITA, GMA News

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will impose fines on the owner of a barge involved in an oil spill in Iloilo on Friday, Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said on Sunday.

In a statement, Antiporda said the department will issue a notice of violation to AC Energy for violation of Clean Water Act or Republic Act (RA) 9275.

“Notice of violation based on RA 9275 (Clean Water Act) will be issued. A Technical Conference will be called to address the oil spill focusing on the cleanup operations,” he said.

Antiporda added that the case will be forwarded to the Pollution Adjudication Board (PAB) for the assessment of fines.

“The case will be endorsed to PAB for computation of fines against AC Energy,” Antiporda added.

According to Antiporda, the AC Energy is conducting a cleanup operation in affected marine areas, with the help of third party Harbor Star Shipping Services.

Cleanup operations will follow the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan with the supervision of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), the DENR official said.

Containing the spill within the barge area and preventing it from going into the shoreline—where it is harder to clean and collect—is the priority procedure of the cleanup, he pointed out.

“The Regional Incident Management Team is created to monitor all aspects of the cleanup from the affected community, health impacts, environmental impacts, and waste management,” he said.

DENR to impose fines on owner of barge in Iloilo oil

July 06, 2020

TITLE: spill - Antiporda

PAGE 1/ 2/2

DATE

Antiporda noted that the recommended cleanup of heavy bunker fuel in mangroves will allow the waves to disperse the oil, which will be collected after being drifted to the sea.

“Sorbents and manual cleanup are recommended but must be strictly monitored so as not to disturb the mangroves in the area which may causes more harm than good,” Antiporda said.

“Use of dispersant in the mangroves should not be recommended due to adverse effects to the mangroves,” he added.

On the other hand, the PCG said it [will file criminal raps against AC Energy if warranted](#).

At least [63 households were displaced due to the fumes](#) that drifted to their area after the explosion of AC Energy’s Power Barge 102 on Friday afternoon.

In a statement, AC Energy said the company and a third party firm are conducting an investigation into the incident to determine the "root cause" of the explosion that ignited the fuel gases inside the sealed tank. —**LBG, GMA News**



# DENR: May-ari ng power barge na pinagmulan ng oil spill sa Iloilo City, papadalhan ng notice of violation

By [Bombo Dave Vincent Pasit](#) -July 5, 2020 | 1:17 PM

Bibigyan ng notice of violation ng DENR ang may-ari ng power barge na siyang pinagmulan ng tumagas na langis sa karagatan ng Iloilo City noong nakaraang linggo.

Hulyo 3 ay nagkaroon nang pagsabog na nagdulot ng pinsala sa power barge na nakadaong sa Barrio Obrero na pagmamay-ari ng AC Energy Corp. na siyang dahilan nang pagtagas ng tinatayang 40,000 litro ng bunker fuel.

Ayon kay Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, magkakaroon ng technical conference para pag-usapan kung anong diskarte ang gagawin sa clean-up operations sa nangyaring oil spill.

“The case will be endorsed to PAB (Philippine Accreditation Bureau) for computation of fines against AC Energy Corp.,” ani Antiporda.

Sa ngayon, inatasan na ang may-ari ng power barge na linisin ang oil spill, at ayon kay Antiporda, humingi na rin ito ng tulong sa third party para magsagawa ng clean-up operations sa apektadong mga lugar.

Prayoridad ngayon aniya nila na ma-contain ang oil spill sa barge at iwasan na umabot ito sa mga pangpang.

Sa ngayon, ang Philippine Coast Guard ang nangunguna sa clean-up operations.



PCG to file raps vs. owner of barge involved in Iloilo

July 06, 2020

TITLE: oil spill if warranted

PAGE 1/ 1/2



DATE

 **Philippine Coast Guard** ✓  
on Friday 

LOOK: The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) continues the recovery operation after approximately 40,000 liters of bunker oil spilled at the vicinity waters off Zone 3, Barrio Obrero, Lapuz, Iloilo City on 03 July 2020.

Initial investigation revealed that the cause of the explosion of one of the four tanks of Power Barge Number 102 was hot work as acetylene was used to open rusted compartments of the involved power barge.

Immediately, the PCG and Power Barge Number 102 laid sever... [See More](#)



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## PCG to file raps vs. owner of barge involved in Iloilo oil spill if warranted

**Published** July 5, 2020 11:11am

**Updated** July 5, 2020 11:17am

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) on Sunday said it will file criminal raps against the owner of the barge involved in an oil spill incident in Iloilo if warranted.

"The PCG will file criminal charges against the owner of Power Barge Number 102, if warranted," it said in a statement.

It added that the PCG's Legal Affairs Team will fly to Iloilo City to assist in the probe.

On Saturday, the PCG shared photos of its recovery operation after an estimated 40,000 liters of bunker oil spilled in the waters off Zone 3, Barrio Obrero in Lapuz, Iloilo City last Friday.

PCG to file raps vs. owner of barge involved in Iloilo

July 06, 2020

TITLE: oil spill if warranted

PAGE 1/ 2/2

DATE

According to initial investigation, one of the four tanks of Power Barge Number 102 exploded.

"Immediately, the PCG and Power Barge Number 102 laid several segments of oil spill boom to contain the spilled oil," the PCG said.

Oil skimmers were then deployed for the recovery operation.

Five additional segments of oil spill boom were laid out by the PCG to protect the mangrove area nearby.

The PCG said the Bureau of Fire Protection and private oil companies also assisted in terms of manpower and equipment in the containment and recovery operations. —**KG, GMA News**

# Coast Guard to probe Iloilo City oil spill, may file charges vs. power barge owner 'if warranted'

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published Jul 5, 2020 1:37:0



(FILE PHOTO)

**Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, July 5)**— The Philippine Coast Guard said Sunday it will investigate the oil spill incident in Iloilo City, adding it will look into possible legal action against the owner of the power barge if necessary.

In a statement, PCG said its legal affairs team will be flying to Iloilo to assist in the ongoing probe on Friday's incident, wherein [over 40,000 liters of oil spilled into the waters](#) following a barge explosion in Lapuz district.

"The PCG will file criminal charges against the owner of Power Barge Number 102, if warranted," it said in a statement.

PCG Marine Environmental Command Rear Admiral Art Abu, however, told CNN Philippines that the agency will still have to study possible complaints that may be filed against the company, with officials still awaiting the final results of the investigation.

"*Pinag-aaralan pa dahil* (We're still studying it because) right now we are busy on containing the oil," Abu said in an interview with *Newsroom Weekend*.

Officials from the Coast Guard as well as personnel and management from the AC Energy Corporation— owner of the power barge— have started a coastal cleanup in the area to contain further damage brought by the oil spill pegged at around 48,000 liters.

Authorities have likewise placed multilayered spill booms from the tank to prevent the further spread of oil in the waters.

Initial reports from the PCG said one of the tanks exploded due to hot work as acetylene was used to open rusted compartments. AC Energy meanwhile said that the oil spill was initially blocked by a structure surrounding the barge but high waves caused it to spill out.

Meanwhile, PCG reported that around 100 families composed of over 300 individuals living in the vicinity were affected by the incident. They were evacuated to a nearby school, it added.

AC Energy, in a separate statement on Saturday, said it will closely coordinate with the local government unit concerned in order to address the needs of the affected community.

The Environment Department, on the other hand, said a notice of violation of the Republic Act No. 9275 or the Clean Water Act will be issued in relation to the incident.

Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/7/5/PCG-Iloilo-oil-spill-probe-possible-charges-AC-Energy.html>

# May-ari ng barge na sangkot sa oil spill sa Iloilo, posibleng kasuhan ng PCG

By [Bombo Dave Vincent Pasit](#) -July 5, 2020 | 11:32 AM

Sasampahan ng kaso ng Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) ang may-ari ng barge na sangkot sa oil spill incident sa Iloilo kung kakailanganin.

Sa isang statement, sinabi ng PCG na tutungo sa Iloilo City ang kanilang Legal Affairs Team para tumulong sa imbestigasyon.

Nitong Sabado lang, ibinahagi ng PCG ang mga litrato ng kanilang recovery operation matapos na kumalat ang nasa 40,000 liters ng bunker oil sa karagatang bahagi ng Zone 3, Bario Obrero sa Lapuz Iloilo City noong Biyernes.

Base sa inisyal na imbestigasyon, isa sa apat na tangke ng Power Barge Number 102 ang sumabog.

Kaagad namang ipinadala sa pinangyarihan ng insidente ang mga oil skimmers para sa recovery operation.

Limang karagdagang segments ng oil spill boom ang inilatag ng PCG para maprotektahan ang mangrove area malapit sa lugar kung saan nangyari ang insidente.

## AC Energy probes Iloilo City power barge blast

July 6, 2020 | 12:04 am



AYALA-LED AC Energy, Inc. (AC Energy) said an investigation is now being conducted seeking the cause of the explosion of its power barge in Iloilo City that caused an oil spill last Friday.

“As of this time, we are conducting an investigation of the incident and a reputable third-party firm will be engaged to conduct a thorough investigation as to the root cause of the explosion that ignited the fuel gases inside the sealed tank, in order to avoid similar situations from happening in the future,” the Ayala energy firm said in a statement over the weekend.

About 251,000 liters of bunker fuel from AC Energy’s Power Barge 102 unit were spilled on Iloilo Strait, covering an area of 1,200 square meters in Barrio Obrero, Lapuz district, according to the city’s disaster risk reduction and management office in a Facebook update on Saturday.

AC Energy said containment procedures were undertaken using spill booms from its barge, the Philippine Coast Guard, and Petron Corp. Skimming operations were also done.

Around 105 affected families were temporarily relocated to a nearby elementary school, as of Saturday.

“We are committed to exerting all means to clean up the oil spill as soon as possible and support the affected communities,” the energy company said. — **Adam J. Ang**

# AC Energy probes oil spill

By ... -July 6, 2020

AC Energy said it has engaged a third party to investigate an oil spill incident in Iloilo City involving its Power Barge 102 (PB102).

The PB is a barge-mounted bunker-fired diesel generating power stations with a total capacity of 32 megawatts (MW), consisting of four diesel generator units rated 8 MW each.

“...A reputable third-party firm will be engaged to conduct a thorough investigation as to the root cause of the explosion that ignited the fuel gases inside the sealed tank, in order to avoid similar situations from happening in the future,” AC Energy said.

The containment stage has been completed, AC Energy said.

AC Energy assured the 63 households that have been displaced from their homes due to fumes carried to the area by winds were immediately evacuated to a nearby elementary school.

# Oil spill spreads to Iloilo, Guimaras coastal towns

Published July 5, 2020, 12:03 PM

by Tara Yap

ILOILO CITY – The oil spill from a damaged power barge in this city has spread to coastal towns of Iloilo province, and the island province of Guimaras.



Oil sheen (lower left) is seen at a coastal area in Iloilo City after bunker fuel leaked out from a power barge that exploded last July 3. (Tara Yap/Manila Bulletin)

“It is spreading,” said Donna Magno, director of the Iloilo City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (Iloilo City DRRMO).

Magno told The Manila Bulletin Sunday that the bunker fuel coming from the barge has reached the coastal areas of Leganes, Dumangas and Oton towns that face the Iloilo Strait.

There have also been sightings of bunker fuel in the Guimaras towns of Jordan and Buenavista, which face Iloilo City.

The oil spill was caused by an explosion that hit Power Barge 102 last July 3 that tore a hole in its hull.

The power barge is owned by AC Energy Corp., a subsidiary of the Ayala group, and was carrying 251,000 liters of bunker fuel and not just 200,000 liters as earlier reported.

Magno said that almost 180,000 liters of oil have been collected by a team led by the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), while AC Energy assured that additional equipment was arriving Sunday for the retrieval of the remaining bunker fuel, and to contain the spread of the oil spill.

Magno said Iloilo City Environmental Officer Noel Hechanova had also suggested to use improvised spill booms because the ones currently being used to contain the oil spill were not enough.

“We have to get people to make these improvised booms the soonest so we can stop the spread,” Magno added.

The incident calls to mind a 2006 incident off the coast of Guimaras, which continues to be considered as the country’s worst oil spill disaster.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/07/05/oil-spill-spreads-to-iloilo-guimaras-coastal-towns/>



# Oil spill spreads to Iloilo, Guimaras coastal towns

July 5, 2020 | Filed under: Headlines, News | Posted by: Tempo Desk

ILOILO CITY — The oil spill from a damaged power barge in this city have spread to coastal towns of Iloilo province and the island province of Guimaras.

“It is spreading,” said Donna Magno, director of the Iloilo City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (Iloilo City DRRMO).

Magno said in a Sunday phone interview bunker fuel has reached the coastal areas of Leganes, Dumangas and Oton towns that face the Iloilo Strait.

There are also has been sightings of bunker fuel in the Guimaras towns of Jordan and Buenavista, which face Iloilo City.

The oil spill was caused by Power Barge 102, which exploded last July 3 and tore a hole in its hull.

The power barge owned by AC Energy Corp., a subsidiary of the Ayala group, was carrying 251,000 liters of bunker fuel and not 200,000 liters as earlier reported.

Magno said that almost 180,000 liters of oil has been collected by a team led by the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) while AC Energy separately assured that additional equipment is arriving Sunday for the retrieval of the remaining bunker fuel and contain the spread. **(Tara Yap)**

At least 63 families evacuated after Iloilo power barge  
blast, owner says

PAGE 1/ 1/2

July 06, 2020  
DATE



## At least 63 families evacuated after Iloilo power barge blast, owner says

**Published** July 5, 2020 1:48pm

By JOVILAND RITA, GMA News

The owner of the Power Barge 102 (PB102), which exploded causing an oil spill in Iloilo, said that at least 63 households were displaced due to the fumes that drifted to their area.

In a statement on Saturday, AC Energy said it is closely coordinating with barangay authorities to assess the needs of the affected families.

“Sixty-three households have been displaced from their homes yesterday due to the fumes carried to the area by the winds. They were immediately evacuated to the nearby elementary school,” it said.

AC Energy said that PB102 on Friday afternoon an "accident" involving its fuel tank caused some oil to spill from the confinement area.

“The containment stage was completed last night through the use of multilayered spill booms from PB102, and additional layers from the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) and Petron,” it said.

“This morning (Sunday), additional oil skimmer equipment arrived from Shell Philippines and another set will be arriving tomorrow from the company’s Power Barge 103,” it added.

According to AC Energy, cleaning operations for the oil spill started on Friday.

Likewise, it said the company and a third party firm are already conducting an investigation into the incident to determine the "root cause" of the explosion that ignited the fuel gases inside the sealed tank.

At least 63 families evacuated after Iloilo power barge

July 06, 2020

TITLE: blast, owner says

PAGE 1/ 2/2

DATE

The probe also aims to avoid similar incidents from happening again, it added.

“We would like to thank the PCG, Iloilo mayor Jerry Treñas, the officials of the local government of Iloilo and our host community who are helping us in the containment efforts,” it said.

“We are committed to exerting all means to clean up the oil spill as soon as possible and support affected communities,” it added.

On Sunday, the PCG said that it will [file criminal raps against the owner of the barge](#) if necessary. —**LBG, GMA News**

# Vista on hot seat for stripping Baguio of trees

Published 6 hours ago on July 6, 2020 12:05 AM

By [Aldwin Quitasol](#)



AN AREA in Barangay Outlook Drive in Baguio City where 54 trees were felled by the Villar-owned Vista Residences Inc. (Photo: Dave Leprozo Jr.)

BAGUIO CITY—Top honchos of the Villar family's Vista Residences Inc. will be on the hot seat when members of the Baguio City Council probe today the property firm, the Department of Natural Resources and officials of Purok 3 in Barangay Outlook Drive regarding the cutting of 54 trees.

Vista Residences had justified the felling of trees, claiming it was allowed through a special private land timber permit issued by the DENR in Quezon City in May 2020.

City government will inquire on the property firm's officials for them to shed light on the issue that in turn will allow them to craft legislative measures.

The developer since 20 June 2020 had chopped down 53 pine trees and one Norfolk tree to pave the way for the Vista Pinehill Baguio condominium project.

According to Baguio City Councilor Arthur Allad-iw, there is a strong clamor from various sectors for the city government to halt the cutting of trees, which used to be the key attraction of the Baguio City that has come to be regarded as the Summer Capital of the country.

## Public protests tree cutting

The local executive said the city government will inquire on the property firm's officials for them to shed light on the issue that in turn will allow them to craft legislative measures.

An online petition against Vista Residences and addressed to Mayor Benjamin Magalong sought to stop the tree-cutting at Outlook Drive.

The online petition has generated more than 15,629 signatures as of the morning of 5 July 2020. Magalong expressed sadness over the tree-cutting operation while stressing the urgency for the issuance of a moratorium on these activities and the construction of high-rise buildings in the city.

## Magalong backs moratorium

In October last year, Magalong pushed for a moratorium which he claimed was a plan that the Palace had approved in principle.

Meanwhile, the city council through a resolution this month requested President Rodrigo Duterte to issue an executive order mandating a moratorium on tree-cutting activities and on the construction of new commercial buildings in the City of Baguio.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/07/06/vista-gets-hot-seat-for-stripping-baguio/>

# Are we ready for the next pandemic?

*As the world struggles to survive the impacts of the dreaded coronavirus disease, the next zoonotic disease may just be around the corner.*

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

July 5, 2020



*The forest of Coron in Palawan is considered home to a diverse species of flora and fauna. The forest is considered by indigenous people communities as nature's pharmacy because of the abundance of plants used for traditional medicine.*

As scientists continue to find a cure for the dreaded coronavirus disease that has affected more than 10 million people worldwide, the lingering question is: Are we ready for another zoonotic disease that may cause another pandemic?

A new report by World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) warns that the conditions are rife for the next pandemic—unless action is taken.

Through the report, “Covid-19: Urgent Call to Protect People and Nature,” WWF has called for urgent global action to address the key drivers it has identified which will cause future zoonotic disease outbreaks.

## Zoonotic disease drivers

The environmental factors driving the emergence of zoonotic diseases include: trade and consumption of high-risk wildlife; land-use change leading to deforestation and conversion; expansion of agriculture and unsustainable intensification; and animal production.

In a news release highlighting the launch of WWF's latest report, Marco Lambertini, director general of WWF International, said there is an urgent need to recognize the links between the destruction of nature and human health.

“We must curb the high-risk trade and consumption of wildlife, halt deforestation and land conversion as well as manage food production sustainably,” he said.

He said such actions will help prevent the spillover of pathogens to humans, and also address other global risks to society like biodiversity loss and climate change.

“There is no debate, and the science is clear: we must work with nature, not against it. Unsustainable exploitation of nature has become an enormous risk to us all,” he added.

## Unsustainable global food system

On top of trade and consumption of animal wildlife, the report partly blames the unsustainable global food system, which is driving the large-scale conversion of natural spaces for agriculture, fragmenting natural ecosystems and increasing interactions among wildlife, livestock and humans.

“Since 1990, 178 million hectares of forest have been cleared, which is equivalent to the size of Libya, the 18th-largest country in the world, and around 10 million hectares of forest are still being lost each year through conversion to agriculture and other land uses,” WWF International said.

The report pointed out that the Covid-19 crisis revealed the need for systemic changes to address the environmental drivers of pandemics.

## ‘One Health’ approach

WWF is advocating a “One Health” approach that link the health of people, animals and their shared environment.

Specifically, WWF wants the organization to be included in decision-making on wildlife and land-use change, and be incorporated within all business and financing decisions related to global health.

According to Lambertini, there is an opportunity to heal man’s relationship with nature and mitigate the risks of future pandemics.

## Urgent action

“World leaders must take urgent action to transform our relationship with the natural world. We need a ‘new deal’ for nature and people that sets nature on the path to recovery by 2030 and safeguards human health and livelihoods in the long term,” he said.

For his part, WWF-Philippines Executive Director Joel Palma also noted that it is high time to start treating environmental issues with the same urgency as economic trepidations.

“Science has proven that planetary health is related to human health. This pandemic is a manifestation of our disregard for the environment. We have put on the side environmental protection over economic gains. Our environment can only give as much and is now within its limits that even our economic gains are threatened. It’s about time to prioritize the environment so that we can sustain healthy communities with an equitable economy,” he said.

## Back to basics

Biodiversity experts agree with the WWF report’s key findings.

Sought for reaction, Assistant Secretary Ricardo Calderon, the concurrent director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Biodiversity Management Bureau (DENR-BMB) described the report as an “accurate observation.”

Calderon said in a telephone interview with BusinessMirror on June 25 that coping with the challenges of Covid-19 and preparing to face the threats of new ones requires a step back to be able to go back to the basics which are anchored on natural-resource management and nature-based solutions.

“It goes back to basics. We are going back to the management and protection of our natural resources, including our flora and fauna. Despite this pandemic, whether this is natural or synthetic, just the same, we are going back to nature,” the DENR-BMB chief said in mixed English and Filipino,

## Solutions in nature

Citing the mantra of the Convention on Biological Diversity, he said the solutions are in nature.

“We can see that even in our economic recovery, we must consider our natural capital as window to survive the new normal. We should go back to basics. [Protecting and conserving] our water, our forest and our wildlife. We should start all over again,” explained Calderon, a forestry expert and a former national coordinator of the government’s National Greening Program, said.

He noted that the road to recovery being eyed by experts amid the pandemic is aligned with the current thrusts and program of the DENR-BMB.

“Our pipeline projects, the biodiversity corridor project, and an upcoming project, Sibol, a consortium with USAID [United States Agency for International Development], was conceptualized years ago but they are still aligned with the path of the new normal we are going through,” Calderon said.

## Human capital investment

Beyond investment in protection and conservation of natural resources, he said the DENR is also heavily invested in human capital.

“If you can see, the DENR is heavily invested not only in natural resources, but also in people in upland and coastal areas as our partner in natural resources management” Calderon added.

He explained that the investment in human capital is a two-way process. “The people [residents] will benefit and us,” referring to the DENR that has been implementing various programs in the rural areas, such as those that tap into the indigenous knowledge and the people in upland communities who are familiar of the local situations, as well as the residents in coastal areas.

## Sustainable livelihood, income

Citing the potential adverse impact of Covid-19, the loss of jobs means a need for a sustainable source of income. This, he said, can be provided by “green jobs program.”

“There are many displaced OFWs [overseas Filipino workers] and this new normal points to the direction of economic activities that are dependent on natural resources, such as farming. To increase agricultural productivity, there’s a need to ensure good water source,” he said.

“The road to recovery, although there’s a need to invest in the health sector, there’s also a need to invest on the natural resource sector as part of the new normal,” he ended.

## Biodiversity decline

The Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) said the threats of new zoonotic diseases, possibly deadlier than Covid-19, are real.

Interviewed via Messenger on June 25, ACB Executive Director Theresa Mundita S. Lim, a licensed veterinarian with specialization on wildlife management and disease, said that as with the rest of the world, the Southeast Asian region has experienced biodiversity decline over the years.

“According to Asean Biodiversity Outlook 2, the region stands to lose 13 percent to 42 percent of its species by 2100. It is a concern that biodiversity decline, if it will continue unabated, can trigger the spillover of viruses that are dormant or inactive, leading to their transmission to domestic animals and humans,” she said.

## Health and biodiversity

She noted that the recent pandemic has indeed made the connection between biodiversity and health more palpable—public health is dependent on the richness and health of biodiversity, or the variability among living organisms.

“As biodiversity underpins all ecosystems and the fundamental services that they provide for humanity’s daily subsistence, the decline of biodiversity could spell out the reduction of these services,” she said

The ACB chief cited that scientists have estimated that there could still be around 1.7 million viruses in wild mammals and birds that could potentially cause pandemics.

Lim, a former director of the DENR-BMB, said bats have been identified as a natural reservoir for most of such viruses.

“The Asean region is a center of diversity for bat species. If left alone and protected, these bats will continue to keep these potential pathogens at bay,” she said.

According to Lim, having the mandate to facilitate cooperation and coordination among Asean member-states, the ACB has been supporting the region in tackling these issues, including the resolve of Asean member-states to address the drivers of biodiversity loss that could lead to more health crises in the future.

Image Credits: [Gregg Yan/Best Alternatives](#)



# PHL, Japan experts partner in mapping of mangroves

By [Cai Ordinario](#)

July 5, 2020



A village and a highway among the mangroves in Siargao, Surigao del Norte.

Filipino and Japanese researchers proposed a new mangrove vegetation index (MVI) to map mangroves and maximize its benefits.

The MVI is a mangrove-specific index or measure that distinguishes mangrove areas from other vegetation. The MVI value increases with higher probability of an area being classified as mangroves.

University of the Philippines Diliman Senior Researcher Alvin Baloloy said the data to be used in the MVI will be derived from free satellite images.

“A mangrove mapping index derived from free satellite images is crucial for regular monitoring of our mangrove forests, especially when it is integrated in online mapping platforms like Google Earth Engine,” Baloloy said.

“We have recently simplified a mangrove index that will support rapid and accurate mapping of mangroves that will not only be useful in our study sites in the Philippines and Japan but also in other mangrove-rich countries,” he added.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency said in a statement that this is a joint project of Filipino and Japanese researchers from the University of the Philippines Diliman and Tokyo Institute of Technology.

A scientific paper on the MVI was released this June and is published in the *International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing Journal* via ScienceDirect, a global database of scientific and medical journals.

The MVI analyzed the characteristics of mangrove and nonmangrove sites in the Philippines and in Japan and was incorporated in IDL (a scientific programming language) and Google Earth Engine.

The study developed and implemented two automated platforms: an offline IDL-based MVI Mapper and an online Google Earth Engine-based MVI mapping interface. These platforms can be used to identify and measure areas with mangroves.

The latter was used in generating the latest mangrove extent map of the Philippines—with an estimate of 227,808 hectares for year 2019.

It is estimated that a hectare of mangroves can provide more than \$3,200 worth of direct flood-reduction benefits per year, according to the World Bank.

Apart from this, mangroves help in the absorption of carbon dioxide or blue or organic carbon. When ecosystems are damaged this leads to adverse effects to the environment.

“We aim to leverage our findings to support a Blue Carbon Strategy to help mitigate the impact of extreme weather and other threats to coastal environments and ensure a future worthy for the next generation,” said Nadaoka Kazuo, Japanese chief technical advisor of the BlueCARES project.

The Blue Carbon Strategy refers to the policy framework on blue carbon conservation that can be implemented at the national and local levels.

The development of the MVI also utilized field data from the IAMBlueCECAM Program, the BlueCARES counterpart program in the Philippines.

IAMBlueCECAM stands for Integrated Assessment and Modelling of Blue Carbon Ecosystems for Conservation and Adaptive Management.

The program is funded by the Philippine Council for Industry, Energy and Emerging Technology Research and Development.

Image Credits: [Alexey Kornilyev | Dreamstime.com](#)

# Endangered wounded owl found in Palawan

By: [Romar Miranda](#) - Correspondent / [@RVMirandaINQ](#)

[Inquirer Southern Luzon](#) / 10:38 AM July 05, 2020



A spotted wood owl was found by residents in Aborlan, Palawan Saturday. Weak and wounded on its right wing, the endangered bird was transported to a facility for treatment. Photo courtesy of PCSD

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY—An environmental management graduate in Palawan province turned over to the local authorities a wounded adult spotted wood owl (*Strix seloputo*) on Saturday (July 4) after it was found on the ground in Aborlan town.

The Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD), in a report issued Saturday afternoon, said that a certain Mylene Ledesma, an alumnae of Western Philippine University (WPU) and a resident of Barangay (village) Ramon Magsaysay in Aborlan town, surrendered to the PCSD staff a wounded owl that “seemed weak and was not able to fly nor move away from its position.”

The spotted wood owl was first seen by Ledesma’s mother and older sister as it was lying on the ground with a deep wound on its right wing. The cause of the wound is undetermined.

The PCSDS Wildlife Traffic Monitoring Unit (WTMU) and Enforcement Team said the owl has a length of 44 centimeters from head to tail, a wingspan of 72 centimeters, and weighed more or less 1.2 kilograms.

The endangered bird was transported to a facility for proper medical attention.

The Spotted Wood Owl is listed as an “Endangered Species” under PCSD Resolution No. 15-521 and is protected under Republic Act No. 9147, or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act.

The wild bird is usually seen in regions surrounding Borneo. Its known subspecies, *Strix seloputo wiepkini*, is endemic in Calamian Islands, northeast of Palawan province.

JE



ABS-CBN News

14 hrs ·

TINGNAN: Limang pawikan ang natagpuan sa Lambaklad fishing area sa Brgy. Malabor sa Tibiao, Antique noong Biyernes nang umaga, Hulyo 3, 2020.

Ayon sa mga mangingisda, ito ang pinakamaraming pawikan na na-trap sa kanilang lambat sa loob lamang ng isang araw. Ang pinakamalaking pawikan ay tinatayang may bigat na 70 kilo at haba na isang metro.

Agad ring pinakawalan ang mga pawikan sa dagat ng mga mangingisda. Mga larawan mula kay Bayan Patroller Flord Nicson Calawag. | Ulat ni Jennifer Hernandez, ABS-CBN News



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Pangasinan townsfolk baffled by mysterious diggings  
into World War II tunnels

PAGE 1/ 1/2

July 06, 2020  
DATE

# Pangasinan townsfolk baffled by mysterious diggings into World War II tunnels

Published July 5, 2020, 1:37 PM

by Liezle Basa Iñigo

TAYUG, Pangasinan – Municipal officials here are demanding a public inquiry on who initiated a treasure-hunting activity in front of the Tayug Fire Station, which is inside the municipal hall complex.



Photo courtesy of Vice Mayor Lorna Premicias Tacdol/ MANILA BULLETIN

Vice Mayor Lorna Premicias-Tacdol was among the town officials who were left wondering who could have been behind the diggings in front of the fire station, which apparently took place just when the entire country was subjected to community quarantine due to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Some curious municipal hall personnel, led by Adriano Santiago, have managed to peep inside the cordoned-off area with blue tarpaulin, and saw a freshly dug hole.

Other municipal officials have reportedly been able to climb down the hole, and have explored additional diggings in what looked like two old tunnels that were “long and dark”.

Local residents have surmised that the tunnels could have been part of the Yamashita legend and the treasures he stashed during World War II.

Tayug town was Gen. Tomoyuki Yamashita’s base of the Second Armored Division and the 10th Reconnaissance Regiment of the Japanese Imperial Army.

It was said that Yamashita, known as “Tiger of Malaya” for successfully occupying Malaysia and Singapore, was assigned to the Philippines in the later part of the war and took camp here to put up a last stand against liberating American forces.

Yamashita reportedly stationed his troops in Tayug as a blocking force against the Americans as the Japanese made their way up to Mountain Province using the Villa Verde Trail in nearby San Nicolas town.

It was also said that Yamashita brought with him his war booties gathered from his previous conquests, and hid them somewhere in Northern Luzon.



Pangasinan townsfolk baffled by mysterious diggings

July 06, 2020

TITLE: into World War II tunnels

PAGE 1/ 2/2

DATE

The Yamashita treasure has since been the object of countless hunting activities, both domestic and international.

But municipal officials here are concerned about how the diggings could affect the structural integrity of the two-storey fire station, and how these were allowed to be undertaken during the quarantine period.

They are also seeking an inquiry on who initiated the diggings, and whether permits were issued for these.

And if there really was a series of tunnels under the fire station, the municipal officials also want to know if any artifacts or treasures were discovered and taken.

Tayug Mayor Carlos Mapili and Tayug Fire Chief Insp. Armand Corpuz have yet to issue their statements on the diggings.

# Baguio artist tops Miss Philippines Earth 2020 virtual pageant

By: [Armin P. Adina](#) 12:53 PM July 05, 2020



Miss Philippines Earth Roxanne Allison Baeyens from Baguio City. FACEBOOK PHOTO

MAKATI CITY, Philippines — Roxanne Allison Baeyens, an artist from Baguio City, was crowned 2020 Miss Philippines Earth in a virtual competition among 33 aspirants nationwide.

Baeyens bagged the top title in the purely virtual contest that was telecast on GMA 7 Sunday morning. She will be representing the country in the Miss Earth pageant later this year.

The 23-year-old Tourism Management graduate had earlier topped the the “Covid Craze” fashion competition and finished third in the Beach Wear competition. She also topped the poll among media staff members for the “Darling of the Press” title and also received the “Best in Eco Video” award.

Baeyens succeeds TV host Janelle Tee, who finished in the Top 20 of the 2019 Miss Earth pageant, and will continue the fight for environmental awareness, which the pageant has been championing since 2001.

The new queen will try to become the Philippines’ fifth winner in the Miss Earth pageant, following Karla Henry (2009), Jamie Herrell (2014), Angelia Ong (2015), and Karen Ibasco (2017).

Also crowned during the virtual competition were Miss Philippines-Air Patrixia Santos from Daraga in Albay, Miss Philippines-Water Gianna Llanes from Mandaluyong City, Miss Philippines-Fire Shane Tormes from Atimonan in Quezon, and Miss Philippines-Ecotourism Ilyssa Marie Mendoza representing the Filipino community in Melbourne, Australia.

Two former Miss Earth winners, Alexandra Braun from Venezuela and Nicole Faria from India, were among the judges of the final competition.

Baguio artist tops Miss Philippines Earth 2020 virtual

July 06, 2020

TITLE: pageant

PAGE 1/ 2/2

DATE

Both Santos and Tormes are veterans of national beauty contests, having joined the Miss Philippines Earth pageant before, as well as the Binibining Pilipinas pageants. Santos had likewise participated in the Miss World Philippines pageant.

The four “elemental queens” will work with Baeyens in advancing the pageant’s advocacy of promoting environmental awareness around the country.

Pageant organizer Carousel Productions pushed through with this year’s staging of the national competition despite restrictions caused by the quarantine imposed by the government to address the COVID-19 pandemic.

While screenings were held in January, the coronation was originally scheduled in May. Carousel Productions decided to move the final competition to July, and held virtual pre-pageant activities and competitions using the Zoom online meeting platform, with the delegates taking part from their own cities or provinces.

The preliminary events were posted real-time using the Facebook Live platform. Even the competitions for the crucial categories were made public on Facebook. The 33 delegates were judged for their fitness and form, beauty of face, and intelligence and environmental awareness.

**JE**



## Recycling art

posted July 05, 2020 at 10:17 pm

by [Dennis Abrina](#)



Environment officers of Mendez, Cavite make a Philippine flag-inspired art using empty plastic bottles collected from evacuation centers at the Mendez Eco Center.



Of the 2,434 cases, 1,147 were fresh cases or test results released to patients within the last three days, while 1,287 were late cases or test results released to patients beyond four days.

KrizJohn Rosales

## DOH records biggest 1-day hike in COVID cases

[Pia Lee-Brago](#) (The Philippine Star) - July 6, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Health (DOH) yesterday reported 2,434 new coronavirus disease 2019 cases – the highest in a single day, bringing the total number of COVID-19 infections in the country to 44,254.

Of the 2,434 cases, 1,147 were fresh cases or test results released to patients within the last three days, while 1,287 were late cases or test results released to patients beyond four days.

The National Capital Region (NCR) has the highest number of fresh cases with 440, followed by Central Visayas with 364.

A total of 336 cases were from other regions, while seven were repatriates.

The NCR also has the highest number of late cases with 629, while 238 were from Central Visayas and 420 from other regions.

The fresh cases are based on the daily accomplishment reports submitted by only 58 out of 73 currently operational labs.

The DOH attributed the increase in cases yesterday to the “increased contact among the population.”

“As the country continues to ease community quarantine measures, the rise in the number of cases today may be attributed to the increased contact among the population,” it said.

Of the seven reported deaths, six occurred in June. As of yesterday, there were a total of 1,297 deaths.

The DOH also announced 489 recoveries, bringing the total number of recoveries to 11,942.

The health department appealed to all establishments to “implement the minimum health standards in their premises and immediately report clustering of confirmed cases in their respective workplaces.”

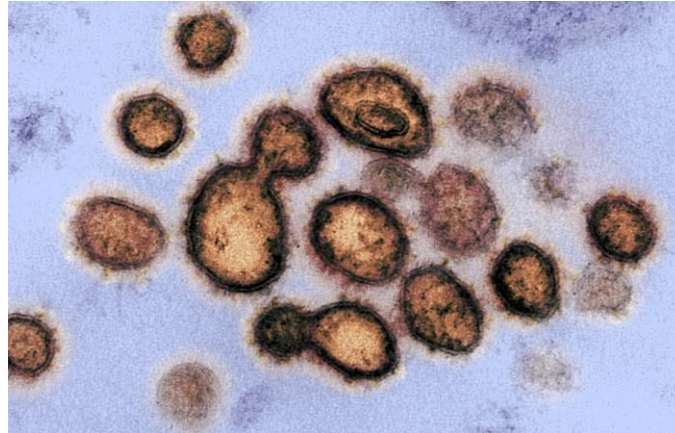
Authorities urged the public to continue practicing general preventive measures, such as proper handwashing, physical distancing, wearing of mask, avoiding non-essential travel outside their homes, and to observe minimum health standards to prevent the transmission of the coronavirus.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/07/06/2025965/doh-records-biggest-1-day-hike-covid-cases>

# Phl COVID: Plus 2,434 in one day

Published 10 hours ago on July 5, 2020 07:39 PM

By [MJ Blancaflor](#)



OF the 2,434, more than half or 1,287 are late-submitted cases. W. Commons

The coronavirus tally in the Philippines rose to 44,254 on Sunday as the Department of Health (DoH) reported 2,434 additional cases — the highest number of infections logged in a single day.

In its latest bulletin, the DoH tallied 1,147 “fresh” and 1,287 “late” cases, majority of which are in the National Capital Region (NCR) and Central Visayas.

The fresh cases were composed of 440 infections from Metro Manila, 364 from Central Visayas, 336 from other regions, and seven from Filipino repatriates.

Meanwhile, the 1,287 late cases were composed of 629 infections from NCR, 238 from Central Visayas, and 420 from other regions.

The additional number of infections recorded on Sunday surpassed the 1,494 cases tallied on Saturday.

The health department urged Filipinos to be observe preventive measures such as mask-wearing, physical distancing, and hand washing, noting that the rise in the number of cases could be attributed to increased contact among population.

“We appeal to all establishments to implement the minimum health standards in their premises and immediately report clustering of confirmed cases in their respective workplaces,” the DoH added.

The department also reported that the number of recoveries jumped to 11,942 after the Health department saw 489 additional survivors, while the death toll rose to 1,297 after seven more patients died.

So far, the country ranks third behind Indonesia and Singapore with the highest number of infections in Southeast Asia, while it ranks second behind its Indo neighbor in terms of the total number of deaths.

The government has eased restrictions in a huge portion of the country in a bid to revive the economy which suffered from the two-month community quarantine, dubbed as the longest lockdown in Asia.

# PHL posts new record high infections in a day; Covid-19 cases now at 44,254

By [Claudeth Mocon-Ciriaco](#)

July 5, 2020



*BusinessMirror file photo*

THE Philippines broke the previous record of new Covid-19 infections reported in a single day as a total number of 2,434 cases were recorded, bringing the number of patients who have contracted the disease to 44,254 on Sunday.

As of 4 p.m. of July 05, the Department of Health (DOH) said of the 2,434 additional cases, 1,147 were logged as fresh cases, and 1,287 were detected as late cases. On Saturday, the DOH also recorded a daily high of 1,531 cases.

The DOH said that Sunday's fresh cases are based on the daily accomplishment reports submitted by only 58 out of 73 current operational labs.

There was also an increase in the number of recoveries, with a total of 489. This brings the total number of recoveries to 11,942.

Amid the new record high of cases, however, a low number of deaths was recorded, with seven. Of this number, six (86 percent) occurred in June. The death toll stood at 1,297.

Ten duplicates were removed from the total case count.

The total cases reported may be subject to change as these numbers undergo constant cleaning and validation.

The DOH said that the rise in the number of cases on Sunday may be attributed to the increased contact among the population as the country continues to ease community quarantine measures.

“We implore the public to continue practicing general preventive measures, such as proper handwashing, physical distancing, wearing of mask, avoidance of non-essential travel outside their homes, and to observe minimum health standards to prevent the transmission of the Covid-19 virus,” the DOH said.

They also appealed to all establishments to implement the minimum health standards in their premises and immediately report clustering of confirmed cases in their respective workplaces.

Image Credits: Nonie Reyes

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/07/05/phl-posts-new-record-high-infections-in-a-day-covid-19-cases-now-at-44254/>

# Palace upbeat on plasma therapy

Published 5 hours ago on July 6, 2020 01:10 AM

By [MJ Blancaflo](#)



The Palace has expressed optimism that the government-funded study on the use of convalescent blood plasma as adjunctive therapy for the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) would yield positive results.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said Malacañang is hoping that the plasma therapy would be the country's contribution to the global effort in developing COVID-19 treatment.

Department of Science and Technology (DoST) Secretary Fortunato de la Peña earlier announced the funding of the said study currently undertaken at the University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital (UP-PGH).

"We hope this study will yield positive results and be our country's contribution to the global effort to develop COVID-19 treatment," Roque said.

The DoST allotted P4.99 million for the 12-month study which started last 1 July.

## Immunity via blood transfusion

The therapy involves infusing a patient with plasma from the blood of a COVID-19 survivor — which contains antibodies or proteins that can destroy toxins or disease-carrying organisms, according to experts.

This mode of treatment is currently being evaluated for COVID-19 patients with severe or critical conditions due to coronavirus infection.

The World Health Organization (WHO) previously allowed the use of this treatment in other outbreaks such as Ebola.

Once screened and deemed qualified to donate blood, the PGH will collect 500 milliliters of plasma, which will be transfused to severe or critically ill patients.

There is still no known treatment or vaccine yet for COVID-19, so the WHO has started a clinical trial looking into the effectiveness and safety of selected drugs.

## Promising drug

Among the drugs to be studied under this program are Remdesivir, a drug that is under research for the treatment of other coronaviruses; the anti-HIV drugs Lopinavir and Ritonavir, and the combination of the two, and Interferon; and the antimalaria drug Chloroquine.

Last week, the WHO's International Steering Committee recommended to discontinue the use of Hydroxychloroquine, Lopinavir and Ritonavir in the trial, as interim trial results showed that the drugs produce little or no reduction in the mortality of hospitalized COVID-19 patients when compared to standard of care.

# Lawmakers cite urgency of Bayanihan 2's passage

By [BusinessMirror](#)

July 6, 2020

*By Butch Fernandez & Jovee Marie N. dela Cruz*

LAWMAKERS on Sunday reiterated willingness to tackle measures to help businesses and workers recover from Covid-related disruptions, as they await Palace's final confirmation of the date for a special session for the purpose.

And, unlike the Bayanihan 1 law which mostly comprised outright doles amid the emergency situation from the forced lockdowns to stop Covid-19's spread, the bulk of Bayanihan 2 will go to lending to businesses and sectors disrupted by the pandemic, and to ramp up testing and contact tracing to fight the virus, Sen. Juan Edgardo Angara said over the weekend.

Thus, timely passage of the second measure, officially called Bayanihan to Recover as One Act—in contrast to the first Bayanihan to Heal as One—is of urgency, given the need to help businesses and workers get back on their feet, and grow the economy, he pointed out in a radio interview.

Angara, chairman of Finance Committee endorsing the money measure, gave assurances of the Senate's readiness to frontload approval of the awaited funding that senators trimmed from P157 billion to P140 billion before their sine die adjournment last June 5.

They approved it on second reading, but could not proceed to third reading, as the Executive failed to send a certificate of urgency that would have allowed the chamber to shortcircuit the three-day requirement between second- and third-reading approvals.

The House of Representatives is expected to adopt the Senate version.

However, Majority Leader and Leyte Rep. Martin Romualdez said on Sunday the House has not yet received the formal request of President Duterte for Congress to hold a special session.

“We are still awaiting the official communication from the Palace. The House leadership under Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano is committed to approve the Bayanihan to Recover as One bill or the Bayanihan 2 to help President Rodrigo Duterte kickstart our economy and strengthen government's fight against the spread of Covid-19,” said Romualdez.

The House and the Senate adjourned sine die last month without passing a consolidated version of Bayanihan 2, hence the need for a special session to be able to approve an enrolled bill before the reopening of the Congress on July 27.

Bayanihan 2 grants the Executive branch necessary powers to manage a second wave of widespread Covid-19 infections, should it come. It also contains provisions on economic packages that would aid economic activities hardest hit by the pandemic.

Senate Majority Leader Miguel Zubiri, summing up the funding bill, gave a breakdown of the Bayanihan 2 as of June 4, showing how the Senate version trimmed the allocation to P140 billion:

Emergency subsidies—from P18 billion cut to P15 billion; prevention and control of other diseases—P12 billion to P10 billion; capital infusion to government financial institutions—P50 billion; support programs for impacted sectors—P21 billion to P17 billion; support to agriculture sector—P21 billion to P17 billion; assistance to transportation—P21 billion to P17 billion; assistance to tourism—P10 billion; Smart campuses—P3 billion; and Tesda training—P1 billion.

“It is a bit different from Bayanihan 1,” Angara said in Sunday’s radio interview, noting that “only a few ECQ [enhanced community quarantine areas] can receive livelihood assistance, like Cebu.”

Angara said the funding bill will also continue to “help jobless returning overseas Filipino workers [OFWs] and health workers.”

## Funding hike sought

In the House, the deputy speaker for Finance has asked the Palace to increase its funding for the proposed economic stimulus package.

Deputy Speaker Luis Raymund Villafuerte said the House leaders have engaged senators and Executive Department officials in continuous discussions on the proposed provisions of Bayanihan 2.

Although state economic managers have said that Malacañang could only afford a P140-billion stimulus package, Villafuerte expressed the hope that Palace officials would exert greater effort to raise more resources to enable the government to spend more on stimulating the economy after the four-month pause in economic activity due to Covid-19.

Villafuerte thinks the proposed stimulus package needs to be raised to an initial P200 billion to clear the way to a strong and quick economic recovery.

With revenue collections down in the year’s first five months as a result of the economic standstill, economic managers have said the government could only afford to set aside P140 billion for a new Covid response and stimulus package.

Still, Villafuerte is optimistic that the Executive Department can raise more funds, in light of last week’s report that revenue collections by the Bureaus of Internal Revenue (BIR) and of Customs (BOC) started to pick up this June, with their combined take totaling P270.77 billion. This is P211.5 billion or 28 percent higher than what both agencies collected in the same month last year.

Meanwhile, the House leadership guaranteed the immediate passage of Bayanihan 2, in order to continue giving special powers to President Duterte to best deal with the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic.

Pending the special session, Lone San Jose del Monte City, Bulacan Rep. Florida P. Robes said passage of the second Bayanihan bill should be a priority once sessions resume for the Second Regular Session on July 27.

“We have done it before and I hope we will do it again. We should strive to set aside our political differences for the good of our countrymen who are now suffering because of this pandemic. There should be no delay once session resumes on July 27, 2020,” Robes said.

The House Committee of the Whole approved HB 6953 last June 4. It went pass the period of debate and sponsorship. Once session resumes, it is expected to go into a period of amendments before it is submitted for approval on second reading.

# PRC checks poor gratis

Published 6 hours ago on July 6, 2020 12:05 AM

By **TDI**



Testing for possible coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) infection among underprivileged individuals will be done free through a COVID Samaritan Program, Philippine Red Cross (PRC) chairman and Senator Richard Gordon announced.

He said the program seeks to reach people who cannot afford to have themselves tested as the cost for each procedure ranges from P3,600 to P9,000. Funds donated for the program will be used to pay for testing fees.

PRC offers the cheapest, so far, PCR (Polymerase Chain Reaction) machines test at P3,500, which the Department of Health labeled as the gold standard among procedures to detect the coronavirus.

“We need to test the people to ensure our victory against COVID-19. This way, carriers can be separated from those who are not infected and they can be cured. People who tested negative can already go back to work. We launched this program so everyone can be tested even when they don’t have the capability to pay for the testing,” he added.

## Aid focuses on marginalized

Gordon disclosed that the Automobile Association of the Philippines through Jose Armando Eduque, donated almost P2.8 million for the Samaritan program.

The group also commended PRC for its contribution in the country’s fight against the pandemic.

The donation of Reckitt Benckiser Healthcare Philippines Inc. or more popularly known as Lysol Philippines, will also be used for the program, particularly for the testing of elderly people and pregnant women.

The donation’s other half will be for the building of testing laboratory in Cagayan de Oro.

“We cannot be a nation unless we help those who are deprived but are willing to fight. Those who want to give to the poor so they can be tested can donate funds,” Gordon said.

After learning that one barangay in Tondo, Manila has a very high number of COVID-19 cases, Gordon said PRC will find a way to get them tested free of charge.

He said this last Friday during PRC’s distribution of financial aid in Tondo which is among the most densely populated and the poorest district of Metro Manila.

He noted that testing will help them recover from the unfortunate consequences of the lockdown.



More than 200 families received P3,500 financial aid from PRC's cash assistance program's overall budget of P73 million.

The non-governmental humanitarian group will also hand out cash aid to the cities' most disadvantaged residents.

### League of Samaritans

PRC also has a program called Blood Samaritan for people who are in need of blood but cannot afford to buy the life-giving liquid; Dialysis Samaritan for free dialysis sessions and the General Good Samaritan for people suffering with other sicknesses.

Donations for the COVID Samaritan program can be sent through the following bank accounts:

- Banco De Oro

Account name: Philippine Red Cross

Peso account: 00-4530190938

Dollar account: 10-453-0039482

Swift code: BNORPHMM;

- Metrobank

Account name: Philippine Red Cross

Peso account: 151-7-15152434-2

Dollar account: 151-2-15100218-2

Swift code: MBTCPHMM; and

- Landbank of the Philippines

Account name: Philippine Red Cross

Account number: 0561-095817

# UP now sees 95K cases in August

Published 5 hours ago on July 6, 2020 01:20 AM

By [MJ Blancaflor](#)



After the Palace declared being victorious over its earlier coronavirus infection projection, the University of the Philippines (UP) now claims the number of coronavirus cases in the country could reach as high as 95,000 by the end of August.

The statistical model developed by the UP Los Baños Biomathematics Team showed that about 61,332 to 95,590 coronavirus infections might be recorded in the Philippines on 31 August.

The model, published on the website [endcov.ph](http://endcov.ph), was formed using data from the Department of Health (DoH) as of Thursday and assumes medium risk to set the initial workable requirements for local government units.

## Moving numbers

Under medium risk, a municipality or city's population density is averaged, with people maintaining physical distancing and herd immunity included.

Last month, research firm OCTA which is composed of researchers from UP forecasted that coronavirus cases might jump to at least 60,000 by 31 July.

For the month of July, UP researchers projected the number of virus infections in Cebu province would be 15,000, assuming enhanced community quarantine will be in place there until the end of the month. If the protocols will be relaxed, it may surge to 20,000 to 30,000.

Meanwhile, they said the current reproduction rate in Metro Manila leads to a projection of almost 30,000 cases, with 860 deaths by 31 July. If transmissions decrease, the lower estimate of 27,000 cases may be hit.

The group previously estimated that cases in the Philippines might reach 40,000 by the end of June.

Coronavirus tally on 31 June just breached the 37,500-mark, but at least 10,000 validation delays and laboratory backlogs at the time were not yet included in the figure.

## Several considerations

The DoH, as well as Malacañang, have repeatedly insisted that the number of confirmed cases should not be the sole factor in evaluating the effectiveness of government response in handling the virus.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/07/06/up-now-sees-95k-cases-in-august/>

# PSA law plays vital role in post-pandemic recovery

Published 16 hours ago on July 5, 2020 02:07 PM

By [TDI](#)



Telecommunications, power and transport are vital but oftentimes costly for consumers. (Photo: Construction Review)

Foreign competition will play a vital role in the country's post pandemic recovery and in ending consumers woes on poor but costly services of three vital industries; power, telecommunications and transport.

House Bill 78, or the Public Service Act (PSA) which was passed by the lower house in March, seeks to open up competitions in the three industries. The bill aims to lower their costs, improve quality of services and create urgently needed jobs in a post Covid-19 economy.

Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, the Ways and Means committee chair who crafted the proposal, said the PSA will seek to redefine "public services" to include "public utilities."

The lawmaker said consumers' woes stem from the ambiguity in the definition of public utility that is used interchangeably with public service under the Public Service Act, which has allowed monopolies in the sector for decades to the detriment of consumers and national progress.

The proposal received a strong push from, among others, Socio-economic planning Secretary Karl Kendrick Chua, who said the PSA Law "will be a key milestone in capturing more foreign investments in the post-pandemic era."

HB 78 seeks to amend the 84-year old Public Service Act and provide a clear statutory definition of a public utility.

Currently, public utilities are subject to a foreign equity cap of 40 percent as provided for under the 1987 Constitution.

Salceda said electricity, power, telecommunications and water, being capital intensive but subject to foreign ownership restrictions "lack competition and therefore, a lack of choice for consumers, with excessively strong market power for the few players, and ultimately market failure."

"The 1987 Constitution restricts the operation of a public utility to Filipinos only. However, there is no definition of public utility in our statutes. There is the Public Service Act, but it only defines public service and not public utility, hence the ambiguity," said Salceda.

The lawmaker said public utilities are "clearly not the equivalent of public service but are more plausibly just a subset of the latter."

"The Public Service Act defines a "public service very broadly to include even such sectors as ice plants and ship repair shops, sectors we would clearly not be suspicious of allowing foreign ownership into. Alas, even these sectors are currently subject to the limits brought about by the ambiguity," Salceda added.

Salceda noted that the Supreme Court, in one of its recent rulings, offered the key elements of a public utility as “a business or service engaged in regularly supplying the public with some commodity or service of public consequence such as electricity, gas, water, transportation, telephone or telegraph service.”

The provisions of HB 78 are clearly consistent with those elements, said Salceda.

The bill proposes to limit public utilities to transmission of electricity; distribution of electricity; and waterworks and sewerage systems.

The amendments also propose that no other business or service shall be deemed a public utility upon recommendation by the National Economic and Development Authority.

To protect the national interest, the bill sates that the President can suspend or prohibit any merger, acquisition or investment in a public service in the interest of national security; foreign nationals can only invest if there is reciprocity with Philippine nationals; fines for substantially increased and indexed to inflation, thereby strengthening regulatory powers of admin agencies; regulatory powers shall be retained where relevant (rate-setting, franchise/authority to operate requirement); restrictions on hiring of foreign labor if there are Philippine nationals who are competent, willing and able to perform the services; and retention of takeover power, etc. for sectors formerly classified as public utilities because they are “businesses affected with public interest.”

Salceda assured the PSA amendments are constitutional. The Supreme Court has upheld the removal of sectors previously considered public utilities, in the case of JG Summit Holdings, Inc. v. Court of Appeals, where the SC upheld the removal of shipyards from the defined categories of “public utility.”

In the case of the National Power Corporation vs. Provincial Government of Bataan, the SC also noted that “power generation is no longer considered a public utility operation.”

It should be emphasized, said Salceda, that the PSA bill is entitled to the presumption of constitutionality which every treaty, executive agreement, and statute enjoys.

“The burden of proof is on the petitioner to clearly demonstrate that the assailed statute is unconstitutional. This is particularly so regarding economic regulations as opposed to statutes which infringe upon fundamental rights,” he added.

“This strong predilection for constitutionality is based on the deference the judicial branch accords to the legislature as a coordinate branch. It is self-evident that the PSA Bill is an economic regulation.”

Following an analysis of the PSA, its economic impact and benefits are seen to be most significant over the next five years.

The amendments are expected to yield up to 0.22 percent higher gross domestic product growth compared to baseline. Real wages are also expected to go up, by 0.14 percent higher than baseline, following more investments in the country.

Global Health Security index reveals world unready  
for pandemic

PAGE 1/ 1/2

July 06, 2020  
DATE



Science Secretary Fortunato dela Peña noted that the Philippines' overall readiness rating stood at 47.6 percent, higher than the global average.

Presidential Photo

# Global Health Security Index reveals world unready for pandemic

(The Philippine Star) - July 6, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — A Global Health Security (GHS) Index mapped out by Filipino scientist Dr. Raul Destura has shown that 195 countries were unprepared for a pandemic.

The 2019 GHS Index, which looked into countries' compliance and observance of provisions in the International Health Regulations (IHR) in 2005, found that the 195 States-Parties to the global health security instrument posted an average score of only 40.12 percent.

The GHS Index was presented by Destura last week at the National Research Council of the Philippines Annual Scientific Meeting and 87th General Membership Assembly held online.

The Index was supposed to have been presented last March 9, but the assembly was reset to July due to concerns of the then worsening coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) situation in the country and the rest of the world.

Science Secretary Fortunato dela Peña said that the GHS Index was a good barometer by which countries can assess their health security systems to be ready for future pandemics.

However, the low average of the 195 countries in the index was "disturbing," he added.

"This is the first comprehensive assessment and benchmarking of health security and related capacities across 195 countries that make up the State-Parties to the International Health Regulations of 2005," Dela Peña said.

"And the GHS Index – the 2019 GHS Index – showed a disturbing average because of their GHS score among all 195 countries that were assessed, and could have a possible score of 100 percent. This leads to the overall finding that national healthy security is fundamentally weak around the world," he explained.

Global Health Security index reveals world unready

July 06, 2020

TITLE: for pandemic

PAGE 1/ 2/2

DATE

Dela Peña noted that the Philippines' overall readiness rating stood at 47.6 percent, higher than the global average.

"And we ranked 53 out of the 195 countries. I did the computations myself, that's top 27 percent," he asserted.

"Notably, the Philippines scored 100 percent in data integration between human/animal/environmental health sectors, 91.2 percent in immunization, 83.3 percent in laboratory systems; 84.6 percent in communication infrastructure, and 87.5 percent for international commitments by country," Dela Peña said.

"In terms of prevention, our average is 38.5 percent. Still higher than the global average which is 34.8 percent," he continued. **Rainier Allan Ronda**

## LETTERS FROM DAVAO

By Jun Ledesma

# Revving the engine of economy

July 5, 2020

FOUR-month-period is long enough for one to realize that in this fight against the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) it takes only a good dose of discipline, obedience to very basic health protocols to adapt to the new normal and survive. We are learning it the hard way. Those who fault the Duterte government for the rise of positive cases and cavalierly cite why Vietnam, Thailand, Korea, and China were able to contain the spread of the disease pronto conveniently forget the differences of culture and discipline in those countries from ours. Cases of Covid-19 resurface now and then but the spread is contained in no time at all.

President Rodrigo Duterte succinctly describes what's wrong with us. While he describes his fellow Cebuanos as "*gahi ug ulo*" (hard-headed) truth is we see these incorrigible traits all over. We have this bunch who dub themselves as PH PRIDE Protesters. They are the types who are impervious of the consequences of their acts. While the government issues simple directives as wearing masks and social distancing and staying home if nothing of importance requires one to go out, they gathered themselves in strange defiance. They were of course removed from the streets and were given a mental counsel after which they were released. Before they finally disperse, however, they had a photo taken, again displaying their defiance of social distancing and then uploaded this on Facebook threatening that they will file cases against law enforcers.

Four months had elapsed and now we come face to face with reality. Finance Sec. Carlos "Sonny" Dominguez has told us the brutal fact. Covid-19 will be around and will be with us until a vaccine will be discovered. That our economy cannot remain in stagnation lest it will lead us to a catastrophe much worse than the pandemic. As head of Duterte's economic team, his is the Herculean task of revving up the engine of the economy and to do that production and movement of the labor force in Metro Manila and CALABARZON must resume. He cited that the huge percentage of our economy comes from these regions. And this is true elsewhere in the growth centers of the country.

Are we ready to grapple with the challenges? The answer is YES! True that the number of Covid-19 cases has increased what is happening in the ground gives us the confidence that we can slowly push up the economy to a modest performance. The signs are there and I think that Secretary Dominguez has seen these all. We have provinces and cities where the local government units are able to address the threats of contamination. There are barangays in the crowded communities in Metro Manila where Covid-19 cases have declined if not altogether disappeared. There were recurring cases but systematic contact tracing and testing were immediately done and if lockdowns become necessary then it is strictly enforced.

We have to absorb lessons from what is experienced in Cebu City. The City officials and business community and other organizations amidst the rising incidence of Covid-19 cases that placed them under Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) demanded that the City be classified under General Community Quarantine (GCQ). The City Mayor takes pride that while cases are on the rise they have a very high percentage of the recovery. The Inter-Agency Task Force refused to heed their plea and they proceeded anyway with the kind of lifestyle that they insist they are entitled to. And so Cebu City in less than 15 days became the epicenter of Covid-19 cases in the country.

The revival of our economy, which was among the best in Southeast Asia, is achievable but it requires a joint community undertaking. We are seeing the emergence of a New Normal. It's all hands on deck. It starts with the basic barangay units enforcing social distancing, wearing of masks and proper hygiene (washing of hands and disinfection with alcohol), enforcement of curfews when needed. They too must have the lead role in contact tracing. The city and provincial governments through their respective Regional Inter-Agency Task Force should ensure that the hospital front liners are provided with an adequate supply of Personal Protective Equipment and for the hospitals to have sufficient isolation and testing facilities. I must stress here that the first phalanx of our war against Covid-19 are our doctors, nurses, and other health workers and therefore they should be provided with enough support. This is the simple role that the Department of Health can do now so hopefully Sec. Francisco Duque can perform this task.

A revitalized economy means jobs and resuscitation of small and medium-size industries. The transport sector is back on the road but gone are the days of jam-packed jeepneys and buses. Airlines are flying their routes. Restaurants and parlors will be opened but with limitations. Factories will start to churn more goods and items on grocery shelves. Duterte emphasizes, “*dahan dahan lang*”.

So we want to be like Vietnam, Thailand, Korea pr China? Then let us observe discipline and obedience to simple rules and protocols. Forget the show-off PH Pride, they are contemptuous imitation of America’s suicidal masses which are in denial of the fact that daily 50 - thousands get infected and there seems to be no prospects that the scourge will stop. As President Duterte puts it, “Let’s not be complacent. *Huwag matigas ang ulo.*”



# 113 days after

posted July 06, 2020 at 12:10 am

by [Jonathan Dela Cruz](#)

## "Can we strike the delicate balance?"

Finance Secretary Carlos "Sonny" Dominguez is right. The COVID-19 pandemic is not going to go away or be controlled in due time. Unlike the seasonal flu, it will not disappear with the change of weather. It will be with us for some time and we will tiptoe around it until a vaccine or a cure comes to light. We will have to live with it and ensure that our response system is adequate to deal with its ebb and flow.

In the meantime, 113 days after the ECQ declaration, we are all in agreement that we have to reckon not just with saving lives as was our immediate and still continuing concern, but with loss of jobs and livelihood as our world ground to a halt after March 15. Saving one without the other is a formula for disaster. We have to ease up, get the economy to breathe and let our people get back to work (and, yes, spend and consume) without undermining the measures we have put in place to save lives.

Only through a proper, responsible and calibrated balancing of these twin objectives can we successfully transit to a better and sustainable future. How are we to ensure this? How are we to transition from ECQ to a less restrictive environment? What needs to be in place for that to happen?

These and other questions need to be answered properly, responsibly and openly if we are to get rid of the fears and anxieties which have built up over the past four months of quarantine. Indeed, we have to build the kind of confidence necessary not just to get us back on track but to move forward with all the energy and resources we can muster.

As early as April 3 in my column "TEST, TREAT, PROTECT" I already noted that the way forward requires an all-of-society approach which begins and ends with each and every one of us doing the right things not just for ourselves and our families but for our communities and the country as well. Here's what I said in that column which remains as appropriate then as it is now four months after:

"Let us make one thing clear. The fight against COVID-19 is ours to undertake. Not government alone. Not the medical practitioners. Not the security forces. Not any person or groups of people doing the things that they know need to be done. It needs the total, undivided effort of a nation and, yes, the entire world in the eye of a huge, huge deluge never been experienced in modern times.

This pandemic needs a total, comprehensive, disciplined, science- and fact-based response. Not bits and pieces of information and initiatives meant to answer each and every issue or concern that comes about. That response begins and, hopefully, ends in ourselves and our families. By sticking to the facts and science based protocols we can remain healthy and strong in situ, and from there move on to help restart life under new normal—not business-as-usual.

The hospitals and their dedicated staff should be our last line of defense. We should, as best as we can, endeavor not get into one at all except perhaps in the worst of circumstances. Which is why I urge government and all concerned citizens out there to insist that we get back to the basics before it's too late. First, as I said, keep U and I and our families healthy to retard or completely cut off the spread of this virus by all means possible, medically, economically and socially. The lockdown imposed on the entire Luzon and suggested for implementation, as needed, in Visayas and Mindanao has provided a menu of initiatives and solutions to make this work. Then, the WHO has issued the TTP protocol to finally flatten the curve of infections, and get the country on its track again.

TTP or Test, Treat, Prevent is the WHO's basic protocol after the initial response of a lock down or, as in the case of South Korea and Singapore a modified ban, has been put in place for the global collaborative efforts meant to combat COVID-19. Indeed this virus has wreaked havoc and changed the landscape worldwide in more ways than one. We have no other recourse but to face up to this newest disease which, as WHO Director General Tedros Ghebreyesus aid, has turned our lives upside down.

Although this protocol has been an extant medical and scientific response to all kinds of diseases, newly discovered or rediscovered, this time around it has gained renewed currency resulting from the fear and panic. In a world experiencing not just an invisible contagion but an epidemic of fake news and misinformation - an infodemic as WHO's chief calls it - so it is well that we are going back and fast tracking such basic formation if only to provide the needed impetus to the international effort to combat the disease.

The focus and immediate concern right now is to flood all countries with the needed resources to the point of rushing the development of reliable diagnostic tests, public health surveillance tools which can detect cases for treatment and isolation. The scarcity of test kit supply worldwide has become a scare in most countries that charges of underreporting have been lodged against health officials. Even the United States, with its vaunted Center for Disease Control (CDC) and related disease prevention network has come under fire after it was found out that it was not only taking its time in undertaking the much needed testing of suspected cases but had in fact botched part of the test protocols in the initial phase of its diagnostic efforts.

Closer to home, DoH officials have been skewered no end for their continued inability to calm the waters, so to speak, with their inexplicable and wishy washy ways in combating COVID-19, starting with the paucity of diagnostic procedures and, of course, the very basic protocols on how to deal with the virus—from information and education advisories to preparation of health first responders to public health facilities including isolation areas to coordination with the private medical care sector and so on and on. Hopefully, with the continued shipment of such kits we will, in the next week or so, be able to put the testing protocols not only in place but widely administered. Then, there is the question of the TP (Treat and Protect) part of the WHO protocol. We have yet to get a clearer idea of what resources, i.e., personnel, facilities, equipment, etc., have been put in place if not countrywide at least the entire Luzon. Do we have consultation-on-demand operations? Can we administer random testing or testing on demand on a much wider and faster rate? Are our barangays up to the task of monitoring each and every household in the area for PUIs and PUMs? Do we have pre-screening and hospitalization areas for mildly symptomatic cases so we do not overwhelm our hospitals? Are our hospitals specially in the provinces fully equipped to deal with COVID-19 patients?

Finally, are the measures meant to protect the general public from the spread of the disease adequate to prevent panic and unrest among the populace now in place? Quite apart from the medical protocols which are mandatory and non-negotiable, are the economic and social measures in place as well? By these we mean food and cash relief, household and community clean up, information and education tools so people will not be prey to fake news and even agitators.

Admittedly, these measures are very hard to undertake. It will take patience and resoluteness to get these going and even so we will have problems along the way.

But that is, I believe, the only way we can win this war against an invisible enemy. There are no shortcuts to it, no magic wands, no instant remedies. And, until such time as we have the vaccines and the needed cures to this pandemic we just have to bear with it. And pray that things will turn for the better. Sooner rather than later. No ifs and butts about it.”

\*\*

That the administration has done a fairly good job in saving lives and ensuring that we do not get overwhelmed by the pandemic is beyond question. Notwithstanding the harangues of those who continue to belittle the responses thus far, there is no point starting the blame game at this time.

As we have been saying all along, there will be a time for that. There will be some kind of reckoning somehow. Now is not that time. Instead, the blame throwers should restrain themselves and offer solutions where needed. If there are lapses or gaps they can point these out. Not to undermine and unduly focus on these but to suggest how things can be better addressed. This is an outbreak nobody, not even the WHO, ever expected to be as deadly and seemingly uncontrollable, if we may call it such. In fact, it took sometime before the organization upgraded it to the highest alert level of an international public health emergency. A pandemic.

Even the most advanced countries had to scramble to put their own response systems in place. Except for Singapore, Vietnam and possibly, Thailand, the 10 member ASEAN grouping was in the same predicament. Maybe even worse. In our case, we had to scramble and cope with limited resources and a degraded public health system with a fumbling leadership. More than that, we had the unique problem of dealing with the repatriation of tens of thousands of our overseas workers while the world was closing down. Through it all we did manage to work things out and stay afloat up to now. The question is: can we sustain, even enhance, our capability to cope with the continuing threat of this virus spiking out of control. Can we get back our balance and transit into a new and hopefully better organized and livable world.

The answer is: we can if we do it as a united people, ready and willing to do the right things for ourselves, our families and our communities.

Source: <https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/327815>



## EDITORIAL - Sumunod at huwag matigas ang ulo

(Pang-masa) - July 6, 2020 - 12:00am

PATULOY ang pagtaas ng COVID cases sa Cebu kahit bantay-sarado ang mga sundalo roon at pinangangasiwaan ni Environment Sec. Roy Cimatu. Ipinag-utos ni President Duterte ang extension ng lockdown para mapigilan ang pagdami ng kaso roon. Nasa hots spot ang Cebu at pumapareho na sa Metro Manila sa dami ng COVID cases.

Sabi ng Presidente noong nakaraang linggo, ang katigasan ng ulo ng mga Cebuano ang dahilan kaya patuloy ang pagdami ng kaso ng COVID. Hindi raw sumusunod sa utos ang mga ito. Dapat daw isipin ng mga ito ang kalagayan din naman ng iba. Huwag daw matigas ang ulo para hindi kumalat ang virus.

Dalawang linggo ang extension ng lockdown sa Cebu para mapigilan ang pagkalat ng COVID. Ikinalat ang mga sundalo at SAF para mapigilan sa paglabas ng bahay ang mga Cebuano. Noong nakaraang linggo, nag-viral sa social media ang mga pagsasaya ng mga residente ng Sitio ISKP sa Cebu City kung saan nagsasayawan sila sa kalye dahil sa pagdiriwang ng pista roon. Naglagay pa umano ng sound system ang mga residente para lalong maging masaya ang pagselebreyt ng pista.

Napag-alaman din na karamihan sa mga residente ay walang face mask at hindi nasunod ang social distancing. Lantaran ang ginawa nilang paglabag sa quarantine at wala nang pakialam kung magkahawahan at kumalat pang lalo ang virus.

Hindi masisisi ang Presidente kung hayagang magsalita na matitigas ang ulo ng mga Cebuano. Maski raw ang mga nakatirang Cebuano o Bisaya sa Davao ay matigas din ang ulo. Ang katigasan ng ulo ng mga Cebuano ay inamin naman ng mayor ng Cebu sa isang radio interview. Gagawin daw nila ang lahat nang paraan para masaway ang constituents at nang hindi na lumala pa ang pagkalat ng virus.

Kailangan pang manghiya ang Presidente bago sumunod sa utos ang mga taga-Cebu. Kailangan pang dumami ang kaso ng COVID bago matuto. Hindi dapat pairalin ang katigasan ng ulo sa panahong ito na hindi pa bumababa ang kaso ng COVID. Hindi biro ang kalaban na nagpapahirap at nagpapalumpo sa bansa. Makinig, sumunod at magkaisa sa paglaban sa virus.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/pang-masa/punto-mo/2020/07/06/2025975/editorial-sumunod-huwag-matigas-ang-ulo>



In an online forum with Science and Technology Secretary Fortunato dela Peña last Friday, PAGASA deputy administrator and officer-in-charge for research and development Esperanza Cayanan said they have done a climate forecast for the year, which shows a normal to below-normal amount of rainfall in the third quarter and a higher amount of rainfall in the last quarter.

Boy Santos, file

## La Niña probable in last quarter — PAGASA

[Rainier Allan Ronda](#) (The Philippine Star) - July 6, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) is seeing a probable onset of the La Niña weather phenomenon by the last quarter of the year.

In an online forum with Science and Technology Secretary Fortunato dela Peña last Friday, PAGASA deputy administrator and officer-in-charge for research and development Esperanza Cayanan said they have done a climate forecast for the year, which shows a normal to below-normal amount of rainfall in the third quarter and a higher amount of rainfall in the last quarter.

“In the first three months of the semester, (which is from) July to September, we can expect rain, because this is our normal rainy season,” Cayanan told Dela Peña in Filipino.

“But toward the last quarter, we are seeing about more-than-50-percent probability that we will experience La Niña,” she added.

This means that the country will experience more amount of rainfall than usual from October to December, according to the PAGASA official.

Meanwhile, PAGASA researchers have developed a forecasting model that they claim will allow them to predict the occurrence of a typhoon two weeks in advance.

Cayanan said the tropical cyclone forecasting method is already being used by their weather forecasters to watch out for incoming typhoons.

In the same Friday online report to Dela Peña, Cayanan said PAGASA had previously come up with its monthly typhoon forecasts based on statistics.

The new forecasting model comprises information from Taiwan’s Central Weather Bureau and outputs of the numerical models of the National Centers for Environmental Prediction global forecast system of the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, according to Cayanan.

“This new model, however, can give information on the exact location a tropical cyclone will form and where it will head to in the first and second weeks, so we will have projections for the next two weeks,” she said.

The meteorological expert added that they have used the model in tracking or anticipating the movement of Typhoon Ambo in May.

# Gov't preps for tropical cyclones while continuing fight against COVID-19

July 5, 2020 9:09 PM by [Kristan Carag](#)



*A female student crosses through a flooded road (Photo by DZRH Florante Rosales)*

Amidst the 2019 Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) pandemic, the Office of Civil Defense (OCD) reminds local government units to prepare for tropical cyclones that will hit the Philippines

Restituto Padilla, spokesperson for the National Task Force on COVID-19, said on Sunday, July 5, that the preparations include stockpiling on relief items, and other necessities during the onslaught of a tropical cyclone.

Padilla said that the Department of Health (DOH) also instructed hospitals to prepare and accept residents affected by tropical cyclones.

*“DSWD (Department of Social Welfare and Development), DOH, Office of Civil Defense, DND (Department of National Defense), lahat nagkakaroon ng meeting tungkol dito, para paghandaan itong mga maaring maging komplikasyon na,”* Padilla said during DZRH’s Sunday Updates.

As part of the country’s preparations, Padilla said that the government is also studying on how to enforce social distancing, and prevent the spread of COVID-19 in evacuation centers.

The Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) previously said that the country will experience below to near normal rainfall conditions from July to September due to monsoon rains, intertropical convergence zone, low-pressure areas, thunderstorms, and tropical cyclones.

PAGASA expects that two to four tropical cyclones will enter the Philippines Area of Responsibility this month.

Aside from COVID-19, Padilla warned that the country might observe an increase in cases of dengue infection, and Leptospirosis because of the increased rainfall, which could lead to flooding.

*“Yung mga barangay health and emergency response units na nandiyan sa mga barangay, iyan ay mga inaasahan natin na handa upang tumugon doon sa mga biglang maaring mangyari,”* he stressed.

Source: <https://dzhnews.com.ph/govt-preps-for-tropical-cyclones-while-continuing-fight-against-covid-19/>



The setback came as the WHO also reported more than 200,000 new cases globally of the disease for the first time in a single day. The United States accounted for 53,213 of the total 212,326 new cases recorded on Friday, the WHO said.

Michael Varcas, file

## WHO halts malaria, HIV drugs in COVID trials

[Pia Lee Brago](#) (The Philippine Star) - July 6, 2020 - 12:00am

GENEVA – The World Health Organization (WHO) said on Saturday that it was discontinuing its trials of the malaria drug hydroxychloroquine, and combination HIV drug lopinavir/ritonavir, in hospitalized patients with coronavirus disease 2019 or COVID-19 after the drugs failed to reduce mortality.

Following the WHO announcement, the Department of Health (DOH) said yesterday it will be stopping the use of lopinavir and ritonavir among hospitalized COVID-19 patients.

The setback came as the WHO also reported more than 200,000 new cases globally of the disease for the first time in a single day. The United States accounted for 53,213 of the total 212,326 new cases recorded on Friday, the WHO said.

The United Nations health agency accepted the recommendation from the Solidarity Trial's International Steering Committee to discontinue the trial's hydroxychloroquine and lopinavir/ritonavir arms. The Solidarity Trial was established by the WHO to find an effective COVID-19 treatment for hospitalized patients.

"These interim trial results show that hydroxychloroquine and lopinavir/ritonavir produce little or no reduction in the mortality of hospitalized COVID-19 patients when compared to standard of care. Solidarity trial investigators will interrupt the trials with immediate effect," WHO said in a statement, referring to large multi-country trials that the agency is leading.

WHO said the decision does not affect other studies where those drugs are used for non-hospitalized patients or as a prophylaxis.

Another branch of the WHO-led trial is looking at the potential effect of Gilead's antiviral drug remdesivir on COVID-19. The European Commission on Friday gave remdesivir conditional approval for use after being shown to shorten hospital recovery times.

The solidarity trial started out with five branches looking at possible treatment approaches to COVID-19: standard care; remdesivir; hydroxychloroquine; lopinavir/ritonavir; and lopinavir/ritonavir combined with interferon.

WHO director general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told reporters on Friday that nearly 5,500 patients in 39 countries had been recruited so far into its clinical trials and that interim results were expected within two weeks.

Some 18 experimental COVID-19 vaccines are being tested on humans among nearly 150 treatments under development.

Mike Ryan, WHO's top emergencies expert, said on Friday that it would be unwise to predict when a vaccine could be ready. While a vaccine candidate might show its effectiveness by year's end, the question was how soon it could then be mass-produced, he said.

DOH Undersecretary and spokesperson Maria Rosario Vergeire said the DOH will be stopping the use of lopinavir and ritonavir among hospitalized patients based on the recent evidence and recommendations from experts.

The trial of hydroxychloroquine for COVID-19 patients was already discontinued early on when the evidence for this came out.

"Complete treatment of those who have started, with an option to stop if the patient prefers not to continue," Vergeire said. "We will have remdesivir plus interferon as the new regimen, vs. remdesivir alone, vs. interferon alone and standard of care once shipment of interferon arrives."

### **Convalescent plasma therapy**

The Department of Science and Technology-Philippine Council for Health Research and Development (DOST-PCHRD) and the University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital (UP-PGH) are undertaking a project on convalescent plasma as adjunctive therapy for patients infected with COVID-19.

The project seeks to evaluate the efficacy and safety of convalescent plasma transfusion as adjunctive therapy to prevent disease progression among patients, the DOST-PCHRD said in a recent statement.

Convalescent plasma will be taken from the blood of those who recovered from the infection and transfused into patients critically or severely ill.

"The Palace welcomes the announcement of Department of Science and Technology Secretary Fortunato dela Peña on the start of the government-funded study looking (into) the use of convalescent blood plasma as one of the modes of therapy for COVID-19," presidential spokesman Harry Roque Jr. said in a statement last Saturday.

"We hope this study will yield positive results and be our country's contribution to the global effort to develop (a) COVID-19 treatment," he added.

DOST has said the project would help reduce the COVID-19 mortality rate if it proves to be successful. PCHRD and UP-PGH started calling for blood donations from COVID-19 survivors last April. **Alexis Romero**



# Climate change 'fueling deadly India lightning strikes'

Agence France-Presse / 09:45 PM July 05, 2020

PATNA, India — Lightning strikes killed 147 people in the north Indian state of Bihar over the last 10 days, officials said Sunday, warning of more extreme weather conditions to come, driven by climate change.

Around 215 people — farmers, rural laborers, and cattle graziers — have now died from strikes in the country's poorest state, authorities said.

"I was informed by weather experts, scientists, and officials that rising temperatures due to climate change is the main cause behind the increasing lightning strikes," Bihar's Disaster Management Minister Lakshmeshwar Rai told AFP.

Twenty-five people died on Saturday, he said.

The Indian Meteorological Department has warned of more lightning in the next 48 hours.

Lightning strikes during the annual monsoon that runs from June to September are fairly common in India.

But officials said this year's toll in Bihar has already surpassed the total number of deaths recorded annually for the state over the past few years, even though the monsoon season has just started.

Last year, 170 people were killed in lightning strikes during the monsoon period.

Bihar agrometeorologist Abdus Sattar told AFP the lightning and thunder was caused by large-scale instability in the atmosphere, fueled by temperature rises and excessive moisture.

State authorities rolled out a mobile phone app they said helps predict possible lightning strikes. But many poor farmers do not own smartphones.

In neighboring Uttar Pradesh, just over 200 people have been struck and killed by lightning since April, according to officials.

More than 2,300 people were killed by lightning in India in 2018 according to the National Crime Records Bureau, the most recent figures available.

The monsoon is crucial to replenishing water supplies in South Asia but also causes widespread death and destruction across the region each year.

/MUF

## Pink ice in Italy's Alps sparks algae probe

[Agence France-Presse](#) / 08:59 PM July 05, 2020

PASSO GAVIA, Italy — Scientists in Italy are investigating the mysterious appearance of pink glacial ice in the Alps, caused by algae that accelerate the effects of climate change.

There is debate about where the algae come from, but Biagio Di Mauro of Italy's National Research Council said the pink snow observed on parts of the Presena glacier is likely caused by the same plant found in Greenland.

“The alga is not dangerous, it is a natural phenomenon that occurs during the spring and summer periods in the middle latitudes but also at the Poles,” said Di Mauro, who had previously studied the algae at the Morteratsch glacier in Switzerland.

The plant, known as *Ancylonema nordenskiöldii*, is present in Greenland's so-called Dark Zone, where the ice is also melting.



A picture taken on July 4, 2020, on the top of the Presena glacier (3000 m), Val di Sole near Pellizzano, shows pink snow supposedly due to the presence of colonies of algae of the species *Ancylonema nordenskiöldii* from Greenland. (Photo by Miguel MEDINA / AFP)

Normally ice reflects more than 80 percent of the sun's radiation back into the atmosphere, but as algae appear, they darken the ice so that it absorbs the heat and melts more quickly.

More algae appear as the ice melts more rapidly, giving them vital water and air and adding red hues to the white ice at the Passo Gavia, altitude 2,618 metres (8,590 feet).

“Everything that darkens the snow causes it to melt because it accelerates the absorption of radiation,” said Di Mauro.

“We are trying to quantify the effect of other phenomena besides the human one on the overheating of the Earth,” said Di Mauro, noting that the presence of hikers and ski lifts could also have an impact on the algae.

Tourists at the glacier lament the impact of climate change.

“Overheating of the planet is a problem, the last thing we needed was algae,” said tourist Marta Durante.

“Unfortunately we are doing irreversible damage. We are already at the point of no return, I think.”

Elisa Pongini from Florence said she felt the Earth was “giving us back everything we have done to it”.

“2020 is a special year: terrible things have happened,” she said. “In my opinion, atmospheric phenomena are worsening. Climate change is increasingly evident.”

/MUF

Global database takes measure of noise pollution  
during COVID lockdown

TITLE:

PAGE 1/ 1/2

July 06, 2020  
DATE

# Global database takes measure of noise pollution during COVID lockdown

**Published** July 5, 2020 7:47pm

By PHINEAS RUECKERT, Agence France-Presse

PARIS — Samuel Challeat was riding his bike in the city of Toulouse in the hours before France's strict COVID-19 lockdown took hold when the thought came to him.

What impact will confinement have on the urban sound environment, and how could it be measured, he wondered.

That same day, Challeat, a geographer at the University of Toulouse II, launched an appeal to scientists and researchers around the world to measure the "unique perturbation" of city sounds during confinement.

The project, called Silent Cities, was up and running within 48 hours, and now has more than 350 participants in 40 countries around the world, including France, the United States, India and Brazil, Challeat told AFP in an interview.

Participants capture ambient sound—recording one out of every 10 minutes—and upload the data into an open-source database.

Because the project is open-source, anyone can access the data and the sound files for free.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has tagged noise pollution as the second most dangerous environmental risk factor for humans after air pollution.

One in five Europeans is exposed to long-term noise pollution that is harmful to health, according to the European Environment Agency.

Confinement was the perfect natural experiment for establishing a baseline for noise pollution in cities, according to Jerome Sueur, a bioacoustician at Paris's natural history museum.

## Silent cities

"It showed us to what extent we are in a noisy environment and allows us to quantify that," he said.

Sueur set up sound measurement instruments called magnetometers in Paris and Cachan, the suburb where he lives, as part of the Silent Cities project.

In mid-June, the magnetometer in the gardens of Paris's natural history museum had made more than 8,000 recordings and amassed 50 gigabytes of data, he said.

During confinement, noise was drastically reduced across the board in the French capital.

Global database takes measure of noise pollution  
during COVID lockdown

PAGE 1/ 2/2

July 06, 2020  
DATE

Environmental sound pollution dropped by as much as 90 percent in some areas of Paris during confinement, according to Fanny Mietlicki, the executive director of BruitParif, an organization that measures urban noise pollution.

"It was an unprecedented situation over this long of a time period," she told AFP.

### Unhealthy noise levels

As car, rail and air traffic slowed nearly to a halt, BruitParif's sound map of the Paris region—typically red to indicate high-levels of noise pollution—suddenly became green.

Noise pollution from automobile and train traffic alone costs the European Union—in degraded health, lost productivity, and other impacts—some 40 billion euros per year, according to a 2011 European Commission report.

Compared to air pollution, "noise seems to have a larger impact on indicators related to quality of life, and on mental health and well-being," said Eulalia Peris, the European Environment Agency's environmental noise expert.

Paris was the world's third most noise-polluted city, according to a 2017 report compiled by the WHO and Norwegian-based technology research group SINTEF.

The research also showed a tight statistical link between urban noise pollution and hearing loss.

Whether or not peace-and-quiet had positive effects on people is hard to say, Mietlicki cautioned.

"Not everyone had the same conditions of confinement," she said.

Challeat and his colleagues plan to publish a dataset paper at the end of the summer, and are currently seeking funding to extend the project into 2021 to measure noise pollution levels year-on-year, Challeat said.

This, he added, would be critical in showing just how unique the COVID-confinement moment was.

"We have grown accustomed to unhealthy noise levels in cities," said Peris, at EEA.

"Due to the drop in noise as a result of the lockdown, maybe people will start to realise that cities can be a lot quieter and more peaceful."

But a two- to three-month reduction in noise pollution during confinement most likely wouldn't have an effect on health, she cautioned.

"It requires societal change," she said. — **AFP**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/scitech/science/745564/global-database-takes-measure-of-noise-pollution-during-covid-lockdown/story/>

# Disaster buries Myanmar jade miners' dreams

posted July 05, 2020 at 10:10 pm

by [AFP](#)

Five Yay Ma Hsay—or 'unwashed' as the jade miners of northern Myanmar are known—arrived early Thursday at the pit to scrape out a living on a scraggy hillside, lured by the prospect of finding a stone that could transform their lives.

But only three would return, the others victims of Myanmar's worst-ever mine disaster after a landslide in heavy rains entombed at least 174 people, with scores more feared missing.

Sai Ko, 22, survived the spin-dryer of rock and heavy sludge by clinging to the corpse of a fellow miner, and battling to land.

His friend Zaw Lwin, 29, and his younger brother San Lwin were miraculously spat out from the churning torrent and delivered naked onto the shore, their clothes ripped off by the deluge.

But two of the crew didn't make it.

Than Niang was cremated on Saturday, while Thet Shin is missing presumed dead, one of scores victims still unaccounted for from the accident at the Hwekha mine, in northern Kachin State.

"We have many dreams of helping our families," a shaken Sai Ko told AFP.

"But it's not worth it. I will never go back."

The hillside which buried his friends harbours jadeite, a stone which goes for a fortune over the Kachin border in China in a multi-billion dollar industry dominated by firms linked to Myanmar's military.

But for the poor migrants from across Myanmar who travel hundreds of miles to prospect in Hpakant, big paydays are few and far between.

"Sometimes we hunt for ten days and only find a piece worth \$7-\$14. If we find a big stone they (the mining company) will take it," said Sai Ko.

Dabbing at the raw cuts on his face, his wife Pan Ei Phyu said they will abandon the mines and head home to near Mandalay.

"I don't want him to dig stones in this life. I just want our family to be together," she said.

'Last journey'

Yet there are thousands more ready to take his place—illegal workers who buy their way into the vast open-cast mines after the company diggers leave—to scour for scraps of the precious stone left behind.

Zaw Lwin, from central Myanmar, is among them—despite the terror of Thursday's accident.

He says his five-strong team arrived half an hour early to grab the best spot and avoid jostling with hundreds of others.

But the early risers became the first victims as the hillside collapsed.

"We hadn't even started digging when we were hit by the wall of water.

"I didn't know what was happening. My clothes were ripped off and rocks battered me... I suffocated on sand and mud."

Just as exhaustion took hold—Zaw Lwin says he recited Buddhist mantras in his head accepting the end was near—he was suddenly washed onto land.

"I don't know how I survived. I returned from death."

He says he will not go back to the pit, a deep mean-looking gouge where mud-caked workers relentlessly chip at the rocks.

Instead, he will work the waste piles dumped on top of the hills by mining companies—a scree of stones which can yield fragments of jade to the Yay Ma Hsay, which translates as 'unwashed' in Burmese but is used to group the informal miners.

Just days after the tragedy, Saw Lwin still has dreams of beating poverty.

"One day, if I get quality stone I will be a Lawpan (a boss of the jade miners)... I want to live in a house in a compound. I'm not going to give up."

The Hwekha mine is now a tomb for an untold number of people—mostly young migrants whose families may never hear of their fate.

Dozens of the unidentified were buried on Saturday in mass graves gouged into the red earth—an anonymous end far from home.

Social media has become a tool to try to identify the dead, with volunteers sharing photos on Facebook. The mines are a cloaked in secrecy.

Campaigners Global Witness say front companies obscure the real military owners in a shadowy industry they estimate to be worth \$31 billion a year.

But there is little trickle down.

Than Niang's wife had to check 60 battered bodies before finding her husband, a grim catalogue of those at the end of the jade chain.

"My whole world is destroyed," she told AFP. "We have a baby son. One day I will show him the last journey of his father."

# Landslide sa Myanmar na ikinasawi ng 160 minero, magsilbing aral - Yap

By [Doris Franche](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon)

- July 6, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Nanawagan si ACT-CIS partylist Cong. Eric Go Yap na dapat ay magsilbing aral at babala sa mga mining companies sa Benguet at sa iba pang parte ng bansa ang nangyaring landslide sa isang minahan sa Yangon, Myanmar na ikinasawi ng mahigit 160 jade miners kamakailan.

Ayon kay Yap, hindi na isolated case ang mga ganitong insidente dahil sa ilang mga iresponsableng minahan sa ilang mga bansa na naglalagay sa peligro sa mga minero.

“This is an eye-opener. It can happen anywhere and anytime. Ito yung gusto natin na maiwasan na mangyari dito sa atin . Hindi namimili ng panahon ang kalamidad o aksidente,” ani Yap na siya ring caretaker ng Benguet.

Kaya naman maghahain daw ng resolusyon ang mambabatas para silipin kung nasa standard ba ang operasyon ng mga minahan sa bansa, ang kaligtasan ng mga minero at kung sapat ba ang kanilang benepisyo at kompensasyon sakaling may sakuna.

Giit pa ni Yap, nais lamang niya na masiguro ang kaligtasan ng mga mga tao lalo na ang mga minero sa panganib bago pa mangyari ang isang trahedyo.



# E-waste levels surge 20% in 5 years, says UN

Agence France-Presse / 05:18 PM July 05, 2020

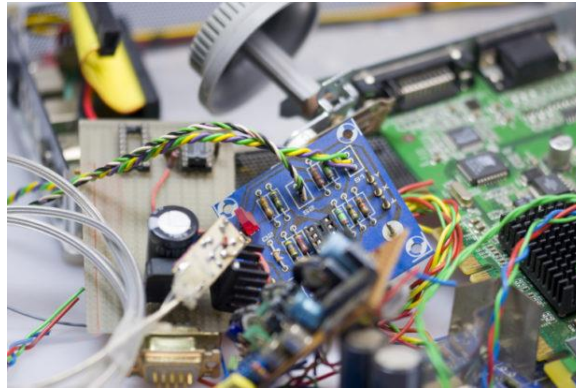


Image: luxxtek/Istock.com via AFP Relaxnews

Humans discarded more than 50 million tonnes of electronic waste last year, an increase of 20% in just five years, making tech refuse the world's fastest growing waste problem, the United Nations said Thursday.

In its annual report on e-waste — tossed away smartphones, computers, white goods and electronic car parts — the U.N. said that materials worth more than \$55 billion (50 billion euros) were being wasted every year.

In 2019, only 17% of the year's 53 million tonnes of e-waste was recycled, with the rest ending up in scrapheaps or landfill.

With its unreclaimed deposits of gold, silver, copper and platinum as well as highly-prized rare Earth metals, non-recycled e-waste means more must be mined to equip consumers with new products.

The report's authors blamed ever-shorter device lifespans and a lack of recycling infrastructure for the ballooning e-waste problem.

"E-waste quantities are rising three times faster than the world's population and 13% faster than the world's GDP during the last five years," said Antonis Mavropoulos, president of the International Solid Waste Association. "This sharp rise creates substantial environmental and health pressures and demonstrates the urgency to combine the fourth industrial revolution with circular economy."

According to the report, Asia generated the greatest volume of e-waste in 2019, with 24.9 million tonnes, followed by the Americas (13.1 million tonnes) and Europe (12 million tonnes), while Africa and Oceania generated just 2.9 million tonnes and 0.7 million tonnes, respectively. Europe had the highest e-waste figure per capita.

To put the numbers into perspective, 53 million tonnes is substantially heavier than every adult in Europe put together, or as much as 350 cruise ships the size of the Queen Mary 2. It equates to more than seven kilograms of e-waste for every human on the planet.

The U.N. warned that e-waste contained a number of toxic substances known to be harmful to human health.

"Substantially greater efforts are urgently required to ensure smarter and more sustainable global production, consumption, and disposal of electrical and electronic equipment," said David Malone, rector at the United Nations University and U.N. under secretary general. "This report contributes mightily to the sense of urgency in turning around this dangerous global pattern." **JB**

Source: <https://technology.inquirer.net/101742/e-waste-levels-surge-20-in-5-years-says-un>

# Australian man dies after a shark attack near Queensland's Fraser Island

By Ben Westcott, CNN

Published Jul 5, 2020 5:51:30 PM



**(CNN)** — A 36-year-old man died after being attacked by a shark off the coast of Fraser Island in the Australian state of Queensland on Saturday, local police said in a statement.

The man was spearfishing in the waters off Indian Head when he was bitten by a shark.

The man suffered injuries to his leg. A doctor and a nurse tried to save his life on the beach, but he passed away at about 4.30 p.m. local time.

Saturday's attack marked the fourth shark-related death in Australia this year. In April, Queensland wildlife ranger Zachary Robba, 23, was killed by a great white shark also near Indian Head.

In June a 60-year-old surfer died after being bitten by a great white shark in the state of New South Wales, while in January a 57-year-old diver died from a shark attack off Western Australia state.

There were no deaths from shark attacks in Australia in 2019 and just one in 2018, according to Sydney's Taronga Zoo.

In a post to his official Facebook, Fraser Coast mayor George Seymour said that it was a "tremendously sad day" for the local community.

"Our deepest condolences go to this young man's family and friends. The loss of a young life with his future before him is a tragedy beyond words and we share their sadness and grief," Seymour said.

Shark attacks are incredibly rare, not just in Australia but around the world. According the Australian Museum, you are more likely to be struck by lightning in Australia or killed in a car accident than attacked by a shark.

Annually fewer than 10 people a year on average around the world die of shark attacks, according to the Australian Institute of Marine Science.

*This story was first published on CNN.com, "[Australian man dies after a shark attack near Queensland's Fraser Island.](https://cnnphilippines.com/world/2020/7/5/Australian-man-dead-shark-attack.html)"*

Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/world/2020/7/5/Australian-man-dead-shark-attack.html>