



DENR partners with PLDT, Smart to protect Caimpugan Peatland

Published July 8, 2020, 11:47 AM by Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz

<https://mb.com.ph/2020/07/08/denr-partners-with-pldt-smart-to-protect-caimpugan-peatland/>

The Caimpugan Peatland at the Agusan Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary (AMWS) is considered a “wonderland,” a sacred land for the Manobos.



(Gabay Kalikasan / MANILA BULLETIN)

Located in Agusan del Sur, the peatland holds the only recorded remaining intact peat swamp forest – the largest of its kind in the Philippines.

It has survived for hundreds of years because of the tribe’s long-standing traditions and beliefs that regard nature with deep respect.

To further protect, conserve, and restore the Caimpugan Peatland that is vital to combat climate change, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has partnered with PLDT Inc. and its wireless subsidiary Smart Communications Inc. to protect one of the country’s most vital natural resources – its peatlands.

The memorandum of agreement was signed by Ricardo Calderon, DENR OIC Assistant Secretary for Climate Change and concurrent Director of DENR-Biodiversity



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Management Bureau; Hadja Didaw Piang-Brahim, OIC Regional Executive Director of DENR-Caraga; and Chaye Cabal-Revilla, chief sustainability officer of PLDT.

The three-year extendable project to be implemented by PLDT-Smart until 2023 aims to strengthen and support the AMWS-Protected Area Management Office and other concerned DENR offices in implementing peatland conservation and management strategies under the AMWS Management Plan.

Aside from applying various technologies for peatland assessment, monitoring, and enforcement activities, PLDT and Smart through its “Gabay Kalikasan” program will implement communication, education, and public awareness programs and activities to increase knowledge and appreciation of the value of these fragile ecosystems.

Peatlands cover only three percent of the Earth’s land surface.

These are wetlands whose peat soils consist of carbon-rich dead and decaying plant matter. If kept wet, peatlands can store twice as much carbon as all the world’s forests combined.

However, its crucial role in mitigating climate change, as well as the huge costs that arise when these natural carbon sinks are damaged, remains largely overlooked.

“Little is known about our country’s peatlands. Now is the time to change the course of conversation, as well as the conservation of this natural treasure and steer our collaborative efforts towards creating a climate-resilient future,” Calderon said.

“This peatland conservation partnership is our unique chance to secure that promising future for all,” he added.

Community involvement will be a central theme in the collaboration, as program activities under the agreement were jointly developed with the representatives from the provincial government of Agusan del Sur and the municipal government of San Francisco and Talacogon; barangay officials from Caimpugan, New Visayas, Causwagan, Maharlika, La Flora, and Sabang Gibong; and members of the Caimpugan Native Farmers and Fisherfolks Multipurpose Cooperative.

The project also aims to engage wetland-dependent communities in a sustainable and biodiversity-friendly livelihood program, which is only one of many community improvements to come with the new partnership.

Piang-Brahim pointed out that the Agusan Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary is designated as a Wetland of International Importance by the Ramsar Convention, recognized as a Heritage Park by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, and legislated as a National Park by the Philippine government.



DENR, PLDT to protect PH's peatland

posted July 08, 2020 at 11:10 pm by Rio N. Araja

<https://manilastandard.net/news/national/328111/denr-pldt-to-protect-ph-s-peatland.html>

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Philippine Long Distance Telephone Inc., along with its sister-company Smart Communications Inc. have partnered to protect one of the country's most vital natural resources needed to fight climate change, its peatland, in the next three years.

Under the arrangement, the agency, through its attached agency, the Biodiversity Management Bureau in CARAGA, would work with PLDT and Smart to set up a program to protect, conserve and restore the Caimpugan peatland in the Agusan marsh wildlife sanctuary in Agusan del Sur.

The peatland holds the only recorded remaining intact peat swamp forest, the largest of its kind in the country.

Peatlands cover only 3 percent of the earth's land surface. These are wetlands whose peat soils consist of carbon-rich dead and decaying plant matter.

DENR cited the peatlands' crucial role in mitigating climate change and the huge costs that arise when these natural carbon sinks are damaged, remains largely overlooked.

"Little is known about our country's peatlands. Now is the time to change the course of conversation, as well as the conservation of this natural treasure and steer our collaborative efforts towards creating a climate-resilient future," Assistant Secretary for Climate Change and BMB director Ricard Calderon said.

"This peatland conservation partnership is our unique chance to secure that promising future for all," he said.

The project also aims to engage wetland-dependent communities in a sustainable and biodiversity-friendly livelihood program.



DENR, PLDT-Smart partnership, kasado na para sa peatlands conservation

July 8, 2020 @ 7:16 PM

<https://remate.ph/denr-pldt-smart-partnership-kasado-na-para-sa-peatlands-conservation/>

Manila, Philippines – Minarkahan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang partnership sa leading telecoms at digital services provider na PLDT, Inc. (PLDT) at ang wireless subsidiary Smart Communications, Inc. (Smart) para protektahan ang isa sa vital natural resources ng bansa na nangangailangan ng combat climate change – ang peatlands.

Sa ilalim ng kasunduan ang DENR mula sa kanyang Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) at CARAGA Regional Office ay magtatrabaho kasama ng PLDT at Smart para magbuo ng programa para protektahan, makatipid at muling ibalik ang Caimpugan Peatlands sa Agusan Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary (AMWS).

Matatagpuan sa Agusan Del Sur ang Caimpugan Peatland na bukod tangi at nalalabing peat swamp forest- na itinuturing na largest sa kalupaan ng Pilipinas.

Ang Memorandum of Agreement ay nilagdaan ni Ricardo L. Calderon, DENR OIC Assistant Secretary for Climate Change and concurrent Director of BMB, Hadja Didaw D. Piang-Brahim, OIC Regional Executive Director of DENR CARAGA Region at Chaye A. Cabal-Revilla, Chief Sustainability Officer ng PLDT.

Ayon sa DENR Peatlands ay kinabibilangan ng 3% ng Earth's land surface at ang naturang wetlands na tinatawag na peat soils na binubuo ng carbon-rich dad at decaying plant matter at nananatiling basa.

Sinabi pa ng DENR na mahalaga ang papel ng Peatlands para sa mitigating ng climate change, lalo na sa napakalaking gastos ng natural carbon sinks.

“Little is known about our country's peatlands. Now is the time to change the course of conversation, as well as the conservation of this natural treasure and steer our collaborative efforts towards creating a climate-resilient future,” ayon kay ASec. Calderon. “This peatland conservation partnership is our unique chance to secure that promising future for all.”

Nabatid pa sa DENR ang pag-aaplay ng technology para sa peatland conservation para sa tatlong (3) taong extendable project na ipapatupad ng PLDT-Smart ng kanilang Chief Sustainability Office hanggang 2023 upang palakasin at suportahan ang AMWS-Protected Area Management Office at iba pang concerned ng DENR offices para sa pagpapatupad ng peatland conservation ang management strategies sa ilalim ng AMWS Management Plan. Santi Celario



Governor raises alarm over spread of oil spill to Guimaras

Published July 8, 2020, 3:14 PM by Tara Yap

<https://mb.com.ph/2020/07/08/governor-raises-alarm-over-spread-of-oil-spill-to-guimaras/>

ILOILO CITY – Governor Samuel Gumarin urged the owner of a damaged power barge located offshore in Iloilo City to also address the oil spill that has spread to Guimaras and also affected more than 20 coastal communities in the small island province.

Gumarin reiterated his call for the management of AC Energy Philippines to lead the efforts to remove bunker fuel that leaked out from its power barge that was damaged due to a July 3 explosion incident.

“AC Energy should step up with the cleanup operations to contain the oil spill,” Gumarin told Manila Bulletin in an interview Wednesday, July 8.

Water current initially swept portions of the more than 250,000 liters of bunker fuel that leaked from Power Barge 102 since July 3 to coastal areas of Buenavista and Jordan towns, which geographically face Iloilo City with a body of water serving as division.

The toxic bunker fuel has also reached coastal villages of San Lorenzo town.

Gumarin pointed out that AC Energy must act fast to avoid larger damage to coastal areas and residents who have been reminded of their sufferings from a 2006 oil spill, which is still considered as the country’s worst oil spill disaster when an oil tanker carrying two million liters of bunker fuel sank off its coast.

“This may be small compared to the 2006 Guimaras oil spill, but this is still a problem for us,” Gumarin added.

The Guimaras government is also considering to evacuate affected residents, especially those who may have a higher risk from the toxic fumes of the bunker fuel.

Aside from health risks, local fishermen in Guimaras have complained of volumes of dead fish in the aftermath of the July 3 oil spill in Iloilo City.

Meanwhile, AC Energy has deployed personnel from Negros Island to augment the oil spill clean up in Guimaras.

“We are closely working with Guimaras officials to address this,” said Gabby Mejia, head for plant operations of AC Energy.

Mejia told Manila Bulletin in a separate interview that cleanup gears and personal protective equipment (PPEs) have already arrived



Guimaras gov't demands total cleanup of oil spill from power barge

By: Nestor P. Burgos Jr. - Correspondent / @nestorburgosINQ

Inquirer Visayas / 06:04 PM July 08, 2020

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1303919/guimaras-govt-demands-total-cleanup-of-oil-spill-from-power-barge>

ILOILO CITY—The Guimaras provincial government has called on the operator of a damaged power barge that triggered an oil spill to ensure the swift and complete cleanup of areas on the island that have been dirtied by bunker fuel.

“I would like to be clear that there should be no bunker fuel left in Guimaras,” said Gov. Samuel Gumarin in a statement.

He said the Ayala-owned AC Power Corp., which operates the power barge, has the responsibility to clean up the bunker fuel that leaked from Power Barge 102 docked off the coast of Iloilo City last July 3.

As of July 6, black oil sludge had reached at least 23 coastal villages in the towns of Buenavista and Jordan and Guimaras province.

Senior Supt. Jerry Candido, officer-in-charge of the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) in Western Visayas, said investigators have “established that there was negligence” leading to the explosion on the barge.

The BFP is preparing to file a complaint for reckless imprudence resulting in damage to property and reckless imprudence resulting in slight physical injuries in relation to the explosion and the injury it caused one of the workers on the barge.

Candido, citing investigation results, said workers were using acetylene torch to cut bolts and nuts on an air vent as part of maintenance work on Power Barge 102.

The air vent, which was outside the hull of the power barge, leads directly to one of the tanks that store bunker fuel.

Investigators said they believed the cutting work, using acetylene torches, triggered the explosion that tore five holes on the hull of the barge including a hole less than a meter in diameter on the side where the bunker fuel leaked.

“It should have been common sense that work using open fire should not have been done near the fuel tank,” Candido told the Inquirer.

“They should have known that that bunker fuel is inflammable,” Candido said.

He said the work was also conducted without a permit from the BFP.



Guimaras gov't demands total cleanup of oil spill from power barge

An estimated 251,000 liters of bunker fuel leaked from the power barge, sending black oil sludge into coastal villages in Iloilo City, the Iloilo towns of Leganes and Dumangas and Guimaras Island, according to the Philippine Coast Guard.

As of Monday (July 6), at least 209,960 liters have been collected by cleanup personnel.

Gabino Ramon Mejia, head of plant operations of AC Energy Corp., said the company had tapped third-party consultants to conduct an investigation on the explosion after receiving different accounts of the blast.

“Rest assured that our company will be very transparent and will work with government agencies and authorities. We will be very cooperative with government,” he said.

The company is also providing food to residents evacuated to keep them away from bunker fuel fumes and are hiring them in a cash-for-work program to help in the cleanup of oil debris on the shoreline.

In a resolution passed at its regular session on Tuesday (July 7), the Iloilo City Council asked AC Energy Corp. to compensate residents of villages dirtied by the oil spill.

Gabino said the company was willing to provide compensation to the residents subject to government rules and protocols.

The Iloilo City Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office reported that 125 families, or 442 individuals, are staying in evacuation centers as of Tuesday afternoon.

The oil spill is expected to reach mangrove areas especially near the power barge.

Rex Sadaba, a mangrove specialist based in the University of the Philippines Visayas (UPV), said many mangrove seedlings and saplings at the 1.9-hectare mangrove area near the barge are expected to die due to the bunker fuel.

UPV scientists have been tapped to conduct an assessment of the environmental impact of the oil spill, including on Guimaras.

In 2006, Guimaras was devastated by a massive oil spill after the MT Solar 1 tanker sank southeast of the island, spilling 2.1 million liters of bunker fuel.



DENR slaps notice of violation to AC Energy on Iloilo oil spill

Posted at Jul 08 2020 04:37 PM | Updated as of Jul 08 2020 04:54 PM

<https://news.abs-cbn.com/business/07/08/20/denr-slaps-notice-of-violation-to-ac-energy-on-iloilo-oil-spill>

MANILA - The Department of Environment and Natural Resources said Wednesday it issued a notice of violation against AC Energy following an oil spill from its power barge in Iloilo.

The barge located at Barrio Obrero, Iloilo City has an estimated capacity of 200,000 liters of bunker fuel. An explosion caused the leak, AC Energy said. The root cause is still being investigated.

The notice of violation stated that the company has violated the provisions of DAO 2005-10, the IRR of Republic Act 9275 otherwise known as "The Philippine Clean Water Act," the DENR said.

Discharging, depositing or causing deposited material of any kind directly or indirectly into the bodies of water are also prohibited under the law.

AC Energy Inc., is required to explain in writing why they should not be penalized, why no order should be issued against them. The company's failure to submit an explanation to DENR will be interpreted as a waiver of their right to be heard, it said.

In a separate statement released Wednesday, AC Energy said it would respond in "due course" to the show cause letter sent by the Environment Department.

"In relation to the show cause letter that we received from the DENR, we will respond in due course, and we will fully cooperate with its efforts and comply with its requirements," AC Energy said.

"We will continue to do everything in our power to mitigate the environmental impact of the spill and address all concerns in a responsible manner," it added.

The Pollution Adjudication Board will also investigate "and come up with the fines and penalties," Department of Environment and Natural Resources Undersecretary Benny Antiporda told ABS-CBN News.

Industry partners, local community, government agencies and third party experts were also tapped to help mitigate the impact, AC Energy said.

The cleanup could last up to 15 days, it said earlier.

-- with reports from Bettina Magsaysay and Jessica Fenol, ABS-CBN News



DENR to fine ACEI for Iloilo oil spill

July 08, 2020 People's Journal

<https://journal.com.ph/specials/business/denr-fine-acei-iloilo-oil-spill>

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources would fine AC Energy Corp. for the oil spill incident in Iloilo City over the weekend.

The DENR said it would issue a Notice of Violation of Republic Act 9275 or the Clean Water Act, to AC Energy Corp.

A technical conference would be called to immediately address the clean-up operation of the July 4 oil spill.

A DENR official said it is the responsibility of AC Energy to conduct the clean-up operation, as they are the owner of the barge that exploded from Power Barge 102.

The company is now coordinating with Harbor Star Shipping Services, a third party, for the oil spill clean-up in the affected areas.

The explosion caused a one-foot wide hole in the hull of the power barge leading to the oil spill.

No one was reported injured in the incident.

The DENR said the clean up must be conducted following the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan and that the operation must be supervised by the Philippine Coast Guard.

The Regional Incident Management Team was created for the monitoring of all aspects of the clean-up — affected community, its health and environmental impact, and waste management.

DENR is also recommending the clean up of heavy bunker fuel in mangrove areas to allow wave action and disperse the oil and collect them from the sea.

Sorbents and manual clean-up are also recommended by the DENR, to be done under strict monitoring to ensure that mangroves in the area would not be disturbed because doing so may cause more harm than good.

A meeting was held on July 4 with ACEI and the PCG, which is supervising the clean-up.

AC Energy, in a statement, said the containment stage has been completed Saturday evening, through the use of multilayered spill booms from PB 102, and additional layers from the PCG and Petron.

Skimming operations were also started on the same day.

AC Energy is currently conducting a thorough investigation of the incident, engaging a third-party firm on the cause of the incident to prevent a similar mishap.

Aside from the immediate clean up of the oil spill, the company also promised to support the affected communities.



Contact tracing, weakest link in fight against COVID-19

Published July 8, 2020, 2:54 PM by Minerva Newman

<https://mb.com.ph/2020/07/08/contact-tracing-weakest-link-in-fight-against-covid-19/>

CEBU CITY – Officials of the inter-agency task force (IATF) COVID-19 for the Visayas admitted in a press conference here Tuesday that contact tracing was the weakest link, not only in Cebu City's, but in the country's fight against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

"In our fight against corona virus, the IATF adopted a three-pronged weapon system approach that include the strict enforcement of health and safety quarantine protocols; efficient mass rapid testing and strong contact tracing," Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, who is currently the chief COVID-19 implementor in the Visayas, told the media.

And to help Cebu City strengthen its contact tracing capabilities, the IATF invited the team of Baguio City Mayor Benjamin Magalong to train medical health workers, doctors and nurse, law enforcers and investigators of the PNP develop an intensified contact tracing strategy, the best practice in Baguio City in its COVID-19 response.

Magalong said his team hoped to effectively train the Cebu contact tracing teams on the various technology and systems that they applied in Baguio City and in the Cordillera region.

But he pointed out that, with more than 6,000 COVID-19 cases here, the existing 35 teams may not be enough.

"The more teams, the better because contact tracing is the most stressful strategy in containing the virus. Contact tracers must be specific in tracing/working on COVID-19 cases. Some cases have several or multiple health problems," Magalong advised that as much as possible, only two cases will be assigned to one team to avoid overwhelming the contact tracers, he added.

Cimatu said that, as far as the strict implementation and enforcement of the quarantine health and safety policies, guidelines and protocols were concerned, there were some challenges in the people's compliance and behavioral attitudes towards physical social distancing and stay home policies at the onset of the pandemic in March or April not only here in Cebu City by in the entire country.

As people saw the government's resolve to enforce quarantine protocols, people slowly gravitated towards the new norms of wearing mask, social distancing especially in public places and regular hand washing.

"We see a tremendous change in people's behavior, especially here in Cebu City, and their compliance to the health and safety protocols that somehow slowed down the



Contact tracing, weakest link in fight against COVID-19

virus transmission in areas such as Barangay Mambaling and Sitio Tejero in Barangay Luz which had the highest number of COVID-19 transmission,” Cimatu said.

Parallel to quarantine protocols was the massive rapid testing, and efficient contact tracing of COVID-19 cases with the establishment of barangay isolation centers and quarantine facilities in the City so as not to overwhelm private and government hospitals.

According to the IATF, the establishment of barangay isolation centers and five quarantine facilities here have immensely contributed to the decongestion of private hospitals in Cebu City.

“We have enough spaces in our barangay isolation centers and quarantine facilities that can accommodate more than 2,000 mild and asymptomatic COVID-19 patients, only about 900 to 1,000 beds have been used,” said Cebu City Mayor Edgardo Labella.

For massive and rapid tests, the Office of the Presidential Assistant for the Visayas (OPAV) launched and implemented the Project Balik Buhay program with the IATF that undertook the tri-cities prevalence survey and mass testing that helped local officials to determine when to relax quarantine restrictions, and allow the gradual resumption of businesses.

OPAV Secretary Michel Lloyd Dino earlier explained that the strategic mass testing provided local officials with a wise, scientific, evidence-based, data-driven approach to really see the extent of the virus spread in Cebu.

“We had a problem with contact tracing before but now, we have improved. We have an existing 35 teams of 5 in each team of contact tracers, but it seems these are not enough, and we have organized 18 teams more with additional testing kits and improved in the number of days for test results to come out from a week to 2 days.” Labella said.

The members of the IATF in its regular media briefings in Cebu has underlined the urgency and importance of a strong and efficient contact tracing activities as a major factor in flattening the curb of COVID-19 cases in Cebu City after it saw some spikes in May and June.



Things are getting better in Cebu

SHOOTING STRAIGHT - Valeriano Avila (The Freeman) - July 9, 2020 - 12:00am

<https://www.philstar.com/the-freeman/opinion/2020/07/09/2026730/things-are-getting-better-cebu>

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Exactly a week from today is July 16, the day that we might return to a general community quarantine (GCQ). If we have some kind of confidence in this, it is due to the fact that Secretary Roy Cimatu declared that he is optimistic that the ECQ in Cebu City may finally be downgraded to GCQ by July 16. But just the same, he said, that the sequential lockdowns would have to be maintained.

Meanwhile, The FREEMAN reported that the Department of Health (DOH) identified Cebu City, Cebu province, Lapu-Lapu City, and Mandaue City as among the top 6 hot spots of COVID-19 in the country, along with Quezon City and Manila. But Sec. Cimatu said there are certain parameters that the Inter-Agency Task Force and DOH experts will look into in determining whether an area is qualified for GCQ status.

Indeed, for me, an important parameter is the fatality rate. Today the whole nation has a death rate of 1,300 deaths, which in my view is a miniscule figure if you consider the 100 plus million Filipino population. Let us also consider the reality that most of the poor Filipinos live in squatter communities that need to be revised so that each house would have a few meters distant from one another as it denies any social distancing. I dare all Filipinos seeking for some elective post to make this their campaign promise to revise the housing of their constituents.

This brings me to a news report from The FREEMAN yesterday, which said that Sen. Bong Go pressed for the passage of measures that seek to address homelessness in the country through affordable financing schemes. He cited Senate Bill 203 and SB 1227 that he filed to lessen housing problems in the country “by providing means for Filipinos to have a home of their own, especially displaced families affected by incidents such as fires and disasters.” Sen. Bong Go said, “I’ve visited many fire victims and they need to be able to get back on their feet through low-cost housing programs and development, including the construction of safe and permanent evacuation centers and housing assistance for fire victims.”

Indeed, in the three years into Duterte administration, whenever there was a fire anywhere in the country and especially here in Cebu, Sen. Bong Go is one personality whom you can see condoling with the fire victims. This is why Sen. Go



Things are getting better in Cebu

said, “the reason why I filed these bills is because of my aim that there will be no more squatters. I want each Filipino family to have a decent home.”

With this proposed law, let us all hope that Filipinos living in squatter colonies would disappear with homes a few meters from each other. But this is easier said than done. The problem is, many of these people might refuse to move out to transfer to a faraway home. Let’s hope that this would be included in this new housing law.

Meanwhile, going back to the issues in Cebu City, I understand that Sec. Cimatú once again met with hospital owners and representatives, along with the DOH-7 Director Jaime Bernadas, Cebu City Mayor Edgardo Labella and other stakeholders, to get updates on hospital capacity and the current state of the health workers. In that recent meeting, the owners of private hospitals agreed to further expand their bed capacity for COVID-19 as long as the government gives them additional manpower and other support.

Indeed, now Sec. Cimatú has gotten the meat of why our hospitals are always supposedly full. It is due to the serious lack of nurses that we wrote about last December long before the COVID-19 descended upon us. Director Bernadas also mentioned that a newly-hired nurse in the government hospital now gets P28, 000 a month as against only P15, 000 in a privately-owned hospital. It was also revealed that top businessman Ramon Ang of San Miguel Corp. (SMC) is giving life insurance to 5,000 health workers here with coverage up to P2 million. This really helps a lot!

Meanwhile, Mayor Labella reiterated his promise that the city government would give P10, 000 in incentive to each health worker in private hospitals in the city. This got a cheerful response from private hospitals that welcomed Mayor Labella’s promise, especially in light of the situation that has forced many nurses to either resign or go on unauthorized absences. This was appreciated by Dr. Potenciano “Yong” Larrazabal III, president of Cebu Doctors’ Group of Hospitals, who said that this will definitely increase and boost the morale and stop those resigning steadily.”

Indeed, there is hope for Cebu!

* * *



Gov't agencies tackle protection, promotion of Pujada Bay

By Prexx Marnie Kate Trozo July 8, 2020, 7:09 pm
<https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1108337>



The Pujada Bay in Mati City, Davao Oriental. (PNA file photo)

DAVAO CITY – The Mati City Tourism and Promotion Office met with the different offices and line agencies on Wednesday for the promotion and protection of Pujada Bay Protected Landscape and Seascape.

In a statement on Wednesday, the local government said the meeting was initiated to address the ease of doing business in the city, especially on securing environmental clearances such as environmental compliance certificate, a special application for the protected area, locational clearance, building permit and business permit.

The meeting was attended by representatives from Mati City Tourism Office, City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), City Agriculturist Office (CAO), City Engineering Office (CEO), Business Permit and Licensing Office (BPLO), City Planning and Development Office (CPDO) and the City Housing Office (CHO).

“The team held their first meeting on Tuesday (July 7) at the City Tourism Office to harmonize the process in securing permits and clearances before investing, constructing, and developing within and along the Pujada Bay Protected Landscape and Seascape,” Mati City Information Officer Ben Jason Tesiorna said.

Tesiorna said the attendees agreed that a transaction flow should be devised to guide the investors and private individuals before developing a certain area within the vicinities of Pujada Bay.

The areas include government projects such as FGR Park and Baywalk, fish port, mariculture, fish ponds, subdivisions, or resettlement areas, he said.

“The team will also conduct a Technical Conference on Thursday (July 9, 2020), to address resort owners' concerns who were located along Pujada Bay and to help them with their documentary requirements,” Tesiorna added. (PNA)



Kalinga mobile force leads tree planting in remote school

By Peter A. Balocnit Published on July 8, 2020
<https://pia.gov.ph/news/articles/1046916>

CITY OF TABUK, Kalinga, July 8(PIA) - - More than 200 fruit bearing and forest tree seedlings were planted today at the compound of remote school in barangay Lacnog East, this city in celebration of the 25th Police Community Relations (PCR) Month.

The activity was organized by the 1st Kalinga Police Mobile Force Company (KPMFC) with the involvement of the barangay Sangguniang Kabataan (SK) members, barangay officials, school teachers, Company Advisory Council members, DENR and PIA.

Marina Anongos and her fellow teachers at the Cataw Primary School committed to take care of the planted trees.

Tree planting is one of the activities of all units of the Philippine National Police operating in the province. They have been partnering with civil society organizations and local government units in support to the government's programs and projects for the protection of the environment even during this time of COVID-19 pandemic.

Along with the advocacy for care of the environment, police personnel also lectured on the anti-terrorism law calling on the youth to concentrate on their studies and on worthwhile activities that help in the development of the school and community.

Police Lt. Ruff Manganip also urged the youth to support the law and refrain from joining student activism. Information materials were also distributed to SK members and residents.

Personnel of the 1st KPMFC also helped the school cultivate their backyard garden for the pupils to plant vegetables. They committed to help the school in any capacity as they did in other schools where the unit contributed money for the purchase of materials needed to repair damaged and dilapidated classrooms.

The theme of this year's PCR Month celebration is "Pinaigting na Ugnayan ng Mamamayan at Pulisya Laban sa COVID-19 Pandemic". (JDP/PAB-PIA CAR, Kalinga)



Another endangered owl turned over to Palawan authorities

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

[Inquirer Southern Luzon](#) / 11:54 AM July 08, 2020

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1303627/another-endangered-owl-turned-over-to-palawan-authorities>



The Spotted Wood Owl (*Strix seloputo*) found in Narra town, Palawan. Photo courtesy of Margie Castulo

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY — Another Spotted Wood Owl (*Strix seloputo*) was turned over to the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD), marking the second of its species to be surrendered to the environmental authorities this week.

Margie Castulo, a resident of Barangay Princess Urduja in Narra town, Palawan, who found the endangered owl, said in a phone interview with the Inquirer on Wednesday morning that no apparent injury was found on the wild bird but it was “on a weak state.”

“We found it at the back of the rice mill. It was my first time seeing it in person and I know it is endangered [owl] so it has to be turned over,” Castulo said in Filipino.

The responders from the Wildlife Traffic Monitoring Unit of PCSD picked up the owl on Tuesday afternoon and transported it to the Palawan Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Center in Barangay Irawan, Puerto Princesa City so it can be “nurtured back to health.”

The owl is 40 centimeters long from beak to tail, with a wingspan of 90 centimeters, and weighed about 1.3 kilograms.

It is categorized as an “endangered species” under PCSD Resolution No. 15-521. It is also protected under the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act.

On July 4, Mylene Ledesma, an alumna of Western Philippine University and a resident of Barangay Ramon Magsaysay in Aborlan town, also surrendered to the PCSD staff a wounded Spotted Wood Owl that “seemed weak and was not able to fly nor move away from its position.”

The Spotted Wood Owl (*Strix seloputo*) found in Narra town, Palawan. Photo courtesy of Margie Castulo



3 illegal land occupants nabbed

Alvin Murcia July 9, 2020 02:10 AM

<https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/07/09/3-illegal-land-occupants-nabbed/>

Three individuals were arrested by the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) for unlawfully occupying a public forest land without any permit or authority in Barangay San Rafael, San Felipe, Zambales during an entrapment operation on 2 July.

NBI officer-in-charge Eric Distor identified the suspects as Danilo Montes, Gilbert Ramiso and Johnedel Bondad, all of whom failed to show any permits and clearances to occupy and construct improvements within the area.

The suspects were subjects of a surveillance after the NBI-Environmental Crime Division (NBI-EnCD) received an intelligence report about the unlawful occupation of some individuals of a parcel of land classified as a public forest.

During the surveillance, the team witnessed and observed a newly-constructed two-story building, which Montes claimed to own, surrounded by a newly-established perimeter fence located within the public forest's land.

They also witnessed Ramiso and Bondad, who were operating a backhoe that was extracting mineral sand in the Sto. Niño River and being loaded into a payloader truck, wherein the extracted sand was being used as filling materials in the illegally occupied area.

A check by the agents at the office of City Environment & Natural Resources Office-Olongapo revealed that the individuals occupying the forest land had no permits or tenurial instruments from their office.

Upon the suspects' arrest, agents also found an unregistered .45 caliber pistol inside the house of Montes.

The three were presented for inquest proceedings before the Office of the Provincial Prosecutor of Zambales for violation of Section 78 (formerly Section 69) of Presidential Decree 705 as amended by Executive Order 277 and Republic Act 7161, otherwise known as the Revised Forestry Code of the Philippines.

Montes was also charged for violation of Sec. 28 of RA 10951 for unlawful acquisition or possession of firearms and ammunition.



Young filmmakers invited to join climate film festival

Published July 8, 2020, 2:40 PM by Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz

<https://mb.com.ph/2020/07/08/young-filmmakers-invited-to-join-climate-film-festival/>

Young filmmakers will have the opportunity to showcase their creativity and advocate for climate action through original short films at the Klima Film Festival (KFF).

The KFF, in partnership with the Climate Change Commission (CCC), is part of the Oscar M. Loper (OML) Center's "Balangay" project, which aims to chronicle the stories of the changing climate in the context of the Filipino experience and how it has shaped the Filipino identity and culture.

Anchored on the theme "Adapting For A Sustainable Future," interested participants should form a team with a maximum of 10 members aged 16- to 22-years-old.

The representative of the team should register online through this link: bit.ly/KFFSignUpSheet. Registration is from June 30 until July 31, 2020.

Before submission of films, participants are required to attend a series of free online workshops, including a climate change seminar-workshop and climate film labs, to deepen their understanding and appreciation on the science behind climate change and of film as a medium to mobilize community action.

After attending the climate change seminar-workshop, each team is required to submit their film concept and synopsis before they may proceed to participate in the climate film labs.

After completing the climate film lab activities, teams must ready their films.

Submissions should include the short film in the form of narrative fiction and running between five to seven minutes; a 30-second trailer; an official poster (18' x 24'); and behind-the-scenes footage.

The film may be in any Philippine language but must have either English or Filipino subtitles.

CCC and OML emphasized that any use of material (footage, music, etc.) not originally produced or owned by the team must secure permission from the original copyright owners.



Strategic Communication
and Initiatives Service

Young filmmakers invited to join climate film festival

The submitted film will be co-owned with the CCC and the OML Center and will be used as part of information, education, and communication (IECs) and promotional materials only.

Entries should also adhere to the MTRCB Rated-G classification on movies and may not contain any violence, explicit scenes, and foul language.

All entries may be submitted to the address klimafilmfest@gmail.com with the subject format, "KFF Entry | Team ID Number" until 12 midnight of October 23, 2020.

The KFF Top 10 finalists will be chosen where the Best Film, first runner-up, and second runner-up will receive cash prizes of P50,000, P30,000, and P20,000, respectively. The remaining seven finalists will receive P5,000 each.

Special Awards including for Best Director, Best Screenplay, Best Cinematography, Best Production Design, Best Musical Scoring, Best Performance, Best in Research and Content, Audience Choice Award, Best Poster and Most Liked Teaser, will also be given and will receive P3,000 each.

Awarding will be in time for the 2020 National Climate Change Consciousness Week to be held online in November.



NY firm bent on \$500M WTE plant in Bataan

posted July 08, 2020 at 11:30 pm by [Butch Gunio](#)
<https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/328127>

Balanga City, Bataan—A New York-based multinational company is bent on putting up a \$500 million (P25 billion) Waste-to-Energy (WTE) power plant in Bataan after it signed a memorandum of understanding with Governor Albert Garcia for the project.

AgriPower Inc., represented by the company's Chief Executive Officer Barry J. Berman, and Garcia formally signed the MOU last month for the project that could produce 100 MW of electricity in Bataan.

A leading company in the United States, AgriPower has already set up more than 60 WTE “heat only” systems, now operating in the US and Canada for more than 12 years.

The WTE power plant project was facilitated by Mario T. Supnad, a provincial consultant of Bataan.

Despite the pandemic that has paralyzed economic activities across the world, Berman and Supnad continued to work hand in hand to pave the way for the formal signing of the MOU.

Through the instruction of the governor, Supnad has worked with Hermosa Mayor Jopet Inton for the preparation of the plant’s site in the area.

“We will give priority on the project in Bataan, since this is one of our biggest undertakings,” said Berman in a telephone conversation with Supnad, a practicing journalist and newspaper editor.

Garcia welcomed the project since the province is pushing for Public, Private, Partnership (PPP) to invite investors and generate employment and at the same time he expressed his gratitude to AgriPower in trusting Bataan.



SK Quirino reiterates support to single use plastic ban

By Thelma C. Bicarme Published on July 8, 2020
<https://pia.gov.ph/news/articles/1047016>

CABARROGUIS, Quirino, July 8 (PIA)—Sangguniang kabataan Provincial Federation President Juan Viktor Gamboa said they will continuously support the implementation of Provincial Ordinance no. 4, series of 2019 otherwise known as “An Ordinance Prohibiting the Use of Single Use Plastics in the Province and prescribing penalties thereof.

The said ordinance which was authored by Gamboa himself took effect last year upon the signing of its Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) last October 24, 2019.

In the Laging Handa Network Briefing, Gamboa told Communications Secretary Martin Andanar, program host, that in lieu of single use plastics, they are promoting the use of eco bags, bayongs and other shopping bags made out of indigenous materials.

Gamboa also said the youth sector is actively involved in other environmental activities such as tree planting, clean-up drive and information dissemination campaigns to engage their co-youth to be involved in environment-friendly activities.

As of press time, the SK has already developed SK app to be able to disseminate all information, programs, projects and activities to all the members. (MDCT/TCB/PIA 2-Quirino)



Magat Dam cleanup campaign protects fisherfolk livelihood

by [Leander C. Domingo, TMT](#) July 9, 2020

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/07/09/news/regions/magat-dam-cleanup-campaign-protects-fisherfolk-livelihood/739547/>

ALFONSO LISTA, Ifugao: Some 200 fisherfolk and community leaders have expressed concern over the proliferation of water lilies and driftwood that flowed into the Magat Dam, causing damage to fish cages that affected their livelihood.



THE cleanup drive initiated in Ifugao province reached as far as SN Aboitiz Power's pilot solar project in Isabela province on July 6, 2020. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Responding to this, renewable energy firm SN Aboitiz Power-Magat (SNAP-Magat) recently sponsored a cleanup drive with participating fisherfolk and village leaders whose fishing livelihood depends on the Magat Dam reservoir.

Members of the Municipal Fisheries Aquatic Resources Management Council in Ifugao province and the Alfonso Lista chapter of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the municipal local government unit here attended and participated in the cleanup drive.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources also took part by providing additional meals for the volunteers while the National Irrigation Administration equipped the boats used with diesel fuel.

The areas covered in the cleanup drive project were Sitio Lubbong and Sitio Nagtipunan in this town and Barangay Namnama, and Halag 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Aguinaldo town.

Joseph Yu, SNAP-Magat president and chief executive officer, said the project also covered some areas of their pilot solar project, which is located on the side of Isabela province.

He said the cleanup drive addressed the proliferation of water lilies and driftwood that flowed into the reservoir from upstream.

“When left unattended, the reservoir blockage could cause considerable damage to fish cages and affect the livelihood of communities here,” Yu said.



Limang ahas, nakuha sa isang pampublikong pamilihan sa Maynila

By Angellic Jordan July 08, 2020 - 04:37 PM

<https://radyo.inquirer.net/252932/limang-ahas-nakuha-sa-isang-pampublikong-pamilihan-sa-maynila>

Nakumpiska ng Manila City Markets Administration Office (MAO) ang limang cobra sa nakatago sa isang stall sa loob ng New Arranque Market, araw ng Martes (July 7).

Ayon kay MAO Director Zenaida Mapoy, narinig ang tunog ng ahas habang nag-iinspeksyon sa naglilinis ng bakanteng pwesto sa pamilihan.

Nakita aniyang nakasilid ang mga ahas sa bote ng mineral water.

Mapanganib aniya ito dahil posible itong magdulot ng panganib hindi lamang sa mga tindero kundi maging sa publiko.

Dinala na ang mga cobra sa Public Recreations Bureau.



Economic managers: We will overcome this crisis

[Mary Grace Padin](#) (The Philippine Star) - July 9, 2020 - 12:00am

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/07/09/2026677/economic-managers-we-will-overcome-crisis>

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MANILA, Philippines — Members of the administration’s economic team yesterday expressed confidence that the Philippines will overcome the health and economic crisis brought about by the coronavirus disease 2019 or COVID-19 pandemic.

President Duterte, in a pre-State of the Nation Address (SONA) briefing, had a similar message, saying his administration has always overcome trials in the past four years.

The head of the economic team, Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III, said the economy would be able to bounce back.

“We will overcome this crisis. We will get back to work. We will get back our economy and you can be assured that this government is doing its utmost to bring the economy back to the growth path,” Dominguez said at the pre-SONA virtual press briefing.

“It’s true we are having a hiccup, we are having a bad spot, but we are strong enough to weather this problem and come out of it probably even stronger than before,” Dominguez added.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Governor Benjamin Diokno, acting Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Karl Chua and Public Works Secretary Mark Villar expressed the same confidence that the country would hurdle the challenges posed by the pandemic.

The Philippine economy contracted by 0.2 percent in the first quarter of the year, the first quarterly economic downturn in two decades.

Diokno said earlier a deeper economic contraction looms in the second quarter, with the gross domestic product (GDP) likely shrinking by 5.7 to 6.7 percent. But he said the country is in a good position for recovery.

For 2020, the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) expects the economy to contract by two to 3.4 percent. However, they also see a sharp recovery in 2021, projecting a GDP growth of 7.1 to 8.1 percent.

In a speech during the Pre-SONA forum, the finance chief noted that signs of economic recovery “are emerging.”



Economic managers: We will overcome this crisis

For one, he said the Bureau of Customs (BOC) was able to collect P42.54 billion in June, 4.4 percent higher than its revised collection target of P40.74 billion due to higher import volume.

“This signals rising economic activity,” he said.

Furthermore, he said recovery is also seen in the manufacturing sector, as the economy slowly reopens.

Citing the Philippine Statistics Authority in its Monthly Integrated Survey of Selected Industries, he said the capacity utilization of factories increased to 73.4 percent in May compared to 71.2 percent in April.

He also mentioned that while the Volume of Production Index of Manufacturing is 40.3 percent down year-on-year last May, this showed an improvement from the 43.6 percent contraction last April.

“The latest result of Purchasing Managers’ Index also points to an improved manufacturing performance moving forward, as it rolls from 40.1 in May to 49.7 in June,” he added.

Meanwhile, Dominguez reiterated his proposal to ease the movement restrictions in Metro Manila and the Calabarzon region to help revive the economy.

“Metro Manila and Calabarzon account for 67 percent of the country’s economy. It is vital that these regions reopen. The reality is that this virus will not go away until a vaccine is found. In the meantime, we must get back to work while staying safe,” Dominguez said.

He said there is a need to “strike a reasonable balance between safeguarding public health and restarting our economy.”

“Health and livelihood is not a binary choice. We must protect lives in ways that do not prevent us from earning a living. This is a tough decision to make but we need to do this,” the DOF chief added.

“Revving up the economy essentially means raising consumer and investor confidence, which requires some functional level of interaction among groups and individuals. We are asking all Filipinos to cultivate in themselves a renewed sense of confidence through continued vigilance – not out of fear, but with the knowledge that most factors of viral transmission are under our personal control.”



Economic managers: We will overcome this crisis

The finance chief also highlighted the legislative measures needed to help the economy bounce back from the impact of the health crisis, which include the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises Act (CITIRA).

Dominguez said the government will also maintain its “Build, Build, Build” program as infrastructure projects are the “best way” to revive the economy, given their high multiplier effect.

Build, build, build

Duterte touted his administration’s accomplishments anchored on aggressive tax measures and the massive infrastructure project under the “Build, Build, Build” program.

“The accomplishments that we have just presented to you in the pre-SONA forum are the fruits of our collective efforts to foster real, lasting and meaningful change in our country,” Duterte said in a taped message aired at the end of the pre-SONA activity at the Philippine Information Agency auditorium in Quezon City yesterday.

“Numerous trials have tested our resolve these past few years but we always emerged victorious because of our unity and bayanihan as a people,” he said.

Secretary to the Cabinet Karlo Nograles said the administration will be relentless in pursuing its economic objectives in the wake of the current pandemic.

“We may live in an extraordinary milieu, but the goal of the SONA and these complementary pre-SONAs remains the same: to provide you, the public, with a clear picture of how we plan to make your lives better,” he said.

The Economic Development Cluster has underscored the need to provide a conducive environment to promote rapid, inclusive and sustained economic growth in the country, and provided information on the implementation of programs involving economic growth and job creation.

At the opening of the forum, Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea said the President is ready to present his administration’s accomplishments, including its pandemic response and updates on priority programs.

“The President’s priority is clear – to save lives and protect communities,” he added.



Economic managers: We will overcome this crisis

Preventing millions

Government measures, including the community lockdown imposed in different parts of the country, saved 1.3 million to 3.5 million Filipinos from getting coronavirus infections, the DOF said yesterday.

Dominguez described the COVID-19 pandemic as a “black swan” event which no one was prepared for.

Despite this, he said the government “did not fold and run in the face of an unprecedented crisis,” quickly taking measures to combat the contagion to save lives.

“According to the Epidemiological Models by the FASSSTER Project in April and the University of the Philippines COVID-19 Pandemic Response Team as of June 27, government interventions such as the lockdown have prevented as much as 1.3 to 3.5 million infections,” Dominguez said.

Last March, Duterte placed the entire Luzon region under enhanced community quarantine to contain the spread of COVID-19.

Malacañang, meanwhile, has decided to change its communication strategy in delivering news and information about the Philippines’ plan of action against the coronavirus disease after statistics showed a drastic increase in positive cases in the past weeks.

During a meeting between Duterte and members of the Cabinet on Tuesday night in Davao City, presidential spokesman Harry Roque Jr. said his team will promote how the government has improved the healthcare capacity in the last few months while the country reopens the economy.

Instead of reporting the rapid increase in the number of positive cases, Roque said the emphasis should be given on the low mortality rate and that there are lesser critical care cases.

The Philippine government is also able to strengthen its healthcare capacity.

“So, while we are reopening the economy, we want to strengthen T3 – which is testing, tracing and treatment. We will provide protection for the vulnerables because we also learned that from other countries,” the Palace official added. Christina Mendez



No money for second wave

July 9, 2020 12:07 AM By [MJ Blancaflo](#)

<https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/07/09/no-money-for-2nd-wave/>

President Rodrigo Duterte admitted the Philippines cannot completely reopen the economy for now.

Doing so would push the country “in deep shit,” the President said even as some officials in his Cabinet are advocating for more relaxed guidelines on the reopening of the economy.

That was how the Chief Executive described his predicament, admitting that the government would find it difficult to deal with another surge of infections with limited funds.

The President said the country cannot follow the “bold” moves by other countries such as China and the United States in easing restrictions in economic activities.

He noted that these countries have almost suffered a “relapse” when they saw another wave of cases.

“Because if you open the entire Philippines and thousands upon thousands of new cases would happen, then we are in deep shit. It would be really difficult for us. Firstly, we don’t have enough money,” the President said Wednesday during his televised address to the nation.

President Duterte said the government could just gradually open the economy to ensure funds for several businesses, households and families while protecting Filipinos from the new coronavirus which has so far infected over 12 million people worldwide.

“The resultant happening or the resultant endgame there is too horrible to ponder. I cannot make a guess. Governance is not made of guesses. It has to be anchored on pure science,” he said.

Duterte also stated that the country remains grappling with the first wave of the coronavirus transmission as cases are about to hit the 50,000 mark.

He also said authorities would continue to limit the number of people who can go out, as he encouraged Filipinos to heed the stay-at-home call of the government.

The President, known for weekly visits to provinces prior to the pandemic, said that he himself wants to go out, too.



No money for second wave

“The problem is, what I want is not good for everybody. And that is true for your choice and my choice. And so, we have to be very circumspect in reopening of the economy,” he said.

The President’s remarks, however, are not in sync with the stance of his alter egos.

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez and Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Benjamin Diokno both backed the further easing of restrictions to boost an economy facing its deepest contraction in three decades. It was paralyzed by months-long community quarantine — the longest lockdown in Asia.

“While health measures are absolutely necessary for us to fight the pandemic, increasing economic activity in a responsible manner is a matter of national survival and priority,” Dominguez said Wednesday in a government-sponsored forum.

“Health and livelihood (are) not a binary choice. We must protect lives and in ways that don’t prevent us from earning a living,” the Finance chief added.

In the past five days, the country reported thousands of additional infections every day, which the Department of Health has called “alarming.” The highest single-day increase was tallied on 5 July with 2,434 infections.

The Philippines has overtaken Singapore for the second spot for the most coronavirus cases in the region with 47,873 infections as of 7 July, trailing Indonesia with 66,226.

President Duterte also expressed optimism anew that a vaccine or medicine against COVID-19 would be available by December.

“I hope this will end. It’s double whammy. It concerns the health of the nation and the economy. The only consolation is that we are not the only one,” he said.

The World Health Organization said that there are 19 vaccine candidates currently in the clinical evaluation as of Monday.



Duterte bucks full reopening

'We are poor and cannot gamble. We must do it slowly or be in big trouble.'

posted July 09, 2020 at 02:10 am

by [Vito Barcelo and Julito Rada. Macon Ramos-Araneta](#)

<https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/328139>

President Rodrigo Duterte said he would not gamble on fully reopening the country's economy and will not follow other the lead of other countries that were doing so and now grappling to contain a resurgence of COVID-19 infections.



CIRCUMSPECT. President Rodrigo Duterte talks to members of the Inter-Agency Task Force on the coronavirus pandemic during a televised speech aired early Wednesday at the Presidential Guest House in Panacan, Davao City. The President said the country must be 'circumspect' in reopening the country amid the COVID-19 crisis. Presidential Photo

"We have to be very circumspect in reopening of the economy. Slowly, slowly" the President said in a meeting with his Cabinet members and the Inter-agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Disease (IATF) t the Presidential Guest House in Panacan, Davao City, on Tuesday night.

Duterte said he doesn't want the Philippines to follow the example of the United States, Brazil, Japan, or Korea, which are now experiencing spikes in COVID-19 cases after opening up their economies.

"If you open the entire Philippines and thousands upon thousands of new cases would happen, then we are in deep s***. That's difficult. First, we don't have enough money," he said.

"We are poor and we cannot gamble. I cannot follow the example of other countries," he said.

He defended the gradual easing of restrictions, from enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) to a general community quarantine (GCQ), saying the number of people allowed to leave their homes is still within the "manageable" level.



Duterte bucks full reopening

“We are still grappling with the first wave,” the President said, citing the latest number of infections in the country at 34,178 of active cases. “Have we arrived at the second wave? I don’t think so.”

Palace spokesperson Harry Roque has said the Philippines had to partially reopen the economy or people would have died from a lack of livelihood.

The Palace official said the country’s health care system has enough critical care resources and that the majority of the cases were mild or asymptomatic.

“The report is the COVID-19 cases are raising. We expected this because there is no vaccine yet. But we are prepared and we have enough beds to accommodate those who will be infected,” Roque said.

As of Tuesday, the Philippines had 47,873 COVID-19 cases, with 12,386 recoveries and 1,309 deaths

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III said there is a need to strike a “reasonable balance between safeguarding public health and restarting the economy.”

The head of the government’s economic team said that while the people’s health and safety remained the government’s top priority, Filipinos cannot keep retreating from the virus at the cost of their livelihoods, especially in Metro Manila and the Cavite-Laguna Batangas-Rizal-Quezon (Calabarzon) region that collectively accounts for 67 percent of the domestic economy.

“It is vital that these regions reopen. The reality is that this virus will not go away until a vaccine is found. In the meantime, we must get back to work while staying safe,” Dominguez said during the pre-State of the Nation Address forum of the Cabinet’s Economic Development and Infrastructure Clusters held Wednesday.

Dominguez said the government would never take the threat posed by COVID-19 lightly, as it must continue protecting lives in ways that do not prevent people from earning a living.

“This is a tough decision to make but we need to do this. Revving up the economy essentially means raising consumer and investor confidence, which requires some functional level of interaction among groups and individuals,” he said.

“We are asking all Filipinos to cultivate in themselves a renewed sense of confidence through continued vigilance—not out of fear, but with the knowledge that most factors of viral transmission are under our personal control,” he said.



Duterte bucks full reopening

Dominguez said the government remained fully committed to implementing the “Build, Build, Build” infrastructure program with more projects focused in the areas of health, education, housing, and water and sanitation.

The national government is working round-the-clock to minimize the socio-economic impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic and to ensure sustainable recovery of the economy, Malacañang said on Wednesday.

Ahead of President Duterte’s fifth state of the nation address (SONA) on July 27, Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea made this assurance during the first of three pre-SONA forums aired over state-run PTV-4.

“We have been relentless in mobilizing every resource and seeking every opportunity to attain better days for our nation. We are confident that in spite of the continuation of this health crisis, our economy can resume its growth trajectory and that our economic and infrastructure development will generate jobs for Filipino workers enabling them to provide a more comfortable life for their families,” he said in his speech.

Medialdea acknowledged that the country will continue to face “immense challenges’ until a COVID-19 vaccine becomes available. However, he also said the President will not lose focus on his priority to “save lives and protect communities” by taking immediate action.

Among these actions, he said was the President’s imposition of strong quarantine guidelines to prevent the spread of the virus.

He said the President also rolled out “the largest economic protection program in our history” such as the small business wage subsidy (SBWS) for small business workers and social amelioration program for informal sector families while the government proceeded to enhance and establish health facilities across the country.

“The government is spending as much as it can to support our less privileged countrymen,” he said.

Budget Secretary Wendel Avisado, meanwhile, said the country has enough funds in its war chest to respond, fight and mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic,.

READ: BSP injects P1.3T in financial system to support economy



Duterte bucks full reopening

The government has so far disbursed P374.8 billion to help Filipinos fight the pandemic, Avisado said during a pre-State of the Nation forum.

With its good credit ratings, the Philippines can borrow additional funds at low rates and longer payment periods, Dominguez III said in the same forum.

“Debt is manageable and affordable to us,” Dominguez said.

Also on Wednesday, Senator Risa Hontiveros said the Department of Health (DOH) should be empowered to set the bed capacity of public hospitals, so they can easily upgrade their services during this crisis.

She renewed her call to authorize the DOH to set the bed occupancy rates of public hospitals to better prepare the country’s health care system for the resurgence COVID-19 infections in Metro Manila and other hotspots.

The senator made her call after several Metro Manila hospitals reported that their “intensive care units” handling COVID-19 patients are fast approaching their limit again, as cases of COVID-19 continue to spike in the capital.

Despite DOH assurances that Metro Manila hospitals are not yet overwhelmed, Hontiveros said the government should prepare for that possibility.

Meanwhile, the Philippine Red Cross said it now has a total testing capacity of 32,000 tests a day with the opening of its molecular laboratory in Batangas City, which has recently been certified as an accredited COVID-19 testing center by the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine.

Senator Richard J. Gordon, PRC chairman and CEO, said the facility, equipped with four RT-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) machines that can run a combined total of 4,000 tests a day, has the biggest testing capability in the CALABARZON (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, and Quezon) region and can cover other nearby provinces.

Aside from the Batangas facility, the PRC also opened molecular laboratories in its former national headquarters in Port Area, Manila, which can run 14,000 tests; Subic and Clark, 6,000 tests, and two in its headquarters in Mandaluyong, which can finish 8,000 tests a day.

PH tally soars over 50,000

The Philippines’ coronavirus case tally crashed the 50,000 barrier on Wednesday as the Department of Health reported 2,539 new confirmed cases, including 1,922 “fresh” ones.

The total now stands at 50,359 – from just under 48,000 on Tuesday – as the DOH also reported 202 new recoveries and five new deaths. Total deaths stood at 1,314, while recoveries numbered 12,588.



Quarantine stays

July 8, 2020 08:37 AM By [Francis Wakefield](#)

<https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/07/08/duterte-stays-quarantine/>

As much as he wants to lift the quarantine in Metro Manila, President Rodrigo Duterte said he cannot follow the lead taken by the leaders of the US and Brazil because it is not for the greater good.

“...I’m sorry but I cannot really kumbaga bitawan ko kayo (set you free). I will remove the leash — leash ‘yung tali (rope). The resultant happening or the resultant endgame there is too horrible to ponder,” Duterte said of his decision to keep community quarantine in place during a public address Tuesday night while meeting with officials of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Managing Emerging Infectious Diseases.

Duterte appealed for public understanding of his decision.

“Because if you open the entire Philippines and thousands upon thousands of new cases would happen, then we are in deep shit. Talagang mahirapan tayo. Unang-una wala tayong pera (We will have a hard time. First and foremost, we don’t have the money),” he said.

He said the United States, Japan, South Korea and China are rich nations that can afford opening up their economies amid the pandemic.

“I am confident that by our readings of other countries who have much improved their scientific study, I think that by December mayroon na hong (there is already a) vaccine or at least if not a vaccine, a medicine that could kill the COVID-19,” Duterte added.

As per reports coming from the Department of Health (DoH), the total number of COVID-19 cases in the Philippines as of 7 July 2020 is 47,873. Of the number, 34,178 are active cases, 12,383 recovered and 1,309 died.



WHO: ASYMPTOMATIC SA COVID-19, 'DI NAKAHAWA NA NAKAHAWA

July 8, 2020 @ 1:32 PM

<https://remate.ph/who-assymptomatic-sa-covid-19-di-nakahahawa-na-nakahahawa/>

Kumambyo nang paatras ang World Health Organization ukol sa hawahan ng mga may coronavirus disease-19.

Sabi ng WHO, hindi nakahahawa ang may COVID-19 na asymptomatic.

“Yun bang === taong positive sa sakit ngunit walang palatandaan ng anomang pagkakaroon ng sakit gaya ng lagnat, ubo, hirap sa paghinga, pagtatae at iba pa.

Kung nakahahawa man umano ang isang asymptomatic, bibihira lamang.

Kaya nga, masasabi nating hindi nakahahawa ngunit nakahahawa pa rin ang nasabing nakamamatay na sakit.

MGA NAGAGANAP

Napakagandang balita ang sinasabi ng WHO.

Kahit papaano maiibsan ang takot ng mga mamamayan sa sakit at makararamdam sila ng ginhawa at gugulong o magpapatuloy ang normal nilang pamumuhay.

Tingnan ninyo.

Kung may napatunayang nag-positive sa COVID-19 na residente sa isang condominium, anak ng tokwa, katakot-takot na takot ang inaabot ng ibang mga residente at pinagmumulan ito ng katakot-takot na away.

Kahit pa isailalim ng nag-positive ang sarili sa self-quarantine.

Ganito rin kahit sa mga subdibisyon.

Kung may nag-positive, walang pinapasok kahit ang mga nagtitinda ng pandesal at iba pang pagkain at wala ring nakalalabas na residente.

Nila-lockdown lahat ng gate.

Damay-damay lahat hanggang sa magkandahetot-hetot ang lahat, maging ang paghahanapbuhay.

Sa huling deklarasyon ng WHO, kahit papaano, malaki ang ibabawas ng mga takot, awayan, lockdown at iba pang problema.

TESTING ANG KAILANGAN

Malaking susi o hakbang umano ang testing sa mga mamamayan.



WHO: ASYMPTOMATIC SA COVID-19, 'DI NAKAHAWA NA NAKAHAWA

Subalit, dahil sa kakulangan ng mga testing kit, lalo na ang pinakaepektibong Reverse Transcription Polymerase Chain Reaction o RT-PCR, pinairal ng Department of Health ang patakarang hindi kailangang magpa-test ang mga walang sintomas ng COVID-19 at tanging ang merong sintomas ang tine-test.

Ito'y para hindi maubos ang nasabing testing kit na pinag-aagawan ng buong mundo.

Subalit sa mga kalagayang nagbukas na ang maraming establisimyento, opisang pampubliko at pribado, transportasyon, pag-uwi sa kanya-kanyang lugar ng mga overseas Filipino worker at locally stranded individual at iba pa, nararapat lang ang pagsasagawa ng test.

Ito'y para maihiwalay ang mga positive sa mga hindi positive at magawan ng kaukulang aksyon ang mga ito.

Kung may matatagpuang positive ngunit asymptomatic, dapat tiyakin ng pamahalaan at ng mismong biktima at pamilya nito na magsagawa ng social distancing, palagiang paghuhugas ng kamay, laging pagsusuot ng face mask at iba pang mga hakbang upang mapigilan ang hawahan.

Intindihin natin na hindi sinasabi ng WHO na hindi lubos na nakahahawa ang may COVID-19.

MAG-COMPLY SA LAW ON COVID-19

Hindi masamang mag-comply o sumunod ang lahat sa batas o law sa COVID-19.

Kasi kung hindi ka mag-comply, hindi ka makalalabas ng iyong tahanan at hindi ka rin makapasok sa pinapasukan o pinupuntahan mo.

Meron at merong haharag sa iyo.

Pero kung mag-comply ka, makalalabas ka at makapasok ka sa iyong tahanan, trabaho at pinupuntahan mo.

Halimbawa, kung isa kang OFW o LSI at hindi ka nagpa-test sa pinanggalingan mo, maaaring hindi ka pasasakayin ng barko, eroplano o bus.

Kung pasasakayin ka man at makarating ka sa Local Government Unit na pupuntahan mo at wala kang suot na face mask, hindi naghuhugas ng kamay at malaman nilang wala kang medical certificate na wala kang COVID-19, aba, hindi ka pauwiin sa bahay mo kundi ipapasok ka sa quarantine facility ng mga lungsod, munisipyo o barangay.

Mananatili ka roon ng 14 araw at kung mamalasin ka pa, may ekstensyon na 7 araw pa para matiyak lang na kahit asymptomatic ka, eh, hindi ka makahahawa.

LUTAS KAY KUYA RAMON ANG

Sa kabila ng abante-atras na ginagawa ng WHO sa mga asymptomatic sa COVID-19 at awayan ng mga employer at pamahalaan sa mahal kong Pinas kung sino ang gagastos sa COVID-19 test sa mga empleyado o obrero, itong si Kuya Ramon Ang na bossing ng San Miguel Corporation ay may sariling diskarte.



WHO: ASYMPTOMATIC SA COVID-19, 'DI NAKAHAWA NA NAKAHAWA

Nagpatayo siya ng testing laboratory para sa RT-PCR para sa libo-libong empleyado nito at may kakayahan ang laboratoryo na magsagawa ng libo-libong test sa isang araw.

Pang-mass testing ang laboratoryo na magagamit ng mga obrero sa lahat ng panahon na nanalasa at wala pang bakuna laban sa nasabing sakit.

At kahit pa, may bakuna na, magagamit pa rin ang laboratoryo dahil sinasabing sa oras na pinasok ang isang bansa ng katulad ng COVID-19 na sakit, mananatili na ito sa nasabing bansa at walang nakaaalam kung kailan sasalakay ang sakit kahit ideklara na itong talo na sa laban.

Siyempre pa, malaking gastos ang pagpapatayo ng laboratoryo kaya naman bibihira ang gumagawa nito sa hanay ng mga pribadong kompanya.

Pero malinaw na malinaw na binibigyan ni Kuya Ramon ng buhay ang paniniwala niyang “Ang pera, kung mawala, makagagawa at makagagawa ka ng paraan na magkaroon ka muli; pero kung buhay ang mawala, hindi mo na maibabalik.”

Nakatulong na si Kuya Ramon sa pamahalaan sa malaking gastos laban sa giyera sa COVID-19, nakatulong pang manatiling buhay ang mga mamamayan, lalo na ang mga obrero at pamilya ng mga ito sa kanyang mga kompanya.

Sa mass testing sa SMC, malalaman ang mga asymptomatic at tiyak na magkakaroon ang mga ito ng karampatang pagtrato ng kompanya.

KONTRIBUSYON NG MAMAMAYAN

Ano naman ang kontribusyon nating mamamayan sa giyera sa COVID-19?

Kung halos walang, malaking bagay na mag-comply tayo sa mga patakaran para sa face mask, social distancing, paghuhugas ng kamay at pagtulong sa contact tracing sa mga nagpopositibo sa sakit, asymptomatic man o wala para sa kaukulang aksyon ng mga kinauukulan.

Kung iasa natin lahat sa pamahalaan na sa maraming pagkakataon ay hindi natin binibigyan ng dugo para makapagserbbisyo nang buo, saan tayo hahantong?

Buwis ang dugo ng pamahalaan at nakapanlulumo ang katotohanang marami ang tax evader o sinasadya ang hindi pagbabayad ng buwis kahit malaki, milyon-milyon o bilyon-bilyong piso ang kita nila.

Magtanong pa kayo sa mga kongresman na nag-iimbestiga sa isang higanteng kompanya ngayon ukol sa paniniwalang tax evader ang kompanya.

Maging sa hanay nating maliliit na tao, marami rin sa atin ang hangga't maaari ay ayaw magbayad ng direktang buwis.

At nahahagip na lang tayo ng buwis o indirect taxes sa bisa ng expanded value added tax.



VCO, Tawa-tawa, Melatonin, potensyal na gamot vs. COVID-19

July 8, 2020 @ 5:58 PM

<https://remate.ph/vco-tawa-tawa-melatonin-potensyal-na-gamot-vs-covid-19/>

Manila, Philippines – Pinag-aaralan na rin ng Department of Science and Technology (DOST) ang ilang potensyal na mga gamot para sa COVID -19.

Kabilang sa sinasaliksik ng DOST ang virgin coconut oil, melatonin at tawa-tawa.

Ayon kay Dr. Jimmy Montoya Executive Director, Philippine Council for Health Reserch and Development ng DOST, dalawang trial ang ginanap ngayon para patunayan ang bisa ng VCO laban sa COVID-19.

Ang isa aniya ay ang community trial na ginagawa sa Laguna para sa may mild symptoms lang kung saan nasa 17 pasyente na ang sinusuri.

Habang ang clinical trial naman ay sisimulan pa lamang sa Philippine General Hospital (PGH) na para naman sa mga pasyenteng naospital dahil sa COVID-19.

Ayon kay Dr. Montoya, titignan din ito kong makakatulong na karagdagang gamot na ibinibigay sa mga pasyente para sa COVID- 19.

Ang Tawa-tawa naman aniya ay pinoproseso na para magamit sa clinical trial.

Ayon kay Montoya, inaasahang ilalabas ang ang desisyon sa susunod na mga araw upang masimulan na ang pag-aaral.

Ang Melatonin naman, ani Montoya, ay aprubado na ng DOST at ng Ethics Review Board pero ito ay hindi pa nagsisimula dahil inihahanda pa ang site kung saaan gaganpin sa Manila Doctors Hospital o sa dalawa o tatlo pang hospital kung saan maari na rin aniyang magsimula sa susunod na mga araw. *Jocelyn*

Tabangcura-Domenden



Sotto bats for early retirement incentive to 'rightsized' gov't workforce

July 8, 2020 6:57pm By DONA MAGSINO, GMA News

<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/746061/sotto-bats-for-early-retirement-incentive-to-rightsized-gov-t-workforce/story/>

Government employees must be offered early retirement incentives to allow the state to cut its expenses on personnel services and allocate the budget to other priority initiatives, Senate President Vicente Sotto III said on Wednesday.

"Dapat talaga sa atin, ang gobyerno natin because nga napakalaki, bloated kung tutuusin with due respect to our employees, dapat mag-programa ang gobyerno ng early retirement program," he said in a virtual Kapihan Sa Manila Bay.

"Magbigay ng early retirement program na magbibigay ng malaking amount doon sa mga magre-retire nang maaga. Let's say retirement benefits of about P300,000," he added.

Under the existing Republic Act 8291, a government employee may be entitled to retirement benefits if he has rendered at least 15 years of service, or is at least 60 years of age at the time of retirement.

Sotto underscored that around 65% of the annual budget of the government goes to personnel services.

By pushing for this perk—which he said was part of the government rightsizing bill pending in the Senate—he stressed that the government could save at least a trillion pesos for every year of implementation.

To fund the early retirement incentives, Sotto said there was a suggestion for the government to avail of loans.

Nonetheless, Sotto said the most essential members of the government workforce such as teachers, health workers, and soldiers will be encouraged to render their services longer by offering them salary increase and other incentives.

During the fourth State of the Nation Address of Duterte, he called on lawmakers to pass a long-pending measure to [rightsized](#) the national government. —LDF, GMA News



4.8 magnitude quake rocks Zambales

July 9, 2020 02:00 AM By [Jonas Reyes](#)

<https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/07/09/4-8-magnitude-quake-rocks-zambales/>



A 4.8-magnitude quake of tectonic origin rocked the province of Zambales on Wednesday morning.

According to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology, the earthquake occurred around 8:28 a.m., with the epicenter some seven kilometers northwest of Cabangan, Zambales.

The origin of the earthquake is a tectonic plate with a depth of 55 kilometers.

Intensity IV was felt in San Felipe, while Quezon City and Olongapo City felt Intensity III.

No damage or aftershocks are expected due to the quake.



Fossil of giant 70-million-year-old fish found in Argentina

[Agence France-Presse](#) / 03:49 PM July 08, 2020

<https://technology.inquirer.net/101822/fossil-of-giant-70-million-year-old-fish-found-in-argentina>



The fossilized remains of this Xiphactinus — similar to the one found in Argentina — was discovered in the U.S. state of Kansas and sold at auction in 2010. Image: Robyn Beck – AFP

A giant 70-million-year-old fossil of a fish that lived among dinosaurs has been discovered in Argentine Patagonia, a team of researchers said on Monday, July 6.

Argentine paleontologists “found the remains of a predator fish that was more than six meters long,” the researchers said in a statement.

The discovery was published in the scientific journal *Alcheringa: An Australasian Journal of Palaeontology*.

The fish “swam in the Patagonian seas at the end of the Cretaceous Period, when the temperature there was much more temperate than now,” the statement said.

“The fossils of this carnivorous animal with sharp teeth and scary appearance were found close to the Colhue Huapi lake” around 1,400 kilometers south of the capital Buenos Aires.

This fossil belonged to the Xiphactinus genus, “amongst the largest predatory fish that existed in the history of Earth.”

“Its body was notably slim and ended in a huge head with big jaws and teeth as sharp as needles, several centimeters long.”

Examples of this species have been found in other parts of the world, “some of which even have preserved stomach contents,” said Julieta de Pasqua, one of the study authors.

Previously, the Xiphactinus had only been found in the northern hemisphere, although one example was recently found in Venezuela.

Patagonia is one of the most important reservoirs of fossils of dinosaurs and prehistoric species. NVG



Climate change turning US mountain lakes green with algae

Published July 8, 2020, 8:58 AM by Agence France-Presse

<https://mb.com.ph/2020/07/08/climate-change-turning-us-mountain-lakes-green-with-algae/>

Global warming is turning clear mountain lakes green in the western United States because of an increase in algae blooms “without historical precedent”, researchers reported on Tuesday.

The concentration of algae in two remote mountain lakes more than doubled in the past 70 years, researchers at Colorado State University found.

Their results, published in the British Royal Society journal Proceedings B, highlight the potentially harmful effects of climate change on pristine and remote ecosystems.

“Even in relatively remote lakes located in protected areas... the fingerprint of human perturbation of Earth System is evident,” lead researcher Isabella Oleksy of Colorado State University told AFP.

“Rapid warming of high elevation environments has resulted in the rapid acceleration and dominance of green algae, which until recently were found in low abundance in these lakes.”

The team of scientists led by Oleksy examined algae concentrations in lakes in a mountain range about 100 kilometres (65 miles) from Denver, using a tool called a gravity corer to collect sediment cores without damaging the lakebed.

Drawing on measurements going back to the 1950s, they found “dramatic changes” in algal abundance in the form of green algal blooms called chlorophytes, which thrive in warmer temperatures.

The high level of algae “came as an ecological surprise”, Oleksy said.

She noted that the amounts of algae documented in the study would more typically be found in highly polluted areas, such as those prone to agricultural run-off, and not in unsullied mountain environments.

“While we documented these changes in two lakes in Colorado, it is likely that this is not an isolated phenomenon,” she said.

The results are not a smoking gun, the researchers acknowledged, but point to climate change as driving the excess accumulation of nutrients — such as phosphorus and nitrogen — that cause algal blooms.

In lakes and oceans, algae blooms sicken wildlife if ingested and destabilise aquatic environments by blocking out sunlight, the United States Environmental Protection Agency says on its website.

Fresh water and marine algae blooms have a huge negative economic impact, affecting fisheries, tourism and human health.



100,000 hit by Sri Lankan drought

July 8, 2020 03:00 AM By [Xinhua](#)

<https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/07/08/100000-hit-by-sri-lankan-drought/>

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (Xinhua) — Over 100,000 people have been affected by an ongoing drought in parts of Sri Lanka due to the lack of monsoonal rains, Sri Lankan Disaster Management Center said in its latest situation update here Monday.

According to the report, 103,219 persons in 31,580 families had been affected by the drought in Kurunegala and Polonnaruwa in the north-central province, Batticaloa and Trincomalee in the East, Hambantota in the south and Mullaitivu in the north.

The center is presently distributing water as well as transporting water bowsers into the affected areas, according to the report.

The Meteorology Department, in its latest weather update, said spells of showers were expected in the Western, North-western, Sabaragamuwa, Central and Southern provinces of the country in the coming days but in the dry areas, temperatures were expected to hit above 36 degrees.