

DENR stops cemetery dev't in Cebu City with 300

July 11, 2020

TITLE: mahogany trees illegally cut

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DENR stops cemetery dev't in Cebu City with 300 mahogany trees illegally cut

By: [Nestle Semilla](#) - Reporter / [@nestleCDN](#)

[Inquirer Visayas](#) / 04:03 PM July 10, 2020

CEBU CITY — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has stopped the development of a lot where a new cemetery will be built amid the rising number of deaths caused by the new coronavirus disease (COVID-19) here.

Mardione De Los Reyes, forester at the Enforcement and Monitoring Section of the City Environment and Natural Resources office, said some 300 mahogany trees in Sitio Katives in Barangay Guba where the Cebu City Botanical Memorial Garden will rise were cut without a permit.

“We are doing an inventory. We will record everything and send it to the office for the investigation,” said De Los Reyes in an ABS-CBN report.

The development surprised Cebu City Councilor David Tumulak, the proponent of an ordinance for the creation of a city-owned cemetery to address the lack of burial places in the city.

During a public consultation last Wednesday, Tumulak said they were told by the DENR that mahogany is not considered an endangered species.

“I just learned on Thursday that a restraining order was issued by DENR,” he said in an interview. Tumulak said a certain Cerila Alcantara, a caretaker in a nearby Muslim cemetery in Barangay Guba, planted the mahogany trees on the city-owned lot and did not oppose cutting those trees. The councilor called on the DENR, the Department of Health, and the city government to talk things over and find ways to address the concerns.

“If there are certain permits to be secured, the executive department can work on that. We will follow the rules. I just hope that they (DENR) won't make it too complicated considering the urgency of the matter,” he said.

Tumulak said Cebu City badly needs a new cemetery since all 11 private and 15 public cemeteries here were already overcrowded.

“Our cemeteries are full. What will we do with dead bodies in our city? I hope by God's grace, we will be able to go on with our plan to have a new cemetery,” he said.

Tumulak said there has been a surge in the number of deaths in the city, not just of persons confirmed with COVID-19, but also of individuals suspected to have contracted the virus in addition to those who died due to other causes.

“Most of the existing public cemeteries in Cebu City, mostly owned and managed by the Archdiocese of Cebu, are full and can no longer accommodate additional burials. This may lead to the delay in the burial of a suspected or confirmed COVID-19 fatality which may cause the further spread of the virus and will add to the problems faced by the city,” he said.

The Cebu City government earlier reported that bodies have remained in hospital morgues as funeral homes and crematoriums were fully booked

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The Department of Interior and Local Government, in its memorandum circular no. 2020-063, ordered the burial, preferably through cremation, of persons suspected to have contracted the COVID-19 or those who tested positive for the virus within 12 hours after his or her death.

“Given this 12-hour requirement for burial, funeral parlors are recently always at full capacity. Adding to this problem is the high cost of cremation for dead bodies,” Tumulak said.

An ordinary burial costs between P10,000 and P20,000 while cremation fee ranges from P30,000 to P60,000.

“While many Cebuanos go for the cremation of their loved ones, there are still those who cannot afford it, that’s why we need a cemetery,” he said.

Tumulak’s proposed ordinance stated that strict guidelines should be implemented in the creation of a new cemetery in Guba to ensure that the buried bodies will not damage the environment, especially that the project is near the protected landscape of Cebu.

As of July 9, the Department of Health recorded a total of 7,175 COVID-19 cases in Cebu City with 336 deaths and 3,516 recoveries.

At least 1,447 persons were admitted in hospitals while 1,876 others stayed at the city’s quarantine facilities.

Pagtatayo ng sementeryo sa Cebu para sa COVID-19, ipinatigil ng DENR

By [Angie dela Cruz](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon)

- July 11, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Ipinatigil ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang pagpapalawak ng lote ng bagong sementeryo sa Cebu City dahil sa illegal na pagpuputol ng puno doon ng walang kaukulang permit mula sa ahensiya.

Ang gagawing pagpapalaki sa sementeryo ay paglilibingan sana ng mga namatay sa COVID-19 sa lungsod.

May 300 mahogany trees sa Sitio Katives Barangay Guba, Cebu ang kabuuang puno na puputulin sa lugar para bigyang daan ang pagpapalawak sa sementeryo doon. Ang lugar ay gagawin sanang Cebu City Botanical Memorial Garden.

Ayon kay Mardione De Los Reyes, forester ng Enforcement and Monitoring Section ng Cebu City Environment and Natural Resources office, nagsasagawa sila ngayon ng imbentaryo para mairecord ang naputol na mga puno sa lugar at makagawa ng kaukulang imbestigasyon hinggil dito.

Paliwanag naman ni Cebu City Councilor David Tumulak, ang proponent ng ordinance para sa pagtatayo ng pinalalawak na city-owned cemetery, na hindi naman ikinokonsidera ng DENR na ang mahogany ay isang endangered species at wala ring pagtutol sa pagpuputol ng puno ang nagtanim ng punong ito sa lugar.

Anya, dapat ikonsidera ng DENR ang planong pagpapalawak ng sementeryo sa Cebu para paglilibingan ng tumataas na bilang ng namamatay sa COVID sa lungsod.

Overcutting of trees sans permit: DENR probes city

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Over cutting of trees sans permit: DENR probes city government

By [Alicia Ivy L. Chua](#)(The Freeman)

- July 11, 2020 - 12:00am

CEBU, Philippines — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Central Visayas has issued a notice of administrative adjudication against the Cebu City government for cutting 389 trees in Sitio Catives, Barangay Guba without a permit.

Another notice of violation was also issued by the Central Cebu Protected Landscape (CCPL) over the development of a proposed public cemetery in the area. Dr. Eddie Llamedo, chief of DENR-7 planning and management division, said the city did not have a clearance from the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB).

Llamedo said that the DENR-7 is not against the project but environmental policies and rules and regulations must be complied with.

“Dunay 389 ka mga mahogany trees ang naapektuhan, ang naputol. Kaning pagputol wala tay tree cutting permit gikan sa DENR,” said Llamedo.

Llamedo said a formal adjudication will be conducted by the City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CCENRO) wherein the city government will be required to explain the cutting of the trees without the necessary permit.

“Ato lang ni i-emphasize na ang DENR wala siya nag prohibit or against sa project kay nasayod man ta na kini na project is noble intention man siya sa city government,” Llamedo said.

Considering that the proposed cemetery is located in a protected area, Llamedo said the project should be consistent with the existing land use in the area. The city government is pushing for the establishment of Cebu City Botanical Memorial Garden to accommodate the fatalities of COVID-19 and other deaths in the city.

Llamedo said that building a botanical memorial garden appears to be consistent with the existing land use in the area. However, the city government must present the development plan that would include the preventive and mitigating measures on its impact to the environment.

Overcutting of trees sans permit: DENR probes city

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“Unsa manang mga preventive and mitigating measures? Unsa may ilahang mga plans kabahin sa pag-address sa solid waste management, water quality, sa air quality so kini sila makita nato kung i-present sa Cebu City Government ilahang development plan on the area,” said Llamedo.

Councilor David Tumulak, proponent of the botanical memorial garden, said that city administrator Floro Casas allegedly got the clearance from DENR to proceed with the cutting of the trees.

“Ato na confirmar gikan mismo sa city administrator na si attorney Casas na dunay pagtugot sa pagputol sa kahoy. Iya natawagan si Mr. (Raul) Pasoc sa DENR unya nihatag kini og pagtugot sa pagputol sa mga kahoy, kining mga gagmay nga mahogany nga naa karon diha sa Sitio Catives, Garangay Guba,” said Tumulak.

Tumulak said the barangay captains of Guba and its neighboring barangays also approved of the project.

“Uyon sila na adto didto ibutang kay kahibaw man ta na maski mahuman ning COVID sa mga musunod na buwan na magkaproblema gihapon ta og menteryo sa siyudad sa Sugbo kay puno naman ang tanan na mga menteryo,” said Tumulak.

He stressed the urgency of establishing the new public cemetery since the cemeteries in the urban area can no longer accommodate new deaths.

Tumulak also clarified that the mahogany trees were planted by one of the caretakers of the lot owned by the city without permission since it was just an idle space. **FPL**

(FREEMAN)

300 puno pinutol para sa sementeryo

By Abante Tonite — Last updated Jul 10, 2020

METRO



Photo courtesy of Google photos



127 0

Pinatigil ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang pag-develop sa lupang pagtatayuan ng gagawing bagong sementeryo sa Cebu City, dahil sa pagputol sa 300 mahogany tree nang walang kaukulang permit.

Sa isang panayam sa radyo, dumepensa si Councilor Dave Tumalak, nakipag-usap na ito sa DENR at sinabing hindi umano kinokonsidera na endangered specie ang mahogany na pinutol para pagtayan ng Cebu City Botanical Memorial Garden sa Sitio Katives, Brgy. Guba.

Una nang naiulat na nadagdagan ang bilang ng mga bangkay sa mga morge dahil puno na ang mga funeral home at crematorium, bagama't hindi naman umano lahat ng mga ito ay nasawi dahil sa COVID-19.

DENR-7 to Cebu City: Explain cutting of trees in Guba

The Cebu City government told to provide a plan first for its public cemetery project

By: Delta Dyrecka Letigio - Multimedia Reporter - CDN Digital|July 10,2020 - 04:56 PM



Barangay Guba in Cebu City. | Google photos

CEBU CITY, Philippines — The Department of Natural Resources in Central Visayas (DENR-7) has ordered a stop to the construction of a public cemetery in Barangay Guba, Cebu City until the city government has provided its plan to address the environmental impact of such in the area.

Dr. Eddie Llamedo, Planning Division of DENR 7 chief, said that they had investigated the cutting of 389 trees in Barangay Guba on July 9, 2020, and they found out that the Mahogany trees were cut without a permit.

“Ang kining pagpamutol, wala niy cutting permit sa DENR-7. Ang CENRO (City Environment and Natural Resources Office) niissue na og apprehension aning pagputol sa Mahogany trees equivalent to 12.47 cubic meter,” said Llamedo.

(The cutting was not permitted by the DENR-7. The CENRO already issued an apprehension for the cutting of the Mahogany trees equivalent to 12.47 cubic meters.)

Llamedo said the DENR-7 had already asked the Cebu City to explain why the trees were cut without a permit, and the city government would be called for an adjudication proceeding within the next few days.

Aside from the trees, the Central Cebu Protected Landscape (CCPL) has issued a violation as well for the cutting of the trees because of its negative impact to the environment in the area especially as it is near a water reservoir.

Still, Llamedo said the DENR-7 was not prohibiting the city from establishing a public cemetery in the area and understood the urgency of this project.

However, the DENR-7 urged the city government not to bypass the environmental regulations in cutting trees of transforming a land for other use.

DENR-7 to Cebu City: Explain cutting of trees in

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“The land is in a multiple-use zone, but it has to remain similar to its existing land use. They are planning a botanical memorial garden so it will still be consistent, but they need to present mitigating measures on how to lessen the environmental impact,” said Llamedo.

He encouraged the city government to comply with the DENR’s environmental mitigating measures and present their plans on how to address solid waste, water quality, and clean air regulations.

If the city has presented its development plan, the DENR-7 will now allow the city to proceed with the project.

“We need to evaluate that. We need to know the plan of the Cebu City government and undergo the process. Let us not compromise our environment safeguards,” Llamedo added. /dbs

Guba cemetery project public hearing set on July 15

By: Delta Dyrecka Letigio - Multimedia Reporter - CDN Digital|July 10,2020 - 08:30 PM



Barangay Guba in Cebu City. | Google photos

CEBU CITY, Philippines — Does the end justify the means?

This was the question raised by Cebu City Councilor Joel Garganera over the controversy surrounding the construction of a new public cemetery in Barangay Guba during the special session of the Cebu City Council on July 10, 2020.

Garganera said the city was torn between the urgent need for a burial site with the rising death toll of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) victims and the possible death of a protected landscape and water reservoir in the barangay.

This new cemetery has been the central discussion of the council following reports that 389 trees were cut without the permission of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to form the botanical memorial garden that Mayor Edgardo Labella has tagged urgent.

The DENR has recently ordered the stopping of the development until the city can explain the cutting of the trees and present their development plan with the corresponding mitigation measures to cushion the environmental impact of the cemetery.

Vice Mayor Michael Rama, in his privilege speech, lamented how the law was bypassed by this urgent desire to build the cemetery and seemingly forgetting the responsibility of the city to protect the environment.

“Do not mistake our support as subservient. We would like to bring to the attention that clearly the measure put in place protecting the environment and health is not secondary to anything even in an emergency. It is as important to us as to the future generation,” said the vice mayor.

Rama said that before the trees should have been cut and before the construction should have started, the ordinance should have been tackled in the City Council first allowing the public to air their concerns regarding the project.

Considering the 3 to 5-hectare property is part of the Central Cebu Protected Landscape (CCPL), the permission of DENR and the CCPL board should have preceded the cutting of the trees.

The bypassing of the laws has caused a great sacrifice of the 389 Mahogany trees, that may not be endemic to Cebu, but has contributed to the ecosystem of the reservoir.

Councilor Alvin Dizon strongly denounced the cutting of the trees and the development of the land without the permission of the CCPL.

“A thorough investigation should be done on this controversy,” said Dizon.

Garganera said that since Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu was in Cebu City to oversee the COVID-19 response, the issue should be brought to him for a recommendation.

Since the city is stuck between two principles, the need for burial sites and the duty to protect the environment, the Secretary will have the answer because he handles both COVID-19 response and the DENR.

The City Council agreed to bring to Secretary Cimatu the issue as well as hold a public hearing on July 15, 2020 and bringing in speakers from the stakeholder groups to talk about the advantages and disadvantages of placing a new cemetery in Barangay Guba.

Rama said that for now, the development must be put on hold until the stakeholders had spoken because the project had been imbued with much public interest for both living and the dead./db

DENR, PLDT-Smart to conserve peatlands

By [Eireene Jairee Gomez](#)

July 11, 2020

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has forged a partnership with leading telecoms and digital services provider PLDT Inc. and its wireless subsidiary Smart Communications Inc. to set up a program to protect, conserve and restore the Caimpugan Peatland in the Agusan Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary (AMWS).

Under the partnership, the DENR, through its Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) and Caraga Regional Office, will work with PLDT and Smart in Agusan del Sur, where the Caimpugan Peatland is located that holds the only recorded remaining intact peat swamp forest — the largest of its kind — in the Philippines.

The three-year extendable project, to be implemented by PLDT-Smart through its Chief Sustainability Office 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.

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. 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, remain 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,” said Ricardo Calderon, DENR officer-in-charge (OIC) assistant secretary climate change and concurrent director of BMB.

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

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 (CEPA) programs and activities to increase knowledge and appreciation of the value of these fragile ecosystems.

“As the first private company in the Philippines to engage with DENR on peatlands conservation, we at PLDT will contribute our expertise to produce innovations that can help conserve and restore these ecosystems,” said Chaye Cabal-Revilla, Chief Sustainability Officer of PLDT.

Hadja Didaw Piang-Brahim, OIC regional executive director of DENR Caraga Region, said the project also aims to engage wetland-dependent communities in a sustainable and biodiversity-friendly livelihood program.

“Agusan Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary is designated as a Wetland of International Importance by the Ramsar Convention, recognized as a Heritage Park by the Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations), and legislated as a National Park by the Philippine government.

We must join hands and combine our efforts from local to international level to maintain the ecological integrity of our globally-important peatlands,” Piang-Brahim elaborated.

Furthermore, Calderon said the partnership between the DENR, PLDT and Smart, will bring a bright future for peatland conservation in the country as the agency steps up its efforts against climate change.

“The climate change clock is ticking. There is no better time than now and no better weapon than a healthy peat to help level up the fight against climate change and its impacts,” he added.

Manila Bay cleanup Drive continues

By [Jerry Hernandez](#)

July 11, 2020

EFFORTS by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) are underway for resumption of a cleanup drive and restoration of Central Luzon portion of the Manila Bay. Manila Bay regional focal person Cynde Pagador said over 10,000 kilograms of mixed wastes have been collected by DENR river patrolers in various water bodies since March as the entire region was placed under community quarantine. The wastes collected were brought to the Metro-Clark Sanitary Landfill in Capas, Tarlac, for proper disposal. Nearly 300 estero (creeks) rangers or river patrolers have been critical in the department's efforts to clean up Manila Bay and the rivers draining from it during the quarantine period. "They were tasked with monitoring up to 10 kilometers of water bodies daily to ensure that these were kept free of solid waste," Pagador said. "Our estero rangers also kept busy coordinating with local government units to ensure that the collection and segregation of solid wastes within their areas of responsibility remained unhampered," she added. The estero rangers also undertook tasks such as the installation of trash traps in water bodies, eco-bricking, as well as assisted in the distribution of relief goods to communities. The DENR appealed to the public to dispose of their wastes properly, particularly used face masks. Of the 190-kilometer stretch of Manila Bay, 142 kilometers fall within Central Luzon, traversing the provinces of Bulacan, Pampanga and Bataan.



TUBIG SA ANGAT DAM TUMATAAS NGAYONG TAG-ULAN

July 10, 2020 @ 1:40 PM

Ayon kay Dr. Seville David, Jr. executive director ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB), sa ngayon, ang lebel ng tubig sa Angat Dam ay mahigit na sa minimum operating level na 180 meters, ngunit, mababa pa rin kung ikukumpara sa normal high water level (NHWL) na 210 meters at malayo pa rin sa end of the year target na 212 meters.

Base sa ulat na ibinigay sa inyong lingkod, ang antas ng tubig sa Angat Dam ay nasa 187.29 metro noong ika-8 ng Hulyo, 2019, 8:00 ng umaga.

Sana tuloy-tuloy ang pag-ulan, habang gumagamit tayo ng tubig, imbes na mabawasan ang antas ng tubig, bahagyang tumataas dahil sa tubig ulan.

Pagpasok ng buwan ng Hulyo, ibinalik ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB) ang alokasyon nito sa Metropolitan Works and Sewerage System sa 46 cubic meters per second (CMS) mula sa dating 48 CMS.

Hindi ito makaaapekto sa pag-supply para sa Metro Manila.

Ang hakbang na ito ay isang estratehiya upang makatipid ng tubig at mabawasan ang pagbagsak ng antas ng tubig sa Angat reservoir hanggang sa umabot sa year-end target.

Ayon pa rin kay David, kung patuloy ang pag-ulan sa susunod na linggo, ang alokasyon na 46cms para sa MWSS ay mananatili pa rin hanggang katapusan ng Hulyo.

NDRRMC gets water treatment unit from Hungarian firm

Published July 10, 2020, 2:49 PM

by Martin Sadongdong

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) received a mobile water treatment equipment from a Hungarian company on Friday.



(OCD / MANILA BULLETIN)

It can provide clean, safe, and potable drinking water to communities especially during calamities.

The equipment was turned over in a ceremony at the Disaster Emergency Logistics System for ASEAN (DELSA) warehouse in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.

Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, concurrent chairperson of the NDRRMC, and NDRRMC Executive Director Ricardo Jalad personally received the water treatment unit from Hungarian Ambassador to the Philippines Jozsef Bencze and Vice Consul Gabor Lehocz in behalf of the Hungarian Water Technology Corp. (HWTC).

In his acceptance speech, Lorenzana said the mobile water treatment unit can process 150,000 liters of water per day which is enough to provide potable drinking water to a small city.

“We have lots of calamities here...earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, typhoons, tidal waves, and most of the time when these calamities hit, people have no water to drink so we end up bringing bottled waters to these areas. It’s very expensive,” Lorenzana said.

“Lately, we are looking at potable water systems and this is the best idea because this can be brought from one place to another,” he added.

According to HWTC, their emergency water treatment unit can easily be transported to disaster areas on pallets unlike other conventional container solutions.

It can also produce potable water from surface water, ground water, brackish water, or sea water, the HWTC added.

The water treatment unit was funded by the Hungarian government’s Ministry of Innovation and Technology through a grant within a bilateral climate financing program between the Philippines and Hungary.



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Two technicians from the NDRRMC were sent to Hungary to learn how to operate the mobile water treatment unit, Lorenzana bared, and they were back to the country in time for the turnover of the equipment.

Lorenzana said the government is looking to purchase more mobile water treatment units from HWTC “in the future.”

“We’re looking in the future to purchase more of these. When calamities strike the Philippines, it strike different places so you need more of these portable equipment,” he said.

Lorenzana thanked the HWTC and Hungarian government for providing the Philippines an opportunity to access its technology and for fostering a conducive environment that enabled a productive partnership between the Philippines and Hungary.

“This gift will not only provide a spring of water for our people’s survival but also a spring of lasting friendship between our two nations,” he said.

The turnover ceremony coincided with the commemoration of the National Disaster Resilience Month this July. The theme for this year’s commemoration is “Sama-samang Pagsulong Tungo sa Katatagan sa Gitna ng Bagong Normal.”

NATION

Palawan wins fourth world's 'best island' citation

Published 6 hours ago on July 11, 2020 01:10 AM

By [Raymart Lolo](#)



One of the country's top tourist destinations bagged the 'Best Island in the World' title by renowned travel publication, Travel + Leisure, the Department of Tourism (DoT) announced on Thursday.

"Palawan reclaimed its rightful place in the World's Best Awards," Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat said.

According to Puyat, the distinction as the Best Island in the World is important because it is voted upon by the readers of the "prominent Travel + Leisure (T+L) magazine."

Palawan has won the title for the fourth time already. Palawan previously held the title in 2017, 2016 and 2013.

"It's wonderful to see that our rehabilitation and sustainable development efforts last year, especially in El Nido and Coron, were well-received by tourists everywhere," Puyat said.

Earlier, the DoT announced the resumption of tourism activities in the island to allow displaced workers to get their jobs back and make up for losses directly attributable to the coronavirus pandemic.



Palawan, 'best island in the world'

July 10, 2020 @ 11:32 AM 20 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Nakamit ng Palawan ang titulong “Best Island in the World,” batay sa survey na isinagawa ng travel magazine Travel + Leisure.

Sa artikulo, inilarawan ni Travel + Leisure writer Sara Clemence ang Palawan na top tourist spots sa Pilipinas na “dramatic at sea level, with mountains rising directly from the ocean palm-edged beaches.”

Nakamit ng Palawan ang iskor na 94.83 sa survey kung kaya’t nakuha ang titulo ng “Best Island in the World.”

Noong nakaraang taon, pumangalawa ang Palawan na may 90.87 points.

“Though it’s difficult to reach from many parts of the world, once travelers get there they can dive in World War II wrecks, explore old-growth rain forests, and paddle one of the world’s longest subterranean rivers at Puerto Princesa,” lahad ni Clemence.

“The results reflect our readers’ experiences before the pandemic, but we hope that this year’s honorees will inspire your trips to come — whenever they may be,” dagdag pa nito.

Samantala, ikinatuwa naman ito ng Department of Tourism.

“Palawan reclaimed its rightful place in the World’s Best Awards. The citation as the Best Island in the World is all the more important because this is voted upon by the readers of the prominent Travel + Leisure (T+L) magazine,” ani Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat.

“It’s wonderful to see that our rehabilitation and sustainable development efforts last year, especially in El Nido and Coron, were well-received by tourists everywhere.” **RNT/FGDC**



Burnham Park rehab, pinag-uusapan na ng DOT, ADB

July 10, 2020 @ 1:41 PM 18 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Pinag-uusapan na ng Department of Tourism (DOT) at Asian Development Bank (ADB) ang impending rehabilitation ng pasyalang Burnham Park sa Baguio City.

Sa ulat ay ipagpapatuloy ang rehabilitasyon sa kabila ng COVID-19 crisis na kinakaharap ngayon ng bansa.

Noong Marso, inanunsyo ni Baguio City Mayor Benjamin Magalong na handa ang Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority (TIEZA) na maglaan ng P480 milyong pondo para sa 34-hectare Burnham Park complex rehabilitation na inaprubahan noon pang Nov. 28, 2019.

Samantala, aminado naman si Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat na napang-abono ang budget para sa COVID-19 pandemic.

“So, we will work with ADB for Baguio rehab (but) in talks pa,” aniya.

Sakop sa rehabilitation works ang landscaping, lighting, electrical works, renovation ng view deck, boat docking, at paglalagay ng terrace planters.

Kalakip din nito ang pagtatayo ng gazebo, palikuran, at palaruan para sa mga bata.

Nakatakda namang bumisita si Puyat sa Baguio City sa Setyembre para sa inspeksyon. **RNT/FGDC**

More than 1,000 displaced by oil spill get upgrade: From evacuation camps to hotels

By: [Nestor P. Burgos Jr.](#) - Correspondent / [@nestorburgosINQ](#)

[Inquirer Visayas](#) / 08:10 PM July 09, 2020

ILOILO CITY—More than 1,000 villagers displaced by an oil spill from a power barge are being treated to an upgrade of temporary living facilities—from hot, humid evacuation centers to air-conditioned hotel rooms.

At least 1,240 persons would be billeted at three hotels—Highway 21, District 21 and Diversion 21—after they transfer from five evacuation camps, according to Gabino Ramon Mejia, head of plant operations of AC Energy Corp., which runs the power barge.

Mejia told the Inquirer on Thursday (July 9) that the company would pay for the hotel rooms that have toilets and TV sets and food for the evacuees until they are able to return to their homes.

The evacuees have been staying at classrooms of the Barrio Obrero Elementary School, Barrio Obrero High School, Zone 1 gymnasium of Barrio Obrero, Jalandoni Memorial Elementary School and Technical Institute of Iloilo City.

They were forced to leave their homes starting on July 3 after the power barge Power 102, operated by the Ayala-owned AC Energy Corp., leaked bunker fuel after an explosion tore a hole on its hull.

The Coast Guard Iloilo station estimated that 268,948 liters of bunker fuel leaked from the barge and reached coastal villages of Iloilo City and areas near them.

On Thursday morning, Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas criticized AC Power Energy Corp. for failing to adequately provide for the needs of evacuees, warning that the city government will file criminal and administrative complaints.

Mejia said the company had difficulty procuring folding beds and other needs of the evacuees because of supplies were constricted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

He said AC Energy decided to transfer the evacuees to ensure they would be taken care of and be comfortable.

Some of the evacuees were expected to transfer to the hotels on Thursday evening while the rest were expected to do so on Friday (July 10).

Aside from breakfast provided by the hotels, packed meals will be delivered to evacuees.

Mejia, quoting the Iloilo City Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office, said the earliest that some of the evacuees can return to their homes is on Tuesday next week when the cleanup of oil residue is expected to be completed in some areas.

TSB

Source: https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1304623/more-than-1000-displaced-by-oil-spill-get-upgrade-from-evacuation-camps-to-hotels?fbclid=IwAR14cn9ir8MtyYseMQEq5eF1kW_UM0cpOfTOVE5R2CHEUVynhR7OqkxAsJI

Mangroves sa Guimaras, 100% nang apektado ng oil spill – biologist

By [Bombo Radyo Iloilo](#)

-July 10, 2020 | 7:29 PM

ILOILO CITY – Mas lumalala pa umano ang epekto ng oil spill matapos sumabog ang power barge ng AC Energy sa Iloilo City.

Sa eksklusibong panayam ng *Bombo Radyo Iloilo* kay Dr. Rex Sadaba, marine biologist at dating program manager ng University of the Philippines-Visayas Oil Spill Response Program, sinabi nito na 100% nang apektado ng bunker fuel ang mga mangroves sa lalawigan ng Guimaras.

Maliban dito, ayon kay Sadaba, mas lumalala pa ang fish kill sa Guimaras kung saan umaabot sa 16 na mga coastal barangay ang apektado ng oil spill.

Nagbabala rin si Sadaba na iwasan ang pagkuha ang pagkain ng mga seafoods sa Iloilo Strait ang baybayin ng Guimaras dahil maaari itong makalason.

Covid-19 cases in PHL climb to 52,914

By [Claudeth Mocon-Ciriaco](#)

July 10, 2020



File photo: A man's temperature is checked by an army trooper before entering the metropolis at a checkpoint on the outskirts of Quezon City, Philippines Sunday, March 15, 2020. Thousands of Philippine police, backed by the army and coast guard, have started sealing the densely populated capital from most domestic travelers in one of Southeast Asia's most drastic containment moves against the coronavirus. For most people, the new coronavirus causes only mild or moderate symptoms. For some, it can cause more severe illness, especially in older adults and people with existing health problems. (AP Photo/Aaron Favila)

The Department of Health (DOH) reported 42 Covid-19 fatalities as the number of infections in the country rose to 52,914 on Friday.

Of the number of deaths, 27 (64 percent) occurred in July and 12 (29 percent) in June. Thirty-six (86 percent) of the deaths reported were from Cebu.

As of 4 p. m. of July 10, the DOH recorded 1,233 additional cases. Of number 848 were lights as fresh cases, 385 were detected as late cases.

Today's fresh cases are based on the daily accomplishment reports submitted by only 70 out of 79 current operational labs.

DOH also said that 286 recoveries. This brings the total number of recoveries to 13,230.

Seventy-three duplicates were also removed from total case count.

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

Health protocols

Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said that the DOH emphasized that the outlook of the country's pandemic response is highly dependent on the public's compliance with prescribed health protocols.

Vergeire explained that the public must remain vigilant and practice the infection prevention and control measures, such as proper use of personal protective equipment , physical distancing, and proper hygiene, to help limit the spread of the virus.

With the government ramping up testing, Vergeire cautioned that the current effort to expand testing does not guarantee the public's safety and that they should continue to observe the DOH's health guidelines.

“Prevention is still the most effective intervention against Covid-19,” as she appealed to the public not to be lax.

Vergeire also reported that the increase in cases can be attributed to clusters in specific areas and not a general increase across the country.

Majority of the newly announced fresh cases on July 5 are concentrated in three regions: The National Capital Region (NCR) with 1,482 fresh cases, Central Visayas (Region VII) with 1,118, and Calabarzon (Region IV-A) with 223.

“Tumaas po ang mga average number ng mga kaso dahil sa pagtaas ng bilang ng mga kaso sa mga binabantayan nating lugar, kaya naman po kailangan nating maging mas maingat at mag-exercise ng caution lalo na para sa mga lugar kung saan may clustering of cases,” she added.

In terms of overall cases, one of the major reasons in the increase is the ongoing verification process of case data, where challenges such as system access or extraction issues are being addressed to ensure a more accurate and timely reporting from laboratories.

Despite the increase in cases, the Philippines’ case doubling time (CDT), or the time it takes for cases to increase two-fold, is still 7.95 days according to the Health Official, this indicator, along with a positivity rate of 7.3 percent, is a clear sign that the country is still able to manage the spread of the infection.

Año: Metro unlikely to go back to ECQ

By [Victor Reyes](#)

-July 10, 2020



MALACAÑANG is not inclined to heighten the quarantine classification of Metro Manila even amid the significant increase of COVID-19 cases which breached the 50,000 mark on Wednesday.

Interior Secretary Eduardo Año, a key member of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID), said the government will instead improve localized lockdowns of affected areas to contain the spread of the virus.

Asked if it was possible to put Metro Manila back to modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) from the current general community quarantine (GCQ), Año said the IATF has already discussed this with Metro Manila mayors.

“Ang direction natin ay economic recovery or buksan ulit ‘yung kabuhayan (Our direction is economic recovery or re-open the economy),” said Año.

Año said the government wants a faster lockdown of a household, building, street, community, subdivision or even a barangay when fresh infections are reported in these areas.

“Ang kailangan talaga dito mabilis na aksyon. Hindi kasi puwede na kapag meron nang cases ay saka ka palang kikilos after three days (What we need is fast action. We cannot afford to wait three days before taking action),” he said, adding the delayed lockdown only leaves contact tracing more difficult.

Año also noted that the government has already built up “enough health capacities” in the fight against the pandemic.

“Marami na tayong testing capacity or testing kits, laboratories. Marami na rin tayong na set aside na mga COVID beds, ICU beds at designated COVID hospital (We have enough testing capacity or testing kits, laboratories. We have also set aside enough COVID beds, ICU beds and designated COVID hospitals),” he said.

“Meron na rin tayong isolation facilities, maganda na rin ‘yung contact tracing so ibig sabihin because of our lockdown for the last three months, nakapag-build tayo ng ganitong capacity, kaya natin magbukas ng economy (We also have isolation facilities, we have good contract tracing. Because of our lockdown for the last three months, we were able to build this capacity, we’re ready to re-open economy),” he added.

Año said there is a “big chance” Cebu City will graduate from its current ECQ status due to the improved COVID-19 situation in the city.

“Puwedeng pumunta na sila ng MECQ or even GCQ depende sa mga data analytics natin pero nakita talaga natin ‘yung remarkable change sa Cebu City (They can proceed to MECQ or even GCQ, depending on our data analytics but we have seen a remarkable change in Cebu City),” he said.

CEBU CITY

Año attributed the success in Cebu City to the government's pouring of attention and resources to address the growing number of COVID-19 infection in the Visayan metropolis.

He gave credit to Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, who had been assigned by President Duterte to supervise the campaign against COVID-19 in Cebu City. "His commitment and dedication is really exceptional," he said of Cimatu.

Health undersecretary Leopoldo Vega said the COVID-19 situation in Cebu City had greatly improved since it was placed under ECQ for the past month, resulting in lower positivity and mortality rates.

"We cannot yet say that (downgrade to GCQ), because it's too early to say. But if it continues to progress, the matrix will decrease and Cebu City will improve. That will be discussed by the IATF whether to downgrade Cebu City to GCQ," he said.

The DOH official is in Cebu City to monitor the critical care response of the city and to inspect several public and private hospitals in the area.

He said Cebu City now has a "better response and capacity."

Vega said private hospitals were required to allot at least 20 percent of their beds for COVID-19 patients, with an additional 10 percent of beds in case of a surge in cases, while public hospitals like the Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center was required to allot more than 30 percent of its beds for coronavirus patients.

He said the government hopes that hospitals would raise their COVID-19 bed to 50 to 60 percent in case of a surge in cases

Vega expressed confidence that Cebu City can realize this because there is still enough human resource and equipment available to ensure the immediate treatment of critical and severe patients.

He also emphasized the need to continue the improvement of the critical care system in the city in anticipation of the reopening of its economy.

Only Cebu City had been placed under ECQ until July 15 due to its high number of positive cases and declining critical care capacity.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III on Monday night reported to President Duterte that the COVID-19 case doubling rate in Cebu City was less than seven days, isolation bed utilization already at 90.6 percent and intensive care unit beds use at 84.46.

The President reiterated that the "nonchalant" attitude of Cebuanos, especially during the critical days of the pandemic, led to the current situation in the city. He complained that some people continued to engage in gambling, drinking in the streets and partying despite the COVID situation.

Cebu City Vice Mayor Rama said his constituents appreciate the frank statements of the President and look at it as a challenge to do better and overcome the pandemic.

"We will be seeing light at the end of the tunnel and wishing that the President will no longer say that we are hard-headed. We will definitely be taking it as a positive challenge and insight, it will give us a lesson to really be united and prove that we can be one in attacking this COVID-19," Rama said during a virtual briefing with Roque. *—With Jocelyn Montemayor*

Neda chief Chua: ECQ impact on economy 'more
TITLE: severe than expected'

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Neda chief Chua: ECQ impact on economy 'more severe than expected'

By: [Ben O. de Vera](#) - Reporter / [@bendeveraINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 03:30 PM July 10, 2020

The Philippines is bracing for an even worse-than-expected drop in the gross domestic product (GDP) in the second quarter as the country's chief economist on Friday said the COVID-19 lockdown inflicted more pain into the economy than earlier projected.

But as the economy gradually opened up under less-restrictive quarantine, Acting Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Karl Kendrick T. Chua told a virtual press briefing that recovery was underway during this third quarter.

Chua, who heads the state planning agency National Economic and Development Authority (Neda), said the latest economic data covering the months of April and May showed the impact of the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) imposed in Luzon and other parts of the country with high COVID-19 infection since mid-March was "more severe than expected."

Earlier Neda estimates showed that the economy shed P1.1 trillion or 5.6 percent of GDP across the agriculture, industry and services sectors during the first 45 days of the ECQ—said to be one of, if not the most stringent COVID-19 lockdowns in the region.

While Chua reiterated that the second-quarter GDP will be "more negative" than the 0.2-percent decline during the first quarter, the Neda chief said he did not know yet "to what extent it will be worse."

In April, 7.3 million Filipinos were jobless, jacking up the unemployment rate to a 15-year high of 17.7 percent.

Some economists already projected sharper second-quarter contraction reaching double-digits in percentage, sliding the economy into a technical recession.

Chua said the government always revisited the economic team's projection in May of 2-3.4 percent GDP contraction for the entire year whenever new data came in.

"Once we prepare the final budget proposal, there could be some adjustments," Chua said, referring to the proposed P4.3-trillion 2021 national budget to be submitted to Congress by August.

Moving forward, Chua was optimistic about improving economic activity especially after 75 percent resumed operations last month, subject to minimum health standards.

The latest preliminary Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) data on external trade in goods released Friday showed that merchandise exports dropped 35.6 percent year-on-year to \$3.9 billion in May, although the value of Philippine-made products sold overseas that month rose from \$2.8 billion last April.

Imports slid 40.6 percent year-on-year to \$5.9 billion, even as their value improved from April's \$3.3 billion.

Neda chief Chua: ECQ impact on economy 'more
severe than expected'

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As such, total external goods trade declined 38.7 percent year-on-year to \$9.8 billion last May, although bigger than the \$6.1-billion in products exchanged between the Philippines and its foreign trading partners in April.

The trade balance remained at a deficit as imports still exceeded exports, which at \$1.9 billion in May was narrower than the \$3.6 billion posted a year ago but wider than April's \$448.7 million.

Citing these May external trade data, Chua said that "although still negative compared to last year, this represents slight improvements compared to last month."

"The slower decline in trade performance is a welcome indication that economic activity has started to pick up with the relaxation of quarantine measures in certain areas, the gradual reopening of business, and the restarting of production in both the country and its trading partners," Chua said.

Expanded testing, kailangan para 'di na ibalik ang ECQ - NEDA

By [Angie dela Cruz](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon)

- July 11, 2020 - 12:00am



Binigyang diin ni Karl Kendrick Chua na kailangan ang higit pang pagpapaigting sa COVID-19 testing hindi lamang sa mga maysakit, OFWs, sa contact at healthcare workers kundi kailangan ito ng lahat ng mamamayan lalo na ng mga manggagawa.

MANILA, Philippines — Kailangang mapalawak pa ng pamahalaan ang pagsasagawa ng COVID-19 testing upang matiyak na hindi na muling ibalik ang enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) sa bansa.

Ito ang sinabi ni National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) head Karl Kendrick Chua kaugnay ng patuloy na pagtaas ng bilang ng mga nagkakasakit ng COVID.

"From testing just a few hundred, we've reached a peak of 22,000 tests per day and we are on-track to achieving 32,000 tests per day which will help bring down the positivity rate to below 5percent. This trajectory, we think, will not bring us back to the ECQ," pahayag ni Chua.

Binigyang diin ni Chua na kailangan ang higit pang pagpapaigting sa COVID-19 testing hindi lamang sa mga maysakit, OFWs, sa contact at healthcare workers kundi kailangan ito ng lahat ng mamamayan lalo na ng mga manggagawa.

"We actually want to increase testing towards the 10 million mark to include the testing of workers and to open up as many public transports as we can in the most safe way," ani Chua.

Sa unang kwarter ng 2020, pumailanlang ang ekonomiya ng bansa sa 0.2 percent, pinakamababa sa loob ng halos dalawang dekada dahil sa pagsabog ng Taal volcano, pagbagsak ng turismo at negosyo dahil sa COVID-19 at pagpapairal sa ECQ.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/bansa/2020/07/11/2027181/expanded-testing-kailangan-para-di-na-ibalik-ang-ecq-neda/amp/>

Department of Disaster Resilience pinamamadali na

By [Gemma Garcia](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon)

- July 11, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Pinamamadali ni Sen. Bong Go ang pagpasa ng panukalang Department of Disaster Resilience (DDR) at ang mandatory na pagtatayo ng evacuation center sa buong bansa.

Sinabi ni Go na ang bansa ay lantad sa iba't ibang kalamidad tulad ng bagyo, lindol at pagputok ng bulkan na bawat taon ay nakakaapekto sa atin.

Ngayong taon din umano ay nakita ng lahat kung paano ang pandemic at mga kalamidad ay naging banta sa bansa kaya dapat na masiguro na handa ang bawat Filipino ngayong panahon ng krisis.

“Sa pagpapatayo ng departamentong ito, mas magiging mabilis ang pagtugon ng pamahalaan, mas maiibsan ang masamang epekto ng kalamidad at mas mabilis makakabangon ang ating mga kababayan. Kailangan ding magpatayo ng mga safe, permanent at dedicated na mga evacuation centers sa mga piling lugar,” ayon pa kay Go.



CSC urges gov't agencies, jobseekers to join online career fair

Published July 10, 2020 2:07pm

By NICOLE-ANNE C. LAGRIMAS, GMA News

A Civil Service Commission (CSC) official on Friday urged government agencies and jobseekers to participate in a weeklong online career fair slated for September.

Commissioner Aileen Lizada encouraged government agencies to register their vacancies from July 1 to August 14. The online job fair will be held from September 14 to 18 through hiring site JobStreet.

"It is very important that we have the correct number of people in a corresponding agency para ho hindi ho sila mahirapan to serve the public," Lizada said at the Laging Handa briefing.

Though the Philippines has some 1.9 million government employees, Lizada said they are "still lacking in numbers" and urged agency heads to fill their vacant positions.

In last year's CSC career fair, 5,171 jobseekers applied for 7,327 vacancies, she said.

Meanwhile, Lizada said she supports the lowering of the optional retirement age of government employees from 60 to 56.

The House of Representatives [approved a bill](#) for this purpose late last year. Senate President Vicente Sotto III, for his part, said the government should [offer early retirement incentives](#) to employees so the state could cut down on personnel expenses and allocate funds to other priority initiatives. —**KBK, GMA News**



Mas maagang retirement age sa gov't workers, inaasahang mapaburan – CSC exec

July 10, 2020 @ 5:00 PM 14 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Umaasa si Civil Service Commission (CSC) Commissioner Aileen Lizada na ang isinusulong na panukala na mapababa ang retirement age ay mapapaburan.

“Personally, I am for the lowering of the optional age of retirement from 60 to 56,” ani Lizada sa “Laging Handa” press briefing.

Ito ay pahayag ni Lizada kaugnay sa sinasabi ni Senate President Vicente “Tito” Sotto na dapat magbigay ang gobyerno ng early retirement incentives.

“This is one of my personal advocacies in CSC. Aside from a better retirement pay, I am for early retirement,” aniya.

“I have gone around Luzon to Mindanao, I’ve spoken to 49 government agencies, LGUs (local government units). The sentiment, 99.99 percent, ang iba po ay pagod na (there are some who are tired already),” dagdag pa nito.

“That’s why nagpapasalamat po ako kay Congressman Garbin for offering the bill, pasado na po ito sa (Lower House).”

Naaprubahan na rin ang House Bill (HB) No. 5509, ni Ako-Bicol party-List Rep. Alfredo Garbin Jr . sa Kamara noong 17th Congress at nakapasa na rin sa huling pagbasa.

“We have the highest optional age of retirement among ASEAN (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) countries, which is 60. We also have the highest mandatory age of retirement among ASEAN countries, which is 65,” paliwanag pa ni Lizada.

“Marami na rin hong pagod. Let’s infuse new blood into the system. Let us give it to the government employees to decide if they want to retire early.” **RNT/FGDC**



According to the American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition, hydration is key to supporting the body's ability to fight COVID-19 and support the immune system.

Photo Release

Experts urge public to take closer look at drinking water

(Philstar.com) - July 10, 2020 - 11:56am

MANILA, Philippine — Water is important in everyday hydration. A document released by the American Society for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition cites hydration as key to supporting the body's ability to fight COVID-19 and support the immune system, recommending 2 to 4 ounces of clear liquid beverages every 15 minutes.

"Keeping properly hydrated at a time like this refreshes our bodies and keeps the virus away," said Dr. Sybil Bravo, a clinical associate professor at the University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital and a member of the Blood-Borne Infectious Diseases Core Team.

Health experts around the world continue to stress the need for proper hydration, along with getting enough sleep and proper handwashing, as the best way to ward off the COVID-19 virus.

However, access to safe and clean water continues to be a challenge. Health experts reveal that it is not enough that the water you drink looks clean to the naked eye.

Your water should also be proven clean through lab tests to avoid common water-borne diseases, such as cholera, dysentery, and gastroenteritis. Unfiltered water also has many potential contaminants, such as chlorine, heavy metals and allergens, as well as parasites.

There are many harmful substances and minerals in unpurified water, and not all bottled water in the market is the same.

Finding clean water that undergoes stringent purification processes to filter harmful substances and minerals means checking the purification process it undergoes. Some follow stricter global processes to ensure that they are truly clean.

Wilkins Pure, one of the water brands of The Coca-Cola Company, is certain to be clean and pure.

With international certifications under its belt, Wilkins Pure goes through an advanced, seven-step purification process, which helps assure that the water you drink purifies the body of toxins.

Learn more about the Wilkins via its [official Facebook page](#) or [cokebeverages.ph](#).

Source: https://www.philstar.com/lifestyle/health-and-family/2020/07/10/2026549/experts-urge-public-take-closer-look-drinking-water?fbclid=IwAR1pEPwFBdPoiWKTCaccYmF2VXDsiiJZteArUgt8Xdjh7vDY1tHhXG-fmrE&utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook&utm_term=Autofeed



ABS-CBN KNOCKOUT SA KAMARA

July 10, 2020 @ 7:22 PM

Tapos na ang botohan sa Kamara ukol sa renewal ng prangkisa ng Abs-Cbn.

Sa 84 miyembro ng House Committee on Franchises, 70 ang bumoto laban sa Abs-Cbn, 11 ang pabor, 2 ang nag-inhibit at isa ang hindi bumoto.

Knockout o tulog ang Abs-Cbn, hindi na ito pupwedeng emere pa.

Matindi pa sa suntok ni aydul Manny Pacquiao ang inabot ng network.

Ang isang tanong: Kailangan pa bang isalang sa pangkalahatang botohan o ng lahat ng daan-daang kongresman ito?

Kailangan pa ba ang aksyon ng Senado na naging kasabay ng Kamara sa pagkakaroon ng pagdinig kung dapat na bigyan ang network ng panibagong prangkisa?

Pupwede bang kwestiyunin ang desisyon ng mga kongresman sa hukuman?

Maghihintay tayo ng mga kasagutan sa mga katanungang ito.

WALANG PAGLABAG?

Ayon kay Cong. Edcel Lagman, wala umanong napatunayan sa mga akusasyon laban sa Abs-Cbn.

Kasama sa mga akusasyon ang paglabag umano ng pangunahing may-ari ng network sa tadhana ng Konstitusyon na nagsasabing dapat 100 porsyentong Filipino ito at hindi dayuhan gaya ng isa sa mga pamilya Lopez.

Mayroon ding umanong paglabag sa mga batas sa buwis gaya ng tax evasion at batas pangmanggagawa gaya ng pagsibak sa daan-daang obrero at pagmaniobra sa labos cases upang hindi makabalik ang mga ito sa trabaho.

Mayroon ding paglabag umano ito sa batas sa eleksyon gaya ng hindi pag-eere ng mga political advertisement ng mga hindi pinapaburang kandidato ng mga may-ari ng network habang todo ang paglalabas ng mga advertisement ng mga pinapaburan nito.

Nabuking naman kamakailan ang lantarang hindi pagsunod ng Abs-Cbn sa cease and desist order na inisyu ng National Telecommunications Commission noong Mayo 5, 2020 sa patuloy nitong pagbo-broadcast gamit ang sariling subsidiary na Amcara broadcasting network channel 43 sa loob mismo ng Abs-Cbn compound sa Quezon City.

Sabi ni Kong. Lagman, maniobra lang umano lahat ni Speaker Alan Cayetano kaya bumoto ang 70 kongresman laban sa Abs-Cbn.

KALAYAAN SA PAMAMAHAYAG PATAY NA?

Siyempre pa, umani ng batikos ang botohan, lalo na mula sa mga suporter ng network at ikinakabit ang isyu ng press freedom.

Patay na umano ang kalayaan sa pamamahayag sa tuluyang pagpapasara sa nasabing istasyon ng telebisyon at kakambal nitong mga kompanya na gamit ng Abs-Cbn sa pag-eere gaya ng Amcara at Skycable.

Ang pagkakaalam natin may 629 radio station sa buong Pinas at 330 rito ang AM habang 339 ang FM.

May 437 namang istasyon ng telebisyon at 23 sa mga ito ang nasa Metro Manila, kasama ang Abs-Cbn.

Ayon sa rekord, pag-aari o kontrolado ng Abs-Cbn ang 80 telebisyon at 32 istasyon ng radio.

Nakakalat ang MOR radio sa buong kapuluan habang ang Radyo Patrol ay itinayo sa Manila, Palawan, Cebu, Catbalogan at Davao.

Ibawas na lang ninyo ang mga tv at radio station na pag-aari at kontrolado ng Abs-Cbn sa napakaraming TV at radio station na buhay na buhay at nagpapanatili ng kalayaan sa pamamahayag.

Tanging ang Rappler lang naman ang may kaso sa mga online at newspaper na libo ang bilang sa buong kapulungan na nagpapatunay ng kalayaan sa pamamahayag.

MAGKAIBA ANG PAGSASARA

Inihahambing o inihahalintulad ang pagsasara ng Abs-Cbn ngayon sa pagsasara nito noong martial law.

Anak ng tokwa, napakalayo ang pinagdadaldal ng mga ito.

Noong martial law, ganap na isinara ang Abs-Cbn at kinumpiska ito para magsilbing istasyon ng telebisyon ng pamahalaan.

Ginanap ito sa dulo ng barrel.

Pero sa pagsasara ngayon, unang pinasara ito dahil natapos na 25 taong ang prangkisa nito.

Isa pa, dinaan sa malayang talakayan sa Kamara ang lahat bago nagkaroon ng botohan.

Napakaganda nga ang proseso at narinig ng lahat ng mamamayan ang mga dahilan kung bakit napagpasyahan na hindi na muling bibigyan ng panibagong prangkisa ang Abs-Cbn.

Kung may pagbabago man sa mga darating na panahon at muling makababalik sa ere ito, ibang usapan na 'yan.

EDITORIAL - It's time to address our population problem

(The Freeman)

- July 11, 2020 - 12:00am



In case you weren't keeping tabs on the calendar, today happens to be world population day. And in case you also weren't keeping tabs on our population, we are now an estimated 109 million Filipinos as of the last census.

According to the data from the United Nations, we make up 1.41% of the world's population and we are also the 13th country with the biggest population.

Although another study pointed out that our population growth has been on a steady decline since the 1960s, this doesn't change the fact that our population is no longer proportional to our infrastructure and it's high time for the government, the different sectors, and families themselves to do something to arrest the way we rapidly multiply.

The proof that we have a population that is just too big, and that it has been for a while, is all around us. Our roads and highways can barely keep up with the number of driving and riding public. Companies and employers cannot supply enough jobs so people have to go work abroad.

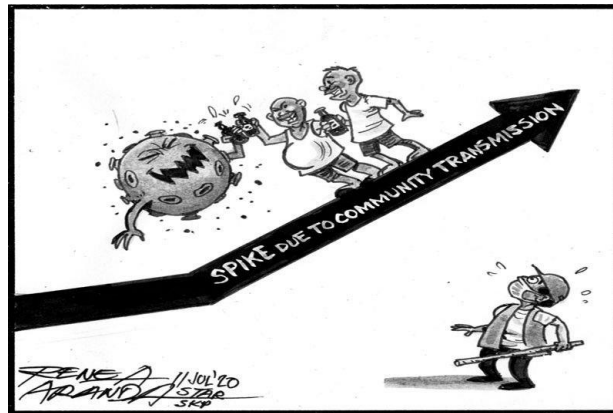
Every year we have to deal with an increasing student population that is always running out of classrooms, chairs, desks, and even teachers.

Some of our hospitals are starting to waitlist patients seeking admission. While this may also be the product of the pandemic, there should at least be some rooms available for non-COVID-19 cases. These days you will be hard-pressed to find one.

Need more proof? We are sure you heard of the recent problem involving Cebu City's cemeteries, or lack thereof. There is almost nowhere to bury the dead here. Sure, it can be seen as a problem arising from poor urban development planning, however it is also a sign of our burgeoning population.

It's also worth mentioning the sad fact that it is actually those who cannot afford to have many children who have many children.

A population that is too big can bring a nation down. If people cannot afford to feed, raise, and send their kids to school they turn to the government for help. And if people cannot find jobs they also turn to the government for support. This strains the government's resources and funds. And if you have a government that is already stretched to the limit when it comes to resources and funds, like ours already is, you can be sure disaster will follow.



EDITORIAL - Community transmission

(The Philippine Star) - July 11, 2020 - 12:00am

As the economy is gradually reopened and more people get their livelihoods back, increased human contact is inevitable. And so, it seems, is the increased transmission of pathogens.

This week was marked by two worrisome developments in the global battle against the coronavirus disease 2019. One was the cautious acknowledgment by the World Health Organization that there is “emerging evidence” of airborne COVID-19 transmission, particularly in enclosed spaces, as 239 scientists from 32 countries are insisting. The WHO has stressed that there is still no definitive study on this, but it deserves attention.

Another development is the announcement of the Department of Health that the current spike in COVID-19 cases in the Philippines is now due to community transmission. This complicates contact tracing and isolation of COVID patients, weak to begin with in this country.

It now falls on the people themselves to prevent the crisis from worsening and again shutting down the economy. The return of mass transportation, which is indispensable in the revival of more economic activities, is seen as one of the factors driving community transmission. The high number of employees testing positive for COVID-19 in the Metro Rail Transit 3 illustrates the infection risk posed by mass transportation.

Health safety protocols in public places will have to be fine-tuned to deal with community transmission. Private companies, seeing the disruption to their operations that can be caused by even one infected employee, should also tighten safety rules, and maintain where possible the work-from-home arrangements that were implemented during the enhanced community quarantine.

As health experts around the world are warning, the easing of restrictions does not mean the coronavirus has been beaten. In fact, as the experts can't stress enough, the pandemic is entering a more dangerous phase, as economic reopening provides more opportunities for virus transmission.

Each person is a frontliner in this war against an unseen, treacherous and deadly enemy. The precautionary measures aren't intolerable: wear a mask in public, maintain a distance of at least three feet – a little over arm's length – from others, and observe hygienic practices such as regular handwashing and keeping surroundings clean.

The past four months have shown that economic health suffers when public health is under threat. Even when quarantine enforcers aren't looking, everyone must continue observing health safety protocols. Your health, life and livelihood depend on it.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2020/07/11/2027092/editorial-community-transmission>

WFH employees deserve additional benefits

posted July 11, 2020 at 12:10 am

by [Charlie V. Manalo](#)

This one makes sense.

Earlier this week, Senator Francis Tolentino said he would file a bill seeking to amend the National Internal Revenue Code and the Telecommuting Act to provide additional tax deduction benefits to workers forced to work from home during quarantine.

And of course, they deserve that.

Tolentino noted that the community quarantine imposed in response to the coronavirus pandemic forced ordinary workers to work from home incurred them additional electricity expenses while their employers enjoyed lower expenses.

According to the lawmaker, he will file on Monday a “win-win” measure for both employees and employers, and even for the government, as it would still collect Value Added Taxes from electric bills.

“What I am contemplating to file on Monday is to amend the tax structure in such a way that those who are working outside their usual offices would now be granted a fixed monthly tax deduction when they pay their income tax or the employer will just give a fixed amount to their employees working at their homes,” Tolentino said.

The additional benefit for the employees, Tolentino adds, will then be considered as business expenses and thereafter deductible on the part of the employer, thus “a win-win situation for both employees and employers.”

Tolentino said he was looking at three options for the proposal, including requiring the employee to attach a form in his or her income tax return indicating how much the deduction should be, requiring employers to compute such deductions due at the end of the tax year, requiring employers to give a fixed amount to employees every month as subsidy for the latter’s electricity expenses.

While many will argue that the employees who were forced to work from home got savings from their provisions for transportation expenses as they no longer have to leave the comforts of their home while working, it should also be noted that other overhead expenses for the business establishments, aside from electricity, were also passed on to them like water, office supplies, maintenance of office and its equipment including its depreciation from use, etc.

And since these are all expenses business establishments used to charge to their expenditures but which were now being shouldered by the work-from-home employees, it is but right that they be given additional benefits, also passable as expenses for the companies.

No additional losses for the companies and the government and no additional burden for the employees.

Still on electricity.

Last Monday, the Manila Electric Co. assured lawmakers that customers are only charged for electricity they actually consumed and pledged that the Philippines’ largest power distributor will clarify concerns caused by estimated bills between March and May, the period when the government imposed an enhanced community quarantine to contain the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to Meralco President, lawyer Ray Espinosa, a clarificatory letter will be sent out to customers soon, particularly those whose meters were read in May but whose bills contain a previous reading that is actually based on estimated March and/or April consumption.

At the same time, Espinosa assured everyone “there is no intention on the part of Meralco to charge a customer and have that customer pay more than the actual consumption registered in the meter,” at the same time apologizing for what he described for Meralco’s “short coming as far as the May bills are concerned which has really caused confusion because of estimates.”

Meralco had earlier issued several explanations through various traditional and social media platforms to detail the bill estimations done for March, April, and, in some cases, May in compliance with the Energy Regulatory Commission rules for cases when meter readers can't be deployed.

In fact, Espinosa said Meralco even went beyond the coverage of ERC's advisory, which only starts from March 16 and ends on May 31 as Meralco even included customer bills due from March 1.

He also said that Meralco has implemented a moratorium on service disconnection until September 30 this year.

As an added service to its clientele, Espinosa also announced that the company will now shoulder the Meralco Online convenience fee for online payments, for the entire ECQ and GCQ period, and will correspondingly refund the amount paid by customers when they previously settled their electricity bills.

I personally agree that these bills generated by estimates have cause so much confusion as they were far from accurate. One of my friends who was caught in their Rizal abode during the lockdown was charged with her monthly bill consumption in the condo unit in Cubao when there was actually no one staying there during the entire duration of the quarantine.

Some were even under-billed for the months of March and April as they were only based on their previous consumption even as their electric usage had surged when they were forced to work from home, resorting to downloading movies, playing online games, etc. thus the bill-shock when the previous under-billing was included in the May bill when their meters were actually read.

Anyway, I am optimistic these "shortcomings" will be corrected as Mr. Espinosa had assured us. Even Joe Zaldarriaga, Meralco vice president and spokesman, has assured us that he will see to it we will not pay a single centavo for any electricity we have not consumed.

And I see no reason not to believe him.

The real challenge of COVID-19

posted July 10, 2020 at 01:10 am

by [Erwin Tulfo](#)

Just what is up with these people wasting time harping on the Anti-Terrorism Act in the middle of a worsening public health crisis?

Isn't that what they were criticizing the Congress for, pushing the anti-terrorism bill instead of focusing on the coronavirus pandemic and the ABS-CBN franchise issue?

Well then, the opposition and rabid critics should train their brilliant mind and energy on helping figure out how to stem the tides of daily rise in COVID-19 cases.

At the rate we are going, the Octa research group at the University of the Philippines Institute of Mathematics would likely be right in their projection that the total cases would hit 60,000 to 70,000 by July 31.

It is 20 days from the time of this writing with a total of 50,359 cases reported on Wednesday. At least 12,588 recovered and 1,314 died.

With at least 1,000 cases per day, that will be 20,000 additional cases for a total of 70,000 plus by the end of the month.

The UP research group goes on to say that COVID-19 cases will have skyrocketed to 100,000 total in August, although not suggesting an apocalyptic-like scenario. Not just yet.

With over 3,500 health workers themselves getting sick, including 35 dying of COVID-19, it is feared that such scenario might overwhelm the country's inadequate public healthcare system.

If these figures do not terrify those protesting the Anti-Terrorism Act at the Supreme Court gate, I do not know why a law meant to protect them scares the hell out of them.

In fact, we all must realize that the real challenge now is to keep the numbers of COVID-19 cases down.

The real challenge is not at the Supreme Court where the most honorable justices are cowering in terror that amid the epidemic a bunch of people are picketing the SC gates, not even observing social distancing and blasting their mouths with virulently name-calling President Duterte.

We must challenge ourselves to peg the total number of COVID-19 cases at 60,000 by July 31. A jubilant Presidential spokesman Atty. Harry Roque declared the Filipino people the winner as last June's total cases fell 2,850 short of UP Octa's prediction of 40,000.

The UP research group comes up with helpful data that offers scientific guide to the Inter-Agency Task Force for the management of emerging infectious diseases in improving its community quarantine policies to contain the coronavirus contagion.

They urged the IATF to take time easing the Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine to General Community Quarantine last June 15.

Unfortunately, the IATF has no choice but to open the economy just as drastically as the panel urged the President to lockdown Luzon in March, leaving hundreds of thousands jobless stranded in Metro Manila with no means of transportation to go back to their home provinces.

Modesty aside, we have in this corner since February suggested solutions—mass testing, contact tracing, prompt treatment, mass information campaign—everything the President just summarized in his public address of late.

I agree with UP Octa that the Department of Health should do 20,000 to 30,000 tests every day. Note there is still only one DOH-accredited laboratory in Mindanao, which is not even enough to serve the large Davao region alone. If only we can all share Atty. Roque's contagious optimism, it is impossible for us to beat the UP mathematicians again or, at least significantly minimize the increase rate of COVID-19 case.

It is worthwhile to note that over 90 percent of those who tested positive are actually mild cases and at least 12,588 have recovered as of Wednesday.

If over 12,500 Filipinos could beat it, there is no reason why more cannot defeat COVID-19.

And that we can achieve if we own the responsibility of keeping ourselves healthy and seriously cooperate to observing establish health and safety protocols.

It is for our own good and our family's well-being.

Meralco consumers gain relief

posted July 11, 2020 at 12:50 am

by [Alena Mae S. Flores](#)

Consumers will have slightly lower power rates in July after Manila Electric Co. announced Friday that the overall rate for a typical household went down by P0.0286 per kilowatt hour, to P8.6966 from P8.7252, last month.

This is equivalent to a reduction of around P6 in the total bill of residential customers consuming 200 kilowatt hours.

Meralco spokesman Joe Zaldarriaga said that, with four straight months of generation rate reduction—and a total rate cut of more than P1 per kilowatt hour since the start of the year—this month's overall rate was significantly lower than in July 2019, which was P9.9850 per kilowatt hour.

This month's overall rate will also be the lowest since September 2017.

"What led to the lower rate is the lower generation charge, and in particular Meralco's claim of force majeure for our contracted suppliers," Zaldarriaga said.

Meralco's generation charge decreased by P0.0069 per kilowatt hour to P4.3344 this month from P4.3413 in June. Meralco continued to invoke the force majeure provision in some of its Power Supply Agreements because of the reduction in demand in its service area during the quarantine period.

Meralco's force majeure claim totaled about P265 million for July, which is equivalent to customer savings of P0.0877 per kilowatt hour in the generation charge.

Meralco's head of utility economics Lawrence Fernandez said this represented avoided charges from the temporary suspension of mid-merit supply contracts recently approved by the Energy Regulatory Commission.

Without the force majeure claims, the total rate would have increased by P0.0717 per kilowatt hour from last month's rate.

For the past four months, the savings from force majeure claims have totaled around P1.85 billion.

Charges from the Wholesale Electricity Spot Market declined significantly, and by P1.7803 per hour, due to the reduction in line rental costs related to Meralco's supply contracts.

Meralco sourced 15.9 percent of its power requirements from the spot market, the trading floor for electricity, in June.

Meanwhile, the cost of power from Independent Power Producers increased by P0.4354 per kilowatt hour, and mainly due to the lower average plant dispatch with the five-day scheduled maintenance outage of San Lorenzo Modules 50 and 60.

Meralco said the peso's appreciation mitigated further increases in its charges.

Meralco sourced 50.9 percent and 33.2 percent of its power supply from its Power Supply Agreements and Independent Power Producers, respectively.

Meanwhile, the transmission charge for residential customers registered a reduction of P0.0426 per kilowatt hour due to lower ancillary service charges.

Meralco said this more than offset the P0.0209 per-kilowatt hour net increase of taxes and other charges following the completion last month of the ERC-approved adjustment on Meralco's system loss over/under-recoveries.



ITCZ magdadala ng ulan, kidlat sa 4 na lugar

July 10, 2020 @ 7:03 PM

Manila, Philippines – Inaasahang magdadala ng maulap na kalangitan na may kalat-kalat na pag-ulan at pagkidlat ang Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ) sa Zamboanga Peninsula, SOCCSKSARGEN, Davao Region, at Caraga, ayon sa PAGASA.

Sa 24-hour forecast nito, nagbabala ito sa posibleng pagbaha o pagguho ng lupa sa katamtaman hanggang malalakas na pag-ulan.

Samantala, iiral naman ang bahagyang maulap hanggang sa maulap na kalangitan na may hiwalay na pag-ulan, lalo na sa hapon o gabi sa Metro Manila at sa nalalabing bahagi ng bansa dahil sa localized thunderstorms.

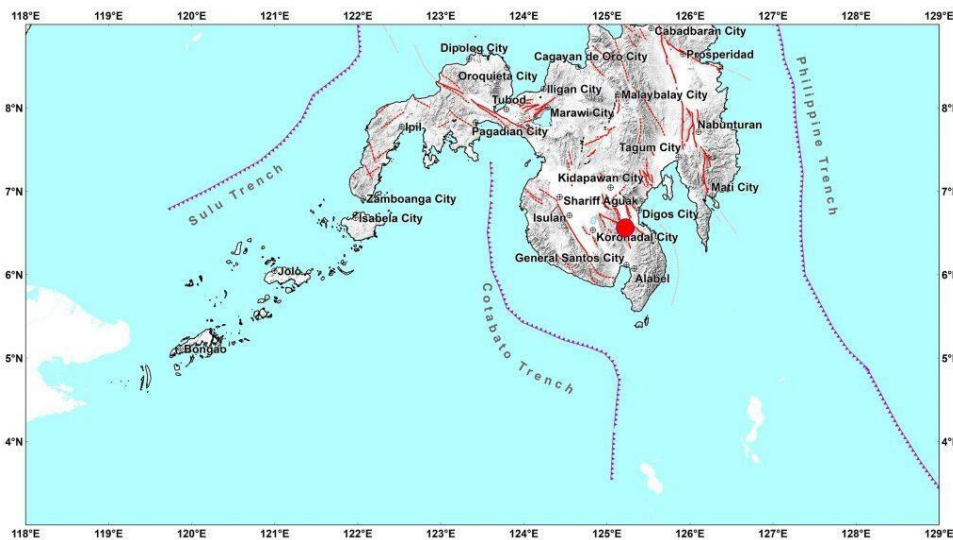
Inaasahan din ang katamtaman hanggang mabigat na pag-ulan na may kasamang pagkidlat at malalakas na hangin sa Bataan, Laguna, Rizal, at Quezon sa susunod na dalawang oras. **RNT/MM**

4.7-magnitude quake jolts Davao del Sur

Published July 10, 2020, 9:41 AM

by Mike Crismundo

BUTUAN CITY – A 4.7-magnitude earthquake hit Davao del Sur in Southern Mindanao region early Friday morning, July 10, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said.



(Phivolcs / MANILA BULLETIN)

In its bulletin, Phivolcs said the tremor was recorded at 2:51 a.m., with the epicenter plotted only 11 kilometers (kms) southeast of Kiblawan town, Davao del Sur province. The tremor had a depth of 16 kms, Phivolcs said.

In its instrumental intensities, Phivolcs also said Intensity III was registered in Kidapawan City, North Cotabato; Koronadal City; Tupi, South Cotabato; and Malungon, Sarangani while Intensity II in Alabel, Sarangani and Intensity I in General Santos City.

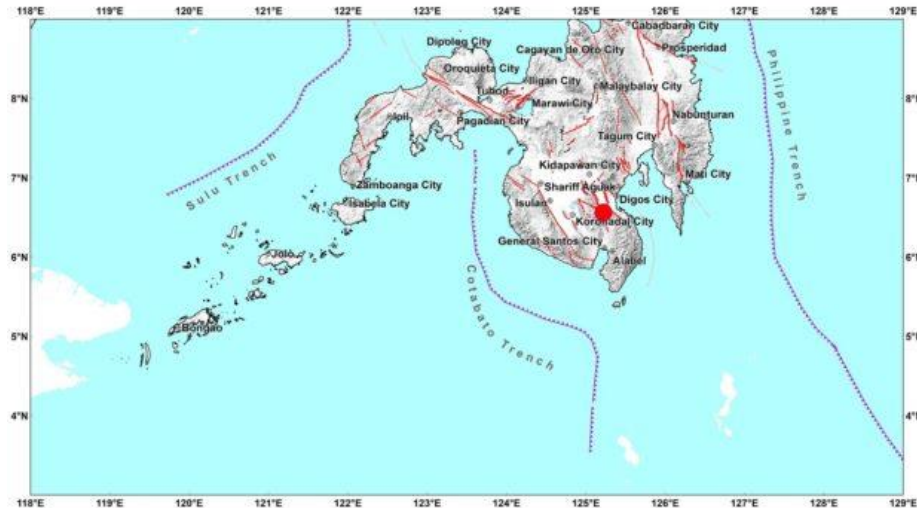
The earthquake was tectonic in origin and no aftershock was raised by the state agency.

The regional office of the Southern Mindanao Office of Civil Defense (OCD) and Davao del Sur provincial disaster risk reduction and management council (PDRRMC) there reported no damage or injury.

Magnitude 4.7 earthquake hits Davao Del Sur town

By: [Cathrine Gonzales](#) - Reporter / [@cgonzalesINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 07:28 AM July 10, 2020



MANILA, Philippines — A magnitude 4.7 earthquake struck parts of Davao Del Sur early Friday morning, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) reported.

The tectonic earthquake struck at 2:51 a.m., kilometers southeast of Kiblawan town. The tremor had a depth of 16 kilometers.

Instrumental intensity III was recorded in Kidapawan City, Koronadal City, Tupi in South Cotabato, and Malungon in Sarangani.

Instrumental intensity II was recorded in Alabel, Sarangani, while instrumental intensity I was recorded in General Santos City.

No damage and aftershocks are expected from the quake, according to Phivolcs.

gsg

Widespread air quality data gaps threaten global

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Widespread air quality data gaps threaten global pollution fight, study finds

Despite data being critical to enabling society to improve the air it breathes, most nations around the world do not measure pollution levels, while some choose not to make information publicly available.



Children pass through a line of jeepneys, or public buses, in Manila. Image: Tear Cordez via Pexels

By [Tim Ha](#)

July 9, 2020

More than half of the world's population lacks full access to timely and transparent air quality data, hindering efforts to tackle air pollution and raise public awareness of its detrimental effects on the environment and human health, according to a new report released on Thursday (9 July).

The [study](#), by American non-profit OpenAQ, which fights air inequality through open data, finds that at least 30 nations such as China, India, Indonesia, Russia, Japan, the Philippines and Vietnam generate real-time air quality data but do not share it with their citizens in a fully open manner, affecting 4.4 billion people.

Only four out of 10 governments around the globe make timely data publicly available. Worse even, in 51 per cent of the world's countries that include Pakistan, Nigeria and Ethiopia—and are home to some 1.4 billion people—no government data of any pollutant type is collected. Not surprisingly, air quality monitoring networks are often limited in highly polluted nations.

While data cannot immediately solve pollution and its impacts on people, taking measurements and making them publicly accessible are critical steps towards cleaner air. Data-sharing also improves citizens' perception of their government's legitimacy and credibility, reads the report.

Air quality data shapes decision-makers' understanding of how dirty air wreaks damage on public health and the economy while helping to track progress on mitigation efforts, making it essential to design, implement and evaluate the effectiveness of pollution control policies.

Where an information vacuum exists, it prevents civil society initiatives from demanding action from policymakers and holding polluting industries to account. Public data also tells citizens if the air is safe to breathe, informing critical choices such as whether to wear a protective mask, or whether to stay at home or venture outside on smoggy days. To the naked eye, lung-wrecking pollution can be invisible.

Widespread air quality data gaps threaten global

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We can't solve the problem of poor air quality without first understanding how big of a problem it is.

Dr Rebecca Garland, principal researcher, The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, South Africa

“Basic access to air quality data is the first step to improve the air we breathe. By providing access to fully open data, governments can enable the power of civil society - from scientists to policy analysts to activists to tackle the problem together. This will unlock the maximum potential and impact of government data, encourage innovation, and mobilise communities to act,” said OpenAQ founder Dr Christa Hasenkopf.

“We can't solve the problem of poor air quality without first understanding how big of a problem it is,” noted Dr Rebecca Garland, principal researcher at The Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, a South African national research organisation.

Where real-time information is unavailable, strategic investments in monitoring and data-sharing infrastructure can help plug data gaps, reads the report. However, support from wealthier nations and philanthropic foundations is lacking, calling for overseas development funds to be linked to open data and air pollution. Of an estimated \$150 billion invested each year by philanthropic groups, only 0.02 per cent is pumped into outdoor air quality improvements.

When governments make data openly-accessible, they must do so in a timely manner, as opposed to yearly averages of pollution levels, and it must come attached with geographic coordinates and be in an analysis-ready form to allow full use by civil society groups and individuals, write the authors.

In the wake of increasingly resource-intensive lifestyles, global air pollution has sharply risen in recent decades. Gas-guzzling cars, coal-fired power plants, industrial facilities and factories cough most of the world's man-made pollutants into the atmosphere, with devastating effects on people and the climate.

Ambient air pollution [kills 4.2 million people](#) worldwide every year—more than three times the number of deaths caused by road traffic crashes—as a result of respiratory infections, strokes, heart disease and lung cancer, according to the World Health Organisation (WHO). While the world's most vulnerable populations are disproportionately affected—9 out of 10 deaths occur in low- and middle-income countries—dangerous air is a global problem: [9 out of 10 people breathe it](#).

A recent analysis by Beijing-based monitoring firm AirVisual revealed India is home to half of the world's [most polluted cities](#), but citizens in Bangladesh, Pakistan and Mongolia suffer from the filthiest air. Of the 100 most polluted cities globally in 2018, 99 are in Asia, showed a 2019 [study](#) by AirVisual and environmental campaigners Greenpeace.

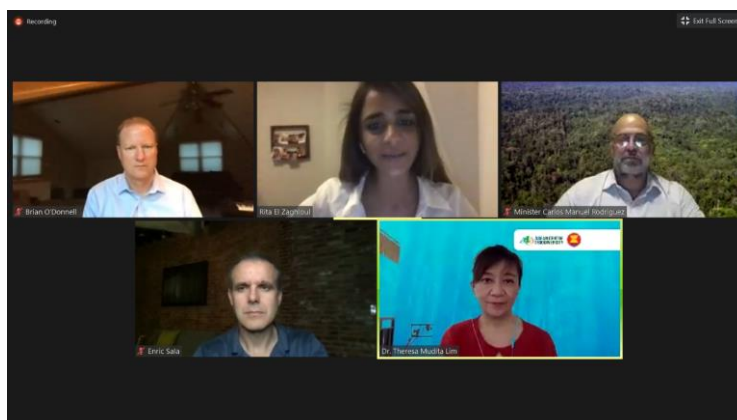
TITLE: Is nature conservation, a drain or a net contributor to global economy? Experts weigh in

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Is nature conservation, a drain or a net contributor to global economy? Experts weigh in

By ACB Published on July 10, 2020



The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity, with the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and the National Geographic Society's Campaign for Nature, organised a webinar for the officials and representatives of the ASEAN Member States. (Screengrabbed from ACB)

LAGUNA, July 10 -- Carving out 30 percent of the Earth's surface for protection can be the wisest economic decision that the world will ever make as the nature sector drives the global economy, experts said.

The High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, with the National Geographic Society's Campaign for Nature and the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), recently organised a webinar titled "Making the case for protecting at least 30% of the planet by 2030: the biodiversity, climate, and economics of 30by30", with officials and representatives of the ASEAN Member States in attendance.

Among the webinar's resource persons were Costa Rica Minister of Environment and Energy Carlos Manuel Rodriguez, National Geographic Society Explorer in Residence Dr. Enric Sala, Campaign for Nature Director Brian O'Donnell, Professor Zakri Abdul Hamid, founding chair of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) and co-chair the Secretariat of Malaysia's Global Science and Innovation Advisory Council, and ACB Executive Director Theresa Mundita Lim.

O'Donnell in his presentation gave a preview of the groundbreaking global report, which lays out the economic costs and benefits of protecting 30 per cent of the planet by 2030. The report on the comprehensive study led by Anthony Waldron of Oxford University and 100 other experts, was published on 8 July 2020.

The zero draft of the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, which was released in January 2020, calls for the protection of 30 percent of the Earth' surface in 10 years, or touted as "30by30".

"Most people think that protected areas are going to be a drain on the global economy. But this report showed that the nature sector is, in fact, a net contributor, not a drain", O'Donnell said.

The tourism sector, which includes nature-based tourism, is one of the drivers of global economic growth, outweighing the impacts of other sectors, such as agriculture, timber, or fisheries.

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Before the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism was growing at 4 to 6 per cent annually, while agriculture and timber industries have been growing by less than 1 per cent and the fisheries sector posting negative growth, O'Donnell explained.

Apart from these economic benefits, "30by30" also provides nonmonetary benefits, such as climate change mitigation, flood protection, clean water, and soil conservation.

O'Donnell said according to the global report, which ran different scenarios of biodiversity conservation for terrestrial and marine areas, the financial and economic benefits of protecting 30 per cent of the planet exceed its costs "by a factor of 5 to 1." This means that for every dollar cost of nature conservation, the economic benefit is equivalent to five USD.

To meet the proposed target of protection, USD 140 billion globally every year should be set aside.

Small fraction of global GDP

Minister Rodriguez did a quick math and pointed out that while the figures sounded like a huge sum of money, the amount is a mere 0.16 percent of the Global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the combined gross national income of all the countries in the world.

"There is no excuse for us not to mobilise resources to be able to achieve our goal in the next 10 years", said Rodriguez, who has been selected as the next CEO and Chair of the Global Environment Facility.

The governments of Costa Rica and France are leading the High Ambition Coalition for Nature and People, a grouping of nations pushing for the proposed "30by30" global target.

Rodriguez spoke about how Costa Rica doubled the size of its forest cover and at the same time tripled its economic growth in 30 years.

"I come from a country that has systematically invested in policy development, institutional solutions that balance nature conservation, human wellbeing, and economic development", he said, emphasizing the "short window of opportunity to address the biodiversity collapse".

Rodriguez underlined the correlation between establishing ecotourism protected areas and efforts to restore degraded landscapes, and the growth of the country's economy and income per capita.

In Costa Rica's case, 2.5 million tourists visit the country every year and spend around 3.5 billion USD in total, according to Rodriguez.

Effective management

Sala, meanwhile, stressed the importance of effectively managing protected areas, saying only five per cent of the world's terrestrial protected areas and one per cent of the marine protected areas are considered to be effectively managed.

"When protected areas have higher budget and number of personnel, and active and effective management, they not only restore biodiversity effectively, they provide benefits including jobs for local people through tourism, fisheries; they bring in more economic revenues", Sala said.

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In her opening remarks, Lim said the online discussion on the science and rationale behind the proposed target will help the ASEAN region determine its own contributions to the post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework and define its priority actions to ensure the agreed targets are met.

Lim stressed that setting aside protected areas still remains as one of the most effective ways to tackle biodiversity decline.

“Although we are crafting the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, we are not reinventing the wheel. The ASEAN Member States, all of which are parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, have shown considerable commitment to achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, particularly Target 11, which calls for the protection of at least 17 percent of terrestrial and 10 per cent of marine areas by 2020,” Lim said.

Professor Zakri, on the other hand, noted some of the challenges of biodiversity conservation in the ASEAN region, such as poaching, lack of conservation staff, the need for coordinated efforts in transboundary protected areas, and funding for conservation programmes.

The post-2020 global biodiversity framework will be adopted by the Conference of the Parties to the CBD in its 15th meeting, which was originally scheduled to take place in October this year, in Kunming, China.

The 15th meeting is tentatively expected to take place during the second quarter of 2021, according to the announcement of the CBD Secretariat. (ACB)

Nearly all Madagascar's lemur species 'face extinction'

Published July 10, 2020, 4:01 PM

by Agence France-Presse

Almost all species of lemur, the small saucer-eyed primates native to Madagascar, face extinction, an international conservation body warned on Thursday, adding to its growing list of animals and plants under threat.



Almost all species of lemur, the small saucer-eyed primates native to Madagascar, face extinction, an international conservation body warned on July 9, 2020, adding to its growing list of animals and plants under threat. Of the 107 surviving lemur species on the island, some 103 are threatened, including 33 that are critically endangered — the last stop before “extinct in the wild”, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature said. (Photo by Janine Haidar / AFP)

Of the 107 surviving lemur species on the island, some 103 are threatened, including 33 that are critically endangered — the last stop before “extinct in the wild”, the International Union for the Conservation of Nature said.

The organisation called for a fundamental reimagining of the way humanity interacts with the natural world, in an update to its “Red List of Threatened Species”.

The list assesses 120,372 species and classifies more than 30,000 species as at risk of disappearing.

The report comes amid growing alarm that the planet may have already entered a period of so-called mass extinction, only the sixth in 500 million years.

The United Nations' biodiversity panel IPBES last year warned that up to one million species faced the risk of extinction as a result of humanity's insatiable desire for land and materials.

Grethel Aguilar, the IUCN's acting director general, said the updated list showed “Homo sapiens needs to drastically change its relationship to other primates, and to nature as a whole”.

Lemurs, Madagascar's “treasure”, are among the many precious species unique to the Indian Ocean island.

Japan limits financing of coal power plants

By [Agence France-Presse](#)

July 11, 2020

TOKYO: Japan said it would tighten rules for investment in foreign coal-fired power stations on environmental grounds, but stopped short of ending government funding for projects.

The move comes with the world's 3rd largest economy under fire for financing projects to build coal plants at home and abroad — notably in Southeast Asia.

Economy, Trade, and Industry Minister Hiroshi Kajiyama told reporters the government “has decided to tighten” the rules for supporting investment.

Countries seeking investment would be required to change their “behavior” towards decarbonization, Kajiyama said, but added that the new policy was not about cutting back funding.

“There are developing nations in the world that can only choose coal as an energy source,” he said. Further details were not immediately available.

The government currently provides funding to Japanese companies if their projects meet certain criteria — such as when a foreign country has no options but to choose coal due to economic reasons.

The Global Energy Monitor watchdog said last year that Japan accounted for over US\$4.8 billion in financing for coal power plants abroad — particularly in Indonesia, Vietnam, and Bangladesh.

Kimiko Hirata, international director of the environmental non-governmental organization Kiko Network, said the new investment decision was a “major decision.”

“The coal-fired power stations were the pillar of infrastructure exports for Japan,” she told Agence France-Presse. But Greenpeace criticized the decision as falling short, saying it showed “no clear policy.”

Last week, the government promised to study ways of phasing out older, more polluting coal-fired power stations by 2030, following reports it plans to mothball around 100 aging plants.