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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service

DENR urges Filipinos to switch to plant-based diet

Published July 11, 2020, 2:42 PM

by Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), through its Environmental Management Bureau (EMB), is urging Filipinos to switch to a plant-based diet aiming to help reduce their ecological footprint and help fight climate change.



To this end, the DENR has launched the month-long “Plant-Based Solutions for Climate Change” campaign coinciding with the celebration of July as Nutrition Month.

“Switching to a plant-based diet not only benefits one’s health, it can also help protect the environment due to the smaller environmental footprint plant-based diets tend to have,” EMB Director William Cuñado said in a statement on Saturday.

According to the 2013 study by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, meat and dairy—particularly from cows—account for around 14.5 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions each year, roughly the same amount produced by cars, trucks, airplanes and ships worldwide.

Likewise, a University of Oxford study suggested that cutting meat and dairy products from a person’s diet could reduce the individual’s carbon footprint from food by up to 73 percent.

Cuñado said a plant-based diet could help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, water consumption and land used for factory farming, which are all factors in global warming and environmental degradation.

“By gradually modifying our meals and shifting to balanced diets with more plant-based food, we have already taken part in reducing greenhouse gases, which in turn will help slow down the rise in global temperatures,” he pointed out.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/07/11/denr-urges-filipinos-to-switch-to-plant-based-diet/?fbclid=IwAR0ydeN140bSjDrjLw3xcgW3dk8oLmU9UKDW3W2USy5xYYYhbN4g6JlshPc>



Plant-based diet, isinusulong ng DENR

July 11, 2020 @ 2:58 PM 15 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Upang labanan ang climate change hinikayat ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang mga Filipino na tangkilikin ang “plant-based diet” na napag-alaman na nakakabawas ng “ecological footprint” ng human food consumption”.

Bunsod nito ang DENR, sa pamamagitan ng Environmental Management Bureau (EMB), ay naglunsad ng isang buwang “public information drive” upang hikayatin ang publiko na iwasan ang pagkain ng animal-based products sa halip ay kumain na lamang ng prutas at gulay.

Sinabi ng DENR ang “Plant-Based Solutions for Climate Change,” isang kampanya na nakapaloob sa pagdiriwang ng Nutrition Month ngayong Hulyo, ay nanghihikayat sa mga Filipino na kumain ng mas maraming prutas at gulay, alinsunod na rin sa rekomendasyon ng Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) na balanseng nutrisyon mula sa “three main food groups” – ang “go, grow, and glow” na mga pagkain.

Ayon kay EMB Director William Cunado, ang pagtangkilik sa plant-based diet ay isang paraan upang mabawasan ang environmental impact ng food consumption ng isang tao.

“Switching to a plant-based diet not only benefits one’s health, it can also help protect the environment due to the smaller environmental footprints plant-based diets tend to have,” ani Cuñado.

Nabatid sa DENR base sa isinagawang pag-aaral ng United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization noong 2013, ang pagkain ng karne mula sa hayop partikular na ang karne ng baka, ay nakapagtatala ng 14.5 percent ng global greenhouse gases kada taon. Ito ay halos katumbas ng pinaghalong emission ng mga kotse, truck, eroplano at mga barko sa buong mundo.

Kaugnay nito ayon naman sa pag-aaral ng University of Oxford, ang pagtigil sa pagkain ng meat at dairy products ay nakapagpapabawas ng kanyang cabon footprint ng hanggang 73 percent.

Sinabi pa ni Cunado, sa pamamagitan ng plant-based diet, nababawasan ang greenhouse gas emission, water consumption at land used para sa factory farming, kung saan ang lahat ng ito ay mga sanhi ng global warming at environmental degradation.

“By gradually modifying our meals and shifting to balanced diets with more plant-based food, we have already taken part in reducing greenhouse gases, which in turn will help slow down the rise in global temperatures,” pagdidiin pa ni **Cuñado**.

Nabatid pa sa DENR ang isang buwan na kampanyang ito ay isinasagawa sa pamamagitan ng virtual o online dahil na rin sa restriction dulot ng COVID-19 pandemic.

Ang EMB ay regular na naglalabas ng infographics patungkol sa plant-based diet bilang solusyon sa climate change sa official Facebook page nito upang madali itong maunawaan at sundin ng mga tao.

Naglunsad rin ito ng online food photo contest na tatawaging #UOTD o Ulam of the Day, kung saan ang mga kalahok ay maaring ipadala ang larawan ng kanilang pagkain base sa nakasaad sa Pinggang Pinoy food guide na inirerekomenda ng FNRI.

Ang Pinggang Pinoy ay isang madaling intindihin na food guide na gumagamit na pamilyar na food plate model ng tama at balanseng pagkain. Layunin nito na matulungan ang mga Filipino na magkaroon ng tama at malusog na habit ng pagkain na kailangan para makuha ang pinakamataas na sustansiya na kanilang makukuha sa pagkain.

Nagsimulang tumanggap ng entry ang EMB sa #UOTD noong Hulyo 4 sa pamamagitan ng kanilang email address na eedcentraloffice@gmail.com.

Matatapos ang patimpalak sa ika-20 ng Hulyo. Makikita ang ibang detalye ng patimpalak sa Facebook page ng EMB Central Office. **Santi Celario**

DENR: Baguio council can impose moratorium on

TITLE: tree cutting

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DENR: Baguio council can impose moratorium on tree cutting

By: [Vincent Cabreza](#) - Reporter / [@Inquirer Baguio](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 12:13 PM July 11, 2020



GREEN LIBING. The coronavirus disease has helped revitalize Baguio's green zones due to rules that forced people to stay indoors for months. But now that the quarantine has impacted the economy, some residents have returned to cook using fire wood gathered from wooded areas in order to stretch their household Resources. VINCENT CABREZA INQ

BAGUIO CITY—The city government has the power to impose a moratorium on tree-cutting activities, especially when pine trees are displaced by building constructions, according to a Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) official.

Ralph Pablo, DENR director in Cordillera, on Monday said an ordinance could suspend these activities for a year as Mayor Benjamin Magalong had proposed to Malacañang so he could undertake Baguio's redevelopment.

Pablo was invited to the city council on Monday to shed light on tree cutting permits his office issued in June which drew flak from local officials and residents.

He said some of the new permits were issued to private landowners whose projects were suspended by the Luzon lockdown.

Regreening project

But cutting trees, even within private lands, interferes with a regreening project which Baguio intends to pursue now that some quarantine restrictions have eased in a transition to a "new normal," Magalong said.

Last year, he asked Malacañang to grant Baguio a one-year moratorium on tree cutting and building constructions. But the DENR suggested that the city itself may enact the moratorium through an ordinance which national agencies would heed, Pablo said.

The ordinance on the moratorium would allow the government to review its land use laws, given a pattern of development projects moving into residential zones where Baguio's remaining forests are located, lawyer Rhenan Diwas, the city environment officer, told the council.

DENR: Baguio council can impose moratorium on

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The moratorium would allow Magalong to study a provision in the Baguio environment code regarding safeguarded lands or areas with a significant environmental impact that the government must preserve, Diwas said.

“We cannot protect pine trees inside private properties unless the city exercises its power of eminent domain to buy back safeguarded properties,” Diwas said.

An inventory ordered by Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu last year placed the total number of trees in the summer capital at 2.5 million. Less than 500,000 of these trees are Benguet pine.

Diwas said the city’s forest and green cover had been reduced to about a quarter of Baguio’s 5,750-hectare territory due to urban expansion.

Cutting suspended

In June, a condominium developer was allowed to cut 30 of 54 trees standing in the way of its building project. The developer applied for the permit to cut trees in 2018 but was told to suspend further cutting until the council resolves the issue.

DENR granted another developer a permit to cut more than 70 trees in its project site, Pablo said. The agency also allowed the Philippine Military Academy to cut 53 trees from a tree plantation raised by cadets so it could put up a parking building, he said.

Road projects undertaken by the Department of Public Works and Highways were also given the go-signal to clear obstructions, including trees, Pablo said.

/MUF

What's Baguio without pine trees?

Published 20 hours ago on July 11, 2020 09:51 AM

By [Aldwin Quitasol](#)



ABOUT 30 trees had already been cut to make way for a condominium's construction. W. Commons

The City Environment and Parks Management Office (CEPMO) of Baguio City on Saturday underscored the need to strengthen the moratorium on tree-cutting in the mountainous tourist magnet.

“When we lose the pine trees, we lose the very identity of the city,” CEPMO chief Renan Diwas said in the face of the brouhaha over the planned cutting of 54 trees by Vista Residences in Barangay Outlook Drive.

The company had been ordered during a city council meeting to suspend its tree-cutting activities which it started last 20 June. About 30 trees had already been cut.

Vista Residences, through its technical service officer Allan Santos, told the council that the trees must be cut because they are in the way of the condominium they are building.

He insisted it is not possible to reconfigure the architectural plan of the condominium to save the trees.

p/jhd

Owner, officials of thermal energy firm in Iloilo City

July 12, 2020

TITLE: oil spill charged

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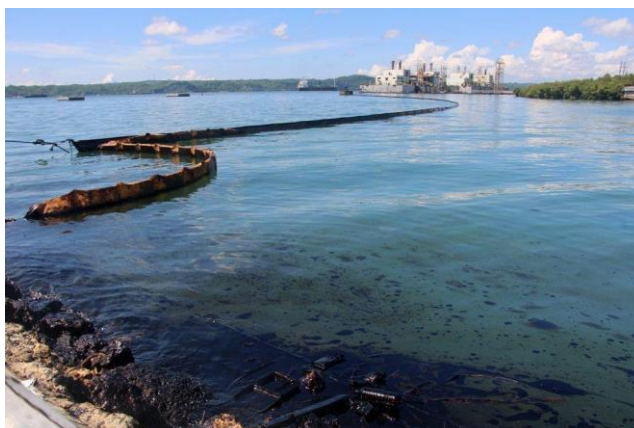
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Owner, officials of thermal energy firm in Iloilo City oil spill charged

Published July 11, 2020, 12:05 PM

by **Betheena Unite**

A criminal complaint has been filed against the owner and officials of the power barge that exploded in the waters off Barrio Obrero, Lapuz District, Iloilo City, causing a massive oil spill affecting several communities.



The oil spill from a power barge owned by AC Energy Philippines in Iloilo City has reached the island province of Guimaras, which is seen in the background. (Tara Yap / MANILA BULLETIN FILE PHOTO)

The Philippine Coast Guard on Saturday said that it has filed a criminal complaint against AC Energy Inc. and its concerned officials for violation of Section 107 of Republic Act (RA) 8550 or The Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998, as amended by RA 10654, on aquatic pollution at the Iloilo Provincial Prosecutor's Office.

“Commander Joe Mercurio of the Coast Guard Station-Iloilo, together with the Coast Guard Legal Affairs Team, found sufficient evidence to prove the negligence of said thermal energy company, its President, John Eric Francia, and Power Barge No. 102 Plant Manager, Roberto Gambito, that led to the oil spill incident in Iloilo City on July 3, 2020,” the Coast Guard said.

The explosion of the power barge contaminated the coastal areas of about 23 communities in Iloilo City, municipality of Dumangas, and Guimaras, including a one-hectare mangrove forest in Iloilo.

It also displaced about 400 residents.

Under Section 107 of RA 8550, “Upon a summary finding of administrative liability, the AC Energy Inc. and its concerned officers shall be punished with fine of P300,000-P500,000 and an additional fine of P15,000 per day until the violation ceases and the fines are paid.”

A cease and desist order, closure, or suspension of the development, construction, or facility, or cessation of operations, or disconnection of water supply may also be imposed against the company.

The order may be issued ex parte pending resolution of the case.

Upon conviction by a court of law, the offenders may face six years and one day to 12 years imprisonment and a fine twice the amount of the administrative fine, and an additional fine of P15,000 per day until the violation ceases and the fines are paid.



Owner, officials of thermal energy firm in Iloilo City

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Vice Admiral George Ursabia Jr., Coast Guard commandant, stressed that the incident should be “a reminder to all industry stakeholders that even the slightest negligence can pose direct or indirect threat on the health and safety of the people, as well as living and non-living aquatic resources.”

“The PCG, as a law enforcement body in marine environmental protection, will ensure that the failure of one company serves as a relevant lesson to others. We need everyone’s cooperation to protect and conserve our limited marine resources,” Ursabia added.

Barge in oil spill rapped by PCG

Published 16 hours ago on July 11, 2020 01:38 PM

By [Pat C. Santos](#)



HE damaged hull of Barge 102. Photo by PCG

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) has filed a complaint for violations of Section 107 of the Philippine Fisheries Code against barge operator AC Energy Inc. over the oil spill incident last 3 July off the waters of Iloilo.

The PCG filed the case at the Iloilo Provincial Prosecutor's Office on Friday against AC Energy president John Eric Francia and Power Barge No. 102 plant manager Roberto Gambito.

An explosion ripped a hole in the hull of the barge with oil contaminating the coastal areas of about 23 communities in Iloilo City, the municipality of Dumangas and Guimaras, as well as a one-hectare mangrove forest in Iloilo.

It also displaced hundreds of families or 400 locals.

Ayala's AC Energy, kinasuhan ng PCG dahil sa oil spill sa Iloilo City

ni [Ronalyne Seminiano Reonico](#) | July 11, 2020



Nagsampa ng kaso ang Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) laban sa Ayala firm AC Energy dahil sa nangyaring oil spill sa Iloilo City kung saan 400 katao ang kinailangang lumikas.

Ayon sa PCG, nalabag ang Fisheries Code o Section 107 of Republic Act No. 10654. Ang sinumang lumabag sa naturang batas ay kinakailangang magbayad ng P300,000 to P500,000 bilang parusa at maaaring makulong ng 6 hanggang 12 taon.

Saad ng PCG, *"Commander Joe Mercurio of the Coast Guard Station – Iloilo, together with the Coast Guard Legal Affairs Team, found sufficient evidence to prove the negligence of said thermal energy company, its President, John Eric Francia, and Power Barge Number 102 Plant Manager Roberto Gambito that led to the oil spill incident in Iloilo City on 03 July 2020.*

"It also displaced hundreds of families or 400 locals who peacefully reside in the said areas when the incident occurred."

Anila, nag-“explode” diumano ang AC Energy’s Power Barge 102 nu’ng July 3 na nagdulot ng kontaminasyon sa ilang lugar ng Iloilo City, Dumangas at Guimaras, gayundin sa isang ektaryang mangrove forest.

Dagdag pa ng PCG, *"Let this incident be a reminder to all industry stakeholders that even the slightest negligence can pose direct or indirect threat on the health and safety of the people, as well as living and non-living aquatic resources."*

Samantala, ayon sa Facebook page ng AC Energy, *"Experts and volunteers have been working round-the-clock to clean-up and mitigate the environmental impact of the spill, rebuild the coastline and most importantly, allow the residents to go back to their homes.*

"Apart from the coordinated efforts with government agencies and leading maritime service provider, Harbor Star, as well as the assistance of several industry players, hundreds of volunteers have stepped up to help remediate the effects of the spill."

Source: <https://www.bulgaronline.com/post/ayala-s-ac-energy-kinasuhan-ng-pcg-dahil-sa-oil-spill-sa-iloilo-city>

PCG files raps vs. AC Energy for oil spill in Iloilo

Published July 11, 2020 8:52am

Updated July 11, 2020 10:30am

The Philippine Coast Guard on Friday filed a criminal complaint against AC Energy and two of its officers before the Iloilo Provincial Prosecutor's Office over the [oil spill that occurred recently](#).

PCG spokesperson Commodore Armand Balilo on Saturday said the complaint was filed for violation of Section 107 of Republic Act 8550 (The Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998) as amended by RA 10654 for aquatic pollution.

Named respondents aside from AC Energy are John Eric T. Francia, company president, and Roberto Gambito, plant manager of Power Barge 102.

According to a PCG press release, Commander Joe Mercurio of the Coast Guard Station – Iloilo, and the Coast Guard Legal Affairs Team "found sufficient evidence to prove the negligence of said thermal energy company, its President, John Eric Francia, and Power Barge Number 102 Plant Manager, Roberto Gambito that led to the oil spill incident in Iloilo City on 03 July 2020."

The oil spill occurred on the afternoon of Friday, July 3, off the waters of Lapuz, Iloilo City.

Ayala-led AC Energy Philippines Inc. said initial investigation showed the oil spill was [caused by a rupture in its barge's fuel tank](#).

"The Company immediately activated containment protocols through containment booms but due to strong ocean waves, some of the fuel oil escaped the confinement area," it added.

AC Energy said the leakage was contained at around 10:00 p.m. the same day, after 170 combined personnel of the company the Coast Guard were deployed.

"After containment, the Company and the Coast Guard immediately started recovery of the remaining floating residue," it said.

Aside from contaminating the waters in Iloilo, the oil spill [has already reached Guimaras](#).

"The explosion of Power Barge Number 102 contaminated the coastal areas of approximately 23 communities in Iloilo City, municipality of Dumangas, and Guimaras, as well as a one-hectare mangrove forest in Iloilo," the PCG said.

"It also displaced hundreds of families or 400 locals who peacefully reside in the said areas when the incident occurred," it added.

PCG Commandant Vice Admiral George Ursabia Jr. said they will "perform further legal actions to ensure that justice will be served."

He added they will work "double time on the recovery and rehabilitation efforts to restore safe living conditions for the residents, and the aquatic flora and fauna in the vicinity waters of the most affected communities."

“Let this incident be a reminder to all industry stakeholders that even the slightest negligence can pose direct or indirect threat on the health and safety of the people, as well as living and non-living aquatic resources. The PCG, as a law enforcement body in marine environmental protection, will ensure that the failure of one company serves as a relevant lesson to others. We need everyone’s cooperation to protect and conserve our limited marine resources,” Ursabia said.

Based on Section 107 of RA 8550, AC Energy and its concerned offices, "upon a summary finding of administrative liability" will be fined P300,000 to P500,000 and an additional P15,000 per day "until the violation ceases and the fines are paid, the imposition of cease and desist order, closure or suspension of the development, construction or facility, or cessation of operations, or disconnection of water supply."

"The order may be issued ex parte pending resolution of the case," the PCG said.

If the court hands down a conviction decision, the offenders will face imprisonment of six years and one day up to 12 years.

They will also face a fine twice the amount of the administrative fine, and an additional fine of Php 15,000 per day until the violation ceases and the fines are paid, the imposition of cease and desist order, closure or suspension of the development, construction or facility, or cessation of operations, or disconnection of water supply. The order may be issued ex parte pending resolution of the case."

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources said [it will impose fines](#) on the barge owner. —**KG, GMA News**



The proposed Philippine Mineral Resources Act is similar to the Alternative Minerals Management Bill which has long been pending in Congress.

Philstar.com/stock

Alternative mining bill filed anew

[Louise Maureen Simeon](#) (The Philippine Star) - July 12, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Grace Poe has filed an alternative mining bill that seeks to regulate exploration and development of resources and ensure equitable sharing of benefits for all.

The proposed Philippine Mineral Resources Act is similar to the Alternative Minerals Management Bill which has long been pending in Congress.

SOS Yamang Bayan Network said the filing of the bill comes at a crucial time when the Department of Environment and Natural Resources announced it was looking at mining as part of the government's economic recovery stimulus to cope with the pandemic.

The new bill places more safeguards for the environment and indigenous peoples, sectors which have taken a beating under the 1995 Mining Act.

The Philippines is a highly mineralized country, with around 14 million hectares of land known to be potential sites for metallic and non-metallic mineral reserves.

However, the local mining industry remains underutilized.

"The flawed provisions of the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 are said to be the culprit behind these limited investments and flawed mining policies, thus further stunting the local economy," the bill said.

"If properly regulated and managed, the Philippine mining industry can be a promising sector for inclusive growth and true human development, particularly if our laws will breathe life and meaning to the right of communities and indigenous peoples to development and to participate in the development process," it said.

The bill seeks to provide the framework for the utilization and management of the country's mineral resources, which will address the needs of the domestic economy and uphold the rights of various stakeholders – from industry workers to indigenous peoples and local communities.

It also seeks to increase the government share to 10 percent from the gross revenues it earns from the development and utilization of mineral resources.

The export of raw mineral ores will be banned, and domestic uses for nation-building

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/business/2020/07/12/2027288/alternative-mining-bill-filed-anew>

Environment advocates ask gov't to stop mining operations in N. Vizcaya

Published July 11, 2020, 1:31 PM

by Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz

Local environmental activists on Saturday appealed to the Philippine government to reject the pending renewal of mining firm Oceanagold Corporation's financial or technical assistance agreement (FTAA) that will allow the company to continue its mining operations in Didipio, Nueva Vizcaya.

Kalikasan made the appeal after the Court of Appeals (CA) dismissed the petition of Australian-Canadian-owned Oceanagold to reverse the Nueva Vizcaya Regional Trial Court (RTC) decision stopping its mining operations.



Kalikasan national coordinator Leon Dulce (KALIKASAN PNE TWITTER/ MANILA BULLETIN FILE PHOTO)

“This latest legal victory upholds the stand of the people of Nueva Vizcaya to reject the illegal, destructive, and plunderous mining operations of Oceanagold,” Kalikasan national coordinator Leon Dulce said.

“Oceanagold must be compelled to return the ancestral lands it is occupying to the indigenous Tuwali people. All outstanding charges filed against the barricaders now proven once again to have just cause in opposing the mine must be likewise rejected,” Dulce added.

The Nueva Vizcaya RTC dismissed the mining company's petition on July 27, 2019 for a temporary restraining order, injunction, and other legal restraints against the executive order of the provincial government of Nueva Vizcaya enforcing the suspension of the gold and copper mining project considering that its FTAA contract already expired last June 20, 2019.

An FTAA is an agreement entered into by the Philippine government and mining firm for the large-scale exploration, development, and utilization of gold, copper, nickel, chromite, lead, zinc, and other minerals except for cement raw materials, marble, granite, sand and gravel, and construction aggregates.

“It is crucial and urgent to immediately close the mine and expedite the rehabilitation of the mine site to mitigate the multiple risks it poses on the COVID-19 pandemic situation faced by the host communities in Vizcaya,” Dulce explained.

He also asked the Philippine National Police to respect the due mandate of barangay officials and citizens in enforcing the full restraint of Oceanagold's operations especially now as upheld by the Court of Appeals.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/07/11/environment-advocates-ask-govt-to-stop-mining-operations-in-n-vizcaya/>

CA denies OceanaGold's appeal to operate mines

By [Leander C. Domingo, TMT](#)

July 12, 2020

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya: The Court of Appeals (CA) has denied OceanaGold Corp.'s petition to continue its mining operations at the Didipio Mines in Kasibu town here.



The Didipio Mine of OceanaGold Philippines Inc. that straddles Quirino and Nueva Vizcaya. PIA PHOTO

The CA 16th division said in a June 30 decision, a copy of which was received by the provincial government here, said OceanaGold's financial and technical assistance agreement (FTAA) has expired and thus the company has no right to continue operating the Didipio Mine.

A national government project, the Didipio Mine's 25-year FTAA was the company's mining license agreement with the Philippine government signed in 1994. It initially covered an area of approximately 37,000 hectares located within the provinces of Nueva Vizcaya and Quirino. It was later reduced to 10,266 hectares.

OceanaGold's FTAA's effective date was June 20, 1994 and the initial term of the agreement ended on June 20, 2019.

"Since the initial term of the FTAA already expired without it being renewed yet, there is no prevailing agreement on which the petitioner can anchor its right to continue its mining operations," the CA decision stated.

As soon as the FTAA expired on June 10 of last year, Gov. Carlos Padilla issued an advisory that led Barangay Didipio officials to issue Resolution 59, stopping OceanaGold's operations.

OceanaGold sought judicial recourse with the Regional Trial Court, which the latter denied the company's application for injunctive relief.



The zoo management converted an idle 200-square meter lot previously used for horseback riding into an urban garden.

City of Manila Official Website

Manila Zoo sets up urban garden to feed animals

[Marc Jason Cayabyab](#) (The Philippine Star) - July 12, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The administration of the Manila Zoo in Malate has come up with a self-sustaining way to feed its herbivore or plant-eating animals amid the uncertain times brought about by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

The zoo management converted an idle 200-square meter lot previously used for horseback riding into an urban garden.

With the zoo shuttered to the public since January last year, compounded by a community quarantine that shut down public parks and hampered supply deliveries, the zoo management had to come up with a way to grow its own food for its animals and personnel.

According to Manila Zoo's officer-in-charge Alipio Morabe Jr., the seedlings were provided by the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Plant Industry and uses the zoo animals' manure as fertilizer.

They started the project last April, and this month their labors bore fruit, with a bountiful harvest that supplied food for the herbivores – species of birds, carabao or water buffaloes, rabbits, zebras and elephants.

“We were worried that we would be short of food for the animals. I was worried for our herbivore animals, so we thought of using the animals' dung for the garden, and within a month, the plants started to sprout,” Morabe told The STAR.

Among the fruits and vegetables grown in the zoo garden are ampalaya (bitter melon), okra, eggplant, alugbati, mustard, patola (silk squash or ribbed loofah), upo (bottle gourd) and kalabasa (squash).

The manure of the zoo's only elephant Mali, who has lived in the zoo for over 40 years, was also used as fertilizer. The gardener was surprised that watermelons and melons, which no one planted, sprouted from Mali's dung.

“Sprouts of melon and watermelon came out of Mali’s manure because she had been eating the two fruits,” Morabe said of Mali.

In May, Morabe assured the public that Mali is fed with nutritious food twice a day and given vitamins to ensure that she is protected against diseases, including COVID-19.

Several animal rights groups have called for the release of Mali, saying the animal has been kept captive from her home country Sri Lanka for more than four decades.

The zoo administrator’s fears for the animals’ welfare during the quarantine period prompted the management to be self-sufficient in its food, Morabe said.

“We need to be self-sufficient now. Because the supply is bountiful, even the people of the zoo share in the food, but of course the animals are the priority,” he added.

Manila Mayor Isko Moreno supported the zoo’s urban garden during the pandemic, Morabe said. The mayor has also supported the renovation of the zoo, which first opened to the public on July 25, 1959.

In January 2019, then Manila mayor Joseph Estrada ordered the temporary closure of the zoo to allow the Office of the City Administrator and the city’s Department of Engineering and Public Works to conduct a “proper study and assessment.” This was after Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu tagged the zoo’s sewage as a major pollutant of Manila Bay, with the zoo’s untreated sewage being drained into one of the bay’s estuaries.

The zoo has remained shut since then. When Moreno took over in 2019, he vowed to renovate the zoo and make it family- and animal-friendly.

The city government is working on improving the zoo with glass barriers to separate visitors and the animals when it reopens by late 2021, Morabe said. A fishing lake is also being developed.

Part of the renovation blueprint of the city government is a thesis by University of Santo Tomas architecture student Kevin Siy for the redevelopment of the zoo to make it closer to the animals’ natural habitat.

In Siy’s design, Mali will have a bigger pen with loam sand to cushion her feet. She is currently kept inside a concrete enclosure.

Morabe said the renovated Manila Zoo will be open to the public next year with better and more spacious facilities for the animals as well as a sewage treatment plant.

DOST-FPRDI prioritizes study of tree plantation species

By [BusinessMirror](#)

July 12, 2020



Large-fruited red mahogany (left) and river red gum (right) are two of the most common ITPS planted in the country.

The country's wood industries have been suffering from a shortage of raw materials for many years now. This has been caused mainly by decades of indiscriminate logging which have systematically reduced the areas of the country's natural growth forests.

To help beef up the country's wood supply, the Department of Science and Technology's Forest Products Research and Development Institute (DOST-FPRDI) started a research program for studying different kinds of tree plantation species (TPS).

According to the institute's Dr. Dwight A. Eusebio, "TPS are fast-growing trees that are either native or introduced to a particular place, and grown in tree farms at least half a hectare in size."

Tree farms or plantations became popular in the Philippines since the 1980s, and especially in the last 10 years after the government finally imposed a logging moratorium on all natural growth forests.

TPS are grown mainly as substitutes to traditional species, and those commonly found in local tree farms, include yemane (*Gmelina arborea* Roxb.); malapapaya (*Polyscias nodosa* [Blume] Seeman); mangium (*Acacia mangium* Willd.); river red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis* Dehnh); falcata (*Falcataria moluccana* [Miq.] Barneby & J.W. Grimes); large-fruited red mahogany (*Eucalyptus pellita* F.v. Muell); large-leaf mahogany (*Sweitenia macrophylla* King) and bagras (*Eucalyptus deglupta* Blume).

"DOST-FPRDI studies TPS not only because they make good construction and housing materials, but also because they have a host of other industrial uses," Eusebio said.

They can be used for pulp and paper, veneer and plywood, composite boards (particleboard, fiberboard, etc.), power and telecommunication poles, and packaging materials (pallets, fruit boxes, crates, etc.).

They can also be tapped for builders woodworks (doors, windows, door and window jambs, moldings, balusters, stairs and railings, shingles and shakes, parquets, etc.), fancy woodwork, wooden shoes, pencil slats, ice cream spoons, chopsticks, matchsticks, toothpicks and many more.

Eusebio explained: “The uses of wood, of course, are dependent on its inherent qualities. For example, is the wood light or heavy? Durable or not? Easy or difficult to dry, machine or finish? These are some things we need to know to determine its applications.

“Thus, for three decades now, DOST-FPRDI researchers from diverse fields have been looking into the properties of 15 TPS [mostly eucalypts and acacias]—their anatomical, chemical, physical and mechanical, sawmilling, machining, finishing, drying characteristics, natural durability and treatability.”

All the information generated has consequently been published in handbooks and bulletins.

“In the coming years, we are committed to conduct research and development studies on other TPS that have not yet been tapped by our client-industries,” Eusebio added.

According to the Forest Management Bureau of the Department of Science and Technology, the wood sector needs about 6 million cubic meters of raw materials a year. This is way beyond the 1 million cubic meters produced, 75 percent of which is supplied by tree plantations.

Rizalina K. Araral/S&T Media Service



Filipino soldiers have some fun with a captured megabat. Smoking is bad for you!

Bat's entertainment

[THE X-PAT FILES](#) - [Scott Garceau](#) (The Philippine Star) - July 12, 2020 - 12:00am

I've lived in the Philippines a long time. I've seen a lot of strange things.

So why is it I've never encountered the giant Golden-Crown Flying Fox Bat?

People on social media are hip to the Golden-Crown Flying Fox Bat. There are photos circulating online that look 1,000 percent fake of some nightmarish man-sized thing hanging upside-down from a Filipino dude's porch in the provinces. There's a Filipino kid in the lower corner, for scale, next to a motorcycle and a basket of fruit hanging nearby. And in the center, a slumbering man-sized bat creature that's pretty hard to miss.

Everyone who sees it says it's a fake. I thought it was fake. Like, just your average guy, wrapped in a black cloth, wearing a bat mask, hanging by his toes. Just the kind of thing that Filipino web pranksters have been known to do for laughs.

But according to Snopes.com, it's for reals. There's a category of really scary Chiroptera called "megabats," some of which reach almost six-foot wingspans. They point out the original photo was posted on Reddit in 2018 and captioned "Golden Crowned Flying Fox" (*Acerodon jubatus*), also known as the Golden-Capped Fruit Bat.

My daughter brought the über-creepy photo to my attention, and I decided to investigate. (She doesn't think it's a bat, though; she's convinced it's aswang.)

Typically, people post up horrified reactions to the viral photo:

"Remember when I told y'all about the Philippines having human-sized bats?" wrote one user. "Yeah, this was what I was talking about."

"Just imagine this bat waking up and flying straight at you," another posted. "I'd leave the country."

"Dude that's a vampire," wrote another.

Snopes even posted another angle of the same bat, and that one's even creepier... because it appears to be awakening from a nap.



Bat!: This photo of a giant Golden-Crown Flying Fox Bat is one of the few viral sensations that's not urban myth.

There's also one of Filipino soldiers who have apparently strung up one of the megabats, and inserted what looks like a... cigarette?... in its mouth. Pranksters, I tell ya.

Some perspective is required: these megabats are rare, fruit eaters, endemic to the forests of Philippines, weighing about two to three pounds. Despite the scary photos, they are not human-sized; their bodies are typically one to two feet, the size of an infant or toddler, but the wingspan makes them look absolutely horrifying. They're harmless vegetarians, so even when they come barreling towards you in your sweat-soaked nightmares tonight, they're probably just looking for some mango to suck on. And they're endangered, so if you want to Adopt A Megabat, maybe WWF can get cracking on that.

Almost a bigger mystery than the freakishly huge bat is the question of where the photos actually come from. Snopes seems to verify the original Reddit poster is from the Philippines. Since it first came to light, the original porch-hanging bat image has been recirculating regularly, garnering about 270,000 likes and 70,000 comments.

And yet, I've never seen one in real life.

We watch the skies most nights and, at around dusk, the bats start flitting around, looking for bugs and fruit, I suppose. But they're the bats of mini-nightmares. Tiny, frisky little winged rodents. Not megabats.

We've visited Club Paradise in Palawan, just a boat-ride away from the infamous Calait animal preserve stocked by Marcos with giraffes and zebras back in the '70s. Every night at sunset, the bats take off en masse from Club Paradise's leafy forests circling the beach and head out like a squadron straight from Apocalypse Now. It's a breathtaking sight.

But no megabats.

Megabats would be easy to spot here. With that kind of wingspan, one of these things would make a pretty majestic — albeit blood-curdling — sight, if they ever came soaring across Metro Manila skies.

Whenever I think an enormous bat is weird, alarming news, I remind myself that the Philippines is a factory of weird, alarming news. Off-the-charts weirdness. The fun, non-lethal kind is my favorite.

This is the home of the Bionic Boy, after all, said to have been adopted by the Marcoses as a sort of mascot, and known for his ability to tell the future, make phone calls without the aid of telephones, and conjure up fried chicken from thin air.

This is a place where military coup plotters were thwarted by an actual tank driving through the front lobby of the Manila Peninsula during GMA's term. Just like a Dwayne Johnson movie.

This a place where midgets bash each other silly in a miniature boxing ring in Padre Burgos while foreigners pay cash to cheer them on, and where ghosts haunt the old concrete Manila Film Center.

So of course, a huge megabat fits right into the mise en scène.

A megabat would probably take our minds off of the COVID lockdown, and the sudden return of horrific traffic. It would be something to talk about besides the Anti-Terror Law. Filipinos, in general, have an affinity for bats, or at least Bat-Men. There is the familiar phrase, delivered with a shrug whenever uncertainty arises: "Bahala na si Batman."

So where's the giant Golden-Crown Flying Fox Bat been hiding?

Doesn't it know that now would be a perfect time to show its furry face, when the world seems to be plummeting down so many simultaneous rabbit-holes of apocalyptic surreality that an enormous bat creature would just make perfect, Biblical-level sense?

Forget about the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. We need a sign from the skies. We need the megabat!

* * *

Follow scottgarceau on IG, visit www.xpatfiles.com.

LATEST

COVID in PHL cases breach 54K

Published 12 hours ago on July 11, 2020 06:16 PM

By [Gabbie Parlade](#)



The Department of Health (DoH) reported 1,387 confirmed cases on Saturday as the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) infections in the country breached the 54,000 mark with a total of 54,222.

A large part of the new cases reported came from the 918 fresh cases or those with results that were released to patients within the last three days and the Health department said that 79 duplicates out of the total cases had been removed.

The number of recoveries, on the other hand, rose to 14,037 after 807 recuperations were reported, while the death toll now stands at 1,372 following 12 fatalities recorded.

Meanwhile, the DoH also said that a majority of the deaths were from the regions of CALABARZON, Central Luzon, and NCR while the two recently fallen COVID-19 patients added in the tally were from the Central Visayas.

To date, the Philippines still ranks at the second spot out next to China with the most number of COVID-19 cases in the Western Pacific region as recorded by the World Health Organization (WHO).



In a press briefing, acting Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Karl Chua said the slower decline in trade performance, the softer decline in manufacturing output, as well as the rise in capacity utilization in firms last May all point to a pickup in economic activity in line with the relaxation of quarantine measures in several areas.

STAR/ File

'Economy on way to recovery'

[Czeriza Valencia](#) (The Philippine Star) - July 12, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The economy is starting to recover but remains in a fragile state as shown by recent indicators, the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) said.

In a press briefing, acting Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Karl Chua said the slower decline in trade performance, the softer decline in manufacturing output, as well as the rise in capacity utilization in firms last May all point to a pickup in economic activity in line with the relaxation of quarantine measures in several areas.

Recovery in consumer demand and the return of more people to work also caused consumer prices to accelerate to 2.5 percent in June after four consecutive months of slowdown. This, however, can still be expected to remain within the government's target range of between two to four percent.

Chua noted, however, that this recovery remains vulnerable to the continued rise in cases as well as the limited mass transportation for people returning to work.

"Recent developments show that the economy has begun to recover, but from a very difficult position," he said.

"Opening up the economy and bringing back livelihoods safely require massive testing, including workers. For this, we support the decision to expand the testing protocol, to begin testing workers also, to bring back confidence to the economy. We also support the resumption of sufficient and safe public transport to facilitate the return to work," he said.

With the transition to general community quarantine and modified general community quarantine – the less severe versions of the enhanced community quarantine that essentially shut down the economy – 75 percent of the economy has reopened.

However, only 50 percent of the public transport system in the country are now operational in keeping with social distancing measures intended to curb the spread of the new coronavirus that causes the COVID-19 disease.

Economic stimulus measures meant to jumpstart key industries, provide wage support to workers, and strengthen the country's health system among others, remain pending in Congress.

A further threat to recovery would be the reimposition of the ECQ in the National Capital Region as the number of COVID-19 cases continue to rise and hospitals become endangered of becoming overburdened.

The economy is already widely expected to enter a technical recession in the second quarter of the year after a 0.2 percent decline in output in the first quarter of the year.

For the entire year, the economy is expected to contract by two to 3.4 percent.

Economic managers have already conceded that second quarter performance will be worse but have hopes the a rebound will occur in the last two quarters of the year.

"What we know from the latest data is the second quarter will be worse than the first quarter and it will be better in the third quarter. I don't know to what extent it will be worse so we have to look at the data as we see them," said Chua.

As seen in the effect of the severe two-month lockdown in the second quarter of the year particularly on trade and manufacturing data as well as on employment, Chua said the reimposition of enhanced community quarantine will necessitate a new review of macroeconomic assumptions for the year.

"We are seeing actually from the latest data in April and May is that the impact of ECQ is much more severe than expected," said Chua. "So once we see the newest data we are going to revise our macro-economic assumptions."

Virus airborne transmission: DoH agrees with WHO

By [Red Mendoza](#)

July 12, 2020

Airborne transmission of coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) is only limited to specific closed settings such as restaurants and hospitals, the Department of Health (DoH) said on Saturday, agreeing with the World Health Organization's (WHO) earlier acknowledgment that the virus might be spread in the air under certain conditions.



A COVID-19 testing associate dressed in personal protective equipment (PPE) watches a man cough into his arm as part of a self-administered test at a testing center at Lincoln Park amid the coronavirus pandemic on July 07, 2020 in Los Angeles, California. Mario Tama/Getty Images/AFP

The statement came after the WHO recently said airborne transmission of Covid-19 is “possible” in closed spaces and inadequate ventilation, such as restaurants, nightclubs, places of worship and workplaces where people might be singing or talking, aside from aerosol transmission in hospitals.

“In these outbreaks, aerosol transmission, particularly in these indoor locations where there are crowded and inadequately ventilated spaces where infected persons spend long periods of time with others, cannot be ruled out,” the WHO said.

According to Philippine Health Undersecretary and spokesman Maria Rosario Vergeire, they have recognized the transmission of the virus in hospitals, citing many aerosol-induced procedures.

“Kaya nga po naka-complete PPE (personal protective equipment) ang ating mga health workers. (That is why our health workers wear complete PPE)” Vergeire said during her regular segment in the Laging Handa public briefing aired on PTV-4.

She added that with the airborne transmission possible in closed settings, they have recommended that restaurants and other sectors should only be confined to open-air settings.

“Kaya nga po tayo nagkaroon ng rekomendasyon na sana kung magkakaroon ng pagbubukas ng sektor tulad ng restaurants, it should be in open air para po hindi tayo nagkakaroon ng ganitong instances (That is why we had a recommendation that when we open other sectors such as restaurants, it should be in open air so that there won't be instances like this),” Vergeire said.

On Saturday, the DoH recorded an additional 1,387 new cases of Covid-19 in the country, bringing the overall tally to 54,222, with 38,813 total active cases

There were 918 fresh cases in the total new cases, while 469 were part of the continuing backlog of samples that have been processed by the Health department based on 71 out of 79 sub-national Covid-19 laboratories.

Recoveries reached 807, for a total of 14,037 total recoveries, while 12 people, nine in April, one in May and two in July, were added to the death tally, now at 1,372.

Of the overall number of cases, a total of 600 Covid-19 patients are registered in the WHO's solidarity trial for drugs, the Department of Science and Technology (DoST) said over the weekend.

In a video aired over DoSTv's Facebook page, DoST Secretary Fortunato de la Peña said the patients came from 22 active sites across the Philippines.

De la Peña added that two drugs are being eyed as a possible treatment for Covid-19 under the trial: remdesivir and ritonavir-lopinavir with interferon beta.

The trial used to include in its tests the anti-malaria drug hydroxychloroquine and ritonavir-lopinavir but they were recently removed from the roster over safety issues and effectivity.

“Ang analysis po sa hydroxychloroquine at lopinavir/ritonavir ay natapos na. And after the results have been analyzed,..[the] WHO [said these are] ineffective at hindi recommended to be used (The analysis of hydroxychloroquine at lopinavir/ritonavir is done. After the results have been analyzed, the WHO said these are ineffective and not recommended to be used),” de la Peña said.

Earlier, he announced that the DoST together with the University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital has started its one-year study on the effectiveness of convalescent plasma therapy as Covid-19 treatment.

De la Peña disclosed that the Philippines ranked fifth worldwide in terms of the number of Covid-19 patients enrolled in the WHO solidarity trial.

He said Canada and India expressed interest to collaborate with the Philippines for Covid-19 vaccine development.

“Ang deklarasyon pong ito ay nagbibigay sa Pilipinas ng mas maraming options for vaccines that we can make available in the country (This declaration gives the Philippines options for vaccines that we can make available in the country),” according to the DoST secretary.

Also earlier, the government's coronavirus task force approved the Philippines' collaboration in trials for five vaccines — three from Sinovac, Sinophar and the Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences in China and two being developed by Adimmune Corp. and Academia Sinica in Taiwan.

The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), through its Foreign Service Posts, has initiated coordination and exchanges of information with different jurisdictions across the Americas, Asia and the Pacific, Europe, Africa and the Middle East regarding Covid-19 vaccine developments.

In a statement, it said its initiative is in line with efforts of the Philippine government to ensure that a viable vaccine for Covid-19 may be available to Filipinos in the soonest possible time.

According to the DFA, information on vaccine developments and potential international partners were endorsed by the department to the DoST, the chairman of the Sub-Technical Working Group on Covid-19 Vaccine Clinical Trials.

Based on the gathered information by the DFA, collaboration with Philippine subsidiaries of vaccine developers, engagement with those overseas for conduct of clinical trials, utilization of multilateral efforts to ensure vaccine access and bilateral cooperation are key efforts that must be pursued to ensure that a viable vaccine can be made available and accessible for Filipinos.

The DFA has also been engaged in processing and facilitating international humanitarian assistance for the government's Covid-19 response.

As of July 6, 2020, it has processed and assisted in facilitation assistance from nine foreign governments and six of their medical agencies, four international organizations and 33 private companies, groups and individuals.

The DFA has also assisted in obtaining flight clearances and in issuing visas to foreign technical experts in relation to Covid-19-related procurement of the Philippine Red Cross and to the Asian Development Bank grant to the DoH.

It is also facilitating receipt of Japan's grant aid in support of the DoH's response to Covid-19 and other health emergencies.

With reports from JAN ARCILLA AND JAVIER JOE ISMAEL

'Airborne transmission ng COVID-19, kailangan pa ng mabusising pag-aaral' – DOH

By [Bombo Sol Marquez](#)

-July 11, 2020 | 7:38 PM

Naniniwala ang Department of Health na hindi malabo ang posibilidad ng airborne transmission ng coronavirus infectious disease sa mga indoor settings.

Sinabi ni Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire na maaari itong mangyari sa lugar tulad ng ospital na mayroong aerosol-producing equipment o maging sa opisina, restaurants o gym.

Dahil dito ay nagkaroon ng rekomendasyon ang ahensya na kung sakaling itutuloy ang pagbubukas ng ibang sektor ay dapat daw gawing prayoridad ang mga open air areas para hindi magkaroon ng ganitong pangyayari.

Kahapon nga ay inihayag ng World Health Organization na hindi nito tinatanggal ang posibilidad ng lalong pagkalat ng virus sa pamamagitan ng hangin.

Ito'y matapos hikayatin ang nasabing international body ng halos 200 scientists na baguhin ang una nitong inlabas na rekomendasyon tungkol sa sakit.

Hindi rin ikinaila ng kalihim na habang tumatagal ang laban ng Pilipinas sa COVID-19 ay mas lalong tumataas ang kaso na naitatala kada araw.

Nagbigay din ng update si Usec. Vergeire tungkol sa pamamahagi ng pamahalaan sa ayuda na matatanggap ng mga pamilya ng fallen frontliners para sa di matatawarang serbisyo ng mga ito.

Ayon kay Vergeire, naibigay na nila ang mga ayuda sa unang listahan na kanilang hawak kung saan dumaan umano sa verification ang pagkamatay ng mga frontliners maging yung severe and critical cases.

Sa ngayon ay hinihintay na lamang daw ng ahensya ang pag-uusap ng national agencies at pati na rin ang extension ng batas upang malaman kung paano matutugunan ang pamimigay ng ayuda.

Source: <https://www.bomboradyo.com/airborne-transmission-ng-covid-19-kailangan-pa-ng-mabusising-pag-aaral-doh/>

Mga namatay sa COVID-19 papayagan nang ilibing, pero may kondisyon – DOH exec

By [Bombo Bam Orpilla](#)

-July 12, 2020 | 4:27 AM

Papayagan na umano ang paglilibing sa mga nasawing pasyente na kinapitan ng coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), ngunit sa ilalim ng ilang mga kondisyon.

Sa isang panayam, sinabi ni Department of Health (DOH) spokesperson USec. Maria Rosario Vergeire, batid daw nila na marami nang mga crematorium facilities ang hindi na kaya pang mag-accomodate ng karagdagang mga bangkay.

Batay kasi sa sanitation code, sa oras na mamatay ang isang pasyente dahil sa anumang uri ng nakahahawang sakit ay dapat itong ma-cremate sa loob ng 12 oras.

Sa kasagsagan ng coronavirus pandemic, kaya ng mga crematorium na magproseso ng hanggang walong mga labi araw-araw.

Pero dahil sa tumataas na demand, may crematorium sa Quezon City ang naubusan na ng urn para sa mga patay.

Ayon kay Vergeire, hindi na maaaring hukaying muli ang bangkay sa oras na inilibing na ito.

“Kailangan double-sealed ‘yung bag, kailangan ‘yung casket adequately sealed din ‘yan at kailangan kapag isinara na natin at na-seal na ang ating individuals, hindi na ‘yan puwedeng buksan kahit kailan,” ani Vergeire.

Optional retirement package gains ground

Published 3 hours ago on July 12, 2020 03:10 AM

By [Jom Garner](#)



Civil Service Commissioner (CSC) Aileen Lizada on Friday said she favors the adjustment of the optional retirement age for government workers.

Current age for optional retirement is 60-years-old while the mandatory retirement age is 65-years-old.

Lizada said 99.9 percent of the government workers she had surveyed during her visit to various government agencies and local government units from Luzon to Mindanao favor early retirement.

“We have the highest optional age of retirement among Asean countries, which is 60 (-years-old) optional. We also have the highest mandatory age of retirement among Asean countries, which is 65 (-years-old),” she said.

Lizada thanked the House of Representatives for approving on the third and final reading a bill filed by Ako Bicol Partylist Rep. Alfredo Garbin, lowering the optional retirement age for government workers from 60 years to 56 years.

“It is now up to the Senate. Let us infuse new blood into the system, let us give them the option,” she said. “Personally, here in my office, I am for the lowering of the age of optional retirement from 60 to 56.”

The CSC, meanwhile, is inviting all government agencies to participate in the government online career fair this September as part of the 120th anniversary of the Philippine Civil Service.

Lizada said this is the right time to give the people the chance to serve by working in the government, especially at this time when many have lost their jobs and are on the lookout for new opportunities because of the coronavirus disease 2019 outbreak.

Lizada noted that the government should be the number one employer and the CSC serves as the central personnel employment agency.

Now that the government has initiated the “Balik Probinsya” Program, its beneficiaries may also avail of the career fair so they can start anew in the province.

Lizada said 11 government agencies have enrolled in the career fair. These are the Land Transportation Office 1 (Ilocos region), a local government unit in Northern Luzon, LandBank of the Philippines, Puerto Princesa City, Philippine Children's Medical Center, Samar Provincial Hospital, National Economic and Development Authority, Monsanto High School (formerly Sta. Lucia High School), Bureau of Jail Management and Penology 4-B (Mimaropa), Department of Education Division City of Iligan, and Department of Science and Technology Advance Science and Technology Institute.

To participate, government agencies may enroll until 14 August while the career fair will be held from 14 to 18 September.

South China Sea Code of Conduct, COVID-19 pandemic top agenda of meet

By: [Jerome Aning](#) - Reporter / [@JeromeAningINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:00 AM July 12, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — The ongoing negotiations for a new South China Sea Code of Conduct and the continuing battle to contain the new coronavirus disease were among the items discussed in the recent Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean)-China senior officials' consultation held for the first time, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said on Friday.

The Philippines, in its capacity as country coordinator for Asean-China dialogue relations for 2018 to 2021, cochaired the meeting last July 1, which reviewed progress in Asean-China strategic partnership and discuss its future direction.

Regional peace

Foreign Assistant Secretary Junever Mahilum-West, director-general of the Asean-Philippines National Secretariat, represented the Philippine delegation while the Chinese delegation was led by Chen Xiaodong, assistant foreign minister.

In a statement, the DFA said the senior officials exchanged views on the “collective aspiration to agree to an effective and substantive Code of Conduct in the South China Sea that will contribute to regional peace, security and stability and is in accordance with international law, including the 1982 United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea.”

“Asean and China discussed maritime cooperation initiatives to further build trust and confidence in the region,” the DFA said.

TITLE: CSC urges gov't offices, job seekers to participate in
the online career fair in September

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DATE

CSC urges gov't offices, job seekers to participate in the online career fair in September

By Jimmyley E. Guzman Published on July 11, 2020

PASIG CITY, July 11 (PIA) – The Philippine Civil Service Commission (CSC) enjoins government offices and job seekers to participate in the online career fair in September.

CSC Commissioner Atty. Aileen Lizada, during the Laging Handa Public Briefing on Friday, discussed the upcoming Government Online Career Fair (GOCF) that will be conducted as part of the 120th year anniversary of the Philippine Civil Service.

"Every September, we celebrate the Philippine Civil Service Anniversary... the whole bureaucracy. This coming September, we are celebrating the 120th year. Part of the activity po, libre po ito, this is a 2020 Government Online Career Fair. Isang activity po ito na binibigay ng civil service para po doon sa mga naghahanap ng trabaho or those who would like to try serving government."

The CSC official invited all government agencies to participate in the online career fair which will be held on September 14 to 18, 2020.

"Right now, we are encouraging all government agencies to enroll. The period of enrollment is from July 1 to August 14, 2020," Lizada said, adding that as of July 9, 11 government agencies have already enrolled.

Lizada said last year, there were about 7,327 vacant positions in the government, however, only 5,171 have applied.

"Let us fill your unfilled positions. May programa na po yung gobyerno, Balik Probinsya. Marami na ho tayong mga JOs (Job Orders) at yung ating mga casuals. Kasi hindi na nga ho sila nakakapasok sa gobyerno. Let us open or unfilled positions," Lizada said as she encouraged government agencies to register and participate in the career fair.

"Kami ho sa CSC we are the central personal employment agency. So, we are encouraging government agencies, from July 1 to August 14, please register."

Comm. Lizada also said that CSC has a tie up with JobStreet.com. She further explained that corresponding government agencies who have enrolled will have an online, one-time seminar on how the system works which will be on August 28 to September 11, 2020.

"Let us help, marami hong nangangailangan ng trabaho ho ngayon. Bigay ho natin sa kanila yung opportunity to serve the government and likewise be financially empowered."

She encouraged those who have the heart to join the government service to participate in the upcoming online career fair to be conducted *September 14 to 18, 2020*.

Lizada said, interested applicants should sign up with JobStreet.com. *"Yung job applicant po kailangan ho meron kayong account sa JobStreet.com. Kung wala naman po kayong account, you can create an account by visiting JobStreet.com and then you click the free sign up icon and follow the instructions."*

TITLE: CSC urges gov't offices, job seekers to participate in
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The CSC official also stressed the importance of having the right number of people in an agency.

Lizada said there are around 1.8 to 1.9 million government employees, but still lacking in numbers because each agency has an organizational structure that would determine the number of employees needed to run the agency.

"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," adding that government agencies can respond well and do-away with JOs. (PIA-NCR)



Phivolcs continues to monitor Bulusan activities

By Mar Serrano July 11, 2020, 11:39 am



TAKING A BREATHER. Mount Bulusan in Sorsogon. Seismic instruments on Friday (July 10, 2020) failed to detect any volcanic events for the past 24-hour observation period. (PNA file photo by Nonie Enolva)

LEGAZPI CITY – Mount Bulusan in Sorsogon, which has been rocked by a series of volcanic quakes in the past several days, has taken a breather as seismic instruments failed to detect any volcanic event in the past 24-hour observation period.

A bulletin released by the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) on Friday said its monitoring network did not detect any volcanic quake while weak emission of white steam-laden plumes that cascaded downslopes from the lower southeast vent was observed.

Paul Alanis, acting Phivolcs resident volcanologist, said in an interview that they are adopting a “wait and see” stand, considering that the “lull” exhibited by the volcano could mean either it is gathering steam for a volcanic event or returning to a normal state.

Alanis, however, advised the public to remain vigilant, just like in any other disaster event.

“Huwag tayong maging kampante (Let us not be complacent), a lull before a storm,” he added.

Alanis explained that volcanic quakes occur when rock fracturing and degassing beneath the volcano’s vent takes place.

The Phivolcs monitoring instruments have recorded more than 80 volcanic quakes in the past five days, prompting the agency to raise the volcano status to Alert Level 1 (Abnormal).

It reiterated its warning to the public not to enter the 4-km.-radius Permanent Danger Zone, including the 2-km. Extended Danger Zone on the southeastern sector of the volcano due to a sudden and hazardous phreatic eruption.

The Phivolcs also informed civil aviation authorities to advise airplane pilots to avoid flying close to the volcano’s summit as ash from any sudden phreatic eruption can be hazardous to aircraft. (PNA)



Bulkang Bulusan patuloy na binabantayan ng Phivolcs

July 11, 2020 @ 2:03 PM 17 hours ago

Sorsogon – Tila nanahimik ang Bulkang Bulusan sa Sorsogon makaraang hindi makapagtala ng anumang volcanic event ang seismic instruments sa nakalipas na 24 oras.

Ayon sa inilabas na bulletin ng Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) nitong Biyernes, sinabi nitong walang naitalang volcanic quake ang monitoring network nito habang naobserbahan ang weak emission ng white steam-laden plumes mula sa mas mababang southeast vent.

“Huwag tayong maging kampante, a lull before a storm,” ayon kay Paul Alanis, acting Phivolcs resident volcanologist.

Ipinaliwanag ni Alanis na nagaganap ang volcanic quakes kapag nagkaroon ng pagbibitak-bitak sa bato at degassing sa ilalim ng vent ng bulkan.

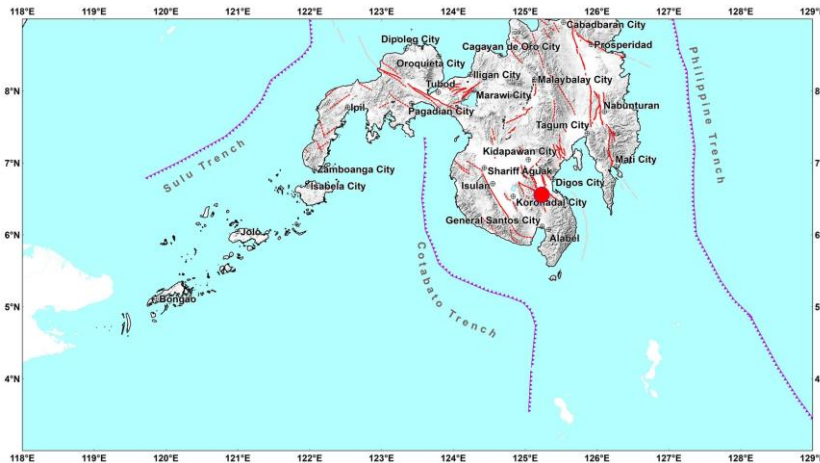
Nakapagtala ng higit sa 80 volcanic earthquakes ang Phivolcs sa nakalipas na limang araw, dahilan upang itaas ito sa Alert Level 1 (Abnormal).

Muli namang nagpaalala ang ahensya na huwag pumasok sa 4-km.-radius Permanent Danger Zone, kabilang ang 2-km. Extended Danger Zone dahil sa biglaan at mapanganib na phreatic eruption. **RNT/MM**

Magnitude 5.2 earthquake shakes Mindanao

By: [Katrina Hallare](#) - Reporter / [@KHallareINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 09:58 AM July 11, 2020



MANILA, Philippines — A magnitude 5.2 earthquake jolted a large swath of Mindanao in the early hours of Saturday, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said.

The inland quake, which struck at 2:16 a.m. beneath Davao Region, centered 11 kilometers southeast of Kiblawan town in Davao del Sur.

There were no immediate reports of damage or injury from the tremblor that was of tectonic origin and occurred at a 19-kilometer depth of focus.

Phivolcs said that the quake was also felt in the following areas:

Reported Intensity V – Bansalan and Magsaysay, Davao del Sur

Instrumental Intensity IV – Kidapawan City; Tupi, South Cotabato; Malungon, Sarangani

Instrumental Intensity II – Alabel, Sarangani; General Santos City;

Instrumental Intensity I – Kiamba, Sarangani

Phivolcs cautioned residents that aftershocks are likely to occur.

Pandemic highlights danger posed by wildlife crime: UN report

Agence France-Presse

Posted at Jul 11 2020 09:37 AM

VIENNA - The novel coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the need to combat the threat to human health posed by the illegal trafficking of wild animals, according to a UN report published Friday.

The report published by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) points out "zoonotic diseases -- those caused by pathogens that spread from animals to humans -- represent up to 75 percent of all emerging infectious diseases."

"Without human interference through capturing, slaughtering, selling, trafficking, trading and consuming of wildlife, the evolution and transmission of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 would have been highly unlikely," the UNODC said in its annual World Wildlife Crime Report.

Pangolins, the mammals thought by some scientists to be the possible host of the novel coronavirus, are the most trafficked mammals in the world and the report says seizures of their scales have increased tenfold between 2014 and 2018.

Pangolin scales are prized in traditional Chinese medicine -- despite a lack of scientific proof -- and used for the treatment of various diseases such as arthritis, ulcers and tumors.

The report warns that the current pandemic may worsen some forms of trafficking as some "wildlife products may be touted as 'cures' for COVID-19, notably bear bile."

In terms of other trends in smuggling of flora and fauna, the report noted that "demand for tropical hardwood timber has grown greatly in the last two decades" with illegal African rosewood entering some legal supply chains, such as the international wood furniture trade.

However, the report says the demand for African ivory and rhinoceros horn is in decline.

The report's analysis of trends in wildlife crime uses a database compiling details of 180,000 seizures from 149 countries and territories between 1999 and 2009.

"To build back better from the COVID-19 crisis, we cannot afford to ignore wildlife crime," UNODC director Ghada Waly said in a statement accompanying the report, calling for further anti-trafficking legislation to be adopted in affected countries, as well as better inter-agency coordination.

Tiger, pangolin farming in Myanmar risks 'boosting demand'

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Tiger, pangolin farming in Myanmar risks 'boosting demand'

Published July 11, 2020, 3:37 PM

by Agence France-Presse

Conservationists have warned a sudden change in Myanmar's law allowing the commercial farming of tigers, pangolins and other endangered species risks further fuelling demand in China for rare wildlife products.



Tigers — thought to number just 22 in Myanmar — can now be bred for their meat and skin (AFP Photo/CHAIDEER MAHYUDDIN)

The Southeast Asian nation is already a hub for the illegal trafficking of wildlife, a trade driven by demand from neighbouring China and worth an estimated \$20 billion worldwide.

In June, Myanmar's Forest Department quietly gave the green light to private zoos to apply for licences to breed 90 species, more than 20 of which are endangered or critically endangered.

It was an unexpected move that caught conservation groups off-guard but was explained by the Forest Department as a way to help reduce poaching of wild species and illegal breeding.

Tigers — thought to number just 22 in Myanmar — appear on the list alongside pangolins, elephants and various species of vulture as well as the Ayeyarwady dolphin, of which only a few dozen remain in the wild in the country. The critically endangered Siamese crocodile can now even be bred for its meat and skin.

But conservationists say commercial farming in the long-term legitimises the use of endangered species and fuels market demand.

“Commercial trade has been shown to increase illegal trade in wildlife by creating a parallel market and boosting overall demand for wild animal products,” conservation groups WWF and Fauna & Flora International (FFI) said in a joint statement.

Experts also fear Myanmar's lack of capacity to regulate the trade raises the risk of disease spillover to humans from animals and even the “next COVID-19”.

John Goodrich from global wild cat conservation organisation Panthera warned farming can also “provide a means for laundering wild specimens”, complicating efforts to police the trade.

CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species) does allow captive breeding of certain endangered species, but only under strict regulation.



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But Myanmar's ability to police the trade is disputed, say environmental groups, who fear the country risks following in the footsteps of Thailand, Laos and Vietnam, which have lost much of their wildlife.

The Forest Department said the new list was drawn up "in full adherence with the law" and after consultation with "conservation groups, academics, and experts in the field".

Conservationists fear the rule change risk undermining all the progress Myanmar had made in recent years to end the illegal wildlife trade.

Rare footage caught by FFI camera traps showed the "treasure trove" of species in Myanmar's forests, the group said.

"We must do everything we can to protect them."

Russia battles wildfires amid record warm weather

posted July 11, 2020 at 04:30 pm

by [AFP](#)

Wildfires raging in Siberia in record summer temperatures have decreased considerably over the past week, Russia's forest service said Saturday, as it battles blazes by cloud seeding and explosives.

Freakishly warm weather across large swathes of Siberia since January, combined with low soil moisture, have contributed to a resurgence of wildfires that devastated the region last summer, the European Union's climate monitoring network said this week.

Both the number and intensity of fires in Siberia and parts of Alaska have increased since mid-June, resulting in the highest carbon emissions for the month -- 59 million tonnes of CO2 -- since records began in 2003, it said.

Russia's Aerial Forest Protection Service said it was trying to suppress 136 fires over 43,000 hectares (430 square kilometres) as of Saturday.

Firefighters are using explosives to contain the fires and using cloud seeding with silver iodide to encourage rain, it said.

However most of the fires have been deemed too remote and expensive to handle, with over 333,000 hectares currently ablaze in areas where all firefighting efforts have stopped, it said.

This is considerably smaller than a week ago when the service reported fires over a total of two million hectares. From mid-June, regions in Russia's far north, including beyond the Arctic circle, have registered unprecedented heat records.

Russia's weather service expert Roman Vilfand had said anti-cyclones -- which create abnormally clear skies with no clouds or rain -- had increased in the northern hemisphere.

In the Arctic, where the sun doesn't set in the summer, this means that sunlight is heating the Earth's surface around the clock, increasing the risk of fires, he said.

Fresh satellite images showed Saturday that the largest fires are still in Russia's vast Yakutia region, which is sparsely populated and borders the Arctic Ocean.

The region announced a state of emergency on July 2 due to the wildfires, which the governor of Yakutia said were caused by "dry thunderstorms."

Greenpeace Russia's forest programme, which analyses satellite data, said Saturday that a total of 9.26 million hectares -- greater than the size of Portugal -- have been impacted by wildfires since the beginning of 2020.

The organisation blames Russia's wildfire crisis on lack of funding of the forest service which now cannot ensure adequate fire prevention.

Seeding clouds, isinagawa sa Siberia dahil sa pagkalat ng wildfires

ni [Lolet Abania](#) | July 11, 2020



Nagsasagawa ang Russian firefighters ng seeding clouds upang magbuhos ng ulan sa wildfires na nagaganap sa Siberia, ayon sa awtoridad.

Sa pahayag ng Russian forestry agency, sasagupain nila ang 158 forest fires na may kabuuang 46,261 hectares upang hindi tuluyang matupok ang naturang kagubatan, kung saan sa nakalipas na araw, ang lugar na iyon ay higit na mas malaking apoy ng tatlong beses na nagliliyab.

Gumagamit ang mga firefighters ng eroplano upang maglagay ng chemicals sa mga ulap na magbubuhos ng ulan sa northern, mga bahagi ng Krasnoyarsk at Irkutsk sa rehiyon ng Siberia, ayon sa ahensiya.

Matinding init at dry weather ang nagiging sanhi ng pagkalat ng wildfires na tumutupok sa rehiyon at boreal forest at tundra na sumasakop ng buong northern Russia.

Ayon sa environmental group na Greenpeace, kung saan nagmomonitor ng pagkalat ng wildfires sa Russia, ang pagkakaroon ng ulan ay makatutulong sa pagbawas ng paglaki ng apoy sa northern Siberia subalit mayroon na ring pagliyab sa south part malapit sa Irkutsk at Krasnoyarsk.

Teen surfer killed in Australian shark attack

Published 9 hours ago
on July 11, 2020 08:38 PM
By [Agence France-Presse](#)



A 17-year-old boy died after being bitten by a shark while surfing off Australia's east coast Saturday, authorities said.

Witnesses told police the boy had been attacked at Woolli Beach, 630 kilometres (390 miles) north of Sydney, New South Wales Police said in a statement.

"Several board-riders came to his assistance before the injured teen could be helped to shore," police said.

Despite attempts to revive the boy, who suffered serious leg injuries, he died at the scene.

It is the fifth known fatal shark attack in the country this year.

The death comes a week after a 36-year-old man was killed by a shark while spearfishing near the popular tourist destination of Fraser Island, about 700 kilometres (430 miles) north from Saturday's attack.

Australia has one of the world's highest incidences of shark attacks but fatalities are rare.

WHO urges aggressive virus measures as flare-ups spark new closures

posted July 11, 2020 at 01:10 pm

by [AFP and Robin Millard with AFP bureaus](#)

The World Health Organization has urged countries grappling with coronavirus to step up control measures, saying it is still possible to rein it in, as some nations clamp fresh restrictions on citizens.

With case numbers worldwide more than doubling in the past six weeks, Uzbekistan on Friday returned to lockdown and Hong Kong said schools would close from Monday after the city recorded "exponential growth" in locally transmitted infections.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus called on countries to adopt an aggressive approach, highlighting Italy, Spain, South Korea and India's biggest slum to show it was possible to stop the spread, no matter how bad the outbreak.

The health agency's comments came as US President Donald Trump was forced to cancel an election rally in New Hampshire, citing an approaching storm.

Trump has pushed to hold large gatherings against health advice as epidemiologists warn of the dangers posed by the virus moving through the air in crowded and confined spaces.

- Lashing out at China -

On a visit to Florida on Friday, Trump hit out at Beijing over the pandemic.

"(The) relationship with China has been severely damaged. They could have stopped the plague.... They didn't stop it," he told reporters.

The virus has killed at least 556,140 people worldwide since it emerged in China last December.

More than 12.3 million cases have been registered in 196 countries and territories, triggering massive economic damage.

The United States, the country worst hit by the illness, reported almost 64,000 new cases Friday and the death toll now stands at just under 134,000, according to Johns Hopkins University.

Brazil, the second-hardest hit, surpassed 70,000 deaths and reported 45,000 new infections, the health ministry said.

In Uzbekistan, citizens were from Friday facing lockdown restrictions again that were originally imposed in March but lifted gradually over the past two months.

The Central Asian country's return to confinement followed a decision by Australia to lock down its second-biggest city Melbourne from Thursday.

A police officer manning a checkpoint on the outskirts of the former Soviet republic's capital said only drivers with "a good reason" to enter Tashkent -- such as delivering food or other vital supplies -- could pass.

Restaurants, gyms, swimming pools and non-food markets have all shut their doors until at least August 1.

Private transport within cities will be limited to morning and early evening journeys and essential purposes such as travelling to work and purchasing food or medicine.

In Hong Kong, the spike marks a setback for the city after daily life had largely returned to normal with restaurants and bars resuming regular business and cultural attractions reopening.

WHO urges virus measures as flare-ups spark new

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Despite being right next to mainland China where the virus first emerged, the city had managed to quash local transmission in recent months.

But new clusters have started to emerge since Tuesday, including at an elderly care home that reported at least 32 cases and a housing estate with 11.

- 'Turn this pandemic around' -

"Across all walks of life, we are all being tested to the limit," the WHO's Tedros told a virtual news conference in Geneva.

"From countries where there is exponential growth, to places that are loosening restrictions and now starting to see cases rise.

"Only aggressive action combined with national unity and global solidarity can turn this pandemic around," he said.

Elsewhere, French officials warned of rising cases in metropolitan France as the death toll topped 30,000.

In Israel, Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu admitted a decision to allow businesses, including bars and event spaces, to reopen may have been made "too soon".

The Middle Eastern country recorded its highest number of infections over a 24-hour period, at nearly 1,500.

In Australia, meanwhile, authorities said they would slash by half the number of people allowed to return from overseas.

From Monday, only 4,000 Australian citizens or permanent residents will be permitted to enter each day.

WHO says airborne COVID transmission a concern but droplets appear dominant

Published July 11, 2020 7:58am

GENEVA - Maria Van Kerkhove, technical lead on the COVID-19 pandemic at the WHO, said on Friday that airborne transmission of the new coronavirus had always been a concern but that droplets appeared to be the most common infection route.

"Aerosol transmission is one of the modes of transmission that we have been concerned about since the beginning, particularly in healthcare settings ... where we know these droplets can be aerosolized — which means can stay in the air longer," she told an online briefing from Geneva.

The WHO released new guidelines on the transmission of the coronavirus on Thursday that acknowledged some reports of airborne transmission but stopped short of confirming that it spreads through the air, a route that cannot be blocked by the social distancing now common around the world. —**Reuters**

Tuberculosis vaccine may be limiting COVID-19
deaths; dormitory screening urged

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COVID SCIENCE UPDATES

Tuberculosis vaccine may be limiting COVID-19 deaths; dormitory screening urged

Published July 11, 2020 4:19am

By NANCY LAPID, Reuters

The following is a brief roundup of some of the latest scientific studies on the novel coronavirus and efforts to find treatments and vaccines for COVID-19, the illness caused by the virus.

Tuberculosis vaccine may limit COVID-19 deaths

A tuberculosis vaccine routinely given to children in countries with high rates of that bacterial disease might be helping to reduce deaths from COVID-19, researchers reported on Thursday in the scientific journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences.

After accounting for differences in factors that might affect vulnerability to the virus - such as income, education, health services and age distribution - the researchers found that countries with higher rates of Bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccinations for tuberculosis had lower peak mortality rates from COVID-19.

A good example was Germany, which had different vaccine plans before East Germany and West Germany were unified in 1990, the researchers said. COVID-19 mortality rates among senior citizens are nearly three times higher in western Germany than in eastern Germany, where more older people received the vaccine as infants, they found.

Study co-author Luis Escobar of Virginia Tech said in a press statement that BCG vaccines have been shown to protect against other viral respiratory illnesses. Escobar cautioned that the new findings are preliminary.

The BCG vaccine is currently being tested for preventing COVID-19 in healthcare workers.

Weekly dorm screenings would not contain COVID-19 outbreaks

Avoiding coronavirus outbreaks in college dormitories would require screening tests for residents at least every three days, according to Yale University researchers. Weekly screening would not be sufficient, they concluded.

Their calculations, based on a computer model of 5,000 students and an 80-day semester, accounted for students' on-campus exposures to the virus as well as imported infections from students traveling, wandering about town to restaurants and bars, or from visitors.

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Frequent testing would interrupt transmission of the virus only if infected students are isolated, the researchers said.

"Students must comply with infection control, social distancing, test scheduling and (if testing positive) isolation requirements for the repeat testing system to work effectively," the researchers said in a paper posted online on Thursday ahead of peer review.

Also, the tests must be reliable, testing laboratories must guarantee timely results, and efficient communications and supports must be in place so students who test positive can be isolated quickly, they said.

The researchers said universities must be prepared to close their residence halls if repeated testing fails to contain the spread of the pathogen on campus.

Molecular study finds multiple types of COVID-19

There are many "flavors" of COVID-19, according to new data that may someday allow coronavirus treatments to be targeted at the specific molecular changes making a person sick.

To learn more about why only some coronavirus patients become severely ill, researchers studied patients' "blood transcriptome," the complete set of genes that are activated in immune cells in the blood.

They found at least five different types of immune response against the coronavirus - not just "mild" and "severe," according to a paper posted online ahead of peer review. "In other words, there are different flavors of the disease," just as there are different types of cancer, study co-author Dr. Joachim Schultze of the University of Bonn told Reuters.

Understanding the molecular mechanisms at work in a given patient could help doctors tailor the therapy to target those mechanisms, Schultze said.

The findings also helped his team predict which drugs would likely benefit COVID-19 patients.

One "prominent" candidate cited was the steroid dexamethasone, which has already been proven effective in some COVID-19 patients. Another "surprising" discovery they cited involved granulocytes, a type of white blood cell.

"Granulocytes, cells that are not really known to be major players in the fight against viruses, play a major role in severe COVID-19 disease," Schultze said. The new findings "will help us to find better therapies and also will guide vaccine development," he added.

Months later, recovering patients still have symptoms

More evidence is emerging that severe COVID-19 has lingering after-effects. Nearly 90% of recovering COVID-19 patients discharged from a hospital in Rome were still not back to normal an average of two months after becoming ill, researchers said.

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Doctors there studied 143 adults who had been hospitalized on average for two weeks. Most had been diagnosed with pneumonia, and one in five had needed help to breathe.

An average of 60 days after their first coronavirus symptoms, 87.4% still reported at least one symptom - particularly fatigue and shortness of breath - and 55% had three or more, researchers reported on Thursday in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

About one in four still had joint pain, and about one in five had chest pain. Roughly 44% said their quality of life was worse now than before they got sick. The researchers did not have information on patients' pre-COVID-19 medical problems and did not compare this relatively small group to patients discharged for other reasons.

But they said their findings suggest more research is needed on the long-lasting effects of coronavirus infection. -- **Reuters**

Source: https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/scitech/science/746435/tuberculosis-vaccine-may-be-limiting-covid-19-deaths-dormitory-screening-urged/story/?utm_source=GMAnews&utm_medium=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR1fg6DXIkHrHIu-rOtmAmodQDF190agUHIeptVOo-KR0GLDcy1lhg0OSRs