

DATE: JULY 13, 2020

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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service

DENR promotes plant-based diet to fight climate change

July 12, 2020, 2:53 pm



MANILA – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Saturday urged Filipinos to help fight climate change by switching to plant-based diet, which has been shown to reduce the ecological footprint of human food consumption.

In a press release, the DENR, through its Environmental Management Bureau (EMB), has launched a month-long public information drive to encourage everyone to shift away from animal-based products towards consumption of more fruits and vegetables.

The “Plant-Based Solutions for Climate Change” campaign, which coincides with the celebration of July as nutrition month, urges Filipinos to include more vegetables and fruits into their diet following the recommendation of the Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) on proportion by three main food groups -- go, grow and glow foods.

EMB Director William Cuñado said shifting to plant-based diet is one way to greatly reduce the environmental impact of one’s food consumption.

“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,” Cuñado said.

According to a 2013 study by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization, meat and dairy -- particularly from cows -- account for around 14.5 percent of the global greenhouse gases each year.

That’s roughly the same amount as emissions from all the cars, trucks, airplanes and ships in the world combined.

A recent study by the University of Oxford suggested that cutting meat and dairy products from a person’s diet could reduce his 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,” Cuñado said.

The month-long campaign is being done virtually or online given the restrictions brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic.

The EMB has been regularly posting infographics about plant-based diet as a climate change solution on its official Facebook page to make it easier for people to understand and follow the concept.

It also launched an online food photo contest called #UOTD or Ulam of the Day, where participants can send photos of their meal based on Pinggang Pinoy food guide developed by FNRI.

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Pinggang Pinoy is an easy-to-understand food guide that uses a familiar food plate model to convey the right food group proportions on a per meal basis. This aims to help Filipinos acquire healthy eating habits needed to attain optimum nutrition.

The EMB started receiving entries for the #UOTD on July 4 through its email address eedcentraloffice@gmail.com.

The photo contest will run until July 20.

Further details about the contest are posted on the Facebook page of EMB Central Office. **(PR)**

PLDT helps protect Caimpugan Peatland

By ... -July 12, 2020



The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has partnered with PLDT Inc. and its wireless subsidiary Smart Communications Inc. to protect, conserve and restore the Caimpugan Peatland in the Agusan Marsh Wildlife Sanctuary.

This peatland is the only recorded remaining intact peat swamp forest and the largest of its kind in the Philippines, the DENR said.



Peatlands are wetlands whose peat soils consist of carbon-rich dead and decaying plant matter which store twice as much carbon as all the world's forests combined.

The partnership is for three years but can be extended by the parties.

PLDT said apart from applying various technologies for peatland assessment, monitoring and enforcement activities as well as communication, education and public awareness programs and activities to increase knowledge and appreciation of the value of these fragile ecosystems will also be made.

The project will engage with wetland-dependent communities to come up with a sustainable and biodiversity-friendly livelihood program.

PTV July 11 at 8:15 PM · 🌐

#UlatBayan | Ginawang sementertyo sa Cebu, ipinatigil ng DENR | via John Aroa



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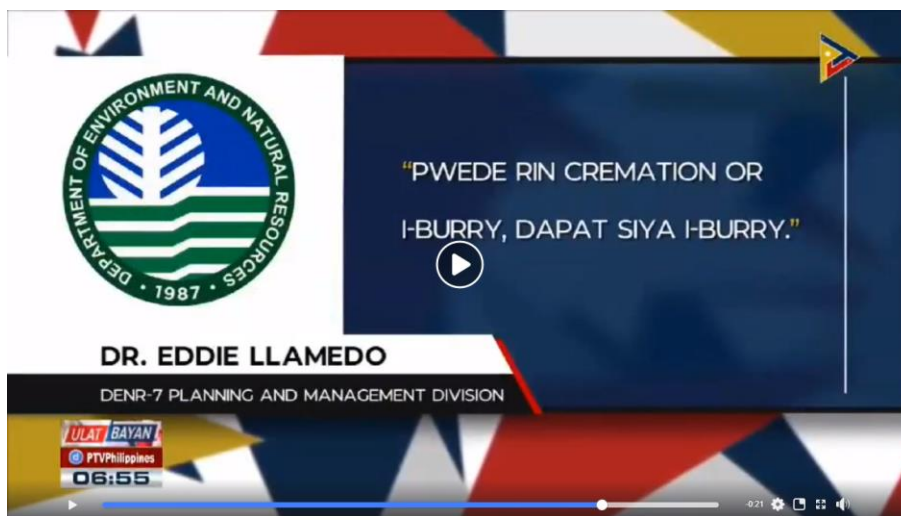
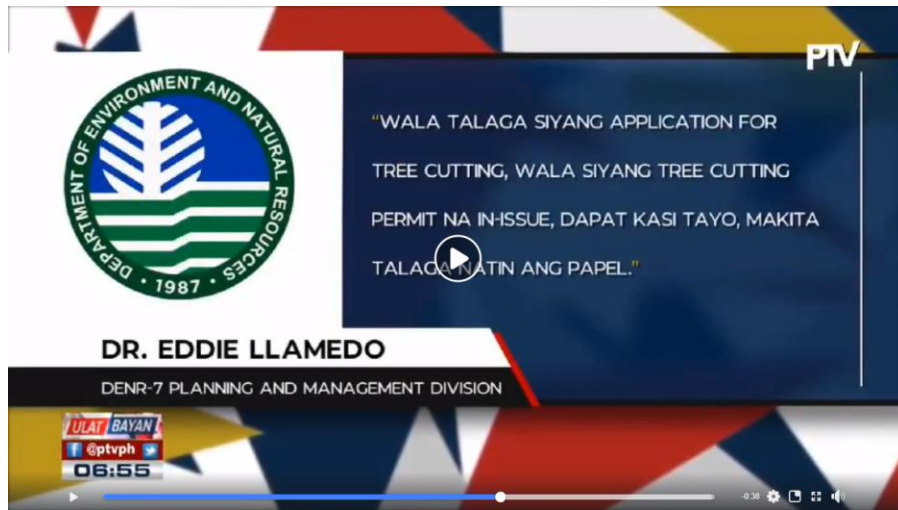


GINAGAWANG SEMENTERYO SA CEBU, IPINATIGIL NG DENR



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DENR-7 PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT DIVISION

GINAGAWANG SEMENTERYO SA CEBU, IPINATIGIL NG DENR



Cebu City LGU says it has permit to cut down trees to make way for new cemetery

Published July 12, 2020 9:45pm

The local government of Cebu City defended its tree-cutting activity in Barangay Guba, saying the operation was covered by a permit issued by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

According to a report on “24 Oras Weekend” on Sunday, Cebu City councilor Dave Tumulak said the city administrator confirmed there was indeed a permit for them to conduct the tree-cutting in the barangay.

“Kinumpirma natin kay city administrator [Floro] Casas na may permit tayo para magputol ng mga puno. Tinatawagan na niya si Mr. [Raul] Pasoc ng DENR na siya ring nagbigay ng permit para makapagputol ng puno,” Tumulak said.

However, DENR Region 7 told GMA News that the cutting of almost 400 mahogany trees in the protected area had no clearance from them. The department has already issued a notice of violation against the city government.

The LGU cut down the trees to build a new cemetery, as the city’s public cemetery has been running out of space amid the rising cases of COVID-19 there.

More than 300 mahogany trees have already been cut for the project. — **Ma. Angelica Garcia/BM, GMA News**

CA junks OceanaGold's appeal to continue operations

[Louise Maureen Simeon](#) (The Philippine Star) - July 13, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The Court of Appeals (CA) has dismissed Australian-Canadian mining firm OceanaGold's call for an injunction against Nueva Vizcaya's restraining orders of its mine operations.

The CA decision released last week upheld the decision of the Regional Trial Court of Nueva Vizcaya last July 2019 denying the injunction of OceanaGold Philippines.

The CA cited that "the petitioner failed to establish its clear and unmistakable right to continue its mining operation."

OceanaGold's financial and technical assistance agreement (FTAA) expired in June 2019 and it has failed to secure a renewal of its mining contract, and therefore, mine closure was implemented by local authorities.

However, the firm continued operations despite the lack of permit, prompting the local government unit and the local community to set up a people's barricades to prevent any illegal entry of mining vehicles.

The actions of the community and the LGU led to OceanaGold filing an injunction, which was later denied by the RTC of Nueva Vizcaya in July 2019.

Nueva Vizcaya Governor Carlos Padilla welcomed the CA decision, saying it affirms the province's position that upon expiration of its FTAA, OceanaGold does not have any more rights to engage in mining activities in Didipio.

"It clearly belies the position taken by the MGB (Mines and Geosciences Bureau) that OceanaGold is permitted to continue its mining operations pending renewal of its FTAA," Padilla told The STAR.

"In view of such development, we now strongly demand for the complete pull out of OceanaGold from the area," he said.

Since the expiry in June 2019, President Duterte still has yet to approve the renewal for another 25 years, even with the endorsement from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

The President has the final decision on the grant and renewal of FTAA upon the endorsement of the MGB and DENR.

The Office of the President earlier found a deficiency – the first 25 years of OceanaGold were not covered by the Indigenous Peoples' Right Act and its area was outside the ancestral domain of the Bugkalot tribe.

OceanaGold's FTAA covers some 10,000 hectares. Out of that, only 975 hectares have an approved environmental compliance certificate and 330 hectares are only being utilized.

An FTAA is entered into between a contractor and the government for the large-scale exploration, development and utilization of gold, copper, nickel, chromite, lead, zinc and other minerals. It is granted to foreign-owned corporations seeking to operate in the Philippines.

OceanaGold Philippines accounts for one-third of the global business of the company. Its other operations are in New Zealand and the United States.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/business/2020/07/13/2027495/ca-junks-oceanagolds-appeal-continue-operations>



In a virtual webinar last week, AC Energy president and CEO Eric Francia said the company would review its diesel investments following the oil spill from power barge 102 in Iloilo City that occurred last July 3.

STAR/File

AC Energy reassessing diesel power plant investment

[Danessa Rivera](#) (The Philippine Star) - July 13, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — AC Energy Inc. will assess its investments in diesel power plants as it submitted a comprehensive plan to the government to address the impact of the oil spill incident from one of its power barges in Iloilo.

In a virtual webinar last week, AC Energy president and CEO Eric Francia said the company would review its diesel investments following the oil spill from power barge 102 (PB102) in Iloilo City that occurred last July 3.

“We will be making an assessment once we resolve the issues at hand,” he said.

The company said AC Energy Philippines submitted its environmental management plan (EMP) to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB).

The EMP focuses on the detailed plans of the company and the relevant timeline for the implementation of such plans in relation to the key areas which the DENR-EMB stressed and highlighted during the technical conference that it hosted on July 8.

These include the completion of oil spill cleanup and ensuring that water quality is restored to safe levels; continued monitoring of air quality and ensuring that air quality is safe before affected families are allowed to return to their homes; proper collection and disposal of oil contaminated materials and wastes; and rehabilitation plan for the affected mangrove areas and fisheries.

Even with the submission of the EMP to the DENR-EMB, AC Energy Philippines said it would continue to work closely and coordinate with the DENR, as well as with the various government bodies and agencies, including the local governments of Iloilo City and Guimaras, and the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), to implement the EMP and to take into account comments and other recommendations from these government units and agencies.

Meanwhile, with respect to news reports released on the filing by the PCG of a criminal complaint against the company and some of its officers for alleged violation of Section 107 of Republic Act 8550 (The Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998), as amended by RA 10654, for aquatic pollution, the company said it has not received a copy of such complaint and is thus unable to make any specific comment as of press time on the matter.

“Even with the filing of this case, however, the company undertakes and commits to continue cooperating in good faith with the PCG and the other government units and agencies to ensure that the oil spill clean-up is done properly and completed soon, and that the needs of the affected communities and groups are provided for,” the company said.

Last week, AC Energy engaged a third party to investigate the oil spill from PB 102 as it initiated a response to the unfortunate accident.

The Ayala firm implemented containment procedures and skimming operations since the oil spill happened.

The oil spill has displaced 63 households due to fumes carried to the area by winds and were immediately evacuated to the nearby elementary school.

“With the submission of its EMP, and the various clean-up activities that it organized in coordination with industry and local government partners, and the community assistance that it provided since the happening of the oil spill, the company hopes to have demonstrated its serious commitment to do what is right for the affected communities and the environment, including to address the finding of aquatic pollution by the PCG,” AC Energy said.

Ayala's AC Energy files rehab plan for Iloilo oil spill-hit areas

July 13, 2020 | 12:08 am



AROUND 270,000 liters of bunker fuel were spilled in the Iloilo Strait on July 3 after AC Energy's power barge exploded.

AYALA-LED AC Energy, Inc. over the weekend submitted its environmental management plan to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), listing its actions in addressing the impact of the oil spill that happened in Iloilo City earlier in the month.

Around 270,000 liters of bunker fuel were spilled in the Iloilo Strait on July 3 after the energy firm's Power Barge 102 unit exploded from a still-unknown cause.

The submission of the action plan came after the department's Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) in Region 6 served the energy firm last week a notice of violation of Republic Act No. 9275, or the Clean Water Act, related to the oil spill that started in Lapuz town.

In a statement, AC Energy said its plan focuses on the completion of the oil spill cleanup works and ensuring the restoration of water quality to safe levels; monitoring of the air quality and its return to safe levels; proper collection and disposal of oil-contaminated wastes; and rehabilitation of the affected mangrove areas and fisheries.

With its various activities done to address the oil slick, "the company hopes to have demonstrated its serious commitment to do what is right for the affected communities and the environment," it said.

On Saturday, the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) also filed a complaint against AC Energy for the alleged violation of Section 107 of Republic Act 8550, or the Fisheries Code, pertaining to aquatic pollution.

The company said it has yet to receive a copy of the complaint.

"Even with the filing of this case, however, the Company undertakes and commits to continue cooperating in good faith with the PCG and the other government units and agencies to ensure that the oil spill clean-up is done properly and completed soon, and that the needs of the affected communities and groups are provided for," it said.

AC Energy said its third-party consultant, engineering firm Aecom Philippines, Inc., is coordinating with the EMB and experts from the University of the Philippines — Visayas in implementing the environmental management plan.

The Iloilo City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office on Friday reported that about 246,000 liters of bunker oil were collected from the ongoing containment activities.

It noted that the oil slick has hit a total of 88.8 hectares of mangrove areas and 26 barangays. Further, more than 300 affected families from fishing communities were evacuated.

On Monday last week, fishers' group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) warned that the oil spill might reach the Guimaras Strait and Visayan Sea due to the wind and water currents heading north.

The group urged the company to shoulder all costs related to the cleanup and pay the affected communities for the damages that were caused. — **Adam J. Ang**

AC Energy submits cleanup plan

By ... -July 13, 2020

AC Energy Philippines has submitted its environmental management plan (EMP) to the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), detailing plans to address the environmental impact of the oil spill in Iloilo that occurred earlier this month.

The EMP contains measures to ensure the completion of the cleanup of the oil spill as soon as possible and to bring water and air quality back to safe levels before affected families are allowed to return to their homes.

The EMP also requires the conduct of proper collection and disposal of oil contaminated materials and wastes as well as the rehabilitation of the affected mangrove areas and fisheries.

“Even with the submission of the EMP to the EMB, the company will continue to work closely and coordinate with the DENR, as well as with the various government bodies and agencies, including the local governments of Iloilo City and Guimaras and the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), to implement the EMP and to take into account comments and other recommendations from these government units and agencies,” AC Energy said in a statement.

But AC Energy said it is yet to receive a copy of a complaint filed by the PCG for violations of section 107 of the Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998 as amended by Republic Act 10654 for aquatic pollution.

“Even with the filing of this case, however, the company undertakes and commits to continue cooperating in good faith with the PCG and the other government units and agencies to ensure that the oil spill clean-up is done properly and completed soon and that the needs of the affected communities and groups are provided for,” AC Energy said.

The company is waiting for the results on the investigation on the fire incident of its Power Barge 102 barge-mounted bunker-fired diesel generating power stations which led to the oil spill.

When asked if AC Energy will turn away from diesel power plant investments following the incident, company president

Eric Francia said they will make an assessment once the issues at hand are resolved.

Power barge owner probed for safety violations in Iloilo oil spill, cleanup operations

Published July 12, 2020, 11:36 AM

by Tara Yap

ILOILO CITY—The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE-6) started its own probe on probable safety violations when a damaged power barge triggered an oil spill that affected mostly coastal communities in Iloilo City.



Men ride a boat to conduct cleanup operations of the oil spill caused by a power barge (upper left) in Iloilo City. (Tara Yap/Manila Bulletin)

DOLE Western Visayas Director Cyril Ticao led the ocular inspection of the power barge owned by AC Energy Philippines.

“We strongly expect the barge owner [AC Energy] to cooperate with us,” Ticao said.

DOLE’s inspection team focused its probe based on what was stipulated in Republic Act No. 11058 or the new Occupational Safety and Health (OSH Law).

This was after bunker fuel leaked from Power Barge 102 last July 3 when its hull was torn by an explosion. The oil spill has spread to several coastal areas in nearby towns of Guimaras and Iloilo provinces.

An initial probe conducted by the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) found that acetylene torch was used inside one of the power barge’s tanks where repair work was being done, and this allegedly ignited flammable fumes.

Ticao also said DOLE inspectors were also looking into complaints of alleged lack of personal protective equipment (PPEs) among newly-hired workers for the cleanup operations in retrieving bunker fuel.

While Ticao cautioned it was still early to reach a conclusion, he urged AC Energy to reassess its own occupational and safety policies.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/07/12/power-barge-owner-probed-for-safety-violations-in-iloilo-oil-spill-cleanup-operations/>



ABS-CBN News

13 hrs ·

TINGNAN: Higit isang linggo matapos ang oil spill sa Iloilo City, tuloy pa rin sa paggawa ng mga improvised spill booms ang mga barangay official sa Bantud Fabrica sa Bayan ng Dumangas, Iloilo.

Gumamit sila ng mga katsa at plastic bottle sa paggawa ng spill booms na inilatag malapit sa mga fish pens.

Ayon kay Brgy. Kagawad Noli Jarandilla paghahanda lamang ito ng barangay sakaling mag-iba ang direksyon ng hangin at bumalik ang mga tumagas na langis sa kanilang lugar. | Ulat ni Jennifer Garcia Hernandez, ABS-CBN News



Kryshlaine Raquel and 1.3K others

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Are we in real danger?

Bubonic plague in China's Inner Mongolia

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#) July 12, 2020



Pieter Bruegel's The Triumph of Death reflects the social upheaval and terror that followed bubonic plague, which devastated medieval Europe.

As the world's new coronavirus disease cases top 12 million, and the Philippines's cases has reached more than 50,000, the unwelcome report of bubonic plague afflicting a herdsman in China's Inner Mongolia was reported last weekend.

This prompted the World Health Organization (WHO) to place China's bubonic plague situation under strict monitoring.

Six months since the first new coronavirus case was reported in Wuhan, China, the disease that spread into a pandemic has caught governments across the world unprepared.



A marmot seen on top of Mount Dana, Yosemite in California, USA.

The Philippines, for one, is still struggling and is not getting any closer into flattening the curve, much more, stop the spread of the virus.

After Chinese authorities confirmed the case of the bubonic plague, news reports said that Russia stepped up patrols to stop hunting and eating of marmots near its borders with China and Mongolia.

Marmots are giant ground squirrels, also called rodents, found primarily in North America and Eurasia, Britannica.com said.

While Inner Mongolia is 3,450 kilometers away from the Philippines and with no less than the WHO saying it is "not a high risk," the very thought of a bubonic plague reaching the country's shores while it is still reeling from the adverse impact of Covid-19 sends chills down the spine.

But before people go on panic mode, here's what we need to know about plagues and the bubonic plague.

Plagues and bubonic plague

According to the WHO, bubonic plague is caused by bacillus *Yersinia pestis*.

A zoonotic disease affecting rodents and transmitted by fleas from rodents to other animals and humans, direct person-to-person transmission of the disease does not occur except in the case of pneumonic plague, through respiratory droplets, being transferred from an infected person to another person in close contact.

There are three clinical forms of plague depending on the route of infection—pneumonic (affecting the lungs), septicaemic (infection of the blood) and bubonic (swelling inflamed lymph nodes in the armpit or groin).

“Bubonic plague is the form that usually results from the bite of infected fleas. Lymphadenitis develops in the drainage lymph nodes, with the regional lymph nodes most commonly affected. Swelling, pain and suppuration of the lymph nodes produce the characteristic plague buboes,” the WHO said on its web site.

The scary part about the disease is that “without prompt and effective treatment, 50 percent to 60 percent of cases of bubonic plague are fatal, while untreated septicaemic and pneumonic plague is invariably fatal.”

14th-century bubonic or Black Plague

Among the early known bubonic plague, also known as the Black Death, spread across Europe that killed 50 million people from 1346-53, Ole J. Benedictow, emeritus professor of History at the University of Oslo, Norway, said in the article “The Black Death: The Greatest Catastrophe Ever” posted on historytoday.com.

Researchers generally agree that the Black Death swept away 20 percent to 30 percent of Europe's population during the period.

Benedictow, known for his research on plagues especially the Black Death, said the plague occurred when rodents in human habitation, normally black rats, become infected. The black rat, also called “house rat” and “ship rat”—having lived on ships, the main means of trade transportation in the Middle Ages—likes to live close to people.

The infection takes three days to five days to incubate in people before they fall ill, and another three days to five days before, in 80 percent of the cases, the victims die.

He explained that the plague bacteria can break out of the buboes and carried by the blood stream to the lungs and cause a variant of the plague that is spread by contaminated droplets from the cough of patients, becoming the pneumonic plague.

Recent incident

It is largely believed that the plague had been already eradicated.

However, occasional cases are still reported, especially among hunters coming into contact with fleas carrying the bacterium, the Associated Press said on July 6.

The last major known outbreak was in 2009, when several people died in the town of Ziketani in Qinghai province on the Tibetan Plateau.

A cause for alarm?

Is the bubonic plague something Filipinos should worry about? Yes and no. Here's why.

Environment Assistant Secretary Ricardo Calderon said chances that the bubonic plague from Inner Mongolia reaching the country is a "far-fetched idea."

In a telephone interview on July 7, Calderon said that on record, the Philippines had no interaction with marmots, hence, it is impossible for the dreaded disease afflicting Filipinos in the country.

"While we have rodents in rice fields and sugarcane plantations, it is not that prevalent," added Calderon, the concurrent director of the Biodiversity Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Pests, not pets

He said Filipinos' treatment of rats is more of pests rather than disease-carrier.

"Fortunately, rats are not palatable as being hunted and eaten," he said.

In certain areas, he said rats are indeed considered a delicacy, but again, such practice is "not prevalent."

He added that a marmot is not engaging as a pet. Hence, marmots being brought into the Philippines is unlikely, he explained.

Proper hygiene, sanitation

Calderon said the spread of any disease can be effectively prevented by simply practicing proper hygiene and sanitation at home.

"When it comes to zoonotic disease, our response is always proper hygiene and sanitation," he said.

Moreover, he said the Philippines is strictly guarding its borders to prevent smuggling of wild animals.

Even those with special permits, he said, go through stringent quarantine procedures.

"We have the Bureau of Quarantine taking care of that, too," Calderon explained.

However, he maintained that the best way to avoid contracting a zoonotic disease is by "staying away from wild animals."

Still vulnerable

A biodiversity expert, Theresa Mundita S. Lim, executive director of the Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) said bubonic plague “is something to worry about.”

In fact, the Philippines, as with the rest of Southeast Asia, is vulnerable to the deadly plague, because of the existence of rodents

Interviewed via Messenger on July 7, Lim, said the Philippines has populations of domestic rats in urban areas, which are the known carriers of the plague.

“Once the causative agent [*Y. pestis*], spills over into our domestic rat population, we become highly vulnerable,” says Lim.

However, she was quick to point out that “there is no evidence yet that native wild rats are a reservoir of the pathogen.”

“We do have a high diversity of wild rodents [more than 70 multiple species] native to the Philippines, but there is no evidence yet that our indigenous wild rats are a reservoir of the pathogen,” Lim said.

Threats: Illegal wildlife or pet trade

According to Lim, Philippine authorities should be on the lookout for the trading of wild animals, whether for the pet trade or for consumption—for their meat, skin, or parts—which is strictly prohibited under the law.

The annual cost of the illegal wildlife trade in the Philippines is P50 billion. Globally, it is a major driver of biodiversity loss. Hunting of critically endangered animals has been driving unique Philippine species to the brink of extinction.

According to Lim, while there is no marmot in the Philippines, private collectors who want to bring them in as pets or part of their wildlife collection is something we should all worry about.

Hence, Lim said like any other zoonotic disease, bubonic plague can spread across borders through wildlife trafficking or illegal wildlife trade.

“Illegal wildlife trade can definitely contribute to transmission. When wild rodents are hunted or captured, killed or smuggled into the country, and they happen to carry the pathogen, their fleas can move and bite other species that they come in contact with, including domestic rats and humans, who will contract the disease and can spread them,” she said.

Human to human transmission

According to Lim, a licensed veterinarian with expertise on zoonotic diseases, bubonic plague can be transmitted from human to human. From the rats, it can spread to the human population, like the coronavirus.

Worse, like Covid-19, she said there is still no vaccine for the bubonic plague, although it is curable.

“Even if there is as yet no evidence of the bacteria present in our indigenous rodent population, they can, technically, harbor them, or any similar pathogen, for that matter. But for as long as our native rodents are maintained in their natural habitats, they can keep these potential pathogens at bay,” she said.

A wave of zoonotic diseases

Sought for reaction, Leon Dulce, national coordinator of the environmental group Kalikasan-People's Network for the Environment, said the bubonic plague case along the borders of China, Mongolia and Russia is part of the expected continuing wave of zoonotic epidemic and pandemic outbreaks.

“Locally, we are experiencing avian flu, swine flu and dengue outbreaks on top of the Covid-19 contagion,” said Dulce, who connected the spread of zoonotic diseases to habitat loss and species' extinction occurring in various parts of the world.

Sixth mass extinction event

“The United Nations has called for the effective protection of 30 percent of critical landscapes and seascapes across the world if we are to avert the extinction of over a million flora and fauna species over the next few decades. If we fail to avert this sixth mass extinction event, hardier species that carry viruses and other dangerous microorganisms will proliferate and spill more emerging infectious diseases into human populations,” Dulce said.

Worse, he said the country's public health care systems will not be able to manage the increasing load if we do not address these diseases on a planetary health scale.

“There must be greater resources allocated by all governments of the world on stopping destructive projects like large-scale mining, poaching and mega infrastructure that destroy our natural defenses to diseases, he said.

Image Credits: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Environment group endorses Senate measure regulating use of plastic bags

By [BusinessMirror](#) July 12, 2020

An environmental advocate has endorsed Senate Bill 114 on regulating the use of plastic bags, which pollution has reached epidemic proportions in the Philippines that is now ranked third among top plastic polluters in the world.

In its position paper supporting the bill, Alagaan Natin Inang (ANI) Kalikasan deplored the fact that while plastic was once considered a wonder material, the “untold and unexpected ravages it is causing the planet are no longer tolerable.”

The bill filed by Sen. Maria Lourdes Nancy S. Binay reaffirms President Duterte’s thrust to stamp out the plastic problem initially by months-long sustained clean up of the world-renowned Boracay Island and Manila Bay with Baguio City and Palawan following suit.

The bill ensures that the ban in single-use plastic is not limited to the discretion of the local government units by ensuring that the ban mandated by a law and is applicable all over the country.

“The bill is practical and obvious: no single-use plastics, no epidemic [proportions in plastic pollution],” the group led by Jun Evangelista said.

The bill has also the support of Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, the chairman of the National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC).

NSWMC Resolution 1363 Series of 2020 bans the use of unnecessary single use plastics by the national government, local government units offices and all government controlled offices “as a solid waste avoidance and minimization strategy.”

Plastics have been causing garbage disposal problems. They have clogged Metro Manila’s waterways, even allowing informal settlers living along canals and esteros walk on closed rivers made solid with plastic waste.

Technology harnessed to safely dispose of plastics has proven more detrimental to the world’s air and water environment.

ANI Kalikasan said it has been clearly established by scientific researches that plastic materials have even become unseen by the naked eye.

While it is thought that seas and oceans are plastic-free, fishery researchers have discovered that “microplastic” has found its way into fishes, clams, shellfishes and other marine animals which people consume, making the same microplastic “invades” the human body.

Just like the Covid-19 virus which has no cure yet, current technology has yet to come up with an effective solution to rid the planet of plastic waste, ANI Kalikasan said.

ANI Kalikasan said it was among the first to introduce a Philippine-made fully biodegradable shopping bags, takeout food containers, drinking straws, coffee cups, spoon and fork and sachet to protect the environment.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/07/12/environment-group-endorses-senate-measure-regulating-use-of-plastic-bags/>

Rep. Legarda calls for integration of climate programs
and economic plans

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July 13, 2020
DATE

Rep. Legarda calls for integration of climate programs and economic plans

Published July 12, 2020, 9:50 AM

by Charissa Luci-Atienza

Deputy Speaker and Antique lone District Rep. Loren Legarda has re-echoed the call of the Global Commission on Adaptation (GCA) for world and business leaders to integrate climate adaptation and resilience into their economic stimulus and recovery packages to cushion the impact of COVID-19.



Deputy Speaker and Antique Rep. Loren Legarda (Congresswoman Loren Legarda Official Facebook Page / FILE PHOTO / MANILA BULLETIN)

The House leader joined the GCA in seeking a “climate-resilient recovery from COVID-19.”

“The raging COVID-19 pandemic has brought out the sobering reality that the world is not as advanced, prosperous and as resilient as we thought it to be. We have realized that our societies and economic systems are fragile and dependent on the health of our natural environment, and that we are only as strong as our most vulnerable,” Legarda, one of the GCA commissioners, said in a statement.

“As the GCA has observed, the COVID-19 pandemic has tragically exposed the risks humanity faces and how unprepared we are to respond,” she added.

In its statement titled “Call to Action for a Climate-Resilient Recovery from COVID-19”, the GCA called on governments and businesses to integrate climate resilience into their COVID-19 recovery packages, particularly in their infrastructure and financing initiatives.

Composed of climate advocates and world leaders pushing to accelerate climate change adaptation, the GCA recognized that the threats arising from the COVID-19 pandemic in terms of people’s health, well-being, and livelihoods will likely be multiplied by the worsening impact of the climate crisis with more extreme storms, droughts, heat waves, food crises and diseases, Legarda noted.

According to her, the Call to Action “builds on” the GCA’s “Adapt Now” flagship report in 2019 that calls for climate adaptation “by averting future losses, spurring economic gains through innovation, and delivering social and environmental benefits to everyone, but particularly to those currently affected and most at risk.”

The GCA seeks to raise the profile of adaptation work by bringing together stakeholders and investments along seven Action Tracks: locally-led adaptation, urban resilience, water resources management, social safety nets, food security, nature-based solutions, and disaster prevention, she said.

“I hope that this crisis has taught us well to be more cautious and approach today’s risks with concrete measures that will diminish our present vulnerabilities. As the world responds, it must build back better, towards a recovery that values the complex and interconnected relationships of human health, the economy, the climate, and the environment,” Legarda said.



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CARTOON

Rep. Legarda calls for integration of climate programs
and economic plans

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The GCA is jointly led by former UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, philanthropist Bill Gates, and former World Bank CEO Kristalina Georgieva, now International Monetary Fund Managing Director, and is co-managed by the Global Center on Adaptation and the World Resources Institute.

ACB welcomes Asean's giving premium to nature in response to Covid-19

By [BusinessMirror](#) July 12, 2020



The Asean Centre for Biodiversity headquarters in Los Baños, Laguna.

The Asean Centre for Biodiversity welcomed the call of President Duterte during the 36th Asean Summit to intensify the regional response against the Covid-19 pandemic and enable the ACB to help curb wildlife trafficking in the region.

Duterte said that as the current pandemic may not be the last, and the region has to strengthen its capacity to address future infectious disease outbreaks.

“We can do this by promoting research and capacity-building on health technology development. We must enable the [ACB] to contribute in combatting wildlife trafficking to prevent the spread of zoonotic diseases,” Duterte said in his intervention at the virtual summit chaired by Vietnam on June 26.

In the chairman's statement of the 36th Asean summit, on the other hand, Vietnam reaffirmed the importance of advancing cooperation on environmental protection and conservation with greater efforts to address cross-cutting issues for sustainable development, such as climate change, marine debris, biodiversity conservation, and transboundary haze pollution.

ACB Executive Director Theresa Mundita Lim expressed her support to the pronouncement of President Duterte and the thrust of Vietnam's chairmanship for a cross-sectoral approach in responding to the Covid-19 pandemic.

“The ACB is more than ready to embark on this challenge and serve the Asean better, most especially in fulfilling its mandate of facilitating cooperation among the Asean member states to conserve the region's rich but highly threatened biodiversity. We appreciate the Asean leaders' efforts to take up medium- to long-term measures in order to address the emergence of zoonotic diseases,” Lim said.

She noted the Asean leaders' unity and commitment to environmental protection and climate action, as demonstrated in previous Asean summits.

With the grave health-related risks posed by the increasing humans and animal interactions, the ACB is planning to support the development or roll-out of applicable tools for wildlife disease surveillance relating to early detection of zoonotic disease outbreaks in the region, Lim said.

“Monitoring and surveillance of species previously implicated as carriers of diseases, such as bats and pangolins, can greatly facilitate timely action and prevent the emergence of outbreaks and pandemics,” Lim said.

ACB welcomes Asean's giving premium to nature in

July 13, 2020

TITLE: response to Covid-19

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“We likewise need to work with existing organisations to coordinate efforts and help link ongoing activities in Southeast Asia that can give us a better understanding of the nature of zoonotic diseases that could occur in the region, as well as propose measures on building immunity or developing cures against newly discovered pathogens,” she added.

The ACB has been carrying out initiatives linking health and biodiversity and facilitating regional discussions on the development of One Health approaches.

One Health is a collaborative, multisectoral and transdisciplinary approach with the goal of achieving optimal health outcomes recognising the interconnection between people, animals, plants, and their shared environment.

On May 21 the ACB and the Asean Secretariat led an online discussion with officials of the Asean and experts from different parts of Asia on the interlinkages of biodiversity and health and how biodiversity considerations can be integrated into the response to the Covid-19 pandemic and other nature-based solutions to avoid pandemics in the future.

Representatives from concerned Asean sectoral bodies participated in the webinar.

Lim cited some of the existing Asean initiatives and mechanisms that ensure and promote the effective management of protected areas in the region and thus, also safeguarding wildlife habitats and helping address poaching and illegal wildlife trade to keep zoonotic diseases at bay.

One such initiative is the Asean Heritage Parks (AHPs) Programme, a flagship programme of the ACB, which recognises protected areas of regional importance.

The ACB recently conducted an online survey for the managers of AHPs and other protected areas in the region in May 2020 to assess the impacts of the Covid-19 on protected areas and their communities in the region.

The results of which will inform the ACB's future actions on enhancing the role of AHPs in disease prevention, and feed into the development of the regional action plan for the program.

Similarly, the ACB, in an ongoing collaboration with NatureServe, is developing the Asean Biodiversity Dashboard, an interactive user-friendly platform that will visualise the progress of the Asean member states in meeting the biodiversity conservation targets.

The dashboard can help in raising awareness of and support for evidence-based policy-making in biodiversity-related issues, including the occurrence of zoonotic diseases, Lim explained.

“The ongoing public health crisis presents a unique opportunity to scale up efforts in integrating nature and biodiversity into the medium- and long-term plans for pandemic prevention and maintaining public health,” Lim said.

Image Credits: [ACB photo](#)

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/07/12/acb-welcomes-aseans-giving-premium-to-nature-in-response-to-covid-19/>

TITLE: Nasa P500-K halaga ng mga hayop na kabilang sa endangered species, nakumpiska ng DENR at NBI

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July 13, 2020 DATE

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TITLE: Nasa P500-K halaga ng mga hayop na kabilang sa endangered species, nakumpiska ng DENR at NBI

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Another tarsier spotted in Davao Region



Photo credit to Tadeco Ko Bai Facebook page

[RALPH LAWRENCE G. LLEMIT](#)

July 9, 2020

ANOTHER tarsier was sighted in Davao Region, this time, inside a banana plantation in Panabo City, Davao del Norte.

Tadeco ko Bai, the Facebook page of Tagum Agricultural Development Company, Inc. (Tadeco) employees, said in its social media post on Wednesday, July 8, 2020, that they did not expect to see a tarsier within their area.

"We thought we could only see tarsiers in Bohol but we kid you not, we found out that we have tarsiers near the boundaries of TADECO!" The group said.

Tadeco employees, along with its security team, said the tarsier was turned over to Panabo City Environment and Natural Resources Office (Panabo-Centro).

"We hope to preserve these little ones; so, when you find one, please turn it over to the nearest local DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) office," the group said.

Panabo-Centro officer-in-charge Rogelio Hermo told SunStar Davao in a phone interview that the tarsier was immediately brought to the veterinarian for a check-up and was cleared for any injuries and other disorders.

Hermo said the tarsiers were immediately brought to the Regional Wildlife Rescue Center in New Balamban, Tagum City.

He said they cannot give an assessment yet as they are still investigating as to why the tarsier was spotted in the area.

Although he said that tarsiers or any wildlife sighting in a certain area are an indicator of having a good and healthy forest ecosystem.

He also said that the lockdown restrictions of human movement due to the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) is also a possible factor as to why some wildlife species have been reportedly sighted during the quarantine period.

However, Hermo reminded the public to report sightings of tarsiers and other wildlife to their office and called on the public not to harm, kill, trade and possess it because they are listed under nearly threatened species.

"Unta kung makakita mog mga sama aning tarsier ug ubang wildlife, palihog i-report kini sa among buhatan aron mahimuan namo'g lakang (please immediately report to our office if you sight any tarsier or other wildlife species so that we can immediately take action on it)," he said.

Two months ago, a tarsier was also found on a farm near a school in Barangay Megkawayan in Calinan District, Davao City. The tarsier was also turned over to DENR Davao Region and a wildlife rescue center.

DENR Davao regional public affairs office chief Jayvee Jude Agas said experts have yet to study the species of tarsiers present in the forests of Mindanao and its characteristics and distinctions from the popularly known tarsiers in the Visayas, specifically in Bohol.

"Our forest ecosystem is still good. Tarsiers or any other wildlife are actually one of the indicators for having a good and healthy forest ecosystem," Agas said.

Dolphins, orcas reappear in Bohol waters

By: [Leo Udtohan](#) - Correspondent / [@leoudtohanINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 03:47 PM July 12, 2020



Orcas or killer whales, the largest among the dolphins, were sighted in the waters off Garcia Hernandez town, Bohol. (Photo courtesy: Jervin Galido)

TAGBILARAN CITY – Pods of dolphins reappear in the waters off Garcia Hernandez town in Bohol three months after tourism activities were stopped because of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Ruel Baguhin, 37, considers the presence of dolphins in the municipality as “rare” and “surprising” since the last time residents have seen the aquatic mammals was some decades ago.

Residents have been spotting bottlenose and spinner dolphins as well as orcas or killer whales starting last June 29.

The presence of dolphins in the waters off Barangay Cayam prompted residents to look for them in the open sea.

Those who had close encounters with the dolphins posted photos and videos of the sea mammals on social media.

According to National Geographic, orcas or killer whales are considered the largest among the dolphins and are among the world’s most powerful predators. They are recognized through their distinctive black-and-white colors.

Argen Joseph Galendez, 29, a resident of West-Lungsodaan in Garcia Hernandez town, saw “hundreds” of dolphins last Saturday afternoon.

He said he and friends spotted them at around 5 p.m.

“It was my first time seeing dolphins here although I learned that some fishermen have had sightings of them in the past,” Galendez said.

The Bohol Sea is one of the breeding grounds of whales and dolphins.

They used to be seen in the seas off Jagna, Garcia Hernandez, Lila, and Pamilacan Island in Baclayon town, known as the highway of whales and dolphins.

However, sightings of these creatures diminished in the early 1990s due to rampant whale and dolphin hunting.

An outcry from local and foreign conservationists triggered the ban on the hunting of dolphins and whales.

The Philippines, one of the first countries in Southeast Asia that came up with policies protecting marine mammals, banned the catching, selling, or transporting of dolphins and whales in 1992 through Fisheries Administrative Order 185.

In 1998, the Animal Welfare Act was also enforced. In 2001, the Fisheries Administrative Order 208 was implemented to conserve rare, threatened, and endangered species which included whales and dolphins.

/MUF

Trees at Camp John Hay have more than doubled since 1997

Published July 12, 2020, 1:06 PM

by Zaldy Comanda

BAGUIO CITY – Mayor Benjamin Magalong lauded the Camp John Hay Development Corporation (CJHDevCo) for its successful re-greening program, which he described as a “huge accomplishment that needs to be highlighted”.



The Camp John Hay is now open for visitors but basic health protocols is strictly implemented. Photo by Zaldy Comanda/ MANILA BULLETIN

CJHDevCo Executive Vice President and Chief Operations Officer Shean Bedi bared that the number of trees inside Camp John Hay has more than doubled since 1997, the year the company took over the lease of the 247-hectare former American military base.

Bedi said the number of trees increased from 250,000 fully grown pine trees in 1997 to 602,350 in 2019. The CJHDevCo Environment Team inventoried the trees.

Bedi said the program will continue with CJHDevCo planting 352,350 more seedlings and saplings to the lot.

Of this number, 242,350 are pine seedlings and saplings, 60,000 coffee plants, and 50,000 bamboo culms.

“We are sharing this information in support of our contribution to Baguio City’s re-greening program,” Bedi said.

Craft long-term virus game plan

Published 6 hours ago on July 13, 2020 12:05 AM

By [Michelle R. Guillang](#)



A comprehensive plan is needed to address the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) crisis in the country, according to Senator Richard Gordon.

“We need to have a grand plan on how we are going to quell COVID. And that’s going to be anywhere from this year to another four years. It is possible that it will never go away... even with a vaccine. It’s like flu, pneumonia,” Gordon, who is also chairman of the Philippine Red Cross (PRC), projected.

“Even if there is already a vaccine, the virus will still exist. There should be a policy that could be implemented up to four years... the things we should do to combat it,” he continued.

Gordon, also chairman of the PRC, stressed that due to the augmented COVID-19 testing capacity in the Philippines through the opening of several molecular laboratories, the number of reported cases is expected to shoot up.

Maximize testing

The senator thus recommended the creation of a policy that would ensure enough medical institutions and quarantine facilities for positive cases.

“What should we do if we get infected? How many COVID hospitals are there that we can run to? There is a possibility that the cases will surge because of the upscaled testing,” the lawmaker asserted.

“If a huge number of people will be tested simultaneously in three to four days, we’ll be surprised that the positivity rate may reach 100,000, just like in other countries,” Gordon hypothesized.

He also reiterated that to restart the economy, local chief executives, especially those with a high number of COVID-19 cases, should test their constituents extensively.

Recovery factor

“Testing is the key to reviving our economy. We have to test the workers to ensure their safety. The public utility vehicles like the buses should have proper physical distancing,” Gordon stated.

“Everyone should always wear masks correctly. All the establishments must have soap and water so people can wash their hands,” he added.

PRC, a non-government humanitarian organization presently operates six molecular labs located in Mandaluyong, Manila, Pampanga, Zambales and Batangas.

It is capable of testing as many as 32,000 individuals for COVID-19 per day.

Those who need to be tested can call PRC's Helpline contact number 1158.

HEADLINES

Home stay a mistake

Published 6 hours ago on July 13, 2020 12:05 AM

By [Francis Wakefield](#)



A requirement for individuals with symptoms of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) to practice self-quarantine at home may have contributed to the spike in infections, the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) admitted yesterday.

Now, the agency tasked to craft policies and plans to beat the outbreak said it is advising against home quarantine.

Cabinet Secretary and IATF co-chairman Karlo Nograles said on Sunday that, as much as possible, persons who were tested positive of the virus but are asymptomatic or has mild cases should instead be isolated in government quarantine facilities.

“Home quarantine is one way of transmitting the virus among members of the households,” he indicated.

“We are also shifting our focus to those who are asymptomatic. Will give priority on facility quarantine. Anyway, we still have many COVID facilities which can accommodate mild cases. So that will be our focus not on home quarantine. If there are cases they should be in a quarantine facility,” Nograles advised.

As part of the government’s contact tracing efforts, the first question that is asked to the person who turned out positive of the virus is where he or she lives. He said some of those interviewed has a permanent residence and a second residence.

“We need to know what is your present address if you are COVID-19 positive. We will ask what is your present address. Of course, if we will attribute the case to this particular city, it’s because of the present address,” the official explained.

As part of second phase of the government’s National Action Plan (NAP) to beat COVID-19, Nograles said local government units (LGU) will be required to be more involved in the efforts.

Granular approach

Nograles indicated the government is moving towards localizing its approach. Mayors should be more involved.

“In fact, the IATF had a meeting with Metro Manila mayors via zoom for us to really compare notes in their jurisdictions. One of the topics raised is that there should be localized community quarantines or lockdowns,” he said citing the mechanics of the recovery program.

The Palace official, however, said the IATF is also reminding LGU that community quarantines should be done for 14 days and not for only two to five days as practiced in some barangays to ensure that they can effectively eradicate the threat of COVID-19 within their community.

“So what we are telling our mayors is that if they will conduct community quarantines in their barangays, it should not just be two days, three days or even five days of quarantine. It should be a minimum of 14 days,” he explained.

DDay on 16 July

Nograles said the IATF will hold a meeting on Monday, 14 July, to determine what kind of quarantine status Metro Manila and other areas of the country will be by 16 July.

Regardless of IATF’s recommendation, it will still be up to President Rodrigo Duterte to make the final decision, Nograles said.

He raised the possibility of Metro Manila moving up to an MGCQ but this will depend on how fast the localized response of the LGU will be in case of spikes in contamination.

“Let’s just wait for the President. We will still have a meeting tomorrow and we will give our recommendation to the President. It will be up to him to decide,” Nograles suggested.

No COVID-19 update on Sunday due to ‘significant volume’ of data gathered – DOH

By: [Darryl John Esguerra](#) - Reporter / [@DJEsguerraINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 12:33 AM July 13, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Health (DOH) failed to release its daily COVID-19 case bulletin due to the “significant volume” of data gathered on Sunday.

The DOH’s daily COVID-19 case bulletin usually comes out around 4 p.m. But on Sunday, the agency said it would release the report at 7:30 pm.

However, just moments before midnight, the DOH announced that it would not release its report for the day as it was still validating the data.

“Due to the significant volume of data gathered today as part of DOH’s effort to harmonize data with cities of NCR [National Capital Region] and the different regions, the DOH Data Team is still currently in the process of validating today’s numbers,” the DOH said in an advisory.

agency said that “initial findings” suggested “an increase in today’s number of reported cases, recoveries, and deaths.”

“We recognize the importance of providing real-time information. However, in providing this information we also make sure that said information is accurate with this the DOH will be providing a comprehensive report of today’s numbers tomorrow [Monday] at 8:30 am,” the DOH said.

With this development, the Philippines’ count of confirmed COVID-19 cases remained at 54,222, including 14,037 recoveries and 1,372 deaths.

/atm

Virtual gov't outsmarts bug

Published 6 hours ago on July 13, 2020 12:05 AM

By [Chito Lozada](#)



The speed at which the government transitions to digital technology would not only improve the efficiency of public services but is also necessary to maintain competitiveness in a post pandemic world.

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) health crisis has accelerated the adoption of automation technologies by firms in the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) region in a bid to reduce risk and costs, according to a report titled “COVID-19, 4IR and the Future of Work” released by the APEC Policy Support Unit.

APEC should study closely a phenomenon of short-term accelerated unemployment resulting from adoption of Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) automation technologies, while also considering new approaches to manage the challenges that stem from automation, according to the report.

“Policymakers will need to conduct a careful, sector-by-sector and gender-based analysis of jobs at risk of automation that factors in the new normal,” it noted.

G2C is better normal

Learn from the COVID-19 experience to usher in a “better normal,” Senator Christopher Lawrence “Bong” Go urged as he added agencies should prioritize the transition to e-governance for more efficient and responsive delivery of services.

Go noted Filipinos who need to transact with government for public services will soon be spared of the need to go to physical offices if government-to-citizen (G2C) e-governance platforms are available.

Aside from supporting calls of his peers for telecommunications firms to ensure connectivity, Go also urged the Department of Information and Communications Technology and other agencies to give priority to developing automated systems and make government processes more efficient, accessible and responsive to the demands of the changing times.

“At this time, many have transitioned to online, from E-governance, E-commerce and also online learning. It is important that the country will not be left behind in the transition to the digital age,” he said.

Go stressed the necessity for e-governance in the country has been growing in light of the current COVID-19 pandemic which limits physical mobility and face-to-face transactions among government offices, and between the government, citizens and businesses.

Gov't to lead transition

“Due to COVID-19, the way of doing business should evolve from the normal need of a face-to-face engagement. The government should be part of the transition. We should adopt more efficient, responsive and modern ways of transacting with our citizens. This will effectively make the government more in tune to the changing times,” he explained.

Go said that E-governance will bring the government closer to the people in these times through modern platforms.

“The old tedious ways of doing things bred opportunities for corruption. A simple permit or license, takes days to obtain and presence is required since the people need to queue to seek the service of agencies. That is passe,” Go narrated as he explained how health and safety protocols dictated the new methods in transacting with government.

Despite the fact that most regular private and public operations have been halted, the need of our people to transact with and seek services from government continues.

Dispense with old norms

Go cited various levels of governance where e-governance will prove to be useful. These include government-to-government (G2G), G2C and government-to-business (G2B) interactions.

“Due to the pandemic, G2G processes, such as transactions between two government agencies, are heavily hampered because we are physically limited by the social distancing and quarantine protocols in place to contain the spread of the virus,” Go explained.

“This will easily be resolved if we have e-governance platforms in place that would allow intra-government coordination and transactions to be done in an efficient, timely and cost-effective manner,” he added.

Furthermore, Go emphasized the need to build e-governance capacities in G2B transactions to ensure that the economic activity in the country remains seamless amid the current pandemic.



E-gov't system, pinapaaksyunan agad ni Bong Go sa DICT

July 12, 2020 @ 12:07 PM 20 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Hinikayat ni Senador Bong Go ang Department of Information and Communications Technology at iba pang concerned government agencies na gawing prayoridad ang pag-develop ng e-government system para sa mas mabilis at episyenteng pagtugon ng gobyerno ngayong panahon ng new normal bunsod ng coronavirus disease o COVID-19 pandemic.

Sinabi ni Go na sa panahon ngayon, mahalagang hindi mapag-iwanan ang bansa pagdating sa transition sa digital age gaya ng e-governance, e-commerce at online learning.

Iginiit ni Go na dahil sa COVID-19 pandemic, naging limitado ang physical mobility at face-to-face transactions sa mga government offices gayundin sa government to citizens transactions.

Binigyang diin ni Go na dapat makasabay ang gobyerno sa modern ways ng pakikipag-ugnayan nito sa mga mamamayan na dati ay face-to-face lang nagagawa.

Kumbinsido din si Go na mas mapalapit ang gobyerno sa mga mamamayan sa pamamagitan ng e-governance sa pamamagitan ng modern platforms.

Dagdag ni Go na matagal nang reklamo ng publiko ang lumang sistema ng kalakaran sa gobyerno gaya ng matagal na pagkuha lang lisensya o iba pang dokumento sa mga government offices habang ang kasalukuyang health crisis ang patunay na hindi na pwede ang makalumang transaksyon.

Inihayag pa ng senador na dapat gamitin ang teknolohiya upang maging mas maayos at komportable ang buhay ng sambayanan at matiyak na ligtas ang mga ito sa pandemya.

Ayon pa kay Go, hindi lang new normal ang dapat pinaghahandaan kundi ang “better normal” para sa mga kababayang umaasa sa gobyerno. **RNT/Kris Jose**

Source: <https://remate.ph/e-govt-system-pinapaaksyunan-agad-ni-bong-go-sa-dict/>

‘Electricity allowance’ sought for home-based workers

posted July 12, 2020 at 11:20 pm

by [Macon Ramos-Araneta](#)

Senator Francis Tolentino Sunday said he will file today a Senate measure which recommends that employers give a monthly P1000 electricity allowance to their employees who are on work-from-home status due to the pandemic.

In an interview over DZBB, Tolentino said companies should be able to give this (incentive) to their employees who are working from home.

“Hindi lang naman P1,000 siguro ang bayad. And that would also be deductible from their business expenses. Yun, mababawas doon sa buwis na babayaran naman ng kompanya,” Tolentino said.

Under his proposal, Tolentino said employees who are working from home should be entitled to a P1,000 tax deduction for every month that they are working from home. He said this can be a deductible expense in the taxable income of these workers.

Aside from the P1,000 tax deduction per month, he also cited another formula that could be considered in providing this tax incentive.

Tolentino said that he devised a formula which he patterned from Australia- to make this (the deduction from tax) P25 per hour

He said Australia is now implementing a AU\$50 per hour for those working from home.

“I computed the AU\$50, it’s almost equivalent to P17 in our money,” he said.

“So if P17, it’s P136 for eight hours of work from home. But perhaps, you’re not working eight hours from home, it might be only four hours,” also said Tolentino.

Tolentino said the employee must only declare under oath that he or she only worked for this number of hours to determine how much will be deducted from his or her income tax.

The senator said there should be penalties on the part of the employees if they fail to give incentives to their work-from-home employees.

“Dapat meron ‘yun. Kasi ang laki nu’ng nagiging katipiran niya,” he said.

He said this would help lessen their burden in paying their electric bills since they started performing their jobs out of the office.

Kuryente sa WFH sagutin ng employer

By Abante Tonite — Last updated Jul 12, 2020

NEWS



71 0

Plano ni Senador Francis Tolentino na maghain ng isang panukala kung saan magbibigay ng electricity allowance ang mga employer para sa kanilang mga manggagawa na work from home upang mabawasan ang bigat ng bayarin sa kuryente sa panahon ng pandemya.

Sa panukala ni Tolentino, ang mga manggagawa na WFH ay bibigyan ng P1,000 tax deduction kada buwan na maaaring deductive expense sa taxable income ng mga ito.

“Kasi hindi lang naman ganun ang nauubos niya sa pagbabayad ng electric bills niya e. Hindi lang naman P1,000 siguro ang bayad. At `yon naman ay deductible din as a business expense. `Yon, mababawas doon sa buwis na babayaran naman ng kompanya,” sabi ni Tolentino.

Ang mga employer na hindi magbibigay ng insentibo sa kanilang mga WFH employee ay papatawan ng kaukulang multa. (Dindo Matining)

Gov't studying provincial bus trips' resumption

Published 12 hours ago on July 12, 2020 05:54 PM

By **Concept News Central**



BUSES to Sagada from Metro Manila are among those affected by the transport restriction. W. Commons

Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles said on Sunday that the government is studying calls to lift the provincial bus ban to ease the effect of the COVID pandemic on drivers and operators.

Nograles said that provincial bus operations can only be allowed to resume if a system to determine that all would-be passengers are COVID-free is put in place.

Guarding against the further spread of COVID is the reason why the Department of Transportation has undertaken “calibrated approach” in slowly providing more transportation options.

“(Transportation) Secretary (Arthur) Tugade is still monitoring how we can assure that those returning to their provinces are safe from Covid,” Nograles said.

Local government units will play a big role in the decision to allow the resumption of the operation of provincial buses.

“Of course, they are also be making sure that there is no increase of Covid cases there,” he said.

p/jhd

Government debts swell to P1.51 trillion

[Mary Grace Padin](#) (The Philippine Star) - July 13, 2020 - 12:00am

From January to May

MANILA, Philippines – The Philippines borrowed around P1.51 trillion from domestic and foreign sources from January to May to raise funds for COVID-19 response efforts, according to the Bureau of the Treasury (BTr).

According to the latest data from the BTr, the national government's gross borrowings from January to May almost doubled to P1.51 trillion from P787.13 billion in the same period last year.

This was also higher compared to the government's borrowings of P1.02 trillion for the whole of 2019.

For May alone, borrowings amounted to P289.82 billion, a sharp 130.73 percent increase from P125.61 billion last year.

The Philippines is ramping up its borrowings to plug the deficit in its budget, which is now expected to widen to P1.613 trillion or 8.4 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) due to COVID-19.

BTr data showed that around 76 percent of the total borrowings in the first five months came from domestic sources, while the remaining 24 percent came from foreign lenders.

Domestic debt, in particular, amounted to P1.15 trillion, two times higher compared to the P576.02 billion recorded in the same period in 2019.

Of the total amount, P307.86 billion was raised through the issuance of fixed-rate Treasury bonds, while another P234.02 billion came from the sale of treasury bills.

Some P310 billion also accounted for the money raised by the BTr during its first Retail Treasury Bond (RTB) sale earlier this year.

Another P300 billion came from the short-term loan extended by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) under a repurchase agreement with the Treasury.

On the other hand, external borrowings from January to May surged by 69 percent to P356.64 billion from P211.11 billion a year ago.

The BTr said P162.79 billion of the amount came in the form of program loans from multilateral agencies, such as the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank. Another P7.79 billion was secured from project loans.

Meanwhile, P67.33 billion of the total foreign debt was raised from the euro-denominated bond sale conducted by the Philippines back in February.

Just this May, the government was also able to raise P118.74 billion in funds from its global bonds sale.

The debt papers, which have maturities of 10 years and 25 years, were priced at the lowest coupon rate ever achieved by the Philippines despite uncertainties caused by the health crisis.

With the state increasing its borrowings to fund its coronavirus response efforts, the national government's debt pile has reached a new-record high of P8.89 trillion as of end-May.

Despite this, Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez earlier assured the public that the government's debt level is still "manageable" and "affordable."

The Duterte administration is also looking to maintain its debt-to-GDP ratio at around 50 percent by the end of the year, which is within the median of its regional peers. This is coming from an all-time low of 39.6 percent as of the end of 2019.

Palace: Duterte 88% healthy, just like any other man his age

July 12, 2020 | Filed under: Headlines, News | Posted by: Tempo Desk

By ARGYLL CYRUS B. GEDUCOS

President Duterte is most likely 88 percent physically healthy, Malacañang said Sunday.

In an interview with Super Radyo DZBB, presidential spokesman Harry Roque said President Duterte is just like any other man his age.



DUTERTE

“Well, like any other 75-year-old, para naman pong nasa 88 po ang physical health ng ating Presidente (I think the President’s physical health is at 88 percent),” he said.

According to Roque, Duterte, after being stuck in Manila for months due to the quarantine, will spend the next few days in Davao City.

However, he refused to divulge information about the President’s schedule.

“Siya po ay nasa Mindanao ngayon, doon po siya nag-o-opisina at may mga planong biyahe po pero iyon nga po, for security considerations, ako po ay pinagbawalan na sabihin,” Roque said.

Duterte turned 75 this year amid the COVID-19 pandemic. Since he assumed the presidency, his health has always been at the center of speculations.

Last May, the Supreme Court junked a petition by a certain Atty. Dino de Leon calling for the disclosure of Duterte’s health records.

“The outright dismissal of the petition is proper since, on its face, the petition failed to set forth his material allegations to establish a prima facie case for a mandamus,” the SC said.

The SC also stressed that Duterte has been visible holding regular meetings that are televised. It said that these events are proof that the President has been actively performing his official duties.

Duterte admitted in an interview with CNN Philippines in November 2019 that he was not as healthy as he used to be. However, he said his health issues will not hinder him from performing his duties as president.

His health condition became a public concern last year after he figured in a minor motorcycle incident in October. Malacañang assured the public that there was nothing wrong with the President but he had to cut short his trip to Tokyo, Japan for the ceremonial enthronement of Emperor Akihito due to unbearable pain.

In a meeting with members of the Filipino community in Moscow, Russia last October, Duterte revealed that he was suffering from “myasthenia gravis,” a disease that causes muscle weakness. The President was also seen wearing a personal wearable air purifier on several occasions to protect himself from those who have coughs and colds.

Duterte had a cancer scare in 2018. (Argyll Cyrus B. Geducos)

Source: <http://tempo.com.ph/2020/07/12/palace-duterte-88-healthy-just-like-any-other-man-his-age/>

MGCQ possible for metro Manila with proactive local

TITLE: lockdowns

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MGCQ possible for Metro Manila with proactive local lockdowns

By Azer Parrocha July 12, 2020, 3:21 pm



File photo

MANILA – Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles on Sunday said a shift of Metro Manila to the least restrictive modified general community quarantine (MGCQ) is possible on July 16 as long as localized lockdowns are imposed immediately.

He emphasized that a shift to MGCQ will be one of the two options that will be proposed by the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) to President Rodrigo Duterte.

The second option, he said, is to retain the general community quarantine (GCQ) in the National Capital Region (NCR).

“There are really two options *dito*, *puwedeng* MGCQ *pero dapat mabilis ang mayor or sige i-GCQ muna natin para bigyan natin ng panahon na masanay ang mayor* (There are really two options here, MGCQ but mayor should be proactive or retain GCQ to give mayors more time to adjust),” he said in an interview over DZBB.

Should the President decide to place Metro Manila under MGCQ, Nograles said he will expect local chief executives to quickly implement localized lockdowns in a particular barangay (village) for at least 14 days.

According to the World Health Organization, the incubation period for Covid-19 is on average five to six days, however it can be up to 14 days.

Nograles said it will be up to Duterte to make the final decision on the matter.

“*Hintayin natin si Pangulo ang mag-announce* (Let’s wait for the President to make the announcement),” he said.

He said members of the IATF-EID will be meeting on Monday (July 13) to discuss possible changes to the current quarantine classifications.

Last June 30, Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III said he wanted NCR and Calabarzon to shift to MGCQ to revive the economy since the two regions made up 67 percent of the country’s economy.

“You know, you put NCR, Calabarzon, that is where the economy is based. About 60 percent or 67 percent of our economy is based on that area. That should move more to the MGCQ as quickly as possible because people have to start working,” he said.

Dominguez also pushed for a localized lockdown where only barangays with a jump in the number of coronavirus disease (Covid-19) cases will be closed instead of an entire region or city.

MGCQ possible for metro Manila with proactive local

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“We should monitor it on a -- maybe on a barangay level and if you know, the cases go up, just close it down. But do it on a place to place,” he said.

He said a company-to-company lockdown basis could also be considered.

Currently, Metro Manila, Benguet, Cavite, Rizal, Lapu-Lapu City, Mandaue City, Ormoc, Leyte, Southern Leyte, and Cebu’s Talisay City, Minglanilla, and Consolacion are under GCQ until July 15. The rest of the country is under MGCQ while only Cebu City remains under the most restrictive enhanced community quarantine (ECQ).

As of Saturday, the country has 54,222 confirmed Covid-19 cases with 14,037 recoveries and 1,372 deaths. **(PNA)**

Metro Manila mayors nagkasundo para sa 'mas mabigat' na penalty sa violators ng health protocols

By [Bombo Christian Yosores](#) - July 12, 2020 | 6:51 PM

Napagkasunduan daw ng mga alkalde sa Metro Manila na magpataw ng mas mabigat na penalty sa mga lalabag sa mas mahigpit na pagpapatupad ng health protocols laban sa COVID-19.

Sa isang panayam sinabi ni Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) general manager Jojo Garcia na kasali sa napagusapan sa meeting ang pagpapataw ng mas mataas na penalties.

Kabilang daw sa mga mahigpit na babantayan sa National Capital Region ang mga hindi nagsusuot ng face mask at hindi sumusunod sa physical distancing.

Samantala, inamin din ni Garcia na nasa siyam na ang bilang ng mga empleyado sa kanilang tanggapan ang tinamaan ng coronavirus disease.

Nauna nang sinuspinde ni MMDA chairman Danilo Lim ang pasok ng mga empleyado sa ahensya para sa disinfection ng kanilang pasilidad at opisina.

Ayon kay Garcia, sa ngayon ay limitado muna ang bilang ng kanilang mga personnel na nagta-trabaho dahil sa biglang pagtaas ng mga kaso ng sakit sa kanilang ahensya.

World's 1st airport test lab opens in Mactan

Published 4 hours ago on July 13, 2020 02:30 AM

By [Rico Osmeña](#)



World's first Passengers at the Mactan-Cebu International Airport await their turn to be swab-tested for the coronavirus disease, to be processed in the airport's molecular laboratory — the first in the country and in the world. PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF DOTR

Considered to be the first in the Philippines and in the world, the Mactan-Cebu International Airport Authority (MCIAA), together with the GMR-MEGAWIDE Cebu Airport Corporation (GMCAC), launched on Saturday a dedicated molecular laboratory for the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) detection in the Mactan-Cebu International Airport (MCIA).

MCIAA General Manager and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Atty. Steve Dicdican said this was borne out of the prerequisite for the resumption of international travel with the de-prioritization of profit since the airport will not profit a single cent from its operations.

“It should be noted that the airport will not profit a single cent from the laboratory because we envisioned this to be our contribution to the government’s effort to bring home our stranded kababayans at minimal cost to them and the government and jumpstarting our economy,” Dicdican said in a statement.

The project was also done in line with Department of Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade’s directive for airports to each have a dedicated molecular laboratory.



Dicdican added the group immediately took up to the task and embarked on the ambitious project of putting up the fastest-built and accredited molecular laboratory, which has the capacity to do mass testing and generate results in the quickest possible time.

The 400-square meter laboratory, which is designed to process 1,500 to 3,000 tests per day, can yield test results after 24 hours — the shortest time in the country to release swab test results.

It holds a Biosafety Level 2 certification from the Department of Health (DoH) and the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM), which allows it to work with agents associated with human diseases that pose a moderate health hazard.

Meanwhile, GMR-MEGAWIDE, which operates the MCIA, has finalized its arrival protocols for international passengers who will need to undergo swab testing and must have confirmed hotel accommodations in Cebu for a specific number of days while waiting for their test results.

The cost of PCR swab tests for returning Filipinos who are not overseas Filipino workers (OFW) and foreign nationals is P4,900, which is to be shouldered by the passenger. The testing cost for land-based OFW and seafarers is P4,400, which shall be shouldered by the Overseas Workers Welfare Association.



Upon arrival, passengers will need to present their Travel Registration Number after registering at the online MCIA Passenger Arrival Registration Form, then proceed to the Bureau of Quarantine (BoQ) to undergo thermal scanning and submit the Health Declaration Form. Following clearance from Immigration, they will need to proceed to the Arrival Reclaim Hall for PCR swab test wherein an orange band/sticker will be given to indicate completion.

While claiming baggage, they will go to the waiting area and wait for a representative from respective agencies for Customs clearance before leaving the airport. PCR swab test results will be released by the BoQ after 24 to 48 hours.

For negative PCR test results, the passenger will receive an email from the BoQ wherein the local government unit may bring the passenger to their residence in Cebu, may be allowed to go home via private vehicle, or take onward flights.

For positive results, the BoQ will be directly in touch with the passenger for specific instructions wherein the passenger must comply with mandated health, safety and treatment protocols of the DoH and BoQ.

Land beneficiaries receive livelihood aid

Published 4 hours ago on July 13, 2020 02:00 AM

By [Elmer Recuerdo](#)



Livelihood aid Former rebels from San Isidro, Leyte who received their certificate of land ownership award from the Department of Agrarian Reform were also granted livelihood assistance to start their own small farms as part of the food supply chain amid the pandemic. PHOTOGRAPH BY ELMER REQUERDO FOR THE DAILY TRIBUNE

TACLOBAN CITY — Some 4,087 agrarian reform beneficiaries in Eastern Visayas will receive crop production inputs starter kits consisting of seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and farm tools from the Department of Agrarian Reform — Eastern Visayas (DAR-8) to help households meet the nutritional requirements and generate income from surplus production.

On top of this, 15 female members from different agrarian reform beneficiary organizations (ARBO) in every province of the region will also receive a livelihood package, based on their preferences and capabilities, within the month.

DAR-8 Regional Director Ismael Aya-ay said the distribution of livelihood kits and packages is one of the four components of DAR's ARBold Move project, which is the agency's response to Republic Act 11469, otherwise known as the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act.

Other components of the project include support to ARBO as frontliners in the food supply chain, livelihood support for women in crisis situations and distribution of relief packs containing supplemental food and hygiene kits.

Aya-ay emphasized that women with special circumstances such as single parents, widows, senior citizens, head of households, group of indigenous peoples and persons with disabilities who undertake farming activities but have lost their source of income due to the quarantine will be given priority in the livelihood program for women.

He added that the procurement of hogs and poultry for the livelihood support for rural women affected by the current crisis is ongoing and will be distributed simultaneously with the crop production inputs starter kits.

Around 65 ARBO in the region have been assisted during the lockdown in the marketing of their products and provided with quarantine accreditation passes to have access at checkpoints for the continuous delivery of food supply. This was able to generate a combined sale of more than P23 million for these farmers during this period, Aya-ay said.

In May, DAR-8 distributed 9,532 relief packs of supplemental food, vitamins and hygiene kits to agrarian reform beneficiaries as immediate assistance to ease the burden caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/07/13/land-beneficiaries-receive-livelihood-aid/>

Acronyms to fight COVID-19

[COMMONSENSE](#) - [Marichu A. Villanueva](#) (The Philippine Star) - July 13, 2020 - 12:00am

The 18th Congress is expected to take up priority legislations geared to address the continuing public health crisis brought about by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. By tradition, the ceremonial joint opening sessions of the Senate and the House of Representatives will be again highlighted by the state of the nation address (SONA) at the Batasang Pambansa in Quezon City.

But due to the existing public health crisis, President Rodrigo Duterte is likely to deliver his penultimate SONA this July 27 through “virtual” tele-conferencing as the safest mode to avoid COVID-19 infection. Last week, the President’s economic team led by Department of Finance (DOF) Secretary Carlos “Sonny” Dominguez III, presented their own pre-SONA reports. Each of them presented their respective Department’s accomplishments last year and plans to finish pending administration’s priority projects.

Likewise, each of the economic managers unveiled a preview of the priority legislative agenda aimed to bring the Philippine economy back to growth track by the time the Duterte administration bows out on June 30, 2020.

As the head of the President’s economic team, Dominguez vowed to strongly push the various “economic stimulus” bills, the majority of which are in various stages at the legislative mills. Dominguez particularly identified as priority the four economic relief bills drafted by the DOF to avert the feared recession of the country’s economy impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Actually, Dominguez first spelled them out during our Kapihan sa Manila Bay Webinar last June 24. At that time, the Finance chief explained these economic bills in broad strokes.

In our subsequent Kapihan sa Manila Bay last week, Senate president Vicente Sotto III acknowledged the four DOF bills that were christened with very catchy names by its principal authors and sponsors in Congress. According to the Senate president, they agreed to pass the four DOF-proposed measures separately instead of putting them together under one “economic stimulus package” billed as Bayanihan to Recover as One or Bayanihan-2.

This was recommended by Sen. Sonny Angara, who chairs the committee on finance, that will shepherd these bills requiring appropriations to fund these measures. The Bayanihan-2 bill seeks to extend the Bayanihan to Heal As One law that granted the President emergency powers, among other things, to realign the 2020 budget to COVID-related expenditures. The Bayanihan 1 lapsed last June 25.

As originally proposed by the Lower House, it would entail a total of P1.3 trillion worth of measures to spur recovery from the adverse impact of COVID-19 lockdowns that cut the country’s economic growth to near zero. But the DOF bucked the proposed P1.3 trillion as an unrealistic amount because it might result to more government borrowing or resort to new taxes to raise funds for it.

As agreed upon by the DOF with the leaders of Congress, Sotto disclosed, the stimulus package is divided into several bills and taken out of the Bayanihan-2 bill. As it is, the Bayanihan-2 bill was already approved by both chambers of Congress on second reading before they adjourned their first regular sessions last June 5.

So when they convene on SONA day, Sotto announced, the original amount of P140 billion under Bayanihan-2 will be approved on third and final reading in both chambers. Thus, a bicameral conference committee can be convened to consolidate the Senate and House

versions immediately after. Another bill being pushed by certain House leaders is seeking to increase the allocation for the proposed P140- billion funding the COVID-19 Unemployment Reduction Economic Stimulus Act (CURES).

But the agreement is limited only to the following four bills, namely: the proposed Acceleration, Recovery and Investment Stimulus of the Economy Act (ARISE); Financial Institutional Strategic Transfer Act (FIST); Government Financial Institutions Unified Initiatives to Distressed Enterprises for Economic Recovery (GUIDE) and the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises Act (CREATE).

Unlike the President's economic team, the police and military implementers of the COVID lockdowns are pretty much straightforward in the use of acronyms. They exempt from the lockdown people classified as APOR, or Authorized Persons Outside Residences. On the other hand, Filipinos caught by the lockdowns elsewhere from their home provinces are collectively called as LSI, or locally stranded individuals.

Not far behind in the acronyms game, the Department of Health (DOH) last week launched their latest public information campaign on how each and every Filipinos can help fight the spread of the COVID-19. To obviously gain the widest public notice, the DOH tapped very popular TV/movie actor Alden Richards as chief endorser.

Known in real life as Richard Faulkerson Jr. is aptly cast in the DOH campaign against COVID-19 dubbed by a catchy acronym "B.I.D.A.." Roughly translated, it means the lead star but it is an acronym that stands for:

B – Bawal walang mask (wear face mask)

I – I-sanitize ang mga kamay (wash your hands)

D – Dumistansiya ng isang metro (physical distancing)

A – Alamin ang totoong impormasyon (don't fall for "fake" news)

Much earlier though, Health Secretary Dr. Francisco Duque III coined his own anti-COVID acronym to warn that people can catch COVID-19 infection through M.E.N. The M.E.N. stood for the first letters of our orifices through which the virus can enter the body: M-outh, E-yes, and N-ose.

And then, there's another anti-COVID acronym W.O.W. Likewise, it stood for the first letters of how to avoid COVID-19 infection: W-ash your hands; O-bserve social distancing; and W-ear mask.

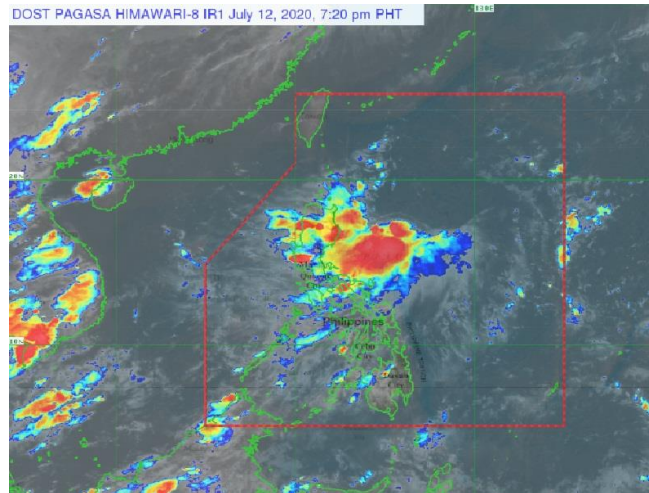
But the lockdowns have the most number of acronyms starting from E.C.Q., or enhanced community quarantine.

These creative acronyms make it not only easier to remember but also, I suppose make them easier to follow.

More so, these acronyms could always help remind each and every one of us Filipinos we must do also our duty to fight against being infected by COVID-19.

Binabantayang LPA, posibleng maging bagyo – PAGASA

By Angellic Jordan July 12, 2020 - 07:39 PM



May isang low pressure area (LPA) na binabantayan ang PAGASA sa loob ng Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR).

Sa weather forecast, sinabi ni PAGASA weather specialist Raymond Ordinario na huling namataan ang LPA sa layong 540 kilometers Silangang bahagi ng Tuguegarao City, Cagayan bandang 3:00 ng hapon.

Bunsod nito, nararanasan aniya ang maulap na kalangitan na may kalat-kalat na pag-ulan, pagkidlat at pagkulong sa Silangang bahagi ng Luzon kabilang ang Cagayan Valley, Aurora, Quezon at Bicol region.

Apektado na rin aniya nito ang northern at eastern section ng Samar province.

Posible aniyang lumakas ang LPA at maging ganap na bagyo.

Maaari aniyang maging tropical depression ang LPA sa susunod na 48 oras.

Sakaling maging bagyo, sinabi ng weather bureau na tatawagin itong Bagyong Carina.

Ito ang posibleng ikatlong bagyo sa Pilipinas sa taong 2020.

Samantala, sinabi ni Ordinario na magiging maayos naman ang lagay ng panahon sa nalalabing bahagi ng bansa.

West PH Sea award is 'non-negotiable', DFA says

TITLE: on 4th anniv of legal victory

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West PH Sea award is 'non-negotiable', DFA says on 4th anniv of legal victory

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Jul 12 2020 07:07 PM



A Philippine flag flutters from BRP Sierra Madre, a dilapidated Philippine Navy ship that has been aground since 1999 and became a Philippine military detachment on the disputed Second Thomas Shoal, part of the Spratly Islands, in the South China Sea March 29, 2014. *Erik De Castro, Reuters, File Photo*

MANILA - The Philippines' arbitration victory against China is "non-negotiable", the Department of Foreign Affairs said on Sunday on the 4th anniversary of the verdict.

On [July 12](#) four years ago, the Permanent Court of Arbitration ruled in favor of the Philippines' arguments for maritime entitlements over the West Philippine Sea, rejecting China's claims in the resource-rich area.

The DFA said the arbitration case "is a contribution of great significance and consequence to the peaceful settlement of disputes in the South China Sea and to the peace and stability of the region at large."

"The Tribunal authoritatively ruled that China's claim of historic rights to resources within the sea areas falling within the 'nine-dash line' had no basis in law," Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. said in a statement.

The DFA also noted that the Tribunal ruled that the Philippines' sovereign rights in its exclusive economic zone were violated by the construction of artificial islands and large-scale reclamation. The large-scale harvesting of endangered marine species also damaged the area's marine ecosystem, it said.

"Compliance in good faith with the award would be consistent with the obligations of the Philippines and China under international law, including UNCLOS (United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea) to which both parties are signatories," Locsin said.

He said the Philippines, as a law-abiding, peace-loving and responsible member of the international community, reaffirms its adherence to the award and its enforcement without any possibility of compromise or change.

"The award is non-negotiable," Locsin added.

China however has rejected the arbitral win, with no less than Chinese President Xi Jinping telling President Rodrigo Duterte this ruling during their bilateral meeting in Beijing last year.

China has instead ramped up its militarization efforts in the vital waterway.

Last April, the DFA filed a [diplomatic protest](#) against China after a Chinese warship pointed a radar gun at a Philippine Navy ship in the West Philippine Sea.

In June last year, a Chinese vessel [collided](#) with a Filipino fishing boat and sank it, and then left the boat's crew floating in the middle of the sea.

West PH Sea award is ‘non-negotiable’, DFA says

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Meanwhile former Foreign Affairs chief Albert del Rosario said Duterte can still raise the country’s arbitral win “before the world.”

“In the remaining years of his term, we believe that our president still has the opportunity to fulfill his promise to the Filipino people to raise the Award: this time, not before the Chinese President, but before the world.” Del Rosario said in a text message.

Last May, Indonesia cited the Philippines’ arbitral win in its own sea dispute with China.

“Indonesia reiterates that the Nine-Dash line map implying historic rights claim clearly lacks international legal basis and is tantamount to upset UNCLOS 1982,” said Indonesia’s Permanent Mission to the United Nations in the letter delivered on May 26.

China’s expansive claims in the South China Sea has brought it into dispute with the Philippines, Indonesia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Brunei and Taiwan.

Growing resistance to Beijing aggression

posted July 13, 2020 at 12:50 am

by [Orlando Oxales](#)

"The Philippine government must complete its re-pivot."

Tensions have reached new levels four years after the arbitral decision declared unlawful and without basis Beijing's absurd "nine-dash line" territorial claim of 1.3 million square miles in the South China Sea (SCS). For several years, continuing buildup of military fortifications in several islands and the series of incursion incidents has created what geopolitical analysts warn as a deteriorating situation. It has been reported that Beijing will soon declare an Air Defense Identification Zone (ADIZ) in the South China Sea revealing the readiness of their facilities to enforce air traffic control over the SCS and a clear imposition of the national authority.

This enables China to monitor and even rationalize any interception of all air traffic in the entire SCS. Military analysts point out that this move to gain control of the air is key in launching military operations. The implications are very serious as this threatens the air traffic and mercantile trade of the Philippines, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, and Vietnam.

In violation of the 2002 Declaration on the Conduct of Parties in the South China Sea, Beijing has again ignored an ASEAN commitment "to avoid activities that would complicate or escalate disputes and affect peace and stability" when military exercises were conducted in the Paracel Islands.

In a re-pivot from a very pro-China policy, President Duterte instructed the abrogation of the Visiting Forces Agreement, a key operational element of the Mutual Defense Treaty with the United States, suspended. The United States welcomed the Philippines' decision which paves the way for "continued close security and defense cooperation with the Philippines."

If you recall, the arbitral victory which was applauded by the international community as a triumph in the rule of law was shelved by the current administration in an appeasement policy that set aside territorial integrity over promised economic concessions that up to now has not had any significant results especially for the government's Build Build program.

As China's People's Liberation Army Navy proceeded with military drills in the Paracel islands, Department of Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. issued an unexpected but fittingly strong warning, "Should the exercises spill over to Philippine territory then China is forewarned that it will be met with the severest response, diplomatic and whatever else is appropriate." The Philippines also protested China's naming of underwater features in the SCS and the creation of administrative districts with one claiming the Kalayaan Island Group in the Spratly islands.

A strong pushback statement against China was also delivered by the United States via a demonstration of military superiority with the conduct of dual carrier operations by the Nimitz Carrier Strike Force composed of the USS Nimitz and USS Ronald Reagan Carrier Strike Groups in the South China Sea. Each carrier is supported by over 60 aircraft and escorted guided-missile cruisers and destroyers.

The US Navy stated that, "Nimitz and Reagan form the most effective and agile fighting force in the world, supporting US commitment to mutual defense agreements with regional allies and partners, and promoting peace and prosperity throughout the Indo-Pacific."

Washington has been increasing the pace of operations in the SCS with overflights by US Air Force heavy bombers, Freedom of Navigations operations skimming Chinese occupied islands and joint naval operations with Singapore and Japan. US-China relations have been deteriorating since the global pandemic outbreak from Wuhan early this year.

The cabbage tactics of Beijing to push forward its expansionists agenda and the multiple incidents of incursion has been denounced by a growing number of nations which includes: Vietnam, Indonesia, Malaysia, Taiwan, Japan, the Philippines, the United States, and India with its ongoing border skirmishes with China's People's Liberation Army.

The arbitral award that our own government hesitates to assert is now being used by other ASEAN countries such as Malaysia and Indonesia to assert maritime rights under the rule of law challenging China's expansionist moves in the SCS. Our arbitral victory is a law that all nations must respect and has become the unifying foundation for a strategic alliance of like-minded nations who believe in the values of a rules-based international order that nurtures the interlinked development of prosperous economic systems.

The 2016 ruling of the International Court of Arbitration affirms the Philippine territorial rights and has become an example for other ASEAN nations. The Philippine government must complete its re-pivoting by asserting our national interests and help solidify ASEAN and the international community to resist Beijing's aggression.

COVID-19 cases sa buong mundo lagpas 12.3-M na

July 11, 2020 @ 8:36 AM 2 days ago

Paris, France – Pumalo na sa 12,361,580 ang kabuuang bilang ng mga tinamaan ng coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) sa 196 na bansa at teritoryo sa buong mundo, ayon sa tally mula sa AFP nitong Biyernes.

Sa bilang na ito, nasa 556,140 naman ang nasawi. Pumalo naman sa 6,593,400 ang mga nakarekober mula sa sakit.

Karamihan sa mga bansa ang sumusuri lamang sa mga symptomatic o mga pinakamalalang kaso.

Estados Unidos ang nangunguna sa pinakatinamaang bansa na may 133,542 na nasawi mula sa 3,144,472 na kaso. Umabot naman sa 969,111 ang nakarekober na.

Sumunod naman ang Brazil na may 69,184 na nasawi mula sa 1,755,779 na kaso; United Kingdom na may 44,650 na nasawi mula sa 288,133 na kaso; Italy na may 34,938 na nasawi mula sa 242,639 na kaso; at Mexico na may 33,526 na nasawi mula sa 282,283 na kaso.

Mayroon 201,723 na nasawi sa Europa mula sa 2,803,100 na kaso; Estados Unidos at Canada na may 142,335 na nasawi mula sa 3,251,493 kasong naitala; Latin America at Caribbean na may 138,337 na nasawi mula sa 3,186,561 na kaso; Asia na may 41,422 na nasawi mula sa 1,658,293 na kaso; Middle East na may 19,555 na nasawi mula sa 893,896 na kaso; Africa na may 12,633 na nasawi mula sa 557,308 na kaso at Oceania na may 135 na nasawi mula sa 10,929 na kaso. **Ulat mula sa Agence France-Presse**

WORLD

Amazon registers record deforestation

Published 1 day ago on July 12, 2020 02:45 AM

By [Xinhua](#)



Image taken on Aug. 17, 2019 shows a raging fire in the Amazon rainforest in the state of Tocantins, Brazil. (Xinhua)

RIO DE JANEIRO, Brazil (Xinhua) — Deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon hit a monthly record of 1,034.4 square kilometers in June, the government reported on Friday.

The National Institute for Space Research (INPE) at the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation revealed in a report that deforestation in June was 10.6 percent higher than in the same month of 2019, and 24.31 percent higher than May this year.

According to the report, in June, the world's largest rainforest witnessed 2,248 fires, the highest level for the month of June in 13 years.

Additionally, areas totaling 3,069.57 square kilometers were deforested in the first half of the year, an increase of 25 percent compared to the same period in 2019.

The figures came at a time when the Brazilian government is receiving harsh criticism from the international community for its alleged lack of commitment in combatting the destruction of the Amazon.

On Thursday, Brazilian Vice President Hamilton Mourao led a meeting with a group of international investors, who publicly expressed their disagreement with the country's environmental policy.

The official stated that investors had demanded environmental policies that produced results, and he promised a stronger effort from the government in reducing high rates of deforestation.



JIGME DORJE/XINHUA

LOCALS in the Tibet region are calling for moves to tackle the growing issue of 'white pollution'. During a waste collection session at the base of Qomolangma, known in the West as Mount Everest, in the Tibet autonomous region, participants put garbage into bags and prepare to transport it downhill.

severely disrupt international students' educational attainment, and our country is worse off for it," said Miriam Feldblum, executive director of the

Washington DC and Puerto Rico.

The extraordinary number of colleges and universities pooling together so quickly is indicative of the serious nature of the opposition to the brash move, academic pundits said.

LATEST

British pilot survives 4-month virus battle in Vietnam

Published 7 hours ago on July 12, 2020 10:43 PM

By [Agence France-Presse](#)



STEPHEN Cameron says he owes his life to the dedicated team of Vietnam medics who fought for months to save his life. (Photo: Cho Ray Hospital)

HANOI—A British pilot who spent more than two months on life support in Vietnam after contracting COVID-19 was on his way home Saturday, astounding doctors who gave him just ten percent chance of survival.

Stephen Cameron, 42, was the sickest patient medics have had to treat during the coronavirus outbreak in the Communist nation, which has recorded no official deaths following a fast and aggressive response to the pandemic.

Little more than six weeks ago, they warned that Cameron would need a double transplant for his lungs, which were only functioning at around 10 percent.

But after nearly four months in hospitals in Ho Chi Minh City, including 10 weeks on a ventilator, the Vietnam Airlines pilot from Motherwell, Scotland, was discharged Saturday and was due to fly back to the UK within hours.

“I’m overwhelmed by the generosity of the Vietnamese people, the dedication and professionalism of the doctors and nurses... the odds say that I shouldn’t be here so I can only thank everybody here for what they’ve done,” Cameron said as he left Cho Ray Hospital.

Tran Thanh Linh, deputy head of ICU at Cho Ray Hospital, said “huge effort and energy” had gone into saving Cameron, who was given the country’s best equipment and whose case had captured the attention of everyone from doctors to government officials.

Just a few weeks after arriving in Vietnam in early February for a new role with the national carrier, Cameron spent an evening at the popular “Buddha Bar” in Ho Chi Minh City.

He tested positive days later, on March 18, for COVID-19.

Known as Patient 91, Cameron became the focus of huge media attention as the country’s top medical minds met to brainstorm treatment options.

The news that he would need a lung transplant was met with 59 donation offers, according to the health ministry.

But after waking from a coma at the end of May, there were small signs of improvement – a thumbs-up sign for an attentive doctor, a trip on to the balcony to catch some sunshine and a video of him holding a Motherwell Football Club scarf aloft.

Every step towards recovery made headlines.

Finally on Saturday, as state media said his treatment bill had reached at least \$150,000, he was well enough to catch a special repatriation flight to London, accompanied by three doctors, state media added.

His return home comes as Vietnam celebrated 85 days with no community transmission of the coronavirus.

The country has just 370 virus confirmed cases and zero deaths, but its borders remain largely shut. More than 10,000 people are currently in mandatory quarantine.