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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service

Environment chief pledges for both Climate Change, COVID-19 resilience

By Ma. Alaine Allanigue Published on July 24, 2020



QUEZON CITY, July 24 (PIA) -- Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu has pledged government will beef up the country's resilience and adaptive capacity to both COVID-19 and Climate Change.

"We will increase our resilience and adaptive capacity to both coronavirus pandemic and climate change," said Cimatu, who also chairs the Cabinet Cluster on Climate Change Adaptation, Mitigation and Disaster Risk Reduction (CCAM-DRR), during a pre-SONA forum on Wednesday.

The official said among those being prioritized by the Cabinet climate change and disaster cluster amid the coronavirus pandemic include not only effective health care but waste management, treatment, storage and disposal facilities, as well.

"More effective health care waste management shall be implemented to overcome the huge volume of infectious and hazardous waste of hospitals," Cimatu said.

"Treatment, storage and disposal facilities in the country shall be increased," he added.

Cimatu also enumerated some of the programs that are being aggressively implemented by government, some with the help of the private sector, which include: reforestation and watershed management, forest protection and agro-forestry development, and food security.

"Patuloy tayong magiging matatag. Lalaban natin ang dagok at hamon na kinakaharap natin hindi lamang sa hamon ng pandemya ganon din sa hamon."

CLIMATE CHANGE, PRAYORIDAD NG DENR SA GITNA NG COVID-19



July 24, 2020 @ 1:42 PM 16 hours ago

Views: 85

Inihayag ni Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu na ang pagtugon sa climate change ang nangunguna pa ring prayoridad ng pamahalaan kahit na ito ay abala sa pagsupil ng COVID-19.

Ang climate change ay mas malaking krisis kaysa sa COVID-19 dahil mas malaking panganib ang dala nito sa mga susunod na henerasyon, ayon kay Cimatu na nagsisilbing tagapangulo ng Cabinet Cluster on Climate Change Adaptation, Mitigation and Disaster Risk Reduction (CCAM-DRR).

“The climate emergency remains as urgent as ever. It is like the COVID-19 emergency, just in slow motion and much graver,” ani Cimatu sa kanyang presentasyon para sa 2020 Pre-State of the Nation Address Report of the Cabinet Cluster on CCAM-DRR na may titulong “Pagkalinga Tungo sa Katatagan” nitong Hulyo 22.

Maaaring magkaroon ang pagbabago ng klima ng mas malalang epekto na nagbubunga ng mas malalang problema, mula sa magiging epekto nito sa katatagan ng mga ecosystem hanggang sa produksyon ng pagkain at pagkakaroon ng gulo sa sangkatauhan.

Nagsisilbing banta ito sa ecosystem at biodiversity loss sa ating planeta na makapaghatid ng serbisyo at kailangan ng tao.

Nakagagambala ang pagkalbo ng kagubatan sa weather patterns at water cycle, nakapag-ambag sa climate change, at sumisira sa mga tirahan ng mahahalagang species ng hayop.

Nagdudulot ng polusyon ang mga kemikal at basura sa hangin, sa lupa at sa tubig at siyang pumapatay sa maraming tao kada taon.

Bilang estratehiya, sinabi ni Cimatu na gagamitin ng pamahalaan ang COVID-19 bilang oportunidad upang pabilisin ang climate action sa “pagbuo ng mga tugon sa pinakamalalang krisis pangkalusugang ng henerasyong ito sa pamamagitan ng ‘climate lens.’”

“The government—through the Cabinet Cluster on CCAM-DRR—will prioritize actions and investments that will reduce long-term health impacts and increase our resilience and adaptive capacity to both the coronavirus pandemic and climate change,” ani Cimatú.

Ang Cabinet cluster, aniya, ay patuloy na tutugon sa mga extreme weather event at mga sakuna; daragdagan ang mga kapasidad sa pagtugon ng vulnerable communities; titiyakin ang sapat na suplay ng malinis na hangin, tubig at likas na yaman at daragdagan ang katatagan ng mga kritikal na imprastraktura.

Sinabi ni Cimatú na ang mga malalaking programa sa pagprotekta ng kapaligiran tulad ng solid waste management at biodiversity conservation, ay dapat nakaayon sa kabuuang pagtugon sa COVID-19, mga pandemya sa hinaharap at krisis sa klima.

“High volumes of hazardous waste and the dramatic spread of zoonotic diseases account to the growing challenges that the government has to face to help alleviate problems in this deadly pandemic,” dagdag pa niya.

Alinsunod sa Executive Order 24, Series of 2017, ang Cabinet Cluster on CCAM-DRR ay inaatasang magpokus sa pagprotekta at pagkonserba ng kapaligiran at likas na yaman at magsilbing venue para sa talakayan ng inter-related concerns ukol sa climate change at disaster risk management.

Pinangungunahan din ng cluster at epektibong pagbubuo ng mga polisiya at programa para sa climate risk management, disaster risk reduction at sustainable development.

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Bigger crisis

July 24, 2020

[People's Tonight](#)

CLIMATE change, which threatens the very existence of man, plants and animals, is a bigger crisis than COVID-19, according to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

In fact, chemicals and other hazardous wastes pollute the air, soil and even water, killing and crippling millions of people throughout the world, including impoverished Philippines.

Addressing the Cabinet Cluster on CCAM-DDR last July 21, DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, a retired four-star military general, said climate change remains a top priority of the government.

Although it is busy controlling the spread of the deadly corona virus, Secretary Cimatu said the Duterte administration continues to address climate change, which is just in “slow motion.”

From the problems on ecosystem stability, changes in climate have a multiplier effect to food production and human conflict, said Cimatu, ex-chief of staff of the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Cimatu also cited deforestation which, he said, disrupts weather patterns and the water cycle that contributes to climate change and, worse, destroys the habitats of many animal species.

The government, through the Cabinet Cluster on CCAM-DRR, will prioritize actions that will reduce long-term health impacts and increase our resilience and adaptive capacity to both the pandemic and climate change.

Under Executive Order No. 24, Series of 2017, the cluster is mandated to focus on the protection and preservation of the environment and natural resources and serve as venue for discussing inter-related concerns on climate change and disaster risk management.

We share the view of experts and specialists that the worsening of climate change, brought about by society’s addiction to fossil fuels, would have untold consequences to many industries.

Without doubt, there’s that urgent need for everybody to exert concerted efforts to arrest global warming.

CCAM-DRR Cabinet Cluster outlines Green Recovery Plan ahead of SONA 2020

By CCCPublished on July 24, 2020



QUEZON CITY, July 24 — “We shall reimagine our relationship with nature by catalyzing structural investments and behavior change. We shall convert this health crisis into opportunities to accelerate climate action. We shall formulate responses to the pandemic through a climate lens,” said Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu yesterday at the “Tatak ng Pagbabago 2020: The Pre-SONA Forum,” which was held in preparation for President Rodrigo Roa Duterte’s 5th State of the Nation Address (SONA) on Monday.

The third part of the forum was co-led by the Climate Change Adaptation, Mitigation, and Disaster Risk Reduction Cluster (CCAM-DRR) Cluster, which is chaired by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) with the Climate Change Commission (CCC) as secretariat.

Sec. Cimatu presented the Cluster’s major projects for the past year focusing on scaling up community preparedness against climate hazards and disasters.

“No previous pandemic had a more dramatic impact in peoples' lives in the past century as COVID-19 has in a few short months. On the other hand, climate change is perhaps the greatest challenge we have ever faced,” said Sec. Cimatu.

“We were able to demonstrate to the whole world that if we act with the political will shown by this government in its fight against this pandemic, we can actually see the change we want. We are at the point where humanity is given a chance to stop and think and to choose how we rebuild, and we shall come out of this in such a way that we can collectively deal with climate change and disasters,” he added.

Among the highlights of the report were the response to the communities affected by the Taal Volcano earlier this year, the Boracay shutdown and rehabilitation, and the cleaning of Manila Bay.

Sec. Cimatu also mentioned the country's success to secure an approval from the Green Climate Fund (GCF) for a grant of USD10 million for the establishment of multi-hazard impact-based forecasting and early warning systems nationwide. He also added that over Php 300 million-worth of climate change adaptation projects by several local government units had already been approved for implementation under the People's Survival Fund (PSF).

Other accomplishments by the cluster include:

- Establishment of a Doppler radar in Bohol in 2019, bringing the total number of Doppler radars to 17 nationwide;
- Commissioning of two satellite telemetered seismic stations (raising total to 104), while nine active fault maps were generated;
- Establishment of a 1.7 km wastewater interceptor and a 2.5 km-long trashboom in Manila Baywalk, noting that coliform levels in the area declined;
- Planting of 1.704 billion seedlings in 2.031 million hectares, generating 5,004,336 jobs under the Enhanced National Greening Program;
- Rehabilitation of Angat Dam low-level outlet to serve as backup water discharge to ensure steady water supply, as well as the reactivation of 89 deep wells and installation of 46 groundwater monitoring in critical areas;
- Closing of 27 dumpsites and construction of 382 materials recovery facility (MRFs) and 22 sanitary landfills, noting that the guidelines for integrated management of municipal solid wastes through waste-to-energy facilities also took effect and that the wastes from South Korea without importation clearance were sent back; and
- Maintenance of 104 ambient air quality monitoring stations in highly-urbanized centers nationwide, noting that the Philippines had good air quality as levels of criteria pollutants were within standard in 2019.

Sec. Cimatu said that the CCAM-DRR Cluster shall prioritize actions and investments that will reduce long-term health impacts from and increase our resilience and adaptive capacity to both the COVID-19 pandemic and climate change. He discussed the following strategies and priorities:

- The 'Plant, Plant, Plant' program will be implemented for food security.
- More effective health care waste management shall be implemented to overcome large volumes of infectious and hazardous waste in hospitals.
- Storage, treatment, and disposal facilities in the country shall be increased to prevent zoonotic diseases.
- Surveillance and enforcement activities in degradation hotspots and critical ecosystems shall be enhanced.

- Research and development and utilizing natural resources for disease prevention and cure shall be undertaken.
- Reforestation and watershed management, forest protection, and agroforestry development especially in critical watersheds shall be strengthened.
- Family-based approach shall be adopted under the Expanded National Greening Program to provide livelihood opportunities.
- Increased demand for water during the COVID-19 pandemic shall be addressed by fast-tracking the development of alternative water sources.
- The capacities of the LGUs, especially the barangays, shall be strengthened.
- Data infrastructure and early warning systems in the NDRRMC shall be upgraded.
- Endeavor for a low-carbon path to recovery by sustaining the investments on renewable energy and energy conservation programs to ensure continuous power supply amidst the pandemic.

CCC Secretary Emmanuel De Guzman also discussed the role of climate change adaptation and mitigation in pursuing a green COVID-19 recovery.

"Tulad po ng COVID, climate change is an urgent global concern. It is an existential threat; it is a life and death issue. Like our response to COVID, we must heed the science in responding to the climate crisis. Kailangan po nating ibangon muli ang ating ekonomiya mula sa dagok ng pandemya nang mas matatag kaysa dati. We cannot just go back to business as usual, vulnerable and defenseless against the next pandemic or global disruption. Mahalaga pong kaakibat po ng pagbabago at pagbangon ng ating bayan mula sa pandemya ang mabisang pagtugon sa climate change," said de Guzman.

President Rodrigo Roa Duterte concluded the program by delivering a message. On his 5th State of the Nation Address (SONA) this Monday, he will present a roadmap for the country to recover from the effects of the COVID-19.

"My fellow Filipinos, the accomplishments that we have just presented to you in this Pre-SONA Forum are the fruits of our collective efforts to foster real, lasting, and meaningful change in our country. Numerous trials have tested our resolve this past few years, but we always emerge victorious because of our unity and bayanihan as a people. As we look to the future with much hope and positivity, let us continue to work together to build a better and more prosperous Philippines and for ourselves and the next generation of Filipinos," President Duterte concluded. (CCC)

DENR Usec. Antiporda: 'Mining' kailangan sa sitwasyon ngayon



July 24, 2020 @ 7:10 AM 23 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Malaki ang maitutulong ng mining companies na naunang sinuspende at pinasara ng pumanaw na si Environment Secretary Regina Lopez sa pagresponde ng gobyerno ngayong coronavirus disease o COVID-19 crisis, batay sa opisyal ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

“Kailangan natin ang mining ngayon dahil sa sitwasyon natin,” lahad ni DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda sa isang panayam.

“Alam naman natin malaki rin ang nakukuha nating revenue dito sa mining na ito,” dagdag pa nito.

Maaalalang kahapon, July 23 kinumpirma ni Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu na ang ilang mining firms na sinuspende o ipinasara ni Lopez sa kanyang kontrobersyal na industry-wide environment audit ay muling papayagang makapag-operate.

Paglililaw ni Antiporda, mandatong masiguro ng DENR ang preserbasyon ng kapaligiran ngunit nais din nilang makiisa para makatulong sa ekonomiya.

Samantala, siniguro naman ng pamunuan na tanging ang mga nakapag-comply sa violation at may mga corrective measure ang papayagang makapag-operate. **RNT/FGDC**

Diokno supports closed mining firm reopening



Published 2 hours ago on July 25, 2020 04:48 AM

By [Keith A. Calayag](#)



Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) Governor Benjamin Diokno said it is about time to open up the mining firms closed by former Environment Secretary Gina Lopez to help boost confidence in the economy amid the impact of COVID-19 pandemic.

In a forum entitled “Build Back Better: Economic Resilience After COVID-19” at the House of Representatives, Diokno said the BSP is encouraging the production of gold and supports the opening up of the mining industry.

“Around 10 percent of our gross international reserve is gold. We are encouraging the production of gold,” he said.

“I think it’s about time we reopen the mining firms as the economy stands to profit from it,” the former Budget Secretary said in a mix of Filipino.

Diokno made the statement after he was asked by Aklan Rep. Tedorico Haresco if the BSP has a policy of boosting the country’s gold reserves since the Philippines is one of the major gold producers in the world.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu earlier said some of the mining companies earlier closed or suspended by Lopez will be allowed to resume operations.

EDITORIAL - Mag-ooperate na ang mga sinarang minahan

(Pang-Masa)

-July 25, 2020 - 12:00am



MAG-OOPERATE na umano ang mga ipinasara at sinuspendeng mining companies noong 2017, ayon kay DENR Sec. Roy Cimatu. Nirebyu na umano ang mga permit at nakapag-apply na umano ng corrective measures ang mga ito kaya maaari nang magbukas. Hindi binanggit ng DENR secretary kung ilang minahan ang magbubukas.

Noong Pebrero 2017, mahigit 20 iresponsable at illegal na minahan ang pinasara ni dating DENR Sec. Gina Lopez. Kabilang sa mga pinasara niya ay ang mga minahan sa Surigao del Sur, Surigao del Norte, Dinagat Islands, Homonhon Island, Benguet, Bulacan at Zambales.

Ang mga minahan sa Surigao provinces ang sumira sa mga bundok doon. Kapag nasa eroplano o helicopter, makikita ang katampalasanang ginawa ng mga minahan sa bundok doon. Butas-butas. Pati watersheds ay sinira. Ang mga latak ng minahan ay dumaloy sa mga ilog kaya namatay at nawalan ng ikinabubuhay ang mga magsasaka at mangingisda.

Ang katampalasanan ng mga minahan sa Surigao ay nakita mismo ni Pres. Rodrigo Duterte noong 2017 nang dumalaw siya roon makaraang lumindol. Sa matinding galit, sinabi niyang ipasasara ang mga minahan na nagdulot nang pagkasira sa mga kabundukan.

Labis na natuwa si Duterte nang ihayag ni Lopez na 23 iresponsable at ilegal na minahan ang kanyang ipasasara. Sinuportahan niya si Lopez. Ang ginawa ni Lopez ay ikinatuwa rin ng mga mambabatas at mga grupong nagmamalasakit sa likas na yaman. Idenemanda naman si Lopez ng mga may-ari ng ipinasarang minahan. Ayon sa report, ang mga hakbang ni Lopez sa mining companies ang dahilan kaya hindi siya nakapasa sa Commission on Appointment (CA).

Ngayon ang mga isinarang iresponsableng minahan ay mag-o-operate na. Nararapat maging mapagmatyag ang mamamayan, sector na mapagmahal sa kalikasan at mga responsableng mambabatas sa gagawin ng mga minahan. Hindi dapat makaligtas sa paningin ang mga dati nang sumira sa likas na yaman.

CLI obtains DENR nod on Cebu reclamation

posted July 24, 2020 at 07:30 pm

by [Jenniffer B. Austria](#)

Cebu Landmasters Inc. said its 100-hectare Cebu reclamation project obtained an environmental compliance certificate from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources after a two-year review.

CLI said the issuance of ECC was one of the major prerequisites for the reclamation project, and the next stage would be the approval from the Philippine Reclamation Authority.

“We hope to achieve the best balance among economic, social and sustainability goals and are pleased that our plans, which have been aligned to that ideal, passed the test of public hearings and DENR’s stringent review process,” CLI chairman and chief executive Jose Soberano III said.

The project called Ming-Mori Techno Business Park is a joint venture among the local government of Minglanilla, Cebu and private consortium partners of Ming-Mori Development Corp. of CLI. The project is envisioned to be a world-class estate that will generate over 75,000 jobs in the municipality and its environs while meeting sound environmental guidelines.

Topics: [Cebu Landmasters Inc.](#) , [environmental compliance certificate](#) , [Department of Environment and Natural Resources](#)

Consultative meeting tackles protection, conservation of Mt. Inayawan

By PIO-LDN Published on July 24, 2020

TUBOD, Lanao del Norte, July 23 (PIA) - The Provincial Government of Lanao del Norte in coordination with the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Offices (PENRO) organized a consultative meeting with the elected officials of the Municipality of Nunungan headed by Mayor Marcos M. Mamay along with concerned Barangay Chairmen for the protection and conservation of the entire forest areas in the municipality, including Mt. Inayawan Range Natural Park.

Provincial Governor Imelda 'Angging' Quibranza-Dimaporo, in her opening statement informed the elected officials of the actions taken by the Provincial Government in curtailing the spread of Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) such as converting the Provincial Hospital in Kolambugan and designating buildings in Lanao del Norte Provincial Hospital in Baroy as additional isolation facilities aside from establishing a COVID-19 testing laboratory in old Kapatagan Provincial Hospital.

She said that though the Provincial Government of Lanao del Norte, like any other provinces in the country, is focusing on finding ways on managing the threat posed by COVID-19 to keep the people safe and healthy, it is also looking into the other issues and concerns that need immediate actions, one is the protection and conservation of natural resources in the province.

Nunungan is the largest municipality in the province in terms of land area and considered the last frontier of Lanao del Norte for its rainforest. It is the home of Mt. Inayawan Range Natural Park, where the two serene and majestic lakes nestle.

The rainforest of Nunungan is also a vital source of water for the municipalities of Lanao del Norte, particularly in the irrigation of rice fields and other agricultural lands in Kapatagan Valley.



Provincial Governor Imelda 'Angging' Quibranza-Dimaporo calls for cooperation among the officials of the municipality of Nunungan

including its barangay chairmen in coming up with a common solution for the c protection and conservation of Mt. Inayawan Range Natural Park. (PIO-LDN)

At the open forum, Governor Dimaporo earnestly asked the commitment of the Barangay Chairmen as direct stakeholders to help and support the PENRO, the Office of the Municipal Mayor and the Provincial Government to stop or report any activities that can damage the forest, primarily the illegal logging and the uncontrolled forest clearing or Kaingin.

In response, the Barangay Chairmen unanimously expressed their 100% support to the campaign and will report any illegal logging or other activities that destroy the forest.

"We cannot do it alone to protect our forest. We need your help and that is why we are here today to come up with a common solution for the conservation of the forest in the Municipality of Nunungan, after all this is for the future of our children and their children," Governor Dimaporo said.

She further said the Provincial Government through the Provincial Agriculture's Office can help them provide a livelihood for their constituents to have a source of income not from illegal activities, especially the ones that destroy our forested areas.

"All we want is your genuine interest to avail of the livelihood program and willingness to sustain it," she added.

Meanwhile, DENR Protected Area Superintendent Saiben Mampao presented the recommended strategies to combat timber poaching/anti-illegal logging in the forest of the Municipality of Nunungan, like the establishment of AFP detachment, intensified community education and public awareness, regular anti-illegal logging operation, engagement of additional Community Forest Guard Volunteers, creation/operationalization of Provincial/Municipal Anti-Illegal Logging Task Force, installation/operationalization of Anti-Illegal Logging Checkpoints in Nunungan, Kapatagan, and Sultan Naga Dimaporo, and provision of alternative livelihood to poorest upland communities.

Also present during the meeting were PENRO Information Systems Division Chief Amron B. Acampong and PGLDN-ENRO Officer Ramon G. Serapio. The meeting was held at Rianas Restaurant, Mindanao Civic Center Sports Complex, on July 24, 2020. (PIO-LDN)

Mga business firms sa Boracay, dapat sumunod sa IATF directives bago tumanggap ng bisita mula Region 6'

By

[Bombo Radyo Iloilo](#)

-July 24, 2020 | 8:39 PM

ILOILO CITY – Kailangang sumunod sa rekomendasyon ng Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases ang mga negosyante bago makapagbukas ng kanilang establisyemento sa Boracay.

Sa panayam ng **Bombo Radyo Iloilo** kay Fire S/Insp. Lorna Parcellano, hepe ng Malay Fire Station sa Boracay, sinabi nito na kailangan munang kumuha ng certificate to operate sa Department of Tourism (DOT) ang mga resort, hotel at restaurant owners.

Ayon kay Parcellano, may composite team ang DOT na nagsasagawa ng inspection kung saan kailangang sumunod sa quarantine protocol ang bawat establisyemento.

Maliban dito, nararapat rin na may permit mula sa Bureau of Fire Protection ang establisyemento upang matiyak na walang mangyayaring sunog lalo na at kilala ang Boracay sa mga masasarap na kainan.

Napag-alaman na wala pang naitalang kaso ng coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) sa nasabing isla.

Leyte's Mahagnao Volcano Natural Park braces for 'new normal'

By Sarwell Meniano July 24, 2020, 2:28 pm



PREPS FOR 'NEW NORMAL'. A fisherman paddles at the Mahagnao Lake in Burauen, Leyte. The Mahagnao Volcano Natural Park is preparing to open its doors to nature-loving tourists in the future under the new normal, Burauen's local government said on Friday (July 24, 2020). *(Photo courtesy of the Burauen local government)*

TACLOBAN CITY – The Mahagnao Volcano Natural Park is preparing to open its doors to nature-loving tourists under the “new normal”.

Although unsure of the exact date of reopening, the Mahagnao Volcano Natural Park Ecotourism Association (MVNPEA) has been setting up measures to observe the minimum health standards, Burauen's local government unit (LGU) said in a statement on Friday.

In a Facebook post, the Burauen LGU reported that a handwashing area for visitors has been set up.

Last July 16, the Burauen Ecotourism and Sustainable Tourism (BEST) project also turned over to MVNPEA two thermal scanners and 35 sets of face shields donated by the EcoEx Explorations Sustainable Travel.

“This is to help the organization in its preparations so it would be ready once the Covid-19 (coronavirus disease 2019) pandemic is over. The organization, however, does not accept visitors yet as part of the town's measures against the spread of the virus,” the local government said.

Proclaimed as a national park in 1937, the site near the volcano is endowed with other natural attractions -- a lake, waterfalls, multi-colored mud, hot springs, virgin forests, and lagoon.

Mahagnao Volcano is about 40 km. south of Tacloban City and 18 km. away from the town center of Burauen.

Although it has been inactive, it is classified as potentially active due to the mountain's active thermal features.

Mahagnao's summit is a steep-walled heavily forested crater that opens to the south with a peak elevation of 860 meters. **(PNA)**

Improvement of water, communities seen in first year of Manila Bay rehab

By Ma. Alaine P. Allanigue Published on July 24, 2020



A screenshot of the Baseco Beach during the Pre-SONA presentation showing the result of the extensive clean up drives and mobilization conducted to rehabilitate the Manila Bay. (PIA NCR)

QUEZON CITY, July 23 (PIA) -- Manila Bay's rehabilitation under the Duterte administration is seen not only to make progress in improving its water quality but an improvement of communities situated along its coastlines.

During the Pre-SONA forum on Wednesday of the Climate Change Adaptation, Mitigation, and Disaster Risk Reduction Cluster (CCAMDRR) cluster, the group featured the transformation of the once notoriously filthy Baseco Beach in Manila into a haven that serves both as a focus for recreation for residents and a popular destination for walks and for viewing the Manila Bay's beautiful sunset.

The cleaning and rehabilitation of Manila Bay remains one of government's continuing efforts to improve the health and water quality of the bay. The rehabilitation along Baseco, on the other hand, showed the various efforts and support by local government units, barangays and communities through clean-up drives and mobilization.

"The clean-up prepared the communities for the need for continuing hygiene to fight COVID-19. After one year since the Battle for the Manila Bay was waged, people can see concrete actions whereby they can look forward watching the sunset by the bay and enjoy a nearby beach," said Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, who also chairs the cluster.

The cluster, likewise, presented that the coliform levels at the Baywalk area have drastically decreased recently due to the solar powered Sewerage Treatment Plant (STP) that treats 500,000 liters of untreated water per day.

"At the Manila Baywalk, a 1.7-kilometer wastewater interceptor was constructed to catch dirty waters from the three notorious outfalls of Manila and a solar powered Sewerage Treatment Plant (STP) beside the Manila Yacht Club," Cimatu's presentation said.

"A 2.5-kilometer long trash boom was already installed, designed to trap for collection of floating debris coming offshore before these would inundate the seawall of the Manila Baywalk," it added.

Likewise, dredging the waters fronting the whole Manila Baywalk "is in full blast" while nourishment of the beach area beside the US Embassy is ongoing, it furthered, in support of the Manila Bay rehabilitation's achievements.

To recall, Cimatu officially declared the start of the Manila Bay Rehabilitation at the Baywalk in Manila on January 27, 2019 calling it the "Battle for Manila Bay" wherein winning the battle is envisioned to be achieved "with the firm resolve to bring Manila Bay back to life."

Moreover, the Manila Bay Rehabilitation has three phases, namely, the cleanup and water quality improvement; rehabilitation and resettlement; and education and sustainment.

There are 17 principal river systems draining to Manila Bay including river systems in Metro Manila such as Meycauayan-Valenzuela River, Pasig River, Parañaque River, and Navotas-Malabon-Tinajeros-Tullahan River.

It was also reported that the dredging of the Tullahan–Tinajeros River System has started through the support of San Miguel Corporation's one billion pledge for the dredging and clean-up of the river system. In addition, there are massive clean-up drives of the esteros with the help of barangays, communities, private sectors and estero rangers.

Apart from the waste water drained to Manila Bay from the river systems, direct dumping of trash along the riverways is a critical issue that needs to be resolved in a comprehensive manner as stated in the report. One key action presented is the provision for resettlement of the informal settler families. (PIA-NCR)

[Manila Bay](#)

New species of one of the largest flowering plant genera *Begonia* discovered in Palawan

Published July 24, 2020, 10:11 AM

by [Noreen Jazul](#)

A new species of one of the largest flowering plant genera *Begonia* was recently discovered in El Nido, Palawan.



(PTI)

The discovery was published in a global scientific journal *Phytotaxa* by a group of researchers under the Philippine Taxonomic Initiative (PTI): Rene Alfred Anton Bustamante, Yu Pin Ang, Danilo Tandang, and John Michael Agcaoili.

Begonia cabanillasii, the new species of *Begonia*, can easily be distinguished by its “compact rosette growth” and “shorter flower stalk with comparatively larger flowers.”

Agcaoili, field biologist at the PTI, said *Begonia cabanillasii*'s features also “does not compare” to its closest allies, *B. suborbiculata* or *B. quinquealata*.

“It has a unique 5-winged ovary which is the type of characteristic that can only be found in Palawan species. This is also the third species known to have such character within Section *Baryandra*,” he told *Manila Bulletin* in an exclusive interview.

“This particular species is currently known only to occur in El Nido, Palawan with a very narrow population,” he added.

Begonia cabanillasii is among the six *Begonia* species which are endemic to El Nido. Other species are *B. blancii*, *B. elnidoensis*, *B. mindorensis* Merr., *B. suborbiculata*, and *B. woodii* Merr.

The flower is usually found “exposed limestone with deeply shaded moist forest,” according to Agcaoili.

Bustamante, co-author of the journal, said many parts of El Nido have natural limestone formation which is also why there is high endemism of flora in El Nido.

‘The discovery’

In December, 2018, Agcaoili said he and fellow researcher Ang were invited by PTI’s executive director Raab Bustamante to “look for more populations of Begonia” which the latter saw in 2017 near a water community resource in El Nido.

The following year, Ang went back to El Nido to conduct a more “in depth study” on the Begonia cabanillasii and “to document two variations of B. suborbiculata to make a good comparison of two related species.”

Agcaoili also said that the Begonia cabanillasii’s population was very small when they started the study, stating there were only less than 50 matured plants which they can document.

‘Naming’

Initially, they named the flowering plant “Begonia pavoides” which means peacock, because the species had “patterns on its leaves that resemble Palawan Peacock-Pheasant’s tail.”

The group, however, renamed the species to honor naturalist and citizen scientist William “Will” Cabanillas, who, according to Agcaoili, “played a significant role that led to several discoveries of new species that is also endemic to Palawan.”

“We realized that this novel species will boost the pride of Palawan to value their unique biodiversity as it is coined as the last frontier of the country,” Agcaoili said.

To date, Palawan has 23 Begonia species. *(With a report from Aira Magdayao)*

<https://mb.com.ph/2020/07/24/new-species-of-one-of-the-largest-flowering-plant-genera-begonia-discovered-in-palawan/>



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TITLE : _____

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Date

Navotas residents complain over thick, black smoke from crematorium

Published July 24, 2020 9:45pm

<https://youtu.be/FQDqCv5iqGI>

Some residents have complained of the thick, black smoke billowing from a crematorium in Navotas City, which included deceased COVID-19 patients.

A netizen uploaded a video of the smoke which appeared to be a huge fire from an establishment, according to a "24 Oras" report by Saleema Refran on Friday.

Uploader Queen Khyilly said her family had been dealing with the smoke since March.

"Sobra po talaga 'yung lakas ng pagbuga ng usok nila. Siyempre alam naman nating lahat na mas delikado 'yun na masinghot ng mga tao. Since kami malapit, lagi namin siyang nalalanghap. Lately, lalo ngayon meron tayong COVID na problema ngayon tapos ang daming sinusunog," the uploader said.

For granular lockdown in Cebu City: List known today

By
[Caecent No-ot Magsumbol](#)(The Freeman)
-July 25, 2020 - 12:00am



Police Crisis Response Battalion personnel patrol a street in Barangay Mabolo in Cebu City yesterday.

CEBU, Philippines — A list of areas in Cebu City that will be placed under granular or segmented lockdown is expected to be released today as barangay captains meet with the city government to discuss the details of the scheme.

A granular lockdown means restriction is limited to a specific area like a household or several houses, a street, or a compound where residents were exposed to an individual with COVID-19.

The city government continues to reconcile data on COVID-19 cases from its departments and testing laboratories.

Councilor Joel Garganera, deputy chief implementer in Cebu City for the IATF Cebu Emergency Operations Center, said they will pick the areas based on the number of active cases from July 9 to 22, 2020.

Based on data from the Department of Health (DOH) as of July 23, Cebu City has 3,256 active cases. Of these, 1,165 are in the hospital while the rest are in isolation.

Garganera said the initial list of areas for granular lockdown has been forwarded to the barangay captains for verification. Residents who will be affected will be provided with relief goods.

Garganera said the city needs to contain and arrest the spread of COVID-19 but it cannot afford to be locking down the whole city further.

Cebu City is under modified enhanced community quarantine but has been under ECQ largely since March this year. Secretary Roy Cimatu, IATF's chief implementer in Cebu, said earlier he is optimistic the city can transition to general community quarantine by August.

Cimatu has said the granular or segmental lockdown is meant to enable restrictions to be in place without having to paralyze the whole barangay and so that residents can go back to work.

“Yung sa lockdown, it should be kung saan ang epicenter ng barangay. Dun ang lockdown doon so that hindi ma-affected ang mga sitios na wala namang cases. So, instead na mag-lockdown sa buong barangay, yun na lang mga sitios or purok... yun din ang pinaplano namin so that yung mga workers magtatrabaho,” Cimatu said.

(On lockdowns, it should be the epicenter in the barangay. That's what should be locked down so that other sitios without cases won't be affected. Instead of locking down an entire barangay, we can just lock down a sitio or purok... that's what we're planning so that those who need to work won't have problems.)

Data Reconciling

Meanwhile, Garganera said it took the city some time to implement the granular lockdown because they will have to reconcile the addresses of those who were found COVID-19 positive.

Early this month, Barangay Guadalupe Captain Michael Gacasan revealed to The Freeman that close to 50 patients recorded under Guadalupe were actually residents of another barangay.

Gacasan said other barangays have also experienced a similar situation.

Last July 6, the Cebu City Health Department issued a statement saying it will no longer post daily reports of COVID-19 cases to avoid confusion until data will be harmonized with those from other health offices, including DOH. **JMO (FREEMAN)**

How Covid-19 changed the hosting of SONA

By Filane Mikee Cervantes July 24, 2020, 11:02 am



MANILA – President Rodrigo Duterte's 5th State of the Nation Address (SONA) makes a striking departure from tradition in the time of the Covid-19 global pandemic.

The government has revamped the way SONA is traditionally held with current restrictions on mass gatherings in place to prevent the spread of the virus.

Despite the threat posed by Covid-19, Duterte decided to be physically present at the Batasang Pambansa Complex in Quezon City when he delivers his fifth SONA on July 27.

Trimmed-down affair

Traditionally, the presidential family, members of Congress and their spouses, former presidents, foreign diplomats, government officials and other dignitaries are invited to attend the annual SONA.

The Batasan complex usually bustles with hundreds of guests to listen to the President's speech.

However, there will only be a limited number of people who can attend this year's event.

Only 15 seats will be reserved for Cabinet members and 25 seats each for senators and congressmen.

Attendees would have to undergo a reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) tests a day before the event.

From flair to bare

The classic red carpet won't be rolled out this year for guests. Instead, disinfection mats, sanitizers, and infrared thermometers would welcome them at entrances as health and safety protocols.

In previous years, the SONA was akin to a fashion show as politicians and other top-level guests have graced the event in formal wear.

The chamber's hallways would always be filled with members of the media as they await guests to walk down the red carpet, stop for photo ops, and entertain interviews.

"Syempre po, wala na yang madamihan na opisyal na nag-a-attend, wala na yung fashion show na pagandahan ng suot, at tingin ko po, kakaunti lang ang mag-assemble sa Kongreso (Of course, there would be no longer too many officials who would attend. There's no more fashion show and I think, there would only be a few who would assemble in Congress)," Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said.

In an advisory sent to reporters, the House of Representatives said no members of the media will be allowed inside the premises of Batasang Pambansa during the President's SONA.

Only members of the Presidential Broadcast Staff-Radio Television Malacañang (PBS-RTVM) will be authorized inside the chamber's premises to cover the SONA, the advisory read.

Despite the limited media coverage of the annual event, RTVM said Duterte's SONA will be aired live and without edits.

However, there will be no live singing of the Philippine national anthem, and video playback will be presented instead before the delivery of the speech.

Film director Joyce Bernal will be directing the SONA for the third time.

Article 7, Section 23 of the 1987 Constitution mandates the President to "address the Congress at the opening of its regular session."

The SONA is delivered by the President of the Philippines every year to report the state of the country, unveil the government's agenda for the coming year, and may also propose to Congress certain legislative measures. **(PNA)**

ATF okays PH participation in Covid-19 vaccine global access

By Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos July 24, 2020, 11:59 am



(Anadolu photo)

MANILA – The Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) has approved the country's participation in a global initiative that guarantees access to coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) vaccines worldwide.

“The members of the IATF likewise approved the participation of the Philippines in the Gavi Covid-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX) facility, including the corresponding allocation of funds,” Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque, who also serves as IATF-EID spokesperson, said in a press statement.

The COVAX Facility is a mechanism designed to ensure rapid, fair, and equitable access to Covid-19 vaccines for every country in the world, be it a rich or poor nation, to make rapid progress towards slowing the pandemic, the World Health Organization (WHO) said in a statement.

The COVAX, co-led by WHO, Gavi, and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, aims to step up the development and manufacture of Covid-19 vaccines by getting the support of developed and developing country vaccine manufacturers.

The WHO noted on July 15 that about 75 countries have already submitted expressions of interest to protect their populations by joining the COVAX Facility.

The 75 nations, which would finance the vaccines from their respective budgets, have partnered with some 90 lower-income countries that could be supported through voluntary donations to Gavi's COVAX Advance Market Commitment.

The WHO noted that the goal of COVAX is to deliver two billion doses of safe, effective, vaccines by the end of 2021.

It ensured that the vaccines would be delivered equally to all participating countries, proportional to their populations, initially prioritizing health care workers then expanding to cover 20 percent of the population of participating nations.

The WHO added that additional doses would be made available based on the country's needs and vulnerability, and the threat of Covid-19.

“The COVAX Facility will also maintain a buffer of doses for emergency and humanitarian use, including dealing with severe outbreaks before they spiral out of control,” it said.

Meanwhile, Roque confirmed that the IATF-EID has approved the creation of a sub-technical working group (sub-TWG) that would study the possible amendments to the Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act 11332 or the Mandatory Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Health Events of Public Health Concern Act.

This was contained in IATF-EID Resolution 58 approved on Thursday.

Roque said the sub-TWG would be chaired by the Department of Health, with the departments of justice and interior, Philippine National Police, and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority as members, he said. **(PNA)**

We can find a working balance

Published July 24, 2020, 10:26 PM

by [Manila Bulletin](#)



In the last four months, the government has generally followed the decisions of the Inter-Agency Task Force on the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) and its decisions have leaned towards shutting down entire regions, towns, and cities to stop the spread of the coronavirus causing the COVID-19 pandemic.

People have been told to stay at home for their own safety. In the process, offices have had to be closed. Factories and other businesses have had to reduce or cease operations, along with all manner of transportation. The government has lost taxes that it would normally get from these shut-down business operations.

Last Wednesday, the Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry asked: Have all these restrictions accomplished the goal of stopping the virus in the country?

Senate Minority Leader Franklin Drilon said in a television interview: “The IATF has failed.... Look at where we are today – 70,764 Filipinos were affected as of yesterday, deaths running to 1,837. Five million of our people unemployed. Forty percent of our micro, small, and medium enterprises closed. And — the worst – 5.2 million Filipinos suffered hunger in the past three months.”

Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) President Benedicto Yujuico was not as brutal in his assessment but it was along the same line. He said that the almost five months of lockdowns have limited business operations and put many at risk of permanent closure.

“You cannot open a business and limit it to only 30 to 50 percent, because they will lose money and would rather close,” he pointed out. “You cannot tell a restaurant to open 50 percent because 50 percent is not enough to pay the rent, utilities, and employees. You cannot tell a manufacturing company to operate at below capacity and still provide accommodation and/or shuttle services for its workers. And you cannot open businesses, even in phases, without allowing public transportation.”

The series of lockdowns in various part of the country – from the strictest Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) to Modified ECQ, to General CQ, to Modified GCQ — were all aimed at stopping the spread of the virus, without or hardly any concern for the economic implications of the restrictions.

It may be time, as the PCCI has proposed, to make an overall assessment of the entire situation—including the health, economic, and human effects and repercussions. The Philippines could see how

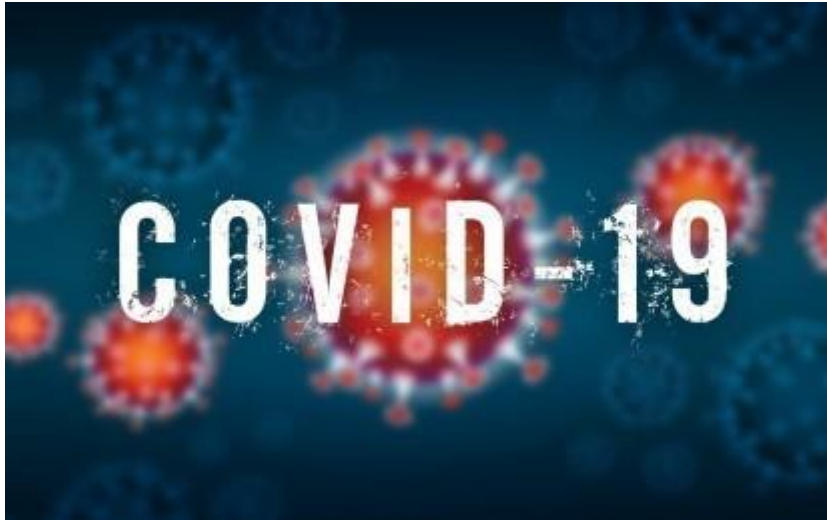
other countries are doing, countries like Vietnam and Thailand, which are beginning to reopen their economies with the virus seemingly under control.

We can perhaps find a working balance between the IATF's current system of restrictions and PCCI's appeal for the resumption of business operations.

<https://mb.com.ph/2020/07/24/we-can-find-a-working-balance/>

2,103 new cases of Covid-19, total now at 76K: DOH

By Raymond Carl Dela Cruz July 24, 2020, 10:44 pm



MANILA – There is still no light at the end of the tunnel for the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic in the country as the Department of Health (DOH) reported 2,103 new cases on Friday.

In its daily Covid-19 bulletin, the DOH said the new cases bring the country's total to 76,444, while active cases — net of Covid-19 deaths and recoveries — are now at 50,063.

It said the areas with the highest number of new cases were the National Capital Region (NCR) with 1,272, Cebu province, 291; Laguna, 107; Rizal, 83; and Cavite with 53.

Of the active cases, it said a little over 90 percent were showing mild symptoms, 8.93 percent were asymptomatic, 0.49 percent were experiencing severe symptoms, while those in critical condition were at 0.43 percent.

Recoveries continue to rise with 144 new recoveries reported, bringing the country's total to 24,502.

Fifteen more deaths were also reported, bringing the total number at 1,879.

Currently, the country remains capable to take care of more cases of Covid-19, with only about half of all beds for Covid-19 cases currently occupied, it said.

In particular, it said beds at intensive care units currently total 1,379 of which 50.1 percent were occupied.

Isolation beds total 10,799 and currently has an occupancy of 50.8 percent, while ward beds total 3,807 with an occupancy of 55.6 percent.

Moreover, it said only 28.8 percent of the country's ventilators were currently in use, with 71.2 percent, or 1,412 units still available for use. **(PNA)**

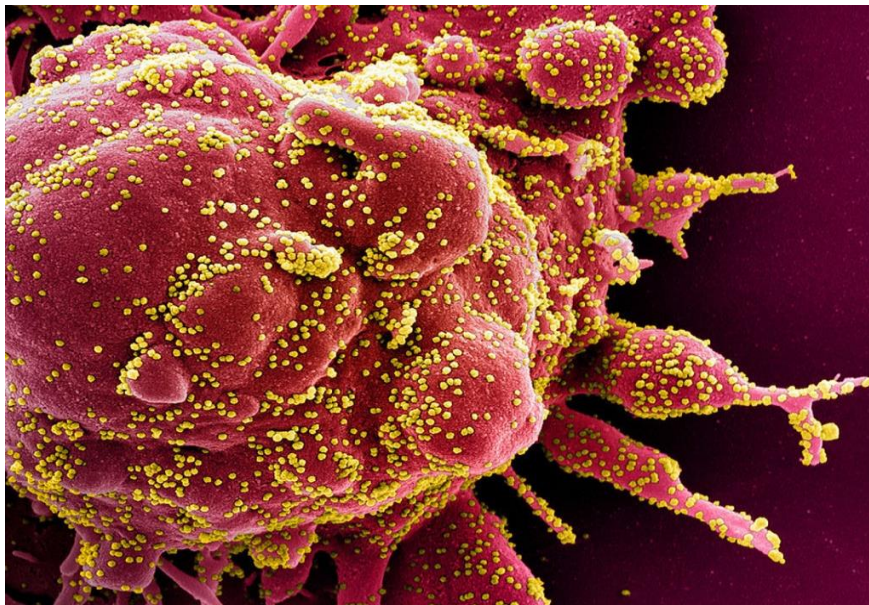
Phl logs over 76K positives



Published
3 hours ago
on
July 25, 2020 01:10 AM
By

[Gabbie Parlade](#)

[Ads by optAd360](#)



The Philippines recorded 76,444 total confirmed cases of the coronavirus (COVID-19) disease on Friday with the active cases breaching the 50,000-mark at 50,063, the Department of Health (DoH) reported.

Based on the daily case bulletin, 2,103 new cases were recorded out of the total tests done by 78 out of the 90 operating laboratories in the country.

Of the active cases, 90.15 percent experienced mild symptoms, 8.9 percent others were asymptomatic while both severe and critical cases were at a 0.4 percent range.

Breakdown of numbers

The number of recoveries also rose to 24,502 with 144 additional survivors while total fatalities have increased as well to 1,879 with 15 more deaths.

Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said that of the 15 deaths tallied, 11 happened in July, three from June, and one in April.

Among the regions where the deaths were recorded included 13 from Region VII and one each from Region III and VI.

DoH said that with continued validation, five cases of recently reported deaths were removed from the tally after they were found to be recovered cases.

Likewise, 49 duplicates were erased from the total count including 25 recovered cases and two deaths.

On a global scale, data from Johns Hopkins University showed that over 15 million individuals have contracted COVID-19 with the United States recording 4 million cases.

PH COVID-19 cases lagpas 76,000 na; 50K aktibong kaso



July 24, 2020 @ 4:35 PM 13 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Nasa 50,063 na ang aktibong kaso ng COVID-19 sa buong bansa, ayon sa Department of Health kung saan umabot na sa 76,444 kabuuang kaso matapos na maidagdag ang 2,103 pang kaso ngayong araw.

Sa bagong dagdag na kaso, mayroong naitalang 1,029 fresh cases at 174 late cases.

Ayon kay Health Usec Maria Rosario Vergeire, ang isinumiteng resulta ay galing sa 78 mula sa 90 licensed laboratories sa buong bansa.

Dagdag pa ni Vergeire, ang kabuuang recoveries na sa COVID-19 ay umabot na sa 24,502 matapos na makapagtala ng 144 bagong gumaling.

15 pa ang nasawi sa nakamamatay na virus kung saan umakyat na sa 1,879 ang total deaths sa bansa. Nasa 2.46 porsyento naman ang fatality rate sa Pilipinas.

Sa 15 deaths na ito, ang 11 ay nangyari ngayong Hulyo.

Tatlo rito ang nangyari noong Hunyo at ang isa ay nangyari noong Abril.

Ang 13 deaths ay mula sa Region 7, isa sa region 3 at isang sa Region 6.

Batay sa datos, ang age range ng mga pumanaw ay mula 48 hanggang 86 years old.

Ayon pa kay Vergeire, ang 9 sa mga pumanaw ay nasa edad 60 pataas.

Muli namang nagpaalala si Vergeire sa publiko na lalong mas maingat sa panahon ng pandemya dahil hindi biro ang sakit na ito ay hindi kumikilala ng katayuan ng buhay. **Jocelyn**

Tabangcura-Domenden



Cars line up for COVID-19 tests at a walk-in and drive-through coronavirus testing site in Miami Beach, Florida on July 22, 2020. The United States on July 21 recorded 68,524 new coronavirus cases in the previous 24 hours, Johns Hopkins University reported in its real-time tally. The United States has seen a resurgence of cases, particularly in the so-called Sun Belt, stretching across the south from Florida to California.

Global coronavirus infections pass 15 million

[Sebastian Smith](#) (Agence France-Presse) - July 23, 2020 - 7:31am

WASHINGTON, United States — The number of coronavirus infections around the world passed 15 million on Wednesday with more than a quarter of those cases in the United States, where President Donald Trump warned that the pandemic was likely to get worse before it gets better.

The US data makes grim reading with more than 140,000 fatalities and regular daily death tolls of more than 1,000, yet Trump repeated his claim late on Tuesday that the pandemic would somehow "disappear".

Trump has been a critic of lockdown measures and has argued in favour of reopening the economy even as death tolls have climbed.

Signs are emerging in other parts of the world that the virus quickly springs back when lockdown measures are lifted.

Australia, Belgium, Hong Kong and Japanese capital Tokyo had all used restrictive measures to successfully beat outbreaks earlier in the pandemic, but all are now facing an upsurge in cases.

Australia and Hong Kong set new daily records for confirmed cases on Wednesday and Tokyo's governor urged residents to stay at home during a forthcoming holiday as cases climb.

Belgian officials said people must stick to social-distancing guidelines to halt a "snowball effect before it provokes a new avalanche".

However, one of the more controversial measures taken by any government -- South Africa's decision to ban the sale of alcohol and enforce a curfew -- continued to cause anguish.

"What the government has put in place has been knee-capping," restaurateur Sean Barber said during a protest in Johannesburg. "It's decimating our industry."

Vaccine hopes

The crisis has left tens of millions unemployed around the world and crippled global commerce, prompting the European Union to agree an unprecedented 750 billion euro (\$858 billion) aid package for the hardest-hit member countries earlier this week.

But the airline industry continues to struggle under the weight of travel restrictions and reluctance among potential passengers to fly.

Irish carrier Ryanair said on Wednesday it would shut its base near the German business hub Frankfurt after pilots refused to take a pay cut.

The firm, which is looking to shed 3,000 staff in total, said the pilot's union had "voted for job cuts and base closures when they could have preserved all jobs".

The production of a vaccine is now key to ensuring a return to something close to normality for businesses and the general public.

More than 200 candidate drugs are being developed with 23 having progressed to clinical trials.

The US government has agreed to pay almost \$2 billion for 100 million doses of a potential vaccine being developed by German firm BioNTech and US giant Pfizer.

Another leading candidate, developed in part by pharmaceutical giant AstraZeneca, registered promising results from clinical trials this week.

But the firm's chief said on Tuesday a global rollout was not imminent.

"We hope to be able to produce a vaccine by the end of the year... perhaps a little earlier if all goes well," said Pascal Soriot.

'Bake a giant cake'

With the sporting world just about getting back on its feet, Olympic officials conceded on Wednesday that their hopes of holding the Tokyo 2020 Games next year rested on a vaccine.

"If things continue as they are now, we couldn't" hold the Games, said local organising committee president Yoshiro Mori.

While global efforts to prevent new infections are the principal concern of policymakers, the extent and severity of the disease in countries with struggling health systems has becoming clearer in recent days.

India passed the one-million infections milestone last week and is now behind only the US and Brazil, but new data on Wednesday suggested a vast underestimate.

A study showed almost a quarter of the population in New Delhi had contracted the virus, equating to roughly five million infections in the capital city.

Officials have registered just 125,000 cases.

Meanwhile, for those who recover from the disease, the path back to full health is not always straightforward.

In Brazil, 63-year-old Elenice da Silva had a severe infection that lasted nearly three months.

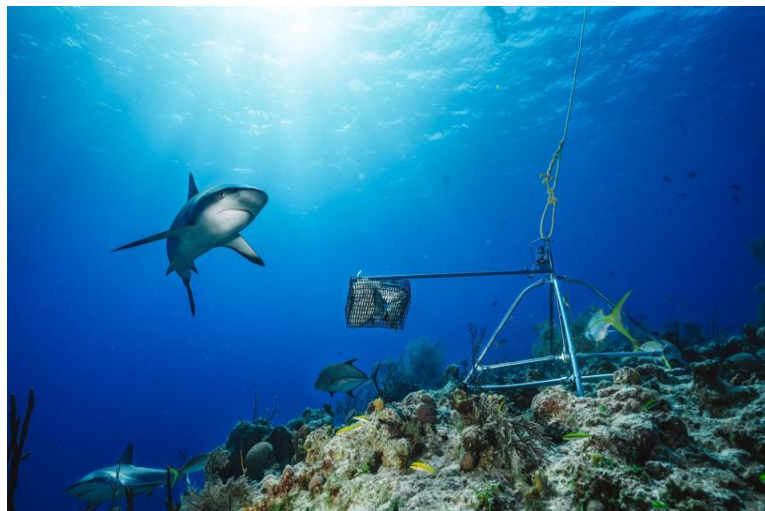
The illness left her temporarily unable to speak.

"Intensive care was awful. But now I'm feeling marvellous," she told AFP during her recovery. "I'm going to bake a giant cake for everyone."

Shark populations declining



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22 hours ago
on
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By
[Agence France-Presse](#)



AFP Photo.

TOKYO, Japan (AFP) — An unprecedented global survey has revealed a shocking decline in the number of reef sharks, with the predators “functionally extinct” on nearly 20 percent of sites studied.

The four-year study used more than 15,000 baited and remotely operated cameras — so-called “chum cams” — to obtain the first comprehensive picture of where reef sharks are thriving and where they are virtually non-existent.

The results, from over 370 reefs in nearly 60 countries, are alarming, said lead author Aaron MacNeil.

“We expect... that there should be sharks on every reef in the world and to find 20 percent of the reefs we surveyed didn’t have any sharks on is very concerning,” he told a press briefing.

At reefs surveyed in eight countries, including Qatar, India, Vietnam and Kenya, no sharks were detected at all.

Vietnam suspends wildlife trade as pandemic prods action

Agence France-Presse

Posted at Jul 24 2020 03:09 PM | Updated as of Jul 24 2020 03:20 PM

Vietnam, one of Asia's biggest consumers of wildlife products, has suspended all imports of wild animal species "dead or alive" and vowed to "eliminate" illegal markets across the country.

The directive signed by the leader of the Communist country follows an international scandal over the sale of wildlife, which has been blamed as the origin of the coronavirus pandemic in neighboring China.

It is a major victory for conservation groups who have in the past accused Vietnamese authorities of turning a blind eye to the rampant trade in endangered species inside and across its borders.

"The prime minister orders the suspension of imports of wildlife -- dead or alive -- their eggs... parts or derivatives," said the order released Thursday on the government website.

"All citizens, especially officials... must not participate in illegal poaching, buying, selling, transporting... of illegal wildlife."

Among the most frequently smuggled animal goods are tiger parts, rhino horn and pangolins used in traditional medicine.

Despite the high prices they command -- with ingredients trafficked from as far as Africa -- there is no scientific evidence of their health benefits in humans.

Vietnam locked down swiftly to dodge a major health crisis as COVID-19 emerged, but its economy has been hit hard.

The country will also "resolutely eliminate market and trading sites which trade wildlife illegally," the edict said -- warning of a crackdown on the poaching, trafficking, storing and advertising of animals, birds and reptiles.

Anti-trafficking group Freeland hailed the move as the most stringent to control the wildlife trade since the pandemic broke out.

"Vietnam is to be congratulated for recognizing that COVID-19 and other pandemics are linked to the wildlife trade," said Steven Glaster, its chairman.

"This trade must be banned as a matter of international and public health security," he added.

China, the world's biggest market for illegal wildlife products, has enacted a similar ban. Vietnam has gone further by taking aim at online sales and imposing an indefinite ban on the trade.

While welcoming the move, conservationists warn enforcement will be a challenge across a country with long porous borders and poorly paid officials who can be bent by cash.

Could sediment plumes from deep-sea mining pollute vast swaths of the ocean?

A new report suggests that deep-sea mining would generate damaging sediment plumes and noise pollution that would negatively affect the midwater column—a critical ocean ecosystem that begins 200 meters below the surface of the sea.



Squid, fish, shrimp, copepods, medusa, filter feeding jellies and marine worms are among the midwater creatures that could be affected by deep sea mining. Image: [weslie.leung, CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

By Elizabeth Claire Alberts, Mongabay.com

July 24, 2020

Beyond the sun's reach is a nutrient-rich, species-abundant part of the ocean called the midwater ecosystem. This zone, which extends from a depth of 200-5,000 meters (660-16,400 feet) to 5 kilometers (3 kilometers) below the sea's surface, represents 90 per cent of the Earth's biosphere, contains a biomass of fish 100 times the annual global fish catch, regulates carbon, and supports the pelagic food web through nutrient regeneration. But deep-sea mining, a new activity intended to extract minerals from the seafloor, could seriously threaten the midwater ecosystem, a new [paper](#) suggests.

While [deep-sea mining](#) has not yet begun, numerous companies are interested in exploring for minerals near hydrothermal vents, seamounts, and the abyssal plains where polymetallic nodules are found. The International Seabed Authority (ISA), an intergovernmental body set up to oversee and control mining beyond any country's jurisdiction, is set to finalise a set of rules surrounding deep-sea mining, referred to as the "mining code," later this year, which would allow mining to begin.



WATER

Exploitation of the Earth's last frontier will leave the world in deep water

In the meantime, the ISA has issued 30 licenses for mining companies to explore for minerals over approximately 1.5 million square kilometers (580,000 square miles) of the seafloor in international waters. There's also mining interest within several countries' territorial waters.

The new paper, published this month in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* (PNAS), says that past research has tended to examine the possible impacts of deep-sea mining on seafloor ecosystems, but has overlooked midwater ecosystems.

Authored by 19 scientists, the opinion piece argues that deep-sea mining "poses significant risks to midwater ecosystems," and that these risks must be comprehensively evaluated to determine whether or not deep-sea mining should proceed.

It's very clear now that mining is going to discharge huge volumes of muddy seawater into these mid waters, and we need to begin discussing what those effects will look like.

Jeffrey Drazen, professor in the Department of Oceanography, University of Hawaii

Each deep-sea mining company will likely use different practices. Most, however, will use a seafloor vehicle to collect minerals and sediment and some kind of vertical system to transport the materials to the surface. Another machine on board a ship will draw out the ore, and discharge unwanted sediment and water back into the ocean.

These activities would generate two types of "environmentally detrimental plumes," according to the paper: one at the seafloor where minerals are collected, and one in the water column where waste is discharged. Both would disperse sediment and dissolved metals in the immediate environment, and eventually over a greater region of the ocean, spanning tens to hundreds of kilometers, the piece suggests.

These plumes, according to the authors, will introduce heavy metals into the pelagic food chain, which could even contaminate the human seafood supply; clog organisms' filtration and breathing structures; and introduce visual and mobility barriers that could prevent organisms from properly functioning.

“It’s very clear now that mining is going to discharge huge volumes of muddy seawater into these mid waters, and we need to begin discussing what those effects will look like,” Jeffrey Drazen, the paper’s lead author and a professor in the Department of Oceanography at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, told Mongabay. “And it’s not a pretty picture.”

Natural levels of sediment in the midwater column are between 10 and 20 micrograms per liter, Thomas Peacock, a co-author of the paper and professor of mechanical engineering at MIT, told Mongabay. Right now, it’s not clear what increased levels of sediment will do to the midwater ecosystem, but the paper suggests that there would be a “host of negative consequences,” similar to the effects of air pollution on land.

“Since the background levels are so low, the threshold could be 2 times, 5 times, 10 times, 100 times background levels?” Peacock said in an email. “Determining threshold levels is central to determining the extent of potential impact of a midwater plume (and also a collector plume down at the bottom of the ocean).”

The mining machinery would also generate a lot of underwater noise, which could stress out marine mammals, fish and other marine organisms, and potentially disrupt key activities like foraging, communication and the ability of larvae, which use sound to navigate through the ocean, to settle onto the seafloor, according to the paper.

“If you’re mining sulphide deposits or crusts on sea mounts, you have to actually grind that hard substrate off of the bottom or out of the sea floor,” Drazen said. “That’s going to be incredibly noisy ... [and] because of the temperature and salinity profiles of the ocean sound is conducted for very long distances. So this is bad news.”

The paper indicates that discharge plumes and sediment disturbance, as well as noise pollution, would impact a range of species in the midwater column, including fish, shrimp, copepods, medusas, filter-feeding jellies, and marine worms. For instance, there’s a creature called a larvacean (*Bathochordaeus* spp.) that uses its gelatinous “house,” which consists of two mucus filters, to help regulate nutrients and carbon in the seawater, but deep-sea mining would immobilise its ability to function, Drazen says.

ITCZ magdadala ng pag-ulan, kidlat sa Visayas, Palawan at Zamboanga Peninsula



July 24, 2020 @ 6:44 PM 13 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Inaasahan ang maulap na papawirin na may kalat-kalat na pag-ulan at pagkidlat sa Visayas, Palawan, at Zamboanga Peninsula dahil sa Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ), ayon sa PAGASA.

Sa 24-hour forecast nito, nagbabala ang weather agency sa mga apektadong residente ng posibleng pagbaha o pagguho ng lupa dahil sa katamtaman hanggang malalakas na pag-ulan.

Samantala, magdadala naman ang ITCZ at localized thunderstorms ng bahagyang maulap hanggang sa maulap na kalangitan na may isolated rainshowers sa Metro Manila at sa nalalabing bahagi ng bansa. **RNT/MM**