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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service

Cimatu vows to consistently pursue climate action

By [Eireene Jairee Gomez](#)

July 25, 2020

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Roy Cimatu has vowed to consistently pursue aggressive climate action and prioritize investments that will increase the country's resiliency and adaptive capacity to both climate change and the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic.

During the virtual Pre-SONA (State of the Nation Address) Forum on Security, Justice and Peace and Climate Change Adaptation, Mitigation, and Disaster Risk Reduction Clusters, Cimatu stressed the need for the Philippines to limit carbon emissions to keep global temperature rise.

Climate emergency, he noted, remains as urgent as ever. "It is like the Covid-19 emergency, just in slow motion and much graver."

"The Cabinet Cluster on Climate Change Adaptation, Mitigation, and Disaster Risk Reduction (CCAM-DRR) reduction has been moving in a direction where our actions today will prepare us for the current healthy emergency, future pandemic and the looming climate crisis," Cimatu said.

"The Cabinet shall prioritize actions and investments that will reduce the long term health impacts from and increase our resiliency and adaptive capacity to both coronavirus pandemic and climate change," he added.

Under Executive Order 24, Series of 2017, the CCAM-DRR shall focus on the conservation and protection of the environment and natural resources, and shall serve as a venue for building synergy among cluster member-agencies in discussing inter-related concerns on climate change and DRR. It shall also take the lead in the effective coordination, harmonization and complementation of policies and programs on climate risk management, DRR and sustainable development.

This cluster is chaired by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and co-chaired by the Department of National Defense. The Climate Change Commission (CCC) acts as the secretariat of the Cabinet Cluster.

The country's environmental laws such as the "Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2001" (Republic Act [RA] 9147), "Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 2018" (RA 11038), and the "Climate Change Act of 2009" (RA 9729) are regarded as landmark legislations by the international community. The implementation of these laws, according to the CCC, will contribute significantly to the envisioned green and resilient post-Covid-19 recovery.

To reduce the "dramatic" impacts of Covid-19, Cimatu said effective health care waste management shall be implemented to overcome the huge volume of infectious and hazardous waste in hospitals. Moreover, he said that treatments, storage and disposal facilities in the country shall be increased.

The Environment chief also pointed out that the government shall intensify, enhance surveillance and enforcement activities in degradation hotspots and critical ecosystems in an effort to prevent zoonotic diseases due to biodiversity loss.

Research and development utilizing natural resources for disease prevention and cure shall also be undertaken, according to Cimatu. Reforestation and watershed management, forest protection and agro-forestry development, especially in critically watersheds, shall be strengthened, he added.

“We are at the point where humanity is given an enforced chance to stop and think to choose how we rebuild. We shall come out of this in such a way that we can collectively deal with climate change and disasters. We shall convert this health crisis into opprotunities to accelerate climate action,” Cimatu said.

“We shall formulate responses to the pandemic through a climate lens [and] seize this key moment for climate response and action in the aggressive build up of adapative and resilient communities,” he added.

PH Mining industry raises P402-M fund to help 1.4-M households, frontliners

Published July 25, 2020, 5:12 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

The Philippine mining industry has so far raised ₱402-million worth of relief fund to help 1.4 million households and frontliners during the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic.



Motorists queue up to avail the free COVID-19 Drive-Thru Testing Center set by the City of Manila with the initiative of Mayor Isko Moreno Domagoso at Quirino Grandstand on Saturday, July 18, 2020. (Jansen Romero / MANILA BULLETIN FILE PHOTO)

Mining companies were able to raise a total of ₱402 million after Acting Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) Director Wilfredo Moncano had authorized them to realign their unutilized Social Development and Management Program (SDMP) funds to help the national government in its fight against COVID-19.

MGB is a line bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) that oversees and regulates the mining sector.

It reported that as of July 8, some 1.2 million households have been provided with food packs, vegetables and garden kits through the relief fund.

This has exceeded the initial target of around 1.184 million beneficiaries, the MGB said.

On top of this, the agency noted that close to 210,000 frontliners have been provided with personal protective equipment and medical supplies.

“The SDMP fund has components that can be sacrificed and realigned to respond and assist the clamor of the government and the community for assistance,” Moncano said, adding that 90 percent of the pooled SDMP funds have been utilized so far.

As stated under the DENR Administrative Order No. 2010-21 or the Consolidated Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act 7942, otherwise known as the Philippine Mining Act of 1995, mining companies are required to allocate at least one percent of their annual operation cost to their SDMP to assist host and neighboring communities and in developing mining technology and geosciences.

The mining companies also provided logistical support, such as service ambulance, trucks and boats to affected communities within their jurisdiction.

Moncano said the initiative, which has already benefited millions of individuals, was a result of “common agenda and objectives.”

“I am glad that through the collaboration of MGB and the mining companies, we were able to give assistance to our local government units and communities hosting mining operations,” he added.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/07/25/ph-mining-industry-raises-p402-m-fund-to-help-1-4-m-households-frontliners/>



PH mining industry magbibigay ng P402M para sa COVID-19 response

July 25, 2020 @ 4:40 PM 14 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Nag-ambag ang Philippine mining industry ng kanilang bahagi bilang tulong sa panahon ng pandemic ng halagang P402 milyon relief fund na makatutulong sa may 1.4 milyong kabahayan at frontliners sa buong bansa.

Ayon sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang mga mining firm ay padadaluyin ang kanilang nalalabing pondo para sa kanya-kanyang Social Development and Management Program (SDMP) para tulungan ang kanilang nasasakupan at mga katabing mga komunidad sa panahon ng community quarantine bunsod ng COVID-19.

Ang Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) na kabilang sa bureau ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang mangangalaga at magre-regulate ng mining sector at iniulat na nitong nakalipas na July 8, aabot sa 1.2 milyon households ang nabigyan ng food packs, vegetables at garden kits mula sa relief fund.

Ang ayuda at tulong ay lumagpas pa sa inisyal na target na 1.184 milyon beneficiaries ng mahigit 16,000 ayon sa MGB.

Kaugnay nito ayon sa MGB, aabot sa 210,000 frontliners ay nabigyan ng mga personal protective equipment and medical supplies.

Nabatid pa sa DENR, ang mining companies ay nakapag-raise ng aabot sa P402 milyon matapos awtorisahan ni Acting MGB Director Wilfredo Moncano at i-realign ang kanilang utilized SDMP funds para tulungan ang national government sa paglaban sa COVID-19.

“The SDMP fund has components that can be sacrificed and realigned to respond and assist the clamor of the government and the community for assistance,” ayon kay Moncano at idinagdag ang 90 percent na nalalabing SDMP funds ay nagamit.

Ayon sa DENR Administrative Order No. 2010-21 o ang Consolidated Implementing Rules and Regulations of Republic Act 7942 na mas kilala sa Philippine Mining Act of 1995, ang mining companies ay nire-required na mag-allocate ng hanggang isang porsyento ng kanilang annual operation cost para sa SDMP para tumulong sa kanilang kalapit na komunidad at developing mining technology and geoscience. **Santi Celario**

Source: <https://remate.ph/ph-mining-industry-magbibigay-ng-p402m-para-sa-covid-19-response/>

Mga naipasarang minahan na naging banta sa kalikasan, muling papayagang mabuksan

July 24, 2020 Ricardo Deleno Philippine News, PHILIPPINES

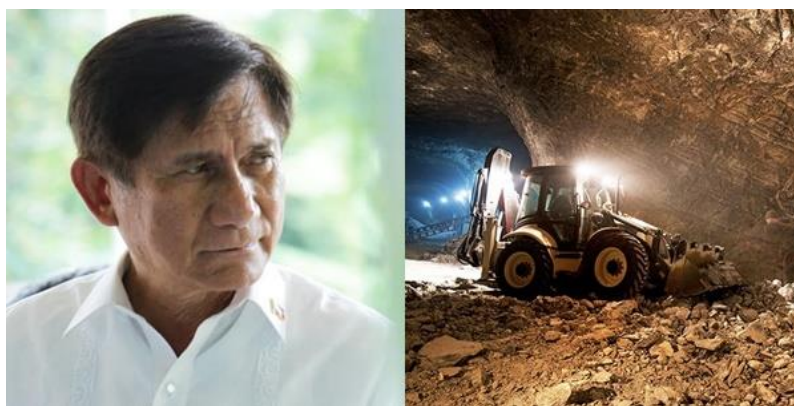


Public Domain Image

- Possible umanong mapagbigyang magbukas at magsagawa ng operasyon ang mga nasuspinde at naipasarang minahan ng dating DENR Secretary na si Gina Lopez
- Iyan ang inihayag ng kasalukuyang kalihim nito na si Roy Cimatu
- Nakapag-comply na raw kasi ang mga minahang ito sa mga hinihinging requirements ng DENR

Ipinahayag ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu na posibleng payagan muli ang pagbubukas at operasyon ng mga kompanya ng minahan na naipasara at nasuspinde noon ng yumaong DENR Secretary na si Gina Lopez noong 2018.

“An audit was conducted by technical experts... There were recommendations made for the companies. They complied and applied corrective measures,” ani Cimatu sa isinagawang virtual press conference matapos ang pre-State of the Nation Address forum.



Public Domain Image

Aniya, may iba pang mga kompanya ng minahan na humahabol pa sa pagkukompleto ng mga requirements. Hindi niya binanggit kung ano ang pangalan ng mga minahan na papayagan na ang operasyon.

“Only those that have passed through the proper review and those who have submitted motion for reconsideration with DENR will be allowed to operate again,” aniya.

Umani naman ito ng iba't ibang reaksyon at komento mula sa mga netizens.

“Iyan po ang isa sa mga dapat na pagtuunan ng pansin ngayon, ang yaman ng bansa pero ibang bansa ang yumayaman sa sarili nating likas na yaman,” sabi ng isa.

TITLE: Mga naipasarang minahan na nagging banta sa
kalikasan. Muling papayagang mabuksan

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Turan naman ng isa, "We cannot deny that Philippines is a country that very rich in gold and other minerals, that's why the government should implement a project para sa mga responsible mining company na independently owned by the Philippine government, in this way many Filipinos job opportunities will arise."

"Kaya naman pala ganoon na lang ang gigil sa pagpapasara ng network, mukhang may hidden agenda? Sabi nga, lintik lang daw ang walang ganti," pahayag naman isa.



Public Domain Image

Matatandaang iniutos ng dating DENR Secretary Gina Lopez ang pagpapasara at pagpapasuspindi ng 26 mining companies dahil sa alegasyon ng paglabag sa mga environmental standards, kasama na ang Philippine Mining Act. Si Gina Lopez ay kapatid ni Gabby Lopez na Chairman of the Board at may-ari ng ABS-CBN.

Source: https://news.definitelyfilipino.net/posts/2020/07/mga-naipasarang-minahan-na-naging-banta-sa-kalikasan-muling-papayagang-mabuksan/?fbclid=IwAR04uCpIwYOOL62zc4JrH7Bk0TwhGRHVHxa4M_3bnMsxL3GogjWBb4AUvGQ

DENR issues ECC to Ming-Mori Project of Minglanilla, CLI unit

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#) July 25, 2020



An architect's perspective of the Ming-Mori Techno Business Park, a joint project of the municipality of Minglanilla and joint venture Ming-Mori Development Corp., an affiliate of Cebu Landmasters. The listed company is the managing developer of this grand technology and business hub envisioned to house commercial, residential and industrial centers.

THE Ming-Mori Minglanilla Reclamation Project covering 100 hectares easily accessible to Cebu City was issued an Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources on July 22 following a comprehensive two-year review.

The joint venture among the local government of Minglanilla and private consortium partners Ming-Mori Development Corp. (MMDC), an affiliate of listed firm Cebu Landmasters Inc. (CLI), envisions a world-class estate that will generate over 75,000 jobs in the municipality and its environs while meeting sound environmental guidelines.

Following the issuance of the ECC considered one of the major prerequisites and milestones of a reclamation project, the development will now be subject to the approval process of 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,” remarked Jose Soberano III, chairman and CEO of CLI, managing developer of the project.

Minglanilla Mayor Elanito Pena said “the grant of the Environmental Compliance Certificate has brought us closer to the materialization of the reclamation project which will propel the Municipality of Minglanilla to higher heights and cements its role as a major economic player in the Province of Cebu.”

“The development project will not just modernize the landscape of Minglanilla but will also create immeasurable socioeconomic opportunities to all people, not just for the Minglanillahanons,” the mayor added.

Following a memorandum of agreement between the Municipality of Minglanilla and Ming-Mori Development Corporation in 2013, CLI was appointed in 2015 to tap a roster of consultants with a track record in similar projects to create detailed design and engineering plans, feasibility and environmental studies. In 2016, a memorandum of understanding was signed between the Philippine Reclamation Authority and the Municipality of Minglanilla with Ming-Mori as its private consortium partner.

DENR issues ECC to Ming-Mori Project of
Minglanilla, CLI unit

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Soberano disclosed that in addition to housing light industrial facilities, the future Ming-Mori Techno Business Park will be a self-contained township with residential and commercial areas. Its proximity to Cebu City makes it an ideal location for a master-planned community with live-work-play opportunities for its residents and visitors.

“The Covid-19 pandemic has shown us that well-planned communities that offer growth prospects alongside safety and security for employees and residents are the way to go. This township’s residents will have access to those benefits and more,” he explained.

The Ming-Mori Techno Business Park will be CLI’s third estate project. Land development of the 22-hectare Davao Global township is ongoing while its planned township in Cagayan de Oro is undergoing approvals.

CLI reports that more township projects are under way in the cities of Mandaue, Tagbilaran, Cagayan de Oro and Bacolod City. In 2019, the company was awarded as the Best Developer in the Philippines by Asia Property Awards.

Bulacan Aerotropolis Project: Goodbye birds, hello big metal birds

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#) July 26, 2020



A black-faced spoonbill. More than 20 of this endangered species were spotted in Barangay Taliptip, Bulakan, Bulacan, on January 11.

With the proposed construction of the P735.6-billion New Manila International Airport (NMIA), people in the municipality of Bulacan and nearby towns in the province of Bulacan will soon be seeing more airplanes flying in the sky.

The project, secured through an unsolicited proposal by the Ramon Ang-led conglomerate San Miguel Corp. (SMC), hopes to ease air and land traffic congestion in Pasay City, where the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (Naia) is situated.



locks of birds cover islets on Taliptip River in Bulakan, Bulacan.

To be constructed in a 2,500-hectare coastal fishpond in Bulakan, Bulacan, that is about 35 kilometers north of Manila, the aerotropolis will stretch from Taliptip River Stream in Barangay Taliptip, Bulacan, to Sitio Baluarte in Obando town.

The project will include a modern passenger terminal building with airside and landside facilities, as well as an airport toll road and railway.

Needless to say, the national government is bent on pursuing the project, with the economic benefits of a new airport in mind—investors coming in, setting up shops triggering construction boom and generating more jobs and livelihood opportunities.

Recovery effort contribution

Despite the enormous challenge posed by the current coronavirus pandemic, SMC is committed to pursuing the ambitious project to help the government in its economic recovery efforts. This was disclosed during the company's stockholders' meeting early this month.

Quoted in news reports, SMC Chief Finance Officer Ferdinand K. Constantino said part of the company's recovery plan is continuing with expansion plans as previously laid out, which include the plan to build the airport.

Constantino remains optimistic that while the company faces challenges because of the pandemic, it remains in good shape.

In a statement in July 2019, SMC said the NMIA project, “will be our largest contribution to the Philippine economy thus far. It’s a project that will benefit not just us today, but many future generations of Filipinos.”



Birds form a line as they rest on a mangrove area in Barangay Dapdap, Taliptip, Bulakan, in January.

“It will generate about a million jobs and jump-start economic growth in Bulacan and neighboring provinces. Apart from improving tourism and addressing congestion problems, it will boost small local industries, manufacturing, exports and possibly give rise to new ones. We are committed to helping the government deliver on our nation’s goals and helping the local communities thrive and improve their quality of life,” SMC said.

Opposition

Like any other environmentally critical project, the Bulacan Aerotropolis is facing stiff opposition from various sectors. Environmentalists, fishermen and conservation advocates included.

While many fishpond owners in Barangay Taliptip have already sold their properties, and most of farm tenants have already agreed to self-demolish their homes as part of an agreement with the project proponents, still, some residents are up in arms, and they are getting help from various environmental groups and conservation advocates.

Oceana Philippines, an ocean conservation advocacy nongovernment organization, has expressed alarm on the stories of fisherfolk residents in Barangay Taliptip as they suffer even more during the pandemic.

Importance of Manila Bay

During the launch of the Save Manila Bay web site on June 27 which coincided with the forum dubbed “Habang May Dagat, May Buhay: Dissecting the Impacts of the Proposed Bulacan Airport,” retired Supreme Court Justice Antonio Carpio underscored the importance of Manila Bay.

Carpio believes that the airport project in Bulacan, Bulacan, will require massive land reclamation, which will further cause the deterioration of Manila Bay and destroy a major fish source in Luzon.

Many areas along Manila Bay, he added, are susceptible to liquefaction and sea-level rise. Land reclamation, he said, will only aggravate flooding in Manila, Pasay and Parañaque, and other low-lying areas near the bay, hence, underscoring the need to educate the people about such life-threatening issues.

Organized by the People’s Network for the Integrity of Coastal Habitats and Ecosystems (People’s NICHE), Bulacan Enumerical Forum, Akap Ka Manila Bay and Center for Environmental Concerns, Philippines, the forum aims to highlight the threats of the project to people and the environment.

Project lacking ECC

In an e-mailed message to the BusinessMirror on July 22, Gloria Estenzo Ramos, Oceana vice president, said SMC legal issues hound the Bulacan Aerotropolis project.

Ramos, an environmental lawyer, said SMC still has no Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) for the airport construction, which, she said, was duly certified to by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) as of September 19, 2019.

She explained that an ECC for the same area was issued to Silvertides Holdings but only for the construction of access road and administration building, and not for a huge project like an international airport.

Environmentally critical project

The construction of an airport with mixed development, including reclamation, which impacts fisheries, wild birds, livelihoods and mangroves, are considered environmentally critical project and in an environmentally critical area at that.

“This requires full adherence to the requirements of the Environmental Impact Assessment System Act, the Fisheries Code, as amended, among other laws, which means full disclosure of the project, programmatic impact assessment of the project as an airport and public participation,” she explained.

Ramos said it is not even clear if Silvertides was able to secure an ECC for their extraction of the reported 205 million cubic meters of filling materials to be used for the project.

Worse, Ramos said the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB)-Region III of the DENR refused to issue a copy of the environmental impact assessment (EIA) to affected residents and to Oceana, which is an important document for the stakeholders to understand the full environmental impacts of the project.

EMB is DENR’s main unit that issues ECCs other than the the department’s regional offices.

“Right now, as much as possible, we see to it that the BMB is part of the [EIA] review process,” he told the BusinessMirror.

In the EIA review process, he said the biodiversity lens will not be overlooked.

“It covers mitigation measures that are needed for ECCs issued by responsible offices,” Calderon said.

While saying that he is not privy to the Bulacan Aerotropolis Project EIA Review Process, or ECC issuance, he said an EIA report should integrate biodiversity consideration.

He said experts from the BMB should take part in the project scoping in order to determine the classification of the land where the project will be constructed, or the conservation status of the species that will be affected.

Important bird area

Cristina Cinco, a bird enthusiast, meanwhile, expressed her concern over the plight of critically endangered bird species whose natural habitats are shrinking because of destruction.

“Manila Bay was [classified] an Internationally Important Waterbird Site” by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and Wetlands International, she said.

Cinco, who is doing a study on birds and wetlands that was commissioned by Wetlands International, is the current vice president of Wild Birds Club of the Philippines.

She said the Philippines has 709 species of bird, 241 of which are endemic, or can only be found in the Philippines, making the country the third in the world in bird endemism.

Equally important is the Philippines' being part of the East Asian-Australasian Flyway (EAAF), one of nine major flyways across the globe. As such, it is a signatory to international treaties for the protection of migratory species and their habitats.

The EAAF stretches from Russian Far East and Alaska, southwards through East Asia and Southeast Asia, to Australia and New Zealand. It encompasses 22 countries, including the Philippines.

Declared as an Important Bird and Biodiversity area by BirdLife International, the northern Manila Bay, which covers the area from Navotas City in Metro Manila, to Bulacan and Pampanga provinces, has been identified as a waterbird congregation area.

Rare sightings

On January 11, a rare sighting of 24 individuals of black-faced spoonbills was recorded in Sitio Dapdap, Barangay Taliptip, Bulakan, Bulacan, the exact area where the airport will be constructed.

The birds came from breeding grounds in China and North Korea, flying all the way to the Philippines during the migration season.

Previous recorded sightings of the species in the Philippines were in Palawan; Olango Island, Cebu province; Bicol Estuary; and in Batanes province.

Another previous sighting in 2019 in Manila Bay area was in Sasmuan, Pampanga province. But prior to 2019, it was last sighted in Obando, Bulacan, 100 years ago.

This species is closely monitored by the International Black-faced Spoonbill Working Group of the EAAF Partnership and the Taiwan-based Black-faced Spoonbill Association

The species's population dropped to 200 and only about 22 individuals in 1980. However, its population as of 2016 is 3,356.

But Cinco noted that it still remains in the IUCN Red List of endangered species.

Environmental disruption

Sought for reaction, Leon Dulce, national coordinator of Kalikasan-People's Network for the Environment (Kalikasan-PNE), a convener of People's NICHE told the BusinessMirror that the presence of the bird populations are bioindicators of good ecological health.

"This is of crucial importance in these times when there are multiple epidemiological risks from pandemics, socioeconomic loss, and climate emergency all emerging from the disrupted environment," Dulce said via Messenger on July 6.

"Massive land-reclamation activities in Manila Bay threatens the last remaining wetlands where migratory birds roost. The Bulacan Aerotropolis is one of the biggest threats that will destroy 2,500 hectares of mangroves and fisheries. It is outrageous that transportation mega infrastructure is being touted for economic recovery when global transportation is expected to remain disrupted until 2021," he added.

"It is too pyrrhic a price to pay when the cost is the loss of our coastal greenbelts that serve as bird and other biodiversity sanctuaries, fisheries havens, and defense lines against disasters," Dulce said.

With the government's backing the project, should we say goodbye birds, and hello to big metal birds?

Image Credits: [Cristina Cinco](#)

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/07/26/bulacan-aerotropolis-project-goodbye-birds-hello-big-metal-birds/>

Manila Zoo mas pagagandahin pa sa Singapore Zoo

July 25, 2020 @ 2:38 PM 16 hours ago



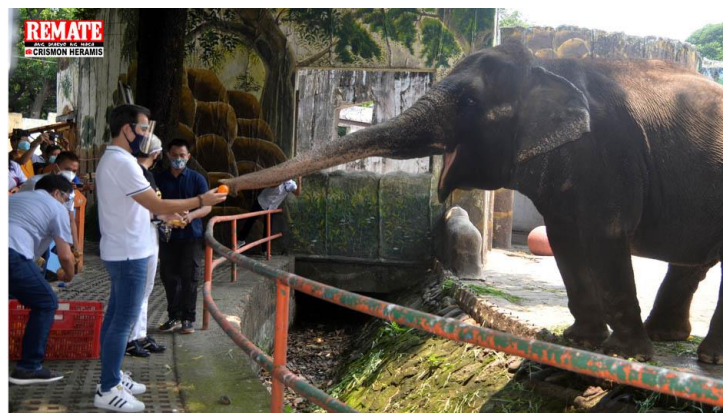
Manila, Philippines – Pinangunahan ni Manila Mayor Isko Moreno Domagoso at Vice Mayor Maria Sheilah "Honey" Lacuna-Pangan ang "groundbreaking ceremony" para sa pagsasaayos at pagpapaganda ng nasabing zoo kasabay ng ika-61 anibersaryo ng pagkakatatag nito.

Ayon kay Domagoso, nais nito na ang "Bagong Manila Zoo" ay ang pinakamagandang zoo sa buong Asya.

"Manila Zoo will be the best zoo in Asia, lalabanan natin ang Singapore. We will compete with them, cause we are the first," ani Domagoso.

Sinabi naman ni Lacuna-Pangan na ang naturang proyekto ng lokal na pamahalaan ng lungsod ang magtutuldok sa haka-haka o tsismis na kumakalat noon na ibebenta na ito kasabay sa pagbebenta umano sa Arroceros Forest Park.

Kaugnay nito, inaasahan naman na matatapos ang pagpapaganda sa bagong Manila Zoo sa darating na taon kung saan sinabi ng alkalde na ituturing itong pinakamagandang Zoo, pinakamalinis na Zoo at "healthier" zoo na para sa mga hayop na nakatira rito.



Ang Manila Zoo na kilala bilang Manila Zoological and Botanical Garden ay may 5.5 hektarya ang lawak kung saan itinatag ito at binuksan sa publiko noong Hulyo 25, 1959.

Isa sa mga binabalik-balikan ng mga tao upang mabisita at makita ng personal sa Manila Zoo ay ang 47 taong gulang na elepante na kilalang si Maali.

Bukod kay Maali ay may ilang mga malulusog na hayop pa ang inaalagaan sa Manila Zoo tulad ng chimpanzee, ahas, buwaya, tigre, mga iba't ibang klase ng ibon, atbp. **Jay Reyes**

Plastic Credit Exchange launches 'Aling Tindera' waste-to-cash program

posted July 25, 2020 at 09:20 pm

by [Manila Standard Business](#)

The Plastic Credit Exchange, the country's first homegrown global non-profit plastic offset organization, together with the City of Manila and with the support of the PepsiCo Foundation recently introduced the Aling Tindera Waste-to-Cash program to address the mounting plastic waste crisis.

Along with their teams, PCEX founder Nanette Medved-Po and Manila Mayor Isko Moreno Domagoso signed a memorandum of agreement to roll out 100 network partners over three years covering all the city's 897 barangays.

Under the Aling Tindera program, PCEX incentivizes women-owned sari-sari stores to become collection points for post-consumer plastic waste and establishes the community infrastructure for the aggregating, storing and efficient transport of the waste to partner processing facilities. Among the many benefits of the project are increased income opportunities for women micro-entrepreneurs and city residents; a more organized informal sector of waste collectors; cleaner environments and improved health.

"We couldn't be happier to work with the Mayor and his team who have passionately demonstrated their commitment to the improvement of Manila. We hope that our program will have a positive impact on the City's citizens and on the environment that we all share," Medved-Po said.

Speaking at the signing, Domagoso said he chose to team up with PCEX because the Aling Tindera Program is "applicable, doable, and sustainable" and "malaking bagay ito for the environment". He said, "We are very grateful to [PCEX] as it will also generate some income for the community" and encourage "more sensible and responsible citizens to participate."

PepsiCo corporate affairs head for the Philippines and Asia Anne Marie Corominas said: "PepsiCo realizes no single organization or industry can solve the plastic waste challenge on their own. That is why we're working with PCEX and communities in Manila through the Aling Tindera program to accelerate systemic change and meaningful progress through collaborative, holistic and sustainable solutions in the Philippines."

The initiative forms part of PCEX's broader plastic offset mechanism inspired by the carbon offset industry. Plastic offsetting enables businesses to take action in stopping plastic waste from polluting our waterways and ending up in nature.

'Aling Tinderas' are women sari-sari store owners invited by the City of Manila to partake in this initiative. To jumpstart their new micro-enterprise, PCEX will provide each one with a purposefully designed 20-foot container, one manual baler donated by the PepsiCo Foundation, and starting capital.

The journey from 'Waste to Cash' begins in Aling Tindera's neighborhood, where residual plastic has little to no value and ends up contaminating nature. In response to this challenge, the Aling Tindera container will serve as an aggregation hub where any member of the community may sell post-consumer plastic by the kilogram. Simple bystanders become empowered not only to depollute their environment, but make extra income.

Using the manual baler, Aling Tindera compacts the plastics she buys into blocks that are easier to store and transport. Once she fills up her container, offset partners through PCEX purchase the lot from her and ensure they are processed using environmentally sound technologies.

In serving businesses who desire to have a real, sustainable impact on ending plastic waste, PCEX commits to transparency to the public and its clients. Together with SGV & Co.'s Climate Change and Sustainability Services practice, PCEX will perform compliance audits for both plastic footprint as well as the entire value chain of offset operations, including the Aling Tindera plastic collection model.

"We hope to expand our network of professional services firms and work with them to refine standards for verification to make sure that we are doing our part to make sure that no plastic winds up in nature," said Medved-Po.

Plastic Credit Exchange launches 'ALing Tindera'

July 26, 2020

TITLE: waste-to-cash program

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PCEx is a Philippine-based non-profit organization that partners with sustainability-conscious businesses around the globe to responsibly offset their plastic footprint, and reduce the flow of plastic waste into our landfills and oceans.

It has built a wide ecosystem of collaborators that recover, process and recycle plastic waste and continuously seeks out the most environmentally and sound solutions to plastic waste reduction. PCEx supports environmental protection with programs that improve livelihoods and scale up social impact.

Documentary shows realities of plastic

By [The Manila Times](#)

July 25, 2020

Since its invention over a century ago, synthetic plastic has been a constant part of our lives. It is virtually everywhere and the variety of its uses has made plastic one of the greatest scientific breakthroughs in history.



A scene from “The Story of Plastic,” a documentary about how plastic has badly affected the environment. HARIBON PHOTO

These days, however, the growing number of plastic waste is presenting a big problem for humanity and nature. We are in the face of a global plastic pollution crisis — and it’s more complicated than we actually think.

As part of its #GoingViral webinars for biodiversity and human health, conservation group Haribon Foundation held a community screening of the award-winning documentary “The Story of Plastic” on July 17.

Through its comprehensive story-telling, the two-hour documentary filled the gap in the narrative around plastic’s life cycle while exposing how the oil and gas industries played a role in the society’s perception of the problem.

Staunchly, it revealed the industry giants’ double standards when it comes to taking the responsibility on their plastic-packaged products. It also highlighted the consequences of plastic production and improper disposal to public health.

To dive deeper into the dialogue, Haribon Foundation also held a post-screening live discussion via Zoom for members and some partners.

“The movie clearly shows that the root of the plastic problem we are facing is not about consumers using plastic,” said Kesh Tatlonghari, senior marketing officer and Charity Pot Coordinator of Lush Philippines.

“It is about the big companies who keep on producing different kinds of plastic; from the food industry, beauty industry, and FMCG (fast-moving consumer goods) companies who need to take accountability of the pollution that they are causing,” added Tatlonghari, one of the panelists for the live discussion.

Guest panelist Frenz Laureta Garcia, social marketing specialist from the Zoological Society of London-Philippines, said “The Story of Plastic” showed how the global plastic problem greatly affects small communities and coastal areas.

As also shown in the documentary, Garcia also noted that communities are not to be blamed for the plastic problem, it is the most convenient and readily available source of packaging for most people. With these realizations, the bigger question remains: what can we do to resolve this crisis?

For Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Officer Reynaldo Avila, focusing on self-discipline and practicing proper waste management at home are two important steps people need to take individually to move forward.

“In the local government, particularly in the solid waste management, it must be complemented with incentives,” he said. “You should give an incentive to the people in order [for them] to participate, to implement and to comply.”

Haribon Foundation Policy Officer Sam Pedragosa said people should also “convince more local government units to enact ordinances to ban single use plastics” as a means for collective action against the problem at hand.

“I will continue to lobby for stronger laws that would make the manufacturers more accountable,” said Pedragosa, noting that the solution “is a job that we all have to do together.”

“The Story of Plastic” is so much more than a documentary. It is an eye-opener for those who still refuse to believe that we are dealing with a problem that will outlive us. We need to break free from plastic because if we don’t, the future of plastics won’t only be in the trash can — it will be everywhere.

ANGELICA IBUYAN

PH in the midst of global health and climate emergencies

By [Ludwig O. Federigan](#)

July 25, 2020

In my four months under community quarantine due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19), last week was the first time to visit the office to participate in a strategic planning workshop. While in continued self-isolation, one of the many climate-related activities that I joined and participated in was a virtual interview with a good friend, George Vincent Gamayo, from Panahon TV.

Here are the insights I shared during the virtual interview:

Question: How does climate change impact global health?

Answer: In my paper titled “The Interconnectedness of Health, Climate Change and Society” published by the Stratbase ADR Institute in May 2020, I stated that: “climate change would affect human health via pathways of varying complexity, scale and directness and with different timing.

Similarly, impacts would vary geographically as a function both of environment and topography and of the vulnerability of the local population. Impacts would be predominantly negative. This is no surprise since climatic change would disrupt or otherwise alter a large range of natural ecological and physical systems that are an integral part of Earth’s life-support system.”

In addition, according to the World Health Organization, climate change affects the social and environmental determinants of health — clean air, safe drinking water, sufficient food and secure shelter.

Between 2030 and 2050, climate change is expected to cause approximately 250,000 additional deaths per year, from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhea and heat stress.

The direct damage costs to health, excluding costs in health-determining sectors such as agriculture and water and sanitation, is estimated to be between \$2 to \$4 billion per year by 2030.

Areas with weak health infrastructure — mostly in developing countries including the Philippines — will be the least able to cope without assistance to prepare and respond.

Reducing emissions of greenhouse gases through better transportation systems, food choices and use of renewable energy can result in improved health, particularly through reduced air pollution.

Q: How is the Philippines vulnerable to Covid-19 coupled with climate change?

A: Most vulnerable sectors to climate change and natural disasters are also vulnerable to the Covid-19 pandemic due to their lack of capacity to access health care services and facilities.

The Covid-19 pandemic, being the worst health crisis the country is facing, continues to challenge our level of resilience and capacity as number of Covid-19 cases continue to rise every day, making our health and governance systems operating at maximum capacity.

To control the spread of the virus, the country has imposed quarantine and physical distancing measures that tremendously affected our economy as businesses are forced to close affecting over 2 million workers, and 22 million students temporarily are out of school due to the pandemic.

PH in the midst of global health and climate

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With these scenarios, the Covid-19 pandemic made the displaced victims of typhoons Tisoy and Ambo, earthquake and Taal volcanic eruption even more vulnerable.

Initially, due to our closed economic links with China, the Philippines, together with other Asian countries, has been identified as one of the most vulnerable countries to a possible Covid-19 outbreak, according to the paper titled “Economic Vulnerabilities to Health Pandemics: Which Countries are Most Vulnerable to the Impacts of Coronavirus” published by the London-based Overseas Development Institute a month before our government declared a community quarantine.

(The latest update revealed that, as of July 22, 2020, the Philippines with over 70,000 total reported cases is leading among Southeast Asia and ranked 30th among 213 countries and territories affected, according to www.worldometer.info.)

Q: Why is there a need for the country to declare climate emergency?

A: The country’s declaration of climate emergency will further advance the urgency of addressing the climate problem.

We should not forget that the new study titled “Digital News Report 2020” of the Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism at the University of Oxford revealed that “8.5 out of 10 Filipinos think that climate change is very or extremely serious.”

Lest we forget that the Philippines is one of the most vulnerable countries in the world.

Although emitting less compared to the total global carbon emissions, our status as vulnerable and developing country compels us to devise measures to stop human-induced global warming and mobilize our people, institution, and resources to enhance its ability to prepare and even prosper amid the climate emergency.

And unknown to many, last February, the Climate Change Commission-National Panel of Technical Experts, chaired by Carlos Primo David, called for the declaration of a climate emergency in the Philippines through a resolution titled “Declaration of a Climate Emergency and the Immediate Need to Consolidate Government Data to Generate a Nationwide Climate Risk Assessment” adding to many other voices globally that have urged their respective governments.

The resolution urged the government to mobilize its people, institutions and resources to identify cities and municipalities that are most at risk from the prevailing climate emergency.

We are bound to lose more if we remain complacent to the prevailing climate emergency. We should raise our voice and act with sense of urgency and in unity.

The author is the executive director of the Young Environmental Forum and a non-resident fellow of Stratbase ADR Institute. He is one of the Climate Reality Leaders selected globally to mentor during the first-ever virtual Climate Reality Leadership Corps Global Training happening until July 26, 2020. He completed his climate change and development course at the University of East Anglia (United Kingdom) and executive program on sustainability leadership at Yale University (USA). He can be reached at ludwig.federigan@gmail.com.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/07/25/business/green-business/ph-in-the-midst-of-global-health-and-climate-emergencies/745592/>

This non-profit tech innovation helps destinations
adapt to health, safety protocols

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This non-profit tech innovation helps destinations adapt to health, safety protocols

[Rosette Adel](#) (Philstar.com) - July 24, 2020 - 11:46am

MANILA, Philippines — A non-profit tech innovation is calling for nature-based destinations that could pilot test its sustainable visitor management platform in a bid to help them recover the economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the COVID-19 pandemic that paused global tourism, several tourist destinations, communities and conservation that heavily rely on the industry are suffering the due to the lack of funding and this tech innovation seeks to help these destinations recover by equipping them with the right technology.

Visita, a visitor management platform comprised of a website and an application, was specifically developed for nature-based destinations. It aims to help these tourist spots adapt to the health and safety precautions under the so-called “new normal.”

While this technology and education initiative was developed pre-COVID it was designed to address the challenges faced by the tourism industry including overtourism, undertourism, irresponsible tourist behaviors and issues on policy enforcement, among others.

How it can help during COVID-19 pandemic

In view of this, Visita could help destination managers alleviate overtourism as this innovation allows them to limit their carrying capacity and manage tourist traffic that could in turn also aid them in implementing social distancing, minimizing physical contact.

The app and website likewise help in destination’s shift to digitizing its services with paperless transactions.

Features

Visita enables online visit requests, contact-free processes, data management through its online channels.

Aside from implementing sustainable practices, the visitor management platform was also designed to help destination managers educate their guests on policies and biodiversity as they also seek to eliminate environmental offenses

It integrates conservation agreements, waivers and visit terms and conditions into the system. Through its website, tourists can read more about the destination as it bares an overview of the site including fees and activities offered and other things they need to prepare and settle.

Guests can likewise pay these conservation fees online.

The Visita app, on the other hand, allows guests to digitally check in and out.

Destination frontliners can also access the app to orient the guests prior to their visit or experience.

Pamela Valle, project manager of Visita said the application requires guests to fill out requirement conservation agreement so that they can abide by the rules and policies, waivers for actual visit.

Under the new normal, the visitor management could also help destination managers should they need to conduct contact tracing as the technology allows them to have access to relevant information about their guests while strictly following data privacy policies.

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Guests will also be asked to answer survey or feedback form to help improve the destination's performance in the future that could help destination managers monitor the tourist behavior.

How the innovation was developed

Visita was developed using a grant received from the Booking Cares Fund in 2018. It was inspired by the learnings of the Masungi Georeserve Foundation in sustainable visitor management for conservation.

"We travelled and immersed ourselves in at least three island and mountain destinations to ensure we come up with a product that solves current pain points. We observed existing processes, identified gaps, and asked for the destinations' wish list in developing the design and features of the platform," Valle said.

"We also consulted experts in technology, data privacy, and sustainable tourism research such as the Asian Institute of Management - Andrew Tan Center for Tourism in designing the prototype," she added.

Nature-based destinations

Among the three destinations that expressed its interest in using Visita's system is the wildlife-based whaleshark tourism destination Donsol.

"Digitizing the visitor management system enables us to maximize technology and use it to further promote sustainable community ecotourism — the heart of the tourism industry of Donsol. We believe that a digitized management system will also make our tourism product more accessible to our guests even amidst the health crisis," Lianne Idjao, tourism focal person of the municipality of Donsol local government unit.

"Not only will it enable us to make paperless transactions possible, it will also be an effective tool to model practices that will be beneficial to the environment," she added.

Visita has also studied and consulted nature-based destinations Mt. Pulag National Park and Kalangaman Island in Leyte.

"The managing bodies for these destinations have communicated that they are focusing on crafting health and safety protocols for their tourism activities and will tap us when they are ready to reopen to the public," Valle told **Philstar.com**.

The project manager said the parameters of the pilot test for other interested destinations can be adjusted depending on their needs and capacity.

Youth leaders call on green, ‘better normal’

July 25, 2020 People's Tonight

AHEAD of the State of the Nation Address on July 27, Filipino youth leaders from Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, presented a declaration calling on President Rodrigo Duterte to ensure that recovery plans from the COVID-19 pandemic lead to a green and just “better normal” that puts the interests of the people, especially the youth, front and center.

The declaration, called the “Better Normal Youth Agenda,” highlights three key demands as part of a roadmap for a better post-COVID normal: 1) promotion of youth participation within a democratic society, 2) prioritization of solutions to the health, food and climate crises, and 3) placing people at the center of local and national policy-making.

The agenda is an outcome of a series of consultations with youth and other sectors, including the recently concluded Classrooms for Future (CFF), a virtual advocacy learning hub which aims to develop youth leaders and champions from all over the country. CFF is organized by Greenpeace Philippines, I Am HampasLupa, STEP Philippines, Youth Strike for Climate Philippines, and Greenducation Philippines. [3]

"The pandemic has shone a light on the numerous inadequacies in the system and also our country. Now more than ever, we need concrete solutions to secure our future and that of the next generation as we tackle problems of greater magnitude like the climate crisis. We call on our fellow youth to join us as we seek actions for a better normal. With our future on the line, we cannot stay silent," CFF graduate Francine Pradez said.

The consultations showed that youth are anxious about the uncertainties caused by the pandemic. Part of the concern is how COVID has in turn magnified rising threats of militarization, red-tagging and deprioritization of people’s needs. But this has not deterred today’s youth from action. “We commit, collectively and individually, to do our part by being active citizens not only for the benefit of fellow youth, but also for the Filipino people. However, we believe that action from all levels of government, as well as democratic processes that enable people participation in nation-building, are key to realizing the better normal,” the declaration read.

The youth leaders emphasized that the government must also put climate action at the center of government-led recovery plans to build the country’s resilience from future pandemics and climate emergencies. This can be achieved by crafting laws and national policies seeking to shift to renewable energy, transition to sustainable and resilient food systems, ensure green and livable cities that support sustainable mobility, and promote zero-waste living.

Youth Strike for Climate Lead Convenor Jefferson Estela said, “As a sector that has always been at the forefront of movements especially in the protection of our environment, I believe that we should defy the normal because normal is the problem. We should make a better one for a brighter and greener future for all generations to come it will start from a just and human rights-based governance.”

“Young people represent more than half of the Filipino population. We are not just fighting for ourselves and our future, but for the well-being of every Filipino alive and yet to be born. Just as COVID19 exposed broken systems that need to be fixed, it has also shown us an opportunity to fix not just the pandemic, but bigger problems, such as the climate crisis. Our future is at stake, the youth are relentless in demanding action—we cannot stand a government that does not listen,” said Greenpeace Campaigner Kisha Muana.

Source: <https://journal.com.ph/lifestyle/people-and-places/youth-leaders-call-green-better-normal>

Bong Go: 5th PRRD SONA to bring hope of a better
future for Filipinos amid ongoing challenges

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Bong Go: 5th PRRD SONA to bring hope of a better future for Filipinos amid ongoing challenges

By OSBG Published on July 25, 2020



President Rodrigo Duterte, on his 5th SONA, is expected to provide concrete plans and proposed legislative measures to strengthen the government's efforts to overcome the ongoing crisis and steer the country towards socio-economic recovery. (Photo from OSBG)

PASAY CITY, July 25 -- Senator Christopher Lawrence "Bong" shared his optimism that President Rodrigo Duterte's fifth State of the Nation Address this coming Monday, July 27, will bring hope of a better future for Filipinos despite the ongoing challenges the country is facing due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Senator said that he is also expecting the President to provide concrete plans and proposed legislative measures to strengthen the government's efforts to overcome the ongoing crisis and steer the country towards socio-economic recovery.

"I am expecting that the President will focus his 5th SONA on measures (1) to strengthen our fight against the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, (2) to address the needs of the people to overcome the hardships that the crisis has caused in everyone's lives, and also, (3) to sustain the gains of the Duterte Administration's promise of a comfortable life for all despite the challenges that we are facing," said Go in a statement.

"Our goal now is not only to adapt to the 'new normal', but to lead our country towards a 'better normal' and better quality of life," he added.

As Chair of the Senate Committee on Health and Demography, Go is confident that primary importance will be placed on measures ramping up the healthcare system's capacity at all levels.

"Aside from enhancing our overall capacity to Test, Trace and Treat COVID-19 cases, I am hoping that he will also prioritize improving the capacities and capabilities of public hospitals, establishing mandatory quarantine facilities and evacuation centers, strengthening our health workforce, promoting the welfare and well-being of our medical frontliners, and preparing a national vaccine program for COVID-19 in anticipation of its availability to ensure that Filipinos can have access to it," Go said.

With this, Go expects to see more of health-related bills to be prioritized as both Houses of Congress are set to open their second regular session of the 18th Congress next week. Recently, Go also called for the development of a national vaccine program for the strategic allocation of the COVID-19 vaccine to the general population in anticipation of possible challenges once the vaccine is made available.

"Kapag dumating ang panahon na mayroon nang vaccine at gamot laban sa COVID-19, dapat handa tayo na mabigyan ang lahat ng Pilipinong nangangailangan nito, mahirap man o mayaman," Go said previously.

Go also said he expects the President will shed a spotlight on key economic responses to mitigate the human and economic impact of the pandemic.

Bong Go: 5th PRRD SONA to bring hope of a better
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"Pangalawa, bibigyang pansin rin n'ya ang mga pangangailangan ng mga ordinaryong mamamayan na hirap na hirap na sa sitwasyon ngayon. Kasama na dyan ang pagpapabuti ng mga government assistance programs for the poor, livelihood opportunities for displaced workers, and stimulus programs to jumpstart the economy," Go said.

"Dahil apektado ang lahat ng sektor ng lipunan dahil sa pandemya, prayoridad rin ng Pangulo na siguraduhing hindi tumigil ang serbisyong dapat natatanggap ng mga tao," he added.

Go also said that efficient, effective and responsive government service delivery must be sustained despite the ordeal in order for citizens to continue to develop and for the businesses to help jumpstart the economy.

"Kasama dito ang mga plano kung paano makapagpapatuloy ang pag-aaral ng mga bata, ang kabuhayan ng mga nawalan ng trabaho, ang pag-alaga sa ating nga OFWs at ang pagbibigay ng pang-araw-araw na serbisyo ng gobyerno sa ligtas na paraan," he said.

Despite the challenges faced this year, Go expects the Duterte administration to continue working hard in order to fulfill its promise of a comfortable life for all Filipinos.

"Inaasahan kong sisiguraduhin rin ng Pangulo na hindi mapapabayaang ang mga naunang mga prayoridad sa kanyang termino, tulad ng Build Build Build Projects at iba pang programa na naglalayong mabigyan ng komportable at ligtas na buhay ang lahat ng Pilipino. Kasama na diyan ang patuloy na laban kontra ilegal na droga, ang seguridad at kapayapaan sa loob at labas ng bansa, at pagpapalakas ng ating disaster resiliency efforts," he stressed.

As the Duterte administration enters the latter part of its term, Go said that the President remains determined in improving the lives of Filipinos by consistently pushing for development in all parts of the country and by continuously aiming to bring government services closer to the people.

"Dahil sa epekto rin ng pandemya, may mga inisyatibo ang Pangulo tulad ng Balik Probinsya Program na magbibigay ng bagong pag-asa at mas magandang buhay sa mga Pilipino kung pipiliin nilang manirahan sa kanilang mga probinsya," he said.

"Kasama rin sa layunin nating mailapit ang gobyerno sa tao, mapabilis ang pagbigay tulong, mabawasan ang red tape, at maitigil ang korapsyon, naniniwala akong bibigyang pansin rin niya ang rekomendasyon ko na gawing prayoridad ang transition to E-governance," he added.

Go also expressed his faith that the country will bounce back from this crisis with a deeper commitment of improving the lives of fellow Filipinos.

"Malayo na ang ating narating mula nang umupo si Pangulong Duterte. Bagama't patuloy ang mga pagsubok na ating hinaharap, hinuhubog rin nito ang ating kakayahan at pagkatao upang mas makapagserbisyo pa lalo sa ating kapwa tungo sa tunay na pagbabago," he said.

"Ako naman po, uunahin ko palagi ang interes, kapakanan, at buhay ng mga ordinaryong mamamayan na pinagsisilbihan ko. Patuloy ko rin pong susuportahan ang mga mithiin at mga ipinaglalaman ni Pangulong Duterte para mabigyan ng mas maayos na kinabukasan ang bawat Pilipino," he ended. (OSBG)

Phl joins call for fair access to COVID vaccines

Published 20 hours ago on July 25, 2020 09:57 AM

By [MJ Blancaflo](#)



The Philippines is set to join a global initiative seeking to ensure fair and equitable access to vaccines developed against coronavirus disease.

In a resolution, Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) approved the country's participation in Gavi COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access (COVAX), a financing mechanism aimed at encouraging manufacturers to increase the supply of COVID-19 vaccines by giving them incentives.

The IATF also approved the allocation of funds needed to join COVAX.

The resolution, however, does not state how much the country will spend to join the initiative.

President Rodrigo Duterte has repeatedly vowed to purchase COVID-19 vaccines for Filipinos once it becomes available, even saying that he is willing to sell some government properties to source out funds.

Countries interested in joining COVAX would have to provide upfront payments and a further commitment to purchase doses by the end of August.

In a statement last week, the World Health Organization said 75 countries expressed interest to join COVAX and will also link up with 90 lower-income countries.

Worldwide, at least 137 candidate vaccines are being tested in various universities and hospitals—20 of which are undergoing clinical evaluation.



Despite the bad weather, hundreds of individuals spend the night inside their vehicles or under tents as they queue for the free COVID-19 testing at the Quirino Grandstand in Manila before dawn on Jul. 24, 2020. Some started lining up as early as 7:30 p.m. on Jul. 23, 2020 even though the testing starts at 8:00 a.m. the following day.

The STAR/Miguel de Guzman

COVID-19 cases in Philippines surpass 78,000 with 2,019 new infections

[Ratziel San Juan](#) (Philstar.com) - July 25, 2020 - 4:05pm

MANILA, Philippines (**Updated 4:20 p.m.**) — The Department of Health on Saturday confirmed 2,019 new cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), bringing the country's total caseload to 78,412.

Of these, there are still 50,763 total active cases, which account for the net of reported recoveries and deaths.

The National Capital Region reported the most newly-announced cases at 1,115, followed by Cebu at 479 and Cavite at 90.

Rizal and Davao Del Sur trailed behind with 52 and 41 new cases, respectively.

Metro Manila, which remains the epicenter of the local COVID-19 outbreak, accounted for more than half of the newly reported cases or 55%.

The death toll has reached 1,897 after 20 more patients succumbed to the coronavirus.

Meanwhile, the local COVID-19 recovery count stands at 25,752 as the Health department announced 1,278 additional survivors.

This week saw 13,108 additional infections on top of the 65,304 recorded as of last Saturday — the most reported in a single week so far.

More than 15.29 million cases of the coronavirus, including around 628,000 deaths, have been recorded globally by the World Health Organization in its latest situation report.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/07/25/2030509/covid-19-cases-philippines-surpass-78000-2019-new-infections>

Cebu City locks down areas in 5 villages

By Carlo Lorenciana July 25, 2020, 7:44 pm



LOCKDOWN. At least six areas in five barangays in Cebu City will be placed under granular lockdowns. This is to contain the spread of Covid-19 in these areas. (PNA file photo courtesy of Alfredo Nagac)

CEBU CITY – The city government of Cebu is implementing localized lockdowns in six areas of five barangays here, the mayor announced on Saturday.

Cebu City Mayor Edgardo Labella announced the move in a media briefing after a meeting earlier with officials from the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) and police station commanders.

The areas to be placed under granular lockdowns include Sitio Eyha in Barangay Guadalupe; Balaga Drive to Sitio Cecalco in Barangay Labangon; Tuada Compound in Barangay Tisa; Sitio San Isidro and Abellanosa Compound in Barangay Quiot; and C. Mina Extension in Barangay Mabolo.

“Going out of residents in these areas is absolutely prohibited,” Labella told the briefing with IATF officials.

“The city government will distribute food packs and other necessities to all families affected,” the mayor announced after issuing Executive Order 085, mandating the lockdown measures.

Medications of affected residents should also be coursed through the barangay officials, he noted.

Labella said the quarantine passes held by the residents of these areas are also suspended.

The granular lockdowns are to be implemented for three to 14 days from the onset of the imposition.

During such period, Labella said contact tracing and swabbing will be done on all first-level contacts and suspected Covid-19 positive in those areas.

The mayor said those found positive of the virus should then be transferred to the designated isolation and quarantine facilities in the city.

In the same briefing, Maj. Gen. Mel Feliciano, who is assisting Cebu overseer Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, said uniformed personnel and station commanders will secure the lockdown areas, with the establishment of barangay control points in place.

The lifting of the lockdowns should only be implemented upon the approval of the city mayor and the Regional IATF.

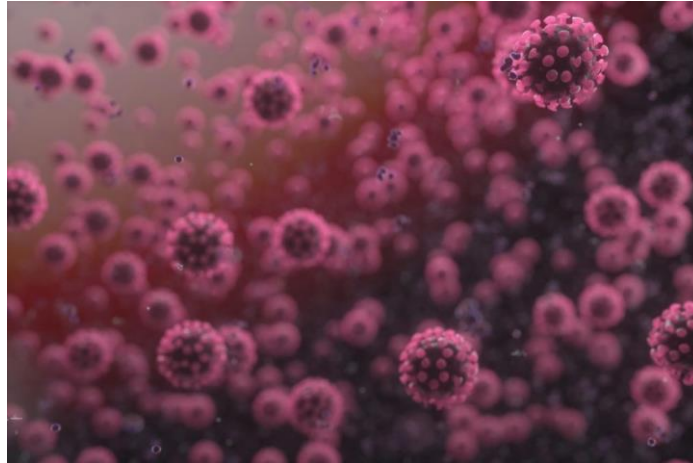
Feliciano said even if Cebu City gradually downgrades to general community quarantine, localized lockdowns will still be implemented if needed especially in areas with high active Covid-19 cases. **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1110094>

1k more virus victims in NCR

Published 3 hours ago on July 26, 2020 02:40 AM

By [Gabbie Parlade](#)



The National Capital Region (NCR) remained as the epicenter of the new coronavirus respiratory disease infections with 1,115 new patients added to the country's total number which hit 78,412 on Saturday afternoon.

The Department of Health (DoH) released the latest figures which added 2,019 new infections to the roster.

The provinces of Cebu (479), Cavite, (90), Rizal (52) and Davao del Sur (41) also remained as among the focus of attention in the new coronavirus fight.

Almost 90 percent of the 50,763 active cases are mild.

Nine percent, meanwhile, are asymptomatic while only one percent falls under severe and critical cases.

Additional recoveries, the DoH said, are 1,278 of the total 25,752 now-well patients.

There were 20 new deaths in the 1,897 total.

The health crisis may have challenged the country's response, but 716 out of a total of 1,383 intensive care unit beds are available for use.

Meanwhile, 5,355 or 49.4 percent of a total of 10,841 isolation beds and 1,673 or 43.7 percent of a total of 3,825 ward beds in the country remain available.

Only 528 ventilators, or 26.7 percent of a total of 1,976 units are currently in use.

President Duterte's unprecedented and crucial

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President Duterte's unprecedented and crucial penultimate SONA

Published July 25, 2020, 11:12 PM

by [Former House Speaker Jose C. De Venecia Jr.](#)

PEACE-MAKER



Tomorrow's State of the Nation Address (SONA) by President Rodrigo Duterte, his fifth, is both unprecedented and crucial in the midst of the raging COVID-19 pandemic, which, as of this writing, has infected more than 72,000 of our countrymen and claimed more than 1,800 lives, and continuously increasing.

We say unprecedented as it will be the first-time that our nation will witness a "hybrid" SONA, with reportedly only 50 people to be physically present at the session hall of the Batasang Pambansa when the President delivers his speech, while the rest of officials of the executive branch as well as members of the Senate and House of Representatives will attend via video conferencing.

It is also crucial in view of the economic downturn and the losses in income and employment of millions of our fellow Filipinos, notwithstanding the fears of those contracting the coronavirus.

In addition, our nation is also besieged by acrimonious issues such as the closing down of ABS-CBN, the passage of the Anti-Terrorism Law, the continuing West Philippine Sea dispute, the revival of Charter change, and the issues initiated by local government executives, particularly their hope for a greater share in the Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA).

Our country's economic managers have already projected that the Philippine economy will incur P2.2 trillion in losses this year due to COVID-19. Only God will know the impact of the pandemic on our people and throughout the world.

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE), for its part, reported that some 7 million of our countrymen, including the overseas workers, have lost their jobs due to the global pandemic. It added that the number of unemployed Filipinos may reach a staggering 10 million by the end of the year.

Truly the worldwide COVID-19 plague is both a perilous health and economic crisis.

A study published by the World Bank, Global Economic Prospects, last June, 2020, foresaw "a 5.2 percent contraction in global GDP in 2020, the deepest global recession" in 80 years, as a result of the coronavirus.

The report also predicts that the global pandemic "will push 70 to 100 million people worldwide into extreme poverty, which is measured at the international poverty line of \$1.90 per day."

The study underscores the following:

"The global recession would be deeper if bringing the pandemic under control took longer than expected, or if financial stress triggered cascading defaults.

"The pandemic highlights the urgent need for health and economic policy action — including global cooperation — to cushion its consequences, protect vulnerable populations, and improve countries' capacity to prevent and cope with similar events in the future."



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The prestigious Oxfam International has proposed two things to the international community in order to address the raging global plague: One, “develop a **global public health plan and emergency response** to tackle the disease head on”; and two, “create an economic rescue plan to pay for the huge increase in public health and to help ordinary people cope with the huge economic costs precipitated by this virus.”

It is in this setting that this 83-years-old citizen looks forward to President Duterte's penultimate State of the Nation Address and his proposals to the nation and our people.

We'll carry on as best as we can

Published July 25, 2020, 10:30 PM
by [Manila Bulletin](#)



In the effort to fight the COVID-9 virus, Philippine scientists are looking into the possibility that some of our own native therapeutic supplements might be of help. Among these is coconut oil.

Lauric acid, which makes up about 50 percent of coconut oil, has long been known for its antiviral properties. Capric acid, which accounts for 7 percent of coconut oil, has also been shown to have antiviral properties and had promising results against another viral disease, HIV, in 2007.

In the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, Virgin Coconut Oil (VCO) was used in helping 20 inmate-patients of the Cebu Provincial Detention and Rehabilitation Center in a study by an Ateneo de Manila University professor. The 20 inmate-patients recovered from a mild strain of coronavirus after regularly taking VCO in April and May.

Two other medicinal plants – lagundi and tawa-tawa – are in the list of therapeutic supplements in the treatment of COVID-19 patients in the Philippines, the Department of Science and Technology said. These Philippine supplements are helping in the care and treatment of Filipino patients in our hospitals.

But the real game-changer in the ongoing pandemic will be the discovery and wide use of an effective vaccine that will help billions of people in the world, now worried about getting infected by the deadly COVID-19 virus.

The most promising effort among some 200 ongoing developments globally appears to be that of the University of Oxford in England with the firm AstraZeneca, which said its vaccine should be available globally by the end of this year. "Perhaps a little earlier if all goes well," AstraZeneca Director Pascal Soriot said.

A second group – Pfizer of the United States and German biotech group BioNTech – is developing a different type of vaccine which causes human cells to mimic the outer surface of the coronavirus. The human body sees these as foreign invaders and then mounts an immune response against the virus. The US has already reached a \$1.95-billion deal with Pfizer to get 100 million doses of this vaccine for the American people.

A third vaccine prospect is one under development by CanSino Biologics and China's military research unit. It induced an immune response in most of 508 volunteers, researchers reported. Chinese Ambassador to Manila Huang Xilian assured last Tuesday that China would give priority to the Philippines once this vaccine is ready.

These vaccines, however, are expected to be ready only by the end of this year. And then the production of hundreds of millions of doses will take time, as will the subsequent distribution over vast distances to all the countries of the world buying the vaccine, even at cost.

We will ultimately get some of the vaccines but much later than some nations which are now in greater need and with greater resources. Until we do, we will have to carry on as best as we can, using the resource that we have, including the native therapeutic supplements that have been helping many of our patients.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/07/25/well-carry-on-as-best-as-we-can/>



AIRBORNE NGA BA ANG COVID-19? PAANO SIYA KUMAKALAT?

July 25, 2020 @ 1:53 PM 16 hours ago

Naniniwala ang mga scientist mula sa iba't ibang bansa na posibleng airborne transmission ang sakit na coronavirus o COVID-19 kaya pinapayuhan ang mga tao na palaging magsuot ng face mask, madalas na paghuhugas ng kamay at social distancing.

Sa ulat ng mga siyentipiko, posible umanong humahalo sa hangin ang mga maliliit na particle ng virus at saka makahahawa sa iba at mas malaki raw ang tsansa na mangyari ito sa matataong lugar at hindi maganda ang ventilation.

Kaya ito ang dahilan kung bakit sumulat ang mga siyentipiko sa World Health Organization para himukin ang lahat ng ahensya na baguhin ang kanilang mga rekomendasyon tungkol sa virus.

Nagpaplano ang mga scientist na ilabas ang resulta ng kanilang pananaliksik sa isang medical journal.

Sa ipinalabas na ulat ng WHO, naikakalat daw ang coronavirus sa tao sa pamamagitan ng malalaking respiratory droplets o aerosol transmission na mula sa taong may ubo o bumabahing at 'yung may infected na tao.

Sang-ayon din ang Department of Health (DOH) sa naging pahayag ng WHO na posible lang ang airborne transmission kapag medical procedure na gagawin sa isang COVID-19 patient.

Mismo si DOH Usec. Maria Rosario Vergeire ang nagsabi ang implikasyon para sa publiko ay ang pagsusuot ng mga face mask sa lahat ng oras at iwasan ang makipag-usap ng walang suot na face mask o kaya sa tuwing makikipag-usap sa tao ay pairalin ang social distancing.

Sa ipinalabas na talaan ng DOH as of July 23, umaabot na sa halos 80,000 ang kaso ng COVID-19 sa bansa, 1,871 naman ang mga nasawi sa sakit habang 24,383 ang bilang naman ng mga gumaling na.

PAANO BA NAGAGAMOT ANG CORONAVIRUS?

Sa ngayon daw ay wala pang bakuna para sa COVID-19 at walang tiyak na paggamot o pagpapagaling para sa mga taong nagka-COVID.

Pero gayunpaman, maaaring gamutin ang marami sa mga may sintomas.

Ang mga pasyente ng COVID-19 ay dapat magpahinga ng lubusan, uminom ng maraming likido, kumain ng malulusog na pagkain at bawasan ang stress.

Airborne ng aba ang COVID-19? Paano siya

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Dapat gamitin ang Acetaminophen upang mabawasan ang lagnat, pananakit at sakit.

Para sa mga malubhang kaso ang pangangalagang medikal ay maaaring kailanganin upang mapawi ang mga sintomas at suportahan ang mga mahahalagang pag-andar ng organo hanggang sa gumaling ang pasyente.

oOo

Anomang puna o reklamo i-text sa 09189274764,09266719269 o i-email sa juandesabog@yahoo.com o juandesabog48@gmail.com

Rumor check

Published 6 hours ago on July 26, 2020 12:04 AM

By **WJG**



Like a virus, gossip travels fast — but one can be used against the other, some say.

The faster people with coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) are detected, the faster the infection can be contained. There are, however, only two methods of detecting the disease at the moment.

The rapid test checks the presence of COVID-19 antibodies in the blood, while the reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) test determines the presence of the virus DNA in swabbed tissues of a person. The rapid test result can be known in 15 minutes, while that of swab tests becomes available in one to two days.

Israelis are trying to add a third mode of detection by analyzing a person's breath. Their NanoScent breathalyzer can produce a positive or negative result in 30 seconds. However, the machine has yet to be approved for mass use.

Another method of detecting COVID-19 is the use of dogs that can sniff out a the virus in a person's saliva or urine. According to James Logan, head of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine that is exploring this tool, a canine trained at detecting the smell of COVID-19 can screen up to 250 people per hour.

Meanwhile, Filipinos may also contribute to improving COVID-19 detection through rapid contact tracing. Central Visayas Police Regional Office director P/Brig. Gen. Albert Ignatius Ferro said this can be done by tapping rumormongers in tracking down people who have mingled with those who are infected.

It cannot be denied that gossip is the pastime of many Filipinos, especially among women. Each village and community have these ladies tagged to being chismosa, who talk about their neighbors' activities or even their fellow gossipers whenever they bump into each other.

Unlike the old guys who congregate at Rizal Park at dawn to debate about religion and politics in balagtas fashion, the topic of chismosas is usually about who did what to whom. Their conversation usually starts with "did you know" and ends when they remember a household chore they have left unfinished or see the person they are talking about arriving.

Why rumormongers can be very helpful in contact tracing is because of their discreetly intrusive, meddling, observant and presumptuous nature.

Even workplaces have gossiping employees who have the knack for identifying others as sipsip, a gigolo, baduy or mired in debt. They are also well-embedded in the neighborhood, have a long-range "radar" and have a penchant for private matters.

Information from gossipers, however, may need verification as they sometimes tend to exaggerate or may just be sowing intrigue on someone they envy. Verifying the gossipers' findings is not difficult as other gossipers can fact-check their peers' rumor.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/07/26/rumor-check/>

7 houses damaged; 400 families affected by floods in Sarangani

By Richelyn Gubalani July 25, 2020, 6:44 pm



FLOODED. A disaster responder from the Bureau of Fire Protection in Alabel town, Sarangani province checks a portion of Barangay Poblacion that was affected by heavy flooding early Saturday. At least seven houses were damaged while around 400 families evacuated for several hours due to the incident. *(Photo grab from the Facebook post of BFP-Alabel)*

GENERAL SANTOS CITY – At least seven houses were damaged while around 400 families evacuated for several hours from three villages in Alabel town, Sarangani province, following severe floods early Saturday.

Alabel Mayor Vic Paul Salarda said parts of barangays Ladol, Poblacion, and Bagacay were submerged in floodwater following hours of heavy rains, causing waterways to overflow.

Salarda said seven houses beside a creek traversing the three villages were swept by rushing floodwater but no casualties were reported.

Among those flooded was the San Isidro Labrador parish church in Poblacion in Alabel, and nearby residential areas.

Salarda said the affected residents took temporary shelter at the designated barangay evacuation centers but about half of them already returned to their homes as of Saturday noon.

He said the Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office is still assessing the extent of damage caused by the floods, adding the local government already provided food packs and other relief items to the evacuees.

“We’re continually monitoring the situation in the affected areas due to the continuing (inclement) weather,” he said in a radio interview.

The mayor acknowledged that flooding has been a perennial problem in low-lying portions of the three barangays but it worsened these past years.

Assistance has been sought from the provincial and national governments for the installation of more stable riprap on the banks of the two creeks -- Bialong and Muleh -- traversing the area.

Salarda added that they have stepped up the monitoring on the illegal cutting of trees in the upper portions of barangays Bagacay and Ladol, which he believed contributed to the flooding. **(PNA)**



Sulu shocked by 4.8-magnitude tremor

Published July 25, 2020, 8:19 AM

by [Mike Crismundo](#)

BUTUAN CITY – A 4.8-magnitude earthquake jolted Sulu province on Friday night, July 24, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said.

In its bulletin, Phivolcs said the tremor was recorded at 8:46 p.m., with the epicenter plotted 278 kilometers (kms) southeast of Banguingui (Tongkil), Sulu province.

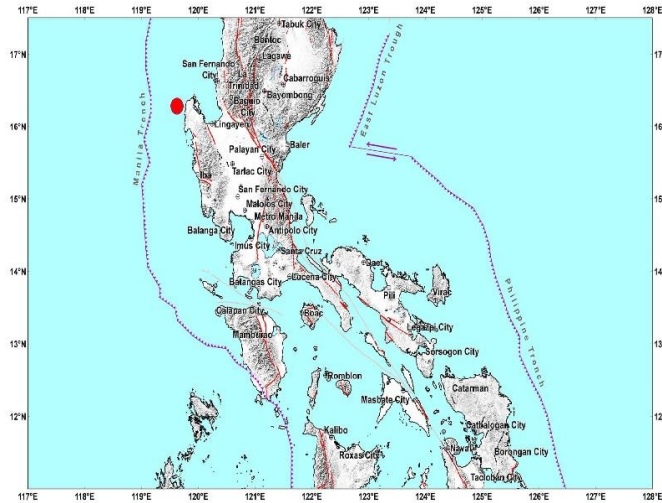
The tremor had a depth of 599 kms, Phivolcs said.

The earthquake was tectonic in origin, and no aftershock or tsunami alert was raised by the agency.

The office of the Zamboanga Peninsula Office of Civil Defense (OCD-9) and provincial disaster risk reduction and management council there reported no damage or injury.

Agno, Pangasinan niyanig ng lindol

By Angellic Jordan July 25, 2020 - 01:15 PM



Tumama ang magnitude 3.2 na lindol sa Pangasinan.

Ayon sa Phivolcs, namataan ang episentro ng lindol sa layong 25 Northwest ng Agno bandang 12:05 ng tanghali.

17 kilometers ang lalim at tectonic ang origin ng pagyanig.

Wala namang napaulat na pinsala sa lugar.

Wala ring inaasahang aftershocks matapos ang pagyanig.

Australia rejects Beijing's South China Sea claims, backing US

posted July 25, 2020 at 03:00 pm by **AFP**

Australia has rejected Beijing's territorial and maritime claims in the South China Sea in a formal declaration to the United Nations, aligning itself more closely with Washington in the escalating row.

In a statement filed on Thursday, Australia said there was "no legal basis" to several disputed Chinese claims in the sea including those related to the construction of artificial islands on small shoals and reefs.

"Australia rejects China's claim to 'historic rights' or 'maritime rights and interests' as established in the 'long course of historical practice' in the South China Sea," the declaration read.

"There is no legal basis for China to draw straight baselines connecting the outermost points of maritime features or 'island groups' in the South China Sea, including around the 'Four Sha' or 'continental' or 'outlying' archipelagos."

The declaration comes after US Secretary of State Mike Pompeo declared Beijing's pursuit of territory and resources in the South China Sea as illegal, explicitly backing the territorial claims of Southeast Asian countries against China's.

Beijing claims almost all of the South China Sea based on a so-called nine-dash line, a vague delineation from maps dating back to the 1940s.

The latest escalation comes ahead of annual talks between Australia and the United States, with ministers travelling to Washington for the first time since Australian borders were closed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The meetings come at a "critical time" and it is essential they are held face-to-face, Foreign Minister Marise Payne and Defence Minister Linda Reynolds said in a statement on Saturday.

US relations with China have markedly deteriorated in recent months, especially over trade disputes, the coronavirus pandemic and Beijing's crackdown on dissent in Hong Kong.

On Friday, Beijing ordered the US consulate in Chengdu to shut in retaliation for the closure of its Houston mission over accusations of being a hub for intellectual property theft.

Payne and Reynolds also penned an article in The Australian newspaper on Saturday, labelling national security legislation imposed on Hong Kong last month as "sweeping and vague".

"We face a public health crisis, economic upheaval and resurgent authoritarian regimes using coercion in a bid to gain power and influence at the expense of our freedoms and sovereignty," they wrote.

‘Gaps in ecosystems services valuation in Asean
countries need to be addressed’

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‘Gaps in ecosystems services valuation in Asean countries need to be addressed’

By [BusinessMirror](#) July 26, 2020



This photo was an entry to the Zooming in on Biodiversity Photo Contest, an Asean-wide photo competition held by Asean Centre for Biodiversity, with support from the European Union.

Biodiverse areas produce ecosystem services that are indispensable to economic and social development. Assessing them informs decision-makers better about the value and priorities for conserving natural capital.

Newly released policy briefs of the Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), in collaboration with the European Union under the Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in Asean (BCAMP) project, underscore the need to address knowledge and research gaps in ecosystems services valuation in Asean member-states, ACB said in a news release.

The “Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Assessment and Economic Analysis for Management, Policy and Innovative Financing Applications [Besa++]” policy briefs present the results of national and site-level stock-taking activities conducted in five Asean member-states, namely, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines and Thailand, as part of the interventions of the BCAMP project.

The activities assessed the existing knowledge and awareness of protected area managers and policy-makers and managers on Besa and other economic analysis applications in biodiversity conservation. “Knowing the full and true economic value of ecosystem services will help decision-makers arrive at win-win solutions both for the economy and the environment. This knowledge provides a deeper understanding of what a nation stands to lose from activities that alter, if not destroy, natural ecosystems,” ACB Executive Director Theresa Mundita Lim said.

Consultation workshops on the results of the stocktaking activities in the five Asean countries were held from July to September 2019 to gather inputs from the government, academic institutions, and nongovernment organizations.

‘Wealth of research data’

In Thailand, data and information have been used to support studies addressing specific policy issues, the Besa++ brief said.

A 2019 mangrove study, for example, looked into the changes in land use and mangrove coverage using the baseline data of Thailand’s Department of Marine and Coastal Resources (DMCR).

'Gaps in ecosystems services valuation in Asean

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“Opportunity costs of conserving mangroves,” or the costs incurred when mangroves are not conserved, were also analysed based on the land price data from Thailand’s Department of Treasury.

Results of the study helped determine the effectiveness of preventing the conversion of mangroves to alternative uses, the news release said.

While there is a wealth of data and studies, the policy brief noted that researchers and protected area managers and policy-makers must closely collaborate to maximize the uptake of existing research.

“Research results can be used to inform more realistic conservation, sustainable development planning and target setting,” the brief said.

Thailand has a combined 107,290.35 square kilometers of protected areas, equivalent to 21 percent of the total land area of the country.

Role in establishing protected areas

Meanwhile, in Malaysia, valuation studies have been used to support the establishment of new state parks, such as the Selangor State Park, which is the third largest in Southeast Asian country, covering 108,000 hectares, ACB said.

Established as a state park in 2007 under the National Forestry Act Enactment 2005 of Selangor, and managed by the Forestry Department of Selangor, this natural forested area protects some of Malaysia’s west coast state’s most vital resources.

Prior to the park’s establishment, various uses of the forest areas were valued, and a trade-off analysis between protective forest reserve, particularly as water catchment functions, versus production forest reserve options, was undertaken.

While there are many studies on value estimates of ecosystem services in protected areas, a few of them have led to substantial increases in the rates for the enjoyment of these services, or the sharing of excess profits among natural resource-based producers, the government and communities.

For instance, despite consumers’ willingness to pay higher rates, prescribed entrance fees in protected areas have not increased. Other factors, however, come into play, such as the approval process for raising fees in forest recreational areas at the state government level.

Malaysia has established networks of both terrestrial and marine protected areas with a total size of 5.87 million hectares to conserve nationally and globally significant biodiversity.

Wider scope of assessment

The policy brief on the Philippines noted that ecosystem services assessments held in the country are narrow in breadth, and indicate a limited capacity at the protected area level, the news release said.

Based on the review of 768 publications in the Philippines, studies were found to be disposed toward resource use assessment and recreation services.

The published studies mostly considered a few ecosystem services instead of the ideal system-wide approach of looking into multiple uses and assessing their trade-offs.

“Recent development of tools for ecosystem services accounting should now provide the basis for protected area managers to start accounting for these various ecosystem services,” it said.

‘Gaps in ecosystems services valuation in Asean countries need to be addressed’

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According to the policy brief, capacity building in the use of these tools should be undertaken in collaboration with academic institutions, which are in a better position to invest in training their constituents and establish information systems.

The Philippines has 526 identified protected areas, of which 240 covering 7.15 million hectares are managed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The rest are under different types of authority and management.

Knowledge, capacity gaps

Assessments in the five Asean countries showed key actors working to improve the management and financing of protected areas have limited knowledge on ecosystem services valuation, economic analysis, and innovative financing mechanisms.

In the Philippines, an online survey for protected area managers, researchers, government officers and faculty and staff of academic institutions, yielded a low response rate due to the “lack of knowledge on the topics presented,” the news release said.

Of the 317 potential respondents, 37 participated in the survey. The overall knowledge and skill on ecosystems valuation was found to be below that of a “novice.”

Similarly, results of a survey conducted in Cambodia showed most of the respondents are either novices (35 percent to 46 percent) or have no knowledge (31 percent to 36 percent) on ecosystem services measurement and accounting.

More than 50 percent of the government officers in the survey expressed the need to understand how to account for and value cultural, provisioning and supporting services of ecosystems.

Government officers also expressed the need for training on conservation financing, especially on regulatory instruments of financing and fiscal financing.

The researcher respondents, on the other hand, said that greater knowledge on the standardized methodologies and approaches is required.

Cambodia has a large remaining expanse of tropical forests, and its system of protected areas and corridors covers 42 percent of the country.

According to the Lao PDR policy brief, on the other hand, insufficient knowledge and skills on assessing economic values of biodiversity and ecosystem services were “one of the most important factors accounting for the loss of forestry resources and biodiversity.”

Lao PDR has rich forest resources and biodiversity, with one of the highest proportions of forest cover in Southeast Asia.

In a similar survey, most Lao PDR respondents indicated that they have limited knowledge and skills on Besa, including baseline inventory and species-specific, change, indicator and resource assessment.

Lao respondents have some knowledge and skills in provisioning services and the estimation of their market price, but “little” on regulating, cultural, and habitat services.

They also said they possess some knowledge and skills in conservation financing. However, most lack experience in developing financing mechanisms.

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Commenting on the Besa++ briefs, Enrico Strampelli, head of Cooperation for the EU delegation in the Philippines, said: “The true value of biodiversity and ecosystem services to the wealth of a nation and to the well-being of future generations is often overlooked by decision-makers, or underestimated against immediate economic interests.”

In the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, “we know, now more than ever, what could be the final price to pay for forest degradation and wildlife trafficking.”

Lim said the ACB will consider the recommendations from the Besa++ policy briefs in its future policy actions with Asean member-states.

“What is common in the reports is the need to improve the competency and skills in valuing biodiversity and ecosystem services, and effective communication of data and information to policy-makers and stakeholders,” Lim said.

Image Credits: [Aung Ko Oo](#)

Wildfires rage in Arctic, sea ice melts

By [Associated Press](#)

July 26, 2020

GENEVA: The United Nations weather agency warned Friday (Saturday in Manila) that average temperatures in Siberia were 10 degrees Celsius above average last month, a spate of exceptional heat that has fanned devastating fires in the Arctic Circle and contributed to a rapid depletion in ice sea off Russia's Arctic coast.

"The Arctic is heating more than twice as fast as the global average, impacting local populations and ecosystems and with global repercussions," World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Secretary-General Petteri Taalas said in a statement.

He noted that Earth's poles influence weather conditions far away, where hundreds of millions of people live.

WMO previously cited a reading of 38 C in the Russian town of Verkhoyansk on June 20, which the agency has been seeking to verify as a possible record-high temperature in the Arctic Circle.

It comes as fires have swept through the region, with satellite imagery showing the breadth of the area surface. The agency says the extended heat is linked to a large "blocking pressure system" and northward swing of the jet stream that has injected warm air into the region.

But WMO also pointed to a recent study by top climate scientists who found that such a rise in heat would have been nearly impossible without human-caused climate change.

Brazil's most famous cobra' sparks trafficking probe, draws fans

Published July 25, 2020, 10:14 AM

by [Agence France-Presse](#)

A cobra that bit a veterinary student in Brazil, putting him in a coma, has turned into a celebrity by sparking an investigation into an alleged exotic animal trafficking ring.



The monocled cobra, which is native to Asia, bit 22-year-old Pedro Krambeck Lehmkuhl on July 7 in Brasilia, sending doctors on a frantic search for the right antivenom — so rare in Brazil that the lone doses had to be rushed from Sao Paulo.

Questions about how the snake ended up at the student's apartment soon turned into a police investigation that found 16 other snakes at a property belonging to a friend of Lehmkuhl's, as well as three sharks, seven more snakes, a Moray eel and a Tupinambis lizard at another property.

So far the probe has led to the firing of two officials at the Brazilian environmental regulator, IBAMA, over suspicions they facilitated fraudulent import permits for a wildlife trafficking ring.

The student's mother and stepfather, a police colonel, were also questioned and fined 8,500 reals (about \$1,600) each on a charge of obstructing justice.

Lehmkuhl, who spent six days in the hospital, was released and fined 61,000 reals. He is still under investigation.

The cobra — “Naja,” in Portuguese — has meanwhile become an internet sensation, after being found near a shopping center where it was allegedly abandoned by a friend of Lehmkuhl's trying to get rid of evidence.

A Twitter account opened in the snake's name, @najaoriginal, has nearly 50,000 followers.

“In less than a week, I have taken revenge on my oppressor, dismantled an animal trafficking ring, freed more than 16 friends, helped a shark and struck fear in the traffickers' hearts,” it posted on July 11 — one of several tweets that have gone viral, mixing references to Brazilian pop music and telenovelas with humorous jabs at animal trafficking.

The snake is now living at the Brasilia Zoo, which showed off “Brazil's most famous cobra” in an Instagram live video Friday.

The zoo's reptiles director, Carlos Nobrega, explained the 1.5-meter (five-foot) snake's care and diet to rapt fans as it slithered about its enclosure.

Despite its ordeal, “everything seems to be OK” with the cobra, he said.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/07/25/brazils-most-famous-cobra-sparks-trafficking-probe-draws-fans/>

Bolsonaro recovers from Covid-19

Credits recovery to unproven malaria drug

Published 8 hours ago on July 25, 2020 11:13 PM

By [Agence France-Presse](#)



BRAZIL President Jair Bolsonaro tweeted he is already "negativo" for coronavirus after a confirmatory RT-PCR test. (Twitter)

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro announced on Saturday he has tested negative for the new coronavirus more than two weeks after being diagnosed on July 7, attributing his recovery to an unproven malaria drug.

"RT-PCR for Sars-Cov 2: negative. Good morning everyone," the 65-year-old tweeted, along with a photo of himself smiling and holding a packet of hydroxychloroquine, whose effectiveness against COVID-19 has not been demonstrated in clinical trials.

He did not say when he took the latest test.

The president, who has routinely downplayed the virus he calls a "little flu" but which is currently ravaging his country, spent nearly 20 days self-isolating at his official residence in the capital Brasilia, the Alvorada Palace.

During that time he underwent at least three more virus tests, all positive.

Three polls released this week showed the leader dubbed a "Tropical Trump" would win re-election in 2020, despite his controversial handling of the virus crisis.

The pandemic has exploded in Brazil, the country with the most infections and deaths from COVID-19 anywhere in the world except the United States.

The Latin American powerhouse has registered nearly 2.3 million cases of the new coronavirus and more than 84,000 deaths, and the numbers have continued to rise rapidly.

But Bolsonaro is a fierce critic of stay-at-home measures, arguing the economic pain they result in is worse than the virus itself.

The president has appeared to continue flouting virus precautions even after his diagnosis.

On Thursday he was seen going for a spin on his motorcycle and chatting maskless with a team of groundskeepers outside the presidential palace.

The same day he admitted in a live Facebook video that he was feeling "a bit wretched at being imprisoned here."

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/07/25/bolsonaro-recovers-from-covid-19/>

World grapples with record number of new virus cases

Published 8 hours ago on July 25, 2020 09:45 PM

By [Agence France-Presse](#)



FOR the second straight day, the US reported over 70,000 new cases of coronavirus and over 1,000 deaths. (AFP)

The world has set a new record for the highest daily increase in coronavirus infections, as a survey released Saturday showed governments are fast losing support for their handling of the pandemic.

There were more than 280,000 new cases recorded globally on both Thursday and Friday, the highest daily rises since the virus emerged in China late last year.

Friday's tally of 282,042 was marginally down on Thursday's single-day record 284,661, according to an AFP count based on official sources, but still marks an alarming uptick in the spread of the virus.

Nearly a third of the world's 15.8 million infections have been registered since July 1, while the total death toll nears 640,000.

The United States remains the hardest-hit nation, on Friday reporting its second straight day of more than 70,000 new cases and over 1,000 deaths as the virus takes hold in the country's south and west.

A similar resurgence in Europe has prompted the World Health Organization to sound the alarm over the spread, as Britain joined France, Germany and Austria in tightening rules on mask-wearing as well as rolling out greater testing.

Governments worldwide have struggled to contain the virus despite long and economically-crippling lockdowns imposed on millions of people, and a survey released Saturday showed that faith in authorities is dwindling in six rich nations.

Populations in France, Germany, Britain, Japan, Sweden and the US widely believed death and infection figures to be higher than recorded, according to the study, which polled 1,000 people in each nation.

"In most countries this month, support for national governments is falling," the report by the Kekst CNC communications consulting group said.

'Wartime mode'

New outbreaks continue to wreak havoc elsewhere around the world, with fresh clusters emerging across Asia.

World grapples with record number of new virus

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South Korea on Saturday reported its highest infections figure in nearly four months, and in Vietnam the first locally-transmitted case in nearly 100 days was detected.

Authorities in China said Friday they would introduce a new wave of testing in the port city of Dalian, home to about six million people, after fresh infections were detected there.

The local government's health commission said the city must "enter wartime mode" to prevent any spread as it announced on-the-spot nucleic acid tests for people using the subway system and new lockdowns for some communities.

That did not prevent the Chinese Super League kicking off behind closed doors on Saturday with the players of Guangzhou Evergrande and Shanghai Shenhua holding a minute's silence for the victims of the pandemic.

However festivities were called off in Sao Paulo, the biggest city in hard-hit Brazil, which indefinitely postponed its 2021 carnival because of the pandemic.

Europe accounts for a fifth of the world's case count so far.

The WHO's European chapter has expressed concern about the rise in cases on the continent in the past two weeks and warned tighter restrictions may be needed.

A three-year-old girl this week died in Belgium, becoming the country's youngest victim of the virus.

"The recent resurgence in COVID-19 cases in some countries following the easing of physical distancing measures is certainly cause for concern," a WHO Europe spokeswoman told AFP.

"If the situation demands, reintroduction of stricter, targeted measures with the full engagement of communities may be needed."

Outbreaks have been seen recently in the Spanish regions of Aragon and Catalonia where officials have reintroduced curbs on daily life and urged Barcelona residents only to leave home for essential trips.

'The world is infested'

French Prime Minister Jean Castex said on-the-spot testing would be rolled out for travelers arriving in France from 16 high-risk countries.

Masks are now mandatory in enclosed spaces across the nation and there are fears that the summer holiday season could see a new spike as people flock to beaches and tourist spots.

Britain on Friday also made it compulsory to wear a face covering in shopping centers, banks, takeaway outlets, sandwich shops and supermarkets.

Exceptions have been made, including for children under 11 or people with respiratory problems, but others who refuse to cover their nose and mouth in the UK risk a fine of up to £100 (\$130).

The virus has overwhelmed health systems in Latin America, with infected people sleeping in tents or cars outside hospitals in Peru's second largest city of Arequipa.

"The world is infested," said Raquel Barrera, a 28-year-old in El Salvador who has lost three brothers and both her parents to the disease in less than two months.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/07/25/world-grapples-with-record-number-of-new-virus-cases/>