

DATE: AUGUST 02, 2020

DAY: SUNDAY

DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service

DENR, 28 private companies to rehabilitate Mahiga River in Cebu

Published August 1, 2020, 4:39 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has partnered with 28 private companies to clean up and rehabilitate the 9.1-kilometer Mahiga River in Cebu province.

DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, together with Mayors Edgardo Labella of Cebu City and Jonas Cortes of Mandaue City, signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) last July 21 with representatives of companies and organizations taking part in the Mahiga River rehabilitation efforts under the Adopt-an-Estero/Waterbody Program.

The program aims to clean the esteros of wastes, debris and silt, mobilize estero communities in cleaning the estero and enlist their active participation in the actual clean up, and in implementing and preparing plans to sustain a clean estero.

The MOA was also signed by the chairmen of six barangays where the river traverses, namely, Apas, Banilad (Cebu City), Kasambangan, Banilad (Mandaue City), Mabolo and Subangdako.

The parties agreed to develop a comprehensive rehabilitation program to reduce the pollution load of the Mahiga River and its tributaries.

“Mahiga River Creek is a critical waterway in the city and its current condition requires intensified actions from all stakeholders to ensure the sustainability of all rehabilitation measures,” said Director Lormelyn Claudio of the DENR’s Environmental Management Bureau in Central Visayas.

According to Claudio, the river’s deterioration has reached the point where it has posed a threat to the safety and health of the communities along its banks, and which the residents and the government can no longer address effectively without help from the private sector.

She said the DENR sought assistance and commitment from donor-partners and private entities and organizations as part of their corporate social responsibility programs for the provision of interventions to improve solid, hazardous and wastewater management of the river, and for the surface clean-up of its specific segment.

They will also assist in the information, education and communication campaign and community mobilization activities of the DENR and local government units to foster harmonious relations with the community and solicit their participation, cooperation and support for the program, among others.

Meanwhile, local governments in Cebu, in collaboration with EMB-Central Visayas, will ensure the establishment of integrated solid, healthcare and household hazardous waste management pursuant to existing environmental laws at the barangay level.

DENR-Central Visayas, Provincial and Community Environment and Natural Resources Offices, and EMB-Central Visayas will intensify the monitoring of industrial and commercial establishments, and undertake regular water quality monitoring of selected points within Mahiga River and its tributaries, to determine improvements in water quality.

DENR may kakampi na sa pagbuhay sa Mahiga River



August 1, 2020 @ 4:56 PM 13 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Upang muling buhayin ang marumi at baradong Mahiga River sa Cebu sa pamamagitan ng Adopt-an Estero/Waterbody Program, nakakuha ng kakampi ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa 28 pribadong k0mpanya at organisasyon.

Sa pamamagitan ng Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) na nilagdaan ni DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu at nina Mayor Edgardo Labella ng Cebu City at Mayor Jonas Cortes ng Mandaue City, kasama ng mga kinatawan ng mga kompanya at organisasyon noong Hulyo 21 sa Cebu City ay nagkaisa ang mga ito na magtulong-tulong para sa rehabilitasyon ng Mahiga River.

Ayon sa DENR lumagda rin sa MOA ang anim na kapitan ng barangay na nakasasakop sa 9.1 kilometrong ilog na kinabibilangan ng Apas, Banilad (Cebu City), Kasambangan, Banilad (Mandaue City), Mabolo at Subangdako.

Idinagdag pa sa ulat na kabilang sa mga pribadong kompanya na lumagda sa MOA bilang adopters ng Mahiga River ay ang Aboitiz Power Oil Visayas, A.D. Gothong Manufacturing Corp., Archdiocese of Cebu, ARN Central Waste Management Inc., AWG Development Corp., Banilad Town Center at Cebu Business Park Association Inc.

Nakiisa rin sa programa ang Cebu Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Cebu Golden Restaurant, Cebu Filipino-Chinese Chamber of Commerce, Cebu Land Masters Inc., Cebu Rolling Hills Memorial Chapels Inc., Coca-Cola Beverages Philippines-Cebu Wilkins Plant, Dynamic Power Adoptor, Ginebra San Miguel Inc. at Global Business Power.

Sinabi pa ng DENR na makikipagtulungan din ang International Pharmaceuticals, Inc., Jollibee Foods Corporation, Jomara Konstruck, Medclean Management Solutions Inc., Mezzo Hotel, New Millenium Petron Service Station, Pollution Abatement Systems Specialists Inc., Pollution Control Association of the Philippines, Inc. Foundation, Sarrosa International Hotel and Residential Suites, SM City Cebu at ang The Lucky Group Management and Development Corp. Gaisano Country Mall.

Sa pamamagitan ng MOA ay nagkasundo ang bawat isa na magkaroon ng Comprehensive Rehabilitation Program upang mabawasan ang polusyon sa Mahiga River maging sa mga daluyan ng tubig na patungo rito.

“Mahiga River Creek is a critical waterway in the city and its current condition requires intensified actions from all stakeholders to ensure the sustainability of all rehabilitation measures,” sabi ni Director Lormelyn Claudio ng DENR-Environmental Management Bureau sa Region 7.

Ayon kay Claudio, umabot na sa punto ng pagkasira ang ilog at nagiging banta na rin ito sa seguridad at kalusugan ng komunidad na nakatira malapit dito kaya’t kinakailangan na ng mga residente at gobyerno ng tulong mula sa mga pribadong sektor.

Aniya, kinakailangan na ng tulong ng DENR mula sa mga pribadong indibidwal at organisasyon bilang bahagi ng kanilang “Corporate Social Responsibility” programs para sa maayos na pangangasiwa sa solid, hazardous at wastewater ng ilog kabilang na rito ang “surface clean-up” sa bawat bahagi ng Mahiga River.

Tutulong din ang mga ito sa information, education and communication (IEC) campaign at social mobilization activities ng DENR at local government units (LGUs) upang magkaroon ng maayos na relasyon sa komunidad at makuha ang kanilang partisipasyon, kooperasyon at suporta para sa mga programa.

Samantala, sa pagtutulongan ng Cebu LGUs at EMB 7 ay titiyakin na susunod ang mga establisimyento sa pagsasaayos ng kanilang solid, healthcare at household hazardous waste base na rin sa nakasaad sa environmental laws sa barangay level.

Sa bahagi naman ng DENR, sa pamamagitan ng tanggapan ni Region 7 Executive Director Paquito D. Melicor, Provincial at Community Environment and Natural Resources Offices at EMB, 7 ay magsasagawa ng monitoring sa mga industrial at commercial establishment at magkakaroon din ng regular na water quality monitoring sa mga piling lugar sa Mahiga River at iba pang daluyan ng tubig upang matukoy kung may pagbabago sa water quality ng ilog.

Isa sa mga pangunahing programa ng DENR, ang Adopt-an Estero/Waterbody ay isang hakbangin ng pagtutulongan ng mga nakatira sa estero, donor-partners, iba pang ahensya ng gobyerno at ng DENR.

Layunin ng programa na malinis ang mga estero sa basura, bara at burak, mahikayat ang mga komunidad na linisin ang estero at makuha ang kanilang aktibong partisipasyon sa mga ginagawang clean-up at sa pagpapatupad at paghahanda ng mga plano upang mapanatili ang malinis na estero. **Santi Celario**

CIMATU NAGPAPASALAMAT KAY PRRD SA BIDA BILL



August 1, 2020 @ 11:01 AM 19 hours ago

Pinuri ni Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu si Pangulong Rodrigo Roa Duterte sa panawagan nito sa Kongreso na ipasa ang Boracay Island Development Authority (BIDA) upang mapanatili ang ginagawang rehabilitasyon sa kilalang isla sa mundo.

Nagpasalamat si Cimatu sa Pangulo sa pag-endorso ng BIDA bill sabay sabi na malaki ang maitutulong nito upang matiyak ang napapanahon at agarang pagpasa ng mga hakbangin na isinusulong ng Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) na pinamumunuan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

“We express our sincerest gratitude to the President for his endorsement of the BIDA bill,” sabi ni Cimatu.

“This is the opportune time to pass a law creating a permanent agency to sustain the gains achieved by the BIATF, which term has been extended for only one year or until April 2021.”

Kamakailan ay inilabas ni Pangulong Duterte ang Executive Order (EO) 115 na nagpapalawig sa BIATF ng isang taon pa.

Ang Task Force ay nagtapos noong Mayo 8, 2020 o dalawang taon matapos itong buuin noong 2018 sa bisa ng EO 53.

“It is the tacit duty of the Task Force to ensure that Boracay does not backslide and slip to a state of environmental degradation especially with all the hard work, cooperation and concern shown by all stakeholders,” dagdag pa ni Cimatu.

Sa kanyang katatapos na State of the Nation Address, nanawagan si Pangulong Duterte sa Kongreso na ipasa ang BIDA bill dahil sa kagustuhan nitong maibalik ang isla sa dati nitong ganda at linis.

“For the rest of my term, I hope to see concerted efforts in protecting the environment. The rehabilitation of Boracay island showcased our reserve to safeguard the environment,” sabi pa ng Punong Ehekutibo.

Noong Hunyo 11, naglabas ng resolusyon ang BIATF na nag-apruba sa draft BIDA bill at nag-e-endorse sa Kongreso.

Batay sa resolusyon ng BIATF, ang pagbuo ng BIDA ay naglalayong maisulong at mapabilis ang likas-kaya at balanseng pag-unlad ng Isla ng Boracay, alinsunod sa pangangailangang mapanatili ang ecological balance sa pangangalaga at pagpapahusay ng kalidad ng kapaligiran.

Sa ilalim ng draft bill na inihanda ng BIATF, ang BIDA ang gagawa ng mga polisiya, plano, programa at proyekto para sa rehabilitasyon, preserbasyon at pagpapaunlad sa Isla ng Boracay.

Nakatutok ang panukalang balangkas sa pagpapaunlad ng Boracay bilang isang self-sustaining na komersyal, pinansyal, pamumuhuan at sentro ng turismo upang makalikha ng trabaho, makaakit ng lokal at dayuhang mga turista at maisulong ang produktibong pamumuhunan.

Upang maisakatuparan ang mga ito, kailangang ikonsidera ng BIDA ang pangangalaga at pagpapanatili ng likas na yaman at biodiversity ng island paradise na ito.

“The BIATF version of the bill envisions the BIDA as a regulatory body to ensure the environmental sustainability of the island and where the local government unit will retain its taxing authority,” pahayag ni DENR Director at Boracay Inter-Agency Rehabilitation Management Group (BIARMG) General Manager Natividad Bernardino.

Gayunpaman, nilinaw ni Bernardino na ang BIDA ay hindi magiging isang government-owned and controlled corporation gaya ng Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority.

Ang 11-miyembrong BIDA Board ay pamumunuan ng DENR Secretary habang ang mga Kalihim naman ng Department of the Interior and Local Government at Department of Tourism ang magsisilbing Vice-Chairs.

Kabilang sa mga magiging miyembro ang mga Kahilim ng Department of Public Works ang Highways, Department of Health at Department of Justice; Gobernador ng Aklan; Alkalde ng Malay; dalawang kinatawan mula sa pribadong sektor na mula sa Aklan at BIDA General Manager na itatalaga ng Pangulo.

First solar-powered treatment plant for Manila Bay rehab, inaugurated

By Ma. Alaine P. Allanigue Published on August 1, 2020



Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu and MMDA Chair Danilo Lim check the facility of the first solar powered treatment plant for that will be used for the rehabilitation of Manila Bay. (Photo credit: DENR)

QUEZON CITY, Aug. 1 (PIA) -- Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu led the inauguration of the first solar-powered treatment plant (STP) for the rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

The solar powered treatment plant is one of the geo-engineering interventions for cleaning up the waters of the bay. It can clean up 500,000 liters of dirty water daily from the outfalls of Padre Faura, Remedios, and Estero de San Antonio Abad - the areas notorious for high counts of fecal coliform bacteria.

These three drainages directly discharge to Manila Bay, and with the STP now in place, wastewater from these drainages will undergo a treatment process before being released to Manila Bay.

"The solar-powered plant is just the first of the many treatment plants that will be installed in key outfalls and river systems. These will receive untreated wastewater for processing and treatment before recycling or release in Manila Bay," Cimatu said.

The DENR partnered with the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) to hasten the construction of the treatment plant amid the pandemic.

The STP works on an off-grid solar system, operating on power supply in daytime and on solar energy for 12 hours during nighttime.

MMDA Chair Danilo Lom said, through the use of a renewable energy source, the Agency hopes to lessen the electricity consumption of the STP.

Once turned over to MMDA, the agency will be in charge of the maintenance and operations of the STP. (DENR/PIA-NCR)

Multa para sa maling pagtapon ng disposable masks pag-aaralan ng DENR

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Aug 01 2020 07:08 PM

MAYNILA - Pag-aaralan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources na pagmultahin ang mga hindi tama ang pagtapon sa mga disposable face mask.

Sa harap ito ng panawagan ng ilang environmental groups sa publiko na gumamit na lang ng reusable o cloth mask imbes na disposable surgical mask, sa kasagsagan ng pandemya.

“What we need to do now is enforce the law on waste segregation,” ani Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda.

Paliwanag ni Marian Ledesma, campaigner ng GreenPeace Philippines, nakakasira sa kalikasan ang paggamit ng non-biodegradable o di nabubulok na disposable surgical mask.

"They can really disrupt yung pagdevelop ng reefs, ng mga corals, and puwede sila kasing ma-ingest kasi ng mga hayop sa dagat," ani Ledesma.

Giit naman ni Antiporda, hindi nila ididikta kung ano ang klaseng face mask na ipapagamit.

Binigyang-diin din ng public health expert na si Susan Mercado na maaari namang gumamit ng kahit anong face mask basta't may physical distancing.

Hinikayat din niya ang paggamit ng face shield kapag nagko-commute.

“In a common everyday life, if you are in enclosed setting, it adds one layer of protection for you. so encouraging the use of face shields is something that could help prevent transmission,” ani Mercado. -- **Ulat ni April Rfales, ABS-CBN News**



Illegal settlers at watershed in Rizal evicted

Published August 1, 2020, 12:04 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has ordered the eviction of illegal occupants inside the Upper Marikina Watershed and Masungi Wildlife Sanctuary in Baras, Rizal due to unauthorized construction of infrastructure in the watershed area.

Last July 30, DENR Undersecretary Jim Sampulna, Environmental Protection and Enforcement Task Force Executive Director Nilo Tamoria, and Rizal Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer Isidro Mercado led the demolition of illegal infrastructures and barbed wire fence constructed by occupants belonging to the 19th Quarters Guardians International.

The Masungi Georeserve Foundation, which has reported the illegal activities to the authorities in June, lauded the DENR and municipal government of Baras.

“It is a win for our threatened landscapes and should serve as a warning sign for those attempting similar rackets,” it said in a Facebook post.

“We hope that there will be no compromises in this victory and that perpetrators and their cohorts will be filed charges and penalized accordingly. We must end the culture of impunity when it comes to forest crimes. Let us continue to be vigilant,” it added.

The group pointed out that forest protection must be proactive and preventive to ensure illegal and unscrupulous occupations do not happen again.

“Relief from criminal acts need to be fast and decisive to avert irreversible damage,” the Foundation said.

“It is clear that the pandemic has given rise to opportunists who want to take advantage of nature at this difficult time. If they are not stopped, more outbreaks, landslides, flash floods, water crises, and biodiversity loss are bound to happen,” it said.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/08/01/illegal-settlers-at-watershed-in-rizal-evicted/>

Illegal settlers in Upper Marikina Watershed evicted

August 1, 2020 | Filed under: Headlines, News | Posted by: Tempo Desk

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Hermosa, Bataan nagpasaklolo sa DENR



August 1, 2020 @ 5:10 PM 13 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Nagpasaklolo na ang lokal na pamahalaang panlalwigan ng Bataan at local government unit (LGU) ng bayan ng Hermosa sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na imbestigahan ang umano’y talamak na paglabag ng isang landfill facility sa Brgy. Mambog sa naturang bayan.

Matapos hilingin ang tulong ng DENR, iginiit ni Hermosa Mayor Jopet Inton na nababahala na umano sila sa tumatagas na katas ng basura mula sa econest waste management corporation papunta umano sa Mambog creek.

Ayon pa sa ulat, bukod umano sa banta sa kalusugan ng basura sa mga residente mapanganib din umano ito sa kalikasan dahil ang huling hantungan umano nito ay ang karagatang bahagi na nag-uugnay sa Manila Bay.

Sinabi pa sa ulat at sa imbestigasyon umano ng municipality ng Hermosa nitong nakalipas na Mayo 26, nadiskubre ang hindi umano pagsunod ng econest waste management corporation sa itinakdang disenyo at akmang tubo para sa katas ng basura.

Kaugnay nito, batay umano sa record pumasok sa 20-taong kasunduan ang munisipyo ng Hermosa sa econest sa kondisyong ito ang magbibigay ng technical expertise at capital para sa rehabilitasyon ng sanitary landfill bagay na hindi naman umano nasunod sa kasalukuyan.

Pinaiimbestigahan din ng LGU sa environmental management bureau ng DENR REGION 3 ang naturang landfill dahil sa paglabag sa environmental compliance ng naturang landfill. **Santi Celario**

Tumatagas na 'landfill' sa Bataan, pinasisilip sa DENR

By Abante Tonite — Last updated Aug 1, 2020

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Hiniling ng Pamahalaang Panlalawigan ng Bataan sa Mababang Kapulungan ng Kongreso at Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang umanoy talamak na mga paglabag ng isang kompanya sa landfill facility sa bayan ng Hermosa.

Ayon kay Hermosa Mayor Jopet Inton, nababahala na umano sila sa tumatagas na katas ng basura mula sa econest waste management corporation papunta umano sa Mambog creek.

Aniya, ang naturang landfill ay inooperate ng kompanyang Econest Waste Management Corporation nang pumasok ang Hermosa LGU sa isang kasunduan noong 2017 para ito ang mag-operate sa Hermosa Sanitary Landfill Facility sa Barangay Mambog.

Sa ilalim ng Public-Private Partnership, nagkaroon ng kasunduan ang Econest Waste Management Corporation at ang Pamahalaang Bayan Ng Hermosa na ipapagamit ang lupa ng LGU Hermosa Sanitary Landfill at ang private partner na Econest ang magbibigay ng technical expertise at kapital para i-rehabilitate, paunlarin at i-operate ang sanitary landfill facility sa bayan ng Hermosa sa loob ng dalawampung taon.

Ito ay para matulungan ang LGU sa pangangasiwa ng sanitary landfill at wala rin anumang gastusin mula sa kaban ng bayan bagkus ay bibigyan pa ng Econest ang LGU ng 20 percent sa magiging kita ng kumpanyang ito subalit hindi nangyari ang inasahan.

Sa loob lamang ng maiksing panahon, ay nadiskubre ang maraming paglabag ng Econest sa ECC at ilan sa mga paglabag ay ang pagpaabaya sa mga solid wastes sa landfill dahil walang sapat na daily soil cover at nagmistulang gabundok na basura tulad ng Payatas na anumang oras ay maaaring gumuho at tumapon sa Mambog Creek na ilang metro lamang ang layo.

Hinayaan lang din daw na tumagas ang katas ng basura papunta sa Mambog Creek na dumadaan sa mga pamayanan patungo sa Manila Bay na maaari ring tumagos sa ilalim ng lupa at maapektuhan ang tubig sa ilalim nito. (Dolly B. Cabreza)

DENR official: Despite I.U.C.N. listing, monkey

August 02, 2020

TITLE: population in PHL 'steady'

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DENR official: Despite I.U.C.N. listing, monkey population in PHL 'steady'

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

August 2, 2020



Philippine long-tailed macaque in Palawan.

Despite the reported global population decline of the Nicobar long-tailed macaque, the native monkey population in the Philippines remains “healthy” and “strong,” an official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said.

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) recently listed the Nicobar long-tailed macaque and all its subspecies, the Philippine long-tailed macaque included, to “vulnerable” from its previous listing of “near threatened” owing to the drastic decline in numbers of over 30 percent throughout its range in the last 36 to 39 years.

The IUCN assessment noted that “the species is hunted for food and captured live for research and sport hunting.”

The Nicobar long-tailed macaque is a subspecies of the crab-eating macaque, endemic to the Nicobar Islands in the Bay of Bengal.

Environment Assistant Secretary Ricardo Calderon maintained that based on the country’s own listing, the Philippine long-tailed macaque is “nonthreatened” as the primate is thriving in many areas.

“This [IUCN’s latest listing] may be true in other countries, but in the Philippines, we still have a healthy population of long-tailed macaques,” said Calderon, the concurrent director of the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB). “It is not on our list of threatened species.”

He cited DENR Administrative Order 2019-09 dated July 12, 2019, or the updated National List of Threatened Philippine Fauna and their categories. The DENR through the BMB regularly updates the National List of Threatened Species.

The list includes all threatened species depending on their conservation status.

DENR official: Despite I.U.C.N. listing, monkey

August 02, 2020

TITLE: population in PHL 'steady'

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Critically endangered species refers to those facing extinction, while endangered species are those whose survival in the wild is unlikely if causal factors continue operating.

A vulnerable species, meanwhile, refers to those that are neither critically endangered nor endangered but are under threat from adverse factors throughout its range.

Threatened species refers to those not critically endangered, endangered nor vulnerable but under threat from adverse factors, such as over collection.

The Philippine long-tailed macaques are known inhabitants of the forests, and they exist on the three major island groups in the country, Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao.

Sightings of native monkeys in tourist spots, such as in Palawan, are well-known as they even become part of the tourism attraction.

Just recently, a troop of the native monkeys was caught by a camera trap, in the Masungi Georeserve in Baras, Rizal.

Around five monkeys suddenly appeared in the "Sapot," one of the facilities in the low-impact tourism cum conservation area.

Small mammals, including Philippine long-tailed macaques, love exploring the low-impact trail highlights of Masungi, many of which use biomimicry to reflect the natural character of the landscape.

Monkeys are also commonly spotted in beaches near and inside the Subic Bay Freeport Zone in Zambales.

Image Credits: [Wikimedia Commons](#)

Magsaysay town cave cited as world-class

By Anthony Allada LGU Magsaysay Published on August 1, 2020



Stalactites inside Stafungsol Cave in Magsaysay, Davao del Sur

MAGSAYSAY, Davao del Sur, July 31 – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Caving Division in the region has identified the Stafungsol Cave in Sitio Blasan, Barangay Malawanit in Magsaysay, Davao del Sur as world-class and one-of-a-kind due to its beautiful formation and tourism quality.

As of this time, the assessment and survey were already done with recommendations for the formulation of the Cave Management Plan that already started today attended by stakeholders from the local and barangay governments as well as the benefiting communities.

The Stafungsol Cave has already been frequented by adventure seekers before the series of earthquakes struck late last year.

Accordingly, its integrity and formation are still intact and that clearing operation is still ongoing to pave way for visitors to have access to go there again. (Magsaysay LGU/Anthony Allada)

4 patay sa magkahiwalay na landslide sa Davao at Leyte

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Aug 01 2020 05:57 PM | Updated as of Aug 01 2020 06:53 PM

Apat ang nasawi sa magkahiwalay na pagguho ng lupa sa Davao City at Southern Leyte nitong Biyernes.

Natabunan ng gumuhong lupa si Leticia Fuerzas, 57, sa Hope Avenue Diversion Road sa Barangay Talomo Proper sa Davao City, gabi ng Biyernes.



Hindi inasahan ng awtoridad na may pamilyang nakatira sa retaining wall sa Barangay Talomo Proper sa Davao City. Namatay ang isang babae matapos na matabunan ng gumuhong lupa habang natutulog. *Claire Cornelio, ABS-CBN News*

Nailigtas naman ng mga rescuer ang asawa niyang si Carlos na may kapansanan matapos bahagyang matabunan ng lupa.

Ayon kay Carlos, natutulog silang mag-asawa nang mangyari ang insidente.

Sabi naman ni Barangay Chairman Bendor Calamba, bumigay ang lupa dahil na rin sa sunod-sunod na malakas na pag-ulan nitong mga nagdaang araw.

"Parang retaining wall ito at weakened ang design kaya bumigay. We did not expect na may nakatira dito kaya devastated tayo sa sitwasyon na may namatay," sabi ni Calamba.

Sinusuri na ng taga-City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office at ng Mines and Geosciences Bureau XI ang sitwasyon sa lugar at hindi na rin pinayagan ang pamilya Fuerzas na makatira uli dito.

Nanawagan naman ng tulong ang pamilya sa gobyerno para sa pagpapalibing kay Leticia.



Natabunan ng gumuhong lupa ang tatlong nagka-quarry sa Barangay Canlawis sa Pintuyan, Southern Leyte. *Larawan mula sa Pintuyan Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction Office*

Samantala, tatlo naman ang nasawi sa landslide na naganap sa Pintuyan sa Southern Leyte, Biyernes ng hapon.

Sa report ng Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office ng Pintuyan, nagsasagawa ng quarrying sa dry river malapit sa bangin ang tatlo nang gumuho ang lupa sa Jubas sa Barangay Canlawis.

Posible rin na ang tuloy-tuloy na pagbuhos ng ulan na naranasan sa bayan ang naging dahilan ng paglambot ng lupa at nagresulta sa landslide na ikinamatay ng tatlo.

- **Ulat nina Claire Cornelio at Jenette Ruedas, ABS-CBN News**

NEWS BRIEFS

Southern Leyte landslide kills three

Three people died Friday afternoon when a landslide occurred in a sand and gravel quarry site in Barangay Canlawis in Pintuyan, Southern Leyte.

The fatalities were identified as Ruben Guibao, 20 years old; Adelberto Gales Jr., 35; and Joel Maique, 43 years old.

The victims were quarrying beside a dried-up river, with a height of around 35 meters, when the landslide happened, possibly instigated by intermittent rainfalls the past few days.

Lt. Omar Bagasbas of the Pintuyan municipal police station said the victims were taken to Pintuyan District Hospital but were declared dead on arrival.

ELMER RECUERDO

Sachet economy killing oceans, threatening biodiversity

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

August 2, 2020



Plastic sachets, which make up more than half of single-use plastic, are a growing concern as they continue to pile up in the environment. Rice, sugar, coffee, vinegar, soy sauce, shampoo and tooth paste.

These are some of the basic commodities that people need and many Filipinos would often prefer to buy in small quantities, often one-time use, in neighborhood retail stores.

The good news is that they are now available in so-called budget packs.

The bad news is they come in small disposable plastic packets and end up as residual waste that accumulate in the environment, even as the Philippines has in place Republic Act 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, which could have addressed the country's solid waste management problem.

Plastics, particularly sachets that comprise more than half of plastic waste, find their way in waterways and end up in the ocean, threatening coastal and marine biodiversity.

Sachet economy

The Philippines, ranked third-largest contributor to ocean plastic pollution—and is trapped in this so-called sachet economy—the 2015 report on plastic pollution by Ocean Conservancy and McKinsey Center for Business and Environment said.

The worsening problem caused by single-use plastics with particular focus on sachets, and how it adds to and worsens the growing plastics pollution problem, was highlighted during a virtual roundtable discussion and media briefing organized by the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA) and the Break Free from Plastic Philippines (BFPP) movement in Asia Pacific and Philippines on July 14.

The report that was commissioned by GAIA used data from the University of Santo Tomas's Research Center for Social Sciences and Education for its research on Filipinos' sachet consumption habits.

Growing concern

Single-use plastics, specifically sachets, are a growing concern in the Philippines because of the affordability and convenience they give to users—especially the poor.

Around 164 million sachets are used every day, and they take up around 52 percent of the residual plastic waste stream, Miko Aliño, program manager at GAIA Asia Pacific who discussed the contents of the report said.

Ironically, he said seven out of 10 Filipinos are willing to buy food condiments in reusable containers, citing a 2019 survey by the Social Weather Stations (SWS), while another survey reported that six out of 10 Filipinos support a nationwide ban on sachets.

Even local governments, he said, recognized the plastic problem, and some have even gone beyond the usual plastic bag bans by enacting local laws or ordinances.

Sadly, he noted the exclusion of sachets from these local laws.

“Sachets are perceived as inexpensive and convenient because of their small and durable packaging. But in reality, they are expensive for cities to manage, difficult to effectively recycle and cannot be reused,” Aliño said.

Hijacking ‘tingi’ culture

Aliño said Filipinos were used to buying in small quantities, which he characterized as a sustainable practice.

“Before, people would buy vinegar and soy sauce, and brought with them empty bottles,” he said.

Aliño said corporations “highjacked” that practice and transformed the Filipinos’ way of consumption by introducing sachets, a marketing strategy that targetted the poor.

Multinational companies advertised them as affordable for daily-wage earners, so they could buy products at prices they could afford, although in small quantities.

It is based on the premise that sachets help consumers ration their use of a product better than in big containers, supposedly reduce product wasting.

Evading corporate responsibility

Aliño said corporations have managed to evade the responsibility for sachet plastic waste, which leaves local governments and communities struggling to address the imminent sachet pollution crisis.

“Corporations have greatly benefited from these products... but they are not made accountable for the pollution that comes along with its production and disposal,” he said.

Moreover, the report says that sachet purchase and use tend to be higher among lower socioeconomic brackets.

Study recommendations

Aliño said some of the recommendations of the study include reintroducing alternative delivery schemes, such as Zero Waste stores and refilling.

Lawmakers, he said, also need to enact a binding extended producer-responsibility legislation so that companies would take greater responsibility for the impact of their products.

The legislation should also require corporations to fully disclose the amount of the plastic used in manufacturing, shipping, retailing and disposal.

He said there’s a need to develop guidelines on recycling and safe disposal of sachets that are already in the market, and for environment-friendly packaging in the Philippines.

Alternative to sachets

Rei Panaligan, national coordinator of BFPP, for his part, highlighted some of the initiatives in the Philippines to address the problem on single-use plastics and sachets. One alternative is to go back to reusables.

Reusables, he said, are safe even in time of pandemics. He cited a statement issued by 125 health experts from 19 countries, to assure retailers and consumers of their safety as long as that reusable is safe by employing basic hygiene.

He noted that an initiative of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to set up refilling stations in Region 3 is a step in the right direction.

The program brings together the DENR's private partners upon the request of concerned local government units, where consumers can buy products in tingi using refillable containers.

He said some stores are now practicing zero waste using refillables.

Threat to food source

In a telephone interview, environmental lawyer Gloria Estenzo Ramos said ocean plastic pollution, particularly by sachets, are a menace and affects everything in the ocean, one of the world's major food source.

"What we are seeing in the surface of the oceans are just 1 percent because 99 percent of the plastics are already in the ocean floor," she said when sought for reaction by the BusinessMirror on July 29.

Plastics, she said, is contaminating, if not already contaminated, the fish and other seafood that people eat every day.

Stop producing plastics

Ramos, the vice president of conservation advocacy nongovernment organization Oceana Philippines, agreed with GAIA and BFFP that manufacturers should stop producing plastics that it cannot take back as part of its extended producer responsibility.

Better, she said the government should exercise and demonstrate political will in implementing policies that should have been implemented a long time ago.

The Office of the President, for one, should direct the DENR and the National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) to release the list of nonenvironmentally acceptable product and packaging (NEAPP) materials which includes single-use plastics, she said.

"Section 29 of the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 requires the NSWMC to prepare the list within one year from the effectivity of the law. It's been more than 18 years, but have they come up with a list of NEAPP?" Ramos lamented.

Threat to biodiversity

Experts have long been fretting about plastic pollution, particularly microplastics, as they threaten entire ecosystems and the extinction of marine species.

Interviewed via Messenger on July 29, AA Yaptinchay of the Marine Wildlife Watch of the Philippines said the effects of ocean plastic pollution, including microplastics, depend on the species as some are more susceptible than others.

He said globally there were 693 marine species documented to have encountered plastic debris with around 400 species that were involved in entanglement and ingestion.

This included all marine turtle species and half of all marine mammal and bird species. Any reduction in marine debris particularly plastics will be beneficial for marine wildlife, he said.

Ingestion of microplastic by wildlife from zooplankton to large marine fauna can lead to toxins in the bloodstream and tissues which may cause diseases, including reproductive impairment. The microplastics absorbs pollutants in the water which are released when they are ingested, he added.

“A pile of trash, especially plastic in the water column, occupies space which can displace wildlife, while those that sink to the bottom will smother the substrate which will kill all organisms under it including corals or a whole reef,” he explained.

Yantinchay said, “Macroplastics just become microplastics and ghost nets will keep on killing as long as it is in the water. Once we set it loose in the natural world, there is no getting it back nor stopping it from affecting wildlife and their habitats.”

Image Credits: [Sonia Astudillo, GAIA Asia Pacific](#)

Antique govt declares Aug as 'Dulangan' Month

By [Albert Balbutin](#)

August 1, 2020

The Antique provincial government has passed Ordinance 2020-208 declaring August as the month of the Rufous-headed hornbill, locally known as dulungan. The species is one of the two most threatened hornbills in the Philippines, the other being the Sulu hornbill. Both can only be found in the Philippines.



A dulungan perched on an agoho tree.

The announcement comes in the midst of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic, the cause of which is rooted in the human encroachment on forest habitats.

“Conserving nature is now more important than ever,” said Gregorio de la Rosa Jr., Conservation Science and Research Department head of Haribon Foundation. “Legislators continue to work safely through the Covid-19 pandemic by helping nature become more resilient.”

Sangguniang Panlalawigan (SP) member Pio Jessielito Sumande of the Cavite provincial government sponsored the passage of the ordinance. Though the dulungan was also declared the “Provincial Bird of Antique” in the early 2000s, not much is known about the species. It is hoped the announcement will instill more pride among Antiquenos, as well as for Filipinos elsewhere, since the dulungan can be found nowhere else in the planet.

The dulungan hornbill or *Rhabdotorrhinus waldeni* can only be found in Panay and Negros islands. They feed on fruit trees in the forests, and create nests out of natural holes and crevices in the trees. Regarded as “farmers of the forest,” the dulungan helps in seed dispersal of trees, helping forests grow and expand.

The Central Panay Mountains in Panay Island is home to watersheds that provide clean water to several communities from the four provinces of Antique, Aklan, Capiz and Iloilo.

This also inspired the local governments of Sebaste and Valderrama in Antique to declare 3,348 and 9,665 hectares of their forests, respectively, as critical habitat (CH) for the dulungan and other threatened species.

CH are established by local governments and communities to protect threatened species that are outside of protected areas as defined in the National Integrated Protected Areas System Act. The CH was declared due to the presence of five important species unique to Western Visayas, including the dulungan.

Despite the advances in conserving the dulungan and forest resources, only 8 percent of Panay's forest remain. Altogether, only 24 percent of forests remain in the entire archipelago, according to the Forest Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The coronavirus responsible for the Covid-19 pandemic has been found to be related to coronaviruses found in bats in the forests of Southern China. Coronaviruses are common among bats around the world, including the Philippines. As populations encroach further into forests around the world, it is expected that more outbreaks will occur.

The Haribon Foundation, with support from the National Grid Corp. of the Philippines (NGCP), have been working together under Haribon's Species of Hope: Dulungan project.

Through the partnership, surveys were conducted in Antique province and Wildlife Enforcement Officers were trained to assist in law enforcement. Awareness-raising campaigns were conducted wherein both students and teachers planned and carried out conservation projects.

"This is an example of how important local efforts are in conserving species unique to the country, and even specific islands and provinces," Haribon Foundation said,

"As communities in Panay begin to celebrate their unique natural heritage year after year, it is hoped that this inspires other communities to declare similar measures. This is a good start in protecting our remaining forests and preventing, or preparing for, future outbreaks. Kruhay!" it added.

SNAP, Banaue LGU restore abandoned rice terraces

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

August 2, 2020

BANAUE, Ifugao: With the successful restoration of abandoned rice terraces in their area, residents of Poitan village in this town look forward to their very first harvest this month.



A partnership between SNAP and the Banaue local government unit successfully restores abandoned rice terraces in Barangay Poitan through the Partnership in Uplifting Upland Natural Resources, Livelihood and Assets, with the first harvest expected this month. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The restoration of the rice terraces was made possible through the Partnership in Uplifting upland Natural resources, Livelihood, and Assets (Punla), which began in 2018 and aims to protect and restore the Upper Magat Watershed and bolster its surrounding communities.

An environment initiative of renewable energy solutions provider SN Aboitiz Power-Magat (SNAP-Magat), Punla is in partnership with the Ifugao municipalities of Hingyon, Mayoyao, Lagawe and Banaue.

Covering the rehabilitation of 6.41 hectares of rice terraces in Poitan village, this leg of the Banaue is projected to take three years and includes the reforestation of 48.44 hectares in the village as well as in the villages of Amganad and Balawis.

With this, around 4.4 hectares of the rice terraces, which have been unproductive for about five years now, would be restored.

Since the project broke ground in February, clearing and weeding, tilling, planting and maintenance activities have been done.

Joseph Yu, SNAP-Magat president and chief executive officer, said they set aside P4.3 million, of which P1.3 million was already released, on top of the local government unit's earmarked funds.

For 2020, SNAP-Magat and Banaue targeted the rehabilitation of the abandoned rice terraces and reforestation of 2.41 hectares in Poitan village. A reforestation project for 20.73 hectares is targeted in Balawis village, also in Banaue, for 2021.

"Much like its English term seedling, Punla promises to grow even more. Hopefully, from this milestone will also come livelihood and enterprise development opportunities for communities within the watershed throughout the rest of the project's implementation," Yu said.

He added that with the cooperation and assistance from Banaue town Mayor John Wesley Dulawan and project development officer Andres Ordillo, SNAP's Punla-Upper Magat Banaue project progresses into the year despite the limitations forced by the coronavirus pandemic.

"Other project activities such as procurement of agricultural support equipment, rehabilitation of water supply systems and more land preparation activities for reforestation are ongoing," Yu said.

SNAP-Magat is a joint venture between SN Power of Norway and AboitizPower. It owns and operates the 360- to 388-megawatt (MW) Magat hydro on the border of Isabela and Ifugao and the 8.5-MW Maris hydro in Isabela.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/08/02/news/regions/snap-banaue-lgu-restore-abandoned-rice-terraces/748982/>

Red tide infests Eastern Visayas waters

Published 1 day ago on August 1, 2020 02:44 AM

By [Elmer Recuerdo](#)



TACLOBAN CITY — Algal blooms, also known as red tide, continues to spread through the waters in Eastern Visayas as Irong-irong Bay in Catbalogan City has been added to the list of affected areas.

This lists the total number of bodies of water infected with toxic algae to five.

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Regional Marine Biotoxin Laboratory its recently conducted tests show that the presence of toxins in seawater and shellfish meat were beyond the regulatory limit.

Said warning on Irong-irong Bay came just a week after BFAR Region 8 also declared the waters of Guiuan in Eastern Samar as contaminated. It was the first time a red tide bloom was recorded in the area.

Other waters in the region that are presently affected with red tide are Cancabato Bay in Tacloban City, Matarinao Bay along the towns of General MacArthur, Hernani, Quinapondan and Salcedo in Eastern Samar, and Carigara Bay covering the towns of Babatngon, San Miguel, Barugo, Carigara and Capoocan in Leyte.

The agency advises fishermen along these waters to refrain from gathering, selling, and eating all types of shellfishes and acetes, locally known as “alamang” as they pose as serious health threats to humans when ingested.

A red tide warning is raised when tests show toxins are beyond the regulatory limit of 60 micrograms for every 100 grams of shellfish meat. This means that prohibition on shellfish harvesting is in effect.

Palace leaves door ajar

Published 6 hours ago on August 2, 2020 12:05 AM

By [Kristina Maralit](#)



After initially dismissing calls for stricter quarantine restrictions, Malacañang late Saturday seemed to have left the door ajar to the possibility of Metro Manila and neighboring provinces being placed anew under enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) as called for by different groups from the medical sector.

This, after presidential spokesman Harry Roque earlier shrugged off comments from the medical community that localized lockdowns in areas under general community quarantine (GCQ) are not enough to arrest the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Roque previously said local government units must instead “intensify other strategies” as the GCQ classification of the National Capital Region (NCR) was a subject of “debate and discussion” among members of the Inter-Agency Task Force for Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF).

But Malacañang may soon take a different route as appeals from medical front liners to revert Metro Manila back to ECQ or risk the health care system to collapse have been mounting and are becoming more resounding.

“President Rodrigo Roa Duterte has heard the concerns of the medical community and the Chief Executive has directed the Inter-Agency Task Force for Emerging Infectious Diseases to act on these concerns immediately,” Roque said in a statement.

The Palace mouthpiece stressed that the Chief Executive recognizes the country’s “skilled, tireless and dedicated healthcare workers as important front liners in the battle against COVID-19” and has tasked the IATF to find ways to alleviate their plight.

“We are grateful for their immense contributions to heal our people and our nation during these difficult times. Your voices have been heard. We cannot afford to let down our modern heroes. This is our commitment,” noted Roque.

Open letter

Around 40 medical societies released an open letter addressed to National Task Force Against COVID-19 chief implementer Carlito Galvez Jr. and Health Secretary Francisco Duque III stating that the health care system has been overwhelmed, especially in the NCR, with hospitals being forced to temporarily close and medical workers also being hit by the viral respiratory disease.

“We propose the ECQ be used as a timeout to refine our pandemic control strategies addressing the following urgent conditions or problems: hospital workforce efficiency, failure of case finding and isolation, failure of contact tracing and quarantine, transportation safety, workplace safety, public compliance with self-protection, (and) social amelioration,” part of the letter released through Philippine Medical Association President Jose Santiago read.

“The health sector cannot hold the line for much longer. Our healthcare workers should not bear the burden of deciding who lives and who dies. If the health system collapses, it is ultimately our poor who are the most compromised. In the end, winning the war against COVID 19 relies heavily on being able to keep our health system capacitated to address the needs of all Filipinos. We hope that our government heeds this plea,” it added.

This comes after calls of Philippine College of Physicians vice president Dr. Maricar Limpin and other sectors to revert Metro Manila back to ECQ — even for just two weeks — to give health workers a time to recuperate from exhaustion due to the non-stop admission of COVID-19 patients in hospitals.

Last Friday, President Duterte retained the GCQ status of Metro Manila until 15 August. It is also in effect in Bulacan, Batangas, Cavite, Laguna, Rizal, Cebu City, Lapu-Lapu City, Mandaue City, Minglanilla and Consolacion towns in Cebu province and Zamboanga City, while the rest of the country is under a modified GCQ.

“The 1 to15 August general community quarantine classification of Metro Manila has been a subject of debate and discussion by the members of the Inter-Agency Task Force for Emerging Infectious Diseases,” Roque said.

“The Palace understands the delicate balancing act between public health and the economic health of the nation given that Metro Manila and CALABARZON make up 67 percent of our economy,” he added.

Purpose served

Noting that the ECQ has already “served its purpose,” the Palace official said “it is for this reason that the local government units (LGU) of Metro Manila has been directed to implement a strict localized lockdown/ECQ in barangays where 80 percent of cases are located and the publication of these barangays.”

Roque added that other measures that the LGU must implement include the stringent enforcement of minimum public health standards, massive targeted testing, intensified tracing, quarantine of close contacts; strict adherence to the implementation of Oplan Kalinga for isolation of confirmed cases.

“We welcome comments of various stakeholders and we will include them in future IATF meetings,” he added.

While this developed, around 80 medical societies urged the national government to use the two-week proposed lockdown to recalibrate strategies amid the overwhelming cases in hospitals.

“The current crisis necessitates putting prime importance on effective solutions addressing the health problems at hand. If the health system collapses, it is ultimately our poor who are most compromised,” they said.

Losing battle

Groups of medical organizations emphasized that the country is now waging a “losing battle against COVID-19” as they urged more drastic measures to curb the pandemic.

“We are the ones in the battlefield, we are the ones facing, seeing what’s happening. Government should listen to us,” Limpin said.

She also noted that exhausted health care workers — from doctors down to ambulance drivers — were also getting infected by the highly contagious virus and as of this week, over 4,500 doctors, nurses and other health care workers have contracted the disease.

“If we’re already tired, don’t wait for us to collapse. If we collapse, all of us, what happens to the Filipino people?” said Limpin, adding that they fear the day when hospitals and health care workers all bog down due to the rising number of COVID-19 patients that need treatment, especially as more sectors are reopening due to a more relaxed lockdown status.

“The number of people with COVID-19 will surge and the hardest part is we will have to turn away patients because hospitals can no longer take patients more than the capacity,” she stressed.

Limpin explained that it is not just about the issue of expanding bed capacity in hospitals but also the health situation of health care workers, noting that there was a shortage in doctors, nurses, even ambulance drivers.

“The entire hospital system is affected, even with increased bed capacity, there’s no staff to check on patients,” Limpin said as she appealed to Filipinos to strictly follow minimum health protocols set by the government such as properly wearing masks and observing physical distancing while in public to curb the spread of the disease.

Not effective

Dr. Antonio Dans of the Philippine General Hospital said the rise in the number of cases admitted in hospitals already shows that the current strategy implemented is not effective.

“The problem is that those measures are not working and we know it’s not working because we are flooded with patients in the hospital,” he said.

He warned that if the current issues are not addressed immediately, the situation in the country may be similar to what has happened in New York City.

Meanwhile, Philippine Nurses Association president Rosie de Leon mentioned the existing disparity in the provision of salary remains to be the main reason why many nurses are hesitant to apply for positions.

De Leon said that the increase was earlier implemented only to certain groups such as those working in government hospitals excluding others working in private facilities.

“That is also the dilemma on why many nurses are hesitant to accept the positions is because of the salary. It really is too low,” she said.

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Duterte orders IATF to reconsider imposing ECQ in NCR

By Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos August 1, 2020, 6:18 pm



President Rodrigo Duterte. (Presidential photo)

MANILA – President Rodrigo Duterte has ordered the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) to reconsider tightening the community quarantine status in Metro Manila to enhanced community quarantine (ECQ), Malacañang said on Saturday.

This, after medical front-liners called on the Duterte government to impose ECQ in Metro Manila from August 1 to 15 due to the continuing spike in the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) infections in the country's metropolis.

"President Rodrigo Roa Duterte has heard the concerns of the medical community and the Chief Executive has directed the Inter-Agency Task Force for Emerging Infectious Diseases to act on these concerns immediately," Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said in a press statement.

In a taped public address aired on Friday, Duterte announced that Metro Manila would be under general community quarantine (GCQ), third to the most stringent community quarantine imposed by the government, until August 15.

Duterte's announcement came despite Malacañang's repeated statements that Metro Manila might be placed once again under ECQ, the strictest quarantine classification.

Several medical workers who are helping the government fight Covid-19 have asked Duterte to consider their appeal to implement ECQ in Metro Manila from August 1 to 15.

Dr. Mario Panaligan, president of the Philippine College of Physicians, appealed for the reimposition of ECQ in Metro Manila, saying the medical professionals are already "tired."

"We propose that the two-week ECQ be used as a time out to refine our pandemic control strategies," Panaligan said in an August 1 letter backed by other health organizations.

Roque said the Palace acknowledges the "skilled, tireless and dedicated" health care workers in the country as "important front-liners in the battle against Covid-19."

"We are grateful for their immense contributions to heal our people and our nation during these difficult times. Your voices have been heard. We cannot afford to let down our modern heroes. This is our commitment," he said.

As of July 31, Metro Manila, the epicenter of the Covid-19 pandemic in the country, has recorded a total of 50,611 confirmed Covid-19 cases, according to the Covid-19 tracker uploaded on the official website of the Department of Health. **(PNA)**

Palace, IATF hold meeting to discuss frontliners' concerns

Published 7 hours ago on August 1, 2020 11:08 PM

By [Francis Wakefield](#)



Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea convened a meeting Saturday night, 1 August, to discuss the mounting concerns being raised by the medical community amid country's fight against the coronavirus disease.

Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque said present during the meeting include Budget and Management Secretary Wendel Avisado, Trade and Industry Secretary Ramon Lopez, Health Secretary Francisco Duque III, Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Ano, Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana, Senior Deputy Executive Secretary Michael Ong and Presidential Assistant for Foreign Affairs Robert Borje.

National Task Force Chief Implementer Charlie Galvez,; and the anti-COVID czars Deputy Chief Implementer of the NTF Vince Dizon and One Hospital Incident Command Chief Leopoldo Vega. and Senator Bong Go, the Chair of the Senate Committee on Health, are also present in the meeting.

"Recommendations from the aforesaid meeting will be also be submitted tonight for the President's review," Roque said.

Roque said before the meeting, some Cabinet officials had met with representatives of the Philippine Medical Association, the Philippine Nurses Association, and the Philippine Association of Medical Technologists to discuss the concerns of the medical community amid the challenges of COVID-19.

He said the meeting took place Saturday afternoon after the press conference of the frontliners this morning.

Almost 5K new Covid-19 cases, tally exceeds 98K: DOH

By Joyce Ann L. Rocamora August 1, 2020, 7:17 pm



MANILA – The Philippines surpassed its previous record of the highest single-day spike in coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) cases after 4,963 new infections were reported on Saturday, jacking up the total to 98,232.

This is higher than the 4,063 new cases reported on Friday.

In its Covid-19 case bulletin, the Department of Health (DOH) clarified that 85 duplicates were removed from the total case count, six of which were recoveries while one was death.

Of the new cases, 4,841 "occurred" in July, the DOH said.

The top areas with new infections are Metro Manila with 2,667, followed by Cavite with 405, Cebu with 355, Laguna with 324, and Rizal with 252.

The DOH said 30,928 of the overall tally are active cases, 88.9 percent of whom have mild symptoms, 9.2 percent are asymptomatic, 1 percent are in severe condition, while 0.8 are critical.

A total of 93 new recoveries were likewise reported, raising the total to 65,265.

Deaths, on the other hand, rose to 2,039 with 17 additional fatalities, 13 of whom passed away in July and four in June.

Five of the new fatalities were from Metro Manila, five from Region 4-A (Calabarzon), four from Region 7 (Central Visayas), two from Region 1 (Ilocos region), and one from Region 9 (Zamboanga Peninsula).

'Hospital beds'

As of this posting, 56 percent of the 1,400 intensive care unit (ICU) beds for Covid-19 patients nationwide are occupied while 52 percent of the 11,100 isolation beds are in use.

The ward bed occupancy rate is also high with 57 percent of the 3,900 coronavirus-dedicated beds in use:

National Capital Region:

- ICU - 79 percent of 508 beds are occupied;
- Isolation - 81 percent of the 3,400 beds are occupied; and
- Ward - 86 percent of the 1,500 beds are occupied

Central Visayas

- ICU - 45 percent of 159 beds are occupied;
- Isolation - 49 percent of the 1,100 beds are occupied; and
- Ward - 39 percent of the 438 beds are occupied

Meanwhile, 72 percent of the 2,000 mechanical ventilators for Covid-19 cases remain available nationwide.

The Philippines has so far tested a total of 1,423,630 individuals with its 72 licensed reverse transcription – polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) laboratories and 23 licensed GeneXpert laboratories. (PNA)

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1110851>

Gov't serious on nuclear power: Cusi

Published 20 hours ago on August 1, 2020 09:59 AM

By **TDI**



SECRETARY Alfonso Cusi (in white polo) during an inspection of the mothballed Bataan Nuclear Power Plant early in the administration of President Rodrigo Duterte. W. Commons

The Philippine government is not taking the possible use of nuclear energy with a cavalier attitude, but is looking at it at all angles, including its safety and environmental impact, if any.

Secretary Alfonso Cusi of the Department of Energy (DoE) made this assurance before an international forum over concerns raised about the Philippines' seeming pivot towards the use of viable sources of energy.

Cusi said the emphasis is being given by the DoE, as the lead government on energy matters, on achieving long-term power security and sufficiency.

"Given that the idea of harnessing nuclear power for our energy needs is a highly politicized issue in our country, we have been working to ensure that public and stakeholder acceptance is fully and properly addressed," Cusi said.

The DoE chief made the remark before the participants of the Nuclear Business Platform webinar, with the theme: "NBP Conversations, Philippine Nuclear Market Update."

Cusi said there is already a comprehensive and integrated communication plan, which will be intensified, as the government goes full speed on its Nuclear Energy Program (NEP).

President Duterte has given the green light for the program through the issuance of Executive Order 116, which created a NEP inter-agency committee headed by the DoE.

The committee's primary mandate is to study the possibility of tapping nuclear power and include it in the country's energy mix.

During the NBP forum, Secretary Cusi expressed optimism that Filipinos have become more open to the idea of using nuclear energy for power generation, as reflected in a Social Weather Station (SWS) survey the DOE commissioned last year.

He noted that the survey respondents are already aware that nuclear energy possesses both benefits and risks, adding that 78 percent of the respondents are willing to learn more about nuclear energy.

That survey also showed a 79 percent approval rating on the possible use or rehabilitation of the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant and a 65% approval rating on building a new nuclear power plant.

"With such a positive turnout, I feel that now is (the) time for intensified and informed public discussions on nuclear energy and its potential role in the Philippine energy security agenda," Secretary Cusi said.

Cusi noted that 70% of the respondents wanting to have government funds to finance the construction of a nuclear power plant is also a good indicator of the acceptability of nuclear energy.

“I believe that the Philippines stands to gain a lot from the safe introduction of nuclear power into our energy mix. Since I assumed my post as Energy Secretary, I have been looking into the merits of nuclear power utilization, and I believe that the time is ripe for us to embark on a full national nuclear energy program,” he stressed.

Cusi cited the following why he is supporting the use of nuclear energy:

- Nuclear power could help ensure a country’s energy security. The energy supplied by a nuclear power plant is considerably more secure as compared with plants that are powered by fossil fuels, which require constant feeds of coal or gas. Additionally, in most reactors, fuel assemblies are used for an average of three years. Nuclear reactors, on the other hand, operate with high capacity factors, allowing them to provide a constant and more reliable supply of power.
- Given the collective desire to build a better and cleaner world for the coming generations, nuclear power appears to be the most viable alternative to baseload power produced by coal.
- There is a correlation between nuclear power utilization and developed economies. The United States has 98 nuclear power plants while France has 58. Japan, on the other hand, has 39; China has 45 nuclear plants; while the United Kingdom and South Korea have 15 and 24, respectively.

He noted that the Philippine nuclear story started almost at the same time as that of South Korea’s.

The Philippines was one of the first Southeast Asian countries to embark on a nuclear power program with the creation of the Philippine Atomic Energy Commission (PAEC) in 1958.

Two decades later after the Commission’s establishment, the country became host to Southeast Asia’s only nuclear power plant in the 1980s — the 621-megawatt Bataan Nuclear Power Plant.

“Unfortunately for us, the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant was mothballed and was never commissioned and operated. In fact, I often say that the Philippine economic landscape would be very much different today had the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant been operational,” he said.

Prior to EO 116, Secretary Cusi said the Philippine Energy Plan (PEP) already projects the inclusion of nuclear power in the country’s energy mix by 2027.

With the evolution of Small Modular Reactors that are suitable for the off-grid or island areas of the Philippines, he said that the possibility of establishing a modular power plant in the country might come sooner.

“This would depend on the passage of necessary legislative policies on nuclear power, which are among the bills that have been certified as urgent, and must be passed by the present Congress,” he pointed out.

p/jd

Nuclear energy

August 01, 2020

People's Tonight

WITH the signing of Executive Order (EO) No. 116, the stage is once again open for the ventilation of the “pluses and minuses” of transforming the Philippines into a nuclear-power country.

Signed by President Duterte last July 24, the order calls for the creation of a committee, which will study the possibility of tapping nuclear energy as a long-term option for power generation.

The Nuclear Energy Program-Inter-Agency Committee (NEP-IAC) will conduct a pre-feasibility study to evaluate the need for and viability of introducing nuclear power into the state’s energy mix.

Likewise, the committee will recommend the necessary steps in the utilization of nuclear energy as well as existing facilities such as, but not limited to, the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP).

Secretary Alfonso Cusi of the Department of Energy (DOE) described President Duterte’s signing of EO No. 116 “as a major step towards the realization of a Philippine nuclear energy program.”

Cusi said the nuclear energy program ought to benefit the Filipino people by enhancing our energy supply levels and help shield the country’s consumers from traditional power price volatilities.

On the other hand, Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian, chair of the Senate energy committee, called for transparency in the plan to study the possibility of utilizing nuclear energy as a power source.

“The public should be well-informed on the inherent risk and the potential of nuclear power. Only an open and free discussion of this technology will deepen the comprehension of the public,” he said.

Nuclear energy is a power source that is “very complicated and demands high level of knowledge to fully maximize its utilization without sacrificing public safety,” according to Senator Gatchalian.

And the NEP-IAC should dig deeper why many people are still against the introduction of nuclear energy into the country’s energy mix despite the rising costs of electricity in the Philippines.

Rainy Saturday as 'Dindo' enhances southwest monsoon

By Raymond Carl Dela Cruz August 1, 2020, 10:22 am



'DINDO'. The path of Tropical Depression Dindo in the next few days, according to the weather bureau on Saturday (Aug. 1, 2020). While "Dindo" has no direct impact on the country, the bureau said it would enhance the southwest monsoon, resulting in some rains in most parts of the country. (Photo courtesy of PAGASA)

MANILA – The low-pressure area spotted east of Cagayan has developed into Tropical Depression (TD) Dindo and will enhance the southwest monsoon (habagat), bringing rains in most parts of the country on Saturday.

In its bulletin, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said "Dindo" was last tracked at 825 km. east of Tuguegarao City and currently has no direct impact on the country.

"No tropical cyclone wind signal is in effect over the country," PAGASA said.

"Dindo", packing maximum sustained winds of up to 45 kph near the center and gustiness of up to 55 kph, is not expected to make landfall as it moves west-northwest at 10 kph.

Maintaining its speed and track, "Dindo" is forecast to be at 575 km. east of Basco, Batanes on Saturday night.

PAGASA said the entire Luzon, western and central Visayas, northern Mindanao, Zamboanga Peninsula, and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao will experience occasional rains brought by the southwest monsoon.

The rest of the country will have cloudy skies with scattered rains and thunderstorms, also brought by the southwest monsoon.

Temperature in Metro Manila will range from 25°C to 31°C; Tagaytay City, 22°C to 29°C; Metro Cebu, 24°C to 31°C; Cagayan de Oro City, 22°C to 31°C; and Metro Davao, 24°C to 31°C. (PNA)

UAE starts up first Arab nuclear plant

Published 13 hours ago on August 1, 2020 06:08 PM

By [Agence France-Presse](#)



The UAE has substantial oil and gas reserves but has made huge investments in developing alternatives, including solar energy and now the Barakah nuclear power plant. (AFP)

The oil-rich United Arab Emirates on Saturday announced the startup of its Barakah nuclear power plant, a first for the Arab world.

“UAE first nuclear reactor at the Barakah Nuclear Energy Plant has achieved first criticality and successfully started up,” tweeted Hamad Alkaabi, the country’s representative to the International Atomic Energy Agency.

“This is a historic milestone for the nation with a vision set to deliver a new form of clean energy for the nation,” he tweeted in English, along with a photograph of technicians raising their arms in celebration.

The UAE premier and ruler of Dubai, Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al-Maktoum, tweeted that work at Barakah had “succeeded in loading nuclear fuel packages, carrying out comprehensive tests and successfully completing the operation”.

“Congratulations on realizing this historic achievement in the energy sector & marking this milestone in the roadmap for sustainable development,” Sheikh Mohammed said.

The UAE started loading fuel rods into the reactor at Barakah in February, after regulators gave the green light for the first of the plant’s four reactors, opening the way for commercial operations.

The plant on the Gulf coast west of Abu Dhabi had been due to go online in late 2017 but faced a number of delays that officials attributed to safety and regulatory requirements.

The Nawah Energy Company said at the time that Unit 1 will begin commercial operations after a “series of tests” leading to the start-up process.

During the process, the unit will be synchronized with the power grid and the first electricity produced.

The UAE has substantial oil and gas reserves, but with a power-hungry population of 10 million, it has made huge investments in developing clean alternatives, including solar energy.

The plant is a regional first — Saudi Arabia, the world’s top oil exporter, has said it plans to build up to 16 nuclear reactors, but the project has yet to materialize.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/08/01/uae-starts-up-first-arab-nuclear-plant/>

Natural toxins likely killed hundreds of Botswana elephants — govt

Agence France-Presse / 02:30 PM August 01, 2020



Hundreds of elephants have been found dying. Image: courtesy of National Park Rescue via AFP

Hundreds of elephants that died mysteriously in Botswana's famed Okavango Delta probably succumbed to natural toxins, the wildlife department said Friday.

The landlocked southern African country has the world's largest elephant population, estimated to be around 130,000. Around 300 of them have been found dying since March.

Authorities have so far ruled out anthrax, as well as poaching, as the tusks were found intact.

Preliminary tests conducted in various countries far have not been fully conclusive and more are being carried out, Wildlife and Parks Department boss Cyril Taolo told Agence France-Presse in a phone interview.

"But based on some of the preliminary results that we have received, we are looking at naturally-occurring toxins as the potential cause," he said.

"To date we have not established the conclusion as to what is the cause of the mortality".

He explained that some bacteria can naturally produce poison, particularly in stagnant water.

The government has so far established that 281 elephants died, although independent conservationists say more than 350.

The deaths were first flagged by a wildlife conservation charity, Elephants Without Borders (EWB), whose confidential report referring to the 356 dead elephants was leaked to the media early in July.

EWB suspected elephants had been dying in the area for about three months, and mortality was not restricted to age or gender.

Several live elephants appeared weak, lethargic and emaciated, with some showing signs of disorientation, difficulty in walking or limping, EWB said.

Tests are being conducted at specialist labs in South Africa, Canada, Zimbabwe and the United States. **CL**

Source: <https://technology.inquirer.net/102646/natural-toxins-likely-killed-hundreds-of-botswana-elephants-govt>