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# DENR

## IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service



PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF DENR

ROY Cimatu, Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary, and Danilo Lim, Metropolitan Manila Development Authority chairman, open the first the solar-powered sewage treatment plant in Metro Manila.

## Manila Bay rehab uses solar technology

The STP is a big step forward to making Manila Bay safe again for swimming, bathing, boating, fishing and other forms of contact recreation

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources announced it will be installing three more solar-powered sewage treatment plants (STP) in Metro Manila.

DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu made the statement as he, together with Metropolitan Manila Development Authority chairman Danilo Lim, led the

inauguration of the first Manila Bay solar-powered STP, which is capable of treating 500,000 liters of wastewater per day, along Roxas Boulevard in Manila last 30 July.

"The STP is a big step forward to making Manila Bay safe again for swimming, bathing, boating, fishing and other forms of contact recreation," said Cimatu, who chairs the Manila Bay Task Force in charge of rehabilitating the historic water body.

He said similar solar-powered STP will be installed along major river systems that drain into Manila Bay, namely the Libertad outfall in Parañaque River, Tullahan-Tinajeros River, and Las Piñas-Zapote River.

The DENR chief said the project will ensure that no untreated wastewater from three drainage outfalls – Padre Faura, Remedios and Estero de San Antonio Abad – flows into the bay.

Cimatu said untreated water from the STP will be recycled and stored in an underground tank with a capacity of two million liters.

The treated water will be used for watering plants along Roxas Boulevard, the maintenance of two solar-powered comfort rooms to be constructed at the bay walk area, and fire trucks of the cities of Manila and Pasay, he said. JC



THIS solar-powered sewage treatment plant harnesses the sun's energy in the operation of equipment vital in cleaning outfalls from rivers and esteros discharging into Manila Bay.

# DENR to build 3 more solar-powered sewage treatment plants

August 2, 2020, 4:34 pm



**MANILA** – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will install three more solar-powered sewage treatment plants (STPs) in Metro Manila after unveiling the first one along Roxas Boulevard in Manila on July 30.

DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu on Sunday said similar solar-powered STPs will be installed along major river systems that drain into Manila Bay: the Libertad outfall in Parañaque River, Tullahan-Tinajeros River, and Las Piñas-Zapote River.

“The STP is a big step forward to making Manila Bay safe again for swimming, bathing, boating, fishing, and other forms of contact recreation,” said Cimatu, who chairs the Manila Bay Task Force in charge of rehabilitating the historic water body.

Cimatu made the statement as he, together with Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chairman Danilo Lim, led the inauguration of the first Manila Bay solar-powered STP, which is capable of treating 500,000 liters of wastewater per day.

According to Cimatu, the project will ensure that no untreated wastewater from three drainage outfalls -- Padre Faura, Remedios, and Estero de San Antonio Abad -- flow into the bay.

Cimatu said the untreated water from the STP will be recycled and stored in an underground tank with a capacity of 2 million liters.

The treated water, he said, will be used for watering plants along Roxas Boulevard, maintenance of two solar-powered comfort rooms to be constructed at the bay walk area, and fire trucks of the cities of Manila and Pasay.

Cimatu said the construction of STPs is “just one of the many geoengineering interventions” for cleaning Manila Bay.

In January 2019, the DENR launched the rehabilitation project dubbed as “Battle for Manila Bay” with a massive cleanup activity along Roxas Boulevard, which was participated in by over 10,000 volunteers.

A month later, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte formed the Manila Bay Task Force and designated Cimatu as its chair to hasten government efforts to restore the heavily polluted bay to its former glory.

The President has allocated PHP43 billion for the implementation of the Manila Bay rehabilitation project within three years and at least 13 government agencies are working together to carry out the mission.

The government targets the source of water pollution in an effort to rehabilitate, restore and maintain the historic bay to a level fit for swimming, as mandated in the writ of continuing mandamus issued by the Supreme Court in 2008. **(DENR PR)**

# 3 more solar-powered sewage treatment plants set to be built in Metro Manila

Published August 2, 2020, 3:35 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

Three more solar-powered sewage treatment plants (STPs) are expected to be constructed on Metro Manila's river systems in the coming months to complement the first solar-powered STP that was unveiled on Roxas Boulevard, Manila last July 30.



(MANILA BULLETIN FILE PHOTO)

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu said the STPs will be installed on major river systems that drain into Manila Bay — Libertad outfall on Parañaque River, Tullahan-Tinajeros River, and Las Piñas-Zapote River.

“The STP is a big step forward to making Manila Bay safe again for swimming, bathing, boating, fishing, and other forms of contact recreation,” Cimatu, who chairs the Manila Bay Task Force in charge of rehabilitating the historic water body, said.

Cimatu and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chairman Danilo Lim led last July 30 the inauguration of the first Manila Bay solar-powered STP, which is capable of treating 500,000 liters of wastewater per day.

According to the DENR chief, the project will ensure that no untreated wastewater from three drainage outfalls — Padre Faura, Remedios, and Estero de San Antonio Abad — will flow into the Manila Bay.

Cimatu pointed out that the untreated water from the STP will be recycled and stored in an underground tank with a capacity of two million liters.

The treated water, he explained, will be used for watering plants on Roxas Boulevard, maintenance of two solar-powered comfort rooms to be constructed at the bay walk area, and fire trucks of the cities of Manila and Pasay.

The construction of STPs is “just one of the many geo-engineering interventions” for cleaning Manila Bay, he said.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/08/02/3-more-solar-powered-sewage-treatment-plants-set-to-be-built-in-metro-manila/>

## Solar-powered plant

posted August 02, 2020 at 09:06 pm



The Metro Manila Development Authority recently unveiled the Solar-Powered Sewerage Treatment Plant (STP) beside the Manila Yacht Club (MYC). At the inauguration and the unveiling of the historical marker are (from left) Fr. Efren Tawagan, who officiated the blessing ceremonial, MYC Commodore Robert Lim Joseph, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, MMDA Chair Danilo Lim, and Jackie Rodriguez, immediate past president of Rotary Club of Manila. The STP can process 500,000 liters of dirty water a day from the outfalls of Remedios, Padre Faura and Estero de San Antonio Abad in Manila so that only clean water will reach Manila Bay.

## Mahiga River rehab boosted by DENR-private firms deal

BY SUNDY LOCUS  
*@tribunephil\_sndy*

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) secured the commitment of 28 private companies and organizations to revive the heavily silted Mahiga River in Cebu Province.

Through the agency's "Adopt-an-Estero/



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF MAHIGA RIVER REHAB FACEBOOK  
THE Environment department and various private firms hope to resurrect the Mahiga River.

Waterbody Program," Secretary Roy Cimatu, together with Mayors Edgardo Labella of Cebu City and Jonas Cortes of Mandaue City, recently inked a memorandum of agreement (MoA) with representatives of companies taking part in the Mahiga River rehabilitation efforts.

The MoA was also signed by the chair of six barangays where the 9.1-kilometer river traverses – Apas, Banilad (Cebu City), Kasambangan, Banilad (Mandaue City), Mabolo and Subangdako.

"We will be relentless in our pursuit to have our waterways cleaned," Labella said.

In early February, the Butuanon River within the Mahiga creek was declared off limits after the presence of the polio virus was detected.

"While it is most unfortunate that this news came at the time when we are still reeling from the effects of COVID-2019, it is good that we knew of this the earliest in order for us to align our time and resources to address this concern," Cortes said.

Under the MoA, 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 Environmental Management Bureau in Region 7.

Claudio said 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.

**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.**

He said residents and the government can no longer address the problem effectively without help from the private sector.

The DENR sought assistance and commitment from donor-partners and private entities and organizations as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility programs.

## Private sector, LGU commit to rehabilitate Mahiga River

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

August 3, 2020

A total of 28 private companies and organizations in Cebu have committed to rehabilitating the heavily-silted Mahiga River in the Province of Cebu, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said on Sunday.

This as DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, together with Mayors Edgardo C. Labella of Cebu City and Jonas C. Cortes of Mandaue City, signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) last July 21 in Cebu City with representatives of companies and organizations taking part in the Mahiga River rehabilitation efforts.

The MOA was also signed by the chairmen of six barangays where the 9.1-kilometer river traverses: Apas; Banilad (Cebu City); Kasambangan; Banilad (Mandaue City); Mabolo; and, Subangdako.

The parties agree to develop a Comprehensive Rehabilitation program to reduce the pollution load of the Mahiga River and its tributaries.

According to Lormelyn Claudio, director of the DENR's Environmental Management Bureau in Region 7, the 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."

Claudio said 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 to improve solid, hazardous and wastewater management of the river and for the surface cleanup of its specific segment.

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

Meanwhile, the Cebu LGUs, in collaboration with EMB 7, shall ensure the establishment of integrated solid, health care and household hazardous waste management pursuant to existing environmental laws at the barangay level.

For its part, the DENR—through Region 7 Executive Director Paquito D. Melicor, the Provincial and Community Environment and Natural Resources Offices and EMB 7—shall 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.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/08/03/private-sector-lgu-commit-to-rehabilitate-mahiga-river/>

# Cebu's Mahiga River to be rehabilitated

August 2, 2020 | 7:03 pm



FREEMAN

REHABILITATION of the 9.1 kilometer Mahiga River in Cebu province will be conducted in partnership with 28 private companies and organizations, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said.

On July 21, Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, Cebu City Mayor Edgardo C. Labella and Mandaue City Mayor Jonas C. Cortes, signed a Memorandum of Agreement with the various partners.

The rehabilitation will take place under the DENR's "Adopt-an Estero/Water body" program, which enlists private entities in clearing out waste, debris, and silt from the water system.

Under the agreement, the partners will "adopt" the Mahiga River and come up with a program to reduce the pollution load on the river and its tributaries.

Environmental Management Bureau Region 7 Director Lormelyn E. Claudio said the river's deterioration poses health and safety risks for the communities along its banks.

"Mahiga River Creek is a critical waterway in the city and its current condition requires intensified action from all stakeholders to ensure the sustainability of all rehabilitation measures," Ms. Claudio said.

Cebu City and Mandaue City will establish integrated solid, healthcare, and household hazardous waste management systems under the agreement.

Meanwhile the DENR will monitor industrial and commercial establishments and perform regular water quality monitoring. — **Revin Mikhail D. Ochave**



## Illegal

posted August 02, 2020 at 09:07 pm



DENR workers remove illegal structures and enclosures in Km. 45 Marcos Highway in Baras, Rizal.

# DENR Region 2 commends NBI anti-logging work

posted August 02, 2020 at 09:40 pm

by [Brenda Jocson](#)

Tuguegarao City—The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Region 2 commended the operation of the National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) against illegal logging, which led to the apprehension of 13,031.91 board feet of illegally cut forest products in the towns of Baggao and Peñablanca in this province.

Gwendolyn Bambalan, DENR-Region 2 executive director, led the department in recognizing the efforts of the NBI in Region 2 for their successful implementation of forest laws in the Cagayan Valley region.

Seven agents were awarded with certificates of commendation during the DENR-Region 2 regional management conference on Thursday here.

They were Supervising Agent Chris Mesa, Supervising Agent Julie Ann Taronas, Senior Agent Clyde Cabasag, Senior Agent Pia Hazel Soga-ang, Senior Agent Martinelli Cobson, Special Investigator Denver Louie Cabaluna and Patrolman Jay-Ar Bartolome.

Mesa assured assistance to the DENR in environmental law enforcement.

DENR Undersecretary Jim Sampulna for field operations, enforcement and Muslim affairs, graced the management conference and expressed thanks for the active involvement of the NBI in DENR's forest protection efforts.

"The NBI is the most sought office and reliable entity in law enforcement. Congratulations on being the topnotch law enforcer right now," Sampulna said, as he thanked the bureau on behalf of Secretary Roy Cimatu for helping the DENR in the pursuit of its mandate.

Sampulna also appealed for the continued support of the NBI in all the undertakings in the department. Led by its Regional Director Gelacio Bonggat, the NBI also arrested and filed corresponding criminal charges against arrested forest law violators.

On April 26, the DENR and the NBI served the search warrant at the residence of Ernest Sibbaluca in Barangay Minanga in Peñablanca town where they discovered 4,327 board feet of illegally cut hardwood species inside his compound.

The joint team also discovered illegally cut lumber and fitches abandoned in an open lot with a volume of more or less 5,000 board feet.

Another DENR-NBI joint operation was conducted in Santa Margarita in Baggao town which resulted in the apprehension of 3,704 board feet of common hardwood lumber from a certain Judy Fabillar in the guise of a dismantled house.

# Lawyer asks MGB to explain release of mining permit within Magat watershed

posted August 02, 2020 at 06:40 pm

by [Manila Standard](#)

A lawyer representing a cause-oriented group asked the Mines and Geosciences Bureau to revoke the mining license of a wholly-owned British company for allegedly operating within the protected Magat watershed.

Lawyer Arnel Victor Valeña, acting on behalf of the non-government organization Action for Consumerism and Transparency in Nation-Building, raised the challenge in a letter dated July 13, 2020 to acting MGB director Wilfredo Moncano.

Valeña said the entire area covered by the Financial and Technical Assistance Agreement with the FCF Minerals Corp. was within the Magat watershed—a state-protected property mandated by Proclamation 573 issued in 1969. The ACTION legal counsel submitted a map indicating that FCF's Runruno Gold Project was "clearly within the Magat Watershed where mining activities are expressly prohibited under the Mining Act of 1995 and the NIPAS [National Integrated Protected Areas System] Act of 1992."

"Moreover, it is also a matter of grave concern that the mine tailings and other toxic materials of the Runruno Gold Project may be spilling into the Magat River and other connecting waterways," the letter stated.

Valeña said the Magat River "feeds into the Magat Dam which is the source of irrigation for agricultural lands in the Cagayan Valley, thereby threatening the agriculture and ecosystem of the basin of the Cagayan Valley."

The lawyer also asked the MGB to immediately issue a cease-and-desist order against the FCF's Runruno gold mining operations at the Magat watershed to avoid charges of "causing undue injury to the public and giving unwarranted benefits" to a particular private company.

Magat watershed irrigates 84,984 hectares of agricultural lands in Region 2, serving 61,812 farmers and 360 irrigation associations.

Valeña said MGB had yet to answer his letter dated July 13. "Even in these times of pandemic, government particularly MGB should not be remiss in their duty to protect our environment and answer legitimate concerns," Valeña said.

ACTION earlier called on President Duterte to exercise his executive powers and cancel FCF's mining franchise, underscoring that protected areas including watersheds are "strictly and absolutely beyond the commerce of man." ACTION in a statement cited NIPAS law which explicitly categorized watersheds as protected areas where mining operations are prohibited under Section 19 of the mining law.

"We respectfully ask President Rodrigo Duterte to cancel the FTAA of FCF Minerals Corp., which is located within the Magat River watershed forest reserve. Not only is the company mining in a protected area which is clearly prohibited under the Mining Act of 1995, but the Magat River also feeds into the Magat Dam which is the source of irrigation for agricultural land in the Cagayan Valley," ACTION said in the statement.

# ‘Iloilo City power barge fire should be investigated’

By [Reina C. Tolentino, TMT](#)

August 3, 2020

ILOCOS SUR First District Rep. Deogracias Victor Savellano has sought a congressional investigation into a power barge explosion in Iloilo City last month that has spilt more than 40,000 liters of oil into the waters near the village of Barrio Obrero in Iloilo City.

The lawmaker sought the investigation through a resolution he filed on July 26, as the barge owned by AC Energy Corp. caused the evacuation of residents in the nearby village because of “the very foul odor experienced by the community, as reported by village chief Ricardo Dino Jr. of Barrio Obrero.”

Savellano said “initial data from the Iloilo City Emergency Operation Center as to the incident, identified almost 48,000 liters of oil was spilt from a 200,000 estimated content of the power barge, affecting an estimated area of 1,200 square meters.”

He added that “the spillage is now being contained by the power barge personnel via Spill Boom, but a small amount of oil was identified to have escaped.”

Based on the resolution, it was reported that Coast Guard and barge personnel were trying to contain the oil spill, which covered an area of about 300 meters.

The area, based on the resolution, was “cordoned [off] by the” Bureau of Fire Protection, Philippine Coast Guard, City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office, and City Environment and Natural Resources Office “to prevent the spread of the affected area.”

The Environmental Management Bureau Region 6 “collected water samples to determine oil and grease concentrations,” and how it has affected marine life in the area. AC Energy said it was conducting an investigation of the incident.

# Korea garbage going home

Published 4 hours ago on August 3, 2020 02:10 AM

By [Romina Austria](#)



The Bureau of Customs (BoC) in Northern Mindanao will send back on Tuesday the last batch of South Korean trash.

Only Customs employees will be allowed to witness the process in adherence to physical distancing protocols.

“There are still restricted areas in the port area and social distancing is strictly enforced so will be just be sending pictures, videos and a comprehensive report,” BoC-10 district collector John Simon said.

The remaining 80 containers of Korean waste will be loaded onto container ship BF Mahia. The last batch of waste was supposed to be transported early this year but the coronavirus pandemic happened.

Simon previously said the ship that was supposed to carry the trash was not allowed to leave China due to the surge of virus infections.

The garbage composed of discarded plastic and other items arrived in July and October 2018, imported by Verde Soko Philippines Industrial Corp. to be used supposedly as materials for its plastic recycling facility.

BoC-10 seized the trash and stored it at the Verde Soko facility inside the Phividec Industrial Estate zone in Tagoloan town, Misamis Oriental, after the company wrongfully declared the shipment as “plastic synthetic flakes.”

Verde Soko likewise did not secure an import permit from the environment department and other relevant government agencies.

BoC placed the total weight at 6,500 metric tons contained in 40-foot container vans.

Environmental groups said the reshipment of the Korean waste is a victory for environmental protection.

“We’re thrilled to get a confirmation from Port Collector Simon that the last batch of 80 shipping containers of contaminated plastic waste from South Korea will be finally sent back,” a statement read.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources was asked to revoke its policy of allowing the importation of waste, including “recyclable materials containing hazardous substances” such as electronic, metal and plastic scraps, fly ash, and used oil.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/08/03/korea-garbage-going-home/>

# Real-life 'Darna' wages war vs plastic waste

By: [Doris Dumlao-Abadilla](#) - Reporter / [@philbizwatcher](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:00 AM August 02, 2020

Ledelyn "Ate Neneng" Rosello, 40, operates a "sari-sari" store and peels garlic for a living in Baseco, Tondo. But these days, she earns extra income from collecting plastic waste like sachets and food packaging materials that otherwise would have polluted the streets, esteros or the ocean.

She is the pilot network partner of Plastic Credit Exchange (PCEX) founded by philanthropist and social entrepreneur Nanette Medved-Po, who dreams of making the Philippines—currently stigmatized as one of the world's largest contributors to plastic pollution—part of a global solution to address postconsumer plastic waste.

PCEX, the world's first nonprofit plastic offset organization, recently teamed up with Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso ("Yorme") and the City of Manila to mobilize over three years 100 sari-sari stores run by women microentrepreneurs like Ate Neneng. This "Aling Tindera" program, which aims to reach all of Manila's 897 barangays, is supported by PepsiCo Foundation.



Nanette Medved-Po (left) with Ate Neneng, PCEX's pilot partner for the Aling Tindera program.

## Proof of concept

Once a sari-sari store operator is nominated by the local government unit (LGU), the proprietress is given a 20- or 10-foot container van, which will be installed in a location specially designated by the LGU, to store the plastic waste. She will also be given a manual baler to compress the materials, allowing PCEX to haul them more efficiently.

Before its partnership with Manila, PCEX had piloted the project with the likes of Ate Neneng. Armed with this proof of concept, Medved-Po's team is ready to scale up the program with the help of LGUs and other government agencies.

PCEX is also working on a program with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to help clean up Manila Bay by setting up Aling Tindera stalls in areas where fisherfolk dock. So during those days when catch is meager and the boat is almost empty, the fisherfolk can opt to bring back plastic waste from the ocean and monetize them.

Unlike PET bottles, newspapers and tin cans, residual plastic waste currently has zero value, but PCEX is creating a grassroots- and market-based system that gives incentive to monetize them. The introductory price for the plastic waste under the program is P2 per kilo, but the price is expected to fluctuate depending on market and logistic costs.

## Big problem

"I don't believe that plastic itself is the enemy," Medved-Po said in an interview with Inquirer, adding that as a packaging mechanism, such as for food and health-care products, it's unrivaled in terms of cost and safety.

"What I think the big problem is that we never figured out what to do with plastic once we've finished using it. That is exactly what the exchange is trying to address."



Medved-Po has found an enthusiastic partner in Manila Mayor Francisco “Isko Moreno” Domagoso, who also wants to curb plastic pollution in his city.

After collecting the plastic waste, PCEx works with selected cement coprocessors that comply with environmental standards to use this as feed stock. PCEx is also keen on working with waste-to-energy solution providers and recycling plants in the future.

PCEx takes pledges from companies to commit to a plastic offset program.

“Let’s say you are Nestle and you want to clean 1,000 tons of plastic waste. You let us know and we will activate our eco-system to collect, transport, process and validate the offset and verify it,” Medved-Po said. The “Aling Tindera” program is one mechanism by which an entity can pay for its “sin” by recovering an equivalent amount of plastic waste.

Achieving plastic neutrality is not easy. For many companies, it’s not due to lack of desire but lack of scalable mechanism to do this at the moment, Medved-Po said.

“COVID has made it much worse, because globally, prior to COVID, many countries were working on legislation to restrict single-use plastics. But when COVID came, many of those were either put on hold or rolled back, understandably, because of issues on safety. People needed to use a lot of these plastic packaged products,” she said.

“Even if we convince every beverage company out there to move to glass or aluminium cans, one of the big sectors that will find it difficult to transition would be pharma, because so much of what they do need plastics for safety, whether it’s medicine in pillbox or syringes or plastic tubing or latex gloves, IV, so much of the medical space relies on plastic as a tool for safety. Can you imagine now that with COVID that space has exploded? I can see how The Economist [magazine] is talking about this as a pandemic of plastic pollution.”

### Plastic neutrality

PCEx’s story is entwined with that of Generation Hope, the social enterprise built by Medved-Po in 2012 that sells “Hope in a Bottle” drinking water and channels all proceeds to build classrooms for public schools.

“What we realized is we might be helping with classrooms but creating a problem in the environment because we’re using single-use plastic [bottles],” Medved-Po said.

Medved-Po challenged her team to find a way to achieve plastic neutrality. Generation Hope computed its own plastic footprint and started taking steps to recover the same amount of plastic. Aside from bringing plastic waste to cement manufacturers for coprocessing, it also works with Green Antz Builders, a builder that uses eco-friendly materials and green technologies, to recycle some of the recovered plastic waste and use them for building classrooms. By January 2018, Generation Hope was able to pay for its “sins” by offsetting an equivalent amount of plastic waste generated.

“We’re a small company in a low-margin business and we were able to achieve plastic-neutrality affordably. So I said, if we can do it, why don’t I inform others that they can do it as well? It’s not so much to make money but more to be of service to other businesses to achieve their goal of achieving plastic neutrality because many of them have sustainability goals,” Medved-Po said.

This led to the creation of PCEx in 2019. Since then until March this year, PCEx has recaptured some 3.46 million kilos of plastic waste with the help of manufacturers, consumers and processors “who are just as passionate as we are about protecting our planet,” she said.

PCEx published a pioneering integrated platform on plastic neutrality standard, a framework that is expected to evolve over time.



### Network of collaborators

The partnership with Yorme—who himself collected garbage as a child to help his then impoverished family—is another step in scaling up the network of collaborators that recover, process and recycle plastic waste.

Like Yorme, Medved also has showbiz roots, having been an actress, commercial model and TV host decades ago. This “Darna” of 1991, who is now married to businessman Christopher Po, has since then become a real-life superheroine. In 2017, she landed on Forbes Magazine’s 2017 roster of “Heroes of Philanthropy” for her work at Hope in a Bottle.

With PCEx, Medved hopes to work not only with Philippine-based companies but also with foreign companies seeking to achieve plastic neutrality, using its local network for the offsetting mechanism.

During the signing ceremony with PCEX, Yorme said he had chosen to partner with PCEx because the Aling Tindera Program was “applicable, doable and sustainable.”

Apart from curbing plastic pollution, Yorme 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.” PCEx has a public registry of companies that participate in this offset program. 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,” Medved-Po said.



# SMC begins massive mangrove planting in Bulacan

By [The Manila Times](#)

August 3, 2020



*San Miguel Corporation has started its initiative to plant a total of 190,000 mangrove seedlings over 76 hectares in Bulacan province and other areas in Central Luzon to help address perennial flooding.*

SAN Miguel Corporation (SMC) has started planting 25,000 mangroves on 10 hectares of coastal area in Hagonoy, Bulacan — the first of a total 190,000 mangroves to be planted over 76-hectares in Bulacan and Central Luzon.

The initiative is part of a massive, wide-ranging plan to address perennial flooding in the province, ahead of construction of the country’s newest and largest international gateway just north of Metro Manila.

“This project is a major component of our strategy to help solve flooding in Bulacan once and for all. Mangroves are essential to protect against flooding” said SMC president Ramon Ang.

“This effort is part of our larger flood-mitigation strategy for Bulacan. The first is our P1-billion plan to dredge and clean-up the Tullahan-Tinajeros River system, which began earlier this year. This involves cleaning major river systems and tributaries that have been clogged up with garbage and sediment for so many decades, preventing flood waters from draining into the Manila Bay,” Ang said.

In Hagonoy, Ang said the plan is to plant 10 hectares of coastal area in Bgy. Tibaguin with 25,000 mangrove seedlings, in order to help protect locals from floods brought on by the rainy season, tidal floods, and waters coming from the Pampanga basin.

Hagonoy Mayor Raulito Manlapaz Sr. led the planting of an initial 8,000 mangrove seedlings over an area of three hectares. The next planting activity is scheduled for November, and all 10 hectares are expected to be completed within the year.

Manlapaz was joined by regional officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), other national and local officials, representatives from San Miguel Corporation, and volunteers.

It will take decades to replace mangroves cut down or  
built over, groups warn

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DATE



This 2019 file photo shows Barangay Taliptip in Bulakan, Bulacan  
Philstar.com/Efigenio Toledo IV, file

## It will take decades to replace mangroves cut down or built over, groups warn

(Philstar.com) - August 2, 2020 - 5:51pm

MANILA, Philippines — Mangroves grow slowly and planting young seedlings cannot substitute for cutting down those that have had years to grow, groups opposed to an airport project in Bulakan town in Bulacan said over the weekend.

In a joint statement, AGHAM (Advocates of Science and Technology for the People) Diliman and PAMALAKAYA (Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas) said that there is a logging ban on mangrove trees for that reason.

"[It is the] characteristic slow growth rate of most mangrove species that makes them really hard to replace. The extensive root system of mangroves that serves as protection for communities from floods, erosions and storm surges took decades to be established," they said.

"Young seedlings or propagules of mangroves with no extensive root system yet are prone to harsh conditions in the coast [like] winds, currents and barnacle infestation. This hampers their growth and may result to high mortality rates prior to maturity," they also said.

The groups issued the statement in response to a project by airport project proponent San Miguel Corp. and the local government of Hagonoy, Bulacan to plant 25,000 mangroves in 10 hectares of the town's coastal areas.

According to state-run Philippine News Agency, around 190,000 mangroves will be planted in more than 76 hectares across Bulacan and Central Luzon as a solution to flooding in those areas.

"This project is a major component of our strategy to help solve flooding in Bulacan once and for all. Mangroves are essential to protect against flooding," the PNA report quotes SMC president Ramon Ang as saying.

Jerwin Baure, a licensed fisheries technologist and who is spokesperson for AGHAM Diliman, said that the newly-planted mangroves cannot, in the short-term, replace mangroves already cut down or that will be affected by reclamation for the New Manila International Airport.

It will take decades to replace mangroves cut down or  
TITLE: built over, groups warn

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AGHAM Diliman said that around 600 mangroves had previously been cut down in Barangay Taliptip in Bulakan, where a handful of residents in the path of the planned airport are pushing for proper relocation and livelihood assistance.

The groups said that aside from affecting biodiversity in Manila Bay, reclamation for the airpory would also affect the role of the mature mangrove forests in mitigating climate change.

"[It] will take another set of decades to replace the existing mangroves, thus leaving coastal communities more vulnerable to hazards, and the ecosystems altered for years," Baure said.

"The time is running out for our vulnerable communities due to the hazards brought by climate change, and in this context, no wide-scale planting activity can justify a wide-scale destruction of existing mangrove forest," he also said.

# Villanueva urges hazard pay for street sweepers, garbage collectors

Published August 2, 2020, 9:18 PM

by [Hannah Torregoza](#)

Senator Joel Villanueva said essential personnel such as street sweepers and garbage collectors should also be entitled to hazard pay given the risks they face especially during this time of COVID-19 pandemic.



Sen. Joel Villanueva (Senate of the Philippines / MANILA BULLETIN FILE PHOTO)

Villanueva said it is high-time the government considers the plight of these sanitation workers as they are one of the “most vulnerable with low salaries and very little, if at all, protection afforded to them, and yet they continued to work to keep us safe at our homes.”

The Senate committee on labor and employment chair said sanitation workers are just one of the most vulnerable and affected sectors who have to deal with low pay and other labor issues.

“We will look into this issue as we are set to hear these measures that intend to grant hazard pay for workers in critical industries. We will tackle all the finer points of the bill in the committee hearing so we can strike a balance among stakeholders,” Villanueva said, referring to Senate Bill No. 1453.

The bill primarily seeks to provide hazard pay for workers providing essential services in critical industries in the private sector.

Villanueva likewise filed a counterpart bill, SBN 1455, to cover government workers, which has been referred to the Senate civil service committee.

SBN 1453, or the proposed Hazard Pay for Workers in Critical Industries Act, would grant covered workers a hazard pay equivalent to 25 percent of their monthly basic salary for the duration of the state of calamity or emergency, or a public health emergency as defined by law.

The bill includes workers in the medical and allied health services, banks, morgues, groceries and public markets, pharmacies, restaurants, logistics, food and medical manufacturing, telecommunications, mass media, electricity generation, transmission and distribution, gasoline stations, oil companies, water distribution, sanitation, capital markets, hotels, public transport, civil aviation, and other establishments the government may deem necessary to operate at the time of the emergency.

Under the measure, workers of third-party service contractors such as security guards and janitors, who are deployed to any of the foregoing establishments shall also be entitled to hazard pay for the duration of the calamity, emergency or public health emergency.

Meanwhile, SBN 1455 or the Hazard Pay for Government Employees Act, would also grant government workers a hazard pay of at least 25 percent when they are stationed or assigned as frontline personnel during a state of calamity or emergency, or in times of a public health emergency.

The senator said it is imperative that the government allocates more funds to support ordinary workers during the health crisis.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/08/02/villanueva-urges-hazard-pay-for-street-sweepers-garbage-collectors/>

# PRRD approves proposed P4.5-T nat'l budget for 2021

August 2, 2020, 5:41 pm



President Rodrigo R. Duterte (file photo)

**MANILA** – President Rodrigo R. Duterte has approved the proposed PHP4.506 trillion national budget for 2021 during a special meeting with the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) held on July 30, the Department of Budget and Management said Sunday.

Higher than this year's budget by 9.9 percent and equivalent to 21.8 percent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), DBM said the proposed 2021 budget aims to sustain government efforts towards effectively responding to the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic.

The budget will focus government spending on improving the country's healthcare systems, ensuring food security, increasing investments in public and digital infrastructure, and helping communities cope and prevail in these trying times.

It carried the theme "Reset, Rebound and Recover: Investing for resiliency and sustainability".

The theme, DBM said, is consistent with the administration's goal of saving lives and protecting communities while making different sectors of the economy stronger and more agile.

Every peso of the proposed PHP4.506 trillion 2021 budget, DBM said, went through numerous budget hearings and consultations with the agencies, and levels of scrutiny and approval.

In view of the President's approval of the PHP4.506 trillion proposed budget, the DBM will be finalizing the 2021 National Expenditure Program (NEP) and other budget documents for submission to Congress before the 30-day constitutional deadline. **(DBM PR)**

## Rody okays shift to MECQ

NCR, 4 provinces under stricter lockdown; Honeylet to serve as frontliner

posted August 03, 2020 at 12:25 am

by [Joyce Pangco Panares and Willie Casas](#)

President Rodrigo Duterte has placed Metro Manila, Bulacan, Rizal, Cavite and Laguna under Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine for 15 days as COVID-19 cases continued to surge, with the total breaching the 100,000 mark on Sunday after the Department of Health (DOH) reported 5,032 more infections, the fourth all-time high in a row.



MECQ will take effect midnight of August 4 and will last until August 18.

The lockdown protocol upgrade was part of a seven-point recommendation that was firmed up during Sunday's meeting between Cabinet officials representatives of the Philippine Medical Association, the Philippine Nurses Association, and the Philippine Association of Medical Technologists.

Other recommendations of the Cabinet are as follows: 1. Hire additional healthcare workers and form a healthcare worker reserve. The government will also enter into a memorandum of agreement with private hospitals to allow the deployment of state healthcare workers to private facilities until December 2020; 2. Give additional benefits to healthcare workers: P10,000 risk allowance for private sector healthcare workers and free life insurance under a pending bill; 3. Free accommodation and transportation as well as free and frequent COVID-19 testing for healthcare workers; 4. Require work and quarantine passes anew to minimize people going out on non-essential travels; 5. Ramp up localized lockdowns; and 6. Intensify street enforcement of guidelines for minimum health standards and procure 20 million cloth masks for the poor.

Duterte said the government will seek to include the additional benefits sought by healthcare workers in the Bayanihan 2 measure pending in Congress.

"We agree that you are bone-weary, I know you are tired to the bone – both the pressure and the stressful work, the uncertainty and the fear of getting COVID-19 and not having any in return," the President said.

"We are ready to consider stipend or allowances or pay. Give us time, and we will make a report, and we hope this will be included in the Bayanihan 2. I will give this to you ahora mismo, no delay," he added.

Duterte said he can understand if medical frontliners are now hesitating to work amid the health crisis as he cited the decision of his wife, Honeylet Avanceña, to volunteer as frontliner in the fight against COVID-19.

"My wife has also volunteered to be a frontliner – she's a nurse," the President said.

"This is a war against microbes. Who are our soldiers? The nurses and the doctors. If you cannot go the extra mile, then I can understand you. I am very sorry, but I can understand you. But who else can we turn to?" Duterte added.

On Saturday, at least 80 medical associations representing thousands of doctors signed a letter calling for a "timeout" amid the continuing surge of infections.

"Health care workers are united in sounding off a distress signal to the nation—our health care system has been overwhelmed," the letter read.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III, for his part, assured healthcare workers that they are "the most important people in our fight against COVID-19."

He said the Duterte administration has prioritized the health of medical frontliners, proof of which is the reduced number of COVID-19 cases involving healthcare workers, from a high of 20 percent to 5.3 percent.

Sunday's tally marks the first time more than 5,000 new cases were reported and brings the Philippines closer to having the highest number of infections across Southeast Asia, a position currently held by Indonesia with 109,936 cases.

Of the confirmed cases reported, 2,114 were fresh cases, while 2,918 were reported late. In both instances, Metro Manila accounted for the most number of cases.

The department reported 20 new deaths, bringing the total fatalities from COVID-19 to 2,059.

At the same time, health officials reported Sunday that 301 patients recovered from the disease, bringing total recoveries to 65,557.

The regions with the most number of cases were the National Capital Region with 1,577 (50 percent), Region 4A, with 786 (25 percent) and Region 7, with 299 (10 percent).

In Metro Manila, the cities with the most number of cases were Quezon City, with 569 (21 percent); Manila, with 379 (14 percent); Makati City, with 339 (12 percent); Caloocan City, with 151 (6 percent); and Taguig City, 132 (5 percent).

In Region 4A, Cavite accounted for 463 (40 percent), followed by Laguna, at 326 (28 percent); Rizal at 201 (17 percent); Batangas, at 113 (10 percent) and Quezon, 16 (1 percent).

There are 35,569 active cases undergoing treatment or quarantine as of Sunday.

A doctor said on Sunday warned that the Philippines is losing its battle against the pandemic, as health care workers battling COVID-19 in the frontlines are seeking coordination between national and local governments aside from strict lockdown to address the surge.

During an interview with ABS-CBN's TeleRadyo, Dr. Antonio Dans of the Philippine College of Physicians said the capacity of hospitals in Metro Manila for handling COVID-19 patients is at 85 percent, much higher than the "danger zone" level of 70 percent

"The overriding problem is, there seems to be no coordination from the top downwards. There are localized lockdowns, but are these being followed?," he said in Filipino.

As of last week, more than 4,500 doctors, nurses and other health care workers have contracted the disease amid the rising number of infections across the country.

Aside from the lack of health care workers, the doctors' groups also urged the government to improve case finding and isolation and to ensure transportation and workplace safety.

The doctors also said public behavior was also a problem because some people, thinking the situation is getting better, no longer wear masks.

# Duterte places Mega Manila back to MECQ

Published August 3, 2020, 12:42 AM

by [Argyll Cyrus Geducos](#)

President Duterte sought the middle ground with medical frontliners as he approved on Sunday night the recommendation to place Metro Manila, Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, and Rizal back under the modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) from August 4 to 18.



President Rodrigo Roa Duterte (SIMEON CELI JR./PRESIDENTIAL PHOTO / MANILA BULLETIN FILE PHOTO)

Duterte made the announcement after the medical community appealed to revert Mega Manila—which includes the National Capital Region (NCR), Central Luzon, and Calabarzon—to ECQ as the number of COVID-19 cases in the country continues to rise.

In his late-night public address aired Sunday, Duterte approved the recommendation of Health Secretary Francisco Duque III to place the said areas under stricter quarantine measures.

He explained that he can't put the entire country under stricter quarantine measures because the government is already "scraping" the barrel.

"Ngayon magsabi kayo i-lockdown mo na ang Maynila at ang ibang lugar sa Pilipinas para wala na mahawa. The problem is wala na tayong pera. (You keep on telling me to place Manila and other places in the Philippines under lockdown so there will be no more transmission. The problem is we have no more money). I cannot give any more food and money to the people," he said.

Duterte, meanwhile, said he understands the plight of the nurses and doctors who on Saturday asked for "timeout" by placing Mega Manila back to ECQ.

"The cry of the moment, which is really, I believe, well-taken, and they are right," he said.

"We agree that you are bone-weary," he added.

The President said he understands if the healthcare workers would eventually resign but discouraged them from doing so because the country needs them.

"If they do not want to work, we cannot force them. But por Diyos naman. Kung ganito na sitwasyon (for the love of God, now that we are in this situation)... Who are our soldiers? the nurses and the doctors," he said.

"If you cannot go for the extra mile, I am sorry, I can understand you. Pero wala kami matawagan na iba, eh (But we have no one else to turn to)," he added.

He also acknowledged that health care workers should be paid more as they are the "most important people" in the country's fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/08/03/duterte-places-mega-manila-back-to-mecq/>



# PH Covid-19 cases now 103K; recoveries rise to 65,557

By Ma. Teresa Montemayor August 2, 2020, 6:38 pm



**MANILA** – The Department of Health (DOH) on Sunday reported 5,032 new coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) infections, raising the overall tally to 103,185.

The DOH said the additional cases reported were based on the total Covid-19 tests done by 70 out of 94 operational laboratories.

The majority of the newly announced cases are from the National Capital Region (NCR) with 2,737; Cavite with 463; Cebu with 449; Laguna with 326; and Rizal with 201 cases. The rest are from the different provinces across the country.

The DOH also reported 301 new recoveries and 20 deaths. These figures increased the number of recoveries to 65,557 and the number of deaths to 2,059.

"Of the 20 deaths, 14 or 70 percent in July, three or 15 percent in June and three or 15 percent in May. Deaths were from Region 7 which is 15 or 75 percent, NCR which is four or 20 percent, and Region 4A which is one or 5 percent. There were 79 duplicates that were removed from the total case count and of these, eight recovered cases have been removed," the agency said.

It added that one case that was previously reported to have recovered has been validated to have died and already included in the count of new deaths.

The health department also noted that the country has 35,569 active cases -- of which around 90.2 percent are mild, 8.2 percent are asymptomatic, 1.0 percent are severe, and 0.7 percent are critical patients.

As of Saturday (August 1), the 72 licensed RT-PCR (reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction) laboratories and 23 licensed GeneXpert laboratories have already conducted a total of 1,453,038 tests nationwide.

The DOH said it has 16,600 total bed capacity dedicated to Covid-19 patients. Occupied are about 56 percent of 1,400 intensive care unit beds; 52 percent of 11,200 isolation beds; and 56 percent of 4,000 ward beds.

There are 2,000 ventilators for Covid-19 patients with about 31 percent in use. **(PNA)**

# Du30 to meet with Cabinet members to discuss frontliners' plea

Published 16 hours ago on August 2, 2020 02:22 PM

By [Francis Wakefield](#)



President Rodrigo Duterte is set to meet with key Cabinet members today to discuss the concerns raised by the medical community amid country's fight against the coronavirus disease, Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said.

Roque said he will make an immediate announcement on what transpired in the meeting once details are available.

"I will make the proper announcement in due course," Roque said.

Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea on Saturday night convened a meeting with key members of the Cabinet to address the concerns of the medical community.

Among the Cabinet secretaries present 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.

Also included in the meeting are the National Task Force Chief Implementer Charlie Galvez, the anti-COVID czars namely 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.

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

Roque said prior to the meeting convened by Secretary Medialdea, he and Secretaries Duque, Lorenzana, Lopez, Galvez, Dizon, Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles and other senior government officials met with the 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 on Saturday morning. – **With MJ Blancaflor**

# Congress must guard people's money in this pandemic

Published August 3, 2020, 1:02 AM

by [Manila Bulletin](#)

In the national effort to meet the problems raised by COVID-19, Congress is moving to enact laws to help support the economy which has been badly hit by the pandemic.



A number of economic bills have thus been filed in Congress, some from the administration. The Corporate Income Tax and Incentives Rationalization Act (CITIRA) is the name of a bill that replaced the Tax Reform for Attracting Better and High-Quality Opportunities (TRABAHO). It is billed as the second package of the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion Act (TRAIN) which became law in January, 2018.

There are new bills with similarly attractive acronyms – the Accelerated Recovery and Investments Stimulus for the Economy (ARISE) and the COVID-19 Unemployment Reduction and Education Stimulus (CURES).

Buhay party-list Rep. Lito Atienza and several other congressmen have stood up in Congress to raise questions about these bills which, they said, have no specific lists of projects and sources of funds. “Why would we be pouring trillions of pesos for unspecified infrastructure projects?,” he asked. Worse, he added, the trillions are yet to be borrowed.

The bills leave Congress with too much leeway in including projects that the congressmen want – in short, Atienza said, pork barrel by another name. He noted that the list of sponsors in both ARISE and CURES bills take up three pages, so the bills are bound to be approved.

There is hope, he said, that other factors will serve to rein in what may be an attempt to use adversity to generate political largesse. He recalled Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III’s comment on the second Bayanihan bill in the House appropriating ₱140 billion, that it was unfundable and may even be unconstitutional.

In a virtual press briefing on July 8, Secretary Domnguez disowned certain provisions in various economic bills in Congress. “These items definitely were inserted and did not emanate from the administration’s proposals,” he said.

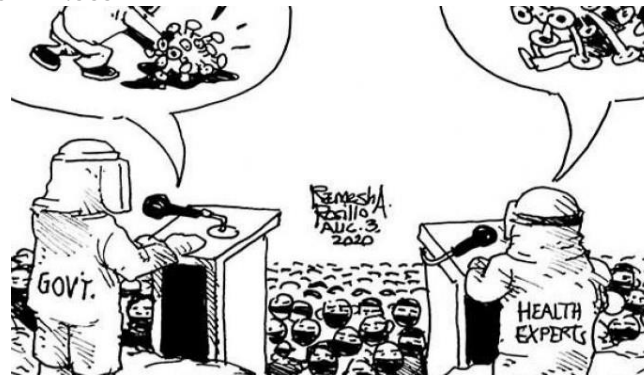
The Philippine Competition Commission has also expressed concern over provisions in four bills that seek to do away with competition and procurement laws. While it recognizes that the bills’ goal is to hasten processes, there is need for deals to be scrutinized, lest certain favored firms abuse the market power they gained because of the pandemic and take advantage of consumers, it said.

Congressman Atienza is concerned about the bills now in Congress containing broad lists of infrastructure priorities without specific lists of sources of funds available. He called on his colleagues as well as the general public to be more vigilant, lest some people take advantage of the pandemic and run away with so much of the people’s money.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/08/02/du30-to-meet-with-cabinet-members-to-discuss-frontliners-plea/>

# EDITORIAL - We should not ignore the experts

(The Freeman) - August 3, 2020 - 12:00am



Groups of doctors and medical personnel are calling for Metro Manila to be placed under Enhanced Community Quarantine anew. They said they needed this “time out” to refine their strategy in the battle against COVID-19.

In an open letter to the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases, the group made up of 80 organizations representing various professions in the medical field said there is a need to reassess the current strategy against COVID-19.

“We are waging a losing battle against COVID-19, and we need to draw up a consolidated, definitive plan of action,” went the unified statement of the various organizations as read by Philippine Medical Association president Dr. Jose Santiago during an online press conference headed by the Philippine College of Physicians last Saturday morning.

“We propose that 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 contact tracing and quarantine; transportation safety; workplace safety; public compliance with self-protection; social amelioration,” the statement further read.

There we have it, straight from the horse’s mouth. Our foremost frontliners themselves are saying that in that part of the county they are not winning against the coronavirus. And that the current strategy being implemented by the government doesn’t seem to be working. The statement goes on for a while, but the gist remains the same.

Those groups are describing what is currently happening in Metro Manila. However, it’s not hard to imagine other areas in the country that are now just opening up --including Cebu Province and Cebu City-- ending up in the same situation as they scale back from more restrictive quarantine measures.

As our medical experts paint the bleak picture, we cannot blame the government for painting the rosy one. They have to maintain control after all, and giving the impression that they are not is sure to cause panic among the people and worsen the already-bad situation. However, we hope that the government at least acknowledges the words of the experts and people in the field and follow their advice.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/the-freeman/opinion/2020/08/03/2032574/editorial-we-should-not-ignore-experts/amp/>

## Local, foreign biz: Poor to suffer more under ECQ

By [Elijah Felice Rosales](#)

August 3, 2020

LOCAL and foreign investors have warned the poor will suffer most if Metro Manila reverts—something medical professionals are pleading for—to enhanced community quarantine (ECQ). The businessmen said work will be restricted again to essential services to the detriment of millions of income earners.

Private-sector leaders interviewed by the BusinessMirror argued the losses outweigh the gains in a U-turn to ECQ. Business operations are just beginning to reopen, and shutting them down again will leave millions of workers jobless, they said.

Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council Private Sector Representative George T. Barcelon said it will be costly to reimpose ECQ measures in Metro Manila, as it will require the government to roll out another round of social amelioration.

“[T]here will be more losses if we revert back to ECQ because only essential sectors would be allowed to operate. Less people will be working, public transport will again [be] locked down,” Barcelon explained.

“The marginalized sectors will suffer more losing their livelihood; government must be ready to revive social amelioration ‘ayuda’ programs,” he added, warning that the peace and order situation could deteriorate if people are left to fend for themselves.

Barcelon acknowledged, however, that infection rates may go slower if households were instructed to stay at home again. As such, this will give the state and the health-care sector the breathing room to reassess their strategies in containing the spread of the virus.

John D. Forbes, executive director at the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, said reverting the nation’s capital to ECQ will result in “delayed recovery, less business activity and less income for basic needs.”

In terms of quarantine protocols, businessmen prefer barangay-level lockdowns over a region-wide ECQ, Forbes said. What should be focused on, he added, is the implementation of health protocols, particularly the wearing of face mask and social distancing.

For Forbes, the coronavirus crisis in the Philippines is not as much of a problem as it is in the United States, where more than 150,000 have now died from Covid-19.

“Also, we should feel safer that the fatality numbers are low in Southeast Asia,” Forbes said. “In the Philippines, the death toll is less than 2 percent of the United States, which has three times larger population.”

In a letter on Saturday, various health groups from all over the archipelago called on President Duterte to place Mega Manila (National Capital Region, Calabarzon and Central Luzon) under ECQ for a period of two weeks from August 1 to August 15.

They said medical practitioners are now exhausted from the overwhelming rise of infections of Covid-19, citing the July 30 case where nearly 4,000 new positives were recorded. Many health-care workers have also been infected, subsequently infecting their families.

As such, it is necessary to impose a two-week ECQ in the nation’s capital to give health workers the time to “draw up a consolidated, definitive plan of action,” they argued.

During this stretch, problems in containing the virus spread should be addressed, particularly on hospital work force deficiency; failure of case finding and isolation; failure of contact tracing and quarantine; transportation safety; workplace safety; public compliance with self protection; and social amelioration.

As such, it is necessary to impose a two-week ECQ in the nation's capital to give health workers the time to "draw up a consolidated, definitive plan of action," they argued.

During this stretch, problems in containing the virus spread should be addressed, particularly on hospital work force deficiency; failure of case finding and isolation; failure of contact tracing and quarantine; transportation safety; workplace safety; public compliance with self protection; and social amelioration.

## DTI chief: No going back

Among the first to oppose the plea of health workers is Trade Secretary Ramon M. Lopez. His agency is responsible for the reopening of business operations nationwide, of which the latest move allowed gyms, Internet cafes and drive-in cinemas to resume activity areas under general community quarantine, such as Metro Manila.

"[We] cannot go back to ECQ," Lopez told reporters on Saturday. "[It is] damaging to people's health, with unemployment and poverty affecting health and wellness and nutrition intake. [It] will affect long-term health and capacity to learn for children."

At least 5 million Filipinos lost their jobs when the whole of Luzon was placed under lockdown in March. Based on the April Labor Force Survey, unemployment rate swelled to 17.7 percent—from 5.1 percent last year—translating into more than 7.25 million jobless Filipinos.

Aside from the threats of income crash and permanent closure, business owners are expected to reject a return to ECQ after investing in health equipment to comply with state protocols on reopening.

The Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases will convene on Monday to discuss the health sector's proposal to reimpose ECQ in Metro Manila. They will have to consider, among others, the public health situation of the country, as the Philippines is now nearing 100,000 cases with over 2,000 deaths.

## DOJ chief weighs in

Meanwhile, the business leaders got an ally in Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra, who expressed apprehension that placing the entire Metro Manila anew in a hard lockdown or enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) would result in more deaths not due to coronavirus infection but due to hunger and other circumstances.

Guevarra, however, said he agreed that the government should take all the necessary steps to protect the welfare of medical frontliners seeking a two-week lockdown in order for them to recover from physical and mental exhaustion caused by the rapid rise in Covid-19 cases in the country, now close to 100,000.

"I understand where our medical and health professionals are coming from. They are expectedly getting weary. I agree that they need all the support and care that the government can provide," Guevarra said.

"But everyone else is getting weary. Millions of people need to go back to work and earn a living, or else they die of hunger. We need to stir the economy back to life, albeit gradually, lest we reach a point where it will be doubly difficult to recover," he added.

Guevarra urged people to continue making sacrifices which he assured will not go unnoticed when the Covid-19 pandemic is over.

"All of us have to make personal sacrifices for the common good. All these will come to pass, and when it's all over the nation will remember with gratitude those who were heroes during this dreadful pandemic. Our doctors, nurses, and other health workers surely top them all," the DOJ secretary explained.

Guevarra's sentiments are aligned with the position of DTI Secretary Lopez who said that the economic cost of tougher quarantine measures could also affect Filipinos' health and well-being.

Lopez is pushing for other measures to stop the Covid-19 spread such as granular lockdowns of buildings, streets or barangays with high infection rates, along with massive tracing, testing, isolation, treatment. He also stressed the importance of complying with health protocols by business establishments.

*With Joel R. San Juan*

Nuclear power plants seen unlikely to be operational by  
end of Duterte's term

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## Nuclear power plants seen unlikely to be operational by end of Duterte's term

August 2, 2020 | 7:07 pm



NUCLEAR POWER within the next two years is unlikely because of the need to complete the appropriate preliminary studies and pass laws regulating the sector, the Senator who chairs that chamber's energy committee said.

"If you ask me whether nuclear can be part of our energy mix in the next two years, it's impossible because the study itself will take time and number two, you'll need legislation to make sure you have safeguards," Senator Sherwin T. Gatchalian said by telephone Saturday.

Mr. Gatchalian said at least seven measures are needed to develop nuclear power — laws establishing an independent regulator, outline safety standards, ensure nuclear security and manage waste, among others.

"The speed of enacting pieces of legislation on nuclear will depend highly on the quality and the credibility of the study that will be conducted by the DoE (Department of Energy)," he said, noting that the coronavirus pandemic has also delayed the legislative process.

President Rodrigo R. Duterte steps down in less than two years, and policy continuity with the next administration remains unclear.

A measure providing a regulatory framework for nuclear energy development and use nearly hurdled the 17th Congress after securing third-reading approval at the House of Representatives. However, it was still awaiting second reading in the Senate when the session adjourned.

The bill has yet to be refiled in the Senate, while at least six bills relating to nuclear power are now pending at the committee level.

Mr. Duterte issued Executive Order (EO) No.116, authorizing a study on the feasibility of nuclear energy and called for the development of a national policy on nuclear energy.

Mr. Gatchalian has said that the DoE and other government agencies should develop a nuclear program with the "utmost transparency," considering the risks it poses.



Nuclear power plants seen unlikely to be operational by  
TITLE: end of Duterte's term

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“We plan to conduct a regular oversight hearing... meaning every step of the way the department should clarify and make us understand every inch of nuclear power,” he said.

He added that as the finance committee vice chairman he also will inquire on the progress during budget review.

“My view is we want to give the department elbow room to recommend what type of fuel source and what type of energy source in our country... but there should be some conclusion at one point because we can't keep on spending on nothing,” he said.

He said the independence of the experts conducting the study will be key, because some experts might be more concerned with selling the Philippines nuclear equipment.

“For example if you ask China to conduct the study, biased na ‘yan (they’ll be biased), because China is trying to be the number one nuclear supplier in the world,” he said.

Carlo A. Arcilla, who leads the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute, said there could still be a significant developments in the last two years of Mr. Duterte's term.

Mr. Arcilla said the government started “too late” because a version of the EO had been submitted for his signature two years ago.

“Definitely, the nuclear plant will not be finished under President Duterte's time, but if he agrees with this, construction could still be started,” he said by telephone Sunday. He added that the study is expected to provide an estimate of the costs involved.

“Sabihin natin na maaprubahan ni President Duterte, may kontrata na, mahirap naman basta basta umatras na doon. Sana ‘yung papalit, igagalang ‘yun.” (Assuming President Duterte approves this and signs a contract, it would be difficult to withdraw from such an agreement. I hope the next administration respects that.)

Mr. Arcilla noted that the fastest route to going nuclear would be to rehabilitate the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant, which would take five years

The United Nations' International Atomic Energy Agency last year transmitted its 19-point Integrated Nuclear Infrastructure Review of the Philippines' readiness to develop nuclear energy.

The report among others raised the need for more public consultations, a legal and regulatory framework, and the addressing of infrastructure concerns. — **Charmaine A. Tadalán**

## 2 storms enhance ‘habagat’

August 2, 2020 | Filed under: Headlines, News | Posted by: Tempo Desk

BY ELLALYN RUIZ

Two tropical storms, one of them inside the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR), continue to enhance the southwest monsoon or “habagat” that will likely induce more rains over Luzon within 24 hours.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said tropical storm “Dindo” (international name “Hagupit”) was estimated at 385 kilometers northeast of Basco, Batanes or still inside the PAR at 10 a.m. Sunday.

It has maximum sustained winds of 75 kilometers per hour (kph) near the center and gustiness of up to 90 kph.

Weather specialist Samuel Duran said Dindo may further intensify into a severe tropical storm with maximum wind speed reaching 89 kph to 117 kph by Monday morning.

However, it is still not expected to make landfall over the Philippines and could already be outside the PAR by Monday.

At the moment, Dindo, as well as another tropical storm with international name “Sinlaku” over the West Philippine Sea, may both continue to enhance the habagat that will bring occasional light to moderate with at times heavy monsoon rains over Luzon within 24 hours. **(Ellalyn Ruiz)**

# Niyanig ng 6.4-magnitude na lindol ang Maguindanao

ni [Lolet Abania](#) | August 2, 2020

Niyanig ng 6.4-magnitude na lindol ang Maguindanao, ayon sa Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs).

Naramdaman ang paggalaw ng lupa ng bandang alas-1:08 ngayong umaga, August 2 sa Maguindanao.

Ayon sa Phivolcs, ang pagyanig ay tumama sa bahagi ng Maguindanao na matatagpuan sa 07.10°North, 124.28°East – 013 km South 24° East ng Cotabato City. Ang lindol ay tectonic in origin at may lalim na 543 kilometers.

Gayunman, walang naiulat na nasirang gusali at aftershocks matapos ang pagyanig. Naitala ang Intensity II sa Alabel at Malungon, Sarangani at Intensity I sa Tupi, General Santos City at Koronadal City, South Cotabato, Kiamba, Sarangani, ayon pa sa Phivolcs.

Samantala, niyanig din ng 3.0-magnitude na lindol ang Davao Oriental, bandang alas-6:02 ngayong umaga.

Ang pagyanig ay tumama sa bahagi ng Davao Oriental na matatagpuan sa 05.92°North, 126.59°East – 099 km South 35° East ng Governor Generoso. Ang lindol ay tectonic in origin at may lalim na 037 kilometers.

Patuloy na pinapayuhan ang publiko na manatiling mapagmatyag at maging maingat sa anumang oras.

# Wildfire hits Banning, California

Josh Edelson, AFP

Posted at Aug 02 2020 05:38 PM



Firefighters watch as flames approach a retardant line near a residential community during the Apple fire in Banning, California on Saturday. At least 2,000 people received evacuation orders as fire spread to 12,000 acres in Cherry Valley.