

DATE: AUGUST 10, 2020

DAY: MONDAY

DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service

DENR pushes for new bureau to specialize in environmental law enforcement

August 9, 2020 | 6:26 pm



Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu

A NEW bureau to oversee compliance with environmental law, for which legislation has been filed in the House, has drawn expressions of support from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu said that an Environmental Protection and Enforcement Bureau (EPEB) will work with law enforcement agencies and the Armed Forces of the Philippines as well as government prosecutors.

According to Undersecretary Jim O. Sampulna, the EPEB will address the gap in the enforcing environmental laws, while also allowing the DENR to focus on conservation and protection.

The DENR recently evicted illegal occupants within the Upper Marikina Watershed and Masungi Wildlife Sanctuary in Baras, Rizal.

Mr. Sampulna, along with Environmental Protection and Enforcement Task Force Executive Director Nilo B. Tadoria and other government officials, led the demolition of illegal structures and barbed wire fences in the area.

“Occupying or dwelling in any public land within a protected area without clearance from the concerned Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) is strictly prohibited under Republic Act 11038 or the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System (ENIPAS) Act of 2018,” Mr. Sampulna said.

Mr. Sampulna added that the law also bans the construction and maintenance of any structure, fence, or enclosure within a protected area without securing clearance from the PAMB and necessary permit from the DENR.

DENR pushes for new bureau to specialize in
environmental law enforcement

August 10, 2020

DATE

TITLE :

PAGE 1/ 2/2

“Violators of these ENIPAS law provisions could face a fine ranging from P200,000 to P1 million or imprisonment from one year but not more than six years, or both,” Mr. Sampulna said.

DENR said protected areas such as the Upper Marikina watershed and Masungi Wildlife Sanctuary are classified as environmentally critical areas and are seen as major sources of biodiversity.

Disturbances to such areas threatened flora, fauna, and water resources which could affect the food and water supply.

Mr. Sampulna said House Bill No. 6973, which backs the creation of EPEB, was filed by Antique Rep. Loren B. Legarda in June. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**



“Occupying or dwelling in any public land within a protected area without clearance from the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) is prohibited under Republic Act 11038 or the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 2018,” Environment Undersecretary Jim Sampulna said over the weekend.

twitter.com/DENROfficial

Public warned vs occupying protected areas

[Elizabeth Marcelo](#) (The Philippine Star) - August 10, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has warned the public against occupying lands classified as protected areas, saying it is ready to evict them even amid the pandemic.

“Occupying or dwelling in any public land within a protected area without clearance from the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) is prohibited under Republic Act 11038 or the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 2018,” Environment Undersecretary Jim Sampulna said over the weekend.

The agency issued the statement after discovering the presence of illegal occupants at the Upper Marikina Watershed and Masungi Wildlife Sanctuary in Baras, Rizal.

The occupants were identified as members of the Guardians International 19th Quarters Inc.

The provincial environment and natural resources office as well as the environmental protection and enforcement task force demolished the structures and fences built by the occupants on July 30.

The law prohibits the construction and maintenance not only of establishments, but also of fences and enclosures within a protected area without authority from the PAMB and DENR, Sampulna said.

Violators will face a fine ranging from P200,000 to P1 million or imprisonment of one to six years, or both.

Protected areas such as the Upper Marikina Watershed and Masungi Wildlife Sanctuary are critical in maintaining balance in the ecosystem as these are the main sources of biodiversity and provides natural processes of the land.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/nation/2020/08/10/2034100/public-warned-vs-occupying-protected-areas>

Pagsusuot ng palero ng PPEs, mahigpit na ipatutupad sa QC



August 9, 2020 @ 4:03 PM 15 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Dahil sa banta ng coronavirus disease (COVID-19) ay mahigpit nang ipatutupad ng Quezon City government ang pagsusuot ng Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) ng mga garbage collector habang naghahakot ng basura sa lungsod.

Ito ang kautusan ni QC Mayor Joy Belmonte sa mga contractor na siyang nangangalaga sa mga garbage collector at mahigpit itong ipatutupad sa lungsod.

Sa text messages sinabi ni Belmonte na may mahigpit na patakaran at guidelines ang QC gov't. hinggil dito.

"May strict protocols and guidelines po ang city government patungkol sa pagsuot ng PPEs ng mga garbage collector," ani pa ni Belmonte.

Sinabi pa ni Belmonte na tungkulin umano ng contractors na siguruhin ipinatutupad ng mga ito ang mahigpit na kautusan hinggil sa pagsusuot ng PPEs ng mga garbage collector.

Nauna rito magugunitang sinabi ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Usec. Benny Antiporda, Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Unit Concerns, na dapat nakasuot ng PPEs ang mga garbage collector bukod pa sa face mask.

Ayon pa kay Antiporda, itinuturing na frontliners din ang mga garbage collector na humaharap sa banta ng COVID-19 kung kaya't dapat may proteksyon ang mga ito at nakasuot ng protective gear habang naghahakot ng basura.

"Kaya umaasa kami sa publiko na i-report sa Hotline 122 ang paglabag dito para maaksyunan natin," dagdag pa ng alkalde.

Idinagdag pa ng alkalde na napag-alaman na pagnag-i-inspect ang mga tauhan ng QC government nakasuot ng PPEs ang mga garbage collector pero pagkatapos ng inspection minsá'y hinuhubad umano ng mga ito dahil nahihirapan o naiinitan ang mga nangongolekta ng basura.

Ayon pa kay Belmonte dapat umano ang contractor ang patawan ng parusa kung mahuhuli ang mga garbage collector na hindi nagsusuot ng PPEs at protector gear pagtatapos pa nito. **Santi Celario**

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/pagsusuot-ng-palero-ng-ppes-mahigpit-na-ipatutupad-sa-qc/>

'Possession of animals in IUCN list requires special

TITLE: permits'

PAGE 1/ 1/2

August 10, 2020

DATE

'Possession of animals in IUCN list requires special permits'

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

August 10, 2020

The possession, transport, and breeding or farming of wild animals, including the progenies that were bred in duly-registered wildlife farms require a special permit, officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said.

This as the DENR begins on Monday its formal investigation of a businessman from Quezon City whose two runaway ostriches went viral on social media. The animals were seen running around a private subdivision on Friday.

One of the two ostriches eventually perished due to stress, according to DENR Undersecretary Benny D. Antiporda.

He said the owner of the ostrich, Jonathan Cruz, has voluntarily turned over to the DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) one of the ostriches.

"Even so, we are not taking his words for it. We are going to investigate," Antiporda told the BusinessMirror.

He said the DENR-BMB team was barred from entering the private subdivision as the entire National Capital Region was again placed under modified enhanced community quarantine.

An ostrich is a large, flightless bird native to Africa. There are two kinds of ostriches in the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species. One is in Appendix I (Somali Ostrich) and the other is in Appendix II (Common Ostrich) which are now being farmed for their meat and egg in many countries, including the Philippines.

Generally, those under Appendix II can be bred. The progenies can be bought locally, or imported. However, only those with wildlife farm permits are allowed to export wild animals under Appendix II.

Wild animals under Appendix I, or critically endangered species, are strictly not allowed.

Initial investigation revealed that Cruz's runaway ostrich was bought by Edwin Hara of San Jose, Nueva Ecija. He bought a total of 12 from a farm in Mindanao. Two of the ostriches went to Jonathan Cruz.

"All Jonathan Cruz needs to show us is the receipt to prove that he bought them from Mr. Hara or directly from the ostrich farm," says DENR-BMB OIC Wildlife Resource Division Chief Theresa M. Tenazas.

'Possession of animals in IUCN list requires special

August 10, 2020

TITLE: permits'

PAGE 1/ 2/2

DATE

Assistant Secretary Ricardo Calderon, the concurrent director of the DENR-BMB, said they will give Cruz the chance to present proof of legal possession or acquisition of the ostriches and wildlife transport permit as they begin a formal investigation on Monday.

He said wild animals bred in captivity like the saltwater crocodiles, which is now considered a farm animal, and could legally be sold for their meat, skin or other byproducts, still require appropriate permits from the DENR.

Mere possession of the wild animals, he said, requires a certificate of wildlife registration. To be allowed to legally breed wild animals in captivity, breeders must secure a Wildlife Farm Permit, which means the holder has the technical and financial capacity to operate a farm for that specific animal.

In the Philippines, ostriches are considered farm animals, and ostrich egg and meat are sold locally. For live ostriches, while buying them is no different from buying a goat, keeping them alive as pets would require a certificate of wildlife registration as proof of legal acquisition or ownership.

Failure to present proof of legal acquisition or transport permit for the ostriches means Cruz may face charges for violation of Republic Act 9147, or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act.

DENR to probe owner of ostriches that ran loose in QC

By Marita Moaje August 9, 2020, 4:44 pm



MANILA – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources on Saturday said it will be investigating the owner of the two ostriches which went viral on social media running inside a subdivision in Quezon City.

DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda confirmed that one of the ostriches was already turned over to the DENR Biodiversity Management Bureau at Wildlife Rescue Center on Friday by its alleged owner, Jonathan Cruz.

Unfortunately, the other ostrich died.

“Isinurender po yung isang ostrich dun po sa ating wildlife rescue center sa DENR. Sad to say base sa naging statement nung sinasabing nag mamay-ari nito na si Jonathan Cruz, yung isa daw pong ostrich ay na-stress at namatay (One of the ostriches was already surrendered to the DENR wildlife rescue center. Sad to say, according to the statement by the alleged owner of the animals, a certain Jonathan Cruz, one of the ostriches died due to stress),” he said.

However, the DENR will not take the statement that the other ostrich has already died, unless its dead body will be shown to them, Antiporda said.

On Monday, the DENR-NCR will be having a technical conference to investigate on the issue where they will invite Cruz to attend.

Antiporda said they will be looking at the permit to transport presented by the owner which states that the two animals were transported from Misamis bound for Nueva Ecija.

He said they need to know how and why the said animals ended up inside the Mapayapa Village in Quezon City.

He added that it also puzzles them that the owner is not from the same village given that his address is in Balingasa, Quezon City.

Antiporda said as of Saturday, Cruz has not presented any permit from the DENR allowing him to take care of the ostrich inside their residence.

The owner, he said, will be given the chance to explain his side to the DENR-NCR, since he is considered to be in good faith after surrendering the said “remaining” ostrich to the proper authorities.

Antiporda also gave an assurance that the welfare of the animal is their utmost concern.

“Rest assured na yung welfare ng mga hayop na ito ay binibigyan natin ng pahalaga at in case we find out na may talagang pagpapabaya itong may-ari at may mga violations may mga karampatang kaso na isasampa ang DENR matapos ang gaganaping technical conference (the welfare of the animals are our utmost concern. In case we find out that there are negligence and violations on the part of the alleged owner then DENR will file cases against him after the technical conference),” Antiporda said. **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1111692>

More details on the QC ostrich that died of 'stress'

By: [Jhesset O. Enano](#) - Reporter / [@JhessetEnanoINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:10 AM August 09, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — One of the two runaway ostriches seen inside a subdivision in Quezon City reportedly died due to stress and the other bird had been turned over to a government animal shelter, according to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The death of the huge flightless bird was a tragic ending to what had been a source of odd amusement on social media for a pandemic-weary public who saw the video of the pair running loose inside Mapayapa Village III in Diliman on Tuesday.

Jonathan Cruz, who claimed to be the owner of the birds, brought the second ostrich to the Wildlife Rescue Center (WRC) at Ninoy Aquino Parks and Wildlife Center on Friday afternoon, according to Dr. Esteven Toledo, a veterinarian with the Biodiversity Management Bureau.

The 9-month-old female ostrich was in good health, with no injuries, said Toledo.

Cruz told the authorities at WRC that he was cleaning the birds' enclosure earlier on Tuesday morning when they escaped through the gate, which he had forgotten to close, Toledo said.

Proof of death

He said Cruz reported that the other bird had died due to stress.

"We asked him to provide proof of death or conduct a necropsy or autopsy to find out the cause of [the] bird's death," Toledo said in a phone interview on Friday.

It was not immediately clear whether the ostrich that died was the one shown in one video being subdued by a security guard and several other men.

The surviving ostrich will be the first to be housed at the animal rescue center — originally a temporary shelter and rehabilitation facility for abandoned, donated or confiscated wildlife that became a permanent home for these animals, many of them from other countries and endangered.



SURVIVOR This 9-month-old female ostrich was one of two that were running loose inside Mapayapa Village III in Quezon City.
—RICHARD A. REYES

Originally 12 birds

The mini zoo's newest addition came from the Philippine Ostrich and Crocodile Farms Inc., a registered ostrich breeder in Opol town, Misamis Oriental province, according to a transport permit and a veterinary certificate presented by Cruz.

The documents indicated that there originally were 12 birds—five males and seven females—that were to have been shipped from the Opol farm to a certain Edwin Jara in Nueva Ecija province, in October 2019 when they were just 3 weeks old for “propagation purposes.”

Ostriches are a source of meat and leather.

Toledo said it was uncertain whether the rest of the birds made it to Nueva Ecija province or somewhere else.

Wildlife law enforcer Rogelio Demelletes Jr. on Saturday said environment officers in Central Luzon had no record of any ostrich arrival from October last year up to the present.

Toledo said initial information indicated no registered ostrich farm in Nueva Ecija province.

Demelletes said the birds may have been bought from Jara, but without purchase documents, Cruz may face charges of illegal trading, possession and transport of wildlife.

No explanation

DENR National Capital Region (NCR) Executive Director Jacqueline Caancan said the transport permit did not allow nor explain why the two ostriches were in Metro Manila.

“Whether you are a pet owner or a wildlife enthusiast, you have to have proof with the DENR that these animals are legally acquired and that these are registered,” she told the Inquirer. “The transport permit they are showing would not work because it does not indicate that the birds were going to NCR.”

Ostriches are considered wildlife and require permits and other documents under Philippine law, Toledo said.

“If you are engaged in ostrich farming, you should be technically and financially capable,” he added.

Caancan said her office would investigate the case further. “Based on our records, there are no registered ostriches in Mapayapa Village,” she said.

The Philippine Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) on Saturday said the owner of the birds must be held liable under the Animal Welfare Act for the death of one of the ostriches.

“The place where they were kept in contributed to the stress and caused the ostrich's death,” PAWS executive director Anna Cabrera told the Inquirer.

Cabrera said that if no permits were secured to keep the animals, the owners should also be charged with violation of the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act.

A peacock was seen lounging on top of a gate inside a subdivision in Muntinlupa

Published August 9, 2020 11:19am

After news of ostriches, a pig, and a cow running free on Philippine streets, a peacock was seen lounging on top of a gate inside a subdivision in Muntinlupa City.

According to Nelson Canlas' report on 24 Oras, a netizen uploaded a photo that showed a beautiful peacock sitting on a gate, looking as though it was guarding the house.

It is unclear who owns the peacock or why it was seen there, but Chico Cabalatangan, who shared the photo on Facebook, said it is well-taken care of.

Wildlife running free seems to be last week's theme, with a [pair of ostriches](#) running loose in a subdivision in Quezon City. It was quickly followed by a [sighting of a pig running on a Cebu highway](#), and finally, [a cow in Iloilo](#).

In case you were wondering, keeping [wildlife in subdivisions is legal](#) as long as it is compliant to Republic Act No. 9147 and supported by necessary documents, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has clarified.

It added that keepers of wildlife should have financial and technical capability, as well as facilities to maintain them.

But perhaps urbanites interested in such a hobby might want to rethink that. On Saturday, DENR Spokesperson Undersecretary Benny Antiporda reported that [one of the two ostriches that went viral](#) has died due to stress. — **Jannielyn Ann Bigtas/LA, GMA News**

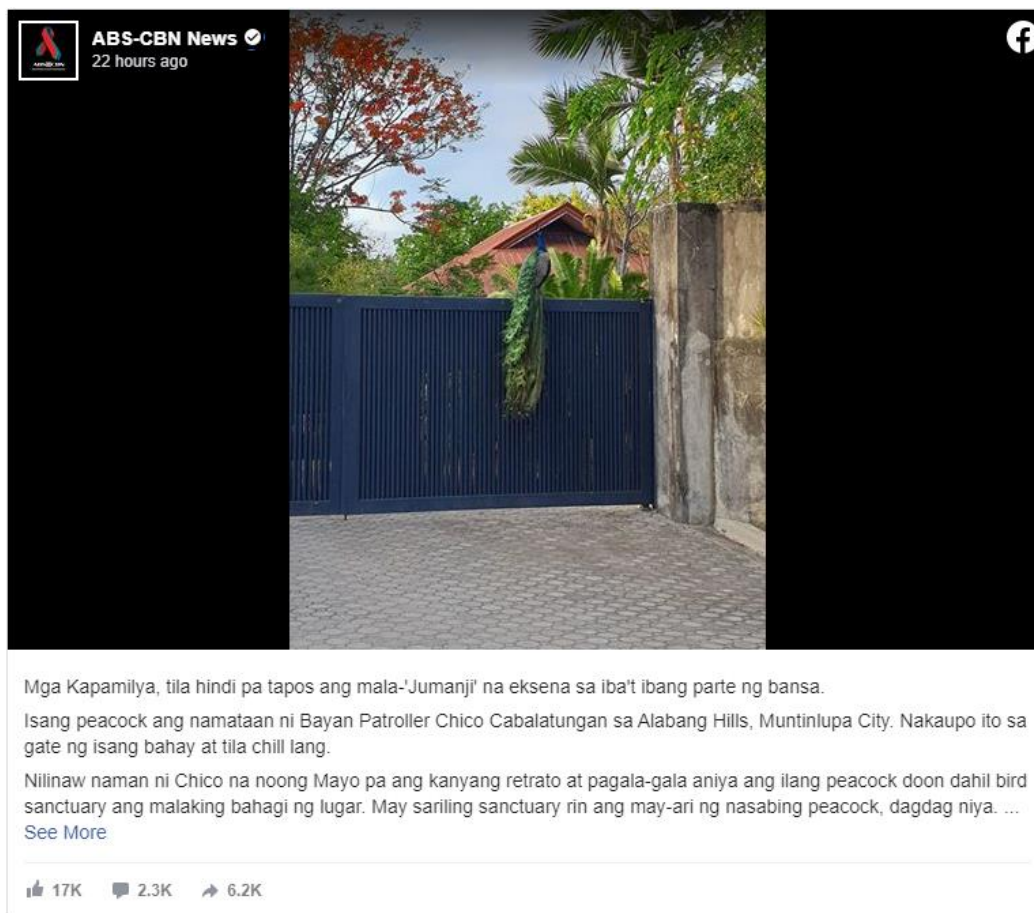
VIRAL: Peacock, namataan sa Muntinlupa

Job Manahan, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Aug 09 2020 03:09 PM

Tila hindi pa natatapos ang mala-'Jumanji' na eksena sa iba't ibang bahagi ng bansa nitong mga nakaraang araw.

Isang peacock ang namataan ni Bayan Patroller Chico Cabalatangan sa Alabang Hills, Muntinlupa City na nakaupo sa gate ng isang bahay at tila chill lang.



Nilinaw naman ni Cabalatangan na noong Mayo pa ang kanyang retrato at pagala-gala aniya ang ilang peacock doon dahil bird sanctuary ang malaking bahagi ng lugar.

Dahil dito, hindi na bago sa mga residente na makasalamuha ang mga peacock, aniya.

"Normally they're let out of their pen early in the morning and that's when they roam around. By the afternoon, they start coming closer to their home property na. Then by evening, they go back in," sabi niya.

May sariling bird sanctuary rin ang may-ari ng nasabing peacock kaya tiyak ang Bayan Patroller na ligtas ang mga ito sa kanyang pangangalaga, dagdag niya.

"It's a very welcome part of our community. Actually kasi, animals are really loved dito sa village namin. It's not uncommon to see houses leaving bowls of food outside their gates for stray cats to feast on."

Matatandaang nitong mga nakaraang araw, tampok sa social media ang mga ostrich, baboy, baka, bayawak, baboy ramo, kambing, at kabayo na rumarampa sa kalsada.

Nagpaalala si Department of Environment and Natural Resources undersecretary Benny Antiporda na may epekto sa biodiversity ang pag-aalaga ng ilang hayop tulad ng ostrich.

"Mayroon tayong endangered species. This shall promote a negative impact to the biodiversity. Kasi first of all, 'yung mga endangered species natin, ginagawang pet sa bahay na para bang trophy nila, without even thinking about the situation of the animal," ani Antiporda.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/classified-odd/08/09/20/viral-peacock-namataan-sa-muntinlupa>

Eagles of Pasonanca



SIGHTING. An adult male Philippine eagle photographed for the first time inside Pasonanca Natural Park. (Photo from PEF and USAid)



The expedition team retrieved the remains of the deceased eaglet for further study. (Photo from PEF and USAid)

August 9, 2020

FOR the longest time, proof of Philippine eagles (*Pithecophaga jefferyi*) inhabiting Pasonanca Natural Park in Zamboanga City relied merely on brief sightings by forest guards or eagle feathers found on the forest floor.

But this changed in 2019 when, for the first time, a Philippine eagle family and their nest were fully documented and observed in a series of field expeditions led by Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF), together with partners from the Zamboanga City government, Zamboanga City Water District, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and United States Agency for International Development (USAid).

Partnership for eagle research

Threatened by hunting and habitat loss, the Philippines' national bird has around 400 pairs left all over the country; half of which can be found in Mindanao. While PEF has led Philippine eagle studies in various parts of the region, an eagle subpopulation in Zamboanga Peninsula, including those in Pasonanca, is yet to be studied and fully understood.

"We can only save what we can understand," said Dr. Jayson Ibañez, PEF Director for Research and Conservation. "For a critically endangered species like the Philippine eagle, finding, studying, and protecting each individual bird in the wild are the only means to save it from extinction."

This has led PEF, USAid and partners in Zamboanga City to roll out the first-ever field study to survey Philippine eagles and find an active nest inside Pasonanca Natural Park. The 17,000-hectare protected area is one of the few remaining intact forests in Zamboanga Peninsula, making it an important habitat for many bird species and other wildlife. Through a series of expeditions, the field study aims to locate nesting sites in the park, record and observe behaviors of resident eagles, and tag and monitor live Philippine eagles.

Led by experts from PEF, the expedition team is composed of personnel from the city government and local DENR, forest guards from Zamboanga City Water District who patrol Pasonanca's forests, and representatives from universities in the city. PEF and USAid chose this multisectoral approach to involve partners in experiential learning on eagle research and to ensure that eagle conservation efforts are sustained beyond the field study.

"Eagle conservation is never the work of just one person. It requires partnerships, multiple skills, and resources toward a common goal," said PEF Executive Director Dennis Salvador. "This collaboration paves way for building regional capacity on research and conservation to help address the unique needs of Philippine eagles in Zamboanga."

Before going on their first expedition, PEF experts trained the partner institutions on eagle research techniques, such as surveying nesting areas, observing eagle behaviors, trapping and tagging live eagles and analyzing telemetry data.

Find an eagle, find the nest

In October 2019, the team embarked on their first expedition inside Pasonanca, just in time for the eagle breeding season in Mindanao. Team members set up at their observation posts—both on the ground and high above on tree platforms—on a site near the edge of the park. Using scopes and binoculars, they scanned the forest canopy every day to search for signs of eagle activity.

After almost 10 days into the expedition, an adult Philippine eagle was finally photographed emerging from a tree line—the first time that the national bird was officially documented inside Pasonanca. The male eagle was seen carrying a large prey and was spotted again by the team for three consecutive days. These observations mean that the eagle could be providing food for a potential mate and their eaglet and that an active nest was not too far from the site.

“Finding active eagle nests and protecting them is very important,” Ibañez said. “As centers of reproduction, protecting nesting areas ensures that eagle pairs can nest safely and that their young survive to become future breeders for their species.”

The team returned for a second expedition in November to December 2019 to record more sightings of the male eagle, observe its behavior and map out its flight patterns and home range, with the goal of locating its nest. The team also scoured the forest for clues, such as eagle droppings, prey remains, molted feathers and large masses of ferns growing on tree branches that could be suitable nests for eagles.

Finally, on the morning of December 4, 2019, as the team spotted the male eagle flying from a tree canopy after delivering food, an adult female eagle emerged into view from a thicket of ferns. From afar, the team observed the nest and its feathered dwellers, including a healthy and well-fed one-month-old eaglet. This is the first active Philippine eagle nest recorded in Pasonanca and the third in the whole Zamboanga Peninsula.

“The presence of an eagle nesting pair and their young is strong proof that conservation is working in the park,” Ibañez explained. “Eagles breed and nest only in safe and healthy forest habitats. If forests are intact, that means the rest of biodiversity therein is also diverse and thriving.”

Hope for an endangered species

Things took an unfortunate turn when the team returned in January 2020 and saw the nest was empty. When the team climbed onto the nest, they found a few feathers, small bones, and skin patches of the eaglet, with no sign of its parents. The team collected the scant remains of the young eagle and sent these to the University of the Philippines for DNA and genetic tests.

While the cause of the eaglet’s death is still uncertain, such a tragedy is not uncommon among eagle parents in the wild. PEF data shows that three out of ten nesting attempts of Mindanao eagle pairs can fail even in optimal environments due to natural causes, such as sickness or accidents. Inexperienced eagle parents breeding for the first time are also more likely to lose their young.

Not all hope is lost, though, as the team spotted the eagle parents numerous times in February and March 2020. Both eagles showed courtship behaviors, such as exchanging vocals, soaring together and displaying their talons, with the male even attempting to mate with the female on a few occasions. These are hopeful signs that the eagle pair can still re-nest and lay a new egg.

In the meantime, the team continues to monitor the eagle pair while also preparing the site for trapping and tagging, in hopes of catching at least one of the adult eagles and using a global positioning system (GPS) tracker to follow its range and movements in the forest. This information can help experts pinpoint areas of Pasonanca that are hunting and breeding grounds for eagles, which can then be prioritized for stronger protection and conservation measures.

“We hope to see a new nest and track the nesting pair and their new eaglet in future expeditions. We also think that there could be three more eagle pairs in Pasonanca,” Dr. Ibañez said. “Finding these pairs, and studying and monitoring them, will be very important to eagle research and conservation in the region.”

Protecting Zamboanga’s eagles

The expedition team’s discoveries in Pasonanca underscores the urgency to protect Philippine eagles in the region and avoid a catastrophic loss of these iconic birds in the wild, especially as escalating diseases and epidemics threaten not only humans but endangered raptors, as well.

“We think these eagles may have adaptations and behaviors that are unique to their bloodlines as a result of adjusting to unique environmental conditions in the Zamboanga region,” Dr. Ibañez explained. “The key to preventing species extinction is saving as many unique bloodlines as possible, and maintaining their genetic diversity to allow eagle populations to adjust to an ever-changing world.”

Initial findings of the ongoing field study are already a clear validation of Zamboanga City’s commitment to safeguarding Pasonanca Natural Park as a protected area and a vital watershed. Conservation measures put in place by the city government and DENR and regular patrolling and enforcement by forest guards of Zamboanga City Water District have translated to pristine forest habitats in Pasonanca that are highly favorable for nesting eagles.

For its part, USAid, through its Protect Wildlife project, supported partners in the city to enhance their plans and strategies for effectively managing Pasonanca as a protected area. The project also trained the water district’s forest guards in improved skills and practices in enforcing forestry and wildlife laws.

“Gracias a Dios y con orgullo that the Pasonanca watershed is also a habitat of the Philippine eagle. With evidence of the presence of Philippine eagles in Zamboanga City, there is indeed hope for future generations to continue conservation and protection of our precious watershed and its vital ecosystems,” said Zamboanga City Mayor Maria Isabelle Climaco. “Our researchers, in partnership with DENR and USAid, collaborated efforts in preparing our forest land use plan and identifying indigenous flora and fauna. We commit to harness efforts to make our natural habitats safe for God’s precious creations.” **(PR)**

Work to save PH eagles won't stop for pandemic

By: [Jhesset O. Enano](#) - Reporter / [@JhessetEnanoINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:18 AM August 09, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — Even before the young Philippine eagle (*Pithecophaga jefferyi*) soared back to her home on Mt. Apo, hundreds of people were already tuned in to her takeoff.

Most of them were far from the actual jungles of Mindanao. Some were more than 1,000 kilometers away, in the urban jungles of Metro Manila, awaiting the eagle's flight on their computer or cell phone screens.

The release in late July of the rescued raptor, named "Makilala Hiraya" by her carers, was the first time such a momentous event was broadcast live on Facebook by the Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF), which works to give the critically endangered species a chance at survival.

With the community quarantine separating people and requiring them to stay home, the livestream offered a rare collective experience to watch the national bird boost that chance.



FIT TO FLY HIGH Adriano Oxales, animal keeper of the Philippine Eagle Foundation, holds the Philippine eagle named "Makilala Hiraya" for a standard medical checkup before the bird's transfer to the Philippine Eagle Center in Davao City on June 8. After she was found healthy and clear of diseases, she was released on July 28, in time for World Nature Conservation Day. —PHOTO

COURTESY OF PHILIPPINE EAGLE FOUNDATION

Learning opportunity

The mission to save the Philippine eagle, one of the rarest eagles in the world, has not stopped despite the COVID-19 pandemic. Under the "new normal," eagle conservationists are turning to digital tools and the internet to keep at their arduous task.

Prepandemic engagements during eagle releases were focused only on concerned local government officials and indigenous communities living near or in the forest that the eagle considers its home, said PEF executive director Dennis Salvador.

The new coronavirus has changed that. Strict health protocols now limit those who can come together at the site.

But this setback has opened another door—an eagle release as a learning opportunity for a wider audience and a source of inspiration during bleak times.

"With most people at home due to the lockdown, we saw that it was a good opportunity to allow people to take part and see firsthand the work that goes into releasing rescued eagles," said Jayson Ibañez, the foundation's director for research and conservation.

Their new approach did not come without technical glitches. After all, forests are not the ideal places to get the strongest internet connection. The result was a tad anticlimactic, as weak signals barred those tuned via Facebook livestream to see the actual moment when Makilala Hiraya left her bird kennel.

Thankfully, the power of social media proved stronger: A subsequent video of the eagle's actual takeoff has gained over 3,000 likes and has been shared by more than 1,000 people at this writing.

Remote rehab

Ibañez said the videos of the national bird, seen as a symbol of rising above adversity, would hopefully help ease the people's sorrows and fears over the uncertain future wrought by the pandemic.

Digital tools are now playing central roles in actual conservation work given the restrictions on the usual protocols in bringing rescued birds to the Philippine Eagle Center in Davao City.

Since the lockdown in March, the PEF has rescued four Philippine eagles. The number includes Makilala Hiraya, which crash-landed in a grassland in Makilala town, Cotabato province, in June, after being mobbed by a flock of large-billed crows.

Makilala town was only a three-hour drive from Davao City. But it was a different scenario for "Siocon," which was found 625 km away in Zamboanga del Norte province at the height of the lockdown in April.

With strict travel bans across the country, Ibañez and his team, along with their partners from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of Agriculture, began remotely rehabilitating Siocon back to health.

"It was the first time for us ... We used Messenger video and phone conferencing," he said.

In over a month, online checkups were done through photos and videos of Siocon that were exchanged by Ibañez's team and the DENR regional office in the Zamboanga Peninsula, where the eagle stayed. Through the Messenger app, Ibañez sent extensive guides on proper restraint and care for the bird.

Weak Wi-Fi signals sometimes got in the way, but the telemedicine approach paid off. In mid-May, the PEF team made the 19-hour drive to Zamboanga, passing through 15 checkpoints across seven cities and provinces. With a GPS tracker attached, Siocon was finally released back into the wild.

"Preinternet and mobile phones, this would have been impossible," Ibañez said.



UNCAGED AND ONLINE The release of the rescued Philippine eagle named "Makilala Hiraya" back to the wild last month was broadcast live on social media, a first for the Philippine Eagle Foundation. —PHOTO COURTESY OF GIDEON ZAFRA OF THE MAKILALA INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS OFFICE

Holistic approach

Nationwide, only around 400 pairs of Philippine eagles are left, half of them in Mindanao. With the threats of deforestation and hunting, conservationists are working closely with their partners on the ground to ensure the birds' survival in the succeeding generations.

Among these partners are the indigenous peoples living in ancestral domains where Philippine eagles are found. They serve as front-liners in watching over and protecting the birds of prey.

But their communities have also been ravaged by the coronavirus and the economic slump, leaving many cut off from vital information on the health outbreak as well as most basic goods and government services.

“Many people have left their homes to go back to the forests and to go back to ‘kaingin’ (slash-and-burn) to feed their families,” Salvador said. “We were concerned that our partners might go back to the old ways, so we have to get them back to the fold.”

To continue protecting the Philippine eagle and its habitat, the people protecting them must be uplifted, too, Ibañez said.

Thus, with laptops, LCD projectors and fervent hope for strong Wi-Fi signals, the PEF and its partners have begun giving online seminars and training in financial literacy and managing small enterprises to indigenous tribes and also migrants in the uplands to help them cope with the changes driven by the public health crisis.

In the next weeks, Ibañez and his team plan to bring livelihood projects and assistance to more communities, including a webinar on how to sew cloth face masks.

With no signs of the pandemic’s end, the PEF has also called on the public for donations so it may continue with its mission of engaging the communities and caring for the 32 eagles still in the center in Davao City.

As the eagle conservationists adapt to the new normal, they hope that the lessons from the pandemic will be carried even after the worst is over.

“If we continue to convert lands and cut down forests, we may face tougher pandemics,” Salvador said. “I think we should do something in terms of policies and practices to protect and secure our forests, not only to benefit our biological resources but also to ensure the future of our people.”

P8-M nipa plantation pushed for bioethanol production

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

August 10, 2020

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Region 2 and the Cagayan State University (CSU) have awarded P400,000 in financial assistance to fisherfolk in the coastal town of Santa Ana. The amount was part of CSU's P8-million project to establish some 50 hectares for a new nipa plantation for bioethanol production. Corie Corpuz, DENR-Region 2 information officer, said the beneficiary was the Pasiguit Fisherfolk Association (PFA) under the "Restoration, Establishment, Maintenance and Protection of Nipa Stands for Bioethanol Production" project of CSU funded by the DENR under the National Greening Program. "The financial aid will be used by the people's organization for the maintenance and protection of a 50-hectare plantation of 125,000 nipa propagules," Corpuz added. She said the CSU's nipa plantation development and mangrove reforestation project was included in a memorandum of agreement between the DENR led by Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu and eight state universities in the country with a total funding of more than P31.2 million. Executive Director Gwendolyn Bambalan of DENR-Region 2 noted thick mangrove areas in Santa Ana town. She was in Barangay San Vicente in the town during the awarding of the financial aid to PFA on July 22. "These mangroves are natural barriers for storm surges," Bambalan said. She added that the shrubs are "good sources of bioethanol for making alcohol for our protection, especially during these trying times with the onslaught of the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic." Dr. Urdujah Tejada, CSU president, thanked the DENR for funding the project. PFA Chairman Jaime Yosores said the assistance will help them earn a living on top of fishing, their seasonal livelihood for six months a year. Joining the awarding and site visit were CSU Gonzaga Campus Executive Officer Froilan Pacris Jr., Provincial Environment and Natural Resources officer Ismael Manaligod, Community Environment and Natural Resources officer Aida Adap and San Vicente village chief Eduardo Palor.

Declare Mt. Arayat as protected area

posted August 09, 2020 at 11:05 pm

by [Macon Ramos-Araneta](#)

The fabled mountain of Mount Arayat in Pampanga, a mystical hill in Negros Occidental and a watershed in Masbate, should be declared as “protected areas, said Sen. Cynthia Villar.

Villar, chairperson of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, filed separate bills to put these areas under government protection. She cited the need to amend Republic Act 11038 or the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System (E-NIPAS) Act to include at least three areas in the Philippines.

“We have to put in place adequate conservation measures and appropriate management schemes to safeguard the biodiversity of ecologically rich and biologically important areas in our country so that present and future generations will continue to benefit from it,” she said.

Villar pushed for the declaration of Mount Arayat in Pampanga as a protected area in SB 1713. Mt. Arayat, formerly known as “Bunduk Alaya” or “Eastern Mountain,” is a fabled mountain in the municipalities of Arayat and Magalang. It has a height of 1,026 meters above sea level and is considered as an extinct stratovolcano.

Notable features include natural habitats of endemic and endangered flora and fauna; important source of water for domestic and agricultural use of the surrounding communities; clear water cascading from its waterfalls; and impressive rock formations.

It is home to 49 species of trees, 86 species of wild birds, 14 species of mammals, and 11 species of reptiles. Also found here are threatened tree species such as Kamagong gubat, Tindalo, Kupang and Bangkal and endangered species such as Arayat Pitogo, Bitag and Teak. The mountain is also home to the nearly threatened monkey species known as the Philippine macaque.

A similar bill was filed by 3rd District of Pampanga Rep. Aurelio D. Gonzales Jr.

Villar also filed Senate Bill 1712, which seeks to declare the Hinakpan Mystical Hills in Negros Oriental as a protected area with a category of a natural monument.

Hinakpan Mystical Hills is a group of around 237 conical limestone peaks in unique shapes and sizes, found in the highland of Guilhelgangan City. The hills which cover 1,331 hectares are scattered in the village of Hinakpan and resembles the Chocolate Hills of Bohol.

A similar bill was also filed in the House of Representatives by 1st District of Negros Oriental Rep. Jocelyn Sy Limkaichong.

Villar likewise filed Senate Bill 1711, which seeks to include the Tugbo Watershed Forest Reserve in Masbate as an E-NIPAS protected site.

The watershed serves as the primary water source of Masbate City and Mobo. It is characterized by a moderate to intensive forest cover in a mountainous topography.

Villar noted that the challenges confronting conservation efforts on the watershed include deforestation, illegal logging, hunting of wildlife, and other destructive human activities, which may include quarrying.

A counterpart measure, House Bill 462, was also filed by 2nd District of Masbate Rep. Elisa T. Kho.

At present, there are 107 protected areas covering 3 million hectares in the Philippines that have been so declared through legislation.

Villar noted that based on records and suitability assessments by the Biodiversity Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, there are still numerous sites in the country.

Based on records and suitability assessments by the Biodiversity Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, she said there are still numerous sites in the country that have to be given 'protected area' status by legislative action in order to ensure its conservation.

Villar is the principal author of the E-NIPAS Act which expanded the list of protected areas from 13 to 107. These include popular tourism destinations as well as internationally-recognized critical zones. The law was signed on June 22, 2018.

Environmentalists nationwide join calls to save 300-

TITLE: year old giant Toog tree

PAGE 1/ 1/3

August 10, 2020

DATE

Environmentalists nationwide join calls to save 300-year old giant Toog tree

By [CHRIS V. PANGANIBAN](#) -AUGUST 9, 2020 5:30 PM

SAN FRANCISCO, Agusan del Sur (MindaNews / 09 August) – Environmentalists and tree preservation experts in other parts of the country have joined the calls to save the giant 300-year-old Philippine Rosewood tree (*Petersianthus quarialatus*), locally known as Toog, from being cut down allegedly because it poses hazard to motorists along the Agusan del Sur- Surigao del Sur highway.

Another letter of appeal from Philippine Native Tree Enthusiasts (PNTE) based in Quezon City will be sent Monday morning to Mayor Solomon Rufila of this town, Agusan del Sur Gov. Santiago Cane, Jr. and Hadja Didaw D. Piang-Brahim, Caraga regional director of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, expressing support to save the Toog tree.

PNTE is a social media group of around 14,000 members dedicated to, and actively propagating native trees since 2013.



Estimated at 300 years old, the 54-metter heritage Toog tree, an ecotourism landmark in San Francisco town, Agusan del Sur, was given yet another lease on life after the last minute appeal by concerned residents stopped its scheduled cutting down on Sunday, 9 August 2020. The mayor summoned the concerned residents to a meeting on Monday, 10 August 2020, to resolve the issue. MindaNews photo by JANUS LOIUSE PANGANIBAN

Signed by Jurgene Primavera, Pew fellow and PNTE member, and Arceli Tungol, PNTE administrator, the letter asked the concerned government officials if they acted on the recommendations during the stakeholders meeting on September 10 last year like pruning of decaying branches, treating the infected portions and conducting studies to improve tree stability by means of artificial buttresses, guy wires and other interventions.

Primavera, an aquaculture scientist who hails from Butuan City in Agusan del Norte, said tree surgeon Dr. Armando Palijon, a retired forestry professor at University of the Philippines Los Baños, is willing to share his expertise to preserve the iconic heritage tree.

The letter will be delivered prior to the meeting on Monday afternoon between concerned groups and local officials to resolve the issue in a manner amenable to all.

Rufila on Saturday called off the Toog's scheduled cutting on Sunday, August 9. But he called for a meeting on Monday with the protesters. Last year, the scheduled cutting was also stopped as recommendations were made on how to save the tree.

Environmentalists nationwide join calls to save 300-

TITLE: year old giant Toog tree

PAGE 1/ 2/3

August 10, 2020

DATE

Another call came from singer-composer and environmentalist Bayang Barrios – Villegas, who grew up in Bunawan town in this province. She asked netizens to make noise and share her message until it reaches the proper authorities.

“I hope they will preserve it,” the Manobo singer said in her social media post, adding she has never heard a Toog tree fall “since time immemorial.”



An old marker with a description of the giant Toog tree. Photo courtesy of Saqve ToOg tree Please (STOP) social media group. The scientific name of the tree then was different. The note reads: “Before you stands what is probably the biggest and most majestic tree in the Philippines today. This tree would have been cut down long ago like most trees. What saved it? The wood of toog trees is hard and cross—grained. Woodsmen find it difficult to fell toogs with axes or cut the wood into lumber with old time handsaws. But with modern power saws nowadays and with wood getting scarce, toog trees are no longer safe from destruction. Let us save this tree and cherish it as a living souvenir of our past.”

A local social media group, Save Toog Tree Please (STOP), will attend the meeting on Monday afternoon, with presentations and recommendations to save the tree.

STOP organizer Mauro Bravo Jr., retired district engineer of the Department of Public Works and Highways and an old-timer of this town, said they will recommend the application of fertilizer around the tree buttress, patching the hole, retrofitting the tree with two elevated platform levels that will serve as a view deck for tourists and visitors to get a panoramic view of the magnificent Mt. Magdiwata.

The group will also remind Sangguniang Bayan members that there was a municipal ordinance in 2012 protecting and adopting the Toog tree under the Community Awareness on Resource and Environment program.

The heritage tree and eco-tourism landmark, estimated to be 300 years old, was marked for cutting by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to eliminate the hazard to motorists and commuters should it collapse.

The cutting of the Toog tree was approved by the Sangguniang Bayan’s Resolution No. 127 on June 15, 2020 after they agreed with the findings of DENR’s Forest and Wetland Research Development and Extension Center (FWRDEC) in Bislig City that the hardwood species poses high potential hazard with a rating of 5.4 based on biomechanical and structural analysis.

But Dr. Marcelina Pacho, a tree surgeon who was a former pathologist of DENR’s Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau, last year said the tree can still be treated by pruning the branches and cleaning the cavities with fungicide.

Environmentalists nationwide join calls to save 300-

August 10, 2020

TITLE: year old giant Toog tree

PAGE 1/ 3/3

DATE



Estimated at 300 years old, the 54-meter heritage Toog tree, an ecotourism landmark in San Francisco town, Agusan del Sur, was given yet another lease on life after the last minute appeal by concerned residents stopped its scheduled cutting down on Sunday, 9 August 2020. The mayor summoned the concerned residents to a meeting on Monday, 10 August 2020, to resolve the issue. MindaNews photo by JANUS LOIUSE PANGANIBAN

Pacho made this recommendation during her visit here in September last year per upon the request of the local government to let her personally see the state of the giant Toog tree.

Pacho said the tree repair procedure is similar to dental work by cleaning the cavity and reinforcing it with concrete mix or cement. "With this we can stop the further decay by 90 percent and I believe we can prolong the life of the tree," she told reporters then.

Pruning of branches and cleaning of fungi inside a meter-wide hole on its buttress roots were done twice last year but the local government did not reinforce with cement or concrete mix as recommended by Pacho. (Chris V. Panganiban / MindaNews)

'Coconut industry not a biodiversity threat'

By ... -August 10, 2020

The United Coconut Associations of the Philippines (UCAP) has hit back what it alleged are campaigns that paint the industry as a environmental and biodiversity threat.

UCAP described as “vague and biased” against the industry recent articles which “practically indict the coconut industry, particularly the process of producing coconut oil, as an environmental threat, said to be worse than palm oil production.”

“The transformation of Philippine landscapes to coconut began hundreds of years ago. At the moment, it is not expanding, rather, coconut areas are receding and being transformed into other land uses or mixed uses (agroforestry). Coconut-based diversified farms are turning into habitats for wildlife, particularly for birds and insects,” UCAP said in a statement.

UCAP quoted Ateneo School of Sciences professor emeritus Toby Dayrit as saying “no rain forests have been burned in the past 200 years to plant coconuts.”

Dayrit explained coconuts are “pioneer species in island ecosystems, and coconuts actually promote biodiversity in barren islands and seashores where no other plants grow.”

The coconut industry contributes roughly \$2 billion in export receipts to the Philippines, one of the world's top coconut suppliers, and provides livelihood to about 3.5 million Filipino farmers.

“Coconut, many times referred to as a low-cost but nutritious poor man's food, is being used to manufacture VCO (virgin coconut oil) and MCT (medium-chain triglycerides) oil health supplements, beauty products, biodiesel, and even aesthetic decors,” it said.

UCAP said the government should expedite its initiative to help the industry, amid the threat of near extinction of coconut trees, most of which were planted during the Spanish colonial times two hundred years ago.

ASEAN biodiversity centre calls for nature's conservation to bounce back, prevent future pandemics

By Jerome Carlo R. Paunan Published on August 9, 2020

CALOOCAN CITY, Aug. 9 (PIA) -- The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) on Saturday underscored the linkages of biodiversity and health and regional efforts to integrate biodiversity conservation into the COVID-19 mitigation and response.

"The global pandemic has underscored the urgency of more robust health systems and economic structures. Moreover, the crisis also brought to light the value of integrating biodiversity concerns into health and socio-economic programmes and policies," ACB Executive Director Dr. Theresa Mundita S. Lim told the PIA-NCR.

"Clearly, ensuring intersectoral cohesion will not only guarantee the sustainable use of our rich biological resources, but will also redound to our well-being and survival and contribute to national and regional economic recovery, as well," Lim said.

The official said nature-based solutions are vital to prevent future pandemics through cross-sectoral collaboration and multi-stakeholder engagement, as part of ASEAN's agenda on mainstreaming biodiversity across relevant sectors.

"The ACB recently supported a study on the state of use of economic values of ecosystems services in decision-making processes in the ASEAN. Results of the Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services Assessment and Economic Analysis for Management, Policy and Innovative Financing Applications (BESA++) pointed out the need for countries to recognize the contribution of biodiversity to economic development," she explained.

"The results may be utilized for determining trade-offs and future priority actions as we move towards building back without compromising the environment," she added.

The ACB revealed that among sectors most affected by the pandemic is the tourism sector, which in 2018 accounted for 12.6 per cent of the ASEAN economy.

"In fact, a large percentage of the types of tourism in the ASEAN region are nature-based and some 80 percent of the ASEAN Heritage Parks are tourism destinations," Lim said.

"Through the ASEAN Heritage Parks Programme, a flagship initiative of the ASEAN, the ACB is mobilising necessary support to help maintain the quality of biodiversity attractions in AHPs during this crisis in preparation for the gradual re-opening of tourism," she added.

Lim said the active participation of all the ASEAN Member States in the crafting of the global biodiversity framework is an opportunity for the Region to develop long-term strategies to create a new normal that further integrates environmental protection and conservation into its various pillars.

"This endeavour will only be possible through meaningful partnerships and greater regional cooperation," she said.

ASEAN biodiversity centre calls for nature's
conservation to bounce back, prevent future pandemics

PAGE 1/ 2/2

August 10, 2020

DATE

To recall, since its establishment 53 years ago, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) has forged ahead and stood united in the face of adversities and challenges.

This year's theme for the ASEAN summit, "Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN in 2020" has been regarded as most apt amid the global health crisis and the compounded consequences of climate change as the ASEAN Member States unite on joint strategies to keep people and the environment safe.

The ACB, for its part, has reaffirmed its commitment to the Region's principles and vision through its continued support to the Member States in advancing the Region's biodiversity agenda in consideration of the COVID-19 pandemic and its immediate and long-term consequences. (PIA NCR)

Youth councilor pushes trash bins for masks, PPEs

posted August 09, 2020 at 08:10 pm

by [Jun David](#)

Caloocan City Councilor Orvince Howard A. Hernandez has urged barangay officials to up the ante in their efforts to prevent community spread of COVID-19 as society is heading toward the “new normal.”

Hernandez specifically proposed that every barangay in Caloocan City should have designated common trash bins or disposal areas for used face masks, face shields, and other personal protective equipment (PPEs) as part of the sustainable measure to protect residents from COVID-19.

“Make no mistake about it. The new normal does not mean COVID-19 is completely gone. That’s why as early as now, we should start setting up common trash containers or designating isolated areas in barangays solely for the disposal of used face masks, face, shield, and other PPEs,” Hernandez said.

A strict policy should be enforced prohibiting unauthorized persons from going to or near these disposal areas, added the councilor, who represents the federation of youth councils in Caloocan.

“We need to ensure that these used materials are kept in a specific container or area because we are unsure if they have traces of the virus. Isn’t it that we use face masks and shields to block the virus from entering our noses or mouths, or land on our faces so we’re not affected by COVID-19,” he said.

He appealed to Caloocan residents to cooperate and support this undertaking “because the issue of protection against COVID-19 is everybody’s concern.”

Mayor Oca Malapitan had earlier urged his constituents to adhere to the proper disposal of garbage in Caloocan City, and that a segregation scheme should be observed in every household and barangay.

“We need separate containers for used face masks and disposable PPEs in our own barangays, especially this rainy season, as they can block the canals and our drainage system if there’s no proper trash bin for them,” said Hernandez.

He said these containers and isolated areas would separate the potentially infectious materials from household, commercial, industrial, and other common wastes.

Hernandez is the president of the Sangguniang Kabataan Federation of Caloocan City and concurrent chairman of the Caloocan Youth Development Council.

He urged the youth of the city to join in the undertaking by propagating through the social media the importance of segregating the used face masks and face shield from other sorts of garbage.

Hernandez reminded that segregation of waste materials is mandated under Republic Act No. 9003, known as the “Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.”

Paragraph “d”, Section 2 of Article 1 of RA 9003 mandates: “Ensure proper segregation, collection, transport, storage, treatment and disposal of solid waste through the formulation and adoption of the best environmental practice in ecological management excluding incineration.”

“One hard lesson that should be learned from this pandemic is that walang superman dito na mag-isang gagawang paraan. Ang kailangan dito ay super friends, meaning, tayong lahat ay dapat magkakasama para sa kaligtasan,” said Hernandez.

PINAGGAMITAN NG PPEs VS COVID-19 DELIKADO



August 10, 2020 @ 1:24 AM 5 hours ago

Mapanganib ang pinaggamitan ng mga personal protective equipment laban sa coronavirus disease 2019.

Ito ang isa sa mga pinalalagay ng mga kinauukulan ng Caloocan City Public Officials kaya nanawagan si Coun. Orvince Howard Hernandez sa lahat ng mga barangay officials na paigtingin ang laban sa COVID-19 hindi lamang sa pagpapatupad sa quarantine protocols kundi maging sa pagtatapon ng mga basura.

Ang sabi ni Hernandez, ang lahat ng barangay ngayon kailangang magkaroon ng 'designated common trash bins' o sentralisadong tapunan lang ng mga gamit na face masks, face shields at iba pang personal protective equipment.

Kailangan daw na magsiguro tayo na contained natin ang mga materyales na ito sa isang lagayan o lugar dahil baka may virus pa ang mga 'to kasi 'di ba ang gamit ng facemask at face shield ay sanggahin ang virus para hindi pumasok sa ilong o bibig ng tao o dumikit sa mukha para hindi tamaan ng COVID-19?

Kaya nga nanawagan si Konsehal sa lahat ng residente ng Caloocan na makipagtulungan at suportahan ang layuning ito upang tuluyan nang masugpo ang pandemikong problema sa COVID-19 habang hinihintay pa natin ang bakuna laban sa nakakamatay na sakit.

Matatandaan kamakailan lang po ay nanawagan din si Caloocan Mayor Oca Malapitan, kaugnay sa tamang pagtatapon ng basura.

Dapat daw ay sinusunod ng lahat ang tamang 'segregation scheme' sa lahat ng kabahayan at barangay sa nasabing lungsod.

Dapat nga naman, sabi ni Hernandez, kailangang may hiwalay tayong basurahan sa face mask, face shields at iba pang disposable PPEs hindi lang sa ating bahay maging sa ating pamayanan o barangay lalo't ngayo'y tag-ulan tiyak na magbabara ang mga ito sa kanal at mga drainage system.

Kung magkakaroon umano ng hiwalay na basurahan para sa mga gamit nang PPEs, makatutulong ito para maiwasan ang hawaan sa COVID-19.

Alam ba ninyo na hindi lang sa mga barangay, pamayanan ipinatutupad ang kampanyang ito kundi maging sa lahat ng opisina, tanggapan, commercial, industrial at iba pang pampubliko o pribadong kompanya.

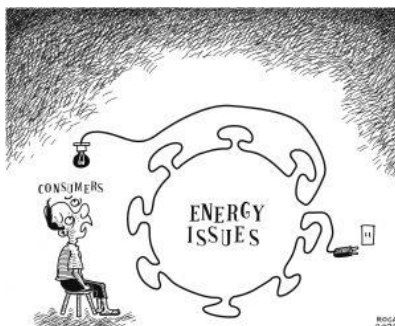
Banggit pa ng konsehal nakasaad na sa Republic Act. No. 9003 na mas kilala sa Ecological Solid Waste Management Act.2000 ang paghihiwalay ng mga basurang nabubulok, hindi nabubulok at 'yung mga tinatawag na hazardous waste.

oOo

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

Environment, energy issues linked to pandemic

Published August 9, 2020, 11:00 PM
by [Manila Bulletin](#)



The COVID-19 pandemic has caused many problems in our country, affecting not just the health sector but all other aspects of the national life. It affected the running of government, the operations of business and industry, and the lives of ordinary people of the country.

There was the problem of electric power charges in the first months of the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) when consumers questioned their electric power bills, asking how the amounts were determined when actual readings of household electric meters could not be done because of the lockdown.

One pro-consumer group raised the FIT-All rates – a uniform charge on all power users to help subsidize the production of clean but expensive renewable energy. It turned out that the FIT-All was a measly amount that has long been part of Meralco bills – amounting in one household to ₱50 of the ₱10,000 bill for 937 kilowatt-hours in June. But the Energy Regulatory Board ordered a refund of any FIT-All amounts, as well as a Universal Charge-Environment Charge (UC-EC) during the lockdown period.

Meralco Chairman Manuel V. Pangilinan later announced it had found ways to lower its bills, including the reduction of systems loss, of transmission charges, and of Wholesale Electricity Spot Market prices. He said it will continue to find ways to further lower systems loss while improving its services.

With this matter arising from the ongoing pandemic and the resulting government restrictions out of the way, it may be time for the government to look into the basic issue of what caused the pandemic in the first place.

It is said to be connected somehow to the climate crisis – the rising of global temperatures, the failing of ecosystems, forcing animals away from their natural habitats, increasing their interaction with other animals as well as with humans over the years.

In the process, many viruses evolved, such as Ebola, H1N1, and HIV-AIDS. Some scientific studies have said that the ongoing COVID-19 is linked with bats, which then infected cats and ferrets.

Along with our efforts to understand COVID-19 and stop its spread, we must invest in studies and actions to avert climate change. We need more investments in renewable energy and in other programs aimed at averting the destructive practices that are destroying the balance of nature and causing destructive changes in the natural world – changes that have given rise to viruses such as COVID-19 which is now ravaging the world.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/08/09/environment-energy-issues-linked-to-pandemic/>

Pesky pollutants

posted August 09, 2020 at 05:50 pm

by [Norman Cruz](#)



Water lilies washed ashore in Baseco area prove to be a tedious task to handle by maintenance men of the City of Manila's Department of Public Services following heavy rains induced by Tropical Storm Enteng. As the typhoon was heading for an exit from Cagayan, another low pressure area was spotted in Zambales on Sunday Aug. 9, 2020, weathermen said.

Rody updates nation today

Published 6 hours ago on August 10, 2020 01:00 AM

By [Francis Wakefield](#)



President Rodrigo Duterte's next address to the nation will happen today in Davao City, presidential spokesman Harry Roque disclosed.

Roque made the remark when asked during an interview where the President Duterte is right now and what will be his schedule for the next couple of days.

According to the Palace official, the Chief Executive is expected to report to the nation the latest on the government's campaign against COVID-19 and other matters affecting the country.

He said prior to the president speaking to the people, he will meet with select members of his Cabinet.

"Our next broadcast will be held in Davao," Roque said.

"He will report to the nation. There will be no meeting with the IATF (The Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases)," he said.

The last address by Duterte took place in Malacañang Palace last Sunday night, 2 August, when he approved the recommendation of the Department of Health to put the National Capital Region, Bulacan, Rizal, Cavite and Laguna under modified enhanced community quarantine from 4 to 18 August 2020 due to rising cases of coronavirus disease 2019.

BUSINESS

Gov't crafts P180-B stimulus plan

Published 3 hours ago on August 10, 2020 04:08 AM

By [Jun Vallecera](#)



The government plans extending the private sector P40 billion in tax credit this year as part of a proposed P180 billion economic stimulus plan to help prevent the budget deficit from going out of hand.

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III said the stimulus program already takes into account the deep contraction of the economy in the second quarter and will be maintained at this level.

He gave assurance the borrowing plan to finance the coronavirus pandemic response and economic recovery program is also in place and sufficient to cover the country's requirements for this year and next.

The bulk of 75 percent of the projected borrowings of P3 trillion next year will be sourced from local lenders and the remaining 25 percent from foreign sources, said Dominguez.

"Our recovery plan is in place and when it was made, we had anticipated a large reduction in the GDP (gross domestic product) growth (in the second quarter)," he said at a recent virtual press briefing of the Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC).

Local output contracted by 16.5 percent in the second quarter, resulting to a first-semester contraction of 9 percent. First-quarter GDP growth was at a revised -0.7 percent.

Dominguez said the government is ready to spend P140 billion as economic stimulus plan this year and free another P40 billion in tax credits to the private sector in the form of the immediate reduction of the corporate income tax (CIT) rate from 30 percent to 25 percent starting this 2020—via the proposed Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises (CREATE) bill endorsed to the Congress by the President—and which will bring the total recovery package for the year to P180 billion.

"This number was arrived at to keep our fiscal deficit in a manageable zone," Dominguez said.

The government expects a higher deficit-to-GDP ratio this year that it hopes to keep below or at the median of the levels of its peers in the region.

This year Dominguez projects a ceiling on the deficit-to-GDP ratio at 9.6 percent, which will lower to 8.5 percent in 2021 and 7.2 percent in 2022.

Dominguez said reducing the CIT rate will leave around P40 billion in the hands of the private sector, especially micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) that account for most domestic companies, to help stimulate the economy and boost consumer confidence.

For 2022, Dominguez said the government will continue to borrow about P2.3 trillion to help the economy recover.

“As we said, whatever stimulus package we have, it has to be affordable and it has to recognize the fact that this (corona) virus may not be defeated by the end of this year,” Dominguez said. “So we have to keep, as they say, we have to keep our powder dry for next year as well.”

Aside from providing P40 billion in tax credit, Dominguez said the stimulus plan also includes injecting P50 billion into the banking system, which will have a multiplier effect of between 8 and 10 times, or about P400 billion worth of economic activity.

Another P5 billion will go to a credit guarantee program for distressed businesses, which has a multiplier effect of around 20 times, or about P100 billion-worth of economic activity generated by the private sector, he said.

“So if you add the two, you will probably end up with anywhere between P400 billion and P600 billion in economic activity,” Dominguez said.

The Finance secretary said all sectors working together to curb the spread of the COVID-19, supported by prudent fiscal and monetary policies, “will see us through this difficult time.”

“We have to continue these policies over the next years as we continue to struggle with this contagion,” Dominguez added.

Dominguez earlier said without continued and increased public-sector spending, especially on infrastructure, public health and social protection, the first-semester GDP would have contracted by a total of 11.5 percent, or 2.5 percentage points more than the actual 9 percent.

Government expenditures in the first six months this year went up 27 percent to P2.01 trillion, from P1.59 trillion in the same period last year.

Dominguez gave assurance the government has “the resources necessary” to prevail over COVID-19 and its adverse economic impact, following the first-semester contraction by 9 percent of the economy.

Dominguez: We have enough resources to withstand COVID-19

Published 15 hours ago on August 9, 2020 03:40 PM

By [Joshua Lao](#)



Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III said the government has enough resources to withstand the dreaded coronavirus disease (COVID-19) as well the impact it causes in the country's economy.

"We are not alone in our struggles, although the unique fiscal and macroeconomic strengths with which we entered 2020 will continue to provide us with solid footing as we confront our economic challenges," Dominguez said.

"The economy is in good shape to mount a strong recovery soon enough, given the positive metrics such as benign inflation, a peso that is the strongest currency in Asia and a high-investment grade credit profile that has enabled us to borrow money here and abroad—at relatively lower cost," he added.

Dominguez also said the government's P180 billion economic stimulus plan would keep the budget deficit manageable.

"Our recovery plan was in place when it was made, we had anticipated a large reduction in the GDP (gross domestic product) in the second quarter," Dominguez said. Still, the proposed P180 billion stimulus plan incorporates a P140 billion spending from the government while the remaining P40 billion will be in the form of tax credits from the eyed reduction of the corporate income tax.

In terms of the borrowing mix, the Finance chief said that the current 75 to 25 percent, in favor of domestic sources will be retained for 2021.

While at it, the Cabinet official pencilled a cap on the country's deficit-to-GDP ratio at 9.6 percent for 2020, to be lowered to just 8.5 percent and 7.2 percent in 2021 and 2022 respectively.

The country's GDP shrank by 16.5 percent in the second quarter, bringing an overall contraction of 9 percent for the first semester of the year.

The government projects better economic prospects moving forward, as the second quarter GDP was projected to be the sharpest drop for the year. GDP outlook for the year was revised to a contraction of 5.5 percent from the previous minus 2 to minus 3.4 percent.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/08/09/dominguez-we-have-enough-resources-to-withstand-covid-19/>



Deputy Speaker LRay Villafuerte over the weekend said the chamber expects the approval on third and final reading this week of House Bill 6953, which will give President Duterte “special powers anew to best deal” with the coronavirus. Philstar.com/AJ Bolando, file

House to give Bayanihan 2 final OK this week

[Cecille Suerte Felipe](#), [Delon Porcalla](#) (The Philippine Star) - August 10, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The House of Representatives, under the leadership of Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano, has given assurance of the final approval this week of the Bayanihan to Recover as One Act (Bayanihan 2) that will help government address the COVID-19 pandemic.

Deputy Speaker LRay Villafuerte over the weekend said the chamber expects the approval on third and final reading this week of House Bill 6953, which will give President Duterte “special powers anew to best deal” with the coronavirus.

“The House leadership expects HB 6953, or the Bayanihan 2 Act, to breeze through final approval this week,” the Camarines Sur congressman said, noting that leaders of various political parties in the administration coalition have forged a manifesto of unity.

HB 6953 provides for P162 billion in funding for the government’s COVID-19 response measures, including some P10.5 billion to enable the hiring of additional healthcare workers, and provide additional allowances and benefits to medical frontliners, he said.

Another House deputy speaker, Mikee Romero of party-list 1Pacman, also disclosed that both public and private school teachers affected by the pandemic will receive financial aid under the proposed Bayanihan 2.

“The proposal allocates P300 million for subsidies and allowances of affected teaching and non-teaching personnel, including part-time faculty, in private and public elementary, secondary and tertiary education institutions, including part-time faculty in SUCs (state universities and colleges),” he said.

The Speaker has emphasized the importance of unity in defeating the contagion, saying the country “cannot hope to succeed without unity of purpose among our people.”

“We need the true spirit of bayanihan to sustain us,” the Taguig-Pateros congressman said as leaders and members of the House crossed party lines in having House Bill 6953 approved on second reading last Aug. 5.

Meanwhile, after passing Bayanihan 2, the Senate is planning to pass the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises (CREATE) Act to lower tax rates and provide incentives to corporations battered by the COVID-19 pandemic, to allow companies to retain workers, Senate Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri said.

In a radio interview, Zubiri said all business sectors have been affected by the pandemic. He said a giant fast-food chain is reportedly closing 250 stores all over the country.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/08/10/2034132/house-give-bayanihan-2-final-ok-week>

New cases top 3,000-mark amid tighter controls

posted August 10, 2020 at 01:50 am

by [Willie Casas](#)

For the 11th day running, health officials reported new cases over the 3,000 mark, as a key lawmaker said the two-week modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) in Metro Manila and neighboring provinces would not be enough to reduce the daily number of new infections.



In an interview on radio dzBB, Quezon Rep. Angelina Tan, chairperson of the House committee on health, said after a week of MECQ, there were hardly any changes in the number of new cases being reported daily.

To tell you honestly, it's really not enough," she said in a mix of English and Filipino, about the two-week MECQ. "Two weeks is not enough for us to achieve the target of lowering the number of cases."

The Department of Health (DOH) reported on Sunday an additional 3,109 new cases of COVID-19, bringing the total number of infections to 129,913.

The Philippines still has the highest number of infections and active cases across Southeast Asia. The 3,109 confirmed cases were based on test results from 82 of the 99 operational testing labs.

The DOH recorded 61 new fatalities in the country, bringing the death toll to 2,270 since the pandemic began. The DOH also reported 654 new recoveries, bringing to 67,673 the number of patients who have recovered from the disease.

Of the 3,109 reported cases Sunday, 2,055 (66 percent) occurred within the recent 14 days (July 27-August 9, 2020). In the last two weeks, Metro Manila accounted for 992 or almost half of the total number of cases. Region 4A accounted for 320 or 16 percent, while Region 3 had 156 cases or 8 percent of the total. Repatriates accounted for 156 cases or 8 percent of the total.

As of Sunday, there were 59,970 active cases undergoing treatment or quarantine, 91.2 percent of which are mild, 7.5 percent of which are asymptomatic, 0.7 percent of which are severe, and 0.6 percent of which are in critical condition.

Also on Sunday, Senator Christopher Go said the government was taking one step backward and two steps forward in its decision to revert Metro Manila and nearby provinces to an MECQ as part of its "recalibration" strategy.



ANTI-VIRUS TACK. A health worker from Manila's Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office conducts anti-bacterial fogging inside the city hall premises on Sunday, Aug. 9, 2020, to prevent the spread of coronavirus disease. The city which has been placed under MECQ along with the rest of the metropolis is one of the heavily infected urban areas. Norman Cruz

Go, chairman of the Senate committee on health and demography, expressed concern over the rising number of COVID-19 infections.

On Aug. 6, the Philippines overtook Indonesia and emerged as Southeast Asia's new coronavirus hot spot.

But Go noted that the Philippines also takes the top spot in terms of testing capacity in the region, having conducted a total of 1,643,539 tests with an average of 28,938 tests per day within the last seven days, as of Aug. 4.

By comparison, he said Indonesia conducted an estimated 908,000 tests with an average of 4,291 tests per day during the same period.

DoH warns vs illegal plasma trade

Published 3 hours ago on August 10, 2020 03:40 AM

By [Manny Angeles](#)



The buying and selling of convalescent plasma from recovered COVID-19 patients can be hazardous to one's health.

The Department of Health (DoH) sounded the alarm after studies have shown that it could pose serious risks to patients, who may contract transfusion-transmissible infections (TTI) such as HIV, hepatitis and malaria.

The reminder came following increasing reports the past weeks from families of critically-ill Covid-19 patients allegedly buying convalescent plasma from recovered patients, hospital staff and "fixers."

There are also other reports that some intentionally infect themselves so that their plasma can be donated after recovery for which they are promised remuneration.

The DoH emphasized that these alleged transactions and practices are "illegal, reckless and dangerous."

"Those individuals do not only place their lives at risk, but they also put their families and communities at risk when they voluntarily get infected," it added.

Presently, only the Philippine Blood Center and the Philippine Red Cross-Port Area are the certified non-hospital-based convalescent plasma collection facilities, while Philippine General Hospital and St. Luke's Medical Center are the only hospitals certified to collect convalescent plasma for use in its treatment protocol.

Though used for Covid-19 treatment protocol in some local hospitals, its effectiveness as a therapy is still being evaluated and not yet part of the standard of care. To date, there is no concrete evidence to show that it is effective against SARS-CoV-2 — the virus that causes Covid-19.

"Trading blood and other blood products, including those from recovered Covid-19 patients, is not only illegal but highly dangerous. Convalescent plasma should not be for sale and should be voluntarily donated for Covid-19 patients in need," Health Secretary Francisco T. Duque said.

According to Republic Act 7719, also known as the "National Blood Service Act of 1994," all blood and blood products shall be collected from volunteer blood donors only. Paid donation is not allowed, and facilities who will pay blood donors shall be penalized according to the DoH Administrative Order 36, series of 1994, Chapter VII, Section 26 and Chapter VIII, Section 41.

With officials from government hospitals like PGH calling for blood plasma donations from recovered Covid-19 patients, the DoH emphasized that these donations should be done voluntarily and should go through the official process so as to ensure the safety of both recipients and voluntary donors.

The DoH is calling on the aid of hospital chiefs to check their own staff if they engage in this practice and local government units to investigate the trade of convalescent plasma outside the realm of authorized health facilities. Likewise, the DoH is appealing to relatives of patients to stop dealing with fixers operating inside and outside the hospital.

It also enjoined the public to only donate blood voluntarily.

“Only through voluntary donation will you be assured of your health and safety, and only through this selfless act of service will you reap the satisfaction of having helped save the life of someone in need,” it added.

Doctor appeals to Du30: Ban rapid testing

Published 12 hours ago on August 9, 2020 06:58 PM

By [Michelle R. Guillang](#)



Former Pampanga Rep. Anna York Bondoc, who is also a doctor, has appealed to President Duterte to ban the rapid testing for COVID-19.

In a letter to Duterte, Bondoc, a pulmonary and critical care specialist, said the “wrong clinical decisions made with inaccurate results from the rapid tests have been fueling the rise of COVID-19 cases in Metro Manila.”

She cited that international medical professionals have affirmed that antibody serology tests, commonly known as rapid antibody tests, are unreliable.

This after studies concluded that countless false positives and false negatives have been produced by the rapid antibody tests.

Moreover, the use of rapid tests for diagnostic purposes have been banned in places like Australia, Dubai and India as they were found defective.

“All antibody serology tests are inaccurate and unreliable in diagnosing acute COVID-19. It’s not meant to be used that way. In Australia, it is called a toss coin. We don’t want diagnostics to be a toss coin,” Bondoc told the Daily Tribune on Sunday afternoon.

She also mentioned a study in the United Kingdom where medical experts found that the results of the antibody serology tests are very far from the results of the gold standard (PCR machine).

“In Australia, doctors could face fines up to 20,000 Australian dollars for the improper use of the antibody serology tests, if they use it for diagnosis,” Bondoc shared.

Bondoc stressed that the antibody rapid test shouldn’t be used in answering the question, ‘Do I have COVID today?’

Thus, she urged the local government units to stop its extensive use.

Living with COVID

posted August 10, 2020 at 12:10 am

by [Jonathan Dela Cruz](#)

"We are talking about years, even beyond the discovery of a cure."

By now, five months into the lockdown, there is universal acceptance that the COVID-19 pandemic with all its virulence is here to stay. Until a vaccine and a cure comes soon enough, the fear, anxieties and hardships that this deadly outbreak continues to inflict on all nations and peoples will leave us all hungering for deliverance. As the experts now concede, we will have to learn to live with COVID – maybe for years to come, even beyond the discovery of a cure to save lives. The world will also have to grapple with saving economies and livelihoods devastated by this outbreak.

As of this writing, the hollowing out of the global economy has spared no one. No one. Not even the most developed and resilient economies like the United States, China, Japan, key members of the European Union, and South Korea. In the process, the contraction has thrown millions of people out of jobs with its attendant impact on hunger and the other diseases, seasonal or otherwise. To think that this global contraction has yet to reach bottom.

In the Philippines, the COVID-19 outbreak has taken us into technical recession as the second quarter contracted by 16.5 percent – the lowest in years. In the process, this exacerbated our already overwhelmed public health system. With this development, the country's public health crisis which has persisted through the years will definitely become even more problematic.

The figures are clear. While COVID-19 has accounted for close to 3,000 deaths over the past five months, we are told that no less than 31,000 Filipino children have been dying every year at least for the past five years due to malnutrition. The international organization Save the Children has even linked about 838,000 additional Filipino deaths in 2013 alone due to hunger and malnutrition. These numbers will definitely get even bigger as the economy contracts under the weight of all the restrictions imposed in battling COVID-19.

The latest Social Weather Stations survey on hunger issued last month noted that involuntary hunger affected 5.2 million (20.9 percent) Filipino families, more than double the December 2019 figure (8.8 percent). This was also higher by 4.2 percentage points, or by about one million more families, than the May figure of 16.7 percent, a clear indication that the hunger problem exacerbated in the last five months under the various levels of quarantine. We are certain that despite the two-week "time out" as requested by our health workers, and even with our best efforts there can be no denying that these problems will linger. We really have no choice but to live with these influences and ensure that their negative impact will be as tolerable as can be.

To that end, we reiterate our earlier push for strict adherence to the government's Save Lives, Save Livelihoods plan. That plan meant to adjust public health and social measures in the context of COVID-19 was earlier endorsed by WHO and our other partners, in and out of government, locally and abroad, consisted of the following core requirements: a) Breaking the chains of transmission by detecting, isolating, testing and treating cases and quarantining contacts and monitoring hot spots of disease circulation (Test, Trace, Isolate, Protect); b) Enrolling a sufficient number of public health workforce and ensure health system capacities are in place; c) Mapping out high-vulnerability settings are minimized and organize rapid deployment medical teams to minimize damage; d) Enforcing preventive measures in workplaces, transport hubs and other public places where people congregate; e) Managing and ensuring proper border controls for both internal and international travelers and the transport of goods and f) Ensuring the proper and responsible engagement of local authorities and communities in plan implementation.

But quite apart from the above, there is a need to engage each and every citizen to be part of the solution not be the problem. Save Oneself, Save Others. Saving Lives and Livelihoods cannot be the government's responsibility alone. Or that of civic, business, religious or other groups. Each and every citizen must be part of the whole enterprise. Individual responsibility comes with being part of the bigger community. We have to do our share.

In this regard, the protocols – staying at home except for essentials, wearing of masks, practicing social distancing, washing of hands, avoiding crowding or congregating – should be strictly observed. We should exercise as much as possible, eat healthy, rest well and use other tried-and-tested ways of treating the common colds like salt steam inhaling. But more than those, there have been a number of feeds in social media advocating some participatory initiatives.

One such idea is “Reading Oneself” – meaning being able to detect signs of infection and undertaking medical (initially home) intervention for mild and asymptomatic cases. The symptoms are self evident: continuous coughing, high temperature, dry throat, loss of taste and smell and loss of appetite. Then, if things do not get any better, initiate healing with medical guidance, before going to the hospital.

It is very possible that you only need to do home quarantine to avoid swamping these already overwhelmed facilities with your presence. Indeed, there are a thousand and one ways an individual can do to take care of himself and in the process take care of family members and the community. By being healthy and abiding by the protocols, one has done his share in our common goal of living with COVID-19 and moving on. That should be a no-brainer.

Days of hunger

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:30 AM August 09, 2020

Poverty and hunger are more likely to give Filipinos already distressed by COVID-19 additional suffering, as the Philippine economy has crash-landed into recession for the first time in 29 years. The GDP tumbled by 16.5 percent in the second quarter under the weight of the world's longest coronavirus lockdown, which forced the suspension of business operations, left more than 7 million people unemployed, and now could push at least 1.5 million more into poverty.

However, the strict police-led lockdowns, now on the fifth month for many regions including Metro Manila, have not only failed to flatten the curve of COVID-19 cases; for the country's poor—many of them daily wage earners who don't earn when they don't work—the restrictions have also become a choice between risking coronavirus infection and facing hunger.

Recall Josie Lopez, a community leader of Sitio San Roque in Quezon City, saying last April 1 as urban poor settlers desperately appealed for food and government "ayuda": "Hindi nga po kami mamatay sa COVID-19, mamamatay naman po kami sa gutom..." The government has managed to provide emergency help to the most destitute, true—but that assistance has dried up now just as the worst effects of the economic recession are only about to sink in, and even as billions of pesos are said to be lost to corruption (P15 billion in the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. alone, per whistleblowers).

The hunger rate, according to a Social Weather Stations survey released last month, has deteriorated fast, with at least one out of every five Filipinos experiencing involuntary hunger from May to July. SWS said this was the highest hunger rate — 20.9 percent or 5.2 million Filipinos — since the 22-percent rate in September 2014. It was also the highest under President Duterte's administration. Experts, however, warn that the reality on the ground may be even grimmer as the sampling frame could have been limited, since the SWS, due to the lockdowns, conducted the survey only through mobile phone interviews.

The coming months are expected to be brutal for low-middle income countries (including the Philippines) which the United Nations World Food Programme said will bear the brunt of the pandemic's impact and "could lead to a food security and nutrition crisis of historic proportions." An additional 200 million people around the world are expected to lose access to basic food and nutrition in the months ahead, warned the UNWFP, on top of the more than 800 million people who were already food-insecure before COVID-19. That means about 1 billion of the world population facing hunger.

The country's poor, according to a discussion paper by the state-run think tank Philippine Institute for Development Studies (PIDS), could swell by as many as 5.5 million under a scenario where incomes decline by 10 percent for everyone; or, with better management of emergency financial subsidies such as the social amelioration program and the small business wage subsidy, by at least 1.5 million. In 2018, there were already about 17.7 million poor Filipinos based on the Family Income and Expenditure Survey. Of these, 5.6 million were estimated to be in subsistence or extreme poverty, while around 830,000 Filipino households were considered extremely poor or whose per capita incomes were less than the subsistence threshold (P7,337 for basic food needs, or P10,481 for both food and non-food needs monthly for a family of five).

With the COVID-19-induced recession, it's unlikely the government will be able to slash the poverty rate to its target of 11 percent by 2022 (it was 26.3 percent in 2015, the latest comparable full-year data from the government), much more realize its AmBisyon Natin 2040 vision, which aims to make the Philippines a "prosperous, predominantly middle-class society where no one is poor." That vision entails tripling Filipinos' per capita income to \$11,000 in 20 years' time by sustaining at least 6.5-percent annual GDP growth. Instead, for this year, the country's economic managers expect the economy to shrink 5.5 percent, and the drop in incomes and expenditures of households and businesses, according to PIDS, portends greater poverty and, inevitably, hunger among the populace.

Hunger, as economist and former National Economic and Development Authority chief Cielito F. Habito wrote in his column in this paper last Aug. 4, has been a major problem for decades "long before COVID-19 came, yet has not caused nearly as much concern or gained as much attention." As of Aug. 6, COVID-19 has claimed 2,150 lives in the country. On the other hand, according to Unicef, 95 Filipino children die every day from malnutrition. That's about 34,675 children dying from poor nutrition and hunger every year before the pandemic. But with COVID-19 and a plummeting economy, the country must brace itself for another crisis — a humanitarian one: Even more harrowing days of hunger are ahead.

Source: <https://opinion.inquirer.net/132534/days-of-hunger>

Tropical Storm Enteng exiting PAR; rainfall, flashflood, landslide warnings up

By: [Gilbert S. Gaviola](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 07:39 AM August 09, 2020

MANILA, Philippines – Tropical Storm Enteng is expected to exit the Philippine area of responsibility (PAR) Sunday afternoon but is still expected to spawn rains in many parts of Luzon and the Visayas, the state weather bureau said Sunday morning.

In its 5 a.m. weather bulletin, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said “Enteng” is expected to leave PAR this afternoon.

“Today, the southwest monsoon enhanced by ENTENG and the Low Pressure Area (LPA) west of Zambales will bring monsoon rains over Pangasinan, Benguet, Zambales, Bataan, Mimaropa and Antique, and occasional rains over Metro Manila, Calabarzon, Bicol region, and the rest of Ilocos region, Cordillera Administrative Region, Central Luzon, and Visayas,” Pagasa stated in its latest weather bulletin.

Pagasa likewise warned of possible flash floods and landslides in rain-affected areas.

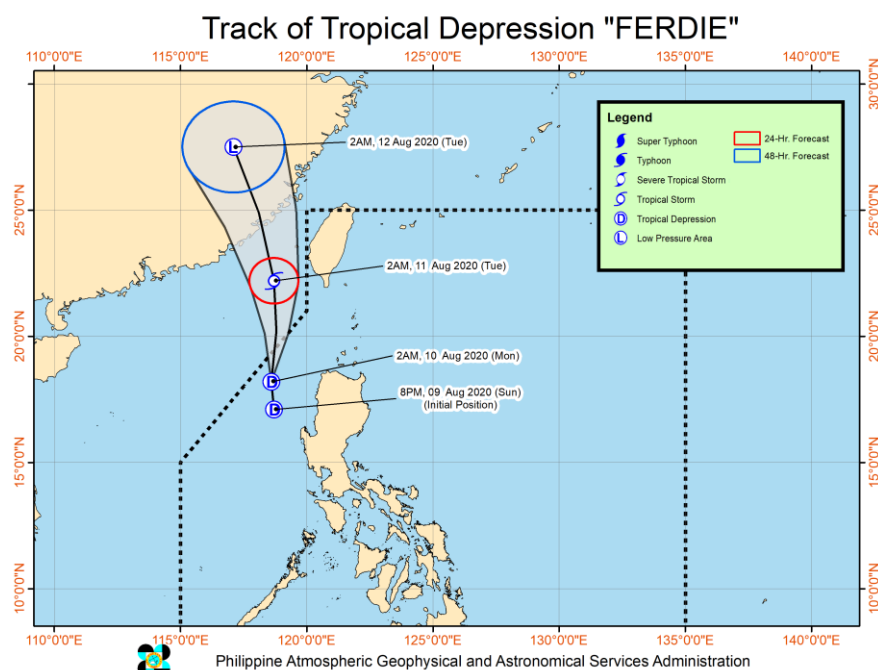
“Enteng” was 445 kilometers east northeast of Basco, Batanes as of 4am., with maximum sustained wind speed of 65 kilometers per hour near the center and gusiness of up to 80 kilometers per hour.

It was moving north at 30 kilometers per hour.

Pagasa also issued gale warnings over the seaboard of Pangasinan, Zambales, Bataan, western coast of Batangas, western coast of Occidental Mindoro including Lubang Island, and western coast of Palawan including Calamian Islands (2.8 to 4.0 m); Batanes, Cagayan including Babuyan Islands, and Isabela (2.8 to 3.4 m).

Sea travel is risky over these areas due to rough to very rough seas.

Crewmen and operators of small vessels were advised to take precautionary measures while venturing out over the seaboard of Visayas and the rest of Luzon due to moderate to rough seas (1.2 to 2.8 m).

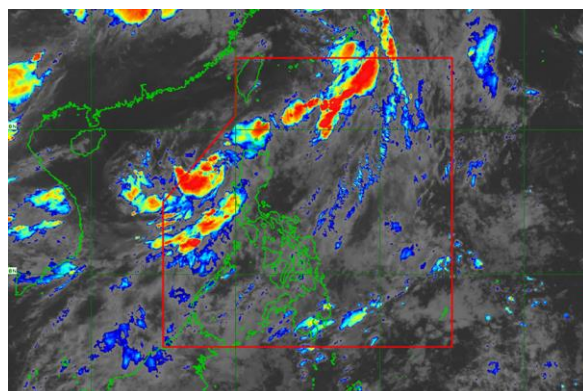


Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1318883/tropical-storm-enteng-exiting-par-rainfall-flashflood-landslide-warnings-up>

Low pressure area intensifies into tropical depression Ferdie

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Aug 10 2020 12:07 AM



MANILA - A low pressure area west of Pangasinan province intensified into a tropical depression on Sunday night, weather bureau PAGASA said.

Named “Ferdie,” the country's sixth storm, was last spotted at 225 kilometers northwest of Dagupan City, Pangasinan while packing maximum sustained winds of 55 kilometers per hour near the center and gustiness of up to 70 kph as of 10 p.m., based on PAGASA’s weather bulletin issued at 11 p.m.

It was last seen moving northeastward at 20 kph.

It is forecast to move generally northward over the West Philippine Sea and is likely to exit the PAR Monday morning.

It is not expected to make landfall while inside the Philippine territory.

Tropical Cyclone Wind Signal number 1 has been raised over the following areas:

- Western portion of Ilocos Norte (Badoc, Pinili, Currimaog, Batac City, Paoay, San Nicolas, Laoag City, Pasuquin, Bacarra, Burgos)
- Western portion of Ilocos Sur (Santa Cruz, Tagudin, Santa Lucia, Galimuyod, Salcedo, Candon City, Banayoyo, Santiago, Burgos, Lidlidda, San Esteban, Santa Maria, Narvacan, Nagbukel, Santa, Caoayan, Vigan City, Santa Catalina, San Vicente, San Ildefonso, Bantay, Sinit, San Juan, Magsingal, Santo Domingo, Cabugao)
- La Union
- Western portion of Pangasinan (San Fabian, Dagupan City, Mangaldan, Calasiao, San Carlos City, Mangatarem, Aguilar, Lingayen, Binmaley, Infanta, Labrador, Sual, Bugallon, Dasol, Agno, Burgos, Mabini, Bani, Bolinao, Anda, Alaminos City)
- Northern portion of Zambales (Candelaria, Santa Cruz)
- PAGASA warned residents of said area to expect winds between 30 to 60 kph or intermittent rains in the next 36 hours.
- Ferdie and the enhanced southwest monsoon will also bring monsoon rains over Ilocos Region, Abra, Benguet, Zambales, Bataan, Tarlac, Pampanga, and occasional rains over Batanes, Cagayan, Metro Manila, CALABARZON, MIMAROPA, and the rest of Cordillera Administrative Region, and Central Luzon.
- Residents of the affected areas are also warned of that flooding and possible landslides may occur during heavy or prolonged downpour especially in areas highly susceptible to these hazards.

PAGASA, likewise, said it is monitoring two other weather disturbances outside the PAR.

Tropical Storm Jangmi was last spotted 950 km north northeast of extreme northern Luzon.

Another tropical depression was also spotted 2,660 km east northeast of extreme northern Luzon. It is unlikely to enter the PAR.

Ferdie developed into a tropical depression hours after Tropical Depression Enteng left the PAR.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/08/10/20/low-pressure-area-intensifies-into-tropical-depression-ferdie>

Mauritius struggles to contain oil spill polluting its seas

Agence France-Presse / 07:48 PM August 09, 2020



In this satellite image provided by 2020 Maxar Technologies on Friday, Aug. 7, 2020, an aerial view of the MV Wakashio, a bulk carrier ship that recently ran aground off the southeast coast of Mauritius. The prime minister of Mauritius says the government is appealing to France for help with a brewing environmental disaster after a ship that ran aground almost two weeks ago off the Indian Ocean island nation began leaking oil. Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth said Friday that the leak “represents a danger for Mauritius” and that his country doesn’t have the skills and expertise to refloat stranded ships. (2020 Maxar Technologies. via AP)

PORT LOUIS, Mauritius — Thousands of Mauritians raced to contain a catastrophic oil spill swamping its pristine ocean and beaches on Sunday as frustration mounts over why more wasn’t done to prevent the ecological disaster.

The bulk carrier MV Wakashio has been seeping fuel into a protected marine park boasting unspoiled coral reefs, mangrove forests, and endangered species, prompting the government to declare an unprecedented environmental emergency.

Attempts to stabilize the stricken vessel, which ran aground on July 25 but only started leaking oil this week, and pump 4,000 tonnes of fuel from its hold have failed, and local authorities fear rough seas could further rupture the tanker.

Japan said Sunday it would send a six-member expert team to assist, joining France which dispatched a naval vessel and military aircraft from nearby Reunion Island after Mauritius issued an appeal for international help.

Thousands of volunteers, many smeared head-to-toe in black sludge, are marshaling along the coastline, stringing together miles of improvised floating barriers made of straw in a desperate attempt to hold back the oily tide.

Mitsui OSK Lines, which operates the vessel owned by another Japanese company, said Sunday that 1,000 tonnes of fuel oil had escaped so far.

“We are terribly sorry,” the shipping firm’s vice president, Akihiko Ono, told reporters in Tokyo, promising to “make all-out efforts to resolve the case”.

But conservationists say the damage could already be done.

Aerial images show the enormous scale of the disaster, with huge stretches of azure seas around the marooned cargo ship stained a deep inky black, and the region’s fabled lagoons and inlets clouded over.

Thick muck has inundated unspoiled marine habitats and white-sand beaches, causing what experts say is irreparable damage to the fragile coastal ecosystem upon which Mauritius and its economy relies.

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1319108/mauritius-struggles-to-contain-oil-spill-polluting-its-seas>

Scientists develop biodegradable flip-flops made from algae

By [Anne Acuña](#)

August 09th, 2020

We all know that the world's most beloved footwear are flip-flops. But did you know that also because of their popularity, they're one of the worst pollutants in our oceans today?

Estimates from a conservation group show that about 90 tons of discarded flip-flops are carried to the shores of East Africa alone. Because of this, a team of researchers from the University of California San Diego sought possible alternatives to the non-recyclable plastic flip-flops.

The research, done in collaboration with a materials science and technology company and published in the Bioresource Technology Reports, is the latest in a series of studies that provide a 360-degree solution to the problem of non-biodegradable polyurethanes that are commonly used in flip-flops.



After devising the right formulation, the team was able to develop commercial-quality polyurethane foams made from algae oil that can be used for midsole shoes and the footbed of flip-flops. The redeveloped polyurethanes were put to the test using traditional compost and soil, and the researchers found that the materials were able to degrade in just 16 weeks.

With the success of their research, the team is now looking into making these materials commercially available by talking to their manufacturing partners. They were also able to establish a center for renewable materials at UC San Diego, with the goal of developing more renewable and sustainable materials and their subsequent application to everyday products.

We stan algae-based, biodegradable flip-flops!