

DATE: AUGUST 13, 2020

DAY: THURSDAY

DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service

DENR rehabilitates contaminated Cebu City river

By Carlo Lorenciana August 12, 2020, 5:57 pm



CLEAN-UP. Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu has ordered a massive clean-up to rehabilitate the highly silted Kinalumsan River in Cebu City's south area. A five-day cleanup drive, which started on Tuesday (Aug. 11, 2020) is spearheaded by the Cebu City Department of Public Services and City Environment and Natural Resources Office with the participation of Bantay Dagat and River Troopers. *(Photo courtesy of DENR-7)*

CEBU CITY – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Central Visayas (DENR-7) has started rehabilitating the highly contaminated Kinalumsan River and coastal area of Barangay Mambaling here.

This, after DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, who has been overseeing the government's Covid-19 response here, saw the bad state of the area and instructed a massive clean-up there.

The cleanup drive which started on Aug. 11 is part of the DENR-7 and the Cebu City government's plan to rehabilitate the highly silted river in the southern barangay.

Cimatu had personally ordered the regional office through the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) and the local government to conduct a massive cleanup alongside other sustainable activities to revive the river.

"A dirty river or any water body present in the area is not conducive to the healing process that we are all aiming and working for," DENR-7 quoted Cimatu as saying in a statement released to the press.

The cleanup drive, spearheaded by the Cebu City Department of Public Services and the City Environment and Natural Resources Office with the participation of Bantay Dagat and River Troopers, is being conducted for five consecutive days.

"All private establishments located near and in the area will also be coordinated to forge more partnerships and ink an agreement to do the rehab process together. A webinar will be conducted for the Barangay Environment Officers, River Troopers, and Sangguniang Kabataan leaders as part of the sustainable approach in the process," the DENR-7 said.

The agency is conducting an action planning workshop within the week to identify the applicable interventions for the rehabilitation of the bodies of water.

EMB-7 Regional Director Lormelyn Claudio expressed concern on the effect of the contaminated river to the health of the residents in the area.

The river's deterioration has reached the point where "it has posed threat to the safety and health of the communities along its banks, and which the residents and the government can no longer address effectively without help from the non-government sector," Claudio said. **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1112000>



The Freeman

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LOOK: DENR and Cebu City start rehabilitation works on heavily-silted and highly contaminated Kinalumsan River and coastal area of Barangay Mambaling. Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu who saw the situation at the area has instructed a massive clean-up and implementation of sustainable programs. | via Michelle Palaubsanon / Photos from DENR-7 #TheFreeman



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U.S. launches new biodiversity project to protect the PH's environment

By Embassy of the United States of America Published on August 12, 2020

MANILA, August 12 -- The U.S. government, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), launched the Philippines Sustainable Interventions for Biodiversity, Oceans, and Landscapes (SIBOL) project that will support the sustainable management of the country's natural resources and combat environmental crimes.



USAID's new biodiversity project will protect Cleopatra's Needle in Puerto Princesa City as a critical habitat for wildlife (Photo credit: Samuel Villanueva/Center for Sustainability PH)

The five-year, P1.1 billion (\$22 million) project will provide support to the Philippine government to achieve its goals of improving natural resource governance and stimulating public and private investments, leading to greater ecosystem stability and inclusive green growth. USAID will work closely with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources to implement the SIBOL project.

"Effective conservation management and measurement of the value of natural resources contribute to the Philippines' economic development and environmental resilience," explained Lawrence Hardy II, Mission Director of USAID Philippines. "Through SIBOL, USAID is pleased to support the Philippines' efforts to conserve the country's rich biodiversity while improving the livelihoods of Filipinos whose incomes depend upon these natural resources."

RTI International, a U.S.-based nonprofit organization, will lead the implementation of the SIBOL project, building on its three decades of experience providing technical assistance, institutional strengthening, programmatic support, and research in a variety of sectors in the Philippines. The Center for Conservation Innovations, Forest Foundation Philippines, Internews, Zoological Society of London, and the Resources, Environment, and Economics Center for Studies (REECS), comprise the consortium partnering with RTI.

DENR Undersecretary for Policy, Planning, and International Affairs Juan Miguel T. Cuna welcomed this important partnership with USAID. "Ensuring ecosystem integrity and human well-being are among the key priorities of DENR," he said. "We look forward to partnering with USAID in advancing our goals of environmental sustainability and strengthening DENR's capacity to combat environmental criminals, enhance the adaptive capacities of communities against natural disasters, as well as improve the economic conditions of affected local people," he added.

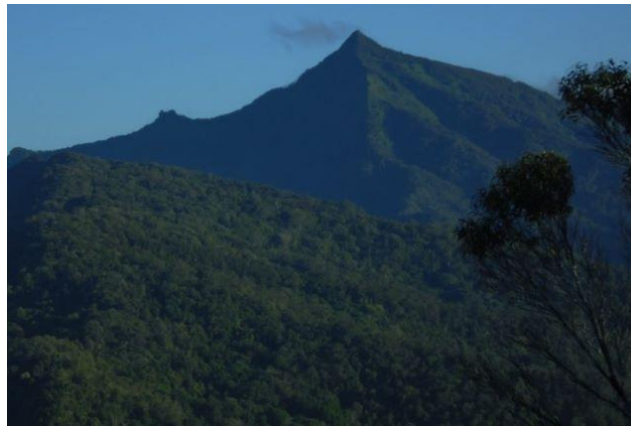
Since 2014, USAID has provided more than P5 billion (\$100 million) in assistance to the Philippine government in conserving the country's biodiversity and protecting its landscapes and seascapes. (US Embassy in the PH IO)

Source: <https://pia.gov.ph/news/articles/1050130>

US government launches P1.1-B biodiversity project
in Philippines

PAGE 1 / 1/2

August 13, 2020
DATE



USAID's new biodiversity project will protect Cleopatra's Needle in Puerto Princesa City as a critical habitat for wildlife (Photo credit: Samuel Villanueva/Center for Sustainability PHL).

US government launches P1.1-B biodiversity project in Philippines

Published August 12, 2020 9:26am

The US government, through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), has launched the Philippines Sustainable Interventions for Biodiversity, Oceans, and Landscapes (SIBOL) project that will support the sustainable management of the country's natural resources and combat environmental crimes.

An [article posted in the US Embassy in Manila](#) website on July 11 said that the USAID will work closely with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of Agriculture's Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources to implement the SIBOL project.

"Effective conservation management and measurement of the value of natural resources contribute to the Philippines' economic development and environmental resilience," explained Lawrence Hardy II, Mission Director of USAID Philippines. "Through SIBOL, USAID is pleased to support the Philippines' efforts to conserve the country's rich biodiversity while improving the livelihoods of Filipinos whose incomes depend upon these natural resources," it said.



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TITLE:

PAGE 1/ 1/2

August 13, 2020

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One of the target sites for environmental protection and preservation is Palawan's Mount Cleopatra's Needle.

The mountain is one of the several tourist attractions in Puerto Princesa City in Palawan. —
LBG, GMA News

450 pine trees planted at PCOO-adopted tree park in
Baguio

PAGE 1/ 1/2

August 13, 2020
DATE

450 pine trees planted at PCOO-adopted tree park in Baguio

By Liza Agoot August 12, 2020, 5:26 pm



TREE PLANTING. The Philippine Information Agency led the planting of two five-foot Norfolk trees at the PCOO-adopted tree park at the Pine Trees of the World on Wednesday (Aug. 12, 2020). A total of 450 Benguet pine trees were planted at the site. In the photo are Helen Tibaldo of PIA-Cordillera, Danielle de Guzman of PTV- Cordillera, Liza Agoot of PNA- Baguio Bureau and Forester Walter Aguirre of the City Environment and Parks Management Office. *(Photo courtesy of PIA-CAR)*

BAGUIO CITY – An initial of 450 pine trees were planted on Wednesday at a tree park adopted by the Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO) here.

Led by the Philippine Information Agency-Cordillera, Philippine News Agency-Baguio Bureau, PTV-Cordillera, and Radyo Pilipinas, they planted two Norfolk trees aside from the 450 pine saplings at the Pine Trees of the World park inside the Burnham Park reservation.

Helen Tibaldo, PIA-Cordillera regional director, said they spearheaded the adoption in time with their office's compliance to the tree replacement policy of the city government and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

PIA-Cordillera is set to build its regional office here, where 12 matured Anchoan dilao trees and two avocado trees will be felled to give way to the structure.

Tibaldo said that under the guidelines of the city government, every tree, regardless of age and kind that will be cut must be replaced with 30 three-feet tall Benguet pine trees.

The DENR, however, requires 100 seedlings as replacement.

She said the 14 trees were replaced with 450 Benguet pine trees aside from the two Norfolk trees.

Additional seedlings will still be produced to comply with the DENR requirement.

"We will schedule a visit once a month for the nurturing of the trees planted, she said.

Forester Walter Aguirre, Environmental Officer II of the City Environment and Parks Management Office, said they encourage residents to plant trees so that the city's environment will be preserved.

No trees, no building

The planting is a requirement for the grant of a building permit for the construction of PIA's permanent office here.

PCOO has earmarked PHP26 million for the construction of the building through the Department of Public Works and Highways.



450 pine trees planted at PCOO-adopted tree park in

August 13, 2020

TITLE: Baguio

PAGE 1/ 2/2

DATE

Tibaldo said they can only be issued a tree cutting permit once they comply with planting the replacement trees.

The PIA-Cordillera is currently leasing a two-story residential house at the Brookside -Modern Aurora Hill area for its operation.

Three years ago, PIA-Cordillera vacated the Cordillera House in front of the Mansion House. (**PNA**)

Mining to ease economic doldrums—Barbers

posted August 12, 2020 at 07:55 pm

by [Maricel Cruz](#)

A congressman from Mindanao on Wednesday said the full resumption of mining activities is one sure way to alleviate the economy that is suffering from recession caused by lockdowns imposed to contain the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Surigao del Norte Rep. Robert Ace Barbers urged President Rodrigo Duterte's economic managers to review present practices and come up with better policies to attract foreign investors in the mining sector.

"This is a feasible and realistic solution. While we are months or years away from a COVID-19 vaccine, our economy needs immediate vaccination. And mining is the solution," Barbers said in a privileged speech.

"With the end goal of increasing our mining output's contribution to our currently threatened economy, I shall be reviewing the current laws and attempt to aggressively drive these forward to dramatically allow for increased financing, exploration, production and regulation in the mining industry," he added.

Barbers, chairman of the House Committee on Dangerous Drugs, said proper exploration, exploitation and utilization of the country's mineral resources would help the government repay its massive debt accumulated to fight COVID-19 and recover from the -16.5 percent drop of the gross domestic product (GDP) in the first quarter of this year.

Two of the country's main sources of dollar revenues, the business process outsourcing or call centers and workers abroad, that combine for an estimated US\$60 billion annually and has kept the economy afloat for two decades, are also under threat, he said.

"If we simulate a 10 to 20-percent decline in these two sectors, our net dollar position will suffer by US\$6 billion to 12 billion."

"Before the economy could spiral down, both in GDP and in dollar reserves, the government needs to implement a concerted effort with the private sector to aggressively advance and finance the mining sector," Barbers added.

"Exploration to production takes time, and we can reap the benefits probably five to 10 years down the line, depending on the various stages of exploration of existing mining companies. If we target, say a 5 to 10 percent share in GDP, the mining sector can contribute \$18 billion 36 billion, more than enough to cover the gap that will be created by the reduced OFW and BPO sectors," he explained.

From a global perspective, he said the total value of the top 50 mining companies in the world stood at \$957 billion as of June 30. In comparison, the entire value of listed companies in the Philippines stood at \$260 billion.

"And I imagine that the mining sector only contributes to a fraction of that," he said.

In terms of GDP contribution, prominent mining countries such as Australia have mining contributing 6 percent. "With Australia's GDP at A\$1.37 trillion, this translates to A\$82 billion dollars, almost 38 times the value of our mining output. If it is true that our resources are among the best in the world, then the solution is obvious," Barbers said.

Value-added mining is also a concern as the current state of this sector is yet to be fully integrated, he said, adding that the Philippines exports nickel, iron ore and copper to countries that possess the technology to further refine the products to stainless steel and copper wires, among others.

"We, therefore, sell low value output only to import them back in its final form, putting us in a negative foreign exchange position. To optimize the value of our exports, I would strongly consider capital formation with respect to smelters and refineries so that value is enhanced before it leaves our shores," Barbers said.

Ostrich na namatay dahil umano sa stress, niluto ng mga caretaker

Agosto 12, 2020 1:44pm GMT+08:00

Niluto ng mga caretaker ang ostrich na namatay dahil sa stress matapos mag-viral sa social media kamakailan na nakunang tumatakbo sa isang subdivision sa Quezon City. Depensa ng abogado ng may-ari, biktima lang ng pagkakataon ang owner at minahal naman din nito ang ostrich.

Sa ulat ni MJ Geronimo ng Stand For Truth sa Unang Balita ng GMA News nitong Miyerkoles, sinabing niluto ng mga nag-aalaga ang ostrich sa kabila ng utos ng may-ari na si Jonathan Cruz na ilibing na lamang ang hayop.

"May mga salaysay naman 'yung mga tao niya na nanghinayang sila du'n sa karne ng ostrich. Kinain na nila ito. Kinabukasan pagbisita ni Mr. Cruz, balahibo na lang," saad ni Atty. Charlie Pascual, abogado ng may-ari ng ostrich.

Iniimbestigahan na ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang insidente.

Humarap naman ang may-ari sa pagdinig.

Ayon sa DENR, hindi labag sa batas ang pagkain ng karne ng ostrich, pero may problema ang may-ari sa pagkuha sa naturang hayop.

"The implementing rules and regulation permits na puwede siyang kainin, puwede siyang gawing livestock na parang manok o baboy. But again, the issue here is not 'yung pagkain nila, but it's mere possession of the ostrich. 'Yung wildlife registration permit, wala silang maipakita," sabi ni DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda.

Naaliw ang netizens nang mag-viral ang video ng mga tumatakbong ostrich sa isang subdivision sa Quezon City noong nakaraang linggo. Nahuli naman pagkatapos ang dalawang ostrich.

Nasa pangangalaga ng may-ari ang dalawang ostrich noon pang Oktubre 28, 2019, na nanggaling sa Misamis Oriental at nakatakdang dalhin sa Nueva Ecija.

Pero napagod sa biyahe ang mga ostrich kaya dinala muna sila sa Quezon City, at dito na naipit nang mag-expire ang travel permit na binigay ng nagbenta nito.

"Hindi niya naibigay 'yung local transport permit na hinihingi pa ni Mr. Cruz para ibiyahe from Manila to farm niya sa San Leonardo 'yung mga ostrich," ayon kay Antiporda.

"Itong mga ostrich na ito, itong nag-aalagang 'tong sina Mr. Jonathan Cruz ay biktima lang din ng pagkakataong ito. Minahal din naman nila itong ostrich na 'to. Humihingi din po ng paumanhin, itong mga pamilyang ito ay disenteng pamilya," sabi ni Atty. Pascual.

Ibinigay na sa DENR noong Biyernes ang isa pang ostrich, na nagtamo ng malaking pasa sa likod.

Patuloy naman ang imbestigasyon para malaman kung sino ang mga kakasuhan. —**Jamil Santos/KG, GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/balitambayan/balita/750972/ostrich-na-namatay-dahil-umano-sa-stress-niluto-ng-mga-caretaker/story/>

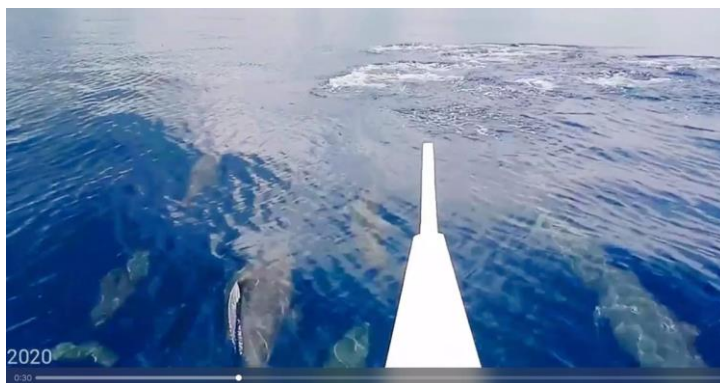
Tagalog News: BFAR-Romblon nanawagan na ingatan ang mga dolphins sa dagat

By Paul Jaysent FosPublished on August 12, 2020

ODIONGAN, Romblon, Agosto 12 (PIA) -- Nagpaalala ang Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) - Romblon sa publiko na ingatan ang mga endangered species katulad ng mga dolphins.

Kasunod ito nang pagkalat online ng video kung saan makikita ang mga dolphins na tila hinahabol ng isang bangka.

Ayon kay Officer in charge-Provincial Fishery Officer Luisito Manes, hindi naman umano pinagbabawal ang paglapit sa mga dolphins ngunit dapat ay siguraduhin na hindi sila masasaktan o di kaya ay masugatan ng bangka.



Ayon kay OIC-Provincial Fishery Officer Luisito Manes, hindi naman pinagbabawal ang paglapit sa mga dolphins ngunit dapat umano ay siguraduhin na hindi sila masasaktan o di kaya ay masugatan ng bangka. (Screengrab from Romblon News Network)

"Pwede naman pong lumapit, pero dapat hindi umaandar ang makina para sigurado na hindi sila matatamaan ng propeler ng bangka. Endangered na ang mga dolphins, at sadyang madalas yan dito sa Romblon kasi maganda ang ating mga karagatan, sagana sa isda," pahayag ni Manes.

Maalalang ang nasabing video ay binatikos ng ilang environmentalist dahil sa tila hinahabol umano ng bangka ang mga dolphins.

"Be that as it may, we all have a duty to let them swim in the wild. It is very clear in the video that the pod was chased which is very detrimental to the sensitive behaviour and well-being of the dolphins (*Kung ano pa man yan, katungkulan natin na bigyang laya ang mga ito sa karagatan. Klaro sa video na ang pod ay hinahabol, at maaaring makasama ito sa sensitibong paguugali at kagalingan ng mga dolphins*)," ayon kay Rodne Galicha, isang environmentalist.

"We hope that environment and toursim agencies will be able to roll-out and enforce policies regarding this kind of case and sustainable eco-tourism in general (*Nawa ay makapagpatupad ng mga polisiya ang mga ahensyang namumuno sa pang-kalikasan at turismo na tutukoy sa mga ganitong uri ng kaso, nang sa gayon ay magkaroon tayo ng sustainable eco-tourism sa pangkalahatan*)," panawagan rin ni Galicha sa BFAR at sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources. (PJF/PIA-Mimaropa)

Source: <https://pia.gov.ph/news/articles/1050104>

Palawan Bearcat, nasagip ng CAFGU sa Brgy. Concepcion

by [Diana Ross Medrina Cetenta](#)

[August 11, 2020](#)



Isang Binturong ang ni-rescue ngayong araw ng isang miyembro ng Citizen Armed Force Geographical Unit (CAFGU) sa Brgy. Concepcion.

Sa impormasyong ipinaabot sa Palawan Daily News (PDN), nakita ng nasabing CAFGU kaninang umaga ang matamlay ng hayop malapit sa kanilang bahay sa Concepcion at dinala niya sa kanilang kampo sa Brgy. Tanabag upang masakloloan.

Batay pa sa inisyal na ulat, may pilay ang nasabing Palawan bearcat nang masagip.

Sa naturang hayop na may scientific name na *Arctictis binturong* ay isa ng endangered species at tanging makikita lamang sa Lalawigan ng Palawan.

Samantala, habang isinusulat naman ang balitang ito ay patungo na ang mga kawani ng PCSD Staff main sa Brgy. Tanabag upang i-rescue ang nasabing hayop at maihatid sa Palawan Wild Rescue and Conservation Center (PWRCC) para sa rehabilitasyon.

Ayon sa tagapagsalita ng PCSD Staff na si Jovic Fabello, kapag gumaling na ang Palawan Bearcat ay ibabalik siya sa natural niyang tahanan doon din sa bahaging norte Ng Puerto Princesa.

Reef shark population depleting in PH — researchers

Published August 12, 2020, 12:41 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

The Large Marine Vertebrates Research Institute Philippines (LAMAVE) recently revealed the depletion of reef sharks in the Philippines.

“While the Philippines still hosts a few sites where sharks are still relatively common thanks to some degree of local or national protection, this study does confirm the general absence of these species from reefs and coastal ecosystems across the country,” LAMAVE said.

It is optimistic, however, the establishment of key conservation measures may help recover and preserve what remains of the population.

In any case, LAMAVE admitted reef sharks are now virtually absent on many of the world’s coral reefs, citing a global study published in Nature by Global FinPrint last July 22.

Of the 371 reefs surveyed in 58 countries, sharks were not observed on nearly 20 percent of these, indicating a widespread decline that has gone undocumented on this scale until now.

Essentially no sharks were detected on any of the reefs of six nations namely Dominican Republic, French West Indies, Kenya, Vietnam, Windward Dutch Antilles, and Qatar. Among these, a total of only three sharks were observed on more than 800 survey hours.

LAMAVE, which is the Philippine counterpart for the global study, has conducted surveys using baited remote underwater video systems across reefs in different sites in the Philippines including the Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park and World Heritage Site, and the waters surrounding the islands of Cagayancillo, Cawili, Arena in Palawan, Ticao in Masbate, Matnog in Sorsogon, and Apo Reef Natural Park and Sablayan in Occidental Mindoro.

Results revealed almost zero shark sightings in all areas except for the waters of Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park and Apo Reef Natural Park which are large and well-established marine protected areas.

LAMAVE said that the situation in the Philippines while alarming is slightly more positive.

“This study demonstrates that reef sharks in the Philippines face an uncertain future but optimistic solutions remain by following best practices from countries with successful shark management initiatives,” said Ryan Murray who led the research for LAMAVE.

“The recovery of reef sharks in the Philippines will require intervention from the government to establish large dedicated shark sanctuaries with strict enforcement policies and the implementation of sustainable fishing practices,” he pointed out.

However, Murray said both measures will require government investment to support alternative livelihood programs and capacity building for coastal fishing communities which would help to ensure their cooperation and compliance.



LAMAVE cited that within the Philippines, Tubbataha Reefs Natural Park and World Heritage Site in Palawan is a clear example on how proper governance and planning can make the difference as to whether these species thrive or become locally extinct.

Citing recent studies, LAMAVE said that the park is seen as a global example of success as it hosts one of the highest densities of whitetip reef and grey reef sharks ever measured.

Launched in the summer of 2015, Global FinPrint's data were generated from baited remote underwater video stations (BRUVS) that consist of a video camera placed in front of a standard amount of bait called a "Chum Cam."

Coral reef ecosystems were surveyed with BRUVS in four key geographic regions, namely Indo-Pacific, Pacific, Western Atlantic, and Western Indian Ocean.



LLDA is warning the public against dealing with individuals and entities selling or representing themselves as developers of public lands along Laguna Lake.

STAR/Bum Tenorio Jr.

Government warns vs buying land along Laguna Lake

[Louise Maureen Simeon](#) (The Philippine Star) - August 13, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA) has warned the public against buying and selling of public lands along the areas covered by the lake.

LLDA is warning the public against dealing with individuals and entities selling or representing themselves as developers of public lands along Laguna Lake.

Just last week, LLDA general manager Jaime Medina and the municipality of Taytay filed before the Office of the Provincial Prosecutor of Rizal a complaint for grave coercion and violations of the Urban Development and Housing Act and the LLDA Act against individuals responsible for selling and disposing of public lands along the Laguna Lake to private individuals through fraudulent, misleading and deceitful means.

“The LLDA denounces any act intended to defraud the public and does not and will not tolerate said unauthorized activities. The public is strongly advised to be cautious and verify the legitimacy of any sale or activities involving the Laguna Lake shore land areas,” Medina said.

“The LLDA will continue taking action to ensure that the Laguna Lake and its environs are duly protected,” he said.

Early this year, the LLDA issued a warning to the public against these kinds of dealings after receiving reports regarding a certain group showcasing the shore land areas of Laguna Lake along C6 Road for a sham project which includes housing facilities.

It was reported that the dealings of these unscrupulous individuals have deceitfully induced private individuals to pay substantial amounts, usually as membership fee or reservation fee for parcels of land along Laguna Lake.

“Under the law, the shore land areas of Laguna Lake are public land which form part of the lakebed. These are not for sale,” Medina said.

He said these groups have no authority to sell or represent themselves as developers of the shore land areas.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/business/2020/08/13/2034823/government-warns-vs-buying-land-along-laguna-lake>



The Environmental Science for Social Change (ESSC) with the support from the Forest Foundation Philippines (FFP) and the Académie De Recherche Et D'enseignement Supérieur (ARES) conducts a webinar on "Understanding Land Use Change for a Sustainable Future: An ESSC Webinar on the Bukidnon Land Cover Updates of 2005-2018" (ESSC)

Webinar on land use for sustainable future held

By Vincent Philip S. Bautista Published on August 12, 2020

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY, Aug. 12 (PIA) – The Environmental Science for Social Change (ESSC) with the support from the Forest Foundation Philippines (FFP) and the Académie De Recherche Et D'enseignement Supérieur (ARES) of the Belgian Government conducted a webinar on "Understanding Land Use Change for a Sustainable Future: An ESSC Webinar on the Bukidnon Land Cover Updates of 2005-2018."

This covers Bukidnon's land cover mapping initiatives in coordination with the provincial government since 2005.

"The updated land cover offers substantial help to our local communities modellers, practitioners, and public leaders including our policy makers as this will serve as one of our references in addressing various environmental and natural resources in the province," Bukidnon Environment and Natural Resources Office (BENRO) Officer-in-Charge Cecile Egnar said in her message.

She noted the significance of the research, as the provincial government of Bukidnon is now in the process of developing and formulating its provincial physical framework plan and forest land use plan for its two cities and 20 municipalities.

With Bukidnon being a critical watershed of six major rivers in Mindanao and being tapped for agriculture, domestic industrialization, and hydropower generation, on top of supporting a huge bulk of forest eco-system in the region that are a depository for biological resources and a source of many environmental resources, Egnar emphasized the need for the province to be guided in the coming ten years when it comes to sustainable land usage and resource management.

In his presentation, Université Catholique de Louvain (UCLouvain) Professor Pierre Defourny presented the technology used in Land Use mapping and its significance and limitations in leveraging it in support of governance towards a sustainable socio-ecosystem such as gearing towards an integrated geospatial information framework and Earth Observation (EO) in which they acquire observations of the Earth's surface and atmosphere via remote sensing instruments.

“EO can now locate and monitor land change everywhere, community mapping is much more than high-tech. However, only communities and authorities empowered can manage land use based on appropriate environmental policies and socio-economic strategies for a sustainable socio-ecological system,” he said.

In this research, they have found that the province’s natural forests, which are critical to the sustainability of ecosystem services, are under pressure, with four major losses in forest blocks that were mainly due to natural forest degradation, and the occurrence of deforestation to “almost 11,000 hectares” of natural forests that were converted to grassland and agricultural land that may result in a negative impact on cultures and livelihoods in the surrounding areas, namely in Mt. Tangkulang, Northern Pantaron, Mt. Kitanglad, and Mt. Kalatungan.

To counter the negative effects of unchecked industrialization in the four major blocks, Payment for Environmental Services (PES) Adviser Rowena Soriaga disclosed the importance of linking forest agenda with water needs at community and landscape levels, updating the Comprehensive Land Use Plans (CLUP) and Forest Land Plans (PLUP), developing scheme payments for ecosystem services (PES) to communities in areas with potential for assisted natural forest regeneration, and supporting and promoting of Indigenous Community Conserved Areas (ICCA).

“We need to help people find other sustainable farming practices, alternative land uses that can provide them livelihood and greater ecosystem security,” she said. (VPSBautista/PIA10)

CCC bats for enhanced youth engagement on climate action

By Jerome Carlo R. Paunan Published on August 12, 2020



CALOOCAN CITY, Aug. 12 (PIA) -- As the Philippines celebrates International Youth Day today, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) has vowed to strengthen its engagement with the Filipino youth in promoting climate change action at all levels, as it is the children and young people of today who will face the worst effects of climate change over time.

The CCC told the **PIA-NCR** that with the theme "Youth Engagement for Global Action," this year's celebration aims to highlight the ways on how engaging the youth at the local, national, and global levels enriches national and multilateral institutions and processes, and at the same time, recognizes the need to enhance their representation in formal institutional politics.

The CCC said it has always recognized the role of the young population as essential partners of change, expressing that the government could further tap into the potential and skills of the youth to generate and amplify climate action from all sectors in the society.

To recall, the United Nations defines the world's youth as those aged between 15 and 24 years old, and estimates that they make up one-sixth of the human population. Many of these young men and women live in developing countries with their numbers expected to rise steeply.

"As the challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic and the climate crisis have become more intense, the contribution of our youth in helping achieve sustainable development and climate resilience for the country and the planet are all the more valuable," it said.

Current initiatives of the CCC in collaboration with youth organizations include the "Klima Film Festival," which aims to raise climate awareness through the use of visual media and showcase the youth's skill and passion on film-making, as well as the recent episode on youth climate activism for the online series "Stories for a Better Normal," held in partnership with the Office of Deputy Speaker Legarda, The Climate Reality Project Philippines, Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities, and Mother Earth Foundation.

CCC bats for enhanced youth engagement on climate

August 13, 2020

TITLE: action

PAGE 1/ 2/2

DATE

Earlier, the climate body also launched the search for Young Outstanding Climate Scientists jointly with the Department of Education (DepEd) and Department of Science and Technology (DOST) to support and mentor senior high school students on climate-related research and projects.

The CCC also has a standing partnership with the Information and Communications Technology Academy (iACADEMY), which has generated a print exhibition on climate action by multimedia arts students and a mentorship project for students to develop a mobile app to raise climate awareness.

"Addressing climate change arises from an intergenerational responsibility to protect natural resources. Engaging the youth, who are constantly finding new ways to build and sustain movements, raise awareness, and innovate in all aspects of climate action could sustain the momentum towards sustainable development and a green post-pandemic recovery," the CCC said. (PIA NCR)

'Green' recovery not in mind of Asian economy

TITLE: rescuers — ING

PAGE 1/ 1/2

August 13, 2020

DATE



A cyclist passes a nearly empty road in Manila on March 20, 2020, after the government imposed an enhanced community quarantine against the rising numbers of COVID-19 coronavirus infections.

AFP/Ted Aljibe

'Green' recovery not in mind of Asian economy rescuers — ING

[Ian Nicolas Cigaral](#) (The Philippine Star) - August 12, 2020 - 5:57pm

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines is among Asian countries that have left out the environment in its coronavirus spending plan, missing a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to tackle the long-term threat of climate change as governments prioritize economic revival.

"The COVID-19 (coronavirus disease-2019) pandemic has offered governments around the world an opportunity for a total rethink on how their economies will operate in the decades to come. COVID-19 might be a near-term crisis, but global warming remains the longer-term threat," Dutch financial giant ING Bank said in a report released Tuesday.

"Few governments in Asia appear to have grasped this chance, with most choosing easier, but arguably less effective traditional stimulus approaches," it added.

According to ING, the pandemic has forced nations to muster a large-scale fiscal bazooka to avert a deeper economic slump. In the Philippines, ING estimates showed the government has so far rolled out a P604-billion COVID-19 war chest.

For ING, the stimulus packages could have also been used to back green projects meant to cut heat-trapping carbon emissions, instead of just cash dole outs, income subsidies and spending on health "with no emphasis on the environment or sustainability."

Apart from Philippines, Taiwan, Indonesia, Thailand, Japan and Australia are just some of the countries that have neglected a greener recovery under their stimulus plans. India, China, New Zealand and Singapore, meanwhile, are at the other end of the spectrum with focus on environmental-sensitive outlays.

At home, lawmakers are set to pass a stimulus package that follows the Duterte administration's thrust of fiscal discipline under the Bayanihan to Recover as One bill already approved by Congress. However, ING believes even this new legislation "will likely continue to focus on income replacement with the economy on partial lockdown... with no emphasis on green projects or programs."

'Green' recovery not in mind of Asian economy

August 13, 2020

TITLE: rescuers — ING

PAGE 1/ 2/2

DATE

"With COVID-19 spreading across the Philippines and the economy in recession, it may be understandable that the majority of funds have been allocated to income subsidies, healthcare and support to SMEs," the global bank said.

"The government has opted to channel a part of the COVID-19 response into loan support for SMEs given that the bulk of employment is generated by this sector," it added.

Last year, the Philippines was declared facing the highest risk of climate change hazards, according to the latest Global Peace Index (GPI) released by Institute for Economics and Peace, an Australia-based independent think tank. The country lodged the highest scores in terms of hazards such as floods, cyclones and droughts.

For climate advocates, green stimuli can deliver a stronger boost to the economy than other policies and generate a greater number of jobs in many, if not most, cases. This, as the coronavirus-induced recession means governments would have to rescue even fossil fuel-heavy sectors that had contributed to climate change prior to the pandemic to save jobs and the economy.

But as the second stimulus bill contained under the so-called Bayanihan II is set to reach President Rodrigo Duterte's desk, the global bank said there are still ways to include environmental priorities on the package.

"Authorities might have opted to tie some of these salary subsidies and low interest rate loans with requirements to help promote the environment and sustainability," ING Bank said.

"The government could perhaps identify and prioritise infrastructure projects depending on their green criteria," the bank added.

IATF assigns members to 'provide stronger support' to local governments under MECQ

PAGE 1/ 1/2

August 13, 2020
DATE



President Rodrigo Duterte holds a meeting with members of the Inter-Agency Task Force on the Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) at the Malago Clubhouse in Malacañang on April 27, 2020.

Presidential Photo/Karl Norman Alonzo

IATF assigns members to 'provide stronger support' to local governments under MECQ

(Philstar.com) - August 12, 2020 - 9:13pm

MANILA, Philippines — The Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases has assigned its members to "provide stronger support" to local government units it identified as having high transmission rates of COVID-19.

According to the resolution that the task force passed, the IATF members will provide the support "inasmuch as to strictly monitor health system performance, critical care capacity, and stringent compliance to surveillance, isolation and treatment protocols."

The IATF said this is to "operationalize the national government-enabled, local government-led and people-centered response to COVID-19."

Local Government Unit	Official assigned		
Quezon City	Health Secretary Francisgo Duque III	Makati City	National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr.
	Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles	San Juan City	Acting NEDA Secretary Karl Kendrick Chua
Pasig City	Education Secretary Leonor Briones	Muntinlupa City	Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade
	Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat	Parañaque City	Presidential Peace Adviser Carlito Galvez Jr.
Pateros	MMDA Chairman Danilo Lim	Las Piñas City	Public Works Secretary Mark Villar
Marikina	Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III	Pasay City	Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque
	CHED Commissioner Prospero De Vera III	Caloocan City	Agriculture Secretary William Dar
Taguig City	Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año	Malabon City	Labor Secretary Bello
	Bases and Conversion Development Authority CEO Vivencio Dizon		CHED Chairman De Vera
City of Manila	ICT Secretary Gregorio Honasan II	Navotas City	Budget Secretary Wendel Avisado
	Anti-Red Tape Authority Director-General Jeremiah Belgica	Valenzuela City	DOST Secretary Fortunato dela Peña
Mandaluyong City	Trade Secretary Ramon Lopez	Bulacan	Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra
		Cavite	Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana
		Laguna	PCOO Secretary Martin Andanar
		Rizal	Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi

IATF assigns members to 'provide stronger support' to
TITLE: local governments under MECQ

PAGE 1/ 2/2

August 13, 2020
DATE

While it is yet unclear how the IATF members will work with local government units, President Rodrigo Duterte in June sent Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu to Cebu City when it was put under Enhanced Community Quarantine.

Duterte said then that Cimatu would [oversee COVID-19 response and "exercise the powers" of the task force](#) there.

"All he has to do, not for permission, but to advise Manila, here, that these things are being done, these things are not yet done, these things must be done," Duterte also said in a mix of English and Filipino.

"He (Cimatu) has to do whatever that has to be done. There's now a hierarchy of laws that we're following here. And, of course, the mandate of General Cimatu comes from the president himself backed up by an executive order. He can exercise all powers that the president can exercise, he has been the beneficiary of delegated authority from the president," presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said on June 24, the same week Cimatu flew to Cebu.

"[He gets to exercise all the extraordinary powers of the Office of the President](#) in dealing with the pandemic in Cebu City," he added.

Some good news for Cebu City

[SHOOTING STRAIGHT](#) - [Bobit S. Avila](#) (The Philippine Star) - August 13, 2020 - 12:00am

I really didn't want to talk about the COVID-19 virus, especially when a couple of months ago, a column I wrote that Cebu City has earned the indisputable reputation of being the longest lockdown city in the whole world became viral on social media. However, when President Duterte sent Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Sec. Roy Cimatu to handle the COVID-19 affairs of Cebu City, he brought in a lot of Philippine National Police (PNP) Special Action Forces (SAF) to help Cebu City monitor its border controls.

Last Aug. 1, after lingering with a modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ), Cebu City was returned to a general community quarantine (GCQ) and it seems to have finally worked. The latest report from Cebu City was that we have been able to continue our streak of recording fewer coronavirus infections with only 11 new cases and no new deaths logged as of last Monday, Aug. 10.

This report was based on the latest update of the Department of Health (DOH) in Central Visayas that was published on its official Facebook page, that the city had a total of 9,222 confirmed cases with 1,724 active cases and the total deaths remained at 603 in the last five months and zero deaths as of Monday. Call it remarkable... but Cebuanos have finally found a way to reduce the effects of COVID-19 or we're no longer hard headed!

Another bit of good news: Mayor Edgardo Labella, with the support of the Catholic Church, has finally agreed to open our closed churches for as long as it only allows 10 percent of the capacity of the church. If you ask me, this is a better deal than what the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) earlier allowed – only 10 people inside a church. So when the Sacred Heart Parish issued a memo giving out information on the hours of the mass with a number to text for reservations, I immediately requested a reservation for my family and me for our first mass this Sunday since five months ago.

* * *

While Cebu City has reported a decline in COVID-19 cases, let me emphasize that the coronavirus is still with us. In fact, the son of a close friend of our family, Gerald Alcibar who was undergoing dialysis, passed away last Tuesday due to COVID-19 in Makati. May we request our pious readers to please pray for the repose of his soul.

Also we read in the news that former Commission on Elections (Comelec) chairman Sixto Brillantes Jr. died the other day at the Manila Medical Center in Manila due to COVID-19. He was 80. This report was confirmed by Comelec spokesman James Jimenez. He would have celebrated his 81st birthday tomorrow. This was after we got the news that former Manila Mayor Alfredo Lim also died. This is more than enough proof that the coronavirus is still very much around. But wearing face masks, washing hands and social distancing is one way of avoiding infection for as long as our people strictly follow these protocols.

* * *

Meanwhile, still on the issue of the COVID-19, we learned from our social media networks that Russian President Vladimir Putin announced last Tuesday that Russia has developed the first vaccine against the coronavirus. I don't know if President Putin was making good what his government earlier reported, that Russia had hoped to launch mass production within weeks.

Russia's pioneer vaccine candidate, developed by Gamaleya Institute, is listed as being in Phase 1, according to the latest draft landscape of COVID-19 vaccines published by the World Health Organization (WHO) on July 28. Phase 1 studies, according to the WHO, are "small-scale studies of which the primary focus is the determination of clinical tolerance and safety." For whatever it is worth, I have totally lost my confidence with the WHO, especially when they appeared as the propagandists of the Chinese Communist Party (CPP) last January when they announced that there was no person-to-person infection with this virus. But a week later they reversed their pronouncement.

Anyway, we can only hope that the Russian Gamaleya Institute anti-COVID-19 vaccines do really work. However, we know that there are a hundred pharmaceutical companies working hard to get their vaccines done. Just to name a few, there's Johnson & Johnson, Pfizer, Moderna, a US company now on its phase 3 trials, and Astra-Zeneca PLC of Oxford University, also on its phase 3 trials. Mind you, these vaccines may be available hopefully by September, which is already next month; however, these would be questionable with regards to its safety, efficacy, effectiveness and impact. We know that President Duterte wants to be the first to try it. So go ahead and try it!

* * *

Email: vsbobita@gmail.com

Use of face shields mandatory in workplaces starting Aug. 15

By Ferdinand Patinio August 12, 2020, 4:53 pm



Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III. (File photo)

MANILA – Employees will be required to wear face shields in working areas starting Aug. 15, Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III said on Wednesday.

"Effective August 15, it is not only face mask that workers should wear but also face shields. That is the new protocol," Bello said in a radio interview.

He added that the Inter-Agency Task Force has advised employers to provide face shields to their employees.

He warned that workers will not be allowed to enter the workplace if they will not follow the health protocol.

Bello said the measure is an added layer of protection to stem further spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) in their working areas.

"Yes, to prevent transmission in workplaces," he said in a text message when asked on the reason for the policy.

In Memorandum Circular No. 2020-014, the Department of Transportation said commuters are required to wear face shields in public transport starting August 15.

The agency earlier said the wearing of face shield and mask, aside from physical distancing, effectively reduce the transmission of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) by as much as 99 percent.

The government has earlier encouraged the use of face shields not only in workplaces and public transport but also in public areas such as markets, hospitals, and quarantine facilities. **(PNA)**

IATF members lead response in COVID hotspots

Published 4 hours ago on August 13, 2020 02:05 AM

By **TDI**



IATF member during a meeting with Pres. Duterte on 10 August in Davao City. (PCOO photo)

Members of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) will be assigned to cities and one municipality in the National Capital Region (NCR) and the provinces of Bulacan, Rizal, Cavite and Laguna to lead the government response against the pandemic in local hotspots.

Under IATF Resolution No. 62 (Series of 2020) released on Wednesday, 12 August, the IATF members assigned in communities with high coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) transmission aim to provide stronger support to local government units (LGU) in terms of strict monitoring of health system performance, critical care capacity, and stringent compliance in surveillance, isolation, and treatment protocols.

For NCR, the members assigned are Health Secretary Francisco Duque III and Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles (Quezon City); Education Secretary Leonor Briones and Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat (Pasig City); Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chairman Danilo Lim (Municipality of Pateros); Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III and Commission on Higher Education (CHED) Chairman Prospero de Vera III (Marikina City and Malabon City);

Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año and Testing czar Vince Dizon (Taguig City); Information and Communications Technology Secretary Gregorio Honasan II and Anti-Red Tape Authority Director General Jeremiah Belgica (Manila); Trade and Industry Secretary Ramon Lopez (Mandaluyong City); National Security Adviser Hermogenes Esperon Jr. (Makati City); National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) acting Secretary Karl Chua (San Juan City);

Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade (Muntinlupa City); Presidential Peace Adviser and National Task Force on COVID-19 Chief Implementer Carlito Galvez, Jr., (Parañaque City); Public Works and Highways Secretary Mark Villar (Las Piñas City); Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque (Pasay City); Department of Agriculture (DA) Secretary William Dar (Caloocan City); Budget Secretary Wendel Avisado (Navotas City) and Science and Technology Secretary Fortunator dela Peña (Valenzuela City).

Meanwhile, Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra has been assigned to the province of Bulacan; Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana to Cavite; Presidential Communications Secretary Martin Andanar to Laguna and Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi to Rizal.

On Licensing Examination and Rice Task Force

Under IATF Resolution No. 62, the task force also approved the resumption of part 2 of the testing activities for the Qualifying Assessment (QA) for Foreign Medical Professionals tentatively scheduled on 19 September 2020 by the Professional Regulation Commission. The approved examinations to be held from 19-21 September 2020 for the Physician Licensure Examination and QA shall proceed only in areas under general community quarantine (GCQ) and/or modified general community quarantine (MGCQ).

The IATF said that strict health protocols as may be approved by the Department of Health (DoH) shall be observed. Agencies are also directed to render full assistance for the safe and successful conduct of the examination.

In the same resolution, the IATF also endorsed the recommendation of the DA to jointly issue a memorandum circular with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) to give guidance and advisory to the LGU to establish and organize the LGU-led rice task force for the proper implementation and monitoring of the rice program.

The resolution, approved during the 62nd IATF meeting, was signed by Duque as IATF chairperson and Nograles as IATF co-chairperson.

p: wjg

Funds needed for longer MECQ

The country posted a record high 6,958 new cases last 10 August and a daily average at more than 3,000.

Published 6 hours ago on August 13, 2020 12:20 AM

By [MJ Blancaflor](#)



AYUDA means a lift to the lives of these women's families as they receive their supply of groceries amid a stricter lockdown due to the new coronavirus pandemic. / Khent Lorca/POND NEWS ASIA

President Rodrigo Duterte might consider extending the modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) in Metro Manila and its fringes if cash aid for the poor will be included in the Bayanihan 2, Malacañang said on Wednesday.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said the inclusion of financial assistance in the proposed law will be one of the factors to consider if the National Capital Region (NCR), Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna and Rizal will remain under MECQ or downgraded to the less stringent general community quarantine (GCQ) after 18 August.

The Chief Executive recently rejected calls to prolong the enforcement of stricter lockdown measures in the NCR, saying that the billions-worth of funds for the Social Amelioration Program provided under the first Bayanihan Law had been exhausted.

This was later echoed by Defense Secretary and National Task Force Against COVID-19 (NTF) chairman Delfin Lorenzana who insisted the country cannot continue imposing lockdowns as there is a pressing need to reopen the economy.

Prolonging the MECQ, Roque said, is "highly unlikely" to be approved by Mr. Duterte as Metro Manila alone loses P18 billion a day while under the strict quarantine status.

"But if Congress, of course, provides ayuda for Metro Manila and these four provinces, then the situation may change. But as far as the President is concerned, we have used already the ayuda provided by Congress," he added.

"And as you know, under the Constitution, we cannot use public funds without the law appropriating such money," Roque said.

The Senate two months ago has approved their version of the Bayanihan Law which provides P140-billion standby funds for the government's COVID-19 response, including cash subsidy for low-income households in areas under enhanced community quarantine and to recently returned overseas Filipino workers.

Earlier this week, the House also approved on final reading the P162-billion funds for emergency subsidy, cash-for-work programs, among others.

Both versions of the measure did not specifically allot cash aids for areas recently placed under the two-week MECQ, but insertions can be made by the bicameral committee.

Lorenzana, meanwhile, expressed confidence Metro Manila and the surrounding provinces will transition to GCQ once the MECQ lapses next week.

This, even as the country posted a record high 6,958 new cases last 10 August and a daily average at more than 3,000.

“My statement has a caveat. If trends continue that the new cases decrease, because during my interview, (the case was only) 3,000 (on) the day before, from 6,000 (during) the previous days. That was the trend I was referring to,” the Defense chief said in a separate statement.

“But we still have five days to go before the end of MECQ. I may be proven right yet,” he added.

Senate Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri, meanwhile, said lawmakers are planning to inject P3.5 to P5 billion to fund the purchase of COVID-19 vaccines through the Bayanihan 2.

Although the proposal remains unofficial, Zubiri disclosed that senators and their counterparts in the House of Representatives are meeting before they hold a pre-bicameral conference.

“Part of the funds for Bayanihan 2 will be set aside for the vaccine. So that we no longer have to wait for the 2021 budget,” Zubiri said.

Several medical groups have been urging the government to extend MECQ for another two weeks to allow frontliners to recuperate from physical and mental exhaustion in attending to COVID-19 patients.

Under MECQ, all citizens are required to stay home, except those working in essential businesses or Authorized Persons Outside Residence. Public transportation and domestic flights are also suspended.

with Kristina Maralit
@tribunephl_tina

Covid vaccine soon as Q2-2021

Published 1 day ago on August 12, 2020 03:10 AM

By [Gabbie Parlade](#)



As the world grapples for a cure against the pandemic, Dr. Rontgene Solante at the San Lazaro Hospital on Tuesday said officials are hopeful a vaccine against the coronavirus disease may be available by next year.

Solante said this assumed local trials start by September or October.

“If we start September or October, the vaccine becomes available in the first or second half next year,” he added.

Solante said as various clinical trials take place overseas, it is also imperative that a local trial also happens because the efficacy of the vaccine varies, depending on the population involved.

“There may be local similarities on the safety but we don’t know really how we can evaluate the efficacy in those individuals,” he said.

“The setup now is we’re still in the negotiating process, looking at how we can collaborate with them in terms of the date,” he added.

“More or less if we can start these clinical trials by September or October, we’ll be monitoring those involved in three to six months. Then probably first or second quarter of next year hopefully we can have the vaccine.”

Solante said officials are still negotiating with five or six vaccine firms willing to conduct trials in the Philippines even as they also search for possible trial sites.

Former National Task Force adviser Dr. Tony Leachon said that initially, the registration of a vaccine takes up to six months as the Food and Drug Administration still has to review its efficacy.

However, Leachon acknowledged he is optimistic that a vaccine may be made available by December as earlier bared by President Duterte.

The vaccine should come from China and Taiwan and that China said the Philippines is a priority recipient.

In addition, the Russian government also expressed its willingness to offer the country the vaccine as President Duterte committed to be the recipient to ensure its safety.

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III earlier said the Philippines has set aside P20 billion for the vaccine that will be distributed among the 20 million poor Filipinos.

The clinical trials for the anti-COVID-19 medications include the Japan-made Avigan anti-flu drug and Remdesivir which is under the World Health Organization Solidarity trials.

The Philippines reported over 136,000 cases of COVID-19, recoveries of more than 68,000 and a death toll of 2,200.

with Elmer N. Manuel

Russian vaccine: No green light yet

We can assure the public that we are going to conduct a critical study and examination as it undergoes our regulatory procedures for us to be sure of its safety and efficacy.

Published 6 hours ago on August 13, 2020 12:40 AM

By [Gabbie Parlade](#)



RUSSIAN laboratory staff holds bottles of the vaccine claimed as effective against COVID-19. / Russian Direct Investment Fund/AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Nyet!

That no means there won't be a quick issuance of permit for the commercial availability of the recently developed Russian vaccine against COVID-19.

This was made clear by the Department of Health (DoH) on Wednesday as it assured that all necessary protocols and safety regulations have to be followed once the vaccine is made available for the Philippines.

Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said the vaccine is still required to undergo a separate process in the country despite going through its initial protocols in Russia.

"We can assure the public that we are going to conduct a critical study and examination as it undergoes our regulatory procedures for us to be sure of its safety and efficacy," she said.

She also noted that although President Rodrigo Duterte has expressed confidence in the Russian-developed vaccine, regulatory processes will not be overlooked before it becomes available for local use.

"Just like any product, it will go through all the procedures, our president knows that," she said.

At present, the Department of Science and Technology — as the lead agency on vaccines — is scheduled to meet with the Russian vaccine firm provider on propositions of holding local trials.

"They will be discussing how we can possibly have the clinical trial also here in the Philippines. It will include talks on its inclusion and exclusion criteria," she stated.

Both parties will also discuss how many doses in the study will be provided to determine which patients are applicable to join.

Vergeire said a panel of vaccine experts has also been assigned to give recommendations on other safe and efficient anti-COVID-19 vaccines developed in other parts of the world.

The DoH earlier said that a budget of around P2.4 billion has been allocated for the procurement of vaccines which is initially estimated for 20 percent of the population in the poorest sectors. Since it is expected that two doses are needed per vaccine, the health department said it is looking at purchasing around 40 million doses.

On Tuesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin announced that Russia has become the first country in the world to develop and approve a vaccine against the coronavirus disease named as the Sputnik V.

He claimed that it “works effectively enough” as one of his daughters has reportedly been administered with it.

However, the World Health Organization (WHO) pointed out that in following its progress, Russia’s fast-tracked development of the vaccine may compromise the safety of its use.

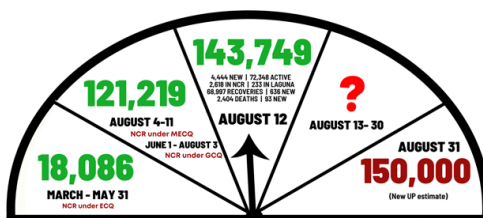
With this, the WHO urged Russia to follow the set protocols under the three phases of the clinical trial on vaccine development to ensure its efficiency.

PH COVID-19 tally tops 143,000 with 4,444 new cases

posted August 12, 2020 at 05:30 pm

by [Willie Casas](#)

The Philippines' tally of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases increased to 143,749 on Wednesday after the Department of Health (DOH) announced 4,444 new infections.



Of the new cases, 3,049 were fresh, and 1,395 late cases.

The five provinces with the highest number of new cases were Metro Manila with 2,618, Laguna with 233, Cavite with 227, Rizal with 174, and Bulacan with 129.

“Of the 4,444 reported cases today, 3,294 (74%) cases occurred within the recent 14 days (July 30 to August 12). The top regions with cases from the recent two weeks were from NCR (1,855 or 57%), Region 4A (580 or 18%), and Region 3 (190 or 6%),” said the DOH in COVID-19 Case Bulletin #151.

Total recoveries also rose to 68,997 after 636 more patients recovered from the respiratory disease, while the death toll climbed to 2,404 with 93 new fatalities.

Of the 93 deaths, 13 (14%) were recorded in August, 49 (53%) in July, 30 (32%) in June, and 1 (1%) in May. Deaths were from Region 7 (67 or 72%), NCR(16 or 17%), Region 9 (3 or 3%), Region 6 (2 or 2%), Region 5 (2 or 2%), Region 11 (2 or 2%), and Region 4A (1 or 2%).

There are also 72,348 active cases undergoing treatment or quarantine, 91.3 percent of which are mild, 7.3 percent are asymptomatic, 0.6 percent are severe, and 0.7 percent are in critical condition.

The DOH said figures reported on Wednesday were based on data submitted by 91 out of the 100 operational laboratories.

As of August 11, the Philippines had 105 licensed laboratories that had tested a total of 1,726,148 individuals, while 55 percent of intensive care unit beds for COVID-19 patients nationwide were occupied and 30 percent of mechanical ventilators were in use.

There were 231 duplicates that were removed from the total case count. Of these, nine recovered cases and one death have been removed.

In addition, two cases were found to be negative and were removed from the total case count after final validation. Moreover, they updated the health status of the 62 cases that were previously reported as recovered but after final validation, they were 60 deaths and two active cases.

These numbers undergo constant cleaning and validation, the DOH said.

TULUNGAN VS PANDEMYA ANG KAILANGAN 'DI GIYERA AT PAMUMULITIKA



August 12, 2020 @ 11:19 AM 20 hours ago

Habang nagkakagulo, naghihirap at namamatay pa ang mga mamamayan dulot ng pandemyang coronavirus disease-19, isinasabay naman ng mga kritiko at rebelde ang kanilang paninira, pag-atake at tangkang pagpapabagsak sa pamahalaan.

Gusto ng pamahalaan, gaya ng kagustuhan ng mga mamamayan, na dapat magkaisa ang lahat laban sa pandemya na talaga namang nakamamatay at nakasasama sa lahat, mayaman man o mahirap na indibidwal, pamilya at bansa.

Pero iba ang utak at motibo ng mga kritiko at rebelde.

Ginagamit ang krisis sa pandemya na dahilan para magmukhang lihis ang pamahalaan sa dapat nitong gawin at kailangan itong sibakin.

Subalit lumalabas namang hindi nakakabig ng mga kritiko at rebelde ang simpatiya at pakikiisa ng mga mamamayan kundi kabaligtaran nito.

Kung meron man silang nakakabig, mangilan-ngilan lang pero alanganin pa ang kanilang simpatya.

SUNOD-SUNOD NA ENKWENTRO

Kabilang sa mga giyera ng mga rebelde at pwersa ng gobyerno ang naganap nitong nakaraang dalawang linggo lamang.

Tatlong rebelde ang napatay sa Quezon, Nueva Ecija; tatlo rin ang napatay sa Kalayaan, Laguna at lima ang napatay sa Sta. Lucia-Candon City-Sta.Cruz area sa Ilocos Sur.

Sa tatlong engkwentrong ito, may napatay ring mga pwersa ng pamahalaan.

Makaraan ang mga giyerang ito, sinilip natin ang mga reaksyon ng mga mamamayan sa social media.

Nahahati ang simpatiya ng mga mamamayan ngunit higit na nakararami ang nagsasabing dapat na ihinto ng mga rebelde ang kanilang pakikipaggiyera sa pamahalaan at sa halip, ibuhos ang giyera laban sa pandemya.

Higit na pinagtutuunan ng mga mamamayan ang halaga ng buhay at kabuhayan na sinisira ng pandemya at ang kalutasan dito kaysa mga idolohiya at giyera sa bala.

Sa pinakahuling giyera sa Ilocos Sur, lumalabas pang higit na kinondena kaysa purihin ang isang umano'y graduate ng University of the Philippines sa pagsali nito sa mga rebelde.

KASONG RANDAL ECHANIS

Itong kontrobersya kay Randal Echanis na isang peace panel consultant ng National Democratic Front ay lumikha rin ng problema sa human rights at pulitika.

Naging kontrobersyal ang kaso dahil nag-agawan sa bangkay ang pamilya at organisasyong militante at mga pulis-Quezon City.

Katwiran ng mga pamilya at militante, totoong kay Echanis ang bangkay subalit sinasabi naman ng pulisya na hindi kundi sa isang Manuel Santiago.

Para maresolba ang problema, inanyayahan ang pamilya ni Echanis ng pulisya, ayon kay Lt. Johnna Sazon, ng Quezon City Police Department na makipagtulungan sa pagkuha ng fingerprint ng bangkay at pagsalang nila sa DNA test.

Sa huli, nakipagkita ang maybahay ni Echanis na si Erlinda kay QCPD Director B/Gen. Ronnie Montejo at nagpakita ng mga ebidensya na si Echanis nga ang biktima.

Tumugma naman ang finger print nito sa rekord ng awtoridad at kinunan na lamang ng salaysay si Erlinda ng Criminal Investigation and Detection Unit sa ilalim ni PMAJ Elmer Monsalve.

Maganda ring nag-sorry mismo si Gen. Montejo sa agawan ng bangkay ngunit idiniin nito na kinailangan talaga ang paniniguro sa mga ebidensya na hindi masira kahit mismo sa katawan ni Echanis upang maisulong ang kaso para sa hustisya rito.

Lumikha rin ng ibang mga kontrobersya ang pagpatay rito ng hindi pa nakikilalang limang kalalakihan na mabilis na tumakas sa dilim makaraang isagawa ang krimen.

Gaya ng nakagawian na nila, tinawag agad itong isang extra-judicial killing ng mga taga-human rights at grupong rebelde, kasama na si Joma na chief consultant ng NDF.

Iginigiit naman ng pamahalaan na dapat isalang ito sa malalimang imbestigasyon at dahil deklarado nang si Echanis ang napatay, sinabi ni Justice Secretary Menardo Guevara na may batas na nakasasakop sa pag-aasikaso rito.

Nangangahulugan naman ang aksyon ni Guevara na ihaharap sa timbangan ng hustisya ang mga may gawa ng krimen bagama't inaasahan nang basta ituring ng mga kritiko at rebelde ito na consuelo de bobo sa gitna ng pagnanais nilang basta siraan at pabagsakin ang pamahalaan sa anomang paraan.

ISKAM SA PHILHEALTH

Hindi rin nakaligtas ang kontrobersya sa PhilHealth sa mata ng mga namumulitika at rebelde.

Basta pinalalabas na bulok ang pamahalaang Duterte at hindi alintana ang katotohanang nagsimula ang malakihang nakawan dito sa panahon ni ex-President Noynoy Aquino na sinasabing ikinawala ng nasa P150B-P170 bilyong pondo ng PhilHealth at panimula ng pagkabangkrap nito.

Gumawa ang Aquino government ng rate system at ginamit ito ng mga korap para magnakaw.

Sa rate system, ginagawang seryoso ang sakit na sipon tungo sa pneumonia o kaya'y galis tungo sa diabetes para makakuha sila sa PhilHealth ng subsidyo at kasama na rito ang iskam maging sa mga sakit sa mata.

Hindi pa nababakbak ang sistemang ito at gamit na gamit pa rin hanggang ngayon para sa nakawan at dinagdagan pa ito ng mga korapsyon sa paglalagay ng sistemang information technology para sa buong PhilHealth.

Ngayon naman, hinihintay ni Pangulong Duterte ang resulta ng mga imbestigasyon at inaasahang magsasagawa ito ng mga desisyon laban sa mga korap batay sa mga lalabas na ebidensya.

Gusto rin ni Partylist Congressman Mike Defensor na ibalik ang dating sistema sa PhilHealth na kung ano lang ang totoong pinagkagastusan, iyon lang ang babayaran ng ahensya.

Ngunit, gaya ng inaasahan pa rin, nakadikit ang mata ng mga kritiko at rebelde sa paninira at pagpapabagsak ng pamahalaan.

Nakalilimutan nilang bahagi sila ng bulok na sistema at gawain at may lakas pa sila ng loob na ibintang lahat sa kasalukuyang pamahalaan.

PAPEL NG MAMAMAYAN

Sa gitna ng lahat ng kontrobersya sa pulitika at rebelyon, naririyang ang mga mamamayan na laging nagmamasid at umaaksyon sa tamang panahon.

Hanggang ngayon, sa kabila ng pagpipilit ng mga namumulitika at rebelde na tumawid ng bakod patungo sa kanila ang simpatiya ng mga mamamayan, nananatili ang huli sa kasalukuyang pamamahala at kalagayan.

Marami nang mga pagkakataon na tinangka ng mga namumulitika at rebelde na kunin ang simpatiya ng mga mamamayan gaya ng nagdaang mga halalan, paggunita sa mga anibersaryo ng People Power at mga bayani ng bansa ngunit nabigo sila.

Ano kaya kung magpahinga muna ang mga ito sa kanilang mga giyera at paninira at tumulong sa pag-ahon ng buong bayan na lugmok na lugmok ngayon dahil sa pandemya?

Many problems face many other sectors

Published August 12, 2020, 11:06 PM
by [Manila Bulletin](#)



The two-week “time-out” given to medical frontliners by President Duterte is “not enough” to relieve the stress and address the problems of the healthcare system, Quezon Rep. Angelina Tan, chairwoman of the House Committee on Health, said Sunday. She suggested that more time be given for the situation to stabilize and the government to come up with a plan to address the problems.

Two weeks are indeed insufficient for such a major problem which has taken months for many other nations to address and none of them have yet found a solution. Infections continue to rise in the Philippines and everywhere else in the world. The two weeks — a return to the Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine (MECQ) — had been granted by President Duterte as a compromise, instead of the strictest lockdown of the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) which the medical frontliners had asked for.

The COVID-19 pandemic, however, is no longer just a medical and health problem. The government is confronted with a myriad other problems arising from the original health one. Since the lockdown restrictions began in March, many businesses and offices have closed down, either temporarily or permanently, and millions of employees have stopped working. Overseas Filipino workers have also begun returning from their host countries which have similarly been devastated by COVID-19. The government began to lift the restrictions on many business operations gradually, but because of the “time-out,” they have again closed down.

From the point of view of national economic leaders, the pandemic and the resulting restrictions have brought about a recession with an unprecedented fall in the Gross National Product (GDP). They are also worried by the precipitous drop in tax collections because of the business and industry closures. Without sufficient taxes, the government cannot run its offices; it cannot provide the Social Amelioration Program aid and provide the other amounts it has been able to give the poorest of the population.

A big part of the population has no permanent employment. In normal times, these people struggled each day to earn enough to get food for the day — sidewalk vendors, “mangangalakal” who scrounged around for anything useful or edible in restaurants’ garbage cans, jeepney drivers working for some operators, construction laborers hired for the day. When the restrictions began in March, they had nowhere to go and nothing to do. Their hopes lifted when the restrictions were gradually lifted, but they are now back to MECQ.

In the last five months, Metro Manila and Calabarzon — which account for 67 percent of the national economy — gradually eased from ECQ to Modified ECQ (MECQ) to General CQ (GCQ), until the President, heeding the appeal of the medical frontliners, returned the two regions to Modified ECQ. Businesses slowly reopening closed down again. Their employees stopped working again. Those without regular employment were back to the problem of how to survive each day.



August 13, 2020

DATE

TITLE: Many problems face many other sectors

PAGE 1/ 2/2

Truly, the medical frontliners need a reprieve from their labors which the President gave them with the two-week "time-out." But, as the President said last Tuesday, the country must move on. The government has no more funds to give away and the people with jobs need to go to work.

The pandemic continues and so will the planning for the government's response. A major part of that plan must attend to the problems of the poor who have suffered most from the pandemic and its restrictions.

Fuga Island sa Cagayan, dapat bantayan laban sa China- Enrile

By [Bombo Radyo Tuquegarao](#)

-August 13, 2020 | 3:15 AM

TUGUEGARAO CITY- Pinayuhan ni dating Senate President Juan Ponce Enrile ang pamahalaan na magdahandahan sa pagpapasok ng mga dayuhan lalo na ang China sa Fuga island group sa Aparri,Cagayan.

Sinabi ni Enrile na ang mga isla ng Fuga, Barit at Mabbag ay strategic sa national security ng Pilipinas.

Binigyan diin niya na kung mapupunta sa kontrol ng China ang nasabing mga isla ay malalagay umano sa matinding panganib ang ating bansa.

Naniniwala siya na gagamitin ng China ang mga isla para sa kanilang Naval at Air Force Bases para magkaroon ito ng kontrol sa sea lane sa South China Sea.

Reaksyon ito ni Enrile sa pahayag ni CEZA Administrator Raul Lambino na may Chinese investors na gustong pumasok sa nasabing lugar.

Bukod dito, sinabi ni Enrile na kung ookupahan ng China ang mga nasabing isla, dodomonahin nito ang buong Balintang Channel na magresulta umano ng malaking strategic problem para sa bansa.

Idinagdag pa niya na magbibigay din ito ng magandang logistic base para sa Chinese Liberation Army para suportahan ang anumang planong aktibidad ng China sa Philippine Rise.

Nangangamba din siya kung nasa Fuga island groups ang red China ay magagamit nila ito para mag-supply ng mga armas sa mga rebeldeng grupo.

Most oil on damaged ship off Mauritius removed, owner says

August 13, 2020 12:10 AM by [DZRH News Online](#)



A general view shows the bulk carrier ship MV Wakashio, belonging to a Japanese company but Panamanian-flagged, that ran aground on a reef, at Riviere des Creoles, Mauritius, August 11, 2020. REUTERS/Stringer

TOKYO (Reuters) – Most of the fuel left on a Japanese bulk carrier that has leaked an estimated 1,000 tonnes of oil off the Mauritius coast has been pumped off, ship owner Nagashiki Shipping said on Wednesday.

Mauritian Prime Minister Pravind Jugnauth said on Tuesday that the MV Wakashio was still holding 2,000 tonnes of oil and was expected to break up, raising concern of a major ecological disaster.

“I heard the collection is almost over, but it is hard to tell if there is absolutely no oil left on the ship,” Yoshinori Fukushima, a spokesman for Nagashiki, said.

The ship was being operated by Mitsui OSK Lines Ltd when it struck a reef and went aground off the southeast Mauritius coast on July 25. Jugnauth declared a state of emergency last Friday.

Oil from the stricken vessel has reached some of the Indian Ocean island’s most pristine beaches, threatening corals, other local wildlife and the country’s tourism industry.

Former colonial ruler France has said it will assist Mauritius with the clean up and Japan said it will send experts to help. The International Maritime Organization is providing technical advice.

Japan P&I Club, the only organisation in Japan that underwrites protection and indemnity (P&I) insurance for ocean-going vessels and coastal ships, said it had yet to estimate the cost of the clean up.

“We are trying to make internal estimates under different scenarios ...including the worst and the best, but we don’t have any figures yet that we can disclose,” spokesman Koichi Miyahiro said.

(Reporting by Kiyoshi Takenaka and Yuka Obayashi; Editing by Toby Chopra and John Stonestreet)

Bolsonaro: Amazon fires a 'lie'

Published 16 hours ago on August 12, 2020 02:57 PM

By [Agence France-Presse](#)



Fires in the Amazon are sparked by humans to clear land illegally. (AFP)

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has said it is a “lie” that fires are ravaging the Amazon rainforest, despite data from his own government showing the number of blazes is rising.

The far-right leader has faced international condemnation for presiding over huge fires and rising deforestation in the Amazon — criticism he took issue with in a speech to a video conference of countries that share the world’s biggest rainforest.

“Tropical rainforest doesn’t catch fire. So this story that the Amazon is burning is a lie, and we have to fight it with real numbers,” he said Tuesday.

Yet satellite data from Brazil’s national space agency, INPE, show the number of forest fires in the Brazilian Amazon last month rose 28 percent from July 2019, to 6,803.

Experts say the fires are typically not sparked naturally, but set by humans to clear land illegally for farming and ranching.

Last year, huge fires devastated the Amazon from May to October, sending a thick haze of black smoke all the way to Sao Paulo, thousands of kilometers away.

The fires triggered worldwide alarm over a forest seen as vital to curbing climate change.

Experts warn this year’s dry season, which is just getting started, could see even more fires.

The scrutiny is pressuring Bolsonaro, who has called for protected Amazon lands to be opened up to mining and agriculture.

He has deployed the army to the Amazon basin, 60 percent of which is in Brazil, to fight fires and deforestation, declared a ban on agricultural fires and launched a task force to combat the problem.

He said that was producing results, pointing to a more than 25-percent reduction in deforestation year-on-year last month.

“We are making big, enormous efforts to fight fires and deforestation, but even so, we are criticized,” he told the meeting of the Leticia Pact, a group launched last year to protect the Amazon.

His government has been accused of cherry-picking data by trumpeting the July drop in deforestation.

Despite the one-month decline, deforestation in the Brazilian Amazon set a new record high in the first seven months of the year, according to INPE data.

Source: https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/08/12/bolsonaro-amazon-fires-a-lie/august122020?fbclid=IwAR1hJrUZRDd2SCbHf53TuO3n7_1i8cS8eaEtnxyo-PSyE1sHIw-B-PasUUo

Beluga whales used as show animals in China released
into sea sanctuary

PAGE 1/ 1/2

August 13, 2020
DATE

Beluga whales used as show animals in China released into sea sanctuary

Agence France-Presse / 03:51 PM August 12, 2020

Two beluga whales from a Shanghai aquarium have returned to the sea in an Icelandic sanctuary, conservationists said Monday, expressing hopes of creating a model for rehoming some 300 belugas currently in captivity.

Little White and Little Grey, two 13-year-old females, left behind their previous lives entertaining visitors at the Changfeng Ocean World in June 2019 when they were flown to Iceland's Klettsvik Bay in the Westman Islands, in specially tailored containers.



Little White and Little Grey. Image: Facebook/@BelugaWhaleSanctuary

On Friday, they were moved from their landbased facility to care pools in the sea at Klettsvik Bay — the first time the two belugas have been in the sea since they were taken from a Russian whale research center in 2011, the conservation charity Sea Life Trust said in a statement on Monday.

They will stay in the care pools “for a few weeks” before they are released into the bigger sanctuary, a 32,000-square-meter (344,445-square-foot) sea pen that will become their home, organizers said.

Little Grey and Little White “will need a short period of time to acclimatize to their new natural environment and all the outdoor elements before they are released into the wider sanctuary in Klettsvik Bay,” the statement said.

After having been cared for by humans for so many years, it is unlikely the belugas would survive in the wild.

The pen is thus sealed off by nets that still allow sea life, such as fish, to swim through.

‘Ambassadors’

Andy Bool, the head of Sea Life Trust, said the belugas’ release “was as smooth as we had hoped and planned for.”

“We are carefully monitoring Little Grey and Little White with our expert care team and veterinarians,” he said.

Bool said the whales were “ambassadors for the 300 other belugas that are in human care across the world.”

Beluga whales used as show animals in China released

August 13, 2020

TITLE: into sea sanctuary

PAGE 1/ 2/2

DATE

“We hope to show that Little White and Little Grey thrive in this bay, and we’re conducting a research study ... that will hopefully show that there’s a welfare benefit to being in a natural environment like this.

“We hope that can then persuade others that maybe their beluga whales might be better off in a different environment,” Bool said.

Ahead of their sea transfer, the whales were trained to hold their breath longer, become physically stronger to cope with tides and currents, and put on blubber to help them cope with colder water temperatures.

The whales each weigh 900 kilograms (2,000 pounds) and measure four meters (13 feet).

Originally from Russian Arctic waters, it is thought they were 2 or 3 years old when captured.

Belugas typically live for 40 to 60 years.

According to Sea Life Trust, Klettsvik Bay is the world’s first open water beluga sanctuary.

Klettsvik is also where Keiko, the killer whale in the 1993 film “Free Willy”, was flown in 1998. The orca was fully released in 2002 but did not manage to adapt to life in the wild and died 18 months later in a Norwegian fjord. **NVG**

Bee friendly: Five everyday things you can do to help protect bees

AFP Relaxnews / 05:56 PM August 12, 2020



The use of pesticides is extremely harmful to honeybees. Image: bo1982/ISTock.com

If you want to do your part in the drive to protect our winged friends, who play such a crucial role in our ecosystems as pollinators, here are a few simple ideas on how to help protect bees and promote a more bee-friendly environment.

Buy local honey

Buying locally produced honey funds local beekeepers, who help support and preserve local honeybee populations.

Cultivate a favorable habitat

At first glance, urban areas aren't a great habitat for wild and honey bees. However, there are ways to improve the bee-friendliness of your urban environment. For instance, to grow honey-producing plants without a garden, all you need is a windowbox. Along with their attractive appearance, geraniums, wisteria, lavender and lilac are full of nectar, which is the main food source for bees. You can also provide a nesting area for wild bees (don't worry, they are solitary, unlike their domesticated cousins) for free — just create a small pile of sand and dead wood, which is all they need to build a comfortable nest.

Avoid using pesticides

Plants treated with pesticides and fungicides are toxic — sometimes even fatal — for bees. But there are plenty of other ways to prevent or control pests in your garden, such as nets and traps, or relying on other useful species and microorganisms. You can also find pest-control products that are less dangerous to bees, which are usually labeled as such.

Sponsor a hive

If you don't have the specific skills and space to own your own hive, you can always contribute to the preservation of honeybees, which have been negatively affected by the use of chemical products in traditional agriculture, via a crowdfunding program. Many organizations offer schemes that enable you to provide shelter for 40,000 to 60,000 bees, either as an individual sponsor or as part of a group. In exchange, you will receive an annual delivery of honey produced by your adopted beehive.

Get tough with Asian hornets

This invasive species, which has been increasingly prevalent across Europe in recent years, actually hunts honeybees. Though Asian hornets are not quite as deadly for humans, if you find one of their nests in your garden you should consider calling in a professional. If you see a nest in a public area like a park, you should contact local authorities. **NVG**

Source: https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/08/12/bolsonaro-amazon-fires-a-lie/august122020?fbclid=IwAR1hJrUZRDd2SCbHf53TuO3n7_1i8cS8eaEtnxyo-PSyE1sHIw-B-PasUUo

Back from the dead? Stem cells give hope for revival

August 13, 2020

TITLE: of Malaysia's extinct rhinos

PAGE 1/ 1/2

DATE

Back from the dead? Stem cells give hope for revival of Malaysia's extinct rhinos

Reuters / 04:47 PM August 12, 2020



Malaysian Professor Muhammad Lokman Md Isa holds a flask containing Sumatran Rhinoceros cells at a laboratory in International Islamic University, in Kuantan, Malaysia June 30, 2020. REUTERS/Lim Huey Teng

KUANTAN, Malaysia— Some skin, eggs and tissue samples are all that remain of Malaysia's last rhino, Iman, who died last November after years of failed breeding attempts.

Now scientists are pinning their hopes on experimental stem cell technology to bring back the Malaysian variant of the Sumatran rhinoceros, making use of cells from Iman and two other dead rhinos.

"I'm very confident," molecular biologist Muhammad Lokman Md Isa told Reuters in his laboratory at the International Islamic University of Malaysia.

"If everything is functioning, works well and everybody supports us, it's not impossible." The smallest among the world's rhinos, the Sumatran species was declared extinct in the wild in Malaysia in 2015. Once it had roamed across Asia, but hunting and forest clearance reduced its numbers to just 80 in neighboring Indonesia.

Iman, 25, died in a nature reserve on Borneo island, following massive blood loss caused by uterine tumors, within six months of the death of Malaysia's last male rhino, Tam.

Efforts to get the two to breed had not worked.

"He was the equivalent of a 70-year-old man, so of course you don't expect the sperm to be all that good," said John Payne of the Borneo Rhino Alliance (BORA), who has campaigned for about four decades to save Malaysia's rhinos.

"It was obvious that, to increase the chances of success, one should get sperm and eggs from the rhinos in Indonesia. But right till today, Indonesia is still not keen on this."

ACROSS THE BORDER

Indonesia's environment ministry disputed accusations of cross-border rivalry as a reason why Malaysia's rhinos died out, saying talks continue on ways to work with conservationists in the neighboring Southeast Asian nation.

"Because this is part of diplomatic relations, the implementation must be in accordance with the regulation of each country," said Indra Exploitasia, the ministry's director for biodiversity conservation.

Back from the dead? Stem cells give hope for revival

August 13, 2020

TITLE: of Malaysia's extinct rhinos

PAGE 1/ 2/2

DATE



This picture taken on July 21, 2019 shows a Sumatran rhino at the Sumatran Rhino Sanctuary, Way Kambas National Park in Way Kambas, Lampung. Sumatran rhinos are the smallest of all rhinos, and the only Asian variety with two horns. (Photo by PERDIANSYAH / AFP)

The Malaysian scientists plan to use cells from the dead rhinos to produce sperm and eggs that will yield test-tube babies to be implanted into a living animal or a closely related species, such as the horse.

The plan is similar to one for the African northern white rhinoceros, which number just two. Researchers in that effort reported some success in 2018 in producing embryonic stem cells for the southern white rhino.

But the process is still far from producing a whole new animal, say Thomas Hildebrandt and Cesare Galli, the scientists leading the research.

And even if it worked, the animals' lack of genetic diversity could pose a threat to long-term survival, Galli told Reuters.

Indonesian scientist Arief Boediono is among those helping in Malaysia, hoping success will provide lessons to help his country's rhinos.

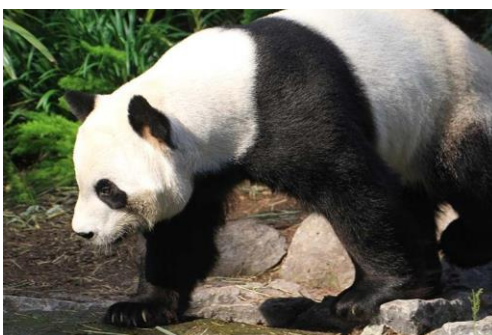
"It may take five, 10, 20 years, I don't know," Arief added. "But there has already been some success involving lab rats in Japan, so that means there is a chance."

Japanese researchers have grown teeth and organs such as pancreas and kidneys using embryonic stem cells from rats and mice in efforts to grow replacement human organs.

For now, however, Iman's hide will be stuffed and put on display alongside Tam in a Borneo museum.

CFC

Source: <https://technology.inquirer.net/103060/back-from-the-dead-stem-cells-give-hope-for-revival-of-malysias-extinct-rhinos>



This undated handout file photo obtained on May 13, 2020 courtesy of the Calgary Zoo shows adult female panda Er Shun. Handout / The Calgary Zoo / AFP

Canada pandas running on empty as bamboo dries up

(Agence France-Presse) - August 12, 2020 - 2:40pm

OTTAWA, Canada — A pair of pandas on loan from China to a Canadian zoo are facing a food shortage as their supply of fresh bamboo dries up, officials warned.

And plans to send them back to China, where bamboo is abundant and easy to access, according to a Calgary Zoo statement, have been stalled by pandemic-era changes to import and quarantine regulations.

Er Shun, a female, and Da Mao, a male, each require around 90 pounds (40 kilograms) of fresh bamboo daily.

Calgary Zoo turned to farms in British Columbia for a temporary domestic supply after international borders were closed in a bid to limit the spread of COVID-19.

But that supply will run out in September, it said.

"You can't give them just any bamboo because they won't eat it," a Calgary Zoo spokeswoman told AFP.

"Our fridges need to be replenished with fresh bamboo every three days in order to meet their dietary needs."

In May Calgary Zoo announced it would hasten the return of the two giant pandas to China.

The pair had arrived in 2014 and were originally scheduled to go back after spending a decade in Canada.

But the zoo has been unable to secure travel permits from China, and last week expressed "increasing concerns for the giant pandas' well-being."

"To date, China has not been able to approve international permits due to changes in its import laws and quarantine facilities due to COVID-19," zoo president Clement Lanthier said in a statement.

"The continued delays in international permitting is putting the health and welfare of these two beautiful giant pandas in jeopardy."

The pair gave birth to two cubs at Toronto Zoo before being moved to Calgary in 2018 with their offspring, Jia Panpan and Jia Yueyue.

The cubs were sent to China in January.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/world/2020/08/12/2034765/canada-pandas-running-empty-bamboo-dries-up>