

DATE: AUGUST 16, 2020

DAY: SUNDAY

# DENR

## IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service

# DENR partners with BPI to help ensure food security in Metro Manila

Published August 15, 2020, 10:48 AM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has partnered with the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI) for the production of agricultural food products that will be used in urban farming in Metro Manila.



(MANILA BULLETIN FILE PHOTO)

The memorandum of agreement (MOA) signed by the DENR-National Capital Region (NCR) and BPI last Aug. 12 aims to raise seedlings of high-value vegetable crops to help ensure food security in Metro Manila amid the community quarantine.

The vegetable seedlings that will be produced in the joint undertaking will be distributed to barangays of Metro Manila with urban farming or gardening programs.

Under the MOA, BPI agreed to provide technical assistance on seedling production, vegetable seeds, and other agricultural inputs to DENR-NCR.

DENR-NCR meanwhile will provide the necessary facilities and manpower for the project.

The Mechanized and Modernized Forest Nursery in Taguig City will be used to raise lettuce, pechay, sili, eggplant, okra, sitao, and ampalaya, among others.

The MOA was signed by DENR-NCR Regional Executive Director Jacqueline Caancan and BPI Director George Culaste.

The Department of Agriculture has been campaigning for the enhancement of urban gardening particularly in Metro Manila and other key areas as one of the measures to address availability of food supply amid the spread of coronavirus disease in the country.

The government has advised the public to stay at home and take the time as an opportunity to get into urban gardening by making use of those idle spaces at home.

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Infectious waste generated at the San Lazaro Hospital in Manila City is temporarily stored in a designated facility.

Philstar.com/Efigenio Christopher Toledo IV

# 'Earth not healing': Medical waste piles up as COVID-19 cases rise

[Gaea Katreena Cabico](#) (Philstar.com) - August 15, 2020 - 10:20am

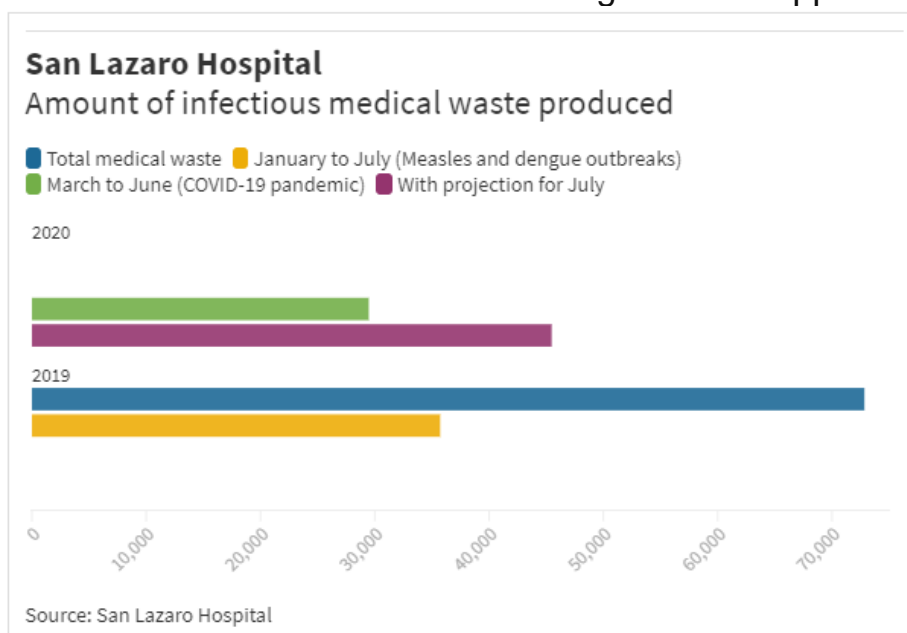
MANILA, Philippines — Since the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic began in the Philippines, San Lazaro Hospital in Manila City—one of the government hospitals at the forefront of the country’s battle against the severe respiratory illness—has been generating an average of 10,000 kilograms of infectious medical waste every month.

From March to June, it produced an estimated 29,473 kilograms of infectious healthcare waste, which according to the Department of Health, includes used personal protective equipment, dressings, swabs, blood bags, urine bags, sputum cups, syringes, test tubes and histopathological waste.

Also treated as infectious waste are liquid waste such as urine, blood and other body fluids.

San Lazaro Hospital, a 500-bed capacity medical facility, has been admitting many of the COVID-19 patients in outbreak epicenter National Capital Region.

It is also one of the laboratories for coronavirus testing in the Philippines.



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When **Philstar.com** talked to Villacarlos last month, he forecast the hospital may generate 16,000 kilograms of infectious waste in July—about 44% of what was generated from March to July last year when the hospital dealt with measles and dengue outbreaks—as the capital region experiences a spike in COVID-19 cases following the easing of quarantine restrictions.

“[Before the pandemic], we could address the problem of bird flu, SARS, MERS-CoV. All those cases, maybe just one or two at a time. It was easier to address them because the cases stopped soon after,” Tirso Villacarlos, officer-in-charge of San Lazaro Hospital’s general services department, said in Filipino.

### **Surge in waste seen as cases rise**

As COVID-19 cases continue to pile up, putting pressure on hospitals, medical facilities are also seeing a surge in the volume of infectious health care waste they produce.

Medical frontliners are clad in personal protective gear to protect themselves and their patients when providing care. In the case of San Lazaro Hospital, an average of 12 PPE sets are used for one patient in a single day.

A complete PPE set includes coveralls, an N95 mask, gloves, head cover, shoe cover, goggles, a surgical mask and a surgical gown.

At minimum, a medical worker assigned to triage and entry points will have a surgical mask on although face shields, which are reusable, are now also increasingly required.

Environmentalists warned that the additional infectious medical waste could have serious impacts on human health and the environment if not managed properly.

In April, the Asian Development Bank estimated that hospitals in Metro Manila—the region that accounts for at least 55% of the nation’s cases—would generate 280 metric tons of medical waste in a single day.

Before the pandemic struck, health care facilities in the capital region had been estimated to produce only 47 metric tons of medical waste daily, with 56%—around 26 tons—of this considered potentially infectious.

Waste that does not come in contact with patients, like that generated from regular housekeeping and office work, is considered general waste and can be handled by municipal waste management services.

Latest data from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources showed that the country has so far generated 19,187.7 metric tons of infectious health care waste from April to June. The figure, which refers to the waste service providers intend to transport and treat, was based on the special permit to transport submitted by treaters.

Of the figure, only around 29% has been treated and disposed of although the waste has already been hauled from hospitals.

The delay is partly in the capacity that waste treatment and disposal facilities have and partly because waste haulers need permits so the DENR can keep track of where hospital waste goes.



Last year, health care facilities in the country produced 88,878.7 metric tons of infectious waste.

“There’s really a surge,” Geri Sañez, chief of the DENR hazardous waste management section, said in an online interview with **Philstar.com**.

Hospitals outside of outbreak epicenter Metro Manila are also grappling with additional infectious medical waste.

Before the current health crisis, Dr. Paulino J. Garcia Memorial Research and Medical Center—also known as PJG—in Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija generated only 3,500 kilograms of infectious medical waste monthly.

As the pandemic continues to rage, the average volume of infectious medical waste produced per month reached around 15,000 kilograms..

Most of the COVID-19 patients in Nueva Ecija, a province north of Metro Manila, are admitted at PJG.

Philip Dasalla, head of the hospital’s engineering and facility management division, said the hospital has had to amend its annual contract with a waste management firm with an additional allotment of 60,000 kilograms because the volume in the contract had already been reached by the second quarter.

**‘Consider all waste infectious’**



San Lazaro Hospitals employs a color coding system to distinguish different types of waste. Infectious waste is discarded in yellow bins, non-infectious dry waste goes to black bins and non-infectious green waste is discarded in green bins.

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Managing healthcare and household waste can be crucial in successfully containing the disease.

In San Lazaro Hospital, a PPE suit used by a medical frontliner after treating coronavirus patients is discarded in a yellow-lidded bin. The PPE suit, along with other infectious waste in the yellow container, is disinfected with sodium hypochlorite at source, Villacarlos said.

A quarantine facility in San Jose City, Nueva Ecija also employs the use of color-coded trash bins to manage their waste.

San Lazaro Hospital also treats all waste generated in COVID-19 wards even if they are discarded in black bins (non-infectious dry waste) and green bins (non-infectious wet waste) as infectious. This is in line with the guidance of the World Health Organization and the DOH to consider all waste generated in the management of suspect, probable and confirmed COVID-19 patients as infectious waste.

After all, any lapses in the management of medical waste may result in healthcare workers and waste management workers getting infected.

Before it is transferred to the hospital's waste storage facility, waste generated in COVID-19 wards is once again disinfected. It is stored temporarily in a designated location, which is away from patients and public spaces, before it is picked up for treatment.

Villacarlos said infectious waste from San Lazaro Hospital is hauled daily.

PJG, meanwhile, installed chutes for infectious linen and waste. Medical frontliners at the floor dedicated to COVID-19 cases drop used PPE and linen—all of which could be contaminated by the virus—down the chutes and into bins.

A waste hauler picks them up for treatment weekly. Dasalla said this is to minimize the transportation of infectious health care waste within the facility and avoid transmission.

### **Treatment and disposal**

Infectious waste from San Lazaro Hospital then goes to Integrated Waste Management Inc.'s waste treatment facility.

Medical waste in the country is typically disinfected through steam sterilization, also called autoclave, which subjects the waste to intense heat and pressure to kill pathogens—prior to disposal in a landfill. Autoclaves can process between 100 kilograms to as much as 3,000 kilograms per cycle.

“You can always bring ordinary waste to a landfill. However, in healthcare waste management, you need to treat the waste to lessen the risk it poses. This is through disinfection or through the use of an autoclave,” Chito Pacheco, president of service provider Integrated Waste Management, Inc., told **Philstar.com** in Filipino.

Aside from San Lazaro Hospital, clients of IWMI also include large quarantine facilities such as Philippine Arena in Bulacan and World Trade Center in Pasay City, where mild and asymptomatic cases are isolated to relieve pressure on hospitals.

Other service providers also use pyrolysis or the process of chemically decomposing organic materials at elevated temperatures without oxygen.

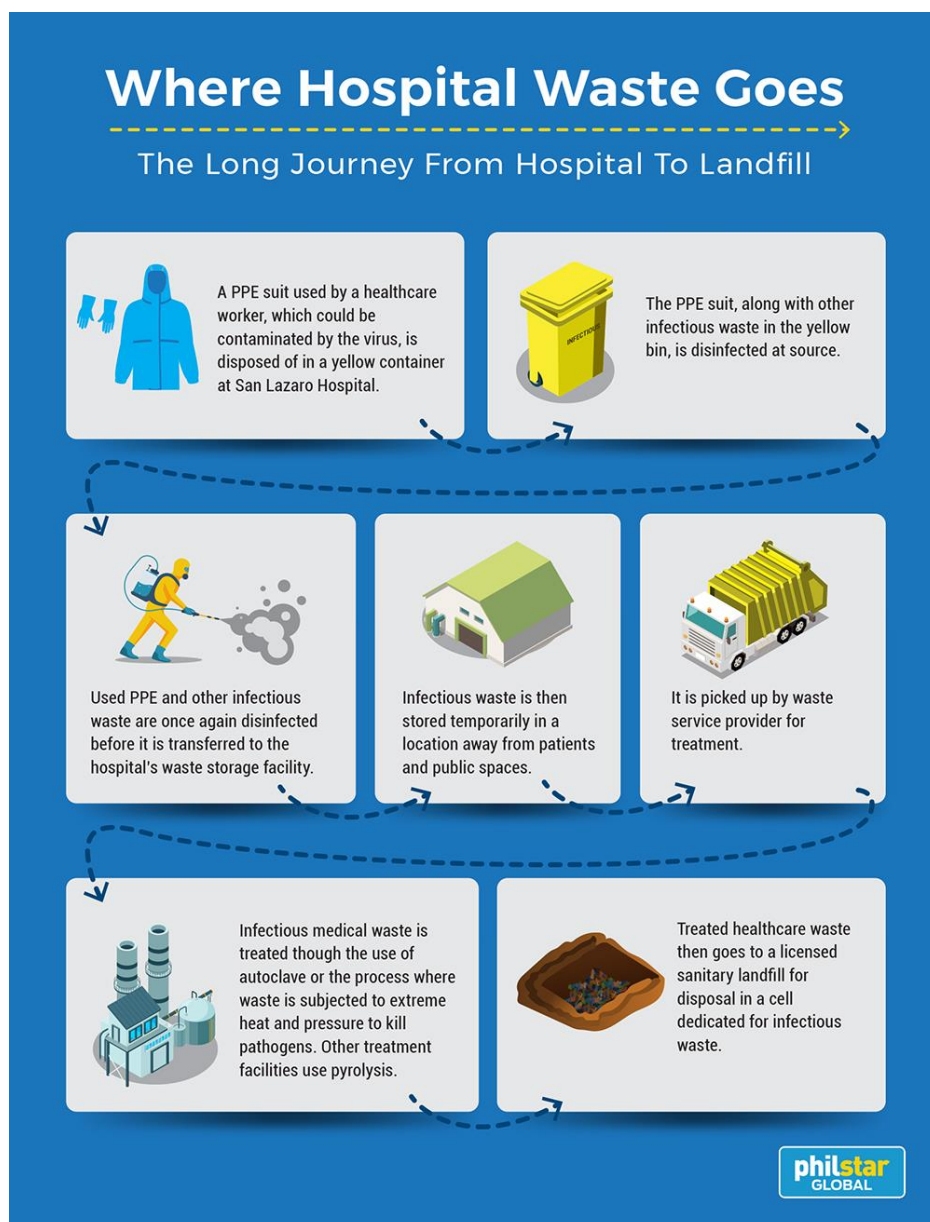
In its Health Care Waste Manual, DOH noted that some facilities shred the waste either before or after treatment but added that “shredding the waste simply to render it unrecognizable makes the task more burdensome and more expensive than necessary.”

Treated healthcare waste is then transported to a licensed sanitary landfill for final disposal in a cell dedicated for infectious waste. According to the DOH, treated infectious waste must not be mixed with municipal waste or non-hazardous waste.

The final destination of waste from San Lazaro Hospital and PJG is Metro Clark Waste Management Corp. in Capas, Tarlac.

Treated waste that comes in the facility is again disinfected in the landfill. This process is repeated while the waste is being disposed of in a special cell before it is buried.

“Right now, there is preponderance of healthcare waste so we are very meticulous when it comes to that. It’s a little tedious but it works,” Victor Hontiveros, MCWMC vice president for administration, told **Philstar.com** in an online interview.



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## Household waste management

With most people confined to their homes, the public is urged to practice proper waste segregation to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 in their communities and to keep waste management workers safe as well.

While the WHO said there is no direct evidence that direct, unprotected human contact during the handling of healthcare waste has resulted in the transmission of the virus, it noted that waste workers should wear long-sleeved gown, heavy-duty gloves, boots, mask and goggles or face shield and perform hand hygiene.

The DENR urged households to dispose of used face masks, gloves and other protective gear in a separate container and to inform garbage collectors of its potentially infectious content.

Republic Act 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, already requires the mandatory segregation of solid waste at source into containers labeled as "compostable," "non-recyclable," "recyclable," or "special waste." The DENR, however, acknowledged there are lapses in the implementation of the law.

In an advisory, DENR's Environmental Management Bureau said households who have suspect COVID-19 cases or patients under home quarantine must disinfect masks and gloves with a chlorine-based solution prior to collection.

"If [segregation] is important before the coronavirus, it's even more important now because we're dealing with infectious waste in households," Paeng Lopez, Health Care Without Harm campaigner, said.

"What we're trying to do here is 'flatten the curve' (of rising cases). If we're not careful then that's another leak, potential leak in our health system that would negate all our efforts to reduce the infection in our waste," he added.

## Volume reduction

Luzon, where many of the country's urban centers are, can handle the increased volume of medical and infectious waste, the chief of DENR's hazardous waste management section said. The challenge lies in Visayas and Mindanao.

There are at least 26 registered treatment, storage and disposal (TSD) facilities nationwide, a fourth of which are located in Luzon.

There are no TSD facilities in the provinces of Cagayan Valley and the Bicol region, however.

Farther south, the Eastern Visayas region, and Zamboanga Peninsula and Soccsksargen in Mindanao do not have waste treatment centers.

"We have directed regional offices to assess their capacity because the formal treatment facilities are concentrated in Luzon and not all regions in Luzon will have access to a formal treatment facility," Sañez said.

There may be TSD facilities outside Luzon, "but healthcare is not part of their business," Sañez said.



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## LIST OF TREATMENT, STORAGE & DISPOSAL FACILITIES BY REGION

Region	Facility Name	Facility Location
CAR	Lepanto Consolidated Mining Company (LCMC)	Mankayan, Benguet
NCR	Eco Safe Hazmat Treatment Inc.	Novaliches, Quezon City
NCR	Integrated Waste Management, Inc.	Quezon Ave., Quezon City
NCR	Maya Med Waste Corporation	Bagbaguin, Valenzuela City
Region 1	La Union Medical Center	Agoo, La Union
Region 3	Servo-Treat Philippines, Inc.	Urdaneta City, Pangasinan
Region 3	Udena Environmental Services, Inc.	Hermosa, Bataan
Region 3	Wacuman Inc.	Norzagaray, Bulacan
Region 3	Far East Fuel Corp.	San Ildefonso, Bulacan
Region 3	Total Organic Environmental Solutions, Inc.	Pulilan, Bulacan
Region 3	Glochem Marketing & Recycling Corp.	San Isidro, Nueva Ecija
Region 3	SafeWaste Inc.	Mabalacat City, Pampanga
Region 3	RMS Petroleum Technology & Waste Mngt. Corp.	Mexico, Pampanga
Region 3	Metro Clark Waste Mngt. Corp.	Capas, Tarlac
Region 3	Tarlac Provincial Hospital	San Vicente, Tarlac City, Tarlac
Region 3	Clean Leaf International Corporation	Bamban, Tarlac
Region 3	Cleanway Environmental Mngt. Solutions Inc.	Capas, Tarlac
Region 4A	Cleanway Environmental Mngt. Solutions Inc.	Silang, Cavite
Region 4A	Green Eco Techwin Inc.	Gen. Trias, Cavite
Region 4A	HAZCHEM, INC.	Calamba City, Laguna
Region 4B	Pollution Abatement Systems Specialists, Inc.	Puerto Princesa City, Palawan
Region 6	Pollution Abatement Systems Specialists, Inc.	Iloilo City, Iloilo
Region 7	Davao City Environmental Care, Inc.	Mandaue City, Cebu
Region 10	Philippine Sinter Corporation	Misamis, Oriental
Region 11	Maya Med Waste Corporation	Davao City
Region 13	Taganito HPAL Nickel Corporation	Claver, Surigao Del Norte

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“So we are encouraging them if they can invest on [processing healthcare waste].”

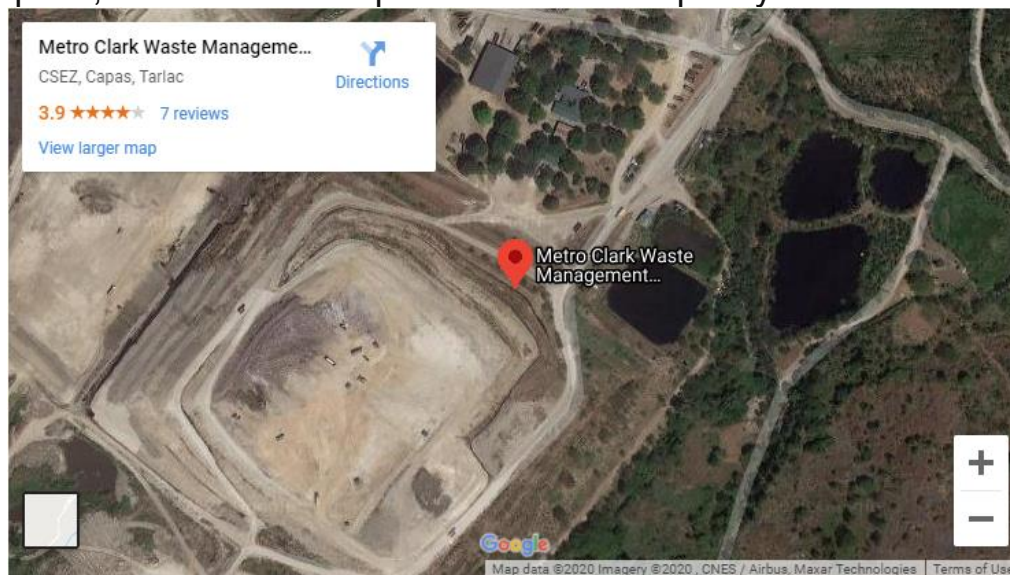
Sañez believes the pandemic may strain licensed landfills in the country. For the DENR official, volume reduction through burning of coronavirus-related waste is needed.

“Time will come that our landfills will reach capacity because volume will be too high and there is no reduction. You’ve treated the waste but you didn’t reduce it,” Sañez said.

“If there will be no volume reduction at the rate this waste is generated, there will be competition between municipal solid waste and hazardous waste for land disposal,” he added.

Hontiveros is confident, though, that the health crisis will not overwhelm Metro Clark, the country’s first engineered sanitary landfill.

“In terms of space, we don’t have a problem. We have plenty of that.”



Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, who oversees local government units and solid waste management, also told **Philstar.com** the country can still accommodate the additional medical waste.

Antiporda said the government is looking into building between 10 and 30 sanitary landfills to help ease pressure on the existing ones. It, however, takes at least six months to build a sanitary landfill, he said.

Incineration is only an option for a worst-case scenario, Antiporda said.

“That might be Plan Z,” he said.

But for environmentalists, incineration is never an option because it will add to pollution in the air.

### **Incineration also a public health concern**

Burning of waste is prohibited under the country’s Clean Air Act of 1999.

“Incineration, hereby defined as the burning of municipal, bio-medical and hazardous wastes, which emit poisonous and toxic fumes, is hereby prohibited,” the law states.

However, Sañez said incineration processes that comply with standards can be allowed.

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“If the incineration facility will have the proper pollution control technology and will comply with incineration standards, then incineration is not banned,” he said.

But in a letter addressed to environmental groups and obtained by **Philstar.com**, the DOH has said there is a ban on biomedical waste incineration, which it said in April “is completely up against the Clean Air Act and the DOH’s response to the global call of minimizing the carbon footprint of the health sector while continuing to provide quality public health and safety.”

The government is also pushing for the adoption of waste-to-energy (WTE) treatment facilities to deal with solid waste, which according to environmental lawyer Gloria Estenzo-Ramos is “illegal and harmful.”

“WTE is not a solution. It causes pollution and in the time of COVID-19, the pollution in the air aggravates those who are suffering from asthma, respiratory illness,” Estenzo-Ramos, who is also the vice president of non-profit Oceana Philippines, told **Philstar.com**.

“Instead of providing a solution, we’re actually creating a whole new problem. Thousands of Filipinos die due to air pollution and adding incineration as another waste management, we just add to that death toll,” Greenpeace zero waste campaigner Marian Ledesma also said.

Both organizations stressed there are sustainable solutions such as the proper implementation of the solid waste program and the shift to reusables from disposables.

“There are green solutions. How come the government turns a deaf ear on them?” Estenzo-Ramos said.

But for now, there is a need to slow the spread of the virus that has so far infected more than 157,000 people in the country to ease pressure on hospitals.

“We need to prevent the spread of the disease to lessen the generation of healthcare waste,” Sañez said.

# Trash for cash

By [The Manila Times](#)

August 16, 2020



*Feliciano Alegre, a 49-year-old settler from Negros Occidental province, tries to salvage plastic bottles or other discarded items he can sell along the coast of the Baseco compound in Manila on Aug. 15, 2020, two days after a Social Weather Stations mobile phone survey conducted early last month found that 79 percent of adult Filipinos said their quality of life worsened in the last 12 months. PHOTO BY MIKE ALQUINTO*

# Wildlife rescues noted in Zamboanga amid health crisis

By Teofilo Garcia, Jr. August 15, 2020, 5:23 pm



**ZAMBOANGA CITY** – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources-9 (DENR-9) has recorded an increase in wildlife rescue and releases in the region amid the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic.

Crisanta Marlene Rodriguez, DENR-Region 9 executive director, said in a statement Saturday a total of 60 terrestrial mammals, birds, reptiles, and marine turtles were retrieved since January this year compared to only 23 from July to December last year.

Rodriguez said they have also recorded 12 wildlife mortalities since January, this year, as against two mortalities recorded from July to December of last year “due to the fact that the injuries sustained by the animals were so extensive and, despite medical treatment, they still succumbed to their wounds.”

The data was provided by the DENR’s Protected Areas Management and Biodiversity Conservation Section of the Conservation and Development Division.

“These animals are undergoing medical treatment for injuries sustained, medical tests for the presence of diseases and rehabilitation until such time they are fit and healthy to be released back in the wild,” Rodriguez said.

Rodriguez said wildlife rescue and retrievals were made possible through the help of concerned citizens who contacted the agency through the DENR-9 hotlines, emails, social media, electronic mails, while others visited DENR field offices to report the presence of stranded, captured or injured wildlife in their community.

“Majority of our rescue efforts were successful due to the fact that people in the community would call us to report on the presence of wildlife or simply turning it over to us as they do not know what to do with it or simply because they know that there is a law for the protection of wildlife,” she said.

She said even though communities are under community quarantine, DENR maintains a skeleton workforce to act as a quick response team to deal with the enforcement of environmental laws, which includes wildlife rescue and retrievals.

The DENR official said a total of 55 animals were released back to the wild since January this year as compared to 23 animals released from July to December last year.

DENR-9 also recorded a total of 942 marine turtle hatchlings released composed of 837 Olive Ridley Turtle and 105 Hawksbill Turtle.

Rodriguez said one of the highlights of wildlife releases back to the wild was a juvenile Philippine Eagle named Siocon, which was rescued in Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte in April this year, and released after a month in Baliguian, in the same province.

Meanwhile, Rodriguez said DENR has intensified efforts to monitor wildlife trafficking considering that the Zamboanga Peninsula could either be a source or transit area for illegal wildlife.

Rodriguez said airports, seaports, and strategic checkpoints are manned by DENR personnel and deputized wildlife enforcement officers to monitor and check the transport of wildlife.

“Our country is a mega-diverse country in terms of wildlife resources and there is a need to protect it from poachers and destroyers of nature. With the help of our citizenry, we can achieve this noble purpose,” Rodriguez said. **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1112371>

U.S. launches P1.1-billion Sibol project for PHL

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# U.S. launches P1.1-billion Sibol project for PHL biodiversity conservation

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

August 16, 2020



*USAID's new biodiversity project will protect Cleopatra's Needle in Puerto Princesa City as a critical habitat for wildlife.*

The United States government recently launched the Philippines Sustainable Interventions for Biodiversity, Oceans and Landscapes (Sibol) project that will support the management of the country's natural resources and combat environmental crimes.

The five-year P1.1-billion project will be implemented through the United States Agency for International Development (USAID).

It aims to help the government achieve its goal of improving natural resource governance and stimulate public and private investments leading to a greater ecosystem stability and inclusive green growth, USAID said in a news release.

Under the project, 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.

"Effective conservation management and measurement of the value of natural resources contribute to the Philippines's economic development and environmental resilience," explained Lawrence Hardy II, mission director of USAID Philippines.

"Through Sibol, USAID is pleased to support the Philippines's efforts to conserve the country's rich biodiversity while improving the livelihoods of Filipinos whose incomes depend upon these natural resources," Hardy added.

RTI International, a US-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 will comprise the consortium partnering with RTI.

In the same news release, DENR Undersecretary Juan Miguel T. Cuna, for Policy, Planning and International Affairs, welcomed partnership with USAID.

U.S. launches P1.1-billion Sibol project for PHL

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“Ensuring ecosystem integrity and human well-being are among the key priorities of DENR,” he said.

He said the DENR “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.”

Sought for reaction, DENR Assistant Secretary Ricardo Calderon said Sibol is a long-term investment program of the USAID.

Sibol is a product of a consortium of different consultancy groups commissioned to do the project, Calderon told the BusinessMirror in a telephone interview.

“Because of the pandemic, the project is very timely especially on building back a better nature. This is a very important project because for us to bounce back, we need to go back to biodiversity conservation and investment in natural resources conservation,” Calderon, concurrent director of Biodiversity Management Bureau, said.

This is a very crucial element of the project in partnership with key agencies of the government implementing land resources and coastal management, he added.

“We are looking at it as an area of convergence to enhance biodiversity conservation and sustainable development,” the BMB chief said.

Since 2014, USAID has provided more than P5 billion in assistance to the Philippine government in conserving the country’s biodiversity and protecting its landscapes and seascapes.

# Toward a 'bluer normal'

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

August 16, 2020



*The Southeast Asian region, home to a third of the world's coastal and marine habitats, plays a significant role in achieving the "30by30 ambition."*

Impacted by the 2019 coronavirus disease (Covid-19), fishermen can play a crucial role in coastal and marine biodiversity protection and conservation. But they will need all the assistance that they could get.

As the community quarantine remains in effect in many areas of the country to help fight the spread of Covid-19, Filipino fishermen, who belong to the poorest of the poor sector of society, remain highly vulnerable.



*A tourist guide does a balancing act as their motorized boat loaded with passengers approach the mouth of the Big Lagoon in El Nido, Palawan. El Nido's tourism is managed by coastal communities that also act as the ocean's protectors.*

Nevertheless, experts believe that the fishery sector could bounce back and boost the recovery efforts given the right support and a wider role in the government's national recovery strategy.

## Production setback

Participants in the online forum, dubbed "Tungo sa Mas Bughaw na Pangkaraniwan," or simply "Toward a Bluer Normal," believed that the stringent quarantine measures put in place since March have reduced fish production.

It also created logistical challenges in delivering the produce, including fish, whether produced via aquaculture or caught in open waters, potentially posing problems to national food security and nutrition.

Fish remains the most abundant protein source for most Filipinos, accounting for 31.2 kilos of consumption per person each year.



While small fishermen were unable to go out fishing, or bring their catch to designated trading centers because of the reduced mobility, illegal fishing continued due to reduced marine patrols during the lockdown.

## Fish Right

The forum series, held on July 16, 20 and 22, was part of the activities of the ongoing USAID Fish Right Program, a partnership between the Philippine government and the US Agency for International Development to help improve the country's marine biodiversity and the fisheries sector.

Among the participants were experts from various sectors, including the government and the private sector.

The resource speakers were Dr. Cielito Habito, professor of Economics; Dr. Joan Castro, executive vice president of PATH Foundation; and Juju Tan, managing trustee of the Center for Empowerment and Resource Development (CERD) and trustee of the NGOs for Fisheries Reform.

"The objective of the program is to reduce the risk of biodiversity," said Nygiel Armada, chief of party of the Fish Right Program, during a Zoom meeting with the BusinessMirror on August 11.

The USAID Fish Right Program is being implemented in the Philippines by the University of Rhode Island in partnership with a consortium of Philippine universities and nongovernment organizations (NGOs).

This five-year project aims to address biodiversity threats, improve marine ecosystem governance, and increase fish biomass in three marine key biodiversity areas (MKBAs) of Calamianes Island Group, South Negros and the Visayan Sea.

During the last two-and-a-half years of implementation, the proponents of the program worked with the Department of Agriculture-Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (DA-BFAR) and local government units in 48 municipalities in Calamianes Island Group, Visayan Sea and South Negros.

Various activities under the program, at various levels enhanced the capacities of various stakeholders in coastal communities.

Among these were local governance, community management of local resources, identifying economically important natural wealth or assets, and protecting and conserving coastal and marine biodiversity.

## Economic opportunity

Despite the degradation and overexploitation, including overfishing, it was found that sustainable management of the country's biodiversity-rich coastal and marine ecosystems could still provide an abundance of seafood and create "blue jobs" that could spur economic activities under the so-called blue economy.

In a statement, Habito pronounced the economic opportunities of sustainably managing the country's coastal and marine resources.

"The economic activities that can possibly be generated from the waters of our territory could contribute more than the current 1.5 percent to the GDP," Habito said.

For his part, John Edgar, Environment Office chief of USAID-Philippines, said that the country's vast natural wealth, as well as strong social capital, are key foundations that can anchor a steady and sustainable recovery.

## Sad plight

Castro told the BusinessMirror during the Zoom meeting on Tuesday about the sad plight of small fishermen.

“Our assessment before and after, or during the pandemic, is that the fishers are already marginalized and vulnerable as they were. They are the poorest of the poor sector. They were more compromised than ever. The threats, the challenges that they have been experiencing has been more pronounced during the pandemic, particularly during the lockdown wherein they lack the mobility to go on their daily lives,” Castro explained.

Worse, she said there were no markets available even when they went out fishing.

She noted that highly affected were the women in fishing communities who would sell the fish that their husbands catch.

“It was double jeopardy for the family, the households. How difficult it was. The longer the lockdown, the more pronounced were the challenges,” Castro said.

## Needed: Financial support

Tan, for his part, said additional funds are needed from the government more than ever.

“I believe that is the case. There are not enough funds from the government, especially for local governments. Local governments have limited budget for coastal resource management and they do not have the technical capacities to assess what good MPAs [marine protected areas] will be,” he said.

Tan said that national government agencies like the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and DA have a budget for coastal and marine resource conservation and protection, “which is good”

However, he said, because of the pandemic, the activities slowed down.

## Biodiversity conservation opportunity

On a positive note, Tan said the community lockdowns were opportunities to step up biodiversity conservation and protection efforts in coastal communities.

“There were more reasons for us to go for conservation because there’s no incentive to go fishing since the market demand was limited and transportation was also limited,” he pointed out.

“I think this is the best time to push more conservation like building more MPAs and networking them to be more effective in the medium and long term,” he added.

## Fisherfolk involvement

In providing financial support, Tan underscored the need to involve fisherfolk in identifying new MPAs or network of MPAs to cover the other ecosystems, such as mangroves and seagrasses that they need to conserve and protect.

“It is important that they be involved, and the money to be used for them to understand and for them to [campaign] among fisherfolk. What is more convincing than fisherfolk convincing fellow fisherfolk,” Tan said.

He said even those who engage in illegal fishing will be enlightened and will have a change of heart.

“I have known a lot of fishermen who were once engaged in illegal [activities]. When they were enlightened, they willingly changed their ways and they became effective enforcers,” he said.

### Alternative livelihood

Both Tan and Castro believe that providing alternative livelihood will be an effective way to reduce the pressure on coastal environments.

“We need to look at developing the value chains. For example, in post harvest. There is a lot of wastage because there are no post harvest facilities,” Tan said.

He said jobs can also be generated through the processing of fish.

“Because the value chain is big, it is regional or national, we have to create a shorter value chain that will employ fishers or those who were once fishers. We can employ fishers in protection activities,” he said.

Castro, for her part, said women can also play a crucial role in transitioning to a “bluer economy.” “They got to be involved in home-based livelihood. Some of the communities with the women [in project sites] that we worked with started to make masks,” she said.

### Time for a bluer normal

According to Tan, the time is ripe to push for a bluer normal. He said it is high time for the blue economy to get the much-needed attention.

In terms of prioritization, he said the bulk of government budget is going to the green or agriculture. However, despite its small contribution to the GDP, investing in coastal and marine biodiversity conservation is very important “because we are protecting our natural assets.”

“It is important that the bluer normal has more protection and conservation activities by the communities themselves supported by the national and local government,” he said, acknowledging that to some degrees, many national government agencies are already looking at how to help coastal communities

“Our marine resources have a lot of potential but we need to ensure that they will serve future and present generation,” he said.

Castro, for her part, said the fishermen are frontliners, in their own right. As such, she said they need a lot of support, understanding the fact that the pandemic has affected them severely.

“It is a great opportunity for us to put them at the center and recognize the effort that they do for the communities and to us as a citizenry for reasons that it will be hard for them to bounce back with the challenges that they experienced during the pandemic,” she said.

Putting the right programs and the right support, investing in nature-based solutions that will include the fishermen as decision-makers and by looking at their alternative livelihood, “then we are not just helping them now but we are making them more resilient to future pandemics and other crises,” Castro added.

# Expert: Endemism is key in protecting biodiversity

By [Rizal Raoul Reyes](#)

August 16, 2020

Endemism is important in promoting biodiversity in the country, a professor at the University of the Philippines-Los Baños (UPLB) said.

Dr. Juan Carlos T. Gonzalez, head of the UPLB Museum of Natural History, said the study of endemism or naturally occurring species in a location, such as an island, region or country, is important to further understand and appreciate biodiversity, as well as to take steps to protect it.

To enhance biodiversity, people should plant more trees, vegetation and flowering plants to encourage pollination, Gonzalez discussed during an online session organized by Energy Development Corp. (EDC) in line with Philippine Environment Month in June.

“For the longest time, we have been reforesting using nonnative species,” he said.

Besides being unsuitable for the location they are planted in, the nonnative species are unable to thrive and serve their purpose of being home to other endemic flora and fauna. In some instances, such reforestation measures end up being more harmful than beneficial, he explained.

In response, EDC established the Binhi greening program in 2008 to address such needs and ensure that endemic tree species are propagated and nurtured across the country.

Binhi has identified and documented 96 threatened species of native Philippine trees and successfully planted in all its 177 partner-organizations across.

An ornithologist, Gonzalez was impressed with the country’s biodiversity data.

According to a 2019 checklist, there are 700 species recorded with 241 of them found only in the Philippines, with the Mindanao region possessing the highest rate of endemism.

At the same time, new species of birds continue to be discovered, including the Cebu hawk-owl in 2012 and the Sierra Madre ground warbler in 2013.

Gonzalez added that this is an indicator of the continuously evolving ecosystem and the need for humans to know more about the creatures that they coexist with.

In partnership with the University of the Philippines Diliman’s Institute of Biology, Gonzalez said the results of an almost decade-long Biodiversity Conservation and Monitoring Program carried out in the geothermal sites further illustrate the impact of endemic trees to biodiversity. He cited the result among birds and flying mammals, including bats.

Gonzalez noted that at least 300 species of birds have been documented to be thriving in these locations, representing about 43 percent of the total bird species in the country.

Some 169 bird species are Philippine-endemic, which represent nearly 71 percent of the total endemic species in the country.

He cited the significance of a total of 59 threatened bird species recorded in these geothermal sites, including the critically endangered Philippine eagle.

Gonzalez noted other important sightings including the Visayan tarictic hornbill in Negros and the Apo myna in Mindanao, among many other precious birds.

He noted that the Binhi forests are an “amazing laboratory” where scientists, including himself, are not only able to study species but also “understand the relationships and patterns that govern our own anthropogenic disturbances,” or human activities that impact the environment.

# PH's metals output, value decline

Published August 15, 2020, 3:32 PM

by [Madelaine B. Miraflor](#)

Due to COVID-19 lockdown restrictions, the Philippines, the world's top nickel producer and one of the most mineralized countries globally, saw a decline in the value of its metals from gold to nickel ore, while production of all exportable mineral commodities also significantly fell during the first half of the year.

Data from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) showed that the country's metallic mineral production value went down by 14.37 percent in the first six months of the year to P53.88 billion from the P62.92 billion recorded in the same period in 2019.

Production, too, went down by double digits for nickel ore, gold, copper, silver, and chromite from January to June.

MGB said that during the period, the performance of the country's metallic sector was "seriously dictated" by the current happenings worldwide including COVID-19 pandemic, slow economic activities, lethargic world metal prices, and limited and hampered mining operations.

Right now, the country's traditional markets include China and Japan for nickel and copper and Switzerland and Hongkong for gold.

In terms of percentage, nickel ore, together with its nickel products, had the largest contribution to the total metallic production value, accounting for 44.79 percent or P24.13 billion.

However, during the period, nickel ore alone incurred production volume and value shortfall of 28 percent and 21 percent, respectively, from 141,584 metric tons (MT) with an estimated value of P12.33 billion in the first half of 2019 to 102,310 MT with an estimated value of P9.76 billion in the first half of this year.

Dante Bravo, president of Philippine Nickel Industry Association (PNIA), said the major factor for the decline for nickel alone was the lockdown, which disrupted movement of mineral products and mine personnel across the country.

As early as March, the Philippines was placed under the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ), the government's top measure to fight the highly fatal and contagious COVID-19 virus. The strict lockdown measures, supported by police checkpoints across many areas, lasted until May.

Bravo said this forced some nickel miners to stop operations by the third week of March and resume during the first week of May.

MGB said that with the exemption of six nickel projects, namely Rio Tuba Nickel Mining Corporation, Adnama Mining Resources Inc., SR Metals Inc. (SRMI), Agata Mining Ventures, Inc., Carrascal Mining Corporation, and Marcventures Mining and Development Corporation, all the remaining nickel producers reported production-value deficits.

In the case of SRMI, it reported no production during the first semester of the year for being on care and maintenance status at that time.

"We expect, however, that production in the provinces of Surigao and Dinagat Island will at least pick-up or improve in the coming months since weather conditions will be more apt for mining operations. It is important to note that of the 10 mining operations in Dinagat Island, only Cagdianao Mining Corporation and Libjo Mining Corporation reported production," MGB said.



During the period, nickel price slightly increased from \$12,316.06 per ton to \$12,473.17 per ton. Next to nickel, gold accounted for 41.51 percent or P22.12 billion of the country's total mineral production.

Though this was a decline of 10 percent from the value of P24.5 billion in the same period last year, MGB attributed the current value to the much-improved price of yellow metal in the world market from US\$1,307.36 per troy ounce to \$1,647.44 per troy ounce.

Market analysts believed that gold prices would continue to go up given the current world economic situation, MGB said.

In terms of production, gold saw a 27 percent decline in output, producing 8,246 kilograms during the period compared to the 11,252 kilograms recorded in the same period last year.

Meanwhile, output performance of silver and copper fell by 30 percent and 17 percent respectively, while chromite's output fell by 39 percent.

During the period, combined mine output of silver and chromite accounted for less than 1 percent or P430 million of the country's total minerals output. Copper contributed P7.19 billion or 13.50 percent.

# Mayor creates body to regulate quarrying activities

BY RHODA GRACE SARON ON AUGUST 15, 2020

MAYOR Sara Duterte has a created a task group that will help regulate quarry operations.

In Executive Order (E.O) No. 48, released on August 12, the mayor said the City Environment and Natural Resources Office (Cenro) complaints in relation to unregulated quarry activities with many of those behind the operations did not even have permits and other necessary documents.

The mayor emphasized in the order the need to address all issues and to guarantee the proper implementation of quarrying laws and other related policies and ordinances.

Members of the the task include the head of Cenro as chair, the head of the Mines and Geo-Sciences Bureau (MGB)-XI as vice chair, and the head/representatives of the City Engineer's Office (CEO, City Planning and Development Office (CPDO)-Zoning Division, City Treasurer's Office (CTO), Department of Environment and Natural Resources Office (DENR), Mindanao Association of Mining Engineers, Society of Filipino Foresters, Inc. (SFFI), and Interfacing Development Interventions for Sustainability (Idis) as members.

The members are tasked to conduct regular ocular inspections, prepare reports on violations and recommendations, monitor and ensure all terms and conditions of quarry permits are complied with, formulate mitigating measures to properly address any negative environmental impact during operation, and make a periodic report to the mayor.

Davao City has several approved quarry permits for commercial sand and gravel, earth fill, and limestone along the Davao, Lasang, Matina Pang, and Talomo rivers.



# TMC recruits environment warriors with free diving

By [The Manila Times](#)

August 16, 2020



*TMC dive master Agapito Cuadra Jr. prepares employees as first-time divers.*

NICKEL Asia Corp. (NAC) subsidiary Taganito Mining Corp. (TMC) has launched DiScuba, a program that aims to get more people in the mining community of Claver and adjacent towns in Surigao del Norte to experience and appreciate diving.

Considered a sport for the elite due to the cost of a single dive, TMC's objective for introducing the sport is to invite more people to become protectors of the environment especially of the marine resources around the mine site.

Marine biologist and TMC Coastal Resource Management Specialist Agapito Cuadra Jr. said that part of his job is to research on the characteristics of marine landscapes and help design programs for environment enhancement and protection.

"I have seen many dive spots, in and out of protected areas, near and far from mine sites, and the learnings are the same, that if we do not introduce structured protection programs, these dive spots will be endangered," he said.

He added that seeing is believing, thus DiScuba, a portmanteau of Discover and Scuba, was launched to bring more people to see the underwater beauty around the mine site. Resident Mine Manager Artemio Valeroso expressed pride and excitement as well.

"Our challenge has always been to make more people appreciate what we do as a responsible mining company and what it means that as miners we are also environment protectors and we are environment warriors," he exclaimed. Cuadra explained why TMC is proud of the Malingin islet dive spot.

"The beauty of the natural corals around the dive spot in Malingin, right in front of the mine site, is proof that responsible mining and the sport of diving can co-exist," Cuadra declared. The TMC mine site is within the Surigao Mineral Reservation.

# Illegal lumber seized in Angeles City

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 03:11 PM August 15, 2020



Illegal lumber seized in Angeles City. Photo from DENR PENRO Pampanga.

**CITY OF SAN FERNANDO** – More than 4,000 board feet of lumber, suspected to have been poached from the forests of the Sierra Madre mountain ranges, were seized in Angeles City on Aug. 12, according to a belated report from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The illegally-cut commodity, worth P250,000, were stacked at the compound of Romar's Hardware Store in Barangay (village) Pandan, according to Laudemir Salac, DENR Pampanga director.

DENR is unable to determine whether the yakal, tanguile and lauan lumber were smuggled out of the forest during the quarantine, Salac said.

The store owner is facing charges for violating the Revised Forestry Code of the Philippines. **TONETTE OREJAS**

# P25,000 illegal lumber seized in Cagayan

By: [Villamor Visaya Jr.](#) - Correspondent / [@VillVisayaJrINQ](#)

[Inquirer Northern Luzon](#) / 01:37 PM August 15, 2020

PENABLAÑCA, Cagayan – Two suspected timber poachers were caught transporting 500-board feet of illegally cut lumber through on Saturday (August 15), police said.

Francisco and Joel Dalumay, of Minanga village, were in the van carrying the lumber worth P25,000, which was flagged down at a checkpoint in Sisim village, said Police Colonel Ariel Quilang, Cagayan provincial police director.

Joel fled but was later arrested. It was not clear how the two suspects are related, but both men will be charged for violating forestry laws.

/MUF

## CCC, OML Center hold "Kaalangang Klima" webinar for youth participants of Klima Film Festival

By Climate Change Commission Published on August 15, 2020

MANILA, Aug. 15 -- The Climate Change Commission (CCC) and the Oscar M. Lopez (OML) Center held a “Kaalangang Klima” webinar-workshop for the participants and youth partners of the Klima Film Festival (KFF) to deepen their understanding on climate change concepts and community-based climate action in the Philippines.

The webinar-workshop, which was conducted online, gathered members of the 56 teams that registered for the KFF, representing at least 13 regions, as well as representatives of the KFF’s 18 youth organization partners, on August 11, 2020, Tuesday, 10 AM – 12 NN.

The esteemed members of the CCC’s National Panel of Technical Experts, Dr. Laura David, Director of University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute, and Dr. Rodel Lasco, Executive Director of the OML Center, gave in-depth presentations on the science on climate change and the ways to address climate impacts.

Dr. Lasco discussed the physical science of climate change, particularly the rise of greenhouse gas emissions and why climate change adaptation and mitigation are crucial to stabilize emissions and address their warming effect on the planet. He also underscored the importance of incorporating science into the works of the KFF participants.

“We need science. We need to understand the science. As you prepare your films, as you do your craft, be creative about your filmmaking and make sure you embed the right science in those films,” said Dr. Lasco.

Dr. David discussed the effects of sea level rise on our fisheries sector and coastal communities and highlighted the importance of our mangrove forests as a natural buffer to adapt to its effects.

“Just like in the COVID pandemic, one thing can stop the entire thing. So, what we have to do is identify what we can stop. We cannot stop the sea level rise. But, if we stop building things where mangroves naturally adapt, we can help stop the “cascade” effect. It’s not the only solution, but it’s one of the small solutions. As filmmakers, you have to highlight those what humans can actually do. We cannot stop sea level rise, but we can help nature adapt,” said Dr. David.

Known climate activists and advocates, including Ms. Joanna Sustento, Public Engagement Campaigner of Greenpeace Philippines; Ms. Marinel Ubaldo, Founder and President of Youth Leaders for Environmental Action Federation; and Mr. Rodne Galicha, Executive Director of Living Laudato Si’ Philippines also joined the online event, sharing their experiences in raising climate awareness and leading climate initiatives on the ground.

“Real life stories are just as important as climate science. Science presents the facts and the figures, while stories reveal the heart and soul behind the statistics. There is a need for collecting and connecting people’s stories, as well as surfacing stories yet untold, on the impacts of the climate crisis and their rights as human beings,” said Sustento, as she recalled her tragic experience when Super Typhoon Yolanda hit in 2013.

CCC, OML Center hold “Kaalangang Klima” webinar  
for youth participants of Klima Film Festival

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“Apathy and denial will not bring back the lives of those who have perished because of climate disasters. This is just a beginning, and we, as youth, have a lot of time and power to do something and to change this path that we're already in. We still have a long way to go but we should not stop because the future of all of us depends on our decisions now,” said Ubaldo, who is also a survivor of Super Typhoon Yolanda.

“Young people, you are not the future of our country anymore. You are the now. Secure your present. Learn from the lessons of the past to face the challenges of today. And with your zeal and vigor, you are the now, shaping the future you wish,” said Galicha, as he encouraged more young people to speak and step up for climate.

Climate Change Secretary Emmanuel M. De Guzman, in his keynote address, committed to provide support and open more avenues for youth engagement in climate action.

“We shall help you communicate climate change effectively so that you can inspire others, especially our national and local leaders, to heed the science and make risk-informed decisions for the sake of our people, nature, and planet. We shall empower you to use your creative talent in promoting sustainable lifestyles, supporting renewable energy, and advancing climate change adaptation and mitigation in your own communities through the powerful and influential medium of film,” said Sec. de Guzman.

Towards the end of the program, the KFF youth organization partners jointly delivered a message of support to all the KFF participants.

Ms. Maricres Valdez Castro, Miss Universe Philippines 2020 - Muntinlupa City, and Mr. Val Amiel Vestil, Founder and Executive Director of the Association of Young Environmental Journalists, moderated the event.

The Kaalamang Klima Webinar-Workshop is also being conducted in harmony with the global celebration of the International Youth Day.

On June 30, the CCC launched the Klima Film Festival, with the view of mainstreaming climate change through science-based short films, while harnessing the skills and talents of young filmmakers, aged 16-22 years old, in climate action. The KFF is organized in collaboration with the OML Center as part of its Balangay Project.

For more information about the Klima Film Festival, visit the Facebook Page of the Climate Change Commission at [facebook.com/CCCPhl](https://facebook.com/CCCPhl), or its website at [climate.gov.ph/events/klima-film-festival](https://climate.gov.ph/events/klima-film-festival).  
(CCC)

# Solon advocates clean and green campaign vs. COVID-19, dengue

By Erna S. GornePublished on August 15, 2020

MAASIN CITY, August 15 (PIA) - - Clean and green environment has been his advocacy not only to combat climate change but to respond to the health crisis threatening the lives of the people nowadays.

Every time Representative Roger Mercado leads in the cleanup drives in rivers, swamp sites and roads, he is always joined in by hundreds of his constituents.

Recently, about five hundred city employees, Sangguniang Kabataan federations, police officers, employees from national line agencies, city hall officials and employees, and non-government organizations swarmed in Barangay Tuburan's river and the whole stretch of the barangay road to pick up tons of garbage.

With his mantra, "Clean and Green is the best solution to COVID-19," Rep. Mercado explained that cleanliness will keep one's immune system strong, promotes good health and enables one to easily combat the threats of health problems to include coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

He further campaigned that cleanliness in the environment will eventually destroy the breeding places of mosquitoes thus reducing the exposure to people's lives against the deadly dengue.

Not to long, Rep. Mercado together with the Federation of Sangguniang Kabataan in Maasin City, barangay officials, among others, cleaned the swampy area in the midst of Barangay Maria Claria.

As of July 21, 2020, the Provincial Health Office reported 654 cases of dengue across the province with Maasin City getting the bulk of infected persons, it was learned.

Meanwhile, the veteran solon recently led in the massive tree planting of some 2,000 acasia mangium seedlings at the hilly mountains of Danao Peak in Malapoc Norte, on August 1, 2020, a Saturday.

As usual, he was able to gather the support of hundreds of people, who kept coming in all his initiatives, be it a planting or cleanup activity for the last 23 years.

Adhering to his other slogan, "One Man, One Tree Can Make A Forest," the green thumb Mercado recorded to have planted nearly a million trees across the province. (Idl/esg/PIA8 SoLeyte)

# Cebu City remains under GCQ until August 31

By: Delta Dyrecka Letigio - Multimedia Reporter - CDN Digital|August 15,2020 - 11:48 AM



A view of some of the skyscrapers at the Cebu Business Park in Cebu City. CDND File Photo

CEBU CITY, Philippines — Cebu City will remain under general community quarantine (GCQ) until the end of the month.

Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque on Saturday morning, August 15, 2020, announced the extension of the city's quarantine status together with the rest of Cebu province.

Mayor Edgardo Labella welcomed the decision of the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) to keep the city's quarantine status for another 16 days.

Being placed under GCQ will allow the city to continue to strictly implement quarantine protocols and limit the movement of its residents without necessarily having to sacrifice economic recovery.

“I am okay with the GCQ. If we were placed under MGCQ, there will be a lot of people going out, it will be difficult to control. Under GCQ, there is still limited movement. Even if we are under GCQ, let us think that we are under ECQ. Stay vigilant,” Labella said in a phone interview with CDN Digital.

Labella said that he will be releasing a new Executive Order soon to specify the regulations that will be enforced while the city remains under extended GCQ until August 31.

The mayor said that the threat to the possible spread of the coronavirus disease remains.

Cebu City was placed under the GCQ since August 1 after 46 days under enhanced community quarantine (ECQ), from June 15 to July 31.

It received its GCQ status after the national government sent Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu here to help address the city's increasing COVID-19 count. / dcb

# 8 areas in Luzon, Visayas on GCQ from Aug 16-31; fate of NCR, Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, Rizal known Tuesday

By [Samuel P. Medenilla](#)

August 15, 2020



*A man wearing a protective suit disinfects an area placed under stricter lockdown measures to curb the spread of Covid-19 in Caloocan City on Friday, August 14, 2020. The capital and outlying provinces is still under lockdown due to rising Covid-19 cases.*

ONLY eight areas in Luzon and Visayas remain under general community quarantine (GCQ) starting on Sunday.

In an online briefing on Saturday, Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) issued Resolution No. 63 placing Nueva Ecija, Batangas, Quezon in Luzon under GCQ.

In Visayas, the areas placed under GCQ are Iloilo City, Cebu City, Lapu Lapu City, Mandaue City, Talisay City, the municipalities of Minglanilla and Consolacion in Cebu province.

“The rest of the country are placed under Modified General Community Quarantine (MGCQ), with some provinces, highly urbanized cities and independent component cities with strict enforcement of local action,” Roque said.

The said classifications will take effect from August 16 to 31, 2020.

Roque noted that some areas within these GCQ and MGCQ areas may still be placed under enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) through localized and granular lockdowns.

“We are now going after areas with clusters [cases of Covid-19]. These will be placed under lockdown,” Roque said.

IATF Resolution No. 63 does not cover the National Capital Region (NCR), Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna and Rizal, which are currently under modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) up to August 18, 2020.

Roque said President Duterte is expected to announce on Monday in Davao City the new community classifications in the said areas.

He noted the IATF already has a recommendation to Duterte regarding the new classification for MECQ areas, but he did not disclose it so as not to preempt the decision of the President.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/bansa/2020/08/16/2035612/maraming-lugar-mananatili-sa-mgcq/amp/>



# Olivarez: Metro Manila ‘most likely’ back to GCQ if virus numbers drop

posted August 15, 2020 at 05:40 pm

by [Joel E. Zurbano](#)

Metro Manila Council chairman and Paranaque City Mayor Edwin Olivarez on Saturday said the National Capital Region will most likely go back to general community quarantine (GCQ) status if the number of COVID-19 cases continues to decrease.

Olivarez claimed the implementation of the modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) has been effective in Metro Manila.

He revealed he is set to meet on Monday National Task Force Chief Implementer Carlito Galvez Jr. to discuss new approaches to lower the number of COVID-19 cases when the metropolis returns to GCQ status next week.

The MMC is composed of the 17 mayors of Metro Manila.

The government placed Metro Manila and four nearby provinces under MECQ following the appeal made by health workers amid the increasing number of positive coronavirus cases.

The lack of PPEs (personal protective equipment), the filling of hospitals, the state of the country’s testing, tracing, and quarantine systems and how to improve them were some of the urgent issues raised by the health frontliners.

According to Olivarez, members of the city council, health officials and city COVID Task Force officials will accompany Galvez on Monday in visiting isolation facilities and conduct meetings with barangay officials to discuss on how to contain the spread of the virus.

“We welcome Sec. Valdez as our big brother in the fight against the pandemic,” said Olivarez, adding that the city government have been exercising transparency in reporting of COVID-19 cases for the past five months.

As of Saturday, the total number of active cases in Parañaque was 729 (21.1%) including no address or unknown barangay.

Total confirmed cases in the city is now 3,459, while recovered patients are 2,629 (76.0%) and deaths are at 101 (2.9%).

Olivarez pointed out that their coordination with the national government will be easier because there is a particular secretary in charge of Paranaque.

The Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID), though Resolution No. 62, said Cabinet members will oversee the implementation and compliance of LGUs to quarantine guidelines, monitor the status of the area’s healthcare system, and ensure a smoother communication between the national and local government.

Galvez last Thursday explained that Cabinet members would serve as "big brothers" and "big sisters" to local chief executives in the fight against the pandemic.

Cabinet members were only assigned because first, they live in their assigned areas and second, to give the officials support coming from the national government, he said.

# Rody not backing out on vaccine

Published 7 hours ago on August 16, 2020 12:05 AM

By [MJ Blancaflor](#)



President Rodrigo Duterte did not walk back from his promise to be the first Filipino to be inoculated with Russia's coronavirus vaccine, his spokesman said Saturday.

This, despite Malacañang's previous announcement that the 75-year-old Philippine leader will only be injected by Russia's "Sputnik V" by May 2021 "at the earliest" once it finishes the third and final phase of the clinical trial.

"He didn't back out. The Department of Science and Technology only said that the first injection can only be done by 1 May, after the third stage o third phase of clinical trial here in Manila," Roque said.

President Duterte boldly declared Monday night that he would immediately try out the vaccine against the new coronavirus developed by Russia, expressing confidence on its safety and effectiveness.

But according to the guidelines set by the country's vaccine expert panel, around 1,000 healthy Filipinos will receive the first doses of Russia's coronavirus vaccine by October as part of the clinical trial.

Duterte, technically, will not be the first Filipino to receive Russia's vaccine which he projected to be ready by the end of the year.

Only healthy Filipinos may volunteer to join the clinical trial to determine if they can build the immunity for the coronavirus once they have received the vaccine.

They will be randomly selected from areas with high coronavirus transmission and will be informed of the trial procedure.

If they will voluntarily agree to be part of the trial, then they will be inoculated with the vaccine.

# Phl's COVID cases now at 157,918

Published 13 hours ago on August 15, 2020 05:39 PM

By [Gabbie Parlade](#)



The Philippines on Saturday surpassed the 157,000-mark insofar as coronavirus disease cases are concerned after 4,351 new infections were reported by the Department of Health (DoH).

From the 157,918 total infections, the active cases have likewise increased to over 83,000, wherein 91 percent are patients with mild symptoms.

Of the tally, 2,460 came from the National Capital Region while others were mainly from the CALABARZON region.

Recoveries, on the other hand, jumped to 72,209 with 885 new identified survivors.

The DoH said that more recovered patients are expected to be added to the tally by Sunday as another massive validation of time-based recoveries will take place.

It will occur Sunday of every week, the health department said.

The current death toll has reached 2,600 with 159 more fatalities, most of which came from the Central Visayas region.

Worldwide, the tally has reached 21 million with the United States at the top with 5.3 million cases, based on data by Johns Hopkins University.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/08/15/phls-covid-cases-now-at-157918/>

Bamboo face shields provide livelihood to group of

August 16, 2020

TITLE: weavers, workers during COVID-19 crisis

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# Bamboo face shields provide livelihood to group of weavers, workers during COVID-19 crisis

Published August 15, 2020, 10:31 AM

by [Zea Capistrano](#)

**DAVAO CITY** – After losing their jobs due to the health crisis, a group of local weavers and workers in a cooperative exporting bamboos in Cotabato province are now overwhelmed with the exponential increase in the number of orders they get for producing face shields made of bamboo.



“We received a huge number of orders in almost all parts of the country,” said Manuel Jayme, the business manager and a co-founder of the Central Mindanao Green Workers Association in Kidapawan City.

Jayme, who also manages and co-founded Community Halal Producers Cooperative, said their group advocates the use of bamboo “for protection and development of the environment against the current global warming”, and was supposed to export bamboo slats to the United States.

“We had planted some 7,000 bamboos in Cotabato Province. We also supported the processing of bamboo led by Community Halal Cooperative in Kabacan,” Jayme told Manila Bulletin.

However, due to the health crisis brought by the coronavirus disease pandemic, their American buyer temporarily suspended the importation of the bamboo slats, causing workers to lose their jobs since February this year.

But these days, they get a minimum of 3,000 orders of face shields a month from their existing non-government organization (NGO) buyers. Jayme said seven workers can produce 150 to 200 bamboo face shields a day. They currently have 14 workers.

“The challenge, therefore, is our ability to provide the required number of face shields in the market,” he said.

Jayme credited the increase in orders to Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA) Secretary Emmanuel Pinol whose Facebook post about the bamboo face shields garnered at least 44,000 shares, and to the NGOs BAMBUHAY and The Bamboo Company.

Their production for bamboo face shields started when they visited the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) office in North Cotabato.

Bamboo face shields provide livelihood to group of

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TITLE: weavers, workers during COVID-19 crisis

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“They showed us a picture of a medical worker wearing this facial shield and asked if we can produce the same. Knowing that it is in line with the current COVID needs for protection, we grabbed the opportunity,” he said.

Jayme explained that face shields require flexible materials to hold the plastic cover around the head.

“As advocates of bamboo, and knowing well of its flexibility, we therefore tried and tested bamboo at first. And yes, as thin as 2-3 mm it can be bent effectively into this U-shapes for its frames,” he said.

“We, initially, tried to use the heavy equipment in Kabacan. Unfortunately, hindi nagkatugma ang thickness planer sa sobrang nipis ng face shield requirements,” he said.

This led them to tap the local weavers called Manug SUKDAP to do the stripping of the bamboo slats, and produce the right thickness of bamboo strips.

Jayme said the bamboo face shields production not only help protect front liners, but also support bamboo farmers whose incomes were augmented. He said it will also mitigate global warming and climate change.

Jayme said one of the challenges they were facing was purchasing raw materials that are not available in Kidapawan City.

“We have to buy them from the nearby Davao City under Region 11. Travel to Davao, nowadays, is costly and tedious with the stringent health protocols in the boundaries,” he said.

Aside from this, Jayme added shipment was more expensive, and took so much time.

Jayme said their strategy to date is to “train more people in viable rural communities.” They also hope to provide employment to women and out-of-school youth.

# What the 'word' needs now: Our new abnormal (IX)

Published August 15, 2020, 12:50 PM

by [Philip Cu Unjieng](#)

## HEARD IT THROUGH THE GRIPE-VINE

Even before the pervasive influence of social media; momentous, historical occasions have always led to new words being coined, particular terms suddenly gaining popularity and entering the mainstream. And let's face it, along with the good and helpful, there's also been the banal and/or confusing. What do I mean? If I surveyed 20 educated people in the first week of February, 2020, how many would have been able to tell me what PPE's are? It's now become part of the nomenclature of our COVID-world; much like how we know the difference between PCR nasal swab testing and the rapid blood sample antibody-testing (but how many realize PCR stands for Polymerase Chain Reaction?). So many of these corona-speak buzzwords and phrases have become part and parcel of our daily conversations and lives.

It's like how we all can create a picture in our minds when I say scuba gear. But do you know the etymology behind "scuba" is Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus? It's repeated usage and acceptance has turned the acronym into a commonly used word, and the origins get lost in history. Closer to home, if we reflect to before the 2019 local elections, and if Manila Mayor Isko Moreno had not won, would "Yorme" be as popular a term as it is now? Never mind that it's in fact a very Old School inversion of syllables, but you can't argue with how it's entered our mainstream, everyday Filipino.



Lexicographers have a field day when these things happen, with dictionaries often playing catch up to what is going on in the real world. And I love it when wordsmiths "play" with the terms and jargon, creating puns that actually make more sense – like how the talk of "flatten the curve," becomes the lockdown reality of "fatten my curves." What is cautionary though; is how, as these buzzwords and phrases become popular, people tend to use them without any real clarity as to what they mean, or if they're being used properly.

As our President offers himself to the Russian COVID vaccine that's bypassed rigorous testing, be prepared to start hearing "herd immunity" bandied about. When enough people in a given population have been administered an effective vaccine, the community develops a herd immunity, where said people are protected from getting the illness even if some have not gotten the vaccine, because the vast majority is immune and incapable of spreading it. And be careful when using the terms Morbidity and Mortality. Morbidity is the measure of how many people have an illness relative to a population, while mortality refers to how many have died as a result of the illness. Don't confuse one for the other.

When I mentioned “used properly,” I also meant pronunciation. This is a pet peeve of mine; as in this day and age, it’s so simple to check this on your smartphone. And yet, the ones who should know better are so damn lazy, and end up leading by mistake. My classic example, for years now, is “indigent” – as it’s so often used by government people. It’s not in-die-gent, with accent on the second syllable. The accent is on the first syllable, and the i in -di- is a short vowel i. Nowhere in the world is it pronounced the way I’ve heard so many do so here, perpetuating the mistake.

Once, at an event, there was this Self-Help motivational speaker and with half my attention elsewhere, I was drawn to listen to what she was saying as she kept referring to a Pla-Too. She was talking about Life’s up’s and down’s, but how we should also resist getting stuck on a Pla-Too. Glancing at her slides, I realized she was trying to say Plateau (pla-toe). Come on, that’s such an essential part of your spiel, and you couldn’t even check to ensure you pronounced it right? Whenever I come across a word I’m not sure about – definition or pronunciation – I always check, as that’s so much better than presuming I’m right, or staying ignorant.

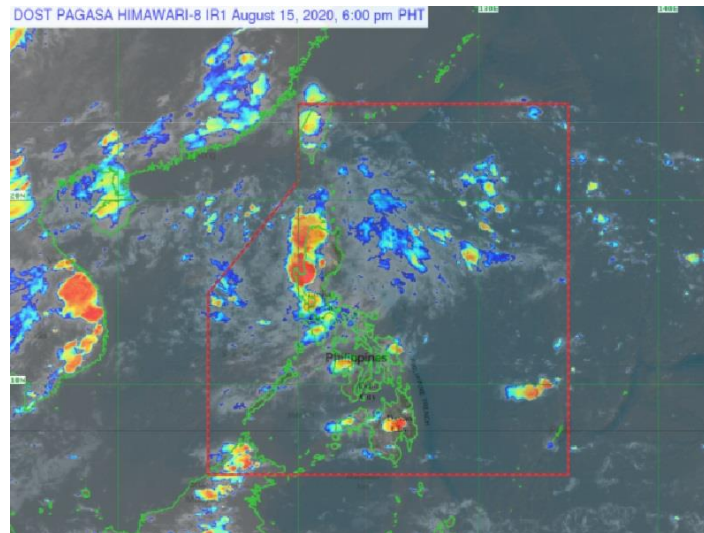
The business world is no exception, Thank God it’s 2020, and I no longer have to attend meetings where we are asked to “think out of the box,” that we need a “paradigm shift,” or adopt “blue sky thinking.” Those buzz phrases have been relegated to the dust bin of business idioms. But unfortunately, this 2020 and the pandemic has seen the resurrection of a term that’s been around for more than a decade, but is suddenly the ‘It’ word of the season – pivot! In business parlance, it’s when a business or enterprise changes direction, when a fundamental change is effected in the business model to adapt to new circumstances. And while it’s obviously essential to the times, it’s been overused like a spent condom; brought in repeatedly just to make the person talking look like he or she knows what they’re talking about.

WFH has led to coined terms like Zoombombing – when an individual tries to take over and dominate a Zoom session, to Quaranteams – when you’re put together as a team and exclusively operate online, and Blursday – how the continued quarantine set-up has led to one day being just like the day before it, or the day after. They’re all fun, and indicative of the world creating jargon to share this COVID experience, and trying to make some sense of it all. I wonder though as to whether some of these terms will enter dictionaries, or still be part of people’s vocabulary a year from now.

And before I sign off, can I just mention that “bake” is a verb. While I know that expressions like clambake and bake-off exist, why have we allowed Sushi Bake to now exist? It’s Baked Sushi at the very least, or Sushi Casserole. Just saying.

# Binabantayang LPA, malabong maging bagyo – PAGASA

By Angellic Jordan August 15, 2020 - 06:16 PM



May isang binabantayang low pressure area (LPA) ang PAGASA sa loob ng Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR).

Ayon kay PAGASA weather specialist Loredin De La Cruz, huling namataan ang LPA sa layong 300 kilometers Silangang bahagi ng Infanta, Quezon.

Mababa naman aniya ang tsansa na lumakas ang LPA at maging isang bagyo.

Gayunman, patuloy pa rin aniyang magdadala ang sama ng panahon ng maulap na kalangitan na may kasamang pag-ulan sa Bicol at ilang bahagi ng Katimugang Luzon.

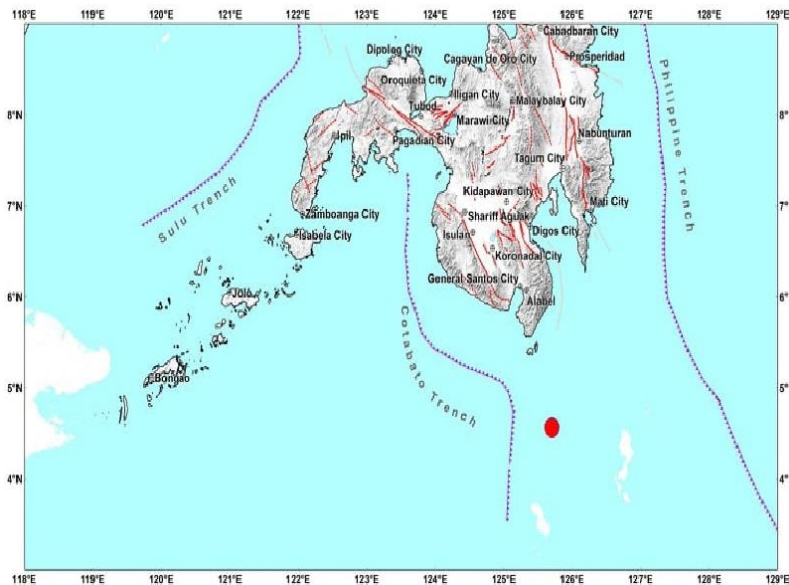
Nakapaloob aniya ang LPA sa Intertropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ).

Nakakaapekto pa rin aniya ang ITCZ sa Visayas at Katimugang bahagi ng Luzon.



# Davao Occidental, niyanig ng magnitude 4.6 na lindol

By Angellic Jordan August 15, 2020 - 08:54 PM



Tumama ang magnitude 4.6 na lindol sa Davao Occidental, Sabado ng gabi.

Ayon sa Phivolcs, namataan ang episentro ng lindol sa lauong 100 kilometers Southeast ng Sarangani bandang 6:53 ng gabi.

128 kilometers ang lalim nito at tectonic ang origin.

Bunsod nito, naitala ang mga sumusunod na instrumental Intensities:

Intensity 2 – Alabel, at Malungon, Sarangani

Intensity 1 – City of General Santos

Wala namang naitalang pinsala sa Sarangani at ilang karatig-bayan.

Sinabi naman ng Phivolcs na walang inaasahang aftershocks matapos ang pagyanig.

# Greenland's ice sheet has melted to a point of no return, according to new study

By Max Claypool and Brandon Miller, CNN

Published Aug 15, 2020 6:27:27 AM



(FILE PHOTO)

**(CNN)** — Greenland's ice sheet has melted to a point of no return, and efforts to slow global warming will not stop it from disintegrating. That's according to a [new study](#) by researchers at Ohio State University.

"The ice sheet is now in this new dynamic state, where even if we went back to a climate that was more like what we had 20 or 30 years ago, we would still be pretty quickly losing mass," Ian Howat, co-author of the study and a professor at Ohio State University, said.

Greenland's ice sheet dumps more than 280 billion metric tons of melting ice into the ocean each year, making it the greatest single contributor to global sea level rise, according to Michalea King, the lead author of the study and researcher at Ohio State University.

The ice loss has been so massive in recent years, she said, that it has caused a measurable change in the gravitational field over Greenland.

Ice melting in Greenland contributes more than a millimeter rise to sea level every year, and that's likely to get worse. Sea levels are projected to rise by more than 3 feet by the end of the century, wiping away beaches and coastal properties.

Coastal states like Florida, and low-lying island nations are particularly vulnerable. Just 3 feet of sea level rise could put large areas of coastline underwater. Forty percent of the US population resides in coastal areas that are vulnerable to sea level rise.

"There's a lot of places, like in Florida especially, where one meter alone would cover a lot of existing land areas," King said. "And that's exacerbated when you get storms and hurricanes and things like that, that then cause extra surge on top of a higher baseline."

The study also found that the ice sheet is retreating in rapid bursts, leading to a sudden and unpredictable rise in sea levels, making it difficult to prepare for the effects.

The study used four decades of satellite data to measure changes in Greenland's ice sheet. The authors found that after 2000, the ice sheet shrank so rapidly that replenishing snowfall would not keep up with the rate of melting from parts of the glacier newly exposed to warmer ocean water, even if climate change were reversed.

Entire coasts of ice are retreating at once due to climate change, Howat said, adding that all 200 glaciers that make up the Greenland ice sheet have been observed retreating within the same episode.

Even though the retreat of the Greenland Ice sheet likely cannot be reversed, it's just the first in a series of tipping points. If climate change continues at this rate, the rate of melting will get much worse.

"We've passed the point of no return but there's obviously more to come," Howat said. "Rather than being a single tipping point in which we've gone from a happy ice sheet to a rapidly collapsing ice sheet, it's more of a staircase where we've fallen off the first step but there's many more steps to go down into the pit."

Source: [https://cnnphilippines.com/world/2020/8/15/Greenland-melted-ice-sheet-seal-level-rise-.html?fbclid#\\_XzcRX85MDhY.twitter](https://cnnphilippines.com/world/2020/8/15/Greenland-melted-ice-sheet-seal-level-rise-.html?fbclid#_XzcRX85MDhY.twitter)

# Zoo livestreams birth of elephant named 'Zoom' in Mexico

Agence France-Presse / 02:29 PM August 15, 2020



Zoom, the baby elephant whose birth was livestreamed, is seen in the Africam Safari park in Puebla, Mexico. Image: AFP José Castañares

A baby African elephant whose birth was livestreamed by a safari park in Mexico has been named Zoom after the video chat app made popular by the coronavirus pandemic.

The calf is the sixth born at the park in Puebla, southeast of the capital, to a herd of elephants rescued eight years ago in Namibia, where they were threatened by poachers.

“The birth of an elephant is difficult to see,” said Frank Carlos Camacho, director of Africam Safari, where the baby elephant was seen Friday playing between its mother’s legs.

“It’s very useful for science, measuring times, fluid volumes, among other factors,” he told Agence France-Presse.

The park said its goal is for the elephants to eventually return to Africa.

“They’re not ours. They belong to the world,” Camacho said.

“We want them to be in Africa, but the current conditions are difficult.

“People working in tourism were left without jobs due to the pandemic and they’re looking for alternatives. The outlook is terrible.” *CL*

# Paglilinis ng oil spill sa Mauritius, magiging mahirap – Japanese cleanup team

By [Bombo Sol Marquez](#)

-August 15, 2020 | 3:41 PM

Walang ideya ang mga Japanese experts kung paano sisimulan ang paglilinis sa tumagas na langis sa Indian Ocean.

Base sa kanilang assessment ay mahihirapan silang linisin ang oil spill na dulot ng barko mula Japan. Sinimulan ng mga specialists sa maritime anti-pollution measures ang paglilinis sa bahagi ng dagat na contaminated na dahil sa tumagas na langis.

Ayon sa isang myembro ng grupo, malawak na ang naapektuhan sa pagtagas ng langis kung saan aabot na ng 10 kilometro ang layo nito.

Dagdag pa nito na sobra rin ang dinanas na pagkasira ng barko dahil sa ilang ulit na sinubukang ilitas ito mula sa tuluyang paglubog.

Covid-19 spreading fast because billions don't have

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# Covid-19 spreading fast because billions don't have water to wash

By [BusinessMirror](#)

August 16, 2020



*A girl wearing a face mask walks with a bottle of drinking water and a food packet that she received from a food distribution site in Mumbai, India on Saturday, June 20, 2020. India is the fourth hardest-hit country by the Covid-19 pandemic in the world after the US, Russia and Brazil.*

A severe household water shortage facing two out of five people in the world is undermining efforts to contain the coronavirus pandemic.

Frequent and thorough hand washing are among the most effective measures in restricting the spread of the virus because the primary routes of transmission are droplets and direct contact, according to the World Health Organization. Yet, some 3 billion people don't have access to running water and soap at home, and 4 billion suffer from severe water scarcity for at least one month a year, the United Nations group UN-Water said.

“It is a disastrous situation for people living without access to safe water and safely managed sanitation,” UN-Water Chair Gilbert F. Hounbo said in an interview. “The chronic underinvestment has left billions vulnerable and we are now seeing the consequences.”

Years of deferred investments in clean water and sanitation are now putting everyone at risk as the virus spreads through developed and developing nations generating a cycle of infection and reinfection.

The world needs to spend \$6.7 trillion on water infrastructure by 2030, according to the UN, not just for the urgent sanitation needs, but to tackle longer term issues from the pandemic such as providing better irrigation to head off a potential food crisis, Hounbo said.

Some companies have stepped in to offer solutions for the most urgent problems. Japan's Lixil Group Corp., which owns brands such as American Standard and Grohe, worked with Unicef and other partners to create an off-grid hand-washing gadget that needs only a small amount of water in a bottle. For \$1 million it will make 500,000 units in India to be donated to serve 2.5 million people before it starts retail sales.

It's a rapid, short-term response to help fight the pandemic, but more sustainable investments are needed, such as installing piped water to more homes, said Clarissa Brocklehurst, faculty member of the Water Institute at University of North Carolina and a former water, sanitation and hygiene chief at Unicef.

Covid-19 spreading fast because billions don't have

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## Water inequalities

The lack of access to basic water and sanitation is one more example of the lethal effects of inequality being exposed by the pandemic. The impacts of water mismanagement are felt disproportionately by the poor, who are more likely to rely on rain-fed agriculture for food and are most at risk from contaminated water and inadequate sanitation, the World Bank said.

Underprivileged people in cities are particularly vulnerable as they often live in densely populated areas where social distancing is hard, especially if they have to share a water source. Transmission in the Americas has been tougher to contain in poor urban areas that have limited access to water, sanitation and public health services, said Carissa Etienne, director of the Pan American Health Organization.

As many as 5.7 billion people could be living in areas where water is scarce for at least one month a year by 2050, creating unprecedented competition for water, said UN's Hounqbo.

By one estimate, each degree of global warming will expose about 7 percent of the world's population to a decrease of renewable water resources of at least 20 percent. Limiting warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, compared to 2 degrees, may reduce climate-induced water stress by as much as 50 percent.

“Hand washing for so long has been what I would call infantilized,” Brocklehurst said. “All of a sudden, it’s a matter of life and death and adults are teaching themselves hand-washing songs.”

***Bloomberg News***