

06 SEPTEMBER 2020, SUNDAY



NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



DENR: Much ado over Baywalk makeover

Published 6 hours ago on September 6, 2020 01:10 AM

By [MJ Blancaflor](#)



Bright ideas are not the monopoly of critics.

This, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) emphasized Saturday as it took a swipe at critics of Manila Bay's "white sand" makeover, saying the project was reviewed by "smart" employees of the agency.

In a radio interview, Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda lamented that critics were quick to "insinuate" that the P389-million project was senseless.

"That's what they said as well when we had closed Boracay. But those noisy groups did not say anything when we finished the project," Antiporda told DZBB.

"Not all intelligent people are from them. There are also smart people in the DENR and the Department of Public Works and Highways who studied this project," he added.

His remarks came after environmental groups raised alarm on the DENR's move to pour artificial sand on Manila Bay's shores, saying the project is focused on aesthetics but has little to offer on rehabilitation and restoration.

The plan is to add a one-meter thick of synthetic sand at the 500-meter stretch of Manila Bay to make it look like Boracay.

Antiporda belied claims that the pulverized dolomite rocks poured in the bay's naturally gray shoreline could easily be washed out by storm surges, adding that engineering interventions like Geotubes were in place.

Geotubes is a brand name for geotextile tubes or long sandbag-like textile containers that are used to reduce erosion in coastlines and to shield it from storm surges.

The DENR official also maintained that the P389-million budget for the project did not just involve the overlay of crushed dolomites, saying it was also used for the cleanup of the waterway.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/09/06/denr-much-ado-over-baywalk-makeover/>



3.5k metric tons of dolomite for Manila Bay from Alcoy, Cebu

By: Morexette Marie B. Erram - Multimedia Reporter - CDN Digital|September 05,2020 - 06:32 PM



INQUIRER.NET FILE PHOTO

CEBU CITY, Philippines — The dolomite rocks used to transform portions of Manila Bay into an artificially made white-sand beach came from Cebu, authorities here confirmed.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau of Central Visayas (MGB -7), in an official statement issued on Saturday, September 5, said they issued last August a transport permit that allowed a mineral-processing firm in Alcoy town to transport 3,500 WMT (wet metric tonne) of processed dolomite to Manila Integrated Terminal in Manila City.

“On August 26, 2020, MGB-7 Regional Office issued an Ore Transport Permit (OTP) to PMSC (Philippine Mining Service Corporation) to transport 3,500 WMT of processed dolomite (size - 5mm) with cargo destination at Manila Integrated Cargo Terminal, Manila City,” said MGB – 7.

“This dolomite shipment is the reported ‘white sand’ which had been spread along the shoreline of Manila Bay to enhance the aesthetic beauty of the bayfront,” they added.

MGB-7 Director Loreto Alburo assured that the shipment of the mineral had complied with all necessary requirements as mandated by the government.

“The dolomite materials sourced from Cebu have been extracted, produced, and shipped out to various buyers following proper regulatory laws and procedures,” said Alburo.

MGB-7 said the dolomite rocks were sourced from a mining site in Barangay Pugalo, Alcoy, which was operated by Dolomite Mining Corporation (DMC).

“(DMC) is mining/quarrying the dolomite found in the town of Alcoy, particularly in Barangay Pugalo. The mining company has a Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA) with the government to mine for 25 years or until 2030,” portions of the statement read.

MGB-7 said these dolomite rocks quarried in Alcoy were then delivered to its sole buyer, PMSC, which also had a plant located within the same town, for processing to various desired sizes and marketable products.

“PMSC-Alcoy Plant has been issued a Mineral Processing Permit (MPP) by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) and presently on its second 5-year term which will expire in 2023. The MPP has a maximum term of 25 years,” they added.



Dolomite is a type of mineral composed of calcium magnesium carbonate.

According to MGB-7, Cebu is one of the few provinces in the Philippines abundant with ‘economically mineable’ deposits of dolomite particularly in the towns of Alcoy and Dalaguete.

Alcoy is a fifth-class municipality located 101 kilometers southeast of Cebu City. It is bordered by Dalaguete to the north.

MGB-7 also said they would continue to monitor all mining activities in Central Visayas particularly the transport and shipment of minerals/ores outside of the region to ensure strict adherence to existing laws, rules and regulations./dbs



Palace defends DENR's 'white sand' in Manila Bay

Published 2 days ago on September 4, 2020 03:37 PM

By [MJ Blancaflor](#)



The Palace has defended the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)'s move to dump pulverized rocks on the coastline of Manila Bay.

In a statement Friday, Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque echoed the DENR's explanation that "crushed dolomite boulders" were utilized for the project — and not white sand as claimed by critics.

"On the issue of the Manila Bay rehabilitation, per the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the report that 'white sand' is being used to fill the stretch of the bay walk is erroneous," Roque said.

Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda has previously explained that the material poured by the department in Manila Bay was not real sand.

He added that the synthetic sand was just pulverized dolomite rocks — a calcium magnesium carbonate used for construction works.

Antiporda also noted that transporting actual sand is illegal under the Philippine Mining Act of 1995 or Republic Act No. 7942.

Environmental groups have slammed the project on Manila Bay's naturally gray shoreline, saying the artificial sand could easily be washed out by storm surges.

Fisherfolk group Pamalakaya tagged the plan as "artificial rehabilitation focusing on aesthetic appearance" of Manila Bay which does not address the environmental degradation problems in the area.

The "white sand" move is meant for the harbor's rehabilitation program that was launched by Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu in January 2019.

Roque noted that this is part of the cleaning up of the Manila Bay with an allocated budget and began even before the coronavirus pandemic.

Authorities are reportedly expecting "white sands" to be seen in Manila Bay as the International Coastal Clean Up Day approaches on 18 September.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/09/04/palace-defends-denrs-white-sand-in-manila-bay/?fbclid=IwAR3lygoAkFB8pFt3D5sqXrdHouUoygrRQw3Hbr0Zq-mu4eq4V499kb8uKhM>



Malacanang defends Manila Bay makeover

By Catherine S. Valente, TMT

September 5, 2020

MALACAÑANG on Friday clarified that it was not “white sand” that will be used to fill in the 500-meter stretch of the Baywalk as part of the Manila Bay rehabilitation.

Citing the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Palace spokesman Harry Roque Jr. said the reported Manila Bay’s white sand makeover was “erroneous” as the “sand” that was brought to Manila was crushed “dolomite boulders,” which came from Cebu province.

“On the issue of the Manila Bay rehabilitation, per the DENR, the report that ‘white sand’ is being used to fill the stretch of the Baywalk is erroneous. DENR added ‘crushed dolomite boulders’ would be utilized for the aforesaid project,” Roque said in a statement.

Roque made the statement after fisherfolk group Pamalakaya earlier criticized the plan of the DENR to fill in a portion of the Manila Bay baywalk with “white sand.”

The group further described the plan as “artificial rehabilitation focusing on aesthetic appearance rather than addressing the environmental degradation problems of Manila Bay.

“Why would you put an alien, synthetic material in the coastline which could seriously hurt and disrupt its ecosystem?” Pamalakaya National Chairman Fernando Hicap said in a statement on Friday.

He warned that synthetic granule materials filled into the coast might pose a hazard to the marine ecosystem.

Pamalakaya urged the DENR to instead pursue a “genuine rehabilitation” that involves the restoration of mangrove areas that were destroyed due to destructive conversion projects.

Roque, however, defended the DENR rehabilitation plan, saying that funds for the program were already allocated even before the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic started.

“This forms part of the cleaning up of the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program with an allocated budget, which began even before the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic,” he said.

In an video message sent to the media, however, DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny Antiporda strongly defended the agency’s nourishment program of the Manila Bay, committing that there will be “engineering interventions” to avoid erosion, preserve the bay’s water quality and make it fit for swimming for the public.

Manila Bay’s fecal coliform level was around 300 million mpn (most probable number per 100 milliliters) per 100 ml when the rehabilitation works started in 2018.

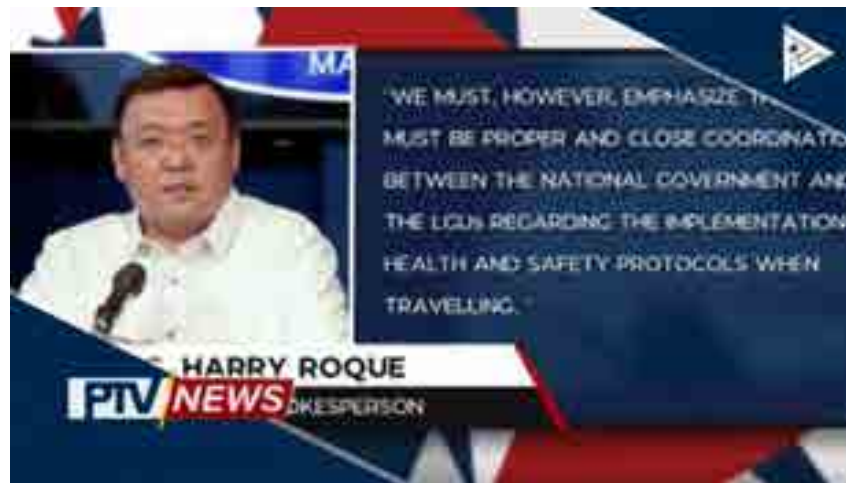
WITH A REPORT BY EIREENE JAIREE GOMEZ

Source: https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/09/05/news/national/malacanang-defends-manila-bay-makeover/764336/?utm_term=Autofeed&utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR20iSroRy_NU-iUc7ZnFT0Rx5FklawbMhiycq5qOljPYGBKCyBRqT1zR_U#Echobox=1599326058



Manila Bay white sand is ‘crushed dolomite boulders’

September 5, 2020



Amid the flak hurled by fisherfolk groups and environmentalists against the ongoing a la Boracay make-over of Manila Bay, Malacañang has clarified that, “per the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the report that “white sand” is being used to fill the stretch of the baywalk is erroneous.”

According to Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque, the Department of Environment and National Resources (DENR) has reported that “crushed dolomite boulders” is being used for the project.

He clarified that the said project is still part of the rehabilitation of the Manila Bay that has started before the health crisis hit.

“This forms part of the cleaning up of the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program with an allocated budget, which began even before the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic,” Sec. Roque added.

Report from Mela Lesmoras

<https://youtu.be/PqSCVRj5gXE>

Source: <https://ptvnews.ph/manila-bay-white-sand-is-crushed-dolomite-boulders/>



White-sand Manila Bay to help improve Pinoys' mental health amid pandemic — Roque

Published September 5, 2020, 10:32 PM

by [Argyll Cyrus Geducos](#)

Malacañang is not buying the argument that the funds for the rehabilitation of the Manila Bay could be used for the government's COVID-19 response instead, saying the white beach in the famous destination can improve the people's mental health amid the pandemic.



Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque (RESIDENTIAL PHOTO / MANILA BULLETIN)

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque made the statement amid the debate over the ongoing rehabilitation of the Manila Bay, especially the white sand that was used to cover the baywalk in the area.

In an interview Saturday, Roque debunked the argument raised by some that the funds for the project could have been used for the government's COVID-19 response. Netizens have pointed out that President Duterte kept on saying that the government was running out of funds already.

According to Roque, the white sand beach in Manila Bay can actually help improve the public's mental health as it will distract them from the global health crisis.

"I don't buy that argument. Kasi alam mo, sa gitna ng pandemya, kinakailangan din na pangalagaan ang mental health (Because you know, we all need to take care of our mental health in the middle of the pandemic)," he told reporters.

"I think, yung pagpapasyal sa mga lugar kagaya ng Manila Bay, hindi mo maka-quantify ang epekto niyan pagdating po sa mental health ng ating mga kababayan—yung kapayapaan ng pag-iisip (I think going to places like Manila Bay, you can't quantify its effect on our mental health—the peace that it brings in our minds)," he added.

Roque likewise said he does not believe that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) would pursue the project if it would hurt the environment.

"Sa tingin ko naman po hindi itutuloy ang proyekto ng DENR nang walang sapat na pag-aaral (I think the DENR would not pursue this project without prior study)," he said.

Roque said on Friday that the DENR used crushed sedimentary rocks, which appear like white sand, for the rehabilitation project at Manila Bay.



Tourism

The Palace official said he is personally looking forward to the outcome of the project.

“I’m looking forward to it dahil ako po ay mahilig talaga na maglakad at maupo diyan sa Manila Bay (because it’s really a habit of mine to walk along and sit down at the Manila Bay),” Roque said.

Roque added that the white sand beach in Manila Bay would also boost its popularity worldwide.

“Sa tingin ko po ang beach na ‘yan ang makakatulong pa para maging pinakamagandang lugar sa buong mundo ang Manila Bay (I think that beach would help Manila Bay be known as one of the most beautiful places in the world),” he said.

“Right now, Manila Bay is known for its sunset, probably the best sunset in the world. With the white beach there, it will be one of the most picturesque sceneries in the whole world,” he added.

Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda told ABS-CBN this week that the project was meant to bring the beach experience closer to Filipinos who could not travel.



Mayor Isko backs DENR's Manila Bay beach nourishment project

September 5, 2020 2 min read

(Photo courtesy of DENR Dir. Tuchie Gaddi)

MANILA – The city government of Manila expressed its full support to the national government and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in its implementation of the Manila Bay beach nourishment project that includes the overlaying of “white sand” in the area.

Manila Mayor Francisco ‘Isko Moreno’ Domagoso, in a press conference on Friday, said cleaning Manila Bay will entail a lot of costs, which is why the city government appreciates all the efforts of the DENR in cleaning the area.

“Natutuwa kami dahil (we are very happy because) they went beyond, to really make more vibrant Manila, we support DENR,” Domagoso said.

Reacting to claims of some groups that the crushed dolomite boulders being overlayed along the Manila Bay beach is dangerous to the environment, Domagoso said that it is not for him to say the same and that he trusts that the DENR knows better on the issue.

“I don’t think a government agency mandated to protect the environment will be the same to destroy it. That is the reason why they are called the Department of Environment and Natural Resources,” he added. For the meantime, he said that the city of Manila is grateful to the national government for giving attention to the cleanliness of the bay.

He added that the Manila city government is excited as well as to the final outcome of the project.

Domagoso, meanwhile, said the city government will do its share in reviving the beauty of Manila Bay, which is known for its breathtaking sunset view.

“We will continue to clean all those solid waste material in Manila Bay within our territorial jurisdiction. We will try to be more efficient in cleaning up our esteros, tributaries, the creeks, we will continue to clean it up,” he said in a mix of Filipino and English.

Domagoso also called on those who live along the Manila Bay area not to throw their garbage and wastes in the water and for the establishment around the bay to follow the rules and regulations being imposed by the DENR most especially with regard to their wastewater. (PNA)

Source: https://maharlika.tv/2020/09/05/mayor-isko-backs-denrs-manila-bay-beach-nourishment-project/?fbclid=IwAR1JEar0ce6GT6bSyBUbHU2bKe-CT8IOUPlv9gUrdsxRnYAvQGyN08rp_vU



Isko Moreno backs Manila Bay's white sands overlay 'for now'

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published Sep 4, 2020 11:30:27 PM



Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, September 4) - Manila Mayor Isko Moreno expressed support to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) initiative to overlay white sands on the shores of Manila Bay despite criticisms.

"The next action would be is to really scrutinize the supposed danger of that particular sand to our environment. For the meantime, they have the support of the City of Manila," said Moreno in a virtual press conference on Friday.

DENR explained that the project aims to remind people to keep the environment clean despite the pandemic.

The agency also pointed out that the material to be overlaid along the shores was not sand, but crushed dolomite boulders from Cebu.

Environmental groups believe that the project might just be for [aesthetic purposes](#) and could damage Manila Bay.

For his part, Moreno said DENR "knows it better to protect our environment."

"For now, hangga't wala naman sigurong nakapagsasaad o nakakapagtibay sa claim ng iilan, may presumption of regularity," he said.

[Translation: For now, until the claims are not yet proven, there is a presumption of regularity.]

"Kung sakaling mapatunayan na itong mga nilagay ito ay makapaminsala, I think DENR knows it better than me," Moreno added.

[Translation: If it is already proven that the material overlaid is damaging, I think DENR knows it better than me.]

DENR assured that the "engineering interventions" will be done to preserve the material used along the shores.

Meanwhile, the Cebu provincial board is [seeking probe](#) on the extraction of dolomite brought to Manila Bay.

Source: https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/9/4/Isko-Moreno-backs-Manila-Bay-white-sands-overlay-for-now-.html???&fbclid=IwAR1KtFR00tD8K7_K2qRpqr4492jj9frqbhIj5I9KwnsDfyjvNDzPUAevzJg



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Suportado ng Manila LGU ang hakbang ng DENR na mas lalo pang pagandahin ang Manila Bay hangga't wala pang malinaw na pag-aaral o ebidensya na nakasasama ito, ayon kay Mayor Isko Moreno.

NEWS 5

“
Kung sakaling napatunayan na ang mga nilagay na ito ay makapaminsala, I think DENR knows it better than me.
Maigi na rin na may nagbabantay na tao... The next action would be to really scrutinize the supposed danger of that particular sand to our environment.
”

MAYOR ISKO MORENO
CITY OF MANILA
SEPTEMBER 4, 2020

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LOOK | White sand sa Manila Bay



September 5, 2020 @ 5:10 PM 13 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Kaaya-ayang pagmasdan ang inilalatag na malapolbo at puting buhangin sa bukana ng Manila Bay partikular sa bay walk area. Kuha ni Crismon Heramis





Manila bay beach?

Jonathan Cellona, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Sep 03 2020 05:24 PM



A man looks on as workers spread synthetic white sand along a portion of the Manila Bay coast on Thursday as part of the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The white sand, made from crushed dolomite boulders from Cebu, will be spread on the banks of the bay from near the US Embassy to the Yacht Club and will serve as a reminder to the public to take care of the popular spot, according to Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda.

Source: https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/multimedia/photo/09/03/20/manila-bay-beach?fbclid=IwAR2JuLQmvdBRUQrzYpv8gI5i10DEhnZvQg70H3l42WQeUG_dJnEl5i3am5c



Senators to DENR: Make sure P389-M allotted for artificial beach in Manila Bay will not go to waste

Published September 5, 2020, 9:43 PM

by [Vanne Elaine Terrazola](#)

Two senators on Saturday, September 5, told the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to make sure that the P389 million allotted for the artificial beach in Manila Bay will not go to waste.

Senator Sherwin Gatchalian said he believes that the DENR has good intentions for beautifying and rehabilitating Manila Bay by filling a 500-meter stretch of baywalk with artificial white sand.

He, however, cited the concern of geologist and professor Mahar Lagmay that the agency's "beach nourishment" project may only be washed away by storms and high tides, and eventually end up wasted.

"Baka short term lang ito at temporary, gagastos tayo ngayon pero sa dahil lakas ng alon baka madala lang sa kalagitnaan ng dalampasigan at mawala din (This may be short-term and temporary, that we will spend funds for it but because of the strong waves, the sand will just be transported away from the coast)," Gatchalian said in an interview over radio DWIZ.

"Yong lang ang akin baka masayang lang kung mawa-wash out din itong white sand kung di maglalagay ng engineering device (To me, the project will go to waste if the white sand will just be washed out and there are no engineering devices to protect it)...Maganda ang intensyon pero baka masayang ang pera kung mawa-wash out (The intention is good but we may just waste money if this will be washed out)."

"Kaya ang payo ko sa DENR siguraduhin nila na tatagal ito na matagal na matagal dahil kung...mawala 'yan baka katakot-takot na demanda ang abutin ng DENR dahil sayang ang pera (That's why my advice to the DENR is to make sure that this will be sustained and will last for a long time because if it will just be washed out, they might face piles of charges for misusing the funds)," he said.

Senate President Vicente Sotto III lauded the government's "political will" for pursuing the beach project but said no one should be put at a disadvantage.

"Kung nakakaimbita ng turista, walang maapektuhan, pwede. Pero kung may maapektuhan ay masama (If it will entice tourists, and no one will be affected badly, then I'm okay with it. Otherwise, then it is not good)," Sotto said.

To prevent it from being washed out, he told the DENR: "Huwag silang kukuha ng kontratistang bano. Kailangan 'yong magaling, 'yong nakakaalam (They should not hire incompetent contractors. They should be competent, experienced with such a project)."

DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda had defended the project from public criticisms. He said the DENR has also prepared "engineering interventions" to preserve and prevent erosion of the artificial beach.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/05/senators-to-denr-make-sure-p389-m-allotted-for-artificial-beach-in-manila-bay-will-not-go-to-waste/>



DENR DAPAT TIYAKING 'DI MASASAYANG ANG WHITE SAND SA MANILA BAY —GATCHALIAN

written by **Ace Cruz** September 5, 2020



Pinasisiguro ni Senador Sherwin 'Win' Gatchalian sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na magtatagal at hindi masasayang ang ilalagay na white sand sa Manila Bay.

Sa panayam ng DWIZ, sinabi ni Gatchalian na sa tingin niya'y nais lamang ng DENR na gawing kaaya-ayang tignan ang Manila Bay.

*Tingin ko naman intensyon ng DENR ay maganada. Pagandahin itong Manila Bay lahat naman tayo gusto natin makitang maganda, malinis at maayos po ang Manila Bay. ani **Gatchalian***

Kaya't payo ni Gatchalian, siguraduhin lamang ng DENR na magtatagal ang proyektong ito at hindi mag-wawash-out dahil kung hindi ay baka maharap ang ahensya sa patong-patong na reklamo dahil sa laki ng pondong nito.

*Kaya nga ang payo ko sa DENR na siguraduhin nila na tatagal ito ng matagal na matagal dahil kung mawala iyan siguraqdong may katakot-takot na demanda ang aabutin ng ahensya kasi nasayang po anmg pera. ani **Gatchalian sa panayam ng DWIZ***

Mababatid na ang white sand na itinambak sa dalampasigan ng manila bay ay mga pinulbos na dolomite rocks mula sa Cebu na bahagi ng Manila Bay Beach Nourishment Project ng DENR na nagkakahalagang P349 milyong.

Nauna rito nanawagan si DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda sa publiko, na pangalagaan at huwag tambakan ng basura ang Manila Bay.



Storms, high tide may wash away Manila Bay white sand: scientist

Jamaine Punzalan, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Sep 04 2020 01:28 PM | Updated as of Sep 04 2020 01:34 PM



Senior Environmental Management Specialist Carolyn Silvestre, collects a water sample from the shores of Manila Bay along Roxas Boulevard in Manila on Sept. 3, 2020. The water sample will be tested for water improvement quality as this stretch of Manila Bay is up for rehabilitation to make it fit for swimming. *Jonathan Cellona, ABS-CBN News*

MANILA -- Storms and the high tide could wash away the artificial white sand that the government dumped around Manila Bay, a scientist said Friday.

Sand is “always transported from one place to the other” along beaches because “there’s a lot of energy that makes the materials move,” said University of the Philippines Resilience Institute executive director Mahar Lagmay.

“If you put white sand in that place, chances are during storms and during high tide, when the waves are high... all of the sand will be washed out and transported,” he told ANC.

“It’s really going to be expensive if you want to continuously replenish the white sand there... That’s not sustainable,” he added.

Sand around Manila Bay comes from surrounding mountains and is naturally dark gray, said the scientist.

NO WASTE OF PUBLIC FUNDS?

Authorities dumped synthetic white sand so the beach could be similar to those in tourist hotspots Boracay, Bohol, Palawan, and Cebu, said Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda.

Engineers used a “geo textile” to prevent the sand from being washed away and authorities were also considering putting up a breakwater to further protect it, Antiporda said in a separate ANC interview.

Muck and garbage were also removed from the area before authorities started placing the sand there, he said.

“I don’t think na pababayaang nitong experts natin na mangyari iyong mga ganiyang bagay na magsasayang lang ng pera ng ating bayan,” said the official.

(I don’t think our experts will allow for things to happen where public funds will be wasted.)

The sand, he said, came from crushed dolomite boulders from Cebu.

Dolomite contains calcium carbonate, which can also be found in sea corals and is not harmful to the environment, he said.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/09/04/20/storms-high-tide-may-wash-away-manila-bay-white-sand-scientist?fbclid=IwAR1xqPxZHJea9cGSNy0iZFiJzEf8QRtLTPX09ZiNWXyD7udqOOa48cFhrNo>

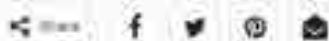


DENR ibaon sa white sand

By: Abante News Online

Last updated: Sep 5, 2020

NEWS



29 0

NAGBABALAK kahapon si Senador Sherwin Gatchalian laban sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na pasimuno sa paglalatag ng halos P4000 halaga ng artificial white sand sa Manila Bay.

"Siguraduhin na tatagal to, na matagal na matagal. Kung mawala 'yan after six months ay sigurong katakot-takot na demanda ang aabutin ng ahensya dahil nasayang ang pera," babala ni Gatchalian sa panayam sa radyo nina Cely Bueno at Raoul Esperas sa Balita Nationwide Sabado.

Sinabi rin ni Gatchalian na sa dami ng diskusyon sa isyu ng paglalagay ng artificial white sand sa Manila Bay ay nauunawaan nya ang punto ni UP Geologist Mahar Lagmay.

Katulad aniya ng pangamba ni Lagmay ay nakakabahala na baka mawala lang ang tone-toneladang bungahin na ginastusan ng milyong piso ng gobyerno.

"Pero nangitindihan ko ang sinabi ni Prof. Lagmay na baka mawala lang 'to sa lakas ng alon na pumapasok sa Manila Bay.

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Hindi ako geologist pero ayon sa kanya (Lagmay) baka short term lang 'to at temporary. Gagastos tayo at sa lakas ng alon baka madala ito sa kalagitnaan ng dalampasigan at mawala rin," gilt pa ni Gatchalian.

Nauna rito ay sinabi ni Celsa Provincial Board Member Ismael Borgonia, wala silang alarm na kumuha pala ng bato sa kanilang

lugar ang DENR para pulbusin at gawing puting buhangin s para malinis ang Manila Bay.



Giit ng board member, kahit pa proyekto ito ng national government ay dapat naabtsuhan sila tungkol sa paghakot ng mga bato sa kanilang lalawigan.

"It's like Cebu was robbed," ngringit ni Borgonia. "We didn't even have an idea about it."

"This is a classic example of getting something from our resources but the province did not have anything in return," aniya pa.

Sa ngayon ay pinapaimbestigahan na sa Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office kung saan eksakto kinuha ng DENR ang mga bato na ilalagay sa Manila Bay.



Geologist warns against wasting resources in ‘costly’ Manila Bay makeover

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published Sep 5, 2020 10:03:54 PM



Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, September 5) — The engineering technology the Environment Department claimed it used in the overlaying of white sand on the shores of Manila Bay “is very costly” and natural alternatives should have been used instead, a geologist says.

Geologist and University of the Philippines professor Mahar Lagmay said that going the natural way in solving environmental problems is always the better option, especially during these times.

“Tayo ay nasa panahon ng COVID at ang pera ay kakarampot at mas kinakailangan dun sa mga talagang... Katulad ng mga frontliners o kaya dun sa mga bagay na mas magandang paglaanan,” Lagmay said.

[Translation: We are in the middle of COVID and money is scarce and much more needed by frontliners or other things that require immediate help.]

Lagmay added that the coastal engineering measures for the rehabilitation project will prove too costly, as the sand will eventually have to be continually replaced and replenished.

“Yung mga ganyang mga projects kapag coastal erosion. Nangyayari itong beach nourishment sa ibang bansa, it has proven very costly,” he said in a CNN Philippines interview on Saturday.

[Translation: Projects like that tend to be vulnerable to soil erosion. Beach nourishment is being done in other countries and it has proven very costly.]

Some groups have criticized the department’s emphasis on aesthetic enhancement and not on addressing critical environmental concerns plaguing the Manila Bay.

Source: https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/9/5/Geologist-resources-costly-Manila-Bay-makeover-.html?%3F%3F&fbclid=IwAR1dRbLYJVrFH5cEpoUW2x6XyThC3s4gc0JgBy9e9biMJjQnDmTkuHb_pi



Cebu official feels like province was ‘robbed’ of resources to fill Manila Bay coastline

Published September 5, 2020, 11:17 AM

by [Calvin Cordova](#)

CEBU CITY – A provincial board member here is questioning where the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) got the [crushed dolomite rocks](#) that will be used to fill a 500-meter stretch of the baywalk on Manila Bay.



Workers pile the “white sand” to be laid on Manila bay on Saturday morning. (Photo by Jansen Romero / MANILA BULLETIN)

“It feels like we were robbed because we didn’t know about this and there was no proper procedure,” said Cebu Provincial Board Member John Ismale Borgonia, chairman of the board’s Committee on Environment Conservation, which has been tasked to investigate the apparently unauthorized extraction of the minerals from the province.

“We have the autonomy. Even if it was undertaken by the government, they have to secure permits and ask the consent of the local government unit,” he added.

Borgonia said dolomite rocks can be found in the towns of Dalaguete and Alcoy.

“These are the towns that have issued with permits by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau. There is a machinery there that is being used to crush dolomite rocks and turn them into white sand product,” said Borgonia.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny Antiporda had earlier said that the materials that will be used to fill a portion of the Manila Bay were crushed “dolomite boulders” from Cebu.

The project to fill the bay with “white sand” has come under fire from environment groups and, now, Cebu provincial officials.

Borgonia said “it was alarming” if it could be proven that the filling materials came from Cebu, and yet the province was not informed about it.

“As far as I know, there was no prior communication. We have not issued permits or we didn’t allow or give our consent to extract white sand. We we’re caught by surprise that it came from Cebu,” said Borgonia.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/05/cebu-official-feels-like-province-was-robbed-of-resources-to-fill-manila-bay-coastline/>



Cebu White Sand sa Manila Bay mas makasasama sa kapaligiran

Balita

By Ulat ng Bandera at Radyo Inquirer September 04, 2020 - 05:04 PM

Sa halip na makabuti, naniniwala ang isang marine conservation advocacy group na mas makakasama pa ang pagtatambak ng white sand sa bahagi ng Manila sa Roxas Boulevard sa Maynila.

Ayon sa grupong Oceana, sinisira ng white sand ang natural ecosystem ng Manila Bay at maaring gayundin sa pinagkukunan ng tone-toneladang puting buhangin.

Sinabi ni Oceana vice president Gloria Ramos nakasaad sa batas, kailangan munang magsagawa ng Environmental Impact Study process at dapat may environmental compliance certificate para sa mga proyekto na makakaapekto sa kalikasan.

Naniniwala din si Ramos na pagsasayang lang ng pondo ng bayan ang ginagawang pagtatambak ng puting buhangin dahil maari lang itong maanod ng malalakas na alon at humalo sa itim na buhangin na aniya ang natural na elemento ng Manila Bay.

Kontra din ang grupong Pamalakaya sa ginagawa ng gobyerno at ayon sa grupo ng mga mangingisda maaaring nitong maapektuhan ang suplay ng nahuhuling yaman dagat sa Manila Bay.

Source: https://bandera.inquirer.net/263494/cebu-white-sand-sa-manila-bay-mas-makasasama-sa-kapaligiran?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR3XyWNG8ptnP1CVCRFIX6D1J5PwUubdI2qDJeNyR97TUmtxoosUEGxkcdU#Echobox=1599219420



Is dolomite dangerous to humans?

Published September 5, 2020, 6:36 PM

by [Ben Rosario](#)

Instead of fresh sea air, promenaders will get a whiff of toxic dust from dolomite sand when the P389-million [Manila Bay rehabilitation project](#) is completed, environmentalists claimed.

This new argument against the proposed sand treatment of a 500-meter stretch of the bay was raised by [environmental advocates opposed](#) to the project.

But is crushed dolomite substance really dangerous to human health?

Dolomite material will take the role of white sand which will be used to top coat the beach surface to complement Manila Bay's picturesque sunset.

Former Kabataan party-list Rep. Terry Ridon, convenor of the Infrastructure Watch, claimed there are a number of scientific and medical studies linking dolomite to various respiratory diseases, including cancer.

However, Undersecretary Benny Antiporda of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources decried the claim as "rubbish."

Antiporda is the spokesman of the inter-agency Manila Bay Rehabilitation Project which has been tasked to clean up and beautify a portion of the bay front.

"They have to show us proof not just claims that remain unsupported by scientific or medical studies. Dolomite and coral reefs are made of the same material which is calcium carbonate – which is not foreign to our coastal system," he explained.

He dared critics to cite specific cases of people getting sick as a result of ingestion or prolong exposure to dolomite material.

The National Center for Biotechnology Information which is a division of the US National Institute of Health said there is "little information" of dolomite's potential to trigger respiratory disorders through occupational exposure.

However, in its study of the substance, the NCBI concluded that while its data "cast doubt on the notion that dolomite is a harmless chemical, they provide evidence in favor of the proposition that exposure to high atmospheric concentrations of these compound is likely to be associated with respiratory symptoms."

In its website, Lhoist North America disclosed that dolomite contact "can cause irritation to eyes, skin, respiratory system, and gastrointestinal tract,"

adding that "long-term exposure may cause permanent damage."

"However, this product may contain trace amounts of crystalline silica in the form of quartz or crysboalite, which has been classified by IARC as a Group I carcinogen to humans when inhaled," reported the firm, a subsidiary of Belgium-based Lhoist Group the which is the global distributor of lime, dolime, and other minerals.

Meanwhile, the Lehigh Hanson Inc. released a safety data sheet for dolomite, classifying the material used for manufacture of brick, cement, and other construction materials, to Category 1A in terms of carcinogenicity.

"Respirable crystalline silica (RCS) may cause cancer. Dolomite is a naturally occurring mineral complex that contains varying quantities of quartz (crystalline silica)," the firm added.

Lehigh Hanson is a distributor of various construction materials, concrete products, and other industrial products.

Source: https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/05/is-dolomite-dangerous-to-humans/?fbclid=IwAR0kb-enqZ55PWV2OWzvABi6g2omhVZ38XSTaOqyCNchXU7jj_kBC9Kehyg



Dolomite boulders harmful – fisher group

Published September 5, 2020, 5:41 PM

by [Raymund Antonio](#)

Dolomite contains high amount of heavy metals that contribute to pollution and acidity of Manila Bay, said a fisherfolk group that has looked into the impact of the dumping of white sand along the Manila Baywalk.

The Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) warned of even more drastic consequences that the people will face due to the sand that came from crushed dolomite boulders in Cebu.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has started to cover the 500-meter stretch of baywalk on Roxas Boulevard with white sand as part of its rehabilitation efforts in the area.

“One of the objectives of Manila Bay rehabilitation is to decrease the amount of its heavy metal. Then why is the DENR, which leads the rehabilitation campaign, filling dolomite boulders that would increase and further the harmful chemical element?” Pamalakaya chair Fernando Hicap asked.

The group said dolomite contains high amount of heavy metals such as aluminum, lead, and mercury, which put human health at risk.

Pamalakaya also cited toxic heavy metals, which were found in Manila Bay’s sediment samples in the past, are “detrimental to the environment.”

“These synthetic materials can easily contaminate Manila Bay when a heavy rainfall washes them away from the shore, tainting the already polluted water and endangering the fishery resources,” Hicap said.

Human exposure to the heavy metals has chronic and acute health effects, he added.



Dolomite boulders harmful – fisher group

September 5, 2020 | Filed under: Headlines, News | Posted by: Tempo Desk

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Cabaero: Cebu to Manila

Nini Cabaero

Sunstar5 September 2020



IF THEY wanted to make the Manila Bay look like Boracay or Palawan, why not take the sand from any of those places? Why take, whether sand or crushed dolomite, from Cebu?

Some Cebu beach resorts have been known to “import” sand from neighboring islands such as Bohol, famous for its white sand and sandbars. So, it was a surprise when news reports said initially that the sand for the Manila Bay restoration came from Cebu.

Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda later clarified that the “sand” brought to Manila was actually crushed “dolomite boulders” from Cebu. Antiporda is in charge of solid waste management and local government unit concerns. It may seem that the use of dolomite instead of sand for the Manila Bay project was a non-issue. But, to Cebuanos, it is a concern because that dolomite came from somewhere here where mining and quarry operations are restricted.

Two years ago, in September, at least 65 people were killed in landslides in Barangay Tinaan, Naga City, Cebu. Local officials have blamed nearby mining and quarry operations for making the ground unstable. That Sept. 20, 2018 landslide in Naga City came five days after a massive landslide hit Itogon, a mining town in Benguet, in the wake of Typhoon Ompong (Mangkhut). Almost 100 people died in the Itogon landslide.

Both incidents happened in September two years ago. We remember them now after dolomite mined in Cebu was brought to Manila as part of the project to cover Manila Bay’s shore with sand and make it look like Boracay or Palawan. This project is a component of the Manila Bay rehabilitation program under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). Government critics and environmentalists called this rehabilitation a “fake” as it was concerned only with appearances and not a real cleanup.

In addition, Cebu officials were not aware of permission being granted to the DENR to move crushed dolomite from Cebu to Manila. The Cebu Provincial Government has suspended quarrying. How then was the DENR able to get permission for the extraction and transport? Local officials are now asking for an investigation on who gave the go-signal. Provincial Board (PB) Member John Ismael Borgonia (Cebu, 3rd District), head of the PB committee on environment and natural resources, said Antiporda’s statement “caught him by surprise.”

Borgonia said he wants to know which part of the province provided the dolomite rocks for the DENR project and why there was no undertaking with them for the dolomite extraction for the Manila Bay project. “As far as I know, they cannot just right away quarry minerals from Cebu even if it’s a National Government undertaking because local governments have autonomy,” Borgonia said in a SunStar Cebu report.

“It’s a classic example of quarrying still going on even if this has already been suspended in Cebu Province,” Borgonia said.

Someone in the DENR has some explaining to do to Cebu.

Source: <https://ph.news.yahoo.com/cabaero-cebu-manila-151900106.html>



Pinong (Sipag -Nyusboy)

(Pilipino Star Ngayon) - September 6, 2020 - 12:00am

Pinong (Sipag-Nyusboy)

Ni RENE ARANDA



Pinong (Sipag -Nyusboy)



GMA News

20h · 🌐

Inulan ng batikos ang proyekto ng DENR na lagyan ng beach ang Manila Bay. Ang tanong ng ilan, hindi raw ba masasayang lang ang malaking halaga ng pera na gagastusin para sa maputing buhangin na 'yan na itatambak doon kung tatangayin lang din ng alon?

Panoorin 'yan at iba pang balita sa 24 Oras: <https://bit.ly/3IM2L7c>



PROYEKTONG GAWING WHITE SAND BEACH ANG MANILA BAY, INULAN NG BATIKOS

Inulan ng batikos ang proyekto ng DENR na lagyan ng beach ang Manila Bay. Hindi raw kasi pasyalan ang kinakailangan kundi rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay. Ang Manila Bay Beach Project ay nagkakahalaga ng P389-M kasama na ang presyo ng buhangin pati ang paglilinis ng dagat.

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'Whitewashing'

posted September 05, 2020 at 09:48 pm



A kid enjoys playing in the mountain of crushed dolomite that will be poured on a 500-meter stretch of Manila Bay's naturally gray shoreline to make it look like white sand. Activists and environmentalists have criticized the P349 million "beach nourishment" project, saying it does not solve the environmental problems of the bay and that the artificial sand could easily be washed away by rising tides.



MMDA's Manila Bay cleanup drive

MMDA collects tons of trash in Manila Bay coastline cleanup

Published September 5, 2020 10:16am

Metro Manila Development Authority personnel collect tons of trash in the Manila Bay coastline area along Roxas Boulevard during a routine cleanup activity on Saturday, September 5, 2020.



Photos by Danny Pata



Saturday's coastal cleanup was undertaken while the heavily-criticized Department of the Environment and Natural Resources' [white sand overlaying project](#) in the bay area is ongoing.



GMA News' file photo

The DENR is scheduled to inspect the project on September 19, in time for International Coastal Clean Up Day. —with a report from **Danny Pata/LBG, GMA News**

Source: https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/metro/754339/mmda-collects-tons-of-trash-in-manila-bay-coastline-cleanup/story/?utm_source=GMANews&utm_medium=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR390eSD1OESC1bMkL9C7bEzmjaVCVksN5xbKAN82NLxrlmVazC2-JUHL58



Tambak na basura, nakolekta sa Manila Bay

ni [Lolet Abania](#) | September 5, 2020



Tambak na basura ang nakolekta ng mga kawani ng Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) kasabay ng cleanup activity ng ahensiya sa baybaying-dagat ng Manila Bay sa Roxas Boulevard, Manila ngayong Sabado.

Ayon sa MMDA, nakatakda ngayong araw at sa mga susunod pa ang paglilinis sa baybayin ng Manila Bay upang muling maibalik ang kagandahan ng lugar habang matinding pagbatikos naman ang ibinabato sa Department of the Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) dahil sa kasalukuyang proyekto ng ahensiya na pagtatambak ng puting buhangin sa gilid ng kahabaan ng look ng naturang siyudad.

Samantala, nagbigay ng pahayag si DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda na hindi ihihinto at ipagpapatuloy ang pagtatambak ng puting buhangin sa nasabing lugar sa kabila ng mga puna sa ahensiya.

Tiniyak din ni Antiporda na dumaan ang proyekto sa masusing pagsusuri at maayos na proseso. Gayundin, inaasahan ng ahensiya na maiinspeksiyon ang proyekto sa September 19, kasabay ng International Coastal Clean Up Day.



Bernabe.

Gapay then urged the Navy personnel to impart their gained knowledge to their colleagues to help in their skills and capacity building.

Share experience

"Impart the proficiencies that you have gained from the training exercises with the objective of augmenting the scope of capabilities of the Philippine Navy in fulfilling its mandate as the first line of defense of our maritime territories," he stated.

BRP Jose Rizal (FF-150) and NTG 80.5 have started their journey back to the country and are expected to dock at the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority port by the third week of September.

PHOTOGRAPH BY BOB DUNGO JR. FOR THE DAILY TRIBUNE @strcomphv Job

Perfect beach in the works Government personnel sweep away garbage to pave the way for white sands that will put the finishing touches in the rehabilitation of Manila Bay



The Philippine Post

September 4 at 11:56 AM · 🌐

...

ANG LINIS!

TINGNAN: Sa walang patid na pagsasagawa ng cleaning operation sa coastal area ng Maynila, makikitang maaliwalas na ang dalampasigan at malinis na ang katubigan sa Manila Bay at Baseco Beach

👤: Isko Moreno Domagoso Facebook Page



👍 🥰 🍷 64

1 Share



Land agencies team up for data-sharing system

By Eireene Jairee Gomez

September 6, 2020

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Land Management Bureau (LMB) and the Land Registration Authority (LRA) are working to establish an online data-sharing system to provide the public with seamless land transactions. In a statement, LMB Director Emelyne Talabis said her bureau and LRA were drafting a joint memorandum circular that would allow them to connect the former's Land Administration and Management System with the latter's Philippine Land Registration and Information System using a software intermediary called Application Programming Interface. The move is part of the government's efforts to cut red tape and improve the quality of frontline services to the public in accordance with the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018. "The new system will relieve land title applicants from directly requesting and submitting land records from each agency as part of the verification and registration requirements," Talabis said, adding that "this will significantly reduce turnaround time in the processing of land transactions."



DENR inspector sa Laguna, utas sa ambush



September 5, 2020 @ 3:38 PM 15 hours ago

Laguna – Hindi na umabot nang buhay sa ospital ang isang opisyal ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa Laguna habang nakaligtas naman ang kasama niya makaraang pagbabarilin ng hindi pa kilalang salarin sa national highway ng Barangay Masaya sa bayan ng Bay Biyernes ng hapon.

Kinilala ang biktima na si Joseph Erwin Mata Blanca, 43, Laguna Provincial Environment Natural Resources Office Land Inspector.

Namatay si Blanca sa tama ng bala sa leeg mula sa hindi pa batid na kalibre ng baril.

Nakaligtas naman ang sakay niyang katrabaho sa sasakyan, senyales na tanging si Blanca talaga ang puntirya, ayon sa pulisya.

Batay sa inisyal na report ng Bay Police Station sa pamumuno ni P/Maj. Jose Barce Tucio, ganap na 5:30 p.m. kahapon, Setyembre 4, ay minamaneho ng biktima ng kanyang Nissan Sentra na kulay puti nang biglang pagbabarilin ng isang suspek na lulan sa asul na motorsiklo.

Mabilis na tumakas ang gunman matapos ang krimen patungo sa direksyon ng Calauan, Laguna.

Patuloy na nagsasagawa ng malalimang imbestigasyon ang pulisya para malaman ang motibo sa krimen.

Nanawagan naman ang pamilya ng biktima at ang PENRO-Laguna na sana ay mabigyan ng hustisya si Blanca. **ELLEN APOSTOL**



DENR land inspector shot dead in Laguna

September 5, 2020 | Filed under: Headlines, News | Posted by: Tempo Desk

BAY, Laguna – A Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) land inspector was shot dead Friday afternoon by a motorcycle-riding gunman while driving his car in Barangay Masaya, this town.

According to police report, the victim, Joseph Erwin Mata Blanca, 43, a resident of Barangay II-C, San Pablo City, Laguna, sustained a gunshot wound in the neck. He died on arrival at the Global Care Medical Center of Bay.

The victim was driving a Nissan Sentra car, which slowed down due to a hump, around 5:30 p.m when the gunman suddenly appeared and shot him, according to Police Major Jose Tucio, chief of Bay Municipal Station.

The suspect fled on board a blue motorcycle toward Calauan town, Laguna. He was wearing a blue t-shirt, according to police report. Probers said they were trying to establish the motive behind the killing. **(Danny Estacio)**



PPE waste disposal a growing challenge

By: [Krixia Subingsubing](#) - Reporter / [@KrixiasINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:24 AM September 06, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — They end up on our sidewalks and in our waterways, those blue-and-white medical masks that used to be on someone's face. They clog our rivers and drift out to sea where fish and other creatures could mistake them for food or they could dissolve into microplastics, harming corals and the marine ecosystem.

Suddenly, contracting the dreaded coronavirus from discarded masks isn't the only concern of the public. Disposing the protective gear properly to minimize harm to the environment has become a headache.

This is part of a large and growing problem with personal protective equipment (PPE) during this pandemic, according to environment officials and activists in interviews this week. They believe that one way to reduce medical waste and still protect the people's health is to adopt reusable PPE.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) reports that over 19,000 metric tons of infectious wastes, including PPE suspected of harboring pathogens, have been collected in just four months — from April to July — at the height of the lockdown.

But what is more challenging for the DENR are the infectious wastes coming from households: masks, food waste and other contaminated materials, which are hardly segregated and mixed with municipal waste, said Geri Geronimo Sañez, chief of the DENR's hazardous waste management division.

The numbers are expected to rise with no immediate end in sight for the pandemic, prompting health and environmental groups to demand that the government lay out new waste disposal standards for the general public and promote reusable PPE whenever possible.

Now a household problem

Before the pandemic, it was mostly hospitals that dealt with infectious wastes, according to Paeng Lopez, a campaigner for Health Care Without Harm. But after the COVID-19 outbreak and with the universal and mandatory use of masks and face shields, that responsibility was added to the public.

Global scientific consensus says surgical masks are the most effective personal protection against droplets that carry the coronavirus. But these masks are made of nonwoven polypropylene fabric, a type of plastic that is not biodegradable.

Most people are unaware that even masks have to be treated as infectious wastes in accordance with Republic Act No. 6969 and Republic Act No. 9003, both of which prescribe guidelines for hazardous waste management, Sañez said.

He strongly advised households to segregate and isolate the masks for at least three days—the period that a virus could survive outside a host — before disposing of them.

“In fact, I even suggest to others that they destroy it, cut it, because others may pick those up, wash it and reuse it,” Sañez said.



Poorly disposed masks will end up scattered on roads or in rivers, where the DENR has been scooping them up.

As with any waste, masks pose a threat to wildlife, said Marianne Ledesma, Greenpeace Philippines campaigner.

“Any plastic floating in bodies of water can be mistaken as food by marine creatures and they can be choking hazards. And when they break down into microplastics, reef corals start to absorb them as food and these corals can’t digest or release them back in the water,” she said.



BLOWN IN THE WIND A surgical mask has been left lying on Belen Street in Manila last July and was probably among those blown in the wind and later formed part of the 19,000 tons of infectious waste, including other personal protective equipment, collected that month, according to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. —RICHARD A. REYES

Hospitals adapting

“You’re killing wildlife, at the same time you’re killing an entire ecosystem because those corals are a habitat for other wildlife too,” she said.

Recent studies estimate that about 8 million metric tons of plastic of all types end up in the world’s ocean annually.

The surge in PPE use, as well as the plastic generated by takeout deliveries and e-commerce, “really worsens” the waste problem, Ledesma said.

The same is happening inside hospitals. Because of the contagious nature of the disease, hospital personnel are required to change their PPE gear regularly to prevent contamination, Lopez said.

“Health-care workers use so much PPE and they generate a lot of waste at the moment. Most of it is because they’re observing the World Health Organization (WHO) recommendation to treat everything as infectious waste, so even pieces of paper or food waste that are in the vicinity of red zones in hospitals are discarded as such,” he said.

Lopez explained that hospitals have to first disinfect their infectious wastes, using either autoclave, alkaline hydrolysis or microwave treatment, before throwing them out for garbage collection.

Some hospitals have their garbage transported to designated medical waste landfills like Metro Clark in Tarlac and Cleanway in Silang, Cavite. Others go to municipal landfills but are segregated from municipal wastes.



Reuse, reduce

For now, the system in place is sufficient, Sañez said.

But apart from proper waste management, Lopez and Ledesma also urged the public and hospitals to consider reusable PPE to reduce the total waste volume.

The 110-year-old St. Paul Hospital in Iloilo was one of the first medical establishments to adopt and promote reusable PPE.

The private hospital run by Paulinian sisters had their first suspected COVID-19 in January, who later recovered. By March, just as the cases started to rise nationwide, the hospital decided to make its operations sustainable, said hospital administrator Sr. Arcelita Sarnillo.

Like other hospitals, they also had trouble procuring PPE, particularly coveralls, or protective suits, because of the lockdown restrictions imposed across the country.

They first used plastic raincoats as substitute for medical coveralls.

“It was the first thing that came to mind, just something to protect because everybody was not ready,” she said. “Later we began to make our own reusable PPE made of taffeta cloth with silver backing, [a nonpermeable cloth] used to make parachutes and umbrellas.”

That saved the hospital over P10 million a month, and millions of pesos more in reduced waste. But despite its advantages, Sarnillo said the reusable protective suits was stigmatized by some local doctors who shunned them.

Sustainability

“I have heard doctors question our PPE because they’re not disposable, to which I tell them, ‘Shouldn’t the fact that medical-grade PPE are disposable mean they are not [of superior] quality and unsustainable?’” she said.

Sarnillo noted that there were very few cases of hospital staff getting COVID-19 even after they shifted to reusable PPE, including cloth masks.

“This is also an issue of political will and being committed to doing your part in sustainability,” she said. “It’s a matter of explaining and making them understand why you need to do this.”



An evolving love story in Singapore

PHILIPPINE EAGLES GEOTHERMICA AND SAMBISIG AT JURONG BIRD PARK

By **Jonathan L. Mayuga** September 5, 2020



Sambisig at Jurong Bird Park in Singapore. Photo from Philippine Eagle Foundation

After one year and two months since they were transferred from the Philippine Eagle Center in Davao City to the Jurong Bird Park in Singapore, the Philippine eagle pair—Geothermica and Sambisig—is now well adapted to their new environment and may well be on the way to renewing a not-so-old and familiar feeling toward each other.

Astoundingly, despite what can be considered an unwanted breakup, the mutual attraction between the two eagles which began in 2018 before their journey to Singapore as “Ambassadors for Philippine Biodiversity,” is back and is getting stronger, even as they are still living separately at the Birds of Prey Enclosure that was especially constructed for the majestic birds.

At the Jurong Bird Park, its staff members are hoping to see Geo and Sam, their nicknames, finally getting to know each other more and becoming “more than friends”—and finally having their first egg soon. All this with the hope of producing offsprings and helping save the Philippine national bird from extinction within the 10-year period that they are allowed to remain in Singapore.

Unique species

The Philippine eagle is a unique species. They pair for life and both parents are needed to hatch an egg, feed and nurture the young until it is ready to fly and leave its nest to find its own territory.

It takes at least two years for a pair to breed a single chick, hence, making breeding a tough job for both parents.

A Philippine eagle chick is said to be vulnerable and may succumb to disease as it is exposed to the elements and the brutal jungle environment.

Wildlife loan agreement

Geo and Sam were flown to Singapore in June 2019 as part of a Wildlife Loan Agreement between the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and Wildlife Reserves Singapore.

This was the first time that the government allowed the Philippine eagle to be loaned, highlighting the bilateral diplomatic relations between the two countries.

The arrival of the eagles to Singapore on June 5, 2019, also coincided with the celebration of the 50th anniversary of bilateral diplomatic relations between the Philippines and Singapore, DENR Assistant Secretary Ricardo Calderon said in a telephone interview on August 18.

The Wildlife Loan Agreement with Singapore, he said, is also a way of promoting the country’s iconic bird. “Like the bald eagle of America, the Philippines has the Philippine eagle. One of the largest bird of preys in the world,” said Calderon, the concurrent director of the DENR’s Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB).

In good hands

Calderon said the eagles appear to be in good hands, and is satisfied with the way the eagles are being cared for.



“So far, they are in good condition. The habitat and enclosures are good and there are dedicated people for the breeding of the eagles,” Calderon said in a mix of English and Filipino.

He bared that the Wildlife Reserves Singapore is planning to transfer the eagles to a bigger and better enclosure, which will be helpful in the pairing of the rare eagle pair.

Captive-breeding program

The partnership between the Philippines and Singapore is part of a conservation strategy to save the endemic Philippine species from extinction by breeding the eagles outside the Philippines.

Besides massive habitat loss and being hunted to the brink of extinction, the threat of deadly zoonotic diseases, such as avian influenza, is real, Calderon said.

It is believed that only around 400 pairs of the iconic bird of prey is left in the wild, and a deadly virus that cause avian flu could cause their extinction.

Hence, the need for a second metapopulation other than the Philippine Eagle Center, which has a successful captive-breeding program, came as insurance of sorts, he said.

ZIMS ID

Upon their arrival in Singapore, both eagles received local ID's in Zoological Information Management System (ZIMS), Kimberly Wee, of the Jurong Bird Park's Avian Department, said in the annual report to the DENR by Wildlife Reserves Singapore on July 23.

ZIMS is an online database of captive animals under human care in Singapore. It acts as a zoological data collection and management software and contains information on more than 22,000 species and 10 million individual animals.

The database covers a wide range of information and is used to help zoological institutions managing captive animals, Wee said.

Love history

17-year-old Geo, the male eagle, is younger than Sam by a year. Both were hatched at the Philippine Eagle Center.

The two were previously introduced to other partners but with no success, Jayson Ibañez, director for Research and Conservation at the Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF) told the BusinessMirror in a telephone interview on August 26.

The PEF is the DENR's partner in the conservation of the Philippine eagle. It manages the Philippine Eagle Center in Davao City and is credited for the successful captive-breeding program of one of the world's rarest birds.

Ibañez said before they were flown to Singapore, the two were starting to bond and are, in fact, close to being “a pair”

However, because they will be sent to Singapore, the breeding efforts were stopped.

Good health, good diet

Both eagles are properly taken cared of by their Singapore caretakers. Before their transfer to the Asean country, the PEF trained a team from the Jurong Bird Park for a week to learn how to care for the pair of the world's largest birds of prey.

According to Wee, the eagles are fed once a day, with a maximum of 300 grams of meat—either of goat, horse, quail and rat. The eagles rejected rabbit meat which was initially offered by their caretakers.



“The indigestible parts of their animal [feed], such as the bones and fur, get regurgitated into small pellets called ‘castings.’ These castings can be regularly found in the eagles’ [excrement] and are a good sign that the eagle is eating and digesting its food well,” Wee said.

To ensure they remain healthy, they are fed with a mineral supplement containing vitamin D3 once a week.

Except for Sam, whose overgrown beak had to be “fixed” via trimming, both eagles remain healthy and strong.

Geo has had the opportunity to practice his hunting skill and killed some iguanas and monitor lizards.

Lovers’ quarrel

According to Wee, on the first few months of their arrival, Geo and Sam were seen bickering a few times a day.

“They fight by launching, talons first, onto the adjoining mesh in an attempt to grab the other. They are protected from each other by the double mesh, which prevents them from being able to physically touch or grab onto each other,” she said.

But as time went on, the number of these incidents has decreased. Wee said the fights rarely occur recently.

“They have been seen showing signs of bonding, and can be occasionally be seen either sitting or eating together peacefully,” Wee observed.

Moreover, Wee said the eagles can now regularly be seen “exhibiting natural behaviors, such as eating, preening, sun/rain bathing and vocalizing in the presence of people.”

Better facility, habitat

PEF Executive Director Dennis Salvador expects Geo and Sam to reunite but it will take time, he said in a telephone interview on August 27.

However, with their history together, Salvador is confident that Sam and Geo will eventually get along and become a pair and breed.

He expects the breeding effort to improve and gain headway as the Wildlife Reserves Singapore plans to transfer the two to a bigger facility.

With the Jurong Bird Park team, being properly trained by the PEF to do the job, Salvador is confident that the breeding program will succeed.

In case of failure, in case Geo and Sam relationship will not work and produce offspring, he said the DENR and PEF may eventually decide to pick another partner for either of the two eagles.

However, he remains confident that with the positive development reported by the Wildlife Resources Singapore, everything is looking good.

Salvador said it is now up to the eagles’ caretakers to decide the right time for Geo and Sam to be brought together in one enclosure and make their breeding happen.



Endangered tamaraw killed in Mindoro; poachers escape

By **BusinessMirror** September 5, 2020



Tamaraw Conservation Program (TCP) and park rangers recover fresh strips of tamaraw meat being dried as tapa (beef jerky). The meat came from a tamaraw bull which was approximately six years old.

A tamaraw, a critically endangered species, was shot and butchered by poachers who escaped apprehending authorities recently.

Alert rangers spotted the poachers drying meat near the base of Mt. McGowen inside the Mounts Iglit-Baco National Park (MIBNP) on August 28, said a news release from the United Nations Development Programme's Biodiversity Finance Initiative (UNDP-Biofin).

Two poachers were quickly surrounded and caught by park rangers and wardens, while a third escaped.

Two pugakang (homemade shotguns) were confiscated, as well as a sack of tamaraw meat, to be dried and illegally sold as tapa, or buffalo bush jerky.

"We'll eat some of the meat and sell the rest on the market," remarked one of the poachers in Filipino.

After three hours in custody, the two apprehended poachers ran off and escaped into the jungle.



*Tamaraws are endemic forest buffalo found only on the island of Mindoro in the Philippines. Numbering only about 600, they are considered critically-endangered by the IUCN. **Gregg Yan***

The tamaraw is the world's most endangered buffalo species and is considered by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) as critically endangered, the highest risk-rating for any species.

Only around 600 tamaraw are left worldwide, most found in four isolated areas in Mindoro.



They are legally protected under the Wildlife Act, or Republic Act 9147. Killing endangered wildlife entails up to 12 years of jail time plus a fine of up to P1 million.

“Poachers might be using the Covid-19 lockdown as an opportunity to illegally enter our country’s protected areas and hunt animals. Rest assured that our rangers won’t stand for this. We’ll see to it that these poachers are prosecuted to the full extent of the law,” vowed Tamaraw Conservation Program (TCP) Head Neil Anthony del Mundo.

Dedicated rangers and wardens of TCP and MIBNP have been conserving the tamaraw for decades. From less than 100 animals in 1969, the number increased to about 600.

Despite being underequipped and underfunded, TCP’s rangers and wardens continue patrolling forestland to protect the tamaraw—facing armed poachers, snakes, leeches, flash floods and hidden animal traps on a daily basis.

Just one of TCP’s 24 rangers is a regular employee with benefits. One ranger plus 32 of the 35 park wardens recently lost their jobs when the park closed due to the pandemic.

“DENR [Department of Environment and Natural Resources] strongly condemns this act of slaughtering endangered wildlife,” said DENR Assistant Secretary Ricardo Calderon.

“Nothing, not even the pandemic, is an excuse to kill legally protected wildlife for no one is above the law. We will work with both the DENR Mimaropa and the TCP to ensure that poachers get the punishment they deserve. Let this serve as a lesson for would-be poachers,” Calderon said.

The UNDP-Biofin and the DENR, and allies like PH Parks and Biodiversity have recently launched #TogetherforTamaraws and the [Tamaraw Society](#) to raise cash gifts for the rangers, particularly those most affected by the pandemic.

“Our tamaraw frontliners, who in spite of losing incomes due to the pandemic, continue their daily patrols without expectation of compensation just to ensure the safety of our tamaraw,” said Biofin Philippines Project Manager Anabelle Plantilla.

“It is high time and urgent that budgetary resources for environmental protection and enforcement be given utmost priority for protected areas, which are home to critically endangered and threatened species like the tamaraw,” Plantilla added.

Biofin hopes to raise approximately P1.149 million by October 2020 to help secure the sorely needed allowances and provisions for the tamaraw frontliners until January 2021. Plantilla enjoins everyone “to help the tamaraw frontliners by supporting #TogetherforTamaraws.”

“UNDP Philippines continues to support the rangers and wardens through the #TogetherforTamaraws campaign. Now more than ever, we need to join efforts to protect the tamaraw—a species in danger of extinction. We must protect what is left of our collective respect for life on Earth,” said UNDP Philippines Resident Representative Enrico Gaveglia.

Image Credits: [Tamaraw Conservation Programme](#)

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/09/05/endangered-tamaraw-killed-in-mindoro-poachers-escape/>



Mine concerns threaten already battered Masbate economy

By [Ben Kritz](#)

September 6, 2020

As though dealing with the ongoing coronavirus pandemic and the aftereffects of the August 18 earthquake that struck Masbate were not stressful enough, residents of that province's Aroroy town are now worried that concerns raised over the safety of the massive tailings pond of the Filminera Resources Corp.'s (FRC) gold mine there might shut down their biggest industry and largest employer.

The 6.6-magnitude earthquake did not cause significant damage in Aroroy — its epicenter was near Cataingan, about 150 kilometers to the south, at the other end of Masbate island — but it was evidently a wake-up call for Masbate Gov. Antonio Kho, who expressed fears that the tailings pond at the FRC mine might have been compromised by the quake, and could collapse if another strong one occurred.

The tailings pond, according to documents filed by FRC in 2018 in connection with a proposed expansion of the mine's processing plant, covers an area of about 217 hectares, has a depth of about 39 meters at its deepest point and is impounded by a 42.3-meter-high earthen dam. As the mine tailings accumulate (at a rate of about 7.3 million metric tons a year), the dam will eventually reach a height of 62 meters, according to FRC's documents, at which point the mine would be presumably exhausted, or another safe location to create a tailings pond would have to be found.

According to Kho, who has a background in civil engineering, the tailings dam is rated to withstand a 7.0-magnitude earthquake, but the Cataingan quake raised enough questions to reevaluate whether it is actually safe. The Cataingan quake, after all, was only slightly less intense than the dam was designed to handle; and the Central Philippine Fault Zone, along which the quake, and hundreds of smaller aftershocks, occurred, lies about 30 kilometers to the east of Aroroy.

In an August 25 meeting with representatives from FRC and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Kho expressed concern that the large tailings dam might have suffered unseen fatigue from the August 18 quake, even though initial assessments of the mine facilities — carried out between August 21 and 26, with mine operations suspended for the inspection — determined no apparent damage had occurred in the area. In that same meeting, the governor also questioned whether the dam was already too big to be located close to a populated area. No amount of caution was excessive, he stressed, because there are roughly 40,000 people in the four villages of Aroroy directly downstream in the event of a flood from the tailings pond.

Kho proposed that the provincial government hire an independent engineering consultant to conduct a thorough analysis of the tailings dam, and said he would forward a resolution to that effect to the provincial assembly. He also proposed — but did not make a firm decision yet — to request that the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) of the DENR suspend operations at the mine while the detailed inspection and analysis were being carried out, a process that could take several weeks or more.

That is the part that has residents of Aroroy worried, because it would be economically disastrous, coming at a time when the town is already struggling with the impact the pandemic has had on livelihoods. Many of Aroroy's overseas workers and residents working in Metro Manila or other parts of the country have returned unemployed — and brought with them the only cases of coronavirus infection the town has seen so far — and the area's modest tourism industry has been completely out of action for months.



Without the mine in operation, economic activity would drop to nearly zero: of the nearly 1,900 workers at the mine employed by FRC and its joint venture partner Philippine Gold Processing and Refining Corp., which operates the mine's processing facilities, about 1,300 are local residents.

In addition, FRC's Social Development and Management Program has provided well over P400 million to the eight villages surrounding the mine reservation — on an annual basis, an amount that is almost double their internal revenue allotment and nine times their development funds — as well as about P68 million for Aroroy's other 33 villages and P43.5 million for other areas in Masbate. The mine operations also account for an annual average of about P200 million in local taxes and P562 million in taxes paid to the national government. The mine also made a modest contribution of P5.3 million in cash, plus a stockpile of rice, shelter materials and other relief goods to residents of Cataingan in the aftermath of the earthquake.

Kho's concerns about the mine, or more specifically, the potential threat posed by its massive tailings storage complex, are completely justified. While FRC is, in the official judgment of the MGB and DENR, a model of propriety in terms of operation, management and community relations, and while prior analyses of the tailings facility by the government, the mine operators and the latter's own outside consultants have found no problems with the dam, it is also true that the structure has not until recently been tested by the stress of a relatively nearby large earthquake. Kho would not be doing his job, particularly on behalf of the 40,000 of his constituents who could be affected by an accident, if he did not raise the issue.

Suspending the mine's operations while a detailed analysis is being carried out, however, would create more immediate problems, particularly since the Aroroy mine is one of the few in the country that is actually productive at the moment. The combined effects of the pandemic and the global downturn in the metals market has, according to the MGB, cost about 138,000 jobs in the mining industry, at least temporarily, and along with those a badly needed tax revenue stream has dried up.

As there is no indication that there are any defects in its tailings facility at the moment, the mine should be allowed to operate as normally as possible, working around whatever inspections need to be carried out. If the analysis does discover significant problems, that would be another matter, and appropriate action — including closing the mine at that point, if it comes to that — would have to be taken. Allowing the mine to operate in the meantime, however, would provide the local community and the government time and resources with which to prepare for that possible outcome, should it become necessary.

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Solution built into a solution: SMC to clean up, revive Pasig River as part of its P95-B road project

Saturday, September 5, 2020 People's Tonight



After Tullahan River, San Miguel Corporation is now looking to clean up ailing Pasig River as part of its Pasig River Expressway (PAREX) project.

The Pasig River, pristine in the time and writings of national hero Jose Rizal but long since polluted and considered biologically dead, may finally have a real shot at being revived, thanks to a P95.40 billion plan to build the Pasig River Expressway (PAREX).

The project, now under government review, is proposed by San Miguel Corporation, known for taking on challenging, large-scale infrastructure projects and environmental initiatives.

SMC president and COO Ramon S. Ang said that the PAREX project represents a “solution within a solution”—a means to solve Metro Manila traffic, with minimal disruption on existing cities and roads, with a built-in solution to clean up and improve the flow of water throughout the entire length of the Pasig River.

“Of all the projects we have done, this will perhaps be among the most challenging, and at the same time, the most fulfilling. Not only will we be building a much-needed direct link between eastern and western Metro Manila, but we will also be leading a historic effort to bring the Pasig River back to health,” Ang added.

Ang explained that to build the 19.40-kilometer, six-lane elevated expressway along the banks of the river, the river bed has to be dredged and cleared of decades of debris and garbage, to attain its optimum depth and ensure the constant flow of water. This, he added, will also help address flooding in Metro Manila.

“For so many decades, even when I was young, the Pasig River had been synonymous to pollution. Many Filipinos have long wanted to clean it and revive it, bring it back to its old glory. There were even high-profile fund-raising projects and similar initiatives to clean it. But unfortunately, not much has changed,” Ang said.

SMC is not new to large-scale river cleanups. Early this year, it started a P1-billion corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiative to clean up the Tullahan-Tinajeros River System as part of a wide-ranging plan to support the government cleanup of the Manila Bay, and address perennial flooding in low-lying areas such as Bulacan and other Central Luzon provinces.

In August, it reported that in just over two months, the company had extracted 20,000 cubic meters or 2,150 truck-loads of silt and garbage from a 5.25 km stretch of the Tullahan from Malabon to Navotas, which constitutes the first phase of the project.



The company has been removing some 600 tons of solid waste from the river every day.

The Pasig River Expressway, which will start from Radial Road 10 (R10) in the City of Manila and end at a connection to the South East Metro Manila Expressway (SEMME), otherwise known as Circumferential Road 6 (C6), is seen to reduce travel time from Manila to Rizal to just 15 minutes.

From R10, or the port area, it will have entry and exit points at the University Belt area, San Juan, Buendia, Mandaluyong, Makati, Rockwell, Edsa, Pioneer St., Bonifacio Global City, C5, before terminating at C6.

It is seen to provide an alternative and faster access to the country's largest business districts—Makati, Ortigas, and BGC.

Along with the PAREX project, SMC is also proposing to build the 420-kilometer, four-lane South Luzon Expressway Toll Road 5 (SLEX-TR5) project which extends the SLEX and SLEX-TR4 project from Lucena, Quezon to Matnog, Sorsogon.

Both projects are under a proposed Built-Operate-Transfer scheme for a concession of just 30 years, after which, government takes over the vital infrastructure assets.

Source: <https://journal.com.ph/editorial/miscellaneous/solution-built-into-a-solution-smc-to-clean-up-revive-pasig-river-as-part-of-its-p95-b-road-project/>



Philippine Star

10h · 🌐

Nestlé Philippines announced that the company has already achieved "plastic neutrality" in August by collecting and co-processing plastic waste equivalent to the plastic packaging they used for the same month.

"Our goal is to maintain neutrality every month moving forward. This groundbreaking step is only one of many that we are taking to reduce our plastic footprint," Kais Marzouki, CEO of Nestlé Philippines said. (Photos courtesy of Kais Marzouki)



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House urged to probe Iloilo oil spill

Published September 5, 2020, 7:06 PM

by [Charissa Luci-Atienza](#)

The House Committee on Ecology has been urged to look into the reported oil spill in Barrio Obrero, Iloilo City which resulted to oil contamination of the neighboring shorelines and evacuation of hundreds of affected residents.

Negros Oriental 1st District Rep. Jocelyn Sy Limkaichiong filed House Resolution No. 1153 urging the panel, chaired by Zamboanga del Norte 2nd District Rep. Glona Labadlabad, to look into the July 3 incident wherein Power Barge 102 located in Zone 3, Barrio Obrero, Iloilo City discharged fuel oil with an estimated volume of 268,000 liters.

“It is apparent that there should be well-defined protocols and rules of engagement in handling and managing incidents of this nature to mitigate on the environment and the communities,” she said.

She said the Labadlabad panel should investigate whether appropriate response and mitigation measures were implemented following the incident.

Under HR No. 1153, Limkaichiong, vice chairperson of the House Committee of Appropriations and a member of the House Committee on Ecology, sought the crafting of “adequate, responsive, and comprehensive” legislation on the possible institutionalization of protocols, and rules of engagement in handling and managing such incidents.

Citing reports, she said the discharge was attributable to the ignition of fuel oil in storage which ruptured PB 102’s fuel tank.

PB 102 is owned by AC Energy Philippines, Inc (ACEPH), and is operated and maintained by Bulacan Power Generation Corporation (BPGC), a wholly-owned subsidiary of ACEPH, she said.

“Oil recovery and oil clean-up activities were reported to have been undertaken by ACEPH and BPGC in coordination with local government units, other government agencies, various stakeholders, and industry partners, third party contractors, and volunteers to mitigate the impact of the oil spill, ensure the restoration and rehabilitation of the affected areas, and address the needs and concerns of the affected residents,” Limkaichiong noted.

She said based on the latest available reports, about 261,000 liters of 97 percent of the spilled oil have been recovered, while majority of the coastal areas affected by fugitive oil have also even cleaned with only a few areas remaining.

“Moreover, the affected residents have safely returned to their homes on July 18, 2020 after they were temporarily evacuated to several hotels in Iloilo City. During the period that the residents were in the hotels, they were provided food, medicine and other necessities. Private and city health doctors and nurses were available to assist the relocated families with their medical needs,” the House leader said.

She expressed hope that the Labadlabad committee will promptly look into the incident to pave the way for the enactment of protocol and rules of engagement in handling and managing related incidents in the future.



PH Covid-19 cases now over 234K; 1.1K new recoveries

By Joyce Ann L. Rocamora [September 5, 2020, 5:56 pm](#)



MANILA – A total of 2,529 new infections were reported by the Department of Health (DOH) on Saturday, bringing the latest coronavirus disease (Covid-19) case count to 234,570, with 69,112 active cases.

The new cases are based on tests by 92 out of 113 current operational laboratories.

Meanwhile, 1,136 new recoveries and 53 fatalities were logged, raising the number to 161,668 and 3,790, respectively.

Most of the newly-announced cases were recorded in the National Capital Region with 1,171, followed by Negros Occidental with 197, Laguna with 145, Cavite with 117, and Bulacan with 70.

According to DOH, 21 of the new deaths happened in September, 18 in August, 12 in July, and one each in June and April. Thirty-two of the deceased are from NCR, six are from Region 3, four from Region 6, four from Region 4-A, two each from Region 1, CAR, and BARMM, and one from Region 12.

There were 30 duplicates removed from the total case count, 15 of which were recovered cases.

"In addition, there's one case that was found to be negative and was removed from the total case count. Moreover, there were two cases that were previously reported as recovered but after final validation, they were deaths," the DOH said.

Out of the active cases, at least 90.4 percent have mild symptoms, 7.2 percent are asymptomatic, one percent are severe, and 1.4 percent are critical.

'Health system capacity'

Nationwide, the bed capacity for Covid-19 is broken down as follows: 1,800 ICU beds, 13,600 isolation beds, and 5,600 ward beds.

About 50 percent of the total ICU beds are occupied, including 43 percent of isolation beds and 49 percent of ward beds.

At least 72 percent of mechanical ventilators dedicated to Covid-19 patients, meanwhile, remain available.

In a Laging Handa briefing, Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire noted that the critical care utilization rate in NCR has gradually decreased from 80 to 81 percent in the past to about 66 percent.

Based on the latest bulletin of DOH, about 65 percent of the 691 ICU beds are in use, while the total 3,800 isolation and 1,900 ward beds are at 62 percent and 66 percent occupancy, respectively.



"Nakita po natin na iyong One Hospital Command System natin ay nakapagbigay ng magandang dulot dito po sa pagde-decongest ng ating ospital. Kabalikat na po niyan iyong Oplan Kalinga natin (We could see that our One Hospital Command System is bringing good results in decongesting our hospitals. That program complements our Oplan Kalinga)," she said.

Over 2.58 million people have so far been tested by 87 licensed RT-PCR laboratories and 28 GeneXpert laboratories across the country.

Meanwhile, Vergeire noted that the DOH is still behind the targeted 10,000 new medical front-liners to respond against the pandemic.

While the recruitment had been continuous, Vergeire said the government is hoping the number would still increase in the coming days.

"Gusto ko lang ipaalala at ipaalam sa ating mga healthcare workers suportado po kayo ng Kagawaran ng Kalusugan. Lahat po ng puwedeng maibigay ay atin pong pinipilit na maibigay sa inyong lahat para po kayo ay maproteksyunan. We recognize na importante po kayo sa labang ito at kami po ay patuloy na susuporta sa inyo (I just want to tell our healthcare workers that the DOH fully supports them. We are trying our best to provide everything that you may need to be protected. We recognize that you are important in this fight)," she said. (PNA)



Pfizer presented Covid-19 vaccine proposal to PH: DOH exec

By Joyce Ann L. Rocamora **September 5, 2020, 3:08 pm**



Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire. (File photo)

MANILA – Pharmaceutical giant Pfizer has presented its proposal to the Philippine government as the country bids to secure a supply of vaccine from foreign manufacturers, an official of the Department of Health (DOH) confirmed on Saturday.

Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said top officials from the American drug firm gave its proposal during a meeting with Health Secretary Francisco Duque III and Science and Technology Secretary Fortunato de la Peña on Friday. However, she did not reveal any details of the talks.

"The Philippines, through the Secretary of Health and the Secretary of the Department of Science and Technology, talked with them regarding this. There will be an initial review... So we don't have a final agreement yet with Pfizer," she said in Filipino during the Laging Handa briefing.

She noted that both parties are working on a confidentiality disclosure agreement for transparency.

"Once this is finalized, we will be discussing the arrangement with them," she said.

Representatives from the DOH on Friday also met virtually with the Russian embassy in Manila to discuss an upcoming meeting between the government and Gamaleya Research Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology, the developer of Moscow's candidate vaccine Sputnik V.

The meeting is scheduled "next week or the week after", Vergeire said.

Russia is the first country to approve a vaccine against SARS-CoV-2, a move met with initial skepticism from the international community. At the time of its approval on August 11, the vaccine has not started the crucial phase 3 clinical trial.

Based on Sputnik V's website, the "post-registration clinical trials" began on August 24 involving more than 40,000 people in Russia. A number of countries, such as the United Arab Emirates, Saudi Arabia, the Philippines, and possibly India or Brazil will join the clinical trials of Sputnik V locally, it added. (PNA)



Airline ground staff wearing protective gear work at the counter at the airport in Manila on August 4, 2020.

AFP/Ted Aljibe

Commentary: Addressing corruption vulnerabilities in COVID-19 pandemic

[Francisco Magno](#) (Philstar.com) - September 5, 2020 - 2:33pm

The eruption of the COVID-19 pandemic brought to the fore the severe corruption vulnerabilities in the health sector. Globally, over US\$ 7.5 trillion are allocated annually for public health. However, even before the pandemic, it is estimated that the leakage from corruption amounted to 10-25% of procurement contracts.

With more public funds being made available to fight the pandemic, better safeguards are needed to prevent corruption. In the words of Sarah Steingruber, “COVID-19 is a corruption accelerator.” She is the global health lead for the CurbingCorruption web platform and is the co-author of the report by the U4 Anti-Corruption Resource Centre on Corruption in the Time of COVID-19: A Double-Threat for Low Income Countries.

The potential for corruption becomes greater due to the lowering of institutional barriers with enhanced calls for swift actions often resulting in shortcuts to address the crisis.

In a forum on “Fighting the Pandemic of Corruption” organized by Transparency International-Philippines, in partnership with Stratbase ADR Institute and Democracy Watch Philippines last week, Steingruber discussed the corruption vulnerabilities in the health sector. The main risk areas identified were: (1) withholding accurate health data, (2) procurement contract awards, (3) substandard equipment, (4) prescription of branded over generic drugs, and (5) health budget embezzlement.

The vital link between transparency and health outcomes cannot be underestimated. The COVID-19 pandemic is acknowledged to have begun on Nov. 17, 2019 with the first recorded case of the disease in the city of Wuhan in Hubei Province, China.

In succeeding weeks, cases of people infected with SARS-like virus piled up. However, the government kept a tight lid on health data and even reprimanded the local doctors who warned of the new disease. It was only on December 31, 2019 that the World Health Organization China Country Office was informed of the existence of the fast spreading virus.



The lack of transparency and monopoly of information by the state where the virus originated prevented health authorities globally to take action and contain the transmission of COVID-19 across cities, nations and borders. The secretive process of managing information and the concentration of discretionary authority in the hands of a few foster an ecosystem that is ripe for corruption.

Dr. Robert Klitgaard, University Professor at Claremont Graduate University defined corruption using the formula $C = M + D - A$, where $C =$ Corruption, $M =$ Monopoly, $D =$ Discretion, and $A =$ Accountability. In this regard, corruption thrives in an organizational setting where decision-making is monopolized by a few people and subject to discretion, while accountability mechanisms are not firmly in place.

Corruption is a form of behavior that deviates from the norms and rules of public office for reasons of private gain. To curb corruption, institutional control mechanisms are important including the establishment of regulations, enforcement of prohibitions and installation of adequate checks and balances.

These should include not just strategic anti-corruption steering committees but also operational watchdogs in the government, private sector and civil society. Operational watchdog bodies should cover monitoring and evaluation of critical governance domains such as public finance and expenditure management, personnel administration, investment planning, and citizen feedback and complaint channels.

The allegations regarding the misuse of funds by the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) brings to the surface the weak exercise of institutional control mechanisms in the state-run agency. The resigned anti-fraud officer and head executive assistant of PhilHealth served as whistleblowers that led to investigations by the Senate, House of Representatives and Presidential Anti-Graft Commission to recommend executive action against erring officials in the government corporation.

Previous to that, rampant financial violations were observed in reports rendered by the Commission on Audit (COA). These indicate the importance of legislative and audit oversight agencies as accountability institutions within a system of checks and balances.

In the case of PhilHealth, it has been reported that that COA was having a hard time in auditing the agency due to the difficulty of obtaining documents from its central office. Corruption is perpetrated when there is a deviation from legal and institutional norms.

The system of checks and balances to combat corruption can be improved through the adoption of an integrated approach. This requires promoting a comprehensive strategy that includes the facilitation of basic democratic standards, participation of a strong civil society engaged in transparency and accountability work, and the consistent application of the rule of law.

Lessening information asymmetry can reduce corruption vulnerability. The poor information technology system of PhilHealth paves the way for the processing of fraudulent claims in the agency.



It is also said that key officials in the agency have strong political backers. There are also regional officials in the agency that have managed to avoid being assigned to other jurisdictions. Public personnel corruption is encouraged by a political culture driven by patronage. Likewise, the regular rotation of key officers and staff will lessen the risks of unhealthy relationships and corruption risks.

Corruption should not be simplified as mere irregularities or the act of individuals who went astray. The focus should be on corrupt systems.

Corruption prevention strategies should look for ways to reduce monopoly power, limit and clarify discretion, and promote transparency and accountability in governance. As a crime of calculation, corruption could be countered by converting it into a high-risk activity through the judicious application of institutional controls, checks and balances, social accountability, and the rule of law.

Francisco Magno is a trustee and convenor of Right Governance and Open Governments Program of think tank Stratbase ADR Institute.



Typhoon 'Kristine' enters Philippine area of responsibility

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Sep 04 2020 10:58 AM | Updated as of Sep 04 2020 11:58 AM

MANILA -- A typhoon has entered the Philippine area and could intensify this weekend, said the state weather bureau.

Typhoon Kristine (international name: Haishen) was 1,340 kilometers east off the northern tip of Luzon at 10 a.m., packing maximum sustained winds of 130 kilometers per hour and 160 kph gusts, said PAGASA.



While the country's 11th storm this year might reach its peak intensity by Saturday or Sunday, it will "remain far from the landmass," said the weather agency.

Kristine will head towards southern Japan and the Korean Peninsula after leaving the Philippine area early Sunday, PAGASA said.





Another typhoon, Maysak, hit South and North Korea this week and caused a cattle ship carrying 39 Filipino crew to capsizе off Japan.

[La Niña](#), a weather pattern characterized by more frequent rains than typical, has a 60-percent chance of emerging in the Philippines in September or October and could last until 2021, the weather bureau earlier said.

Around 7 to 10 storms may form in the Philippine area until February next year, said PAGASA.

For more updates, visit the [ABS-CBN Weather Center](#).

Source: https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/09/04/20/typhoon-kristine-enters-philippine-area-of-responsibility?fbclid=IwAR0_mSngJKjpDqB97cX0WtGhVzAA9YXXwWJo4ZRjW02oR-ArmRqTPyEhWuw



MAYNILAD PATULOY NA NAGSASAGAWA NG LIBRENG “DESLUDGING SERVICE” NGAYONG SETYEMBRE



September 6, 2020 @ 12:08 AM 6 hours ago

ANG West Zone concessionaire Maynilad Water Services, Inc. (Maynilad) ay nag-aalok muli ng kanilang libreng serbisyo sa paglilinis ng septic tank sa mga residential at semi-business customers nitong buwan ng September sa mga piling bahagi ng Malabon, Manila, Muntinlupa, Navotas, Pasay, Valenzuela, Quezon City, at Lalawigan ng Cavite nang walang dagdag na gastos.

Ang kompanya ay nagpatibay ng bago at mas mahigpit na mga protokol sa pagsasagawa ng mga desludging na serbisyo upang matiyak ang kaligtasan ng mga kostumer na makukuha sa paglilinis ng septic tank.

Ang mga desludging personnel and vacuum truck unit operator ng Maynilad ay kinakailangan magsuot ng personal na proteksyon na kagamitan, susunod sa physical distancing at magsagawa ng mga karagdagang pamamaraan ng pagdidisimpekta upang malabanan ang pagkalat ng COVID-19.

“We have made our already-stringent desludging safety protocols even stricter, to assure our customers that we are taking all necessary steps to protect them from possible COVID-19 infection as we deliver our desludging services in their homes,” sabi ni Maynilad COO Randy T. Estrellado, pagdaragdag pa niya na ang mga customer ay dapat samantalain ang libreng serbisyo sapagkat nakatutulong itong maprotektahan ang kalusugan ng komunidad at ang kapaligiran.

Ang mga kustomer na nakatira sa mga barangay ng Hulong Duhat, Potrero, Tañong at Tonsuya sa lungsod ng Malabon; barangays na nasasakupan ng Ermita, Pandacan, Sampaloc, Sta. Cruz, Sta. Mesa at Tondo sa lungsod ng Manila; Brgy. Poblacion sa lungsod ng Muntinlupa; Brgy. Sipac-Almacen sa lungsod ng Navotas; barangays sinasakupan ng San Jose, San Rafael at Sta. Clara sa lungsod ng Pasay; Brgy. Apolonio Samson, Bahay Toro, Balingasa, Damayan, Del Monte, Kaligayagan, Katipunan, Maharlika, Manresa, Mariblo, Novaliches Proper, NS Amoranto, Pag-ibig sa Nayon, Pasong Putik, Payatas, San Antonio, Santo Domingo, Santa Lucia, Sienna, Talipapa at Unang Sigaw sa lungsod ng Quezon; Brgy. Balangkas, Bignay, Gen. T. de Leon, Lingunan, Mapulang Lupa, Paso De Blas, Pasolo, Rincon, Ugong at Veinte Reales sa lungsod ng Valenzuela City ay maaaring mag-avail ng libreng desludging service na handog ng Maynilad.



Bukod dito, ang ilang mga kostumer na nasa Cavite province, particular sa Brgy. Alapan I-C, Anabu I-B hanggang I-F, Anabu II-A hanggang II-F, Bayan Luma V, VI at IX, Bucandala III hanggang V, Molino V, Palico I at Pasong Buaya I at II sa lungsod ng Imus ; Brgy. Samala-Marquez, Santa Isabela, Tabon II at III, Tramo-Bantayan at Wakas II sa Kawit, Cavite; at Brgy. Kanluran, Muzon II, Poblacion, Sapa III at Silangan II sa Rosario ay maaaring makinabang sa mga serbisyo ng paglilinis ng septic tank, ibinibigay ng kompanya sa mga kostumer at walang sinisingil sa kanilang serbisyo. Ang halaga ng serbisyong sa paglilinis ng tangke ng Septic ay karaniwang nagkakahalaga ng halos Php 5,000 bawat trak.

Ang mga customer ng Maynilad na interesadong makapag-avail ng libreng serbisyo sa paglilinis ng septic tank na inaalok ng kompanya ay maaaring tumawag sa Maynilad Hotline 1626 upang malaman nila ang mga kinakailangan at pamamaraan. Ang karagdagang impormasyon ay makukuha rin sa website ng kompanya, ww.mayniladwater.com.ph at sa social media account (Twitter @ maynilad, Facebook MayniladWater).

Ang Maynilad, pinakamalaking pribadong konsesyuner sa tubig sa Pilipinas na may tungkuling pangalagaan ang kanilang customer base, ang ahente at kontratista ng Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System para sa West Zone ng Greater Manila Area, na binubuo ng mga lungsod ng Manila (ilang bahagi), Quezon City (ilang bahagi), Makati (kanluran ng South Super Highway), Caloocan, Pasay, Parañaque, Las Piñas, Muntinlupa, Valenzuela, Navotas at, Malabon, lahat nasa Metro Manila; mga lungsod ng Cavite, Bacoor at Imus, at mga bayan ng Kawit, Noveleta, at Rosario, lahat nasa Cavite Province.



Pope: Use pandemic to give the environment a vital 'rest'

By **BusinessMirror**

September 5, 2020



File photo: Pope Francis at his weekly General Audience on June 24.

VATICAN CITY—The Covid-19 pandemic has shown how the Earth can recover “if we allow it to rest” and must spur people to adopt simpler lifestyles to help a planet “groaning” under the constant demand for economic growth, Pope Francis said this past week.

In his latest urgent appeal to help a fragile environment, Francis also renewed his call for the cancellation of the debts of the most vulnerable countries. Such action would be just, he said, since rich countries have exploited poorer nations’ natural resources.

“In some ways, the current pandemic has led us to rediscover simpler and sustainable lifestyles,” Francis said in a written message.

“Already we can see how the Earth can recover if we allow it to rest: the air becomes cleaner, the waters clearer, and animals have returned to many places from where they had previously disappeared,” he wrote. “The pandemic has brought us to a crossroads.”

The pontiff urged people to seize the opportunity to reflect on their habits of energy usage, consumption, transportation and diet.

Until now, “constant demand for growth and an endless cycle of production and consumption are exhausting the natural world,” the pope said, adding, “Creation is groaning.”

People must be aware of their rightful place in nature, never thinking themselves masters of what Francis described as the “interconnected web of life.”

Disintegrating biodiversity, climate disasters and the “unjust impact of the current pandemic on the poor and the vulnerable” amount to a “wakeup call in the face of our rampant greed and consumption,” the pope wrote.

Francis hailed “our indigenous brothers and sisters who live in harmony with the land and its multiple forms of life.”

He urged protection for these communities from companies, particularly multinational ones, which carry out “destructive extraction” of such resources as fossil fuels, minerals and timber.



Citing the medical, social and economic crises triggered by the pandemic, Francis said it was “time for restorative justice.”

“We also need to ensure that the recovery packages being developed and deployed at global, regional and national levels must be regeneration packages,” Francis said, without naming any particular nations or regions.

Drawing attention to Earth’s fragility is a hallmark of Francis’s papacy. He poignantly stressed people’s pressing responsibilities to heal and care for the environment in a 2015 encyclical.

The pontiff issued his appeal on to mark the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation, an annual occasion that was established for Christians in the wake of the encyclical Laudato Si’ (Praise Be to You!).

Francis invited all nations to “adopt more ambitious national targets to reduce emissions” harming the environment. **AP**



California braces for record-setting heatwave, more fires

posted September 05, 2020 at 12:00 pm

by [AFP and Jocelyne ZABLIT](#)

California is bracing for record-breaking temperatures and dangerous fire weather conditions this Labor Day weekend, with the National Weather Service urging people to limit outdoor activity and to stay hydrated.



A woman wearing a facemask walks on the boardwalk as many come to the beach to escape the heat wave in Venice Beach, California on September 4, 2020. - California is bracing for all-time record-breaking temperatures and dangerous fire weather conditions this Labor Day weekend, with the National Weather Service urging people to limit outdoor activity and to stay hydrated. "Saturday and Sunday will be about 20 to 30 degrees above normal across the entire area," Frank Fisher, a meteorologist for the southern part of the state, told AFP. (Photo by Robyn Beck / AFP)

"Saturday and Sunday will be about 20 to 30 degrees above normal across the entire area," Frank Fisher, a NWS meteorologist for the southern part of the state, told AFP.

"By Monday, we should be 10 to 20 degrees above normal ... but still very warm and dangerous outside," he added.

Fisher said temperatures are expected to peak to 108 degrees Fahrenheit (42.2 Celsius) in the Los Angeles area on Sunday and to 118 Fahrenheit (47.8 Celsius) further inland in Woodland Hills.

Excessive heat warnings through the holiday weekend and possibly beyond have also been issued in other western states including Arizona and Nevada.

The warm temperatures in California come as the state is recovering from another heat wave in mid-August and devastating wildfires that have burned some 1.5 million acres in the last three weeks.

That heat wave also set records, with Death Valley -- located near the border with Nevada -- recording a high of 130 degrees, one of the hottest temperatures ever measured on Earth with modern instruments.

Weather forecasters said red flag warnings indicating the potential for dangerous fire conditions had been issued in many parts of California for the weekend, notably in the Santa Barbara mountains, north of Los Angeles.

"We have the heat, winds and low humidity," a perfect cocktail for fires, Fisher said.

"Our big issue with this excessive heat," he added, "is the fact that it's a holiday weekend and a lot of people are going out."

He said the National Weather Service was recommending people refrain from outdoor activities such as hiking and remain indoors during the day.

Once the sun sets, however, evening temperatures are not expected to bring much relief.

- 'Warmest nighttimes' -

"This is going to be the warmest nighttimes we are going to have in a while," Fisher said. "We are looking for temperatures to be in the upper 70s and even upper 80s, the warmest being Saturday night."

And if you're expecting to go to a restaurant in the Los Angeles area or other regions, where only outdoor dining is allowed because of the Covid-19 pandemic, you may want to think twice.



"Outdoor dining is not going to work this weekend," Fisher said.

The situation is not expected to be any better further north -- in the Bay Area and beyond -- where dangerous hot conditions are also predicted.

"It's certainly gonna be hot all over," said Jonathan Garner, a NWS meteorologist for that region.

"In areas like Ukiah, the record of 108 degrees could be exceeded by one or two degrees," he told AFP, referring to a city about 115 miles (185 kilometers) north of San Francisco.