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Manila Bay project passed environment impact assessment; DENR budget vetted, approved before COVID-19 onset — Roque

Published September 7, 2020, 3:41 PM
by [Genalyn Kabling](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) would not have approved the “beach enhancement” of Manila Bay if it did not pass its environment impact assessment and would not benefit the nation, Malacañang said Monday.



(JANSEN ROMERO / MANILA BULLETIN)

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said the Manila Bay “white sand” project went through a government study not only to beautify the place but also address its problems on soil erosion and flooding of nearby roads.

Roque also explained that the laying of “white sand” along Manila Bay was part of the 2020 national budget, that was approved last year. Under the budget rules, he said the fund allocation can only be used for its intended purpose.

“It’s not as if pinlano po itong proyektong ito ngayong panahon ng COVID – hindi po. Ang 2020 budget na ginagamit po natin para sa proyektong ito, 2019 pa po na-approve, wala pa pong COVID noon (It’s not as if it was planned during the time of COVID. The 2020 national budget we are using for the project was approved in 2019. There was no COVID then),” he added.

The Manila Bay rehabilitation project, which includes the laying of crushed dolomite rocks along its shoreline, has recently drawn criticisms from Vice President Leni Robredo and other environmental protection advocates.

The artificial beach project reportedly costs an estimated P389 million.

“Like all projects which can affect the environment, dumaan ito sa masusing pag-aaral. nagkaroon ito ng environmental assessment at kung hindi naman ito beneficial sa atin hindi ito inapubrahan ito ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (Like all projects which can affect the environment, it went through a thorough study. There was an environmental assessment conduct and if it was not beneficial to us, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources would not have approved it),” Roque said during a televised press briefing Monday.



Manila Bay project passed environment impact assessment; DENR budget vetted, approved before COVID-19 onset — Roque

“Hindi lang ito beautification (This is not just a beautification project). This is a project intended to prevent further soil erosion and also intended to help alleviate yung flooding problem natin sa Maynila (flood problem in Manila),” he added.

Roque, born in Manila, said although it is “primarily a beautification project,” he is pleased with the latest attraction of Manila Bay.

“As a resident of Manila, I am happy na magkakaroon tayo ng beautification of Manila Bay kasi kaming mga taga-Maynila ay kinakailangan din magkaroon ng access sa magandang beach sa ga panahon na hindi naman pupuwedeng lumabas ng Metro Manila (As a resident of Manila, I am happy we will have a beautification of Manila Bay because Manila residents would need access to a beautiful beach since we can’t go outside of Metro Manila yet),” he said.

“Pero itong ginawa po nila, ito po ay tinatawag na beach enhancement, so hindi lang po ito pagpapaganda. Itong beach enhancement pong ito ay para po maiwasan ang soil erosion at para makatulong din po sa flood control (But this project called beach enhancement is not only for beautification. The beach enhancement also aims to avoid soil erosion and help with flood control),” he said.

Roque also assured the public that the DENR knows “what do or not to do” especially since it is the approving authority on a project’s impact to the environment.

He noted that proper engineering works are implemented to ensure the artificial white sand will not just be blown away.

On the possible filing of a petition to ask the Supreme Court to halt the controversial project, Roque said the Palace would respect any decision of the court. But he expressed confidence that the DENR is fulfilling its duty to protect the environment.



Manila Bay white sand project will prevent soil erosion, floods

By Azer Parrocha September 7, 2020, 7:10 pm



'WHITE SAND' BEACH. Works continue even on a Sunday (Sept. 6, 2020) as an excavator spreads the synthetic sand along the shoreline of Manila Bay as part of the ongoing efforts to beautify the bayfront under the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program. Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque on Monday said the project will prevent soil erosion and flooding. (PNA photo by Avito C. Dalan)

MANILA – Malacañang on Monday defended the government project to pour "white sand" on the shore of Manila Bay claiming it will prevent soil erosion and flooding.

Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque made this remark after Vice President Leni Robredo said the PHP389-million project is a "misplaced priority" during the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic.

Besides being a beautification project, Roque explained that it would also help address risk and disaster problems.

"Itong ginawa po nila, ito po ay tinatawag na beach enhancement, so hindi lang po ito pagpapaganda. Itong beach enhancement pong ito ay para po maiwasan ang soil erosion at para makatulong din po sa flood control (What they're doing is called beach enhancement, so it's not just beautification. This beach enhancement is also to prevent soil erosion and help flood control)," he said in a virtual presser.

He appealed to the public to trust the "overall adaptation policy" of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) since it underwent several studies before it was approved.

"Huwag naman po tayong maabala na hindi alam ng DENR ang kanilang ginagawa, dahil sila nga po ang nag-a-approve ng mga environmental impact assessments at saka mga environmental impact studies. Alam naman po nila kung ano iyong dapat gawin at hindi dapat gawin (Let's not concern ourselves with the thought the DENR doesn't know what it's doing because they're the ones who approve environmental impact assessments and environmental impact studies. They know the difference between what needs to be done and what shouldn't be done)," he said.

Since the white sand project has been approved since 2019, Roque said budget rules dictate that it should be used for that purpose.



Manila Bay white sand project will prevent soil erosion, floods

“Hindi naman po natin inasahan na magkakaroon ng Covid-19 ‘no. So alam ninyo naman ang rules sa budget ‘no, kapag iyan po ay nasa line item, iyan lamang po ang pupuwedeng paggamitan noong pondo

(We didn’t expect Covid-19. So you know the rules on budget, if it’s in the line item, the budget can only be used for that project),” he said.

The project, he said, was planned a year before and not during the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to Roque, he was personally pleased that there will be a “new attraction” since it would allow Metro Manila folk to experience a beach setting amid travel restrictions.

“I’m happy na magkakaroon po tayo ng beautification of Manila Bay kasi kaming mga taga-Maynila ay kinakailangan naman magkaroon din ng access sa magandang beach sa mga panahon na hindi naman pupuwedeng lumabas ng Metro Manila ‘no (I’m happy that there will be a beautification of Manila Bay because there are people from Manila who can have access to a nice beach during a time when we can’t leave Metro Manila),” he said.

He also allayed fears that storms and high tides would wash away the white sand saying there would be “engineering work” to prevent this from happening.

“Naglagay po sila ng mga tubo diyan na mayroong mga sand doon po sa perimeter para maiwasan nga po iyong matangay iyong mga sand diyan dahil primarily nga po (They already placed a tube there with sand in the perimeter to prevent the sand from being washed away because primarily), this is an anti-soil erosion project,” he added.

Meanwhile, he said the Palace will respect public policy think tank Infrawatch PH’s motion urging the Supreme Court to intervene under its Manila Bay Advisory Committee (MBAC).

“We will respect the decision of the Supreme Court, pero tingin ko naman po rirespetuhin din ng Supreme Court iyong primary jurisdiction ng DENR na pangalagaan ang kalikasan natin (but I think the Supreme Court will also respect the primary jurisdiction of the DENR to conserve our environment),” he said.

Earlier, Robredo said the millions of funds used for the white sand project of Manila Bay could have been used to help 80,000 families in need.

Robredo disagreed with Roque’s earlier suggestion that the white sand in Manila Bay would benefit the public’s mental health.

The DENR has started to dump the stretch of Baywalk on Roxas Boulevard with white sand that came from crushed dolomite boulders in Cebu. **(PNA)**



White sand sa Manila Bay ipinagtanggol ng Palasyo

By [Malou Escudero](#)(Pilipino Star Ngayon) - September 8, 2020 - 12:00am



Ayon kay Roque, ang pondo sa proyekto ay nakapaloob na sa 2020 national budget o bago pa magkaroon ng COVID-19 pandemic.

MANILA, Philippines — Ipinagtanggol kahapon ni Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque ang ginagawang pagpapaganda sa Manila Bay sa pamamagitan ng paglalagay ng “white sand.”

Ayon kay Roque, ang pondo sa proyekto ay nakapaloob na sa 2020 national budget o bago pa magkaroon ng COVID-19 pandemic.

“Well unang-una po, ito naman plano pong maglagay ng white sand sa Manila Bay, ito po ay kabahagi noong budget para sa 2020. Ibig sabihin, inaprubahan po ito 2019 ‘no. Hindi naman po natin inasahan na magkakaroon ng COVID-19 ‘no,” ani Roque.

Inihayag ito ni Roque matapos sabihin ni Vice Pres. Leni Robredo na “insensitive” na ipinagpatuloy pa ang proyekto gayung hindi makapagbigay ng pinansiyal na tulong ang gobyerno sa maraming mahihirap na pamilya.

Ipinaliwanag ni Roque na ang line item budget ay hindi maaaring ilaan sa ibang proyekto.



Palace: P389-M Manila Bay ‘white sand’ project approved prior to pandemic

[Bella Perez-Rubio](#) (Philstar.com) - September 7, 2020 - 5:42pm

MANILA, Philippines — Malacañang on Monday defended the P389-million budget for "beach nourishment" on Manila Baywalk after Vice President Leni Robredo called it "insensitive" and said the money could have been used to feed 80,000 hungry families amid the pandemic instead.

"This plan to put white sand in Manila Bay, it was part of the budget for 2020. This means it was approved in 2019. We could not foresee that there would be a COVID-19 [pandemic]," Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said in Filipino during a virtual briefing.

Robredo on Saturday was one of many to criticize the project, recalling that President Rodrigo Duterte repeatedly said the government had run out of funds to give cash assistance to Filipinos amid the coronavirus-induced crisis.

"With almost P400 million (budget) at P5,000 for each family, you can help around 80,000 families in a month," the vice president said.

She previously urged the administration to provide P5,000 in subsidy to the poorest households severely affected by the health crisis.

Robredo further argued that the government is allowed to realign the 2020 budget due to the pandemic.

"While it is true that this was part of the 2020 budget, it was done prior to COVID-19. Now that we are facing a pandemic, why not reassess the budget and prioritize assistance to hospitals, salaries of the frontliners, food for the poor and mass testing," Robredo said.

The "Bayanihan To Heal As One Act" gave the executive branch powers to reallocate funds to address the pandemic.

Roque: As a resident of Manila, I'm happy about the project

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources last Thursday confirmed that piles of crushed dolomite were being dumped along the shore of Manila Bay to transform the area—known for its stunning sunset views and garbage-strewn, murky waters—into something similar to popular tourist destination Boracay.

But the move to fill the 500-meter stretch with white sand—actually crushed dolomite boulders, according to DENR—did not sit well with environmental groups, who said the dumping could cause more harm to Manila Bay.

"Although it is primarily a beautification project, as a resident of Manila, I'm happy and excited that there will be a beautiful attraction in my city," Roque said in a mix of Filipino and English.

"I'm happy that we will have a beautification of Manila Bay because we from Manila also need access to beautiful beaches in these times where we cannot leave Metro Manila," he added in Filipino.



Palace: P389-M Manila Bay ‘white sand’ project approved prior to pandemic

Although Metro Manila is now under General Community Quarantine, people are advised to stay at home unless it is necessary to go out.

The Palace spokesman said the project is not just about aesthetics.

"What they're doing is called beach enhancement. So it's not just beautification. This beach enhancement is to prevent soil erosion and to help with flood control," Roque said.

However, scientist group Advocates of Science and Technology for the People also warned of the geophysical hazards of the “beach nourishment” project.

“Only a thin layer of these powdered dolomite rocks is overlaid on the beach, on top of existing black sand. This makes an enriched beach susceptible to coastal erosion, especially considering the number of typhoons in the country,” Jerwin Baure, AGHAM spokesperson and fisheries expert of fishers group PAMALAKAYA said.

DepEd: If we had the P389-M, we would use it to fund distance learning needs

Meanwhile, the Department of Education on Monday said that if it received P389-million from the government, it could have been used to fund distance learning needs amid the pandemic.

DepEd Secretary Leonor Briones said this during a virtual Laging Handa briefing after the issue was raised by the media.

"We are not interfering with the budget of others but if we had [the P389 million] budget, I'm sure we would have used it for gadgets, computers, and radios [for distance learning]," Briones said in Filipino.

The Department of Budget and Management recently denied DepEd's P65-billion supplemental budget request for its learning continuity plan.

Education Undersecretary Anne Sevilla, during a previous virtual briefing, called the request a conservative amount, primarily meant to cover the provision of laptops to all public school teachers, as well as to fund the upholding of minimum health standards in basic education schools and offices. — **with reports from Gaea Katreena Cabico and Helen Flores of The STAR**



Pagsasaayos sa Manila Bay, 2019 pa pinondohan – Roque



September 7, 2020 @ 5:15 PM 13 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Taong 2019 pa aprubado at kasama sa line item ang ginagawang hakbangin ngayon ng pamahalaan sa Manila Bay.

Ito ang binigyang diin ni Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque sa gitna ng ilang batikos patungkol sa pagpapa-white sand ng nabanggit na lugar.

Ani Sec. Roque, tuhog lang ang nangyayaring pagpapaganda sa Manila Bay gayung ang target talaga ng proyekto ay may kinalaman sa flood control at soil erosion control.

Alam aniya ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang ginagawa nila para maproteksiyonan ang kalikasan at incidental na lang ang nangyayaring beautification sa lugar.

Dagdag ni Sec. Roque na maging siya bilang isang taga-Maynila ay natutuwa na may pinagagandang atraksiyon na hindi lamang mga tubong taga-Maynila ang makikinabang kundi ang buong taga-Metro Manila.

Nauna rito, sinabi ni Vice-President Leni Robredo na nanghihinayang siya sa perang pinanggastos para sa pagtatambak ng artificial white sand sa Manila Bay.

SAMANTALA, sa pag-aaral ng grupong Infracatch Philippines, sinabing ang dinurog na dolomite rock ay nagdudulot ng iritasyon sa mata, mga sakit sa baga at maging cancer.

Dinurog na dolomite rock ang ginamit bilang artificial white sand sa Manila Bay, na bahagi ng P389 milyon na beach nourishment project, ayon sa DENR.

Pero pinabulaanan ni Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda ang pahayag ng grupo.

“Napag-aralan ito na... wala siya hazard, lalo naman sa health,” ayon kay Usec. Antiporda. **Kris Jose**



A nation of factional interest

[Monday, September 7, 2020](#) [People's Tonight](#)8

OVER the way the government, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in particular, has been fulfilling its mandate of protecting the environment in general and “rescuing” the dying and decaying Manila Bay in particular, we would like to think there is still hope for this country.

But the sad thing is, for some people, the communist bunch and the pseudo-liberals mainly, there is “nothing” that this administration will do—or any administration for that matter—that would pass their “taste” or their standard of what is good or beautiful.

Para sa mga taong ito, walang gagawing mabuti o maganda ang sino mang administrasyon.

They are so consumed by their own sense of self importance and self-righteousness that unless they are the ones in power or authority, whatever happens should be scrutinized, condemned and in the end, discarded.

And looking back, it is this kind of mentality, prevailing over the last 30 years, those years that the “Dilawans” and their communist consorts are in power, that contributed to our nation’s decay, as exemplified by the state of the Manila Bay.

For these people, it is easy for them to forget that the Manila Bay cleanup is a responsibility of not only the government but of everyone. And more than this, its clean up is among the clearest manner by which the Duterte administration has been upholding the rule of law.

Have they forgotten that favoring a petition filed by environmentalists and plain concerned citizens in 1999, the Supreme Court, in 2008, ordered a “continuing mandamus” to all subsequent administrations to clean up Manila Bay?

But what happened under PGMA and Noynoy Aquino? Nothing of note by way of compliance to the order of the Supreme Court.

And now that this administration showed commitment and sincerity in complying with the direct order of the country’s highest tribunal, the only way by which some people acknowledges it is by their usual route: reckless and irresponsible criticisms.

Looking beyond our shores, especially in this age of the Internet, other people and other countries must have been shaking their heads in disbelief that something worth of admiration and emulation are treated dirt and a waste by some quarters in this country.

They must have been saying to themselves that it is only right and proper that Filipinos and the Philippines should remain backward and retrogressive because there is simply nothing that can unite us; we are a nation of unending “factions” motivated by factional interests.

Oh well, our only word of consolation to DENR secretary Roy Cimatu and to Pres. Duterte is this: To persist in doing what is good and what is right.

For in doing this, the comfort to one’s conscience that this brings is already a reward to itself.



“DENR knows it better”: Isko dinepensahan ang Manila Bay white sand



September 7, 2020 @ 5:28 PM 12 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – “As long as it is not proven na ito ay makapaminsala, the city of Manila, in our own little way, are grateful to DENR.”

Ito ang pahayag ni Manila Mayor Isko Moreno Domagoso hinggil sa proyekto ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) hinggil sa paglalagay ng “white sand” sa Manila Bay kung saan binabatikos ito ng ilang grupo.

Ayon kay Domagoso, ang planong paglalagay ng nasabing puting buhangin sa Manila Bay ay naudlot lamang dahil nakatakda sana itong gawin bago pa man magsimula ang pandemya dulot ng COVID-19.

“This didn’t happen yesterday, last week or last month. This was planned ahead of time, before this pandemic.” ani Domagoso.

“We cannot just strike down a valid contract without violation of anything under the provision of that contract. Hindi naman maganda iyon, magiging masamang ehemplo ang gobyerno na you change the rule in the middle of the ballgame,” dagdag pa ng Alkalde.

Dahil dito, hindi sang-ayon ang Alkalde sa mga panawagan ng ilang indibidwal o grupo na huwag nang ituloy ang proyekto ng DENR hinggil sa paglalagay ng puting buhangin. Ang paglalagay ng puting buhangin sa dalampasigan ng Manila Bay ay isa sa mga paraan ng pagpapaganda at bahagi ng Manila Bay rehabilitation program ng gobyerno.

“DENR knows it better than anybody else, including me, whether or not the project is harmful to the environment and the public’s health.” giit pa ni Domagoso.

Ilan sa mga bumabatikos sa proyekto ng DENR na sana ay ginamit na lamang ang pondo upang mas marami pang matulungan ang mga naapektuhan ng pandemya ngunit sinagot naman ito ng nasabing ahensiya ng gobyerno na ang P389 milyon na pondo ng Manila Bay rehabilitation program ay nagsimula dalawang taon na ang nakalilipas at hindi aniya maaaring mailipat ito na panggastos para sa pandemya. **Jay Reyes**



GAWING MALA-BORACAY ANG MANILA BAY SUPORTADO NG MALAKANYANG

written by [Judith Estrada-Larino](#) September 7, 2020



Suportado ng Malakaniyang ang programa ng DENR na gawing mala-Boracay ang Manila Bay.

Sinabi ni Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque na beach enhancement lamang ang ginagawa ng DENR na hindi lamang pagpapaganda kundi para maiwasan din ang soil erosion at makatulong sa flood control dahil naglagay aniya ng mga tubo na mayruong buhangin sa perimeter.

Tiyak aniyang mag e-enjoy ang mga residente ng Maynila sa nasabing proyekto kahit pa mayruong restrictions dahil sa coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

Idinipensa pa ni Roque ang DENR sa paggamit nang durog na dolomite rocks mula sa Cebu na dumaan sa tamang assessment dahil alam ng ahensya ang dapat gawin lalo nat ito ang nag-aprub ng environmental impact assessment at maging impact studies.



Dust from crushed dolomite rocks pose risks, but not toxic —MGB 7

Published September 7, 2020 5:47pm

Crushed dolomite rocks, which will be used to beautify the Manila Bay, are not toxic even though their physical properties may pose respiratory risks, the chief science research specialist of the Mines and Geoscience Bureau (MGB)-Region 7 said Monday.

“Pag sinabi mong dust, kahit anong uri ng dust, kahit nga sigarilyo ay nakakasira sa lungs. It’s not because it is dolomite but it is because of the dust, ‘yung physical characteristic niya,” Armando Malicse told Dobol B sa News TV.

The dolomite rocks that will be used to adorn the coastline of Manila Bay were sourced from the town of Alcoy in Cebu province.

“If you talk about toxic, it’s definitely not. The calcium magnesium carbonate, as a matter of fact, ‘pag sinabi mong magnesium, I don’t know if you are familiar with the milk of magnesia na medicine... ‘Yung mga calcium carbonate, actually they are all basic and alkaline,” Malicse explained.

The Department of Health earlier [warned](#) that the inhalation of crushed dolomite rocks can cause respiratory issues.

Meanwhile, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), which oversees the MGB, said that the P389-million project [will not affect](#) Manila Bay’s ecosystem.

“I would agree that nakakatulong siya dahil it will help in the conversion of acidic environment into an alkaline one,” Malicse said.

“What are we trying to protect? It’s a sea which is the original home of the dolomite. So para bang ‘yung dolomite naman doon gawa sa dagat, ilalagay mo balik sa dagat, okay lang. Hindi naman siya magre-react na magiging poisonous,” he added.

Malicse also said that the MGB Region 7 has been documenting beaches whose coastlines were previously filled with crushed dolomite rocks.

“We are documenting the beaches na nilagyan ng mga dolomite... Mga five years ago, nilagyan ng dolomite, hanggang ngayon maganda pa ang mga beach and very acceptable to the populace,” he said.

Malicse also maintained that the project has obtained all the necessary permits.

A member of the Cebu provincial board earlier [lamented](#) how they were “left in the dark” about the transfer of dolomite from Alcoy to Manila.

Environmentalist and fisherfolk groups earlier [slammed](#) the white sand project as “an aesthetic solution” that “does not solve pollution at the source.” —**Julia Mari Ornedo/LDF, GMA News**



A small crowd gathers on a pedestrian overpass to watch a segment of Manila Bay's Baywalk be covered in sand -- made from crushed dolomite transported from Cebu -- on Sunday, September 6, 2020. The DENR has defended the controversial project, saying that it will not affect the bay's natural ecosystem. **DANNY PATA**

Palace says Manila Bay white sand project will help prevent floods, soil erosion

Published September 7, 2020 4:33pm
By VIRGIL LOPEZ, GMA News

Malacañang on Monday backed the government project to cover the shores of the Manila Bay with white sand, claiming that this will help in flood control and prevent soil erosion.

[Environmental groups](#) and [Vice President Leni Robredo](#) have criticized the P389-million project of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), with Robredo saying it is insulting to Filipinos who were suffering because of the COVID-19 pandemic and a waste of taxpayers' money.

"Itong ginawa po nila, ito po ay tinatawag na beach enhancement, so hindi lang po ito pagpapaganda. Itong beach enhancement pong ito ay para po maiwasan ang soil erosion at para makatulong din po sa flood control," presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said in a televised briefing.

"Naglagay po sila ng mga tubo diyan na mayroong mga sand doon po sa perimeter para maiwasan nga po iyong matangay iyong mga sand diyan dahil primarily nga po, this is an anti-soil erosion project."

Roque also said the project will give residents of Manila a source of enjoyment despite travel restrictions due to the pandemic.

"As a Manila resident, I'm happy na magkakaroon po tayo ng beautification of Manila Bay kasi kaming mga taga-Maynila ay kinakailangan naman magkaroon din ng access sa magandang beach sa mga panahon na hindi naman pupuwedeng lumabas ng Metro Manila," he said.

He added that the project, which uses crushed dolomite boulders from Cebu, went through the proper assessment.

"Huwag naman po tayong maabala na hindi alam ng DENR ang kanilang ginagawa, dahil sila nga po ang nag-a-approve ng mga environmental impact assessments at saka mga environmental impact studies," he said.

Environmental groups have already announced plans to ask the court to stop the project.

"Kampante naman po kami na ang DENR ay alam nila ang katungkulan nila na proteksiyunan ang kalikasan at kaya nga po pinatupad itong proyektong ito," Roque said when told about the possible legal action by the project's critics. — **BM, GMA News**



Health, legal, economic issues bug DENR's Manila Bay 'white sand'



By [BusinessMirror](#)
September 8, 2020



Excavators fill the 500-meter stretch of the famed baywalk on Manila Bay with white sand as part of the bay's rehabilitation efforts. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources is working double time to finish the project in time for International Coastal Cleanup Day on September 19, 2020

By Butch Fernandez & Jonathan L. Mayuga

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has come under increasing pressure to revisit its controversial P400-million "white-sand" project in Manila Bay, with critics citing economic, health and legal implications.

Sen. Sherwin Gatchalian on Monday advised DENR officials to ensure that the project will last, while a civilian watchdog called out the department for allegedly violating its rules in exempting the project from obtaining an environmental compliance certificate.

Sen. Nancy Binay sought the project's suspension on questions raised about health hazards from using dolomite—crushed rocks that mimic sand—while Sen. Risa Hontiveros was dismayed by the ill timing of the project amid the pandemic.

Gatchalian suggested to DENR officials involved in the multimillion project to make sure that the tons of sand supply dumped on the bay shores better "stay white."

He said officials concerned could face an avalanche of charges if the Manila Bay white sand fades, resulting in waste of huge amount of public funds.

Gatchalian noted that the DENR itself confirmed nearly P400 million was allotted for the white-sand project, prompting criticism that the huge expense was ill-timed, as the government scrounges for funds to deal with the Covid-19 pandemic. The project was approved before the Covid outbreak.



Health, legal, economic issues bug DENR's Manila Bay 'white sand'

In a statement, Gatchalian acknowledged the good intention to “beautify the Manila Bay,” but added it was reasonable for taxpayers to expect that the government had at least thoroughly studied the project so the expense of public money is justified.

Health concern

In light of the health department's warning of potential health hazards brought by the “white-sand project,” Senator Binay urged the DENR to immediately suspend the filling of synthetic white sands on Manila Bay's shore.

The Department of Health on Monday confirmed that dolomite dust can cause adverse respiratory reactions, eye irritation and discomfort in the gastrointestinal system. Dolomite is a type of mineral composed of calcium magnesium carbonate.

“The use of dolomite as a substitute for white sand only means that the Manila Bay rehabilitation did not go through the right process or was studied well. There was no public consultation, no environmental clearance, the EIA/EIS was done haphazardly, and the plan is not comprehensive,” Binay pointed out in a mix of English and Filipino.

According to the senator, the public deserved to be informed about the whole context of the project particularly its impact on the environment and public health.

Bad timing

At the same time, Hontiveros deplored the timing of the project amid the Covid contagion.

She wondered who was the “health expert” who suggested to the Duterte administration that the response to the pandemic is to dump white sand on Manila Bay's shores.

This, even as Presidential spokesman Harry Roque was earlier reported contending that the Manila Bay beautification project will help ease the public's anxieties amid reports of a rash of mental health problems in the pandemic.

ECC exemption

Also on Monday, former government official turned watchdog Terry Ridon said that by seeking an exemption from its own ECC regulations, DENR violated Presidential Decree No. 1586 (Environmental Impact Statement System Law) and DENR Administrative Order No. 2003-30, the agency's own implementing rules and regulations governing environment compliance certificates.

According to Ridon, under PD No. 1586 and DAO No. 2003-30, projects that require an ECC are those located in Environmentally Critical Areas such as areas set aside as aesthetic potential tourist spots.

Executive Order No. 69, Series of 1999, designates portions of the waters in Manila Bay and its foreshore area as a special tourist zone.



Health, legal, economic issues bug DENR's Manila Bay 'white sand'

"As such, there is absolutely no basis for the DENR to say that its project is not covered by ECC rules. The proponents should have applied and received an approved ECC before starting the project," said Ridon on a statement.

SC Manila Bay Advisory panel

In Ridon's view, this "presents a prima facie case for a Writ of Kalikasan in the Supreme Court, including a temporary environment protection order stopping the Manila Bay white-sand project."

At the very least, the Supreme Court should intervene under its Manila Bay Advisory Committee (MBAC) led by Chief Justice Diosdado Peralta, said Ridon.

The MBAC was reconstituted by the Chief Justice himself on December 19, 2019.

The committee is tasked to maintain the mandate of the continuing mandamus issued by the high court in 2008 and enable it to verify the reports of the government agencies tasked to clean up the Manila Bay.

The SC should be informed that DENR has not only violated its own rules, but also overstepped its mandate in Manila Bay, either based on SC's continuing mandamus or President Duterte's Manila Bay Task Force, Ridon added.

"Both bodies call for the cleanup, rehabilitation, restoration maintenance of the waters of Manila Bay to a level fit for swimming; and also to improve water quality through the reduction of coliform levels in all river systems and tributaries within Manila Bay.

"Both make no mention of a mandate to beautify a thin stretch of Manila Bay's 190-kilometer coastline," he said.

Groups react

Several groups are also calling on the DENR to stop dumping crushed dolomite in Manila Bay.

The latest to join the call to stop the project are members of Nilad Metro Manila Environmental Network who protest the dumping of the "white sand" and the reclamation of the coastline in the baywalk area.

The DENR, which earlier defended the project as a way to inspire the public to join the rehabilitation effort, was defended by Manila Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso and Roque.

But Nilad, in a statement, insists that it is "unnecessary, frivolous waste of public funds, and destructive to the environment."

"The DENR is advised to conduct cleanup drives instead of pursuing this project. If the government is sincere in rehabilitating the bay, it should cancel all ongoing reclamation projects," the group said.

Nilad, which has been organizing cleanup operations, vowed to continue mobilizing community groups in "protecting" Manila Bay.



Health, legal, economic issues bug DENR's Manila Bay 'white sand'

The Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) said the project should be suspended until its suitability and sustainability to the rehabilitation program are established.

The environmental and health issues raised by experts, environmental and fisherfolk groups are "more than enough basis" for the DENR to suspend the project, Fernando Hicap, national coordinator of Pamalakaya, said in a statement.

"Synthetic beautification is far from genuine rehabilitation. Not even a huge amount of 'white sand' can hide the deteriorating environment and ecosystem of Manila Bay, which small fishers endure through depleted daily fish catch," Hicap said.

For its part, scientist group Advocates of Science and Technology for the People (Agham) said that the DENR's "beach nourishment" project clearly shows that the objective of the government's Manila Bay rehabilitation is "aesthetic in nature."

Agham also warned of the geophysical hazard of the dump-filling project, which involves alien and synthetic materials.

"The coast along Manila Bay, in particular along Roxas Boulevard, is constantly subject to strong waves especially during typhoons when storm surges erode the coasts. Only a thin layer of these powdered dolomite rocks is overlaid on the beach, on top of existing black sand. This makes an enriched beach susceptible to coastal erosion, especially considering the number of typhoons in the country," Jerwin Baure, Agham spokesman, added in a statement.

Hicap noted the DENR has admitted its deviation from the SC mandamus by branding its project as "beach nourishment," when historically, such as in the United States, they were carried out as part of public works program, to combat soil erosion and protect land development.

The first beach nourishment project in the US was in 1922 at the Coney Island, New York. It is presently famous as part of the city's amusement center, the group said.



3 senators tell DENR: Stop Manila Bay ‘white beach’ project now

By: [Marlon Ramos](#) - Reporter / [@MRamosINQ](#)
[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 06:40 PM September 07, 2020

MANILA, Philippines—Several senators on Monday (Sept. 7) called on the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to immediately stop its “white beach” project in Manila Bay after the Department of Health warned that the material being used for it, dolomite, is hazardous to health.

“If DENR is really concerned about the environment and the people, it is but proper for them to immediately stop the dumping of dolomite,” Sen. Nancy Binay said in a statement.

Binay said environment officials should have focused first in improving the quality of water in Manila Bay before spending hundreds of millions of pesos in taxpayer money for the beautification project which seeks to turn the bay’s rocky shores into a sandy beach.

The senator also chided the DENR for its failure to conduct public consultation and thorough studies on the health and environmental impacts of using dolomite as alternative to natural white sand.

“Using dolomite as a substitute for white sand only means that the Manila Bay rehabilitation did not go through the appropriate process and studies,” Binay said.

Opposition Sen. Risa Hontiveros also played down Malacanang’s claim that dumping dolomite along the 500-meter portion of Manila Bay’s shore would help people mentally cope with the COVID-19 pandemic.

“If we are really serious in protecting the Filipinos’ mental health, we should ensure that people can safely return to work, bring food to their tables everyday and make the (country) free from COVID-19,” Hontiveros said.

“During the Suicide Awareness Month, we have to acknowledge the heavy toll this crisis is taking on Filipinos. The spike of suicides is of great concern,” she said.

Sen. Francis Pangilinan, also from the Senate minority bloc, said the government could have provided 189,000 sacks of rice or 26,000 laptops for teachers and students using funds that the DENR instead spent on the project.

“It’s unacceptable that while our countrymen are going hungry and students could not buy gadgets for their online classes, (the government) is squandering public funds for a project that could harm the environment and public health,” he said.

“Our government must prioritize addressing the plight of our people who are already grappling with difficulties brought by the pandemic,” Pangilinan said.

Read more: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1332411/3-senators-tell-denr-stop-manila-bay-white-beach-project-now#ixzz6XOUiyNf6>

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Nancy Binay wants suspension of 'white sand' dumping along Manila Bay

Published September 7, 2020 9:12pm
By DONA MAGSINO, GMA News

Senate Committee on Tourism chairperson Nancy Binay on Monday said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) should suspend dumping synthetic white sand along the shores of Manila Bay.

"Yung paglalagay ng dolomite as a substitute for white sand only means na hindi dumaaan sa tamang proseso at pag-aaral ang plano sa Manila Bay rehabilitation. Walang public consultation, walang environmental clearance, hilaw ang Environmental Impact Assessment/Environmental Impact Statement, at malinaw na bara-bara at di comprehensive ang plano," Binay said in a statement.

She said the public deserves full disclosure of the environment and public health impact of the project.

Binay's appeal came after the Department of Health [warned](#) that inhalation of crushed dolomite rock—the material used as white sand in the beach nourishment project—can cause respiratory problems, among other health issues.

The DENR-Mines and Geoscience Bureau Region 7 said dust from crushed dolomite rocks [poses](#) health risks but is not toxic.

Further, Binay lamented that DENR should have prioritized improving the water quality in Manila Bay instead of adorning it with white sand.

"Bago sana ang mga palamuti, dapat unahin muna ng DENR ang pagsasaayos ng water quality ng Manila Bay. Nakakalungkot lang, kaysa sa i-prioritize ayusin ang mga banyo sa Baseco, mas inuna pang pondohan ang puting buhangin galing Cebu," she said.

Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said the public would [refrain](#) from dumping wastes in Manila Bay if they see white sand along its shore.

He said the water quality in Manila Bay has significantly improved from having 1.3 billion of coliform per 100 milliliter of water to 700 coliform per 100 milliliter of water.

"Ang target po is 200 coliform per 100 milliliter by the end of the year para maging safe po ito sa ating mga kababayan sakali pong lumangoy sila diyan," he added.

'Pera na naging buhangin pa'

Some minority senators also opposed the said project, saying this is inapt amid the COVID-19 pandemic.



Nancy Binay wants suspension of ‘white sand’ dumping along Manila Bay

"Hindi katanggap-tanggap na habang nagugutom ang mga kababayan natin, walang hanapbuhay ang mga magulang, at walang kagamitan ang mga anak para sa online classes, ay nagtatapon lang tayo ng pera sa mga proyektong maaaring makasira pa sa kalikasan at sa ating kalusugan," Senator Francis "Kiko" Pangilinan said.

"Pera na, naging buhangin pa," he added.

Pangilinan said the almost P400-million worth white sand project could have instead been used to buy 189,000 sacks of rice, to provide WiFi connection to 55,000 students, to buy over 130 million face masks, or 300,000 UP-developed test kits, among others.

But Antiporda said the funds were already allocated last year, before the pandemic.

"Matagal na po itong project na ito. Last year pa ito. Hindi po ito ngayong pandemic lang. Na-allocate na po yung funds niyan and naumpisahan na po yan last year pa. Yung silt removal nag-umpisa po yan, yung pagtanggap ng burak sa ilalim," he said.

Senator Risa Hontiveros also questioned presidential spokesperson Harry Roque's claim that the white sand along Manila bay will positively impact the mental well-being of Filipinos.

"Kung seryoso talaga tayo sa mental health ng mga Pilipino, siguraduhin natin na may balik-ligtas na trabaho ang mga tao, may maiuuwi silang pagkain para sa kanilang pamilya araw-araw, at maging COVID-free ang lahat," she said in a statement.

She added that the Filipinos' mental health would best be protected if they are confident with the pandemic response of the government.—LDF, GMA News



Whitening the beach instead of flattening the curve

By [Malaya Business Insight](#)

-September 8, 2020



What is interesting to note is that Secretary Cimatu has been quiet on the issue, allowing only the presidential spokesman and Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, a former newsman, to defend the project.'

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) under Secretary Roy Cimatu has come up with this Imeldific idea of moving tons of pulverized dolomite rocks from Cebu and dumping them on the shorelines of Manila Bay to create a mini-Boracay effect. The idea was straight from the playbook of First Lady Imelda Romualdez Marcos during the halcyon days of the Marcos dictatorship, when anything that the Madame thought of about “the good, the true, and the beautiful” could see the light of day with funding from the martial law regime.

Cimatu has so endeared himself to President Duterte that he has become the uncontested “trouble shooter” of Malacañang, doing the peripatetic move of shuttling from Cebu to Bacolod to stem the wave of the coronavirus epidemic, and gaining some success. This translates to Cimatu’s getting the ear of the President in matters like this one, which is within the ambit of his department, the DENR.

The rationale behind the beach-whitening project at Baywalk is that it will be a huge curiosity and will attract tourists, therefore will create jobs and revenues for the government. Secretary Harry Roque even hailed the idea as having a soothing effect on the population, giving Filipinos in Metro Manila the chance to relax and view the iconic Manila Bay sunset while stepping on an artificial white beach. Roque’s touting that the experience would make the residents forget the devastation, hunger, worries, and psychological instability caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is quite a stretch. It is good for your mental health, he says.

Officials like Vice President Leonor Robredo, Rep. Carlos Zarate, former representative Terry Ridon, members of the scientific and academic community, and Duterte critics are correct in shooting down the whitening project as ill-timed, expensive, and out of place at a time when the nation is still trying to raise its head above water, economically speaking. The money allocated for the Manila Bay whitening project dubbed as “beach nourishment” should be used instead in more health interventions to fight the coronavirus and “flatten the curve.”



Whitening the beach instead of flattening the curve

What is interesting to note is that Secretary Cimatu has been quiet on the issue, allowing only the presidential spokesman and Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, a former newsman, to defend the project. Do allow us to digress a bit. It was another media man before him — Angelito Banayo — who first conceptualized and implemented the Baywalk project, and after several years and millions of pesos lost, what Banayo had to show us is a decrepit structure that no one even wants to visit. And now it is Benny's turn to scalp.

The Manila Bay project involves two areas: Manila and Cebu. Manila Mayor Isko Moreno cautiously endorsed the project, saying there should be a presumption of regularity in what the DENR wants to do. Moreno presupposes that being experts in their field which is environmental protection, Cimatu and Antiporda know what they are doing.

It is quite the reverse in Cebu, specifically in Alcoy and Dalaguete towns, where the dolomite quarries are located. The Cebu Provincial Board has questioned how the dolomite was transported — cleared by the regional Mines and Geosciences Bureau — out of the province without them knowing it.

Meanwhile, Terry Ridon urged the government to reject the 500-meter Manila Bay white sand project with a P795,000-per meter tag price. He said the P397.897-million budget for the project should be better spent for anti-COVID-19 measures. He also claimed, just like others, that the use of dolomite sand as beach top fill causes cancer, silicosis, bronchitis, emphysema and lung failure, just to name a few.

Already, critics and environment advocates are planning to file a writ of kalikasan petition at the Supreme Court to stop the project. Let us watch and see how this thing develops.



Ill-timed, prelate says of P300-M Manila Bay white sand project

Published September 7, 2020, 11:21 AM
by [Leslie Ann Aquino](#)

Archdiocese of Manila apostolic administrator Bishop Broderick Pabillo said the P300-million white sand project at the Manila Bay is ill-timed because of the pandemic.



(JANSEN ROMERO / MANILA BULLETIN)

“During these times, wherein many are without jobs and have no food to eat, this project amounting to over P300 million just for the ‘white sand’ appears to be ill-timed,” he told church-run Radio Veritas.

“There are many incorrect things with this project, foremost is that it is not attuned with the current predicament of our nation,” Pabillo added.

The prelate believes the money allotted for the project should be allocated instead to help those in need.

“If the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has this amount, it would be better if they just help provide jobs and give food to those in need,” said Pabillo.

Besides, he said, such beautification may only be temporary as the white sand might erode when a typhoon hits Metro Manila.

“We are not even certain if this white sand will be able to stay there since tons of trash fill up Manila Bay whenever there are typhoons,” he said.



DOH cautions on respiratory issues arising from DENR's Manila Bay project

Published September 7, 2020, 3:08 PM
by [Leslie Ann Aquino](#)

The Department of Health on Monday said the inhalation of [crushed dolomite rock](#), the artificial white sand used on the shores of Manila Bay, can cause respiratory issues.



(JANSEN ROMERO / MANILA BULLETIN)

“Sa mga pagaaral, kapag na inhale natin ito, may mga (Based on studies, when we inhale this, there are) adverse reactions, respiratory mainly...Pero hindi naman natin sinasabi na (But we are not saying that) when you go to Manila Bay, you'll get it at once. Yun lang sinasabi ng mga (That is just what is being said) in articles, medical literatures,” DOH Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergere said in a virtual press briefing.

“So titingnan natin (we will see) how it is going to affect. But according to studies, dolomite dust... it can cause respiratory issues to a person,” she added.

Vergere said dolomite dusts may also cause irritation to the eyes.

“Nagkakaroon ng konting (there's a slight) irritation so you just have to wash it off with water,” she said.

If ingested, Vergere said, it can also cause gastro intestinal discomfort, stomach ache and diarrhea.

“These are the minor effects of these dolomites placed at the Manila Bay,” she said.

To avoid such adverse health effects, the Health official said it would be good to continue wearing face masks.

“When you go to the Manila Bay for your R&R (rest and recreation), let us still observe minimum health standards. When you're wearing your face masks, inhalation can be prevented also,” said Vergere.

She, however, believes that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources would not implement the project if it did not undergo thorough studies and if it will cause harm to the environment and the people.



DOH cites health risk posed by crushed dolomite, says DENR approval means 'white sand' project safe

[Gaea Katreena Cabico](#) (Philstar.com) - September 7, 2020 - 4:52pm

MANILA, Philippines — Crushed dolomite rocks—which are being used to cover a stretch of Manila Bay’s shoreline—could lead to eye irritation and respiratory problems, the Department of Health said Monday.

Government agencies began filling a portion of Manila Bay’s shoreline last week with artificial sand from crushed dolomite boulders as part of the “beach nourishment” program.

Critics of the project said the artificial sand does not only pose geophysical hazards but also potential harms to people’s health.

Citing studies, Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said crushed dolomite rocks may lead to “adverse” effects, mainly on the respiratory system, once inhaled.

“Once dolomite becomes dust or it aerosolizes, it can cause respiratory issues or effects to a person,” Vergeire said in a media briefing.

Dolomite particles could also cause eye irritation and gastro-intestinal discomfort such as stomach pain and diarrhea, if ingested.

According to a safety report of US cement company Lehigh Hanson in 2012, inhaling dolomite dust may “cause discomfort in the chest, shortness of breath and coughing” and may even cause cancer.

Another company from the US, Lhoist North America said that dolomite “causes damage to lungs through prolonged or repeated exposure when inhaled.”

Vergeire, however, said the DENR would not push through with the project if its study found that pulverized dolomite rocks would cause harm to the environment and the people.

“These are the minor effects of this dolomite in Manila Bay. I think with the clearance of the DENR, hindi naman ipapatupad nang DENR 'yan kung hindi napag aralan na this will cause harm to the environment and also to our people,” Vergeire said.

“We just needs to continuously follow minimum health standards to prevent any effects of dolomite in Manila Bay,” she added.

Lawyer Jay Batongbacal, director of the University of the Philippines Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea, said the harmful effects of dolomite can be used as a ground for the filing of a petition for writ of kalikasan, a legal remedy that could halt the project.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources Undersecretary Benny Antiporda earlier said the “beach nourishment” project is part of the government’s program to rehabilitate the degraded Manila Bay.

Related Stories

[‘White-sanding’ along Manila Bay will not make it cleaner, DENR reminded](#)
[No environmental impact study needed on Manila 'beach nourishment' — DENR](#)



Dolomite may cause health problems – DoH



By [Red Mendoza](#) September 8, 2020



The Department of Health (DoH) said dolomite, which was used in the restoration of the Manila Bay shoreline, might cause health problems such as respiratory diseases.

Various groups have criticized the use of dolomite sand in the bay's rehabilitation, saying the money for the project should have been allotted instead for the coronavirus pandemic response.

Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said the department would study dolomite's effects on health.

She added that based on studies, dolomite dust might cause respiratory problems if a person breathes the small particles.

"Pero hindi po natin sinasabi na (But we are not saying that) when you go to Manila Bay, you'll get it at once," she said.

Dolomite dust can also irritate the eyes and can cause gastrointestinal problems when ingested, according to the Health official.

Vergeire, however, believes that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) studied the effects on the use of dolomite prior to its use. She reminded the public to observe health standards if they visit the bay to avoid the effects of dolomite.

"When you go to Manila Bay, kailangan po gagawin pa rin ang minimum health standards and when you wear your masks, ito pong (we should continue to do minimum health standards and when you wear your masks, the) inhalation effects can be prevented." Vergeire said.

Malacañang on Monday defended the decision to place dolomite sand on a stretch of Baywalk, saying it was also to prevent soil erosion.

"Itong ginawa po nila, ito po ay tinatawag na (What they did was) beach enhancement. So, hindi lang po ito pagpapaganda (it was not merely beautification). Itong beach enhancement pong ito ay para po maiwasan ang soil erosion at para makatulong din po sa (the beach enhancement was to avoid soil erosion and for) flood control. So, although it is primarily beautification, it is a soil erosion project, it is part of an overall adaptation policy of the DENR," Palace spokesman Harry Roque Jr. said.

With Reina Tolentino



DOH: Dolomite particles to cause respiratory ailments



Published 10 hours ago on September 7, 2020 06:41 PM

By [Gabbie Parlade](#)



The Department of Health (DOH) on Monday warned that dolomite particles found in the “white sand” poured into Manila Bay may cause adverse effects to individuals.

Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said the dust that may come from dolomite may cause respiratory ailments, eye irritation, and gastrointestinal complications when ingested.

“Ito po yung mga batong kinrush at nilagay sa Manila Bay. Ang dolomite po it’s a form of a rock na merong sinasabi sa mga pag aaral na kapag na-inhale ito ng mga tao may mga adverse reactions, respiratory mainly kasi nga po kapag nalanghap natin may respiratory na maapektuhan,” she said, noting the aerosolization of the dust into the air.

“Also kapag napunta sa mata nagkakaroon ng konting irritation so you just have to wash it water. Third kapag naingest ito it can have discomfort sa gastro intestinal system natin and magkakaroon ng konting pagsakit ng tiyan at pagtatae,” she added.

These, according to the official, were based in several medical literatures.

However, Vergeire expressed confidence that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) would not be providing clearance in its implementation without ‘studying’ its possible effects.

“I think with the clearance of DENR hindi naman po ipapatupad ng denr yan kiung di nil anapagaralan na this will cause harm to the environment and also to our people,” she said.

She emphasized that adverse effects brought by the inhalation of the dust will be avoided by continuing the practice of wearing masks.



(Fake) sand and fury in Manila Bay



By [Antonio Contreras](#)
September 8, 2020

HALITOSIS cannot be cured by chewing white Mentos, in the same manner that the waters of Manila Bay cannot be cleaned by simply layering a small stretch of its beachfront with white sand or, to be more accurate, with crushed dolomite imported from Cebu. The muck and dirt of the waters of the bay are footprints of the urban decay of the metropolis, and no amount of beautification can seriously rehabilitate the landscape without a radical transformation in how urban development unfolds in the cities and municipalities surrounding it.

The justification offered is not only about aesthetics, but also about regulating people's behavior. Officials behind the project believe that the mere sight of what they would perceive as white sand would inspire people to be more mindful of their duty to keep Manila Bay clean; that somehow it becomes a powerful cleanup reminder. They want us to believe that the beautiful sunset by the bay would not be enough of a deterrent for people to throw garbage or for some wayward soul to find a nice spot and defecate. We need the image of white sand, which actually reveals a colonial fixation on the magical effect of the color white.

Certainly, some people can find some sense in the argument that beautifying a strip of an accessible beachfront, making it look like Ipanema or Waikiki or Miami Beach, or even Boracay, could be a cheaper option for those who do not have the resources to travel to these places or even just to the beaches of Batangas. It is easy to appreciate the line that the elites who are now protesting what they point out as a ridiculous and artificial makeover and who can afford these luxuries should not deny the ordinary resident of the metropolis the chance to have a taste of how it feels to lounge in what to them appear as white sand as they watch the beautiful sunset of Manila Bay.

In cultural theory, this is the equivalent of the massification of culture, where those who do not have the resources to travel to Paris, visit the Louvre Museum and gaze at the Mona Lisa, can just marvel at its replica being turned into doormats, jigsaw puzzles and tablecloths. It comes with the gift of accessibility and the inclusiveness of the experience.

The main bone of contention to many is the offensiveness of artificial landscapes, particularly their ecological soundness. Yet, it is a given that the advance of humanity, coupled with development in science and technology, have made the alteration of the natural not only a cottage industry, but as indicators of how humans can control our environment. It does not have to be as glaring as an artificial white beach, but could come in the form of more subtle alterations. The art of landscaping is also a science that has turned our natural flora into built and well-manicured gardens. Those who rail against what they describe as ridiculous attempt to create plastic environments should be reminded of the existence of forest plantations which are in fact artificial forests.



(Fake) sand and fury in Manila Bay

We decorate our environments with constructed mimicry and we even alter our human bodies to feel good about ourselves. And some do not even have to be seen as alien and inauthentic. Indigenous peoples wear body markings, piercings and tattoos, or elongate their necks, as part of their cultural expressions. We now live in times where plastic flowers decorate living rooms, artificial grass turfs become part of golf courses, and artificial breasts help to raise self-esteem while artificial organs save lives.

There are in fact artificial beaches. The entire Waikiki Beach in Honolulu was constructed in the 1920s and 1930s using real white sands shipped in large barges from Manhattan Beach in California. The issue is not whether beaches can be artificial. While there are ecological issues surrounding artificial landscapes, it is still a fact that they exist. The ecological risks of altering the natural environment are also as real as having a silicone breast implant. Forest plantations are prone to insect pests and disease infestation due to its lack of biodiversity, in the same manner that layering Manila Bay with crushed dolomite poses health risks associated with exposure to the mineral, not to mention its being prone to erosion.

However, one cannot also be dismissive of the ability of humans to innovate. The procedure called “beach nourishment,” which is pumping sand onto beaches, is not only for aesthetic purposes, but also for their health. Waikiki Beach in Honolulu is an artificial beach which is continuously nourished by adding new layers of sand, even as in theory beach nourishment is also applied to natural beaches that are prone to erosion or long-shore drift. Even as there are debates about the ecological soundness of making Manila Bay look like a Boracay transplanted to the metropolis, these are things that science and technology can address.

The main source of our fury, however, should be on its propriety. We need to ask if it is proper for us, a country that is in dire need of resources, to prioritize a beautification project over the needs of people who are fighting, and are victimized by, the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic. Defenders argue that the money, about P400 million, used in the project had already been appropriated prior to the pandemic. However, President Rodrigo Duterte was given emergency powers by Congress through law to realign budgets towards those needs that are most pressing.

It now behooves us to ask if a beautification campaign, purportedly designed to lift the spirits of the people to take pride in the Manila Bay, and which is also anticipated to provide them enough inspiration not to dirty it with their garbage, is more important than test kits, personal protective equipment and financial assistance for people who are getting sick of, dying from, or losing their employment and livelihoods due to Covid-19.



Batongbacal: No provision in Manila Bay enviro plan to turn beaches white

Published September 7, 2020 5:43pm
By TINA PANGANIBAN-PEREZ, GMA News

The director of the UP Institute for Maritime Affairs and Law of the Sea on Monday said that critics of the Manila Bay “white sand” project may file a writ of kalikasan before the Supreme Court in order to stop the project.

“I’ve seen the Manila Bay Environmental Management Plan upon which this cleanup is supposed to be undertaken. That is the reason for the mandamus issued by the Supreme Court. We really cannot find anywhere in that plan a provision for turning Manila Bay’s beaches white,” Dr. Jay Batongbacal told GMA News.

“What they’re doing is not cleaning up the bay. It’s just covering up the beach. So that does not address the real cause of the pollution in the bay,” he added.

“Writ of Kalikasan is one of the remedies available under the Supreme Court’s special rule on environmental cases. It can be used as like a temporary restraining order or a writ of mandamus,” he also said.

Environmental groups [are already mulling this option against the DENR project](#), which aims to cover up Manila Bay’s baywalk with “white sand” made from crushed dolomite.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources hopes to have the project completed by September 19, International Coastal Clean-up Day.

The DENR has defended the project by [saying that the white sand will stop people from throwing trash on the beach](#). Palace spokesperson Harry Roque, meanwhile, [said that the project will help prevent floods and erosion](#).

Batongbacal said any taxpayer or any citizen may seek the Supreme Court’s intervention if he or she feels that he or she may be affected by the project.

Batongbacal also mentioned that there were studies abroad saying that dolomites may be harmful to people’s health.

The Department of Health, in fact, [said that inhalation of the crushed rock can cause respiratory issues](#). — BM, GMA News



CLIMATE JUSTICE GROUP'S CALL PB urged: Continue probe on Alcoy dolomite transport to Manila Bay

By: Rosalie O. Abatayo - Multimedia Reporter - CDN Digital | September 07, 2020 - 02:39 PM



A 500-meter stretch of the 190-kilometer coastline of Manila Bay will be covered with sand derived from crushed dolomite in a bid by the government to beautify the scenery and encourage the public to protect it. Environmental activists are not exactly pleased. —RICHARD A. REYES

CEBU CITY, Philippines — An assurance of compliance to mandated regulations should not end the investigation or probe on the transport of crushed dolomite from Cebu to Manila Bay.

A climate justice group calls on Cebu officials to continue its investigation or probe on the transport of the 3,500 tons of crushed dolomite from Alcoy town for the Manila Bay “make-over” despite the word of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau in Central Visayas (MGB-7) that the transport was compliant to all mandated requirements and regulations.

The Philippine Movement for Climate Justice (PMCJ) said it had remained a question if the “greatest measures to ensure environmental sustainability” were actually being practiced in the environment agencies instead of merely complying to bureaucratic processes.

“We are also concerned by the way in which they released permits for these types of activities. These activities need to be removed completely from our practice given the effects of extractive industries on our natural resources,” PMCJ Cebu Chapter Coordinator Teody Navea said in a statement.

The pouring of “white sand,” which would turn out to be crushed dolomite from Alcoy, Cebu, started last week which drew flak with environmental advocates warning that the move is destructive not just on the bay but also on the area where the mineral was sourced.

Cebu Provincial Board Member John Ismael Borbonia, chairman of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, earlier said they tapped the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (Penro) to look into the matter.

In a statement on Saturday, September 5, MGB-7 said they issued an Ore Transport Permit 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.”



CLIMATE JUSTICE GROUP'S CALL PB urged: Continue probe on Alcoy dolomite transport to Manila Bay

“We urge a full investigation by the Provincial Board to hold MGB-7 and the DENR accountable for their lenient regulations on extremely harmful industries. We hope a swift and decisive action shall be taken against the violators,” PMCJ said.

PMCJ-Cebu Chapter added that it would support local legislations that would enforce measures to ensure that environmental impacts would be given the utmost importance.

Vanea said that Cebu “is highly susceptible for the effects of climate change and sea-level rise” and that “incompetence and irresponsibility, given the climate emergency, are not any more acceptable standards for government officials stationed in MGB-7 and the DENR.”/dbs

Read more: <https://cebudailynews.inquirer.net/338357/pb-urged-continue-probe-on-alcoy-dolomite-transport-to-manila-bay#ixzz6XOeLm7f3>

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Suspension of Manila Bay white sand project urged

September 7, 2020 | Filed under: Headlines, News | Posted by: Tempo Desk

BY RAYMUND ANTONIO

A local fisherfolk group on Monday called for the suspension of the white sand project of Manila Bay as it poses potential harm to both environment and public health.

Pamalakaya said that the environmental and health issues being raised by experts and concerned groups are “more than enough basis” for the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to suspend the project.

The group stressed the DENR should suspend the white sand project until its “suitability and sustainability” to the Manila Bay rehabilitation program are established.

“We demand the DENR to suspend and eventually terminate this absurd project because it is useless and a waste of people’s fund with no benefit to the fishers and coastal residents residing along Manila Bay,” Pamalakaya chair Fernando Hicap said in a statement.

This white sand project has drawn criticisms for the potential harm of the crushed dolomite from Cebu being poured on a 500-meter stretch of the Manila Bay’s shorelines.

The DENR explained it was a “beach nourishment” that doesn’t need to comply with the mandatory environmental impact assessment.

In the 2008 Supreme Court ruling ordering various government agencies that include the DENR to clean up and rehabilitate Manila Bay, Hicap said it never mentioned any beautification programs. (Raymund F. Antonio)



White sand sa Manila bay waldas na, delikado pa sa tao! DENR nilaglag ng DOH, DEPED

By Abante News Online — Last updated Sep 7, 2020

NEWS



Kinumpirma ng Department of Health (DOH) na maaring pagsimulan ng respiratory problems at iba pang isyung pangkalusugan ang pagkalanghap ng isang tao ng mga dinurog na dolomite rock na inilalagay sa Manila Bay sa Roxas Boulevard, Maynila.

Taliwas ito sa pahayag ni Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda at sinabing pinag-aralang mabuti at wala itong hazard lalo na sa kalusugan.

Ang dolomite rock ay ang materyales na mula sa Cebu City at dinurog upang magkaroon ng artipisyal na puting buhangin sa Manila Bay.

Sinabi ni Health Undersecretary at Spokesperson Maria Rosario Vergeire na base sa pag-aaral at medical literature, ang dolomite kapag nalanghap ng tao ay may masamang epekto sa respiratory system.

Ayon kay Vergeire, maaari rin itong magdulot ng iritasyon kapag napunta sa mata o di kaya ay gastro-intestinal discomfort, pagsakit ng tiyan at pagtatae sa isang indibidwal.

"Ito pong dolomite, base po sa pag-aaral, kapag na-inhale natin ito, may mga adverse reaction [sa] respiratory system, mainly," ayon kay Vergeire.

"Based on studies and medical literature, it can cause respiratory issues to a person. Kapag napunta sa mata, magkakaroon ng kaunting irritation. Kapag na-ingest, magkakaroon ng gastro-intestinal discomfort, pagkakasakit ng tiyan at pagtatae...ito iyong mga minor effects," dagdag pa ng opisyal.



White sand sa Manila bay waldas na, delikado pa sa tao! DENR nilaglag ng DOH, DEPED

By Abante News Online — Last updated Sep 7, 2020

NEWS

Kaugnay nito, naniniwala si Vergeire na pinag-aralan naman ng DENR ang kanilang hakbang na lagyan ng artipisyal na buhangin ang Manila Bay, bago nila ito isinagawa.

Hindi rin sang-ayon si Department of Education ((DepEd) Leonor Briones sa paggastos ng DENR ng halos P400M sa kanilang white sand Manila Bay project.

Sa Laging Handa press briefing, sinabi ni Briones na malaking bahagi ng pondo ang mapupunta sa pangangailangan ng gadgets ng mga pampublikong paaralan kaugnay sa kanilang

blended learning program.

Bukod dito, magagamit ito para sa modular learning system dahil gagastos sila sa mga materyales at printing ng mga pag-aaralang leksiyon ng mga bata.

"Halimbawa may P389 million budget na ibibigay ng pamahalaan sa ating departamento, sigurado ako na malaking bahagi niyan ay mapupunta sa pangangailangan ng gadgets sa may three thousand "last mile schools" na walang connectivity, mga isolated sila, makakatulong ito," ani Briones.

Mayroon aniyang mahigit tatlong libong mga pampublikongn paaralan sa bansa na mahirap ang internet kaya malaking bagay kung mayroon silang ganitong kalaki pondo.

Pero agad nilinaw ni Briones na hindi sila nakikialam sa pondo ng ibang ahensiya at kung ano lang ang pondong ibinigay sa kanila ng gobyerno ay 'yun ang gagamitin at pagkakasyahin ng kanilang departamento. (Juliet de Loza-Cudia/Aileen Taliping)



From misplaced priorities to lack of transparency, Manila Bay ‘white sand’ project raises more questions

By [Catalina Ricci S. Madarang](#)

- September 7, 2020 - 2:46 PM



Filipino bikers along Manila Bay (PNA photo by Avito C. Dalan)

Vice President **Leni Robredo** questioned the funds used for the controversial Manila Bay “white sand” project after the Palace claimed that it could improve the Filipinos’ mental health.

Last [week](#), the **Department of Environment and National Resources** started dumping pulverized dolomite rocks from Cebu to fill 500 meters stretch of the bay walk on **Roxas Boulevard** “white sand” amid the novel coronavirus pandemic.

This initiative is part of its plan to revive the **Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program**, which was launched in 2017.

However, several Filipinos [raised concerns](#) about the environment risks the artificial white sands would bring to the already-contaminated bay.

What Robredo said

On her radio program last Sunday, September 6, Robredo said that the funds used for the project, which was a hefty P349 million could have been better allocated to the national government’s response to the worsening health crisis instead.

“Halimbawa na lang, iyong mga mananahi namin, noong binisita namin, kaunti lang naman iyong kita nila per PPE na tinatahi nila, pero nagpapasalamat silang grabe kasi sabi nila ‘may pangkain na po kami, may pangbili na ng gamot,’” Robredo [said](#).

“Iyong iba naman na binisita namin, ‘noong wala pa po itong PPE, umaasa lang kami sa tulong ng barangay’. Tapos makikita iyong ganito. Parang napaka-insensitive sa kahirapan ng tao,” she added.

She also reacted to the previous remark of presidential spokesperson **Harry Roque** where he defended the Manila Bay project as supposed healing for mental struggles.

“Iyong makatulong sa mental health ng tao, tapusin na ang pandemya. Gawin natin ‘yung lahat para bumalik na tayo sa normal,” she [said](#).



From misplaced priorities to lack of transparency, Manila Bay ‘white sand’ project raises more questions

What the Palace said

Last Saturday, September 5, Roque was asked about the same criticisms on the realignment or the reallocation of funds from the COVID-19 relief programs to the rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

He responded that should the beautification become successful, walking along this tourist spot could boost the public’s mental health.

“I don’t buy that argument. Kasi alam mo sa gitna ng pandemya. Kelangan din alagaan yung mental health. I think yung pagpapasyal sa mga lugar tulad ng Manila Bay na may white beach, hindi mo maka-quantify ang epekto niyan pagdating po sa mental health,” Roque [said](#).

How Filipinos reacted

Following his remarks, Roque over the weekend once again drew the ire of local Twitterverse as Filipinos viewed his idea that the white sand beach would resolve mental struggles “absurd” and even “funny.”



EDITORIAL - Puwede namang makapaghintay ang beautification ng Manila Bay

(Pang-Masa) - September 8, 2020 - 12:00am



MARAMING nangangailangan ng ayuda sa panahong ito ng pandemya. Marami kasing nawalan ng trabaho. Maraming namamalimos na jeepney driver sa kalsada. Maraming nagpapaospital. Maraming nangangailangan ng tulong para makauwi sa kanilang probinsiya. Maraming estudyante ang problemado dahil wala silang gadgets, laptop at computer para sa blended learning. At kung anu-ano pang pangangailangan na ang ilan dahil sa pagka-stress ay nakakaisip nang gumawa nang masama.

Pero habang marami ang nag-iisip kung paano at kung saan hahanap nang kakainin at pupunan ang mga kakulangan sa buhay, narito ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) at pinagaganda ang Manila Bay bilang bahagi umano ng beautification project.

Para masunod ang kanilang planong pag-rehabilitate at pagpapaganda sa Manila Bay, nilagyan nila ng puting buhangin ang dalampasigan ng lawa. Ang tone-toneladang buhangin ay nanggaling pa sa Cebu. Ayon sa report, ang puting buhangin ay mula sa giniling na dolemite at inorder pa sa Alcoy, Cebu. Ang dolemite ay isang uri ng bato.

Ang beautification project ng Manila Bay ay may pondong P389 milyon. Sabi ng DENR noong nakaraang taon pa ito pinlano at ngayon lamang naisagawa. Nagsimula ang pagreporma sa Manila Bay noong 2018. Pinalalim ang bukana ng lawa at inalis ang mga burak. Halos lahat ng mga dumi galing sa mga pabrika at establisimiento ay sa Manila Bay isinusuka.

Wala namang masama sa pagpapaganda sa Manila Bay. Maganda ang proyekto pero ang hindi tama ay ginawa sa panahong maraming problema ang bansa dahil sa pandemya. Makapaghintay naman ang beautification. Sana saka na lang ito ginawa. Puwede namang 'pag nakaraos na sa pandemya at kapag umuusad na. 'Yung budget ay nilaan na lang sana sa mga nangangailangan ng ayuda.

Mas maraming nangangailangan lalo pa ang mga mahihirap na hindi malaman kung saan kukuha ng ilalaman sa kanilang sikmura. Ang P389 milyon na pondo para sa beautification ay marami nang mapapakain. Sana inuna muna ang para sa bituka.



Editorial: Setting the ground



Editorial Cartoon by John Gilbert Manantan

September 7, 2020

OFFICIALS have explained the P397.9-million Manila Bay “restoration” project rather tangentially that it’s almost like the contention is played merely on the public relations front. A crucial handling is most needed amidst looming public discontent during the pandemic.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said it is a “beach nourishment project,” supposedly to “give a spark of hope” amidst the pandemic. It’s for “mental health,” Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque Jr. was quick to add. Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said the project is only part of a large-scale, integrated cleanup of all water bodies.

At some point, the arguments were cornered into the issue of the dolomite dump—permits, environmental cost and health hazard.

Easy to miss, however, is the fact that the whole stretch of the bay had been earmarked for large-scale reclamation projects, around six of which in Manila have already been approved since early last year by the Philippine Reclamation Authority.

It is, therefore, nothing but horseplay to tell us that the dolomite dump down Roxas Blvd. makes our quarantine-traumatized mental state bearable in the presence of artificial sand.

The cosmetic nourishment of that part of the world merely sets the ground as crowd-drawer for the other projects coming that way.

Early last year, there were already 19 Manila Bay projects that were in different stages of development. A February 2019 report said six were already in the detailed engineering stage and were inches away from completion of required documents.

Government defends itself amid allegations of insensitivity for pushing the dolomite dump by also saying that the project had been approved since last year yet. It might have been unlawful to shut the project altogether, it said.



Editorial: Setting the ground

But this is precisely one of the reasons the Bayanihan law was created in the first place, to give the President the power to stop projects to give government the opportunity to divert funds—“whether released or unreleased”—under the 2019 and 2020 General Appropriations Act to address the health crisis.

On whether the Manila Bay project’s long-term economic benefits can match that of what the consequences of a quicker resolution to the more urgent health crisis would be remains to be seen.

There is also the political cost if the project eventually turns out to be a major letdown. Like all cosmetic solutions, they are transitory, never sustainable.



Caraga mining firms compliant with DENR forest program: MGB

By Alexander Lopez September 7, 2020, 9:04 pm



ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE. A villager beams as she works with seedlings at one of the nurseries owned by Cagdianao Mining Corporation in Barangay Valencia, Cagdianao town in Dinagat Islands province. The company regularly taps community residents in its rehabilitation and reforestation works within its mine site. *(Photo courtesy of Nathalie Radaza)*

BUTUAN CITY – Mining companies operating in Caraga Region have complied with the provisions of the Mining Forest Program (MFP) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

This was bared by the DENR's Mines and Geosciences Bureau in Caraga Region (MGB-13) in a press statement on Monday (Sept. 7, 2020).

“The Caraga mining firms’ unwavering implementation of the Mining Forest Program is a testament to their compliance with all existing environmental laws and policies, rehabilitation efforts for the preservation of the Caraga forest cover, and commitment to the enrichment of human life in the form of livelihood opportunities for their stakeholders,” MGB-13 said.

In 2019, MGB-13 said mining companies in the region planted a total of 1,435,442 seedlings and reforested more than 751.96 hectares of mined-out areas, buffer zones, mangroves, and other applicable planting sites.

The reforestation efforts, the agency said, were implemented by the companies in accordance with the provisions of the DENR Administrative Order (DAO) No. 22, series of 1989.

“The MFP, originally the Adopt-A-Tree Adopt-A-Mining Forest Program, was initiated in 1989 and requires the establishment of mining forests within mined-out areas, waste dumps, denuded and sparsely vegetated lands and areas adopted by the mining firms through a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA),” the statement said.

12 billion seedlings

MGB-13 noted that from 1990 until December last year, 29 mining firms in the region have already planted more than 12 billion seedlings of indigenous and exotic species, including mangrove propagules in an area of 8,269 hectares.



Caraga mining firms compliant with DENR forest program: MGB

“The average reforestation survival rate for 2019 is 92 percent which is above the Philippine national standard of 80 percent,” the statement said.

Nurseries were also developed by mining companies in Caraga that propagate seedlings and wildlings considered as endemic to the areas where they operate.

“Pursuant to Executive Order No. 399, series of 1997, the exemplary practices and commitments of firms involved in underground and surface mining operation, quarry operation, mineral exploration, and mineral processing which contribute to sustainable mineral development and responsible management of the environment and natural resources are recognized through the Presidential Mineral Industry Environmental Award (PMIEA) given at the Annual National Mine Safety and Environment Conference (ANMSEC),” the MGB-13 said.

It added that the MFP program of the DENR recognizes mining, mineral processing, and mineral exploration firms in their reforestation programs within and outside the mining tenement.

MGB-13 also reported that three mining firms from Caraga Region are recipients of the PMIEA for Best Mining Forest Program during the 66th ANMSEC in November last year.

The awardees include the Surigao del Norte-based Hinatuan Mining Corporation and Agata Mining Ventures, Inc. in Agusan del Norte for the metallic category, the Agusan del Sur-based Mindanao Mineral Processing and Refining Corporation for the mineral processing category, as well as the Cagadianao Mining Corporation for the surface mining category.

Pursuant to Executive Order No. 399 issued in 1997, the annual PMIEA event recognizes the exemplary practices and commitments of mining firms which all contribute towards sustainable mineral development by promoting responsible management of the environment and natural resources. *(PNA)*



Mahalimuyak na kapaligiran sa Sta. Maria, Bulacan

[Monday, September 7, 2020](#) [Marlon Purificacion](#)¹⁴

ILANG buwan na lamang sasapit na naman ang Araw ng Pasko pero ngayon pa lang umaasa tayong masasamyo na ang masarap na simoy ng hangin sa ating binabantayang lugar sa bahagi ng Sta. Maria, Bulacan.

Naisulat na natin sa nakalipas nating kolum ang panawagan natin sa lokal na pamahalan ng Sta. Maria at sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang pagtatapon ng basura sa Sitio Camachile sa Tierra Subdivision sa Bgy. Pulong Buhangin.

Agad namang nagsagawa ng inspeksyon ang DENR upang beripikahin ang ating impormasyon kung saan natukoy nila ang lugar na malapit sa rip rapping ng daluyan ng tubig patungong Camatchile Elementary School.

Sa ginawang onsite inspection ng DENR sa pamamagitan ng drone para makita ang aerial view at mabilis ang assessment sa lawak ng lugar, lumitaw na mayroong ongoing operation ng kontroladong pagtatapon ng halo-halong basura sa lugar.

“Presence of bulk mixed waste emits obnoxious odor during the time of inspection,” nakasaad pa sa findings ng DENR.

Natiyempuhan din ng inspection team ang isang closed van na may kapasidad na 3,800 gross weight at 1,900 net weight; dalawang backhoe at dalawang dump truck na may kargang mga lupa sa lugar.

Na-interview din ng inspection team ang driver ng closed van at natuklasan na ang basurang itinatapon sa lugar ay mula sa munisipalidad ng Marilao subalit tumanggi na itong magbigay pa ng karagdagang impormasyon.

Ayon kay Rommel Enriquez, ng ENRO ng Sta. Maria, walang alam ang lokal na pamahalaan sa naturang aktibidad at nangakong agad na aaksyunan ang isyu.

Sa rekomendasyon ng inspection team, bigo ang lokal na pamahalaan ng Sta. Maria na ipatupad ang Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000 kaya’t agad na nilang sinulatan ang mga lokal na opisyal upang tumugon nang naaayon sa batas.

Inoobliga rin ang LGU na magsumite ng safe closure and rehabilitation plan sa EMB Region 3 upang makatiyak na naaksyunan ang problema.

Umaasa tayo na sa magandang record ng pamamahala nina Mayor Russel Pleyto at Vice Mayor Quirino Buenaventura kasama ang iba pang lokal na opisyal ay agad na matutugunan ang isyung ito sa kanilang nasasakupan.

Maraming kababayan natin sa Sta. Maria, Bulacan ang umaasa na mararamdaman nila ang kalinisan at mabangong kapaligiran lalo na’t ang lahat ngayon ay abala sa kalinisan dahil sa COVID 19 pandemic.



NWRB NANAWAGAN NG PAGTITIPID SA TUBIG



September 8, 2020 @ 12:21 AM 5 hours ago

KATULAD ng nakikita na ng pamunuan ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB), sanhi ng kakulangan sa tubig-ulan na bumuhos sa nakaraang mga buwan ng Hulyo at Agosto ngayong taon, ngayong buwan ng Setyembre, bumagsak sa 179.53 meters Minimum Operating Water Level (MOWL) ang tubig sa Angat Dam, mababa ng 0.47 masl base sa pinakahuling ulat (September 4, 2020, 8:00AM).

Kaya kinakailangan ng publiko na magtipid at maging responsable sa paggamit ng tubig lalo pa't nagpapatuloy ang pagharap natin sa Coronavirus Disease 2019.

Bagama't nasa panahon ng tag-ulan ang bansa, nasa siyam na bagyo pa lang ang nabuo at pumasok sa Philippine Area of Responsibility mula Hunyo hanggang huling Linggo ng Agosto, sina Butchoy, Carina, Dindo, Enteng, Ferdie, Gener, Helen, Igme at Julian.

Sina Carina at Gener ay pawang mga tropical depression lang na nagpaulan at hindi naging ganap na bagyo kung kaya't hindi binigyang pangalan ng Japan Meteorological Agency ngunit naghatid ng pag-ulan sa loob ng PAR.

Ang binabantayang category 4 typhoon na si Kristine ay sandaling pumasok sa PAR nitong Septemer 4, 2020 ngunit kaagad na lumabas at humina patungong Rykyu Island, Japan at sa Korean Peninsula.

Wala pa talagang lubhang malakas na bagyong naramdaman natin sa bansa. Si Typhoon Helen naman bagama't pumasok sa PAR ay nagbuhos naman ng kanyang ngitngit sa Hong Kong at sa Vietnam gayundin si Typhoon Julian na niragasa naman ang Korean peninsula.

Ngunit isang cargo ship, ang Gulf Livestock I na may sakay na 39 Pilipinong tripulante, tig-dalawang New Zealander at Australia, at 5,800 baka ang pinalubog ni Typhoon Julian sa East China Sea na bahagi ng Amami Oshima Island sa Japan. Dalawang Filipino seamen pa lang ang nare-rescue.

Para sa buwan ng September 2020, ang inaprubahang alokasyon ng tubig para sa Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System ay 46 cubic meters per second habang nanatili sa 30 cms ang para sa irigasyon sa mga lalawigan ng Bulacan at Pampanga dala ng kanilang pangangailangan para sa wet cropping.

Inaasahan ng Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration na mula dalawa hanggang tatlong bagyo ang papasok sa PAR sa buwang ito.



NWRB NANAWAGAN NG PAGTITIPID SA TUBIG

Kaya naman naghahanda ng alternatibo ang NWRB katuwang ang iba't ibang ahensya para sa pangangailangang tubig ngayong nariyan pa rin ang hamon ng COVID-19.

Pero siniguro ni Dr. Seville David, Jr., NWRB executive director na prayoridad pa rin sa tubig ang mga pagamutan at quarantine facilities para mapanatili ang kalinisan ng mga ospital at mga pasilidad na ginagamit sa laban kontra COVID-19.

Sana naman ay maging katamtaman ang mga bagyong papasok sa PAR ngayong Setyembre at ibuhos talaga ang dala nitong ulan sa mga lugar malapit sa Angat Dam para muling mapataas ang lebel ng tubig dito pero walang panganib na dala sa mga kababayan nating naninirahan sa bahaing mga lugar o kaya ay tinatamaan ng daluyong o storm surge.



WWF, Globe to plant 20,000 seedlings in Ipo watershed



By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

September 7, 2020

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Philippines announced it has partnered with a subsidiary of Globe Telecom Inc. to plant 20,000 seedlings within the Ipo watershed before this year ends as part of an ongoing program to rehabilitate one of the country's important raw-water reservoir.

In a statement, WWF Philippines said its project, which began June last year, seeks to rehabilitate the watershed, located in Norzagaray, Bulacan, which supplies 96 percent of water to Metro Manila. The planting at Ipo watershed is part of the group's overall goal to plant 365,000 seedlings across the country, with 120,000 committed to the slopes of Ipo watershed.

The group said restrictions imposed in response to the Covid-19 pandemic have made it difficult to continue with tree-planting activities. The organization said it is currently exploring ways to proceed without endangering its staff and the local communities. There have been no cases in Ipo watershed so far.

"Now more than ever, we can see that protecting Ipo watershed is vital not just because it ensures that there is a reliable water supply for Metro Manila, but because it keeps foreign diseases at bay. By protecting these forests, we reduce the chances of another pandemic," WWF-Philippines's Paolo Pagaduan was quoted in a statement as saying sans citing scientific studies.



Residents try to salvage belongings among their houses destroyed at the height of Typhoon Vongfong in San Policarpio town, Eastern Samar province on May 15, 2020, a day after the typhoon hit the town.
AFP/Alren Beronio

P181.9-B in proposed 2021 budget to address effects of climate change

[Alexis Romero](#) (Philstar.com) - September 7, 2020 - 1:40pm

MANILA, Philippines — The Duterte administration has proposed a P181.9-billion budget for programs designed to mitigate the effects of climate change and curb environmental risks under the proposed 2021 budget.

In his budget message, President Rodrigo Duterte said the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic has emphasized the importance of protecting and conserving the country's natural resources for future generations.

"The COVID-19 pandemic impacted not only our economy and our people but also our environment. This experience has opened our eyes to the reality that everything has its limit," the president said.

"Some P181.9 billion of programs and projects under this budget have been tagged as climate-change related expenditures, identifying adaptation and mitigation measures for climate change," he added.

The administration has allocated P26.5 billion for the environment department, which will implement the Forest Protection Program (P0.8 billion) and National Greening Program (P5.2 billion).

The government has also set aside P0.7 billion for the Protected Areas Development and Management Program, which aims to protect and conserve key biodiversity and protected areas.

Duterte said a total of P2.1 billion has been set aside for the energy department, of which, some P500 million would support the sustainable Total Electrification Project. Some P133 million, meanwhile, has been allocated for the exploration, development, and use of renewable energy resources and technologies.

The administration has also proposed a P128-million budget for the National Water Resources Board, which will implement water security programs.

The budget will fund the development of a groundwater management plan, and the establishment of groundwater monitoring stations for groundwater critical areas.

The Philippines is prone to natural disasters due to its geographic location. About 20 cyclones, five to seven of which are destructive, visit the country every year.



Tree planting by parents, new graduates approved in House bills

Published September 7, 2020, 5:08 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) cited the approval on third and final reading of House Bill (HB) 6930 or the “Family Tree Planting Act” and HB 6931 or the “Graduation Legacy for Reforestation Act” that will help promote a “whole-of-nation” approach in protecting and preserving the environment.

HB 6930 seeks to mandate all expectant parents residing in the country, whether legally married or not, to plant two trees for every child born to them within their own home’s premises or in a designated area in their barangay, within 30 days after the child’s birth.

Once enacted, this will be a requirement before the parents can claim their newborn’s birth certificate.

HB 6931 meanwhile aims to mandate graduating senior high school (SHS) and college students to plant two trees in areas in their locality designated by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), in coordination with the concerned local government unit and the schools, colleges, and universities.

Once enacted, this will be added among the requirements for the students’ graduation.

According to the CCC, these measures will help increase the awareness of Filipinos, particularly families and the youth, on the current state of the environment and the role of trees in mitigating climate impacts and disasters by retaining water to prevent landslides and flashfloods, acting as carbon sinks, and protecting and restoring natural ecosystems and biodiversity.

Based on the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Special Report on Climate Change and Land, “planting trees will always result in capturing more atmospheric carbon dioxide and thus in annual mean cooling of the globe.”

As plants and trees grow, they take carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and turn it into sugars through photosynthesis. Planting additional trees could remove more carbon from the atmosphere and store it for a long time, as well as improve soil quality at a relatively low cost, it added.

Through these bills, the CCC hopes that these could further bolster and sustain local greening initiatives and mainstream the importance of planting the right species of trees, especially in vulnerable areas across the country.

In a related note, a group of young Filipinos will be sounding the alarm on the urgency of climate change issues by holding a protest action in time for the observance of the Global Day of Climate Action on Sept. 25.

“It’s important that even during our current public health crisis, we recognize that the climate crisis still exists and we still have to act now if we want to meet our deadline,” Youth Advocates for Climate Action Philippines (YACAP) spokesperson Xian Guevarra said.



Tree planting by parents, new graduates approved in House bills

“We want the national government and big businesses to listen to our demands and act now before it’s too late,” he added.

The nationwide action dubbed “Kamay para sa Klima: Hands-on Climate Action,” is set to have protest centers around the country that share a unified theme that calls on Filipinos to be hands-on when it comes to climate action.

In line with this theme, youth activists will spell out pro-climate action messages with chalk handprints, making a grand total of 25,000 handprints across the various strike centers.

The group explained that the 25,000 handprints symbolize the more than 25,000 individuals around the world who signed the recent petition spearheaded by environment and climate groups, including YACAP, against the passage of the Anti-Terrorism Act of 2020, a law which the alliance sees as a threat to environment and climate activism.

The main protest center in Quezon City will feature a large map of the world with pins that indicate the various countries where the petition signatories come from.



Marcos calls on gov't to solve Kaliwa Dam negotiations impasse to avert water shortage

Published September 7, 2020, 1:03 PM

by [Hannah Torregoza](#)

Senator Imelda “Imee” Marcos on Monday urged the government to solve the impasse in negotiations with tribal communities affected by the Kaliwa Dam project as the ongoing disruption on water supply has raised concern over the long-term water security of Metro Manila and neighboring cities.



Senator Imee R. Marcos
(Senate of the Philippines / FILE PHOTO / MANILA BULLETIN)

Despite the rains in recent months, Marcos noted that Angat Dam’s water supply has continued to dip below its minimum operating level of 180 meters since Thursday, far from its highest level of 204.5 meters recorded in January.

Without more rain, the senator warned that Angat Dam’s water supply might drop to its critical level of 160 meters by November, if the present rate of decrease continues.

Marcos issued the call to the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), saying they should come up with long-term solutions to solve a possible water crisis.

“Once and for all, let’s buckle down and solve Metro Manila’s perennial water problem, short and long-term,” Marcos said.

“The translation of project documents that the Dumagats had requested so long ago will lend transparency to the negotiations in acquiring their free, prior, and informed consent according to law,” the senator added.

Over the weekend, Marcos said 32 indigenous communities in the municipalities of General Nakar and Infanta in Quezon province, led by tribal leader Marcelino Tena, complained that the NCIP had left them out of the distribution of the translated documents.

Tena’s group, Samahan ng Katutubong Agta/Dumagat-Remontado na Binabaka at Ipinagtatanggol ang Lupang Ninuno, is opposing the Kaliwa Dam project over fears it will inevitably submerge ancestral domain and displace their people.

The tribal leader also told Marcos’s office that police escorts were guarding Chinese workers of the project contractor, China Energy Engineering Co. (CEEC) Ltd., who continued building access roads to the Kaliwa Dam site despite lacking the required government permits.



Marcos calls on gov't to solve Kaliwa Dam negotiations impasse to avert water shortage

However, the government had resumed building access roads in May amid the COVID-19 lockdown, renege on a promise the MWSS made in February during the last hearing of the Senate Committee on Cultural Communities.

Marcos said that if the Kaliwa Dam project pushes through, its timeline for completion shows that Metro Manila's growing population of almost 13 million may face a lack of water security in at least the next five years.

For now, she said, water supply can be increased if Maynilad uses its billions in profit to further reduce its non-revenue water, or water lost to leakages and illegal connection, which the MWSS placed at more than 30 percent of the private concessionaire's total water distribution.

"Reducing non-revenue water will also help lower the price of water, since consumers will no longer have to cover for all that huge 30 percent wastage," Marcos said.

"Manila Water has identified Laguna Lake as an alternative water source, but siltation makes its water quality more difficult and thus, more expensive to filter, which means higher costs will be passed on to the consumer," she added.

But she said the government can also consider rehabilitating other dams and constructing rainwater harvesting facilities.



Map from MWSS shows location of Kaliwa Dam

Construction of roads to Kaliwa Dam continues despite incomplete permits —Imee

Published September 7, 2020 1:04pm
By DONA MAGSINO, GMA News

Senator Imee Marcos on Monday said the construction of access roads to the Kaliwa Dam site in Quezon province resumed last May amid the COVID-19 pandemic and despite insufficient government permits.

Citing information from indigenous people's community leader Marcelino Tena from Quezon, the senator said police escorts were even guarding Chinese workers of the project contractor China Energy Engineering Co. (CEEC) Ltd. in constructing such access roads.

Chairing the Senate Committee on Cultural Communities, Marcos stressed that this move was contrary to the commitment of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) during a hearing last February.

The Kaliwa Dam project, a venture traversing the provinces of Rizal and Quezon, is expected to help meet the growing water demand in the National Capital Region, southern Luzon and reduce total dependence on the Angat Dam.

About 85% of the project will be funded through a Chinese loan, while the remaining 15% will be financed by the MWSS, according to MWSS administrator Emmanuel Salamat.

Further, Marcos said Tena lamented over the weekend that the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) left out 32 indigenous communities in the municipalities of General Nakar and Infanta in the distribution of translated documents relevant to the controversial dam project.

"The translation of project documents that the Dumagats had requested so long ago will lend transparency to the negotiations in acquiring their free, prior and informed consent according to law," she said in a statement, noting that the request for such was made back in August 2019.

Last January, the MWSS said the Kaliwa Dam project [secured the approval of indigenous communities](#) in Rizal and Quezon when they adopted a resolution of consent in December 2019.



Construction of roads to Kaliwa Dam continues despite incomplete permits —Imee

"The IPs 'Resolusyon' also means that [MWSS adhered to the FPIC](#) (Free Prior and Informed Consent) framework and that the rights of the IPs are being respected by making sure that they understood all of the implications of the project before they give their consent," the MWSS said.

But Imee said Tena's group, Samahan ng Katutubong Agta/Dumagat-Remontado na Binabaka at Ipinagtatangol ang Lupang Ninuno, opposes the multi-billion dam project because it is seen to submerge their ancestral domain and displace their people.

Salamat previously assured that the [government will provide a proper relocation site](#) for the communities that will be displaced by the project.

Marcos said the impasse on negotiations with tribal communities to be affected by the Kaliwa Dam project must be properly resolved by the government first as she acknowledged the need for short-term and long-term solutions to the looming water shortage problems in Metro Manila and nearby areas.

GMA News Online has reached out to the MWSS and NCIP for comment but has yet to receive a response as of posting time. —KG, GMA News



Duterte: Lockdowns, public obedience helped flatten PH's COVID-19 curve

By: [Krissy Aguilar](#) - Reporter / [@KAguilarINQ](#)
[INQUIRER.net](#) / 09:05 PM September 07, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — President Rodrigo Duterte said Monday that the flattening COVID-19 curve in the country was due to the government's imposition of community quarantine as well as the public's obedience to health protocols.

"The coronavirus curve flattened, meaning to say there are now [fewer] people with the disease called COVID-19," Duterte said in a televised address aired Monday.

"Ito kasi mga kababayan ko, ito 'yung mga ginawa nating preventive measures. Kagaya ng COVID quarantine, nakatulong talaga 'yun. Malaking tulong 'yun because kokonti lang ang tao naglalakad na maco-contaminate ng iba," he said.



Pres. Rodrigo Duterte. Screenshot from RTVM

The President also expressed appreciation to the public for obeying the government's guidelines to prevent the transmission of SARS-CoV-2, the new coronavirus that causes respiratory ailment COVID-19.

"Ganito 'yan, sumunod kasi kayo sa pinapagbawal ng gobyerno. We had obedience and people followed. That meant a lot and contributed to what is happening now that there's a flattening of cases," Duterte said.

Over the weekend, the [University of the Philippines said that COVID-19 infections in the country have already leveled](#), noting the low number of case reproduction rates.

Despite this, however, experts reminded the public that the virus remains and that the country should keep its momentum in continuously lowering its recorded infections.

The Philippines on Monday recorded the [lowest daily increase of COVID-19 cases since July 15 at 1,383](#), driving the nationwide total caseload to 238,727, including 2,890 deaths and 184,906 recoveries.

KGA

Read more: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1332473/duterte-lockdowns-public-obedience-helped-flatten-phs-covid-19-curve#ixzz6XOrZVJ4K>

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TINDI NG KRISIS SA EDUKASYON, RAMDAM NA RAMDAM



September 7, 2020 @ 1:22 PM 16 hours ago

Marami nang iskul ang nagsimula ng klase bago pa ang araw na ito na pasimula ng maraming klase sa mga pribadong eskwela.

State Universities and Colleges o SUC at ilang pribadong eskwela mula kinder hanggang kolehiyo ang nakapagsimula na ng klase.

Pero karamihan, online learning ang gamit.

‘Yun bang gamit ng mga titser at estudyante ang cellphone, laptop, desktop, tablet at iba pa.

Kaya lang, nagkakagulo hindi lang dahil sa kakulangan o hindi akmalang gadget na hawak lalo na sa parte ng mga estudyante, kundi dahil sa kawalan o mahinang internet.

ANAK VS MAGULANG

Kwento ng mga pamilyang titser ang mga magulang sa public school sa ilalim ng Department of Education, uso ang away sa pagitan ng mga anak na nag-aaral at kanilang mga magulang.

Panay ang miting at reporting umano ng mga titser na magulang sa kanilang mga nakatataas at nakasabay nila ang kanilang mga anak na may mga klase.

Alam ba ninyo ang ginagawa dahil sa paghina ng signal sa internet at sa agawan at sabay-sabay na paggamit ng mga gadget at internet?

Tinitigil ng mga magulang ang kanilang pakikipagmiting at reporting sa DepEd.

Ano ngayon ang mangyayari kung full blast o buo na ang pagkaklase?

Paano kung magkasabay ang pagtuturo ng mga titser, kasama ang miting at reporting sa DepEd at pag-aaral ng mga bata?

Higit na malaking problema ang kakulangan o kawalan ng akmalang gadget sa parte ng mga estudyante dahil hindi kayang bumili ang maraming magulang nito.

Isa pa, dahil sa hina ng internet sa mga bahay-bahay, sa iskul na nagtatrabaho ang maraming titser dahil doon malakas ito.



TINDI NG KRISIS SA EDUKASYON, RAMDAM NA RAMDAM

Paano ang kanilang mga anak na walang gadget at naiwan sa mga bahay na mahina ang internet...kung meron man?

Alalahaning tanging karaniwang ang mga titser lang ang may tamang gadget dahil binibigyan ang mga ito ng DepEd.

KABOBOHAN

Ngayon pa lang, kitang-kita na ang kabobohang dala at magiging bunga ng online learning.

Kwento ng mga titser at magulang, napakarami palang lugar ang napakahina ang signal ng internet o walang internet.

Sa mga may internet, panay ang pagkaputol ng koneksyon ng mga titser at mag-aaral.

Panay ang loading lang sa parte ng mga mag-aaral at kapag naka-connect sila kay titser, anak ng tokwa, marami nang parte ng leksyon ang hindi nalaman ng mga estudyante.

Marami ring estudyante ang nag-iinit ang ulo dahil natatapos ang klase na kalahati o mas maliit pa ang natutunan nila mula sa titser.

Dahil sa pandemya at pagkawala ng maayos na hanapbuhay ng mga magulang, nariyan din ang problema sa pambili ng load sa mga prepaid na internet o pambayad sa buwanang bayarin sa wifi.

Alam ba ng DepEd na nababaon na sa utang ang maraming magulang dahil sa pagbili ng mga gadget, pambili ng load at pambayad sa buwanang wifi?

Eh, paliit nang paliit ang nauutangang mga kamag-anak, kapitbahay at iba pa.

Saan hahantong ang ganitong kalagayan sa ating edukasyon kundi sa kabobohan?

PASPASAN ANG PAGTATAYO NG CELLSITE

Feel na feel ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte ang hirap sa pag-aaral na internet ang kabilang sa mga pangunahing kailangan.

Kaya naman, ipinag-utos nito sa lahat ng local government unit na luwagan ang pagtatayo ng mga cellsite o tower para sa mga kompanya ng telepono.

Dati-rati kasi, mga Bro, ang daming harang na inilalagay ng mga LGU sa mga internet provider o telco.

‘Yun pala, may halong korapsyon.

‘Yun bang === naghihintay o nanghihingi ng lagay ang mga opisyal ng LGU para mabigyan ang mga telco ng mga lugar na mapagtatayuan ng mga cellsite o tower at permit to operate na rin.

Meron ding mga may-ari ng mga lupa na ang gusto’y sky is the limit ang presyo ng lupa o upa rito.

At dina-dive na lang ng mga telco ang mga presyo sa lupa o upa.



TINDI NG KRISIS SA EDUKASYON, RAMDAM NA RAMDAM

At kapag nakarinig ang mga opisyal ng LGU na balak na gawing cell site o tower site ang isang lugar, anak ng pitong putakte, mabilis silang nagbabago ng klasipikasyon ng lupa.

Ang mga agricultural lang na pagtatayuan ng mga cellsite o tower, ginagawang commercial o industrial zone kaya mabilis at biglaan ang pagmamahal ng mga lupain.

Ngayon, binuwag ni Pang. Digong ang ganitong mga gawain upang mapabilis ang paglagap ng internet sa buong kapuluan.

Kapag may internet at lalakas ang signal sa bawat lugar, hindi lang edukasyon ang uunlad kundi maging ang hanapbuhay at komersyo ng mga mamamayan at serbisyo ng gobyerno.

MAGBUBUKAS NA BA TALAGA SA OKTUBRE?

Balik tayo sa balaking pagbubukas ng klase sa ilalim ng DepEd mula kinder hanggang elementarya sa Oktubre 5, 2020?

Noong Agosto ang unang iskedyul ng pagbubukas ngunit pinospon ito ni Pang. Digong sa bisa ng batas na nagbibigay-kapangyarihan sa kanya na itakda sa tamang panahon ang pagbubukas ng klase.

At pinospon nga ang klase sa Oktubre 5.

Ngayon ay bumubulaga ang problema sa internet na siyang pangunahing daluyan ng pag-aaral.

Kakambal nito ang kawalan o kakulangan ng gadget at internet sa maraming mag-aaral at lugar.

At malaki ang posibilidad na sa naka-enroll na 24 milyong mag-aaral ay magiging dropout sa kalaunan ang marami.

Hindi kaya may susunod na kautusang magpopospon sa pasukan?

Lalo na kung iisipin na walang nakatitiyak sa pag-atake ng coronavirus disease-19 na naging sanhi ng lahat sa krisis sa edukasyon?

Paano lulugar ang napakahalagang katwiran ni Pang. Digong na hangga't walang bakuna laban sa COVID-19, walang bukasang klase, lalo na kung face-to-face o in-person kung tawagin sa ibang bansa.

Napakahalaga ring pag-isipan ang sinasabi pa rin ng Pangulo na maibabalik at maibabalik ang nawalang edukasyon ngunit kung ang buhay ng mga tao o bata ay nawala dahil sa nasabing sakit, hindi na ito maibabalik pa.

Kayo, mga Bro, anong sey ninyo?



Global Covid-19 caseload surpasses 27M: Johns Hopkins

September 7, 2020, 2:53 pm



27 MILLION CASES. Pedestrians walk past a store for lease in New York, the United States, Sept. 4, 2020. US-based Johns Hopkins University's data on Sunday showed the global coronavirus cases surpassed 27 million. (*Xinhua/Wang Ying*)

BEIJING – The global coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) caseload surpassed the milestone of 27 million on Sunday, with the dead toll over 882,000, according to US-based Johns Hopkins University.

The United States still ranks the first in the tally with a total number of over 6.27 million infections and a death toll over 188,940.

India surpassed Brazil to become the world's second-worst-hit country with its total caseload hitting over 4.2 million, and its death toll reached 71,642.

India is passing through the Unlock-4 phase after the pandemic hit the country over seven months ago. Over the past several weeks, the Asian country's focus has been on ramping up samples testing, which has led to the sudden jump in new COVID-19 cases found every day.

As per the data from the Indian Council of Medical Research, 48,831,145 samples had been tested till Saturday, with 1,092,654 samples tested on Saturday alone.

Brazil on Sunday said it registered 447 deaths from COVID-19 in the past 24 hours, pushing the death toll to 126,650, while thousands headed to beach and other recreational spots for the long weekend of Independence Day, which was on Sept. 7.

The Ministry of Health also reported that 14,521 cases of infection were detected in the last 24 hours, bringing the total number of cases since the start of the pandemic to 4,137,521, ranking the third in the global tally.

In the southeast state of Sao Paulo, the worst hit by COVID-19 and the most populated in the country, less than 40 percent of residents stayed at home, the Globo TV network reported, citing government figures. (*Xinhua*)



It's highly unlikely that food is a source of COVID-19 transmission, experts say

By Naomi Thomas, CNN Health
Published Sep 8, 2020 12:37:18 AM



(CNN) - It is highly unlikely that food is a source of COVID-19 transmission, a team of experts on food contaminations says.

The International Commission on Microbiological Specifications for Foods (ICMSF) looked at the evidence that coronavirus might be carried on food or its packing and found very little.

“The ICMSF believes that it is highly unlikely that the ingestion of SARS-CoV-2 will result in illness; there is no documented evidence that food is a significant source and/or vehicle for transmission of SARS-CoV-2,” the organization said in a statement.

While it is possible that people could eat something contaminated with the virus and become infected that way, it's never been seen to have happened, they said.

“To date, there has not been any evidence that food, food packaging or food handling is a source or important transmission route for SARS-CoV-2 resulting in COVID-19,” they wrote. “There are no foods that should be considered a risk or warrant consideration as a vector for SARS-CoV-2.”

There have been few reports of the virus being found on food products, ingredients and packaging materials and no evidence that links food or its packaging as a source of cross contact infection. However, it is still prudent to emphasize good food hygiene practices, the group said.

Some countries have restricted food imports, tested imported products or asked companies to state their products are coronavirus-free, but none of this is necessary, the ICMSF said.

“The focus for food businesses should be on protecting food workers, consumers and restaurant patrons from becoming infected by person-to-person SARS-CoV-2 spread,” they wrote.

This story was first published on CNN.com, ["It's highly unlikely that food is a source of COVID-19 transmission, experts say"](#)



6.4 magnitude quake leaves no damage in Davao Occidental

By Eldie Aguirre and Che Palicte September 7, 2020, 7:24 pm



(Courtesy of Phivolcs)

DIGOS CITY – The provincial disaster risk reduction and management office (PDRRMO) in Davao Occidental on Monday reported that the 6.4 magnitude earthquake that struck the province on Sunday night (Sept. 6) did not cause any damage.

Harry Chester Firman Camoro, PDRRMO action officer, in a message to the Philippine News Agency, said there was no reported casualty or injury either based on the information gathered from different municipal DRRMO in five municipalities of Davao Occidental.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) also informed in its bulletin that there was no tsunami threat following the tremor that hit the seas of Don Marcelino in Davao Occidental.

However, Camoro said they encouraged the people of Davao Occidental, especially those living in the coastal villages to be vigilant at all times and be prepared to evacuate if necessary when there are signs of tsunami following an earthquake.

Action Officer July Marie Doria of Don Marcelino MDRRMO also reported that despite the proximity of the epicenter to their area of responsibility there had been no reported damage or landslide from different villages of the municipality.

The strong tremor which was also felt in Davao City has also prompted Mayor Sara Z. Duterte to remind the Dabawenyos to be prepared and vigilant for such occurrence.

"Last night's tremor is quite strong. We have to keep in mind the 'what to do's' during an earthquake," she said.

Duterte added that it is important for everyone to refresh the earthquake drills and keep in mind the duck, cover, and hold process should an earthquake occurs.

"We don't know when and the time it's going to happen, what's important is we are ready," she said. **(PNA)**



How do we avert global warming and pandemics? New app has answers

A new online platform shows where best to protect land in order to safeguard biodiversity and stem carbon emissions.



A silky sifaka, found in Madagascar, is one of the world's rarest mammals. Image: [muzzanes, CC BY-SA 2.0](#)

By Morgan Erickson-Davis, Mongabay.com

Sept. 7, 2020

As the world heads towards 2021 with Covid-19 still raging overhead, it might be easy to forget about the other global crises. But a new app, debuted today, aims to light the way to a brighter future, showing how we can stop global warming, halt extinctions and prevent pandemics – all in one fell swoop.

[Research shows](#) that global warming above 1.5 degrees Celsius will likely result in the collapse of ecosystems around the world. Scientists say that not only would this result in mass extinctions, but it would also have dire consequences for humans in terms of food and water security, community resilience against environmental disasters, public health and other societal needs that are intrinsically tied to a healthy environment.

But, according to the numbers, we're running out of time to do this. Studies indicate that in order to achieve a good likelihood of staying below the 1.5-degree threshold, the majority of the world's greenhouse gas emissions need to be avoided. Deforestation is one of the biggest emitters of excess CO₂ and reducing it is one of the key components to international strategies aimed at mitigating global warming. However, researchers say that if deforestation and other industry emissions continue at current rates, we'll be on track to reach the 1.5-degree threshold by 2030.

In other words, we have less than 10 years to turn things around.

To this end, a team a team of researchers led by Eric Dinerstein, a wildlife scientist and director at the conservation organization RESOLVE, has created the first comprehensive estimate of the total land area that needs to be protected in order to fix both biodiversity loss and climate change. Called the "Global Safety Net," the effort combines data on protected areas, intact landscapes, biodiversity importance, and carbon absorption and storage, to show where exactly conservation action should be prioritised. It is visualised on an [open-access online platform](#).



How do we avert global warming and pandemics? New app has answers

‘Conserve at least half and in the right places’

The Global Safety Net combines six primary data layers: existing protected areas, habitats where rare species live, areas of high biodiversity, landscapes inhabited by large mammals, large areas of intact wilderness and natural landscapes that can absorb and store the most carbon.

In a study accompanying the release of the platform published today in [Science Advances](#), the researchers describe what we need to do in order to stave off the worst effects of global warming and extinction. Overall, they found that in addition to the 15.1 per cent of the world’s land that is already protected, 35.3 per cent will need to be added to fold over the next 10 years. This means that ultimately 50 per cent of the planet’s land area will need to be protected from further degradation to keep it under the 1.5-degree threshold and stave off ecological collapse.

The researchers were surprised how well their numbers lined up with [previous estimates](#) of how much of the planet needs to be set aside for nature.

“Without trying, the analysis landed on 50.4 per cent of the terrestrial surface requiring protection,” said study coauthor Karl Burkart, managing director of the NGO One Earth. “Of course conservation is much more nuanced now and strictly protected areas are just one type of land designation that can contribute towards this goal.”

Zooming in, the study finds 30 per cent of land area is of “particular importance for biological diversity.” An additional 20 per cent of land area is needed to maintain ecosystem intactness and provide additional carbon storage and absorption. The authors also note that restoration of degraded areas could help meet carbon sequestration and wildlife conservation goals.

Dinerstein and his colleagues write that the Global Safety Net can be used as a roadmap to achieving climate and biodiversity targets.

“Staying below the 1.5°C limit will require much of the world’s remaining habitat—and a significant amount of restored habitat in forest biomes—be put under some form of conservation by 2030,” the authors say. “Advances being championed under the two conventions responsible for biodiversity and climate— the Convention on Biological Diversity and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change—must be accelerated if we are to protect the abundance and diversity of life on Earth and stabilise the climate.

“A holistic solution is emerging that will accelerate both efforts: conserve at least half and in the right places.”

The researchers identified 50 different ecoregions – areas defined by their unique ecologies and geologies – and 20 countries that hold the lion’s share of conservation potential.

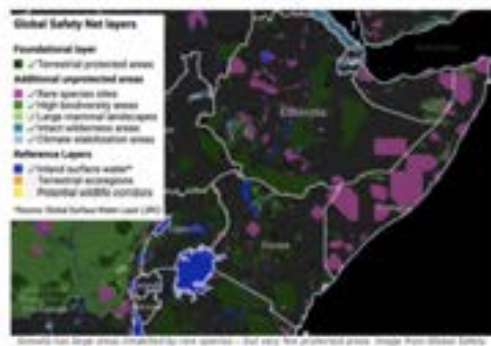


How do we avert global warming and pandemics? New app has answers

Among them is the Sahelian Acacia Savanna, a vast grassland that stretches across the top of Africa from Senegal to Sudan, the [Central Range Papuan Montane Rainforests](#) shared between Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, [Indonesia's Sulawesi Montane Rainforests](#), Madagascar Humid Forests, and Mindanao-Eastern Visayas Rainforests in the Philippines.

These areas occupy the top five spots in terms of the amount land that could be protected in future, together totaling some 183,000 square kilometers (70,658 square miles) of protection potential and nearly 2 per cent of the planet's land area.

The app also [ranks countries](#) on how much of their biologically important land areas are under official protection, which is broken down into three lists based on the size of the country. For "large" countries, Nigeria scored the top spot in terms of protection level, Brazil is #15, the U.S. is #34, Indonesia is #47, and Somalia was ranked lowest at #70.



It should be noted that these rankings do not take into consideration deforestation within protected areas. If so, countries like [Nigeria](#) and [Brazil](#), where protected areas are increasingly beset by illegal clearing, might not rank so high on the list. Still, the researchers say protected areas provide needed accountability and a metric with which to measure conservation effort.

"Protected Areas (or area-based targets) are certainly no guarantee of conservation outcome, as we can see with the fires burning in Brazil as we speak," Burkart told Mongabay via email. "But without them we are lost at sea."

Both Burkart and Dinerstein view area-based targets as the "North Star" of biodiversity preservation and climate protection, and say they are an important part of creating a framework for action that civil society can use to help motivate and mobilise conservation efforts.

"We've got to take conservation out of the ivory towers of academic institutions (or basements of government ministries)," Burkart said. "It is the public good we're talking about, so we need an open and transparent stocktaking of where we are right now, and what we need to immediately prioritize. Area-based targets are just the beginning, a 'blueprint' if you will of the cathedral we need to build."



How do we avert global warming and pandemics? New app has answers

Will it happen in time?

If more than tripling the amount of land under official, effective protection in less than 10 years sounds daunting, you're not alone. But Dinerstein and his colleagues say it is possible.

One avenue they recommend is safeguarding Indigenous territories. The Global Safety Net shows important conservation areas often overlap with areas occupied by Indigenous communities or regarded as ancestral land, which previous research indicates contain around 80 per cent of the planet's remaining biodiversity and contribute significantly to carbon storage. Putting land under the management of Indigenous and local communities has been shown to [be an effective way](#) to protect it.

"Addressing indigenous land claims, upholding existing land tenure rights, and resourcing programs on indigenous-managed lands could help achieve biodiversity objectives on as much as one-third of the area required by the Global Safety Net," the researchers write in their study. "Simultaneously, this focus would positively address social justice and human rights concerns."

Protecting such a large amount of land will take a lot of money. But researchers say that the Covid-19 pandemic is showing just how quickly countries can allocate large amounts of resources if needed. And since [research shows](#) deforestation can increase the risk of outbreak of deadly diseases like Ebola and Covid-19, Dinerstein and his colleagues say there is added incentive for funding such efforts.

"The need for an ambitious global conservation agenda has taken on a new urgency in 2020 after the rapid spread of the Covid-19 virus," they write in their study.

The researchers were surprised to find that only 2.3 per cent of the planet's land area would needed to be further protected to safeguard the species most at risk of extinction. This, they say, could be accomplished within five years.

Overall, they say the investment spent on preserving these important areas of land would be offset by the trillions of dollars worth of benefits provided by a healthy environment.

"Literally billions of dollars are being spent trying to invent technologies to remove carbon from the atmosphere with very little to show for it. Meanwhile we can protect the spectacular diversity of life on this planet while simultaneously providing all the ecosystem services humanity needs by protecting and conserving the 50 per cent of lands identified in the GSN," Burkart said. "Based on a new economic analysis, we estimate that the global safety net would cost about \$200 [billion per year] to manage. This is a tiny investment for a massive return, as nature provides \$33 trillion in ecosystem services every year."



How do we avert global warming and pandemics? New app has answers

For their part, Dinerstein, Burkart and their colleagues are continuing to improve the GSN, and are planning on releasing an updated version next year that will include more data layers and higher resolution. They are also developing technology to help monitor elephant populations in the hopes of reducing human-elephant conflict and prevent poaching, as well as a system that detects logging trucks before they get a chance to start cutting down trees.

“Protecting forests begins with early detection and then enforcement,” Dinerstein said. “We think our ForestGuard AI is an important piece of this.”

But the main thing, the researchers say, is that governments must act – and soon.

“Human societies are late in the game to rectify impending climate breakdown, massive biodiversity loss, and, now, prevent pandemics,” they write. “The Global Safety Net, if erected promptly, offers a way for humanity to catch up and rebound.”

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