

17 SEPTEMBER 2020, THURSDAY



**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**



# DENR vows to finish Manila Bay rehab despite criticisms

By Marita Moaje [September 16, 2020, 2:46 pm](#)

MANILA – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Tuesday vowed to finish rehabilitation efforts in Manila Bay, including the beach nourishment project, despite criticisms on the use of crushed dolomite boulders as artificial white sand.

“Now, more than ever, the DENR is determined to finish the project to give our people a nice, cozy, and clean place to relax, recreate and enjoy the world’s most beautiful sunsets. No amount of baseless and harsh criticisms will prevent us from performing the gargantuan and extremely difficult task of restoring our beloved Manila Bay,” DENR said in a statement.



DENR said constructive criticisms are always welcome most especially if these are accompanied by suggestions for improving public service in the spirit of transparency and accountability.

Moreover, they are also grateful and appreciative of those extending their understanding and support for the Manila Bay nourishment project, as they help the agency focus on the job that needs to be done.

The agency, however, called on those who deliberately mislead the public and criticize efforts made by the government to give Manila Bay its much-needed makeover from its full-of-garbage image.

“These blind critics have been propagating lies and baseless accusations against the DENR and government in general in all forums, including social media, to advance their selfish interests. It is only right and just for supporters of the project to ask critics this all-important question: ‘Where were you when people complained about how dirty Manila Bay has become?’” it added.

DENR explained that the beach nourishment project is a significant phase of the Manila Bay rehabilitation program which dates back to the issuance of a writ of continuing mandamus by the Supreme Court.

The said mandamus issued in 2008 directs the DENR and all other government agencies to clean, rehabilitate and preserve the historic bay.

Several administrations have passed but only the Duterte administration paid attention and took on the initiative to rehabilitate Manila Bay to bring it back to its former glory.

In January 2019, right after the successful Boracay rehabilitation project which led to the closure of the entire island for almost a year, the DENR, along with other mandamus agencies that form part of the Manila Bay Task Force created by President Duterte, regular massive cleanups were conducted along the bay including its tributaries.

A sewage treatment plant (STP) that filters dirty water that flows back to the bay was installed in Roxas Boulevard while three more STPs poised to be set up within Metro Manila.

Commercial and residential establishments surrounding Manila Bay were also obliged to comply with the country’s clean water law and other pertinent rules and regulations and informal settlers living along the bay who greatly contribute to the water pollution in the area were slowly relocated.



According to the DENR, these may just be some of the accomplishments that they have done together with the Manila Bay Task Force, but they “have been purposely disregarded by detractors, who chose instead to ignore facts and spouted conspiracy theories to cast aspersions on a well-meaning project”.

The alleged health hazards posed by crushed dolomite boulders placed along the shore of Manila Bay, it said, have already been clarified even by the Department of Health.

The DENR also cited many other private beach areas in the country and outside that have been using dolomite for more than two decades now but that has not caused any problem.

The agency continuously assures the public “that the funds used for the project will not be put to waste as engineering interventions are being made to prevent the artificial white sand from being washed away,” adding that the project “likewise passed the required environmental impact assessment”.

More than its aesthetic side, the Manila Bay beach nourishment project is also a strategy to promote pro-environment behavior among Filipinos.

“It is our hope that the beautiful white sand would inspire people to be more mindful of their obligation to keep Manila Bay clean,” the statement said.

It added that the DENR will never get tired of explaining the benefits of a cleaner Manila Bay and that they are more than willing to respond to issues hurled against the project in the proper forum. (PNA)



## DENR blasts 'baseless' Manila Bay rehab accusations

It was only under the administration of President Rodrigo Duterte that the government finally set in motion an honest-to-goodness endeavor to bring Manila Bay back to its former glory.

Published 5 hours ago on September 17, 2020 01:00 AM

By [Francis Wakefield](#)



The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Wednesday lambasted critics of the Manila Bay nourishment project it claims to continue to peddle lies and baseless accusations against the agency and the Duterte administration for pushing through with the project.

DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said that while they always welcome and respect others' criticisms they deem as constructive and accompanied by suggestions on how they could better provide service to the public "in the spirit of transparency and accountability," they have to draw the line when there is an apparent deliberate attempt to mislead the public and vilify the government's efforts to restore Manila Bay's lost glory.

"These blind critics have been propagating lies and baseless accusations against the DENR and government in general in all forums, including social media, to advance their selfish interests. It is only right and just for supporters of the project to ask critics this all-important question: 'Where were you when people complained about how dirty Manila Bay has become?'" Antiporda said.

He then reiterated that the beach nourishment project is a significant component of the Manila Bay rehabilitation program, which dates back to 2008 when the Supreme Court (SC) issued a writ of continuing mandamus directing the DENR and other government agencies to clean up, rehabilitate, and preserve the historic bay known globally for its spectacular sunsets.

More than a decade since the landmark ruling was handed down by the SC, it was only under the administration of President Rodrigo Duterte that the government finally set in motion an honest-to-goodness endeavor to bring Manila Bay back to its former glory.

Antiporda said since January 2019, the DENR, along with other concerned agencies which comprise the Manila Bay Task Force has been conducting regular massive cleanups along the bay and its tributaries, preparing to install three more sewage treatment plants within Metro Manila after setting up the first one on Roxas Boulevard, and closely monitoring compliance by commercial and residential establishments with the country's clean water law and other pertinent rules and regulations.



The government, he said, has also started relocating informal settlers living along the coast of the bay since they are known to be largely contributing to pollution in the area.

“These are just among the accomplishments of the DENR and the Manila Bay Task Force that seemed to have been purposely disregarded by detractors, who chose instead to ignore facts and spouted conspiracy theories to cast aspersions on a well-meaning project,” noted the official.

Antiporda lamented how there seems to be no end to naysayers criticizing their efforts, with the supposed health and environmental hazards posed by crushed dolomite boulders being used along the shores of Manila Bay as the latest issue being thrown against the DENR.

This, despite earlier assurance issued by the Department of Health that “no untoward incidents will occur as a result of the endeavor,” given that the dolomite material used for the project is 100 times bigger than dust, therefore does not get suspended in air that would make it hazardous.”



## **BEAUTIFICATION | DENR defends Manila Bay clean-up against 'misleading' and 'blind' critics**

September 15, 2020 , 07:39 PM

(September 15, 2020) – The department tasked to clean up Manila Bay defended the project against critics, insisting on Tuesday that the beautification which used artificial white sand passed the required environmental impact assessment.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) issued the statement on Tuesday as it hit on “deliberate attempt to mislead the public and vilify government efforts” in dumping crushed dolomite in Manila Bay.

“These blind critics have been propagating lies and baseless accusations against the DENR and government in general in all forums, including social media, to advance their selfish interests,” the DENR statement read,

“It is only right and just for supporters of the project to ask critics this all-important question: “Where were you when people complained about how dirty Manila Bay has become?””

Several environmental groups and think-tanks raised concerns about the project, such as its pricing, the results of its environmental impact assessment study, and the health hazard of using crushed dolomite.

The provincial government of Cebu even ordered the mining companies involved to cease operations as they were not informed of the project and cited potential hazards to the environment.

Infracatch PH added that dolomite mined in Cebu was primarily used for construction, glassmaking, and soil conditioner—not as beach topfill.

Last Monday, the Department of Health (DOH) said inhaling crushed dolomite could cause respiratory issues.

“Kapag napunta sa mata, magkakaroon ng kaunting irritation. Kapag na-ingest, magkakaroon ng gastro-intestinal discomfort, pagkakasakit ng tiyan at pagtatae,” DOH Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said in an online briefing.

Two days later, the DOH clarified that dolomite in its bulk state “is not a known health hazard”; and that in dust form, like any other dust particle, “can lead to symptoms such as chest discomfort, shortness of breath, and coughing for this is our body’s normal reaction to irritants.”

DENR Sec. Roy Cimatu told lawmakers in a budget hearing that the crushed dolomite they procured from Cebu was thrice the size of sand granules, and would not be suspended in the air.

“The dolomite has been used in many beach areas for more than 20 years and there has not been any reported problem,” the DENR statement said.

“The DENR also reassures the public that the funds used for the project will not be put to waste as engineering interventions are being made to prevent the artificial white sand from being washed away. The project likewise passed the required environmental impact assessment,” they added.

The DENR added that the beautification and beach nourishment project was a culmination of its Manila Bay clean-up, which was mandated by the Supreme Court as early as 2008.

Three additional sewage treatment plants were installed within Metro Manila and relocated informal settlers living along the coast of the bay.

They plan to finish the project by September 19, in time for the International Coastal Cleanup Day.

“No amount of baseless and harsh criticisms will prevent us from performing the gargantuan and extremely difficult task of restoring our beloved Manila Bay,” the DENR said.

Source: [https://news.tv5.com.ph/breaking/read/beautification-denr-defends-manila-bay-clean-up-against-misleading-and-blind-critics1?fbclid=IwAR0FdP2fZ3OWIR1mxZuSAgbJEWZIEcVz-23iVRxFAfVnyHIEMvjM\\_RKodRI](https://news.tv5.com.ph/breaking/read/beautification-denr-defends-manila-bay-clean-up-against-misleading-and-blind-critics1?fbclid=IwAR0FdP2fZ3OWIR1mxZuSAgbJEWZIEcVz-23iVRxFAfVnyHIEMvjM_RKodRI)



## DENR nagpapasalamat sa mga natatanggap na suporta sa paglilinis sa Manila Bay



September 16, 2020 @ 6:09 PM 12 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Taos-pusong nagpapasalamat ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa mga suporta na natatanggap nito sa paglilinis sa Manila Bay.

Ayon sa DENR na lalo silang ginaganahang pagbutihan ang pagtatrabaho dahil sa mga suportang natatanggap.

Ayon sa DENR, nirerespeto nila ang mga kritisismo hanggang ang mga ito ay constructive at sinasabayan ng mga mungkahi upang mapaunlad ang serbisyo-publiko bilang espirito ng transparency at accountability.

Ngunit ayon sa DENR na hindi sila mangingimi sa mga kritisismong panay propaganda lamang para ilihis ang publiko at siraan lamang ang gobyerno ukol sa Manila Bay cleanup.

Tugon naman ng DENR sa mga kritikong nainira lamang: “Where were you when people complained about how dirty Manila Bay has become?”

Ayon pa sa DENR ang beach nourishment project ay isang makabuluhang component ng Manila Bay rehabilitation program matapos umanong magpalabas ang Supreme Court ng writ ng mandamus na ipinag-uutos sa DENR at sa iba pang ahensya ng gobyerno para linisin at i-rehabilitate at ipreserba ang historic bay na kilala bilang globally sa kanyang spectacular sunsets.

Siniguro naman ng DENR na maayos at tamang nagagamit ang pondo ng bayan. **Santi Celario**



## DENR sinigurong hindi maaaksaya ang white sand sa Manila Bay



September 16, 2020 @ 10:38 AM 19 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Tiniyak ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources na hindi maaaksaya ang white sand project sa Manila Bay.

“The DENR also reassures the public that the funds used for the project will not be put to waste as engineering interventions are being made to prevent the artificial white sand from being washed away,” ayon sa DENR.

Ayon pa kay Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda na mayroong “geotube” ang buong kapaligiran ng baybayin na magiging harang ng lupa at ng dagat.

Dagdag pa nito na maaari pa ring anurin ang buhangin ngunit hindi ito magiging malaki.

“These blind critics have been propagating lies and baseless accusations against the DENR and government in general in all forums, including social media, to advance their selfish interests,” saad pa ng DENR.RNT/ELM





# EMB exempted Manila Bay project from ECC

Published September 16, 2020, 10:12 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

The chief of the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) insisted on Wednesday that the Manila Bay “beach nourishment” project, classified as an “enhancement” activity, did not go through the Philippine Environmental Impact Assessment System as it has been issued a certificate of non-coverage.



EMB OIC Director William Cuñado

In a webinar organized by environmental group Oceana Philippines, EMB OIC Director William Cuñado said a certificate of non-coverage was issued by the previous EMB director.

EMB is an agency under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

“This is more of an enhancement project as the previous director has classified. I also looked at it and it thus falls under this category,” Cuñado said.

The EMB chief’s statement is contrary to a statement issued by the DENR last Tuesday saying the project “passed the required environmental impact assessment.”

Oceana Philippines has been questioning the absence of an EIA study for the beach nourishment project saying the issuance of only a certificate of non-coverage “is a solid evidence of non-compliance and willful violation of the national laws.”

The certificate of non-coverage refers to a document issued by the DENR stating that the proposed project is not covered by the Philippine Environmental Impact Assessment System, therefore, the proponent is not required to secure an environmental compliance certificate or ECC prior to the commencement of activities.

“If you have an EIA, you are required to identify all the impacts and establish mitigating measures,” Cuñado said.

“This project is not under the environmental impact assessment system because this is an enhancement project, there is no need for the environmental impact study. This is a nourishment of the area so it falls under enhancement projects,” he added.

Meanwhile, the Rotary Club of Manila (RCM) has expressed its support to the DENR for its efforts in the improvement, beautification, restoration and cleanup of the Manila Bay.

RCM president Bobby Joseph said DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu has been instrumental in carrying out the Supreme Court Mandamus ordering 13 government agencies to clean up, rehabilitate and preserve the bay. “The mandamus was long neglected since 2008, and Manila Bay continued to deteriorate over the years,” he said.

Joseph noted the dramatic improvement on the quality of the water as well as the construction of the first solar-powered sewage treatment plant at the Manila Yacht Club, which has been operational for about a month now.

The DENR is expected to establish three more STPs in Parañaque, Las Piñas and Cavite.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/16/emb-exempted-manila-bay-project-from-ecc/>



A certificate of non-coverage for environmental impact assessment has been issued for the Manila Bay white sand project, an official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environment Management Bureau said on Wednesday.

## Manila Bay white sand project exempted from impact assessment, says EMB

**Published** September 16, 2020 8:20pm

By MA. ANGELICA GARCIA, GMA News

A certificate of non-coverage for environmental impact assessment has been issued for the Manila Bay white sand project, an official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environment Management Bureau said on Wednesday.

In a virtual forum, DENR-EMB director William Cuñado said the certificate of non-coverage was issued by the former EMB Metodio Turbella.

The said certificate states that the project is not covered by the Philippine Environmental Impact System and thus not required to secure an environmental compliance certificate prior to the commencement of activities.

“The previous director issued a certificate of non-coverage for this project already,” Cuñado said.

“Enhancement project ito so there’s no need for an environmental impact study because this is a nourishment, enhancement of the area... So it falls on the enhancement project,” he added.

However, in a statement on Tuesday, the DENR said “the project likewise passed the required environmental impact assessment.”

Asked whether DENR’s statement was incorrect, Cuñada said: “Kasi that is an enhancement project so what I’m saying is when you’re in an enhancement project, it falls on enhancement so improving the quality of the project using the enhancement component, which for this one is the nourishment project.”

Earlier, environmentalists and fishers' groups [have criticized the project](#), calling it an artificial rehabilitation and a waste of money. **-NB, GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/metro/755885/manila-bay-white-sand-project-exempted-from-securing-ecc-says-emb/story/>



# Cebu province won't meddle in Manila Bay project: Garcia

By John Rey Saavedra **September 14, 2020, 10:30 pm**

CEBU CITY – The Manila Bay beautification project has nothing to do with the cease and desist order issued against the two dolomite mining firms in the southern Cebu town of Alcoy, Governor Gwendolyn Garcia said on Monday.

In a press conference at the Capitol, Garcia said the province is not opposed to the nourishment program for Manila Bay, adding that she would not join the discussions as to the propriety of the project.

The concern of the province, she said, are the violations committed by the two mining firms – Dolomite Mining Corp. (DMC) and Philippine Mining Service Corp. (PMSC) – which may cause environmental degradation in Alcoy town, she said.



**DOLOMITE MINING.** An undated photo shows the dolomite mining plant in Barangay Pugalo, Alcoy town in Cebu province. Governor Gwendolyn Garcia on Monday (Sept. 14, 2020) said the Manila Bay nourishment project has nothing to do with the cease and desist order she issued last week to two mining firms, which is meant to stop them from selling and transporting the sedimentary carbonate rocks that have high content of the mineral dolomite to the domestic market. (Photo courtesy of MGB-Region7)

“Kining duha ka firms, ilabi na ning PMSC, wa na ni mag-mining, nag-quarrying na ni kay namaligya naman sila locally (These two firms, especially the PMSC, are no longer engaging into mining, they are already in quarrying activities because they are already selling dolomite locally),” Garcia said.

The two companies in Alcoy, she said, were allowed to extract dolomite for export as raw materials for steel and glass manufacturers in Korea and Japan but do not have a permit to sell and transport to domestic markets.

The governor said the province is placing the two companies in Alcoy under tight watch in line with the campaign against illegal quarrying.

She said she sees a high demand for sand and gravel now that the government is implementing its Build, Build, Build program where works for concreting of thousands of kilometers of roads are ongoing.

The governor said the province wants to regulate extraction of natural resources by monitoring if mining firms are religiously following the 10,000 cubic meter limit under the permit issued to them by the government.

Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said the national government is “not in anyway connected to their provincial internal business problem”.

“If there is anything that we can do to assist them, our MGB-7 (Mines and Geoscience Bureau-Region 7) is available anytime, but if they will be needing the assistance of Sec. Roy A. Cimatu, he is also willing to help just like what he has done to assist Cebu in their Covid-19 problem,” Antiporda said in a message sent to the Philippine News Agency.

Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque on Thursday last week said Malacañang respects Cebu province’s decision to stop the firms from supplying dolomite sand for the beach nourishment project at the Manila Bay shoreline.

He said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources should coordinate with the Cebu province on the matter. (PNA)

Source: [https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1115391?fbclid=IwAR1qOWjLZN0jvaI\\_h0w1Bb3v61azcl7WGxdT6ig6-NUI28DqWqJZomESoL4](https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1115391?fbclid=IwAR1qOWjLZN0jvaI_h0w1Bb3v61azcl7WGxdT6ig6-NUI28DqWqJZomESoL4)



# 'Disclose fully documents on Manila Bay white sand project,' DENR urged

Published September 16, 2020, 3:19 PM

by [Raymund Antonio](#)

Pro-environment and civic society groups that are opposed to Manila Bay's white beach project have asked Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu to publicize documents of the project.



(JANSEN ROMERO / MANILA BULLETIN)

In a letter dated September 14, Akbayan! Youth – Taft, De La Salle Environmental Conservation Organization, University of the Philippines (UP) Marine Biological Society, Alyansa Tigil Mina, and Oceana Philippines, wrote Cimatu and Manila Mayor Francisco “Isko Moreno” Domagoso.

The groups formed the #SaveManilaBay alliance which also sent their position paper to the officials on the white sand beach project.

In their position paper, they tackled the environmental, medical, and legal-political effects of dumping crushed dolomite in Manila Bay as valid reasons to suspend the project and rechannel the funds earmarked for its implementation to alternative uses that are deemed more beneficial.

“The environmental, medical, and even legal impacts of the white sand dumping project are not just abominable in themselves; they also set a harmful precedent on how we ought to treat human life, local biodiversity, and the natural habitats in which they live,” it read.

SaveManilaBay alliance released their position paper amid DENR's claim that “blind critics” have vilified its efforts to give Manila Bay a makeover.

The department is tasked to clean up the bay as part of its rehabilitation program. “The DENR can't claim that we're blind critics because our position is based on data and analysis,” Akbayan! Youth – Taft, the convening organization of the alliance, said in a Facebook post.

“Meanwhile, white sand (as) being good for mental health and pro-environment behavior is completely (unsupported),” the group added.

Apart from the public disclosure of the documents, the alliance asked the DENR to implement following:

- Reallocate unutilized project funds to the COVID-19 response program
- Defund or reverse all local and national reclamation projects harmful to biodiversity



- Consult or grant leadership positions to environmental defenders and community stakeholders
- Plant mangroves and seagrass
- Ensure medical and financial assistance to workers and community stakeholders affected by the dolomite
- Monitor the implementation of the Cease and Desist order of mining companies

“As an environmental group, we are seeing before us how the natural world has become a victim to meaningless projects not rooted upon scientific theory or fact. And where there is a victim, there is a perpetrator. And when the perpetrator is our own government, how then can we stay silent?” said Javier Vilchez of UP MBS said.



Philippine News Info

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LOOK: White sand costing 390 million pesos appears to be partially washed away by the recent storm and tide at the Manila Bay.

Credits to the owner of the picture.



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4 Comments 5 Shares



# Nalzarro: Gwen to run after abusive mining firms

BobNalzarro

Sunstar16 September 2020



WHILE the two big mining firms, Dolomite Mining Corp. (DMC) and Philippine Mining Service Corp. (PMSC), are permitted to explore dolomite mining in Barangay Pugalo, Alcoy, Cebu for export purposes, they allegedly abused their permits. Gov. Gwen Garcia, in a brief conversation with this columnist, said the two mining firms are abusing the permits granted to them by the National Government. She said the two firms also allegedly engage in sand and gravel extraction and illegal quarrying operations in their areas.

Gwen said the two firms have been selling sand and gravel to private contractors because of the administration's "Build, build and build" project. There is scarcity of materials in the province because, upon her assumption last year, she ordered a ban on sand and gravel extraction. Private and government contractors are "importing" their source of materials from other provinces for their projects.

On the dolomite minerals used for the "nourishment project" in Manila Bay, Gwen said, she will not question it since it is a project of the National Government. The Supreme Court approved it and Congress appropriated funds for it. But since the minerals were sourced here, she should intervene on the sourcing and shipment of the materials. Thus, prompting her to issue a cease and desist order (CDO) on all transport permits (ATPs) or shipment as there are several metric tons ready for delivery.

She said the two mining firms have the "guts" to extract and deliver the materials for the "nourishment project" on Manila Bay because their client and backers are national and regional officials of the DENR. These DENR regional officials, especially from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB 7), are the same officials that granted permit to a cement firm to quarry in the City of Naga, which caused a massive landslide a few years ago, killing a number of residents.

On its website, the PMSC and its subsidiary DMC in 2009 were proclaimed Titanium winners under the quarry operation category of the Presidential Mineral Industry Environmental award and second runner up for non-metallic category of Best Mining Forest, respectively, during the 56th Annual National Mine Safety and Environment conference in Baguio City.

Pro-environment awardees, yes, but it seems they've gone far from the guidelines set under the Philippine Mining Act of 1995. It seems that officials of Alcoy are sleeping on their job on the abuses of these firms when it has the power to enforce environmental laws under Executive Order 79 (Institutionalizing and implementing reforms in the Philippine Mining Sector), the law that ensures environmental protection and responsible mining in the utilization of mineral resources.

Section 2 of the EO, which was signed by then President Benigno Aquino III, states thus: "The Government, in general, and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in particular, in coordination with concerned Local Government Units (LGUs), shall ensure that environmental standards in mining, as prescribed by the various mining and environmental laws, rules and regulations shall be fully and strictly enforced, and appropriate sanctions meted out against violators thereof."

Source: <https://ph.news.yahoo.com/nalzarro-gwen-run-abusive-mining-132100538.html>



# DENR to cover 16,867 hectares of land with bamboo trees

Published September 16, 2020, 10:26 AM  
by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) targets to cover around 16,000 hectares of land nationwide with bamboo trees in 2020.

Secretary Roy Cimatu told lawmakers in a recent budget hearing that the direction of the Enhanced National Greening Program (ENGP), the government's flagship reforestation initiative being implemented by the DENR, "is towards planting bamboo."

He said bamboo is one of the fastest growing renewable resources in the world and is a sustainable alternative to wood. It is also an effective climate change solution.

"We intend to make amendments in the ENGP to increase the country's production of bamboo," Cimatu said, believing that the shift to bamboo will help improve the country's forest cover.

For 2020 alone, Cimatu said the DENR targets to cover 16,867 hectares of land with bamboo trees.

Bamboo is valued for its ecological benefits. It absorbs greenhouse gases, insulates carbon dioxide from the environment, and produces 35 percent more oxygen than its equivalent tree size.

The plant's strong and extensive roots prevent soil erosion and landslides. It can hasten aquifer recharge in a watershed and is a source of food and biofuel in the form of charcoal and briquettes.

In celebration of World Bamboo Day on Sept. 18, the DENR, through its Forest Management Bureau (FMB), has lined up activities for the entire month of September to raise public awareness on bamboo and its benefits.

FMB Director Lourdes Wagan said that due to the growing demand for bamboo, it rapidly transitioned from being a "poor man's timber" to a sought after commodity now called "green gold."

"This recognition of the increasing economic value of bamboo, and its vital role in forest recovery and climate change adaptation and mitigation are the reasons the DENR and FMB are taking part in this annual event," Wagan said.

Most of the activities are done online in light of the continuing health threat posed by COVID-19. On all Mondays of the month, the FMB will be posting trivia or little known facts about bamboo on its official Facebook page.

It will also be conducting webinars and talks every Wednesday with DENR officials and other experts on various topics related to bamboo.

The highlight of the celebration will be the nationwide simultaneous bamboo planting, in which the kickoff event will be held at the Batasang Pambansa grounds in Quezon City on Sept. 18.





Another highlight of the World Bamboo Day celebration is the virtual launch of Kilusang 5K (Kawayan, Kalikasan, Kabuhayan, Kaunlaran, and Kinabukasan), an advocacy group formed to create awareness on bamboo and to back its development as a major industry and livelihood, as a rich and sustainable natural resource for food, and for environmental protection and preservation.

World Bamboo Day was established in 2009 by India's Kamesh Salam during the 8th World Bamboo Congress in Bangkok, Thailand. Kamesh was the president of the World Bamboo Organization, a group that promotes global information sharing on the environmental, socioeconomic, biological, and cultural aspects of bamboo.



## Bamboo given major role in DENR reforestation plan

September 16, 2020 | 7:42 pm



ENVIRONMENT Secretary Roy A. Cimatu said his department has set a target of planting bamboo over 16,867 hectares in 2020 in order to augment the country's forest cover.

During the recent House of Representatives budget hearing of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Mr. Cimatu said the agency's Enhanced National Greening Program (ENGP) will involve bamboo.

"We intend to make amendments in the ENGP to increase the country's production of bamboo. The shift to bamboo would help improve the country's forest cover," Mr. Cimatu said.

Mr. Cimatu said that bamboo helps address climate change as it is a sustainable alternative to wood.

According to the DENR, bamboo absorbs greenhouse gases and produces 35% more oxygen than trees of equivalent size.

"The plant's strong and extensive roots prevent soil erosion and landslides. It can hasten aquifer recharge in a watershed and is a source of food and biofuel in the form of charcoal and briquettes," the DENR said.

Forest Management Bureau (FMB) Director Lourdes C. Wagan said the DENR and FMB plan to raise public awareness of bamboo's benefits culminating in World Bamboo Day on Sept. 18.

"This recognition of the increasing economic value of bamboo, and its vital role in forest recovery and climate change adaptation and mitigation are the reasons the DENR and FMB are taking part in this annual event," Ms. Wagan said.

The DENR is organizing bamboo planting events in Quezon City on Sept. 18, and the virtual launch of an advocacy group focused on bamboo awareness and development called Kilusang 5K (Kawayan, Kalikasan, Kabuhayan, Kaunlaran, and Kinabukasan). — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**



## 2 DENR foresters nabbed for alleged extortion in Isabela town

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

[Inquirer Baguio](#) / 05:53 PM September 16, 2020

CABAGAN, Isabela — Agents of the National Bureau of Investigation on Wednesday arrested a forest protection unit chief of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and his fellow forester after allegedly receiving extortion money.

Timoteo Rejano, chief of NBI-Isabela, said suspects Antonio Aggabao Jr. and Diosdado Medrano were caught receiving P3,000 from Angel Domingo, who claimed that the two DENR employees promised to release his permit to transport wood in exchange for the amount.

Domingo had applied for a permit to transport 110 pieces of Gmelina lumber, about 800 board feet, that were retrieved from felled and uprooted trees at his farm in Barangay Caligayan, Tumauni, Isabela.

The Inquirer tried to get the side of the suspects, but both refused to talk.

The seized evidence was brought to the NBI provincial office for safekeeping while charges of robbery through extortion are being readied against the suspects.

Caption: Photo attached.

Caption: The alleged extortion money worth P3,000 was recovered from two DENR foresters who allegedly asked for the amount before releasing a permit to travel to a complainant. (Photo courtesy of NBI-Isabela)

ZB



# Baguio City police to deploy ‘plantvestigators’ to probe plant poaching in parks

By [Vince Ferreras, CNN Philippines](#)

Published Sep 16, 2020 7:42:51 PM



Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, September 16) - The Baguio City Police Office will deploy “plantvestigators” who will look into the reports of illegal poaching of plants in parks.

“We are appealing, we are now deploying our 'plantvestigators' to investigate this case and to protect our environment, especially the plants in our parks,” Baguio Police chief PCol. Allen Co said in an interview with CNN Philippines.

The City Environment and Parks Management reported last week that plant thieves nearly wiped out the Monstera or Swiss Cheese plants long inhabiting the Mines View Park and Burnham Park.

The office also said that succulents were also being poached in the City Hall Park, and the Upper Session Road was also stripped off of rubber trees as people are into taking care of plants amid the pandemic -- or “plantdemic” as many call it.

Co warned that plant thieves maybe charged for violating the City’s Environment Code, which carries a penalty of P5,000 fine and/or imprisonment of up to five days.

If poached plants are considered endangered, Co added that Republic Act 9147 or Wildlife Resources and Conservation Act penalizes violators with six to 12 years of imprisonment and a fine of P100,000 to P1 million.

With the “plantdemic” craze, Co appealed to plant lovers to preserve the plants in the city parks for the future generations to see.

“We understand the call of maintaining plants in our home, but let us not deprive other people of enjoying these plants doon po sa ating mga parks (in our parks),” said Co.



# DENR Turns To 'Habal-Habal' To Tackle Garbage Collection Woes



By [Featuresdesk \(MD\)](#) September 16, 2020

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has found an innovative solution to trash collection problems in estero communities along the Tullahan-Tinajeros River System using its own version of the lowly yet dependable “habal-habal.”

Frequently dubbed as the “poor man’s motorcycle taxi,” habal-habal is a highly improvised two-wheeled single motorcycle usually ridden beyond its passenger capacity.

In a press release on Tuesday, DENR said it has its own version of the utility vehicle that uses an eco-friendly bicycle with automatic foot break and two-by-three feet sidecar, allowing it to carry household waste.

DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu said the habal-habal will be used to collect garbage from estero communities that are not reached by dump trucks and whose uncollected trash eventually ends up in Manila Bay.

Citing a recent DENR study, Cimatu said garbage generated by estero communities with narrow streets or alleys are not regularly collected since these areas are not accessible to dump trucks.

“The accumulated uncollected wastes do not only pose health risks to the communities but also clog canals, causing flooding in these areas. Uncollected garbage also ends up in coastlines and waters of Manila Bay,” Cimatu said.

Cimatu, who chairs the Manila Bay Task Force, said proper garbage collection and regular cleanups in esterros are crucial to the ongoing efforts to rehabilitate the historic bay.

“Tough problems involving the presence of informal settlers directly dumping to the esterros, non-compliance of industries with discharge permitting regulations, and lack of sewage management system are also being addressed under the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program,” he added.

Cimatu said the DENR will be distributing units of habal-habal to 10 barangays within the Tullahan-Tinajeros River System, which have a relatively high number of informal settler families and with areas that are hard to reach by garbage collection trucks.



These are Barangays 160, 162, and 163 in Caloocan City; Potrero, Catmon, Tinajeros, and Maysilo in Malabon City; Ugong and Marulas in Valenzuela City; and Sta. Lucia in Quezon City.

Tullahan-Tinajeros River Commanders and DENR Undersecretaries Jonas Leones and Analiza Rebuelta-Teh, together with DENR-National Capital Region Executive Director Jacqueline Caancan, will lead the turnover of habal-habal units to the barangay beneficiaries on Sept. 19. The turnover ceremony forms part of the local celebration of the International Coastal Cleanup Day, with the theme “Safe Oceans Start at Homes.”

During the event, the DENR will also distribute educational materials on climate and environmental protection, including UNICEF-assisted climate change flip charts and children storybook entitled “Ang Paglalakbay nina Niño at Niña,” as well as hygiene kits in support of the campaign against Covid-19.

The Tullahan-Tinajeros River System measures 36.4 kilometers, traversing 44 barangays, covering the cities of Quezon, Caloocan, Valenzuela, Malabon, and Navotas.

Dredging of the 5.25-km portion of the river system has recently started, with help from diversified conglomerate San Miguel Corporation, yielding about 2,500 truckloads of silt and garbage as of late August 2020. (PNA)



# Celebrate ICC through mobile cleanup app — DENR-NCR

Published September 16, 2020, 3:26 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

Make your efforts count as the largest volunteer activity in the world devoted to cleanup oceans and waterways will be celebrated in a different way this month amid the continuing threat of the coronavirus disease.



(DEPED NCR / MANILA BULLETIN)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources-National Capital Region (DENR-NCR) said the pandemic has prevented them from organizing coastal cleanup activities for volunteers to celebrate the 35th International Coastal Cleanup (ICC) Day on Sept. 19.

But one does not need to go to coastal areas to participate in the ICC. The DENR-NCR urged Metro Manila residents to cleanup in their own homes, backyard, or community. “Yes, you can still participate in the ICC and contribute to the cleanup of Manila Bay and other waterways right at the safety of your home,” the DENR-NCR said.

This can be done by using Clean Swell, the mobile application developed by international non-government organization Ocean Conservancy to help volunteers easily record and directly upload each item of trash they collect.

Simply download the app, which is available for free on both Android and iOS devices and create an account. Once an account has been created and you have your cleaning tools with you, you can start cleaning up right away.

The mobile app also allows the user to record and audit the type and number of trash collected and submit it to the marine debris database.

The database is used by scientists, conservation groups, governments, and industry leaders to study ocean trash and take action to ensure trash will never reach beaches.

“We only need to clean our house and ensure that our trash does not end up in Manila Bay through the practice of waste reduction and segregation-at-source. Indeed, safe oceans do start at home. So if we want a clean Manila Bay, we must practice cleanliness in our house and immediate community,” the DENR-NCR said.

Held every third Saturday of September, the ICC began more than 30 years ago, when communities rallied together with the common goal of collecting and documenting the trash littering their respective coastlines.

The Philippines started participating in the ICC in 1994 when volunteers were only 3,000 and were spread among six provinces to cover 76 kilometers of water bodies. They were able to recover 9,469 kilos of marine debris at the time.

In 2003, the third Saturday of September was officially declared as the International Coastal Cleanup Day pursuant to Proclamation No. 470.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/16/celebrate-icc-through-mobile-cleanup-app-denr-ncr/>



## MWSS restarts Sumag River project

By Jordeene B. Lagare

September 17, 2020

The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) is restarting the Sumag River Diversion Project in Quezon province's General Nakar town that could provide additional water for residents in Metro Manila and nearby provinces.

“Preparatory activities, such as excavation works at the tunnel intake and apron structure, pump concrete base [and others have] already started, but barging activities for [the] transport of major equipment and materials can only be done in the summer of next year,” the water agency said in a statement on Wednesday.

Jointly funded by Manila Water Co. Inc. and Maynilad Water Services Inc. through a common purpose facility, the project is expected to be completed by the second quarter of 2022.

The project is seen as the most viable option in augmenting the National Capital Region's raw water supply and solve its water shortages in the near term.

According to the MWSS, the interconnection of the branch tunnel from the Sumag River to the existing Umiray-Angat-Transbasin tunnel will shorten the refilling period of the Angat Dam in Bulacan province by diverting inflows to the reservoir by 188 million liters of raw water a day or 2.2 cubic meters of raw water per second.

Currently, the dam is Metro Manila's primary source of water.

The restart comes after the Quezon provincial government halted the project following a flash flood at the river, which is found in General Nakar's Umiray village.

The diversion structure then had been excavated. One half of the 600-meter tunnel has been completed.

The MWSS had tried to restart the project, as its continued postponement would mean higher standby costs due to project suspension and water insecurity to the 16.9 million customers under MWSS' administrative jurisdiction.

“Moreover, the impact of the 2019 El Niño on the level of the Angat Reservoir could have been lessened if the additional water supply from [the] Sumag River has been made available,” it said.

So far, the project has secured a gratuitous permit to extract and dispose sand and gravel from the provincial government and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources through the Provincial Mining and Regulatory Board.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/09/17/business/business-top/mwss-restarts-sumag-river-project/768809/>





## BELOW NORMAL WATER LEVEL SA ANGAT PERO MAY PARATING NA LA NIÑA



September 17, 2020 @ 12:13 AM 6 hours ago

SA ipinalabas na balita ng top rating news program, '24 Oras', ng GMA 7 ay sinabi ni National Water Resources Board (NWRB) executive director Sevillo David, Jr. na napagpasyahan ng water board na bawasan ang alokasyon ng tubig na ipinagkakaloob sa Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System sa buwan ng October na nasa 46 cubic meter per second kumpara sa 48 cms noong mga nakaraang buwan.

Habang isinusulat ng inyong Agarang Serbisyo Lady ang column na ito, nasa 176.65 meters above sea level ang tubig sa Angat Dam o mababa ng 3.35 masl sa operating level nito na 180.0 masl.



Ang kakulangan ng tubig sa Angat Dam na siyang pinagkukunan ng 97% ng tubig ng mga nasa National Capital Region at mga kalapit na lalawigan ay dulot ng kokonting ulan nitong nakaraang buwan ng Agosto at unang Linggo ng Setyembre.

Bagamat may dalawang bagyong malalakas na pumasok sa Philippine Area of Responsibility, sina Typhoon Julian (Maysak) at Kristine (Haishen) ay sa southern part ng Japan at Korean peninsula ito nanalasa at nagbuhos ng ulan.

Pero sa press statement na ipinalabas ng Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration, kinumpirma ni Dr. Vicente Malano, PAGASA administrator, na nasa 70% ang chances na mararanasan natin ang La Niña sa bansa sa mga susunod na buwan.

Batay sa monitoring ng malalaking weather agencies, nagaganap ngayon sa central and eastern equatorial Pacific (CEEP) ang "unusual cool ocean surface temperatures" na indikasyon ng La Niña.

Magdudulot ito ng mas maraming tubig-ulan sa silangang bahagi ng bansa simula October 2020 o November 2020 na sasabayan ng bahagyang mainit na air temperature. pero madahatid ito na mga paabaha at landslide.



Alam n'yo ba na ang mapaminsalang landslide sa Guinsaungon, Saint Bernard, Southern Leyte noong February 2006 at ang Typhoon Ondoy (Ketsana) noong September 2009 ay dulot ng La Niña. Nasa 1,126 ang nasawi sa Guinsaungon habang nasa 747 naman sa Bagyong Ondoy at halagang US\$ 1.09B (Php 52.86B) ang nasira sa imprastraktura.

Anoman ang mangyari, naghahanda na ang mga ahensya ng pamahalaan para sa napipintong weather phenomenon kabilang ang NWRB na siyang magbabantay sa mga pangunahing dam at irigasyon sa bansa.

Huwag naman sanang maging mapaminsala ang La Niña na paparating.

Bagamat kailangan ng tubig, huwag naman iyong labis-labis sa ating pangangailangan.

Kaya kapag naglabas ng official advisory ang PAGASA, dapat tayong nakahanda palagi at parati dahil mahirap kalaban ang bagsik ng kalikasan.



## Manila's water future at risk, again

By [Ben Kritz](#)

September 17, 2020

As if we actually needed another (potential) crisis, the issue of Metro Manila's water supply appears to be a matter of some concern again after the Commission on Audit (CoA) "flagged" (whatever that means) the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) over the P12.2-billion New Centennial Water Source-Kaliwa Dam project, because the water agency issued a notice to proceed in spite of an incomplete environmental compliance certificate (ECC), and questions about the validity of the consent given by the indigenous peoples affected.

The CoA's observations were contained in its 2019 Audit Report for the MWSS, released late last week. The report is troubling for a couple of reasons. First of all, in spite of the dim regard the Duterte administration has for the CoA — the president once suggested that a good way to interact with audit officials would be to throw them down the stairs — it is a valuable and necessary defense against wasteful and improper spending of public funds. It is one of the most professional and apolitical agencies in the entire bureaucracy, and its findings ought not to be dismissed.

On the other hand, valid though the CoA report may be, its timing is very problematic. It raises another roadblock in a seemingly endless series of roadblocks to getting the badly needed Kaliwa Dam project started, just when there are signs a repeat of last year's water shortages may be in the offing in a few months' time, and at a time when large-scale infrastructure projects in general are seen — although their impact may be somewhat overestimated — as critical to the hoped-for economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic.

Interestingly, the disclosure of the report hit the news at coincidentally the same time the last column I wrote about the Kaliwa Dam issue — this was back in June 2019 — reappeared on a concerned agency's radar for a completely different reason. But while I am happy to have made an impression and to have an opportunity to discuss the topic again, it is mostly a discouraging reminder that the impasse hasn't changed at all. Much of what I wrote a year and a half ago could have been written yesterday, or for that matter, a couple of months into the future (I'm guessing around next March or April) when another water crisis occurs.

At the moment, Metro Manila could be said to have reached "peak water" in terms of its supply. Luzon is experiencing one of its driest "rainy seasons" in recent memory, obliging the National Water Resources Board to reduce the allocation of water from the Angat Reservoir — which supplies about 98 percent of Metro Manila's fresh water — from 48 cubic meters a second to 46, due to the drop in the reservoir's water level. As of Tuesday, the reservoir's elevation was at 176.18 meters above sea level, two and a half meters lower than it had been a week earlier, and almost four meters below its normal operating level of 180 meters.

Granted, the weather may help relieve that situation over the next couple of months; weather forecasters are predicting a 70-percent chance of an onset of La Niña conditions in the Pacific around Christmas, which generally results in somewhat wetter-than-average weather in the Philippines. Even if that happens, however, the best-case scenario for Metro Manila is water supply that just presently adequate, with no margin for expansion of demand or unexpectedly dry weather.

Simply put, if Metro Manila is to avoid chronic intermittent water shortages and the chaos they cause, it needs a new, reliable source of water.

Just as I wrote in June last year, the best available solution right now is the Kaliwa Dam project, which will create an additional water source that should be sufficient for at least a couple of decades at the current rate of population growth. Whether or not the government can get the project off the ground is still a bit uncertain, however, because of the resistance to it by some special interest groups.



Those trying to stop the project offer three arguments for doing so: the reservoir and associated facilities will wipe out about 300 hectares of protected wilderness in the Sierra Madre; the area is also tribal land belonging to the Dumagat-Remontados people; and the proposed financial structure of the project is politically questionable, since it was changed from a public-private partnership (PPP) project to a government project primarily funded by a loan from China. In fact, some conspiracy theorists suggested that the March 2019 water crisis may have been a contrivance by the Duterte administration to get people to accept an onerous deal from China.

Because of these factors, the dissenting groups say, the project should be canceled and a safer alternative found. Any option of similar capacity is yet to be proposed by anyone, however, meaning the government faces a choice between following through with Kaliwa Dam project or doing nothing at all.

The first two factors are valid, and some reasonable solutions for them must be found and made part of the project. The CoA's recent findings that these have not been addressed completely is troubling. The third factor — that a PPP model is preferable to a loan-and-grant funded public project — can be set aside for the moment, as it based on so much jingoistic nonsense and is a contradiction to the usual position of the usual suspects resisting the project.

Unfortunately, there is not much to be done to mitigate the environmental damage the new dam and reservoir will cause; a considerable amount of land will be under water, and there is no way to avoid that short of killing the entire project. Besides maintaining the area surrounding the new reservoir as a protected watershed, the government could consider designating a similar area of land elsewhere as a wilderness protected area, so that the country would at least not suffer a net ecological loss. The MWSS must, at a minimum, resolve the lingering issues with the apparently incomplete ECC as soon as possible.

Likewise, there is no perfect solution to address the displacement of the indigenous people, but an acceptable compromise can be found. Compensating the Dumagat-Remontados for their land, relocating them to suitable areas as near as possible to their home territory, and providing other financial and social assistance as they may require should all be part of the project costs. President Duterte has publicly said the government would undertake those steps, so the MWSS should take the CoA's admonition regarding the informed consent of the indigenous people to heart, ensure that steps are being taken to address their needs and concerns, and provide the clear documentation indicating that the affected native communities are clearly on board.

As long as those matters are being properly addressed, the government should not tolerate any further delay to the Kaliwa Dam project. The risk-benefit equation as the project is presently designed is too heavily weighted to the benefit side to ignore.

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# Nestlé Philippines, Pure Oceans launch Linis Islas Basura Bangka

[Wednesday, September 16, 2020](#) [People's Tonight](#)



To support waste management in coastal, island communities

**FOOD** and beverage manufacturer Nestlé Philippines and the marine conservation social enterprise Pure Oceans have entered into a partnership to design, procure, and operate a prototype boat called Basura Bangka to transport plastic waste from coastal and island communities in Batangas to recycling facilities.

Basura Bangka is a component of Nestlé Philippines' high-priority strategy to reduce its environmental footprint and collect and recycle soft plastic waste. The company, together with other stakeholders, is engaged in recovering and diverting such post-consumer waste away from landfills, waterways, and oceans.

Nestlé Philippines recently marked a major milestone in accelerating its actions to tackle plastic waste by achieving plastic neutrality in August, recovering 2,400 metric tons of plastic waste equivalent to the plastic used in its packaging for that month in the country. The company's partnership with Pure Oceans is part of its plastic neutrality program, which it is committed to sustaining every month moving forward.

Pure Oceans, led by its Founder and CEO Pia Roxas Ocampo, is based in Mabini, Batangas and works with coastal and island communities on sustainable solutions to the problem of marine plastic litter, aiming to keep reefs and seas plastic-free.

Under the partnership, Nestlé Philippines is funding the development of the Basura Bangka to support Pure Oceans programs in Mabini and Tingloy, Batangas. Basura Bangka is an innovative mechanism to help address the plastics situation in geographically disadvantaged, coastal and island communities that do not have access to conventional waste management solutions.

"We are accelerating our actions to confront plastic waste and are committed to making a significant contribution to tackle the plastics problem. Collaboration among stakeholders is important and necessary. Given the geographical set-up of the Philippines, we need to find waste management solutions as well for coasts and islands. We therefore warmly welcome our partnership with Pure Oceans in our first direct initiative to divert plastic waste from coastal areas and islands," said Nestlé Philippines Chairman and CEO Kais Marzouki.

The Philippines as an archipelago has been identified, after China and Indonesia, as a country most responsible for the leakage of plastics into seas and oceans.



“Nestlé’s support for programs like Linis Islas shows a company trying to do better in a changed world, conscious of the impact of their manufacturing choices on the environment and the farthest, most under-served of their customers. Basura Bangka is a prototype towards making sure coastal and island communities can thrive in a purer and healthier environment. We hope that solutions like this and support like Nestle’s will grow and increase further in scale because the challenge of marine plastic litter affects all of us, and so all of us must act,” Ocampo said.

“We are committed to examining all options in facing the issue of plastic waste in the environment and adopting a range of solutions that can make a difference. At Nestlé we are determined to pursue the vision of a waste-free future in the face of difficult challenges. We are happy to partner with Pure Oceans in this specific initiative, one that helps bring us closer to realizing that vision,” Marzouki stated.

Source: [https://journal.com.ph/news/events/nestle-philippines-pure-oceans-launch-linis-islas-basura-bangka/?fbclid=IwAR1vgbKojH3wEiun\\_KWO\\_qniJLdbw7zFMbxI39Fkgr4M62nZqQjZ6dMvHjg](https://journal.com.ph/news/events/nestle-philippines-pure-oceans-launch-linis-islas-basura-bangka/?fbclid=IwAR1vgbKojH3wEiun_KWO_qniJLdbw7zFMbxI39Fkgr4M62nZqQjZ6dMvHjg)



# DOH records 3,550 new COVID-19 cases as tally approaches 273,000

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published Sep 16, 2020 4:03:44 PM



Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, September 16) — The Department of Health reported on Wednesday that 3,550 more people in the country have been diagnosed with COVID-19, pushing the total case count closer to 273,000.

The latest data from the department showed there are now 272,934 confirmed cases of the viral illness nationwide, of which 60,344 are active cases. This means 22 percent of the total number of infected are still afflicted by the disease.

According to the DOH, Metro Manila detected 1,459 new infected residents, while Rizal had 271, Cavite had 196, and both Bulacan and Laguna registered 172 each.

Health spokesperson Maria Rosario Vergeire said the DOH has identified five new clusters in Calabarzon and four in Bulacan, which led to the increase in the coronavirus tallies in the areas.

READ: [DOH: New COVID-19 clusters found in Calabarzon, Bulacan](#)

Meanwhile, 524 recoveries were logged by health officials, with the country's recovery count rising to 207,858.

The death toll also reached 4,732, as 69 more people succumbed to the disease. Of this number, 34 passed away in September, 18 in August, and 17 died in the months of April to July.

The DOH noted in its bulletin that it removed 23 duplicates from the total case count as part of its constant data cleaning process. It added that nine cases previously reported as recoveries turned out to be deaths after final validation.

Sixteen more Filipinos abroad caught the coronavirus, while another 13 recovered, the Department of Foreign Affairs said.

A total of 10,339 overseas Filipinos have been infected with COVID-19 in 77 countries worldwide. Of this number, 6,581 have gotten well while 773 have died, according to the DFA.

The Philippine National Police also confirmed 27 more cases and 62 new recoveries in its ranks. Nearly 60 percent, or 16, of the newly infected are assigned in Metro Manila. The tally among police personnel went up to 5,233 detected cases, including 3,813 recoveries and 16 fatalities.

Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/9/16/PH-coronavirus-cases-near-273k.html>



# PH allocates P8.9 million to compensate vaccine trials' participants

Published 15 hours ago on September 16, 2020 02:56 PM

By [Gabbie Parlade](#)



The Philippines is set to allocate around P8.9 million for the World Health Organization (WHO) solidarity trial for vaccines, the Department of Health (DOH) disclosed on Wednesday.

Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said the fund will come from the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) budget, being the lead agency on vaccine trials in the country.

She also said that the central implementing agency for the trial will be the Philippine General Hospital (PGH) where around 34 vaccines are expected to join which are all in varying phases of their clinical trial.

“We have this list of vaccines, these are 34 in all which are being studied by the WHO, so that they come up with a list of all the vaccines included in the solidarity trial for vaccines,” she said.

“Yung unang siyam diyan yan na po yung mga nasa advanced stages at yan na rin po yung nakakusap ng pilipinas sa ngayon,” she added.

Vaccine developers which are already in talks with the Philippines include the Oxford University's Astra-Zeneca, Russia's Gamaleya Research Institute, China's Sinovac and Sinopharm, the Osaka University's Takara DNA-plasmid, India's Bharat Biotech, and the University of Queensland's Seqirus among others.

Vergeire said the trial is expected to run for 18 months, and it may start in the third week of October.

Earlier the DOST said compensation will be given to all the participants of the trial which will include allowances for food and transportation.

At present, the total COVID cases in the country have reached nearly 270,000 with recoveries at more than 207,000 and a death toll of around 4,600.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/09/16/ph-allocates-p8-9-million-to-compensate-vaccine-trials-participants/>





## DOKTOR SA PINAS, DAPAT PARAMIHIN



September 16, 2020 @ 9:58 PM 8 hours ago

INILANTAD ng pandemyang coronavirus disease-19 ang labis na kakulangan ng mga doktor sa ating bansa.

Ayon mismo sa Department of Health, noong wala pa ang pandemya, kailangan ng bansa ang nasa 15,000 doktor para matugunan ang pangangailangan ng mga mamamayan nating nagkakasakit.

Ngayong nagpandemya, lalong luminaw ang pangangailangan ng mga doktor.

Kulang na nga, nagkakasakit at namamatay pa sa COVID-19 ang marami sa mga ito.

### TAKOT SA KAMATAYAN

Sa pakikipaglaban nila sa pandemya simula noong pumutok ito noong Enero, may namatay nang halos 30 doktor mula sa mahigit 40 na health care worker.

Sa halos 7,000 health care worker na nagka-COVID-19, nasa 1,370 rito ang doktor, kabilang na ang mga namatay.

Pagkagaling sa COVID-19, may mga doktor na nadadala at hindi na bumabalik sa laban sa pandemya.

May mga doktor pa nga na nagre-resign sa pwesto sa private at public hospital sa takot na ma-COVID-19 sila at mamatay.

May mga retirable na tuluyan nang nag-retire rin sa takot pa ring magkasakit at mamatay.

Kasama ang mga ganitong kalagayan sa mga dahilan kung bakit kinakapos tayo ng mga doktor.

### TAGILID SA TIMBANGAN

Ayon sa Philippine Medical Association, noong 2016, may rehistradong 130,000 doktor ngunit nasa 70,000 lamang ang aktibo.

Nakalulungkot ding malaman na marami sa mga ito ang naging nurse upang magtrabaho sa ibang bansa.

Meron namang tayong nagiging doktor taon-taon na 2,600, ayon sa DOH, ngunit malinaw na kulang na kulang pa rin tayo sa doktor.



Ngayon, ipagpalagay na lang na may mahigit 70,000 doktor tayo na aktibo, kasama na ang mga bagong 2,600 taon-taon simula noong 2016, kung ipupwesto sila sa pag-aalaga ng 105,000,000 Pinoy, lumalabas na 1 doktor ang nagbabantay sa kalusugan ng 1,500 Pinoy.

Pero hindi ganito ang tunay na larawan ng distribusyon ng mga doktor.

Maraming doktor ang naiipon sa mga ospital at sentrong lungsod habang wala o kakaunti ang nalalagay sa mga barangay.

Meron ngang ilang general hospital na isa o dalawa lang ang resident doctor sa mga lalawigan.

Kaya naman, libo-libong mamamayan ang hindi nakakikita ng mga doktor mula sa pagkapanganak hanggang sa sila'y mamatay at nagaganap ito sa mga lugar ng mga katutubo.

Sa mga sikat na ospital, minimum ang P100,000 na singil ng mga doktor sa professional fee mula sa isang pasyente lang gaya ng maysakit sa puso, kidney, diabetes at iba pa samantalang ang municipal doctor, nasa P50,000 kada buwan para sa napakaraming pasyente.

## REMEDYO

Isang taon pa lang ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte, isinulong na nito ang scholarship para sa mga mahihirap na gustong maging doktor.

Pero wala tayong gaanong naririnig mula sa Department of Health at Commission on Higher Education kung ano ang kalagayan ukol dito.

Mayroon namang makikitang pagbubukas para rito ang DOH at CHED alinsunod sa aksyon ng Pangulo subalit kung saan nakarating ang programa, walang malinaw na rekord.

Magkagayunman, sa taong ito, may mga panukala sa Kamara nitong Agosto na pinangunahan ni Cong. Rufus Rodriguez at sa Senado na pinangunahan ni Senate President Vicente Sotto III ngayong Setyembre para gawing batas ang scholarship program sa doktor.

Walang gaanong kumontra sa mga panukalang batas, lalo na sa Senado na unanimous ang pag-apruba sa panukala.

Kung papasa na sa bicameral conference committee ang mga panukala, lubos tayong naniniwala na pipirmahan naman agad ito ni Pang. Duterte.

Sana magmadali ang lahat ng mga mambabatas na ipasa ang kanilang mga panukala at idulog agad ito sa opisina ng Pangulo upang maisama ito sa binubuong pambansang badyet para sa taong 2021.

Kailangan natin ang batas upang magkaroon ng sariling pondo at hindi katulad sa nagaganap sa DOH at CHED na parang isisingit-singit lang sa sarili nilang pondo kaya halos walang nangyayari.

# Leon expected to intensify to severe tropical storm, exit PAR Thursday

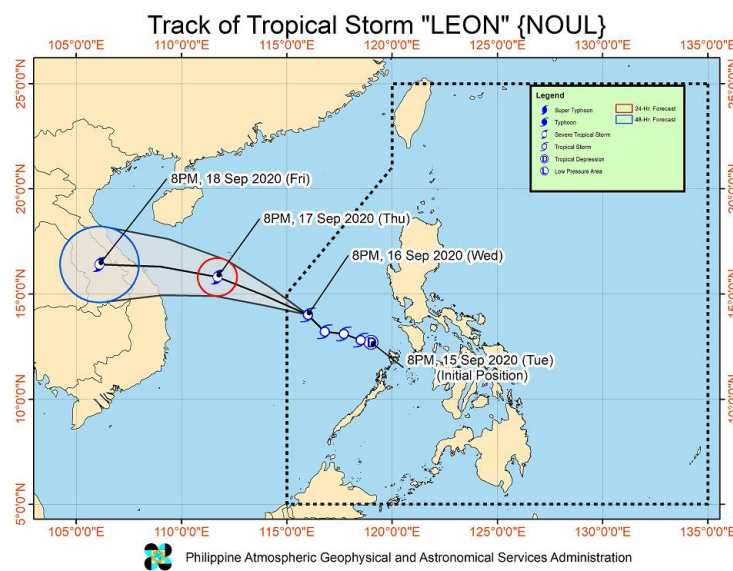
ABS-CBN News

Posted at Sep 16 2020 11:56 PM

MANILA - Leon is continuing to intensify as it moves over the West Philippine Sea and is expected to develop into a severe tropical storm by Thursday, PAGASA said Wednesday.

In its 11 p.m. weather bulletin, PAGASA said Leon was last spotted 550 km west-northwest of Coron, Palawan packing maximum sustained winds of 85 kph near the center and 105 kph gusts.

The weather disturbance is projected to leave the Philippine area of responsibility (PAR) on Thursday morning and make landfall over northern or central Vietnam on Friday afternoon or evening.



No tropical cyclone wind signal is currently in effect, said PAGASA.

Intermittent gusts due to the southwest monsoon may however be experienced over Batanes, Babuyan Islands, Mimaropa and Western Visayas.

On Wednesday night through Thursday, the southwest monsoon enhanced by Leon will bring light to moderate with at times heavy rains over Mimaropa, Western Visayas and Zamboanga Peninsula, said PAGASA.

The weather agency warned flooding and landslides may occur during heavy or prolonged rainfall in areas highly susceptible to these hazards.

PAGASA also said a gale warning is in effect over the western seaboard of Palawan (including Kalayaan Islands), Occidental Mindoro, Zambales, and Bataan due to rough to very rough seas, with waves of 2.8 m-4.5 m. Sea travel is risky over these areas.

Moderate to rough seas, with waves of 1.2m to 3.1m, will prevail over the seaboard of the rest of the country. Fishers and residents with small seacrafts are advised to take precautions out at sea.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/09/16/20/leon-expected-to-intensify-to-severe-tropical-storm-exit-par-thursday?fbclid=IwAR2vB4DHnvGCp5v-KJkBhLZieZM6OnEJxfgKhFuQKY2pJf7lCqGwBhzE3PQ>



# World lost 100 million hectares of forest in two decades: UN

Published September 16, 2020, 6:19 AM

by [Agence France-Presse](#)

The world has lost nearly 100 million hectares of forests in two decades, marking a steady decline though at a slower pace than before, a UN agency reported Tuesday.

The proportion of forest to total land area fell from 31.9 percent in 2000 to 31.2 percent in 2020, now some 4.1 billion hectares, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization.

It marks “a net loss of almost 100 million hectares of the world’s forests,” the FAO said.

Deforestation has hit particularly hard sub-Saharan Africa and southeast Asia, where it has accelerated in the last decade, but also Latin and Central America, where it has nonetheless slowed down.

Forests are being cut down mainly to make way for crops or farm animals, especially in less developed countries.

In southeast Asia, forest now covers 47.8 percent of the land compared to 49 percent in 2015. In sub-Saharan Africa, it covers 27.8 percent compared to 28.7 percent five years ago.

In Indonesia, it is 50.9 percent, down from 52.5 percent. In Malaysia, it is 58.2 percent, down from 59.2 percent five years ago.

A country strongly focused on agriculture like the Ivory Coast has seen forests reduced to 8.9 percent of the total land area from 10.7 percent in 2015. Kenya, Mali and Rwanda have largely held firm against forest loss.

In Latin and Central America, forest covers only 46.7 percent of the total land, compared to 47.4 percent five years ago.

In Brazil, forests declined to 59.4 percent of the country’s territory in 2020 from 60.3 percent in 2015. In Haiti, deforestation has continued apace — falling to 12.6 percent of the total land area from 13.2 percent in 2015.

In contrast, in many parts of Asia, Europe and North America forest area has increased or stayed the same in the last five years with policies to restore woodland and allow forests to expand naturally.

In China, forests make up 23.3 percent, up from 22.3 percent in 2015. In Japan, they account for 68.4 percent, the same as it was five years ago.

In France, forests cover 31.5 percent of the land in 2020, up from 30.7 percent in 2015. In Italy, they make up 32.5 percent of the national territory, up from 31.6 five years ago.

In Britain, they make up 13.2 percent, up from 13 percent five years ago.

In Canada, it is unchanged at 38.2 percent, and in the United States, unchanged at 33.9 percent.

In Australia the figure rose from 17.3 to 17.4 percent and in New Zealand from 37.4 percent to 37.6 percent over the five years.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/09/16/world-lost-100-million-hectares-of-forest-in-two-decades-un/>



## UN: Earth lost 100M has of forest in 20 yrs

By Agence France-Presse

September 17, 2020

**NEW YORK:** The world has lost nearly 100 million hectares of forests in two decades, marking a steady decline though at a slower pace than before, a United Nations agency reported on Tuesday (Wednesday in Manila).

The proportion of forest to total land area fell from 31.9 percent in 2000 to 31.2 percent in 2020, now some 4.1 billion hectares, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization.

It marks “a net loss of almost 100 million hectares of the world’s forests,” it said.

Deforestation has hit particularly hard sub-Saharan Africa and Southeast Asia, where it has accelerated in the last decade, but also Latin and Central America, where it has nonetheless slowed down.

Forests are being cut down mainly to make way for crops or farm animals, especially in less developed countries.

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Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/09/17/news/world/un-earth-lost-100m-has-of-forest-in-20-yrs/768882/>



## Smoke from US fires reaches Europe, satellite data shows

**Published** September 16, 2020 9:04pm

Smoke from the fires devastating swathes of the US West Coast has reached as far as Europe, the European Union's climate monitoring service said Wednesday in its assessment of the "unprecedented" blazes.

Satellite data from the Copernicus Atmosphere Monitoring Service (CAMS) showed that the wildfires currently raging across California, Oregon and Washington State are "tens to hundreds of times more intense" than the recent average.

Thanks to strong pressure systems, the smoke from the fires was trapped along the western part of North America for days, making for potentially dangerous air quality in major cities such as Portland, Oregon and Vancouver and San Francisco.

But the weather shifted on Monday, carrying the smoke east along the jet stream. The site NY Metro Weather said Tuesday that it was visible in the skies above New York.

CAMS said that it had tracked the long-range transport of smoke particles from the fires as far as 8,000 kilometres to the east -- reaching northern Europe.

It estimated that the blazes, which are significantly more likely to occur as the planet warms, have spewed out more than 30 million tonnes of carbon dioxide since mid-August.

"The scale and magnitude of these fires are at a level much higher than any of the 18 years that our monitoring data covers" since 2003, said Mark Parrington, CMAS senior scientist and wildfire expert.

"The fact that these fires are emitting so much pollution into the atmosphere that we can still see thick smoke over 8000 kilometres away reflects just how devastating they have been in their magnitude and duration."

### Climate link

The blazes have already burned nearly five million acres (two million hectares) across the US West, torching an area roughly the size of the state of New Jersey, with fears the death toll of 35 may rise.



The disaster has brought the issue of global warming to the forefront of US political discourse a matter of weeks ahead of the presidential election.

While it has been historically difficult to prove the link between individual extreme weather events and climate change, there is a growing body of evidence showing blazes such as those in the US could not be so intense and widespread without the 1C of warming humanity has caused during the industrial age.

In general, climate change has been proven to amplify droughts that dry out regions, creating ideal conditions for wildfires to spread out-of-control and inflict unprecedented material and environmental damage.

Using a growing area of research known as "attribution science", experts concluded that the wildfires that struck eastern Australia earlier this year were made at least 30 percent more likely due to global warming. **-Agence France-Presse**

Source: [https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/world/755893/smoke-from-us-fires-reaches-europe-satellite-data-shows/story/?utm\\_source=GMAnews&utm\\_medium=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR2Ema4ODoEwd4WXPag1WBM-qOX3zbw5biFj2ASrmvGD91U7mIwouUaqCZ4](https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/world/755893/smoke-from-us-fires-reaches-europe-satellite-data-shows/story/?utm_source=GMAnews&utm_medium=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR2Ema4ODoEwd4WXPag1WBM-qOX3zbw5biFj2ASrmvGD91U7mIwouUaqCZ4)



## Big fire endangers historic LA edifice

By Agence France-Presse

September 17, 2020

**LOS ANGELES:** A major fire that has been raging outside Los Angeles for more than a week threatened to engulf a historic observatory and billion-dollar broadcast towers on Tuesday (Wednesday in Manila) as firefighters struggled to contain the flames. The so-called Bobcat Fire was within 500 feet (150 meters) from the 116-year-old Mt. Wilson Observatory, the United States Forest Service said in a tweet, while fire officials said crews were in place “ready to receive the fire.” Officials at the observatory said in a tweet late Monday that all personnel had been evacuated as the fire was “knocking on our door.”