

26 SEPTEMBER 2020, Saturday



DENR

NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Cimatu suspends 2 dolomite mining firms in Cebu; coral reef damage probe ongoing

Published September 25, 2020, 4:44 PM

by [Alexandria Dennise San Juan](#)

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) chief Roy Cimatu ordered on Friday the suspension of two mining firms in Alcoy, Cebu, pending results of the investigation on the alleged damages they have caused for dolomite mining.



Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu (RTVM / FILE PHOTO / MANILA BULLETIN)

Operations of the Dolomite Mining Corporation (DMC) for its quarry operations and Philippine Mining Service Corporation (PMSC), a processing plant for dolomite, have been halted by the environment secretary, following an inspection conducted by DENR officials, the Department said in a statement.

According to Cimatu, a probe is already ongoing on the alleged damages on the coral reef, as well as on water and ambient air qualities caused by dolomite mining in the town.

Cimatu has directed the DENR-Environmental Management Bureau in Region 7 to conduct a water quality sampling on waters below the conveyor at the ship-loading facility, and ambient air quality.

The Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office-Cebu was ordered by the DENR secretary to determine the health condition of the corals which was the subject of the complaint made by the provincial government.

He also instructed the DENR Mines and Geo-Sciences Bureau in the region to convene the Provincial Mining Regulatory Board of Cebu chaired by the bureau's regional director to discuss mining-related concerns.

Cebu Governor Gwendolyn Garcia has earlier ordered an investigation into the damage on the marine ecosystem as shown on aerial photos and videos presented to them.

Garcia had also issued a cease and desist order to DMC and PMSC for selling dolomite rocks as substitute for sand and gravel in the domestic market, which is not covered by their permits. Crushed dolomite rocks from Alcoy had been transported to Manila to fill a stretch of the Manila Bay for its beautification project.

Cimatu orders suspension of Alcoy firms mining, exporting dolomite

By: Morexette Marie B. Erram - CDN Digital | September 25, 2020 - 02:01 PM



Environment secretary Roy Cimatu speaks with members of the media during his visit in Alcoy town in Cebu on Friday, September 25, 2020, to lead the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) inspection of dolomite-quarrying and processing companies. CDN Digital photo | Morexette Marie B. Erram

Alcoy, Cebu—Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu has verbally ordered on Friday, September 25, 2020, the temporary suspension of all aspects of operations of the two firms quarrying and exporting dolomite here.

Cimatu told members of the media in a [press interview](#) that the decision was made in order to pave way for their department's investigation on the environmental impact of quarrying.

“We have to suspend all of its operations as an investigation is ongoing. Starting today (Friday),” said Cimatu in a mix of English and Tagalog.

Cimatu visited this southeastern town of Cebu on Friday to lead the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) inspection of dolomite-quarrying and processing companies.

The Cabinet member has directed the Environmental Management Bureau in Central Visayas (EMB-7) to collect water samples and conduct air monitoring around the port of the Philippine Mining Services Corporation (PMSC).

PMSC, based in Barangay Pugalo in Alcoy, processes and exports dolomite they bought from Dolomite Mining Corporation (DMC), the sole dolomite quarrying operator in the municipality.

Cimatu also said DENR will be closely coordinating with the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (Penro) to examine the extent of damage in Alcoy's seabed, which, environmental groups said, have suffered heavy siltation due to the movement of crushed dolomite rocks in PMSC's port.

PMSC, for its part, said they will abide with whatever instructions that will come from DENR

In the meantime, Engr. Antonio Castillo, Senior Manager of Corporate Planning of PMSC, said they will wait for the official order from DENR's central office.



Cimatu orders suspension of Alcoy firms mining, exporting dolomite

“But nevertheless, as the regulating body, we will abide with whatever they will instruct us to do,” Castillo said in a mix of English and Cebuano.

Crushed dolomite rocks sourced from the mountains of Alcoy, a fifth-class municipality located approximately 101 kilometers southeast of Cebu City, were used for artificial white-sand component of Manila Bay’s rehabilitation project.

/bmjo

Read more: <https://cebudailynews.inquirer.net/341950/cimatu-orders-suspension-of-alcoy-firms-mining-exporting-dolomite#ixzz6Z5WCxBbr>

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DENR pinasususpende ang quarrying ng dolomite sa Alcoy, Cebu

By Dona Dominguez-Cargullo September 25, 2020 - 02:50 PM



Iniutos ni Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu ang temporary suspension sa dolomite operations ng dalawang kumpanya sa Cebu.

Sa kaniyang pahayag sa Cebu, sinabi ni Cimatu na layon ng desisyon na mabigyang-daan ang imbestigasyon ng DENR sa environmental impact ng dolomite quarrying.

Epektibo ang suspensyon simula ngayong araw, Sept. 25 ayon kay Cimatu.

Nagtungo si Cimatu sa Alcoy, Cebu para inspeksyunin ang dolomite-quarrying.

Inatasan ni Cimatu ang Environmental Management Bureau sa Central Visayas (EMB-7) na kumuha ng water samples at magsagawa ng air monitoring sa Philippine Mining Services Corporation (PMSC).

Ang PMSC ay naka-base sa Barangay Pugalo sa Alcoy at ito ang nagproseso ng dolomite na binili ng DENR mula sa Dolomite Mining Corporation (DMC).

Read more: <https://radyo.inquirer.net/266413/denr-pinasususpende-ang-quarrying-ng-dolomite-sa-alcoy-cebu#ixzz6Z5uToOBx>

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Inatasan din niya ang Provincial Environment and Natural Resources-Cebu na alamin ang kondisyon ng corals na laman ng reklamo ng provincial government ng Cebu.

Nauna nang nagbaba ng cease-and-desist order ang provincial government dahil sa hindi otorisadong mineral extraction ng dolomite rocks kaugnay sa Manila Bay "white sand" project.

**CIMATU, IPINASUSPINDE
ANG 2 DOLOMITE FIRMS
SA CEBU**

Sinuspinde ni DENR Sec. Roy Cimatu ang Dolomite Mining Corporation dahil sa quarry operations nito at Philippine Mining Service Corporation na isang processing plant sa Alcoy habang hinihintay pa ang resulta ng imbestigasyon sa umano'y coral reef damage, water quality monitoring, at ambient air quality.

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Cimatu orders suspension of dolomite mining in Cebu town

By Carlo Lorenciana and John Rey Saavedra September 25, 2020, 8:00 pm



SITE INSPECTION. Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu surveys the conveyor of the Philippine Mining Services Corporation that loads dolomite to a vessel, in Barangay Pugalo in the southern town of Alcoy in Cebu on Friday (Sept. 25, 2020). Cimatu ordered the PMSC and the Dolomite Mining Corporation to temporarily suspend operations as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources investigates on the alleged environmental impact of the two firms' dolomite mining activities. *(Photo courtesy of DENR-7)*

ALCOY, Cebu – Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu on Friday ordered the two dolomite mining operators in this southern town to temporarily suspend all aspects of their operations.

The verbal order was issued by Cimatu when he led a site inspection on the coastal area of Barangay Pugalo here to determine if crushed dolomite mined by Dolomite Mining Corp. (DMC) have contaminated the waters in the area amid the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' (DENR) investigation on the alleged environmental impact of their activities.

The order is immediately effective Friday, Sept. 25, while the investigation is ongoing, according to Cimatu.

“Nagpunta ako rito para tignan tong (reported) environmental violations ng mining operations dito,” he said in an interview with the local press.

He said the crushed dolomite rocks sourced from a mineral-processing plant here are transported in bulk carrier vessels, which might have affected the quality of the water and corals in the area.

“Yan yung mga concerns na tinitignan natin,” he said, noting that he has ordered the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) to get water samples in the said coastal barangay to be tested for quality and conduct air monitoring.

Cimatu said his office also sent divers to check on the damage to corals due to the fallen dolomites, stressing that he was very concerned about the “environmental issues brought up by the province”.

The provincial government of Cebu earlier noted new violations committed by two mining firms operating in this town.



Cimatu orders suspension of dolomite mining in Cebu town

An inspection of the seabed in Pugalo showed heavy siltation and damage to the area's marine ecosystem, raising the possibility of the issuance of another cease and desist order against the mining firms.

Cimatu said without such order, mining operations in the town must be suspended pending the ongoing investigation.

Governor Gwendolyn Garcia asked the Mines and Geosciences Bureau to investigate after aerial photos and videos were presented by the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) in a meeting with the Environmental Management Bureau, DENR, DMC, and the Philippine Mining Services Corp. (PMSC) on Sept. 17.

Environmental group, Sea Knights, found that particles from the crushed dolomite fall to the sea when transported to the bulk carrier vessels through a conveyor belt.

Initial reports submitted to PENRO indicated that corals were destroyed within 500 meters of seawater because of heavy siltation, causing the corals and the seabed to turn white.

Earlier, the provincial government issued a cease and desist order to DMC and PMSC for selling the dolomite as substitute for sand and gravel in the domestic market, which is not covered by their permits.

Crushed dolomite rocks are being sourced from the mountains of Alcoy, a fifth-class municipality located approximately 101 kilometers southeast of Cebu City. These were used for the Manila Bay's white-sand rehabilitation project.

PMSC, based in Barangay Pugalo, processes and exports dolomite it bought from DMC, the sole dolomite quarrying operator in the municipality.

Cimatu said the DENR will be closely coordinating with the PENRO to monitor the extent of damage in Alcoy's seabed.

Earlier, Mayor Michael Angelo Sestoso told the Philippine News Agency in an interview that dolomite mining in Alcoy has been in existence since 1981 and the activities there are not solely meant for the ongoing rehabilitation of Manila Bay. *(PNA)*

Cimatu verbally orders suspension of dolomite-quarrying firms

By: Morexette Marie B. Erram - Multimedia Reporter - CDN Digital | September 25, 2020 - 06:24 PM



DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu leads the inspection of the mineral-processing plant in Alcoy, Cebu on Friday, September 25, 2020. | Morexette Marie B. Erram

ALCOY, Cebu — Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu on Friday, September 25 has verbally ordered the temporary suspension of two large-scale dolomite quarrying and processing firms in Alcoy town, Cebu.

Cimatu on Friday led the ocular inspection in Dolomite Mining Corporation (DMC) and Philippine Mining Service Corporation (PMSC), both based in Barangay Pugalo, Alcoy.

Cimatu told members of the media [in a press interview](#) that his visit was due to reports they received and heard from various sectors – both from the public and private – that quarrying and processing dolomite, a type of mineral, have damaged portions of Alcoy’s marine ecosystem.

After a meeting with representatives from the two mining firms, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary said their department would be intervening in the matter.

As a result, they have ordered the companies to temporarily cease all aspects of its operations effective Friday.

“We have to suspend all of its operations as an investigation is ongoing. (Suspension will take effect) starting today (Friday),” said Cimatu in a mix of English and Tagalog.

It can be recalled that prior to Cimatu’s announcement, the Cebu Provincial government has initiated its own investigation on DMC and PMSC.

The Capitol earlier announced that they, too, had received findings from environmental groups, saying that moving crushed dolomite out of the processing plant, through a conveyor belt, had resulted in heavy siltation in Alcoy’s coral reefs.

Sought for her comments, Governor Gwendolyn Garcia welcomed Cimatu’s decision.

“I would like to thank Secretary Cimatu for acting quickly. He has, I’m sure, been apprised of the investigation we have conducted, and from reports that have arrived,” said Garcia.

The governor had planned to issue another cease-and-desist order on the two mining operators after discovering ‘obvious environmental violations’.



Cimatu verbally orders suspension of dolomite-quarrying firms

“And these have been discussed yesterday in different agencies. They have conducted site inspections and there are obvious violations to the ECC (Environment Compliant Certificate) and water discharge permit,” Garcia said.

“These are violations causing degradation of our seabed so we had contemplated issuing a CDO. But I’d like to thank Secretary Cimatu for beating me to it,” she added.

Alcoy is a fifth-class municipality located approximately 101 kilometers southeast of Cebu City. Experts said huge deposits of dolomite rocks, a type of mineral composed of calcium magnesium carbonate, can be found here.

Cimatu has directed the Environmental Management Bureau in Central Visayas (EMB-7) to collect water samples and conduct air monitoring around the port of PMSC.

PMSC processes and exports dolomite they bought from DMC which is the sole dolomite quarrying operator in the municipality.

Cimatu also said DENR would be closely coordinating with the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (Penro) to examine the extent of damage in Alcoy’s seabed, which environmental groups said had suffered heavy siltation due to the movement of crushed dolomite rocks in PMSC’s port.

PMSC, for its part, said they would abide by whatever instructions that would come from DENR.

In the meantime, Engineer Antonio Castillo, senior manager of corporate planning of PMSC, said they would wait for the official order from DENR’s central office.

“We will wait for the official document from DENR. But nevertheless, as the regulating body, we will abide by whatever they will instruct us to do,” Castillo said in a mix of English and Cebuano.

Garcia earlier released a similar order to the companies after national government agencies confirmed that the crushed dolomite rocks used as the artificial white sand for Manila Bay’s rehabilitation initiative came from Alcoy.

Garcia’s previous directives effectively stopped more shipment of dolomite rocks to Manila Bay.
/dbs

Read more: <https://cebudailynews.inquirer.net/342047/full-story-cimatu-verbally-orders-suspension-of-dolomite-quarrying-firms#ixzz6Z5dLoc4E>

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IN PHOTOS: Cimatu visits dolomite-processing, exporting firms in Alcoy

By: Morexette Marie B. Erram - Multimedia Reporter - CDN Digital | September 25, 2020 - 05:36 PM



DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu leads the inspection of the mineral-processing plant in Alcoy, Cebu on Friday, September 25, 2020. | Morexette Marie B. Erram

ALCOY, Cebu – Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu has ordered the temporary suspension of two large-scale dolomite-quarrying and processing firms in Alcoy town in southeastern Cebu on Friday, September 25, 2020.

Cimatu led various regulatory bodies and bureaus under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) for an ocular inspection in Dolomite Mining Corporation (DMC) and Philippine Mining Services Corporation (PMSC) in Barangay Pugalo, Alcoy.



The DENR Secretary said his visit was due to reports they received and heard from various sectors – both from the public and private – that quarrying and processing dolomite, a type of mineral, have damaged portions of Alcoy’s marine ecosystem.

Alcoy is a fifth class municipality located around 101 kilometers southeast of Cebu City, and where experts said huge deposits of dolomite rocks can be found. /dbs

Cimatu orders suspension of 2 Cebu mining firms amid probe on dolomite damage

By [Danielle Nakpil, CNN Philippines](#)

Published Sep 25, 2020 3:01:37 PM

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, September 25) — Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu has ordered the suspension of two mining firms in Alcoy, Cebu pending the results of the investigation on the alleged dolomite mining damage.

DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said in a statement on Friday that Cimatu ordered the suspension as the investigation is ongoing on the alleged damages caused by the dolomite mining on the coral reef, water, and ambient air quality.

“Secretary Cimatu suspended the Dolomite Mining Corporation for its quarry operations and Philippine Mining Service Corporation, a processing plant for dolomite,” said Antiporda.

Cimatu has directed the Environmental Management Bureau Region 7 to conduct sampling on the ambient air quality and on the quality on waters below the conveyor at shiploading facility.

The Environment chief held a two-hour meeting with officials from Dolomite Mining Corporation, the Philippine Mining Services Corporation, local officials and other stakeholders at the mining site.

He also ordered the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office Cebu to determine the health condition of the corals.



The alleged damage of coral reef in the surrounding area where the dolomite boulders were extracted was the subject of the complaint of the local government.



Cimatu orders suspension of 2 Cebu mining firms amid probe on dolomite damage

"Habang under investigation dito ay mag cease operations muna sila pero nag cease operations naman sila dahil sa cease and desist order of the province. Ang sabi ko kahit wala ang cease-and-desist order na yan they have to stop operations at mag conduct ng investigation muna," Ciimatu told reporters during his visit to Alcoy town on Friday."

[Translation: While there is an ongoing investigation here, operations must cease, but it already did because of the cease-and-desist order of the province. I said even without that, they need to stop operations.]

The stoppage will last pending the EMB investigation. If violations are found, Cimatu said operations will be suspended further.

The Cebu provincial government has earlier issued a cease-and-desist order for the unauthorized mineral extraction of the dolomite rocks to be used in the controversial Manila Bay 'white sand' layover.

Governor Gwendolyn Garcia issued [Executive Order No. 25](#) preventing the two aforementioned firms from "extracting, processing, selling and transporting dolomite, associated mineral deposits, and other quarry resources."

Dale Israel, CNN Philippines correspondent in Cebu, contributed to this story.



DENR probes mining firms in Manila Bay white sand project

By: [Dale Israel](#), [Nestle Semilla](#) - [@inquire dot net](#)
[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:24 AM September 26, 2020

CEBU CITY, Cebu, Philippines — Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu on Friday suspended two mining companies in Cebu that provided the crushed dolomite for the controversial Manila Bay “beach nourishment project” of the environment department after they allegedly destroyed corals in the waters near the mine site.

Dolomite Mining Corp. (DMC) and Philippine Mining Service Corp. (PMSC), which processes quarried dolomite rocks, will remain suspended until an investigation by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is concluded.

“I have to stop the operation while an investigation is conducted to determine whether or not the two companies violated some rules,” said Cimatu, who visited the dolomite mine site at Alcoy town in southern Cebu province.

DMC is the only large-scale producer of dolomite materials, according to Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda.

The company has a 25-year mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA), which covers a total of 524 hectares in Cebu’s Alcoy and Dalaguete towns. PMSC’s mineral processing permit is valid until 2023.

Cimatu directed the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) to test the air and water quality in Alcoy’s Barangay Pugalo where the crushed dolomite was loaded on bulk carrier vessels anchored off the coastal village before they sailed for Manila.

The Manila Bay beautification project has been hounded by criticisms since the first trucks loaded with dolomite “sand” first appeared on a part of the famed Manila Baywalk beside the US Embassy on Sept. 3.

The criticisms centered on the timing and the amount to be spent for the project—P389 million—while the country was grappling with a raging pandemic.

In a radio interview on Friday, Vice President Leni Robredo said the continuation of the beach nourishment project was insensitive and showed a lack of a sense of urgency in dealing with the national health emergency.

“If they think that the [project] would help improve the appearance of Manila Bay, I have no problem with that. But my problem is the timing,” she said. “That’s important because the allocation could have been realigned for urgent needs.” She noted President Duterte’s oft-repeated complaint that the government was running out of funds.

“Many people are hungry right now, many people need help, the [new coronavirus] transmission has yet to be controlled, and then we see this,” Robredo said.

GRAY AND WHITE Manila Bay’s natural gray sand appears to be pushing its way to the surface, breaking through tons of dolomite “white sand” dumped near the US Embassy (in the background) as part of the environment department’s P389-million rehabilitation project. On Friday, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu ordered the suspension of the two mining companies



DENR probes mining firms in Manila Bay white sand project

that sold the dolomite to the government for allegedly silting the waters off a village in Cebu near the mine and damaging the marine ecosystem. —RICHARD A. REYES

Sustainability

Environmentalists also questioned the sustainability of the artificial “white sand,” warning that the next typhoon could wash it away, leading to a waste of money.

The Akbayan party list on Thursday petitioned the Supreme Court to cite the DENR for contempt for violating the court’s 2008 order to clean up and rehabilitate Manila Bay when it dumped the crushed dolomite rocks to create an artificial white sand beach.

“A dolomite beach in Manila Bay is nothing but a window-dressing project. Disregarding the unconscionable cost at this time of the COVID-19 pandemic, it might even be acceptable if it does no harm to the environment and to humans. But it does,” Akbayan said in its petition.

It cited a data safety report by the US-based construction materials supplier Lehigh Hanson Inc., which stated that dolomite could cause cancer, lung damage through prolonged repeated exposure, and skin and eye irritation.

The Cebu Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office last week reported that corals within 500 meters from the shores of Barangay Pugalo were destroyed by the dolomite silt. Cimatu on Friday ordered the EMB to again send divers to check the condition of the corals.

Antonio Castillo, the senior manager for corporate planning of PMSC, said they would cooperate with the government investigation.

“We could not say no to their order because they are the regulating body,” he said in an interview.

DOLOMITE TOWN Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu visits a coastal village in the dolomite mining town of Alcoy in Cebu province on Friday where he announced the suspension of two mining companies that provided crushed dolomite to the environment department’s Manila Bay beach nourishment project. —DENRPHOTO

Surprised

Officials of the Cebu provincial government, including Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia, were surprised to learn that dolomite from the province was being shipped to Manila.

On Sept. 8, Garcia stopped the further extraction, sale and transport of dolomite locally, which is beyond the provisions of the MPSA issued by the EMB.

At least 10,500 wet metric tons of Alcoy dolomite were supposed to be transported to Manila in addition to the 7,000 wet MT that had already been shipped, Garcia said.

The regional office of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau had issued two ore transportation permits to PMSC authorizing the shipment of dolomite to Manila valued at P1.64 million. Three more permits are pending.



No prior assessment

Since the sale of dolomite is not covered by the MPSA, Garcia said there was no prior assessment of the quarrying's impact on the environment in Alcoy, which is a critical area as it is the natural habitat of the endangered and endemic "siloy" birds, or the Cebu black shama.

Alcoy, located 101 kilometers south of Cebu City, is a fifth class municipality.

Garcia said Alcoy dolomite had been sold as a substitute for sand and gravel in the domestic market without the necessary permits from the Capitol and tax payments to the province.

Provincial Treasurer Roy Salubre earlier said that based on their initial computation, DMC and PMSC should pay P726,923.077 to the province for the dolomite shipped to Manila.

Garcia said they were looking for a "fair, transparent and accountable way" of responding to the dolomite controversy because "we answer to the people."

2 kumpanyang nagmina para sa 'Manila Bay white sand' suspendido ng DENR

(Philstar.com) -September 25, 2020 - 3:09pm



Kulang na lang ay magtampisaw sa tubig ang mga turistang ito, ika-20 ng Setyembre, matapos buksan sa publiko ang "white sand beach" ng Manila Bay
The STAR/Miguel de Guzman

MANILA, Philippines — Simula ngayong araw, pansamantala munang ipagbabawal ang lahat ng operasyon ng mga kumpanyang nag-extract ng "dolomite" para sa kontrobersyal na Manila Bay beach nourishment project, pag-uulat ng state-owned [Radyo Pilipinas](#), Biyernes.

Ayon kay Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, pinatawan nila ng suspensyon ang Dolomite Mining Corporation (DMC) at Philippine Mining Services Corp. (PMSC) kasabay ng kanyang isinasagawang site inspection sa diumano'y pagkasira ng kalikasan sa Alcoy, Cebu.

Tatlong araw pa lang ang nakalilipas nang sabihin ni Cebu provincial board member Jiembro Borgonia na pinag-aaralan na nila ang pagsasampa ng kaso laban sa DMC at PMSC dahil sa "hindi pagbabayad ng local taxes sa probinsya ng Cebu."

Maliban pa riyang diumano'y pagwasak ng dolomite mining operations sa mga lugar, gaya na lang ng idinulot daw nito sa mga kalapit na anyong-tubig.

"Yung mga corals, [wala] na sa kanyang natural color kasi... pumuputi na at tska 'yung mga fish cage," ani Borgonia nitong Martes.

"Yung mga fisherman natin di na sila maka-fish within the area. Kailangan nila sa malayo kahit marami naman sanang fishes dun. 'Yung livelihood ng fisherman ay talagang naapektuhan kaya sila ang dumulog nung narinig 'yung issue."

Bago ipinataw ng DENR ang suspensyon ngayong araw, nauna nang nag-isyu ng cease and desist order ang pamahalaang panlalawigan ng Cebu laban sa PMSC at DMC sa kani-kanilang operasyon sa Alcoy bunsod ng ilang paglabag.

Una nang nabatikos ang paggastos ng P398 milyon ng gobyerno para lang magtambak ng dinurog na dolomite — isang mineral na nakasasama sa kalusugan kung pinong-pino na animo'y alikabok — lalo na't isinasagawa ito kasabay ng coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

Ayon sa mga environmentalists, "gandang panlabas" lang talaga ang naibibigay nito at hindi naman nalilinis ang pagkarumi-ruming tubig ng look.



2 kumpanyang nagmina para sa 'Manila Bay white sand' suspendido ng DENR

Mas mainam pa rin naman daw na ginastusan na lang ang mas mura at environmentally sustainable na pagtanim ng mga bakawan (mangrove) sa paligid ng Manila Bay.

Kamakailan lang din nang mabahala ang Department of Health (DOH) sa biglaang pagdagsa ng libu-libong katao sa Manila Bay para saksihan ang man-made white beach, sa dahilang [hindi napanatili ang social distancing](#) sa gitna ng COVID-19 pandemic. — **James Relativo**

2 mining firms in Cebu suspended over alleged extensive damage to environment



Published 12 hours ago
on September 25, 2020 04:09 PM
By [Francis Wakefield](#)



Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu ordered the suspension of two mining firms in Alcoy, Cebu allegedly for extensive damages they brought to the marine ecosystem.

Cimatu ordered the suspension of Dolomite Mining Corporation and the Philippine Mining Service Corporation while the investigation is being conducted on the alleged coral reef damage, water quality monitoring, and ambient air quality they caused to the environment.

DMC operates as a quarrying firm while PMSC is a dolomite processing plant.

DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and LGUs Concerns Benny Antiporda said Cimatu directed the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) in Region 7 to conduct a water quality sampling on waters below the conveyor at the ship loading facility, and ambient air quality.

Also, the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) was ordered to conduct a coral assessment to determine the health condition of the corals which was the subject of the complaint by the Provincial Government of Cebu.

“He (Cimatu) also instructed the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) 7 to convene the Provincial Mining Regulatory Board of Cebu chaired by the MGB7 Regional Director to discuss mining-related concerns,” Antiporda said in a statement.

Local officials from Alcoy earlier reported that the extraction of dolomite rocks in their area brought extensive damage to the town’s marine ecosystem, particularly its coral reefs.



2 mining firms in Cebu suspended over alleged extensive damage to environment

An inspection earlier conducted by PENRO revealed that the heavy siltation caused by the crushed dolomite destroyed corals within 500 meters of seawater and also turning the seabed into white.

Antiporda said Dolomite Mining Corporation, the only large-scale producer of dolomite materials, is a holder of a 25-year mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA) denominated as MPSA No. 208-2005VII covering 524.6103 hectares of dolomite property located within municipalities of Alcoy and Dalaguete, Cebu and to expire in 2030.

PMSC, meanwhile, is a holder of a mineral processing permit denominated as MPP-007-2005VII which will expire in 2023, undertaking the crushing and screening of the raw materials

The DENR previously welcomed the action of the Provincial Government of Cebu after it issued a cease-and-desist order last 8 September against the two mining firms for unauthorized mineral extraction as part of the Manila Bay “White Sand” Beach Nourishment Project.

Antiporda disclosed that by doing so, this will allow Cebu provincial officials to also revisit their policy on allowing local businesses and protecting legitimate business interests in the province.



Ayon kay Environment Usec. Benny Antiporda, ang hakbang ay ginawa ni Cimatú nang suriin ang dolomite mining operations sa Alcoy hinggil sa reklamong nakakasira ito ng kapaligiran.

Freeman Photo

Dolomite mining ops sa Cebu ipinatigil

[Angie dela Cruz](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon) - September 26, 2020 - 12:00am

Pinagmumulan ng 'white sand' sa Manila Bay

MANILA, Philippines — Ipinatigil ni Environment Secretary Roy Cimatú ang operasyon ng dalawang dolomite mining firms sa Alcoy, Cebu na pinagmumulan ng synthetic white sand na naging kontrobersyal para pagandahin ang Manila Bay.

Ayon kay Environment Usec. Benny Antiporda, ang hakbang ay ginawa ni Cimatú nang suriin ang dolomite mining operations sa Alcoy hinggil sa reklamong nakakasira ito ng kapaligiran.

“He immediately ordered the suspension of operation of Dolomite Mining Corp. and Philippine Mining Service Corp pending investigation on its operations’ environmental impact,” pahayag ni Antiporda.

Una nang nagpalaesist order ang Cebu Provincial Government laban sa dalawang kompanya dahil sa pagdadala ng mga crushed dolomite sa Manila Bay nang walang naisagawang public consultation.

Sa naipalabas na Executive Order No. 25, ang paghukay at pagkuha ng dolomite sa Alcoy ay makakasira sa kapaligiran ng Cebu island at paglabag sa constitutional right ng mga residente ng Cebu.

Inutos na ni Cimatú sa Region 7-Environmental Management Bureau na magsagawa ng water quality sampling malapit sa shiploading facility ng kumpanya at suriin ang ambient air quality.

Una nang sinabi ng mga eksperto na masama sa kalusugan ng tao na malanghap ang pulbos ng dolomite.



DENR pinasususpinde quarrying ng dolomite sa Alcoy, Cebu

By Ulat ng Bandera at Radyo Inquirer September 25, 2020 - 03:06 PM

Iniutos ni Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu ang temporary suspension sa dolomite operations ng dalawang kumpanya sa Cebu.

Sa kaniyang pahayag sa Cebu, sinabi ni Cimatu na layon ng desisyon na mabigyang-daan ang imbestigasyon ng DENR sa environmental impact ng dolomite quarrying.

Epektibo ang suspensyon simula ngayong araw, Sept. 25 ayon kay Cimatu.

Nagtungo si Cimatu sa Alcoy, Cebu para inspeksyunin ang dolomite-quarrying.

Inatasan ni Cimatu ang Environmental Management Bureau sa Central Visayas (EMB-7) na kumuha ng water samples at magsagawa ng air monitoring sa Philippine Mining Services Corporation (PMSC).

Ang PMSC ay naka-base sa Barangay Pugalo sa Alcoy at ito ang nagproseso ng dolomite na binili ng DENR mula sa Dolomite Mining Corporation (DMC).

Read more: <https://bandera.inquirer.net/265546/denr-pinasususpinde-quarrying-ng-dolomite-sa-alcoy-cebu#ixzz6Z5l96hyA>

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Suspended operations

[VERBAL VARIETY](#) - [Annie Fe Perez](#) (The Freeman) - September 26, 2020 - 12:00am

One of my closest friends posted a photo of me on a swing by the beach side-by-side with the viral photo of photographers and citizens taking pictures. She captioned it that there was a commotion because of my pose. I laughed because it was full of humor, but the truth is there are a lot who went against quarantine protocol in that picture because of the new Manila Bay. It featured white sand that was extracted from no less than our province. It was dolomite, from the town of Alcoy.

Recently, in what seemed to be damage control, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu made an inspection of the area where the extraction of dolomite was done. He then ordered a suspension of the operations pending investigation and review of the documents. My only question was, why now? Residents of Alcoy have been saying that the extraction has already been going on for quite some time. The controversy has sprung so many issues, including the incompetence of the many agencies involved in this issue.

Yet others are complaining that instead of making issues about the sand, it is better to appreciate the rehabilitation that was done. Yes, it is true that Manila Bay is now more beautiful than it was then and is a promise fulfilled, but it is one that we don't need at the moment. Our country is facing far more pressing problems with the COVID situation still ongoing. A lot of people are losing their jobs. In Cebu, old-school favorite restaurants are closing their doors because they can no longer afford to pay and continue the business anymore. While those who are starting a new business are also risking a lot just to survive this pandemic.

Where is the promise to look after the welfare of the Filipinos and give them aid? I personally feel like a person left in the air with no place to go. I guess we shouldn't rely so much on promises only to be disappointed. Well, the dolomite issue is a reminder to all of us that there are priorities made by the government which aren't what we need.

Suggesting to them what could have been seems moot, but we could all hope for change. Change that would not only concern the way things would be done but also take care of the environment. The suspension of the operations seem to very ironic compared to the promised rehabilitation. I could only shrug and sigh. What's next now? It is really hard to tell.



Antiporda takes bay critic to school



Published 5 hours ago

On September 26, 2020 02:50 AM

By [Francis Wakefield](#)



The beach nourishment project which is a vital component of the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program is not overpriced as claimed by critics, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) insisted.

DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and LGU Concerns Benny Antiporda made the remark after Infrawatch PH Convenor Terry Ridon claimed the project cost is way beyond its intended budget of P389 million.

In the spirit of fairness, Antiporda said he took it upon himself to call Ridon over the phone and explain to him that the project is above board.

According to the DENR official, he called Ridon on three different occasions to make him understand that the overlaying of dolomite sand in Manila Bay was not overpriced as he thought.

The first time he called Ridon, Antiporda explained that the project is estimated to cover 30,000 square meters, length of 500 meters and a width of 60 meters.

But to make it looked overpriced, Ridon divided the project cost, which is P389 million, by 500 meters, instead of the number of square meters.

“This erroneous formula led him to conclude that the project costs P778,000 per meter. But if he divided P389 million by 30,000 square meters, the result would be P12,267 per square meter, which is quite reasonable. He certainly got a lecture on Math 101,” Antiporda said.

“I also explained to him that only P28 million was used to emplace the crushed dolomite rocks. Moreover, the amount covers not only the price of the crushed dolomites, but the whole package which includes the delivery cost from Cebu to Manila Bay,” he added.



Antiporda takes bay critic to school

Antiporda said despite his explanation, Ridon merely shrugged it off and told him that he and other DENR officials should just explain their side to the public.

“That is what we are actually been doing all along,” Antiporda said.

“I also told Ridon that, “You don’t do that to a friend,” since I consider him as such, not to mention that he also once served under the Duterte administration as chair of the Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor,” he added.

According to Antiporda, he again tried to reach out to Ridon to reiterate their response to his allegation but his call again fell on deaf ears and he continued with his unfounded criticisms against the project.

“Finally, I called him for the third time as he kept on insisting that the project was overpriced despite my repeated explanation. Out of frustration, I blurted “bobo ka sa Math,” he explained.

Antiporda said in all these circumstances, he tried to reach out to Ridon in the hope that he would listen with an open mind about their mission to bring Manila Bay back to its former glory.

“But his actions tell us that whatever this government undertakes, it will only get a flak from him and his group. It is quite ironic because Ridon worked with us in the Duterte administration during its early years,” Antiporda said.

“No wonder President Duterte fired Ridon after finding out about his unnecessary travels abroad. In a span of only one year and two months, Ridon was able to travel to Ecuador (October 2016), Morocco (November 2016), New Delhi (December 2016), Beijing (July 2017), New York (September 2017), and Bonn, Germany (December 2017), spending more than P1.1 million for these travels,” he said.

Manila Bay grabbed headlines earlier as environmental groups criticized the move to put pulverized rocks along the shores of Manila Bay to expand the beach, saying it would hurt the natural ecosystem in the area and in Cebu, where the dolomites came from.

Environmental groups say dolomite harmed marine life in the bay, affecting fishermen near the area who depend on marine life as a source of income.

A dolomite is a calcium magnesium carbonate used for construction works.

Meanwhile, DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu ordered the suspension of two mining firms in Alcoy, Cebu after an inspection he conducted Friday, pending the results of the investigation for the alleged coral reef damage, water quality monitoring, and ambient air quality.

Antiporda said Cimatu suspended the Dolomite Mining Corporation for its quarry operations and the Philippine Mining Service Corporation, a processing plant for dolomite.

Antiporda said Cimatu directed the Environmental Management Bureau in Region 7 to conduct a water quality sampling on waters below the conveyor at the ship loading facility, and ambient air quality.

He also ordered the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office in Cebu to conduct a coral assessment to determine the health condition of the corals which was the subject of the complaint by the Provincial Government of Cebu.



DENR exec slams ex-solon's 'overpriced' Manila Bay rehab claim

By Marita Moaje September 25, 2020, 3:58 pm



'DO THE MATH'. DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda (left) on Thursday (Sept. 24, 2020) claimed that he gave Infrawatch PH convenor Terry Ridon (right) a lecture on mathematics due to allegations of overpricing on the Manila Bay beach nourishment project. Ridon, however, called on Antiporda to stick to the facts and not resort to name-calling in dealing with critics of the Manila Bay white sand project. (PNA file photos)

MANILA – Department of Environment and Natural Resources Undersecretary Benny Antiporda took a swipe at former Kabataan Party-list congressman and Infrawatch PH convenor Terry Ridon over his claims that the Manila Bay beach nourishment project was "overpriced".

In a statement on Thursday, Antiporda said he called up Ridon, whom he considers a friend, thrice on different occasions "to make him understand that the overlaying of dolomite sand was not overpriced as he thought."

"During the first time I called him, I explained to him that the project is estimated to cover 30,000 square meters, with a length of 500 meters x 60 meters width. To make it look overpriced, Ridon divided the project cost, which is PHP389 million, by 500 meters, instead of the number of square meters," he said.

Antiporda noted that the "erroneous formula" led him to conclude that the project costs PHP778,000 per meter.

"But if he divided PHP389 million by 30,000 square meters, the result would be PHP12,267 per square meter, which is quite reasonable," he said, adding that he gave Ridon a "lecture on Math 101."

Antiporda explained that the project could not be overpriced as the PHP28 million used to emplace the crushed dolomite covers the whole package cost from the crushed dolomite to the shipping cost from Cebu to Manila Bay.

He said despite numerous attempts to reach out and explain to Ridon, his calls fell on deaf ears as the latter continued with his unfounded criticisms on the project.

Meanwhile, Ridon said Antiporda should only stick to the facts and not resort to name-calling in dealing with critics of the Manila Bay white sand project.



DENR exec slams ex-solon's 'overpriced' Manila Bay rehab claim

“I continue to consider him an old friend despite these low blows, so I urge him to just stick to the debate on the project’s lack of an environmental compliance certificate and concerns on project costs,” he told the Philippine News Agency (PNA).

Ridon added that the raising of the non-relevant issues of official travels should not be raised as this had already been sufficiently addressed in the past two years and had full authority from the Office of the President.

He was referring to Antiporda’s statement that President Rodrigo Duterte “fired Ridon after finding out about his unnecessary travels abroad.”

“Stick to the relevant issues: the Manila Bay project violated environmental laws, the sand is already leaching into the water, and the project costs appear significantly higher than market rates,” Ridon said.

He said there are policies of the government that “we support and oppose.”

“We laud the President’s diplomatic jetski in the UN General Assembly in asserting our victory in the arbitral ruling on the West Philippine Sea. But we oppose projects which we deem ill-planned, environmentally harmful, and demonstrably a waste of public funds,” Ridon said.

He also said he does not need any lesson in mathematics as he learned finance and economics at the University of the Philippines and Harvard University. *(PNA)*



Explain environmental violations, DENR orders Hermosa LGU



Published 5 hours ago
on September 26, 2020 12:40 AM
By [Jonas Reyes](#)



The Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) has ordered the local government unit of Hermosa in Bataan and the Econest Waste Management Corporation (EWMC) to explain the reported environmental violations committed in relation to the operation of the Hermosa Sanitary Landfill Facility.

In a two-page Notice of Violation order issued by EMB Director William Cunado dated 24 September 2020, the agency is ordering the municipal government and EWMC, the company which used to operate the landfill, to submit their written explanation within 15 days on why there were traces of biomedical and electronic wastes found in the facility during an inspection made by the DENR-EMB recently.

The same inspection yielded that EWMC does not possess a TSD Category C permit which allows ecowaste companies to accept biomedical wastes.

Mayor Joseph Inton earlier this year ordered the closure of the sanitary landfill over numerous violations including its acceptance of hazardous waste, having no separate cell for pathological and infectious waste, no daily soil cover, and failure to comply with specific provisions of Republic Act 6969 or the Toxic Substances and Hazardous and Nuclear Waste Act of 1990 and its implementing rules and regulations.



DPWH hopes to settle environmental issues over P23.04-B Samal-Davao bridge project

Published September 25, 2020, 9:00 PM
by [Betheena Unite](#)

After meeting with various stakeholders to address environmental doubts on the implementation of the 3.98-kilometer bridge project linking the Island Garden City of Samal (IGaCoS) to Davao City, the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) said it is hopeful that these concerns would be settled soon.



Public Works and Highways Secretary Mark Villar (MARK VILLAR FACEBOOK / MANILA BULLETIN)

A meeting was held recently to push through with the implementation of the bridge project dubbed Samal Island to Davao City Connector (SIDC), which has been receiving push backs due to environmental concerns on the proposed landing site of the project.

“DPWH officials are in talks with the stakeholders to guarantee that we are addressing environmental concerns and doubts of the project before we begin design and construction activities targeted by January 2021,” Public Works and Highways Secretary Mark Villar said late Friday.

The meetings in Samal Island and Davao City were spearheaded by Undersecretary Emil Sadain; Director Sharif Madsmo Hasim, of the Unified Project Management Office (UPMO) Roads Management Cluster II; Davao del Norte Governor Edwin Jubahib; Island Garden City of Samal Mayor Al David Uy; and other stakeholders.

Sadain said while right of way acquisition for the project may still pose a major challenge in the course of implementation of this iconic bridge, “continuous negotiation is being carried out with all affected stakeholders and we are hoping to have an agreement very soon.”

“In the end, people may openly understand the value of socio economic development that this project could bring over the cost of land affected. Government must always understand and respect the dynamic process of land acquisition and should employ patience and cultural/ancestral sensitivity in carrying out this process,” Sadain added.



DPWH hopes to settle environmental issues over P23.04-B Samal-Davao bridge project

The SIDC, a P23.04-billion project under the government's "Build, Build, Build" Program, is proposed as a four-lane bridge in the southern corridor to connect Samal Circumferential Road in Barangay Limao, IGaCoS to Davao City between R. Castillo-Daang Maharlika Junction.

The proposed bridge will rise over Pakiputan Strait and is expected to provide a resilient and reliable transportation link between Metro Davao and IGaCoS.

At present, locals and tourists can get to IGaCOs via scheduled 20 to 45-minute ferry/boat ride from Davao City.

According to the department, the City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Region 11 in May 2020 issued a certification citing that the SIDC project site is not within the National Integrated Protected Area System.

A 20-day substantive environmental impact statements (EIS) review for the issuance of Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) is also ongoing, with a public hearing scheduled on September 28, 2020.

The project's feasibility study was already completed in 2019 with the design and build bridge project to be funded by China Loan Financing Facility under China International Development Cooperation Agency.



Bahagi ng Talayan Creek sa G. Araneta, tambak ng basura

Lyza Aquino, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Sep 25 2020 12:44 PM

MAYNILA - Puspusan ang paglilinis ng mga tauhan ng Quezon City Riverways Clearing Operations Group para maialis ang naipong basura sa Talayan Creek Biyernes ng umaga.

Nag-umpisang lumusong para maglinis ang grupo alas-6 ng umaga sa bahagi ng creek sa kahabaan ng G. Araneta.

“Sana naman po may konting malasakit sila sa ating kalikasan kasi po kami ginagawa namin lahat ng paraan, araw-araw naglilinis kami pero pagbalik namin kinabukasan marami pa rin po. Dapat naman matuto silang magtapon sa tamang lagayan, kung saan nararapat ilagay ang basura. Hindi itatapon sa ilog,” pahayag ni Teresita Agustin, team leader ng grupo.

Tambak na basura ang nakuha ng grupo sa creek na natambak at nadala ng agos mula sa sunod-sunod na pag-ulan nitong mga nakaraang mga araw.

Ayon kay Agustin, nito lamang Miyerkoles ay nalinis din nila ang lugar kung saan 850 sako ng basura ang kanilang nahakot. Pero puno na naman ang creek nang balikan nila ng Biyernes.

Karaniwan sa mga basura ay mga plastic, kahoy at styrofoam na ayon sa kanlla ay nanggagaling sa matataas na lugar na konektado sa creek tulad ng Balintawak.



DENR Bataan plants bamboo, cleans coast

posted September 25, 2020 at 09:25 pm
by [Butch Gunio](#)

Pilar, Bataan—The Department of Natural Resources (DENR) in Bataan led by Penro Raul Mamac and some volunteers planted bamboo trees along the easement area of Almacen Riven, Hermosa and conducted cleanup in the mouth of the river area on Friday.

“It was World Bamboo Day and next day was International Coastal Cleanup Day,” said Mamac.

“We cleaned up 12 hectares silt containment area at the mouth of Almacen River which is part of Brgy. Pulo, Orani,” he added.

The body of Almacen River passes Hermosa town.

Cenro Rommel Suba of CENRO Dinalupihan and staff joined the activities.

Mamac said officials of the Hermosa Water District also participated in the bamboo planting and coastal cleanup. He said they limited the participants to the cleanup activity this year due to Covid 19 pandemic.

DENR Bataan with provincial government leads the annual ICC in September here, usually in full force.

Mamac has vowed to fully support all the pro-environment initiatives of Gov. Abet Garcia.

Topics: [Department of Natural Resources](#) , [Penro Raul Mamac](#) , [Almacen Riven](#) , [COVID-19](#) , [International Coastal Cleanup Day](#) , [Hermosa Water District](#)



Rescued eagle awaits release back to the wild

Published September 25, 2020, 10:15 AM

by [Tara Yap](#)

ILOILO CITY—An eagle that is on the red list of concerned species by the International Union of Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) was recently rescued in Miag-ao, Iloilo province is awaiting to be released back to the wild.



The eagle rescued by a local resident in Miag-ao town, Iloilo province. (DENR Wildlife Center-Guimbal / MANILA BULLETIN)

Regional Director Francisco Milla Jr. of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Region 6 (DENR-6) said environmental officers were preparing to release the crested serpent eagle.

Milla said the crested serpent eagle was found by resident Geerazel Nieves, who did not hesitate to turn it over to the environment office of the Miag-a local government.

The Miag-ao local government then got in touch with the DENR Wildlife Rescue Center in neighboring Guimbal town to assess the condition of the eagle.

Milla said that initial inspection found the eagle, which wandered off to a residential area, to be in good condition.

With the latest rescue of another wildlife, DENR-6 encourages other citizens to be responsible in reporting it to the proper authorities.

DENR-Zamboanga Peninsula rescues Philippine Tarsier in Lapuyan



ZAMBOANGA. Personnel of the Department of Environment Natural Resources (DENR)-Zamboanga Peninsula rescue a Philippine Tarsier Tuesday, September 22, in Gunsili, Lapuyan, Zamboanga del Sur. The tarsier was released back to its natural habitat in the evening of September 22. (SunStar Zamboanga)

September 25, 2020

PERSONNEL of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Zamboanga Peninsula have rescued a Philippine Tarsier in the province of Zamboanga del Sur, the agency said Friday, September 25.

It said the tarsier was rescued Tuesday, September 22, in Gunsili village, Lapuyan, Zamboanga del Sur after its picture was posted on social media by a netizen who inquired about what kind of animal it was.

The post was monitored by the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (Penro) of the province.

The Penro-Zamboanga del Sur personnel immediately established contact and coordinated with the netizen, Ulama Mayo, and her daughter, Elmeda, for the proper turnover of the wildlife.

The DENR said a short information campaign was conducted to the community about the conservation efforts of the agency and the role of the citizenry and the salient features of the Wildlife Act.

The agency also reminded the public that possession of wildlife without a permit is prohibited and punishable under Republic Act 9147, otherwise known as "Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act."

The tarsier was then released in the evening of Tuesday, September 22, in a forested area. The release was witnessed by Jamred Saga, the Municipal Environment and Natural Resources officer of Lapuyan, and Agustine Soon, the Municipal Agriculture officer of the same town.

The DENR-Zamboanga Peninsula described the Philippine tarsier as a shy and nocturnal animal.

The tarsier sleeps in dark hollows close to the ground, near tree trunks and shrubs during the day and becomes active only at night.

It has a keen sight and ability to maneuver around trees, and clings to trees and leaps from branch to branch.

The DENR said the tarsier, world's second smallest primate, can also be found in Bohol and other areas in the country. (SunStar Zamboanga)

Alcoy fishermen continue livelihood amid corals suffering from siltation

By: Morexette Marie B. Erram - CDN Digital | September 25, 2020 - 01:03 PM



Jerry Dueñas, a fisherman from Alcoy, Cebu, looks at the conveyor belt that juts out of a mineral-processing plant in Barangay Pugalo. Dueñas said despite the controversies involving their town's dolomite rocks, it has not severely impacted their source of livelihood. CDN Digital photo | Morexette Marie Erram

ALCOY, Cebu—Every night, Jeffrey Dueñas goes out of his small shanty to fish around the waters off Barangay Pugalo in this southern town of Cebu province.

The 51-year-old native of Alcoy grew up on the shores of this village and has been a fisherman since he was still a child.

He also witnessed how a mineral-processing plant, which exports dolomite rocks, constructed a gigantic conveyor belt over the village's shallow seawaters.

This has become a subject of the controversy surrounding the [Manila Bay Rehabilitation project](#), where crushed dolomite rocks from this town were used to transform portions of the famous spot in the nation's capital into an artificially made white-sand beach.

The Cebu Provincial Capitol received reports from environmental groups that coral reef in Alcoy's seabed have been suffering from heavy siltation, and damaged nearby marine ecosystem.

The findings, according to provincial authorities, pointed to the crushed dolomite rocks falling off from the conveyor belt as the cause.

Crushed dolomite rocks seen inside a mineral-processing plant in Alcoy town, southern Cebu. Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu will lead the site inspection in operators quarrying and transporting dolomite rocks from Alcoy on Friday, September 25, 2020. CDN Digital photo | Morexette Marie B. Erram

An investigation on the matter, which is headed by the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (Penro), is now underway.

But for Dueñas, this did not bear any significant impact on his livelihood – for now.

“Wala ra man. Naa man gihapon mi makuha. (It has not significantly impacted our catch. We were still able to harvest fish),” said Dueñas.

The fisherman usually sells around three kilograms of *tamarong* every day, and his income, he said, is just enough to serve him three meals a day.



Alcoy fishermen continue livelihood amid corals suffering from siltation

However, Dueñas admitted that he and his neighbors have observed siltation in Alcoy's corals.

Crispin Medina, 41, can attest to this.

"Naa gyuy coral nga natabunan. Pero naa pa man gihapon mi makuha sa pagpanagat (Some corals were really buried. But we're still able to catch fish)," said Medina.

Like Dueñas, Medina has been a fisherman in Barangay Pugalo since in his younger years.

If there's one culprit behind instances of unfruitful harvests in their community, Medina said he would blame climate change and global warming.

"Para nako, tungod na sa kainit sa panahon (For me, small harvest is due to warmer temperatures and weather)," explained Medina.

The Cebu Provincial Government is eyeing to issue another cease-and-desist order to quarrying and mineral-processing firms in Alcoy town following their discovery of heavy siltation within the town's seabed.

It can be recalled that Governor Gwendolyn Garcia earlier released a similar order to the companies after national government agencies confirmed that the crushed dolomite rocks used as the artificial white sand for Manila Bay's rehabilitation initiative came from Alcoy.

Garcia's previous directives effectively stopped more shipment of dolomite rocks to Manila Bay.

Alcoy is a fifth-class municipality located approximately 101 kilometers southeast of Cebu City. Experts said huge deposits of dolomite rocks can be found here.

/bmjo



Even without corruption, Manila Bay rehab is not OK during pandemic – Robredo

By: [Gabriel Pabico Lalu](#) - Reporter / [@GabrielLaluINQ](#)
[INQUIRER.net](#) / 12:19 AM September 26, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — Vice President Leni Robredo remains firm in her stand that the Manila Bay rehabilitation project is ill-timed even if it followed all the required procedures without corruption.

In an interview with Vanguard Radio Network on Friday, Robredo said that the Manila Bay project should have been forgone for the time being, not just because of all the red flags raised — health hazards, ecological dangers, corruption issues — but because funds could better be used for the government’s COVID-19 response.

She also reiterated her stand that beautification of an area during a pandemic that had affected so many families would be insensitive.

“For me, the first thing is the timing,” she said in Filipino. “Let’s say there are no health hazards. Let’s say there’s no environmental damage. For me, you [the administration] keep saying that we don’t have any money. So many are going hungry now. So many need help. We can’t control the transmission [of the virus]. Then you see something like this.”

“For example, let’s say the requirements have been followed,” she went on. “I don’t know if it has an ECC [Environmental Compliance Certificate] or not because people are saying different things. But let’s say that all the requirements are followed, that there was no corruption, that there was an honest-to-goodness bidding. It’s still not okay.”

Robredo previously questioned why the government decided to push through with the project knowing that the funds could have been allocated to programs that would help the country fight the pandemic.

In the same radio interview on Friday, she said she understood that the budget used for the Manila Bay rehabilitation project was allocated prior to the pandemic. But it could have been stopped temporarily to give way to the needs of fighting the pandemic.

“This was planned before the COVID-19 pandemic at a big cost. For me, it’s okay if they think beautifying Manila Bay will help. I have no problem with that,” she said. “But my problem here is the timing. Timing has a big impact. The funds could have been realigned to current needs.”

On Wednesday, think tank organization Infracore PH raised several [red flags](#) on the project, which involved overlaying a stretch of the Manila Bay shoreline with artificial white sand made of crushed dolomite.

According to Infracore PH, the project did not secure an ECC and seemed to be overpriced.

The opening of the project site also led to a mass gathering there despite the risk of COVID-19 infection.

President Rodrigo Duterte previously slammed Robredo and the opposition for [nitpicking](#), criticizing the administration for whatever it did or did not do.

Duterte also told Robredo that solving the pandemic would [not be possible without a vaccine](#). Before that, the Vice President noted that the administration seemed to be doing little to solve the problems caused by the pandemic.

Read more: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1340313/even-if-theres-no-corruption-manila-bay-rehab-is-not-okay-at-this-time-robredo#ixzz6Z5zfYIQc>

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Robredo: Timing, not legality, makes Manila Bay white sand project wrong

Published September 25, 2020 1:27pm
By LLANESCA T. PANTI, GMA News

The white sand project along Manila Bay, which used crushed dolomite, was wrong as it was done amid limited government resources in the middle of COVID-19 pandemic, Vice President Leni Robredo said Friday.

Robredo was referring to the P389 million beach nourishment project which includes adorning Manila Bay with white sand.

“Kahit wala itong hazard, walang corruption, walang environmental damage, dahil sa timing, hindi pa rin okay. Maraming nagugutom, maraming nangangailangan ng tulong. Makikita nating insensitive sa kahirapan,” Robredo said in a Basta Batas forum.

“For us to spend this much amount to a project which has nothing to do with a COVID-19 pandemic, ano ba? Pinapakita na walang sense of urgency amid the COVID-19 pandemic,” she added.

The Manila Bay white sand attraction was opened to the public last week, prompting people to crowd the area to take photos and the Health department raising alarm due to non-observance of social distancing and other minimum health standards in place amid the COVID-19 threat.

Robredo stressed the fact that P25 billion of the P165 billion Bayanihan 2 law is a standby fund—meaning an allocation to be funded if budget becomes available—shows that the white sand project should have not been considered in the first place.

Bayanihan 2 law is a sequel to Bayanihan 1 which both allowed the President to realign funds under the 2020 national budget to address the COVID-19 threat.

“Sinasabi sa atin na wala tayong pera. Kaya nga may standby fund iyong Bayanihan 2 law kasi wala na tayong pera...tapos mayroon nitong [white sand in Manila Bay]...very contradictory,” Robredo said.

Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda has responded to critics by appealing to give the project a chance, maintaining that it is legal and does not get in the way of the government’s COVID-19 response.

Some of the dolomite sand put in parts of the Manila Bay were washed away by recent rains, prompting the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to put sandbags in the area.—
AOL, GMA News



COVID-19 CRISIS

Postpone elections as safety precaution? People aren't even afraid to go to fake white sand —ex-poll exec

Published September 25, 2020 1:41pm
By JAMIL SANTOS, GMA News

A former Commission on Elections (Comelec) official on Friday rejected the idea of postponing the May 2022 elections as a way to protect the public from COVID-19.

In stressing his point, former Comelec commissioner Gregorio Larrazabal noted that people have been allowed to visit the Manila Bay "white sands" beach and will be allowed to visit Boracay in October when it reopens.

"Matatakot tayo na pumunta sa presinto to vote more than one year and a half away from now, pero hindi tayo takot na pumunta sa Roxas Boulevard para makita 'yung fake na sand?" Larrazabal said in a Dobol B sa News TV interview.

"Hindi tayo takot na pumunta sa Boracay this coming October? Puwede pala tayong magbakasyon pero hindi tayo puwedeng bumoto? 'Di ba may mali 'yon?" he added

On a personal note, Larrazabal said entertaining thoughts of cancelling the elections, which he stressed is unconstitutional, will result to government officials slacking off in their preparations.

"Dapat ang mindset mo, maghanda na tayo, dapat rush tayo, we have to prepare day in and day out to make sure that maayos ang elections sa 2022," he said.

Larrazabal thus proposed that the elections be held for several days, but raised concerns about the safety of ballots and election workers from harassment by supporters of candidates.

He said Comelec is already studying the legal implications of having the elections done for several days as they consider the wages for election marshals.

Larrazabal previously said other countries [have managed to hold elections](#) even amid the COVID-19 pandemic. —KBK, GMA News



Kulang tayo sa disiplina bilang isang bansa

[USAP TAYO](#) - [Pastor Joey Umali](#) (Pang-masa) - September 26, 2020 - 12:00am

NANG pansamantalang buksan sa publiko ang bahagi ng 500-metrong artipisyal na white sand beach sa Manila Bay, dumagsa ang napakaraming tao, nakalimutan ang social distancing, na para bang hindi totoong may COVID-19 pandemic. Isang kinapanayam na may hawak pa ng litrato ni Presidente Duterte ang masayang-masayang nagsabi na isa itong maagang pamasko sa isang mahirap na katulad niya na ngayon ay mayroon nang pamamasyalan na isang magandang beach.

Masaya nga naman, pero sa ilalim ng pang-ibabaw na kasayahang ito'y lumitaw ang problema sa uri ng pamamahala rito sa atin at sa takbo ng isip ng karaniwang Pilipino. Bawal ngayon ang mass gathering at dapat ay laging sinusunod ang mga health protocols. Kaya nga ipinagbabawal ang maramihang pagsamba sa loob ng mga simbahan. May katwiran naman sapagkat tayo na ang may pinakamalaking bilang ng COVID-19 cases sa buong Asya.

Pero ang tanong, bakit hindi pare-pareho ang paghihigpit? Naalala ko ang nangyari sa pitong nagprotestang jeepney driver na hinuli't ikinulong dahil sa diumano'y paglabag sa social distancing at mass gathering. Iyon ay pito lamang, ang sumugod sa beach ng Manila Bay at nag-usyoso sa mga foot bridges sa harapan nito'y daan-daan, pero walang hinuli. Kung ang pumunta kaya roon ay isang grupo ng mga nagpoprotesta sa anti-terror law, wala rin kayang huhulihin?

Ayon sa balita, sinibak sa tungkulin ang hepe ng Ermita police station dahil hindi siya nakapagpatupad ng safety at health protocols. Kung siya'y sinibak, hindi ba dapat ding sibakin ang mga opisyal ng DENR na nagpahintulot sa publiko na saksihan ang pansamantalang pagbubukas ng white sand beach? O maging si Mayor Moreno na namuno sa mga nagbunyi? Okey lang na maging mahigpit basta't consistent at pantay-pantay ang pagpapatupad ng batas.

Ano ang naisakatuparan ng pangyayaring ito? Ang malinaw ay ang pansamantalang kaaliwan ng daan-daang taong dumagsa roon. Pero ano ang maaaring ibunga? Ang isa'y ang pagdagdag sa COVID-19 cases. Ipagpalagay na isa lang sa daan-daang naroroon ang carrier ng virus, ang mahahawahan niya ay posibleng makahawa naman ng isang pamilya o isang barangay. Paano kung 10, o 20 o 30 sila? Sa pamamahala, ang dapat laging sinusukat ay ang mas malalim at pangmatagalang benepisyo. Ang hinahanap ay ang ugat ng problema; ang sinusulusyunan ay hindi ang mga sintomas lamang, kundi ang mismong sakit.

Ang daang-daang sumugod sa Manila Bay ay kumakatawan sa ating mga Pilipino. Tila hindi pa bumababa sa ating consciousness ang panganib ng COVID-19. Tayo ang may pinakamahabang lockdown o quarantine sa buong mundo, pero nangunguna na tayo sa dami ng kaso sa buong Asya. Kulang tayo sa disiplina bilang mga mamamayan. Ang disiplina ay walang iba kundi ang kahandaang isakripisyo ang mga pansamantalang kasiyahan upang makamtan ang pangmatagalang benepisyo. Ang disiplina ay isang paraan ng pamumuhay, kaya't ginagawa ito may manghuhuli man o wala.

Sinabi sa Bibliya, sa pamamagitan ng Roma 12:2, na ang tunay na pagbabago ay ang pagbabago ng takbo ng isip. Kung hindi magbabago ang takbo ng ating isip at hindi tayo makakaranas ng pagbabago ng kultura bilang isang bansa, pupulutin tayo sa kangkungan ng kasaysayan. Mangyayari sa atin ang slogan na, "It's more fun in the Philippines," sa ibang kahulugan, dahil magiging katawa-tawa tayo sa buong mundo.

COVID-19 cases sa Pilipinas tuloy sa paglobo, halos 300,000 na

By [James Relativo](#)(Philstar.com)
- September 25, 2020 - 4:14pm



Sa litrato na ito na kuha noong Setyembre 18, 2020, kinukuhanan ng temperatura ang mga pasahero bago sumakay ng bus sa Maynila.
AFP/Ted Aljibe

MANILA, Philippines — Hindi pa rin kumakalma ang pagsirit ng coronavirus diseases (COVID-19) sa Pilipinas habang patuloy ang ika-28 na linggo ng quarantine restrictions sa buong bansa.

Ayon sa Department of Health (DOH), Biyernes, nasa 299,361 na ang tinatamaan ng kinatatakutang sakit sa bansa. Mas marami 'yan nang 2,630 kumpara sa inilabas na datos ng gobyerno kahapon.

Mula riyang, 61,766 ang sinasabing aktibong kaso pa rin, o yaong mga hindi pa nagre-recover o namamatay dahil sa COVID-19.

Pinakamarami pa rin sa mga panibagong kaso ang naitala ng gobyerno sa mga sumusunod na lugar:

- National Capital Region (1,091)
- Cavite (196)
- Laguna (171)
- Negros Occidental (142)
- Rizal (141)

“24 duplicates were removed from the total case count. Of these, 8 were recovered cases,” wika ng DOH sa isang pahayag.

“Moreover, 15 cases previously tagged as recovered were reclassified to deaths after final validation.”

Tinatayang nasa 3.33 milyon na ang nasusuri para sa COVID-19 sa bansa. Tatatlo naman sa daan-daang laboratories ang hindi nakapagsumite ng mga resulta ngayong araw, na labis na mababa kumpara sa karaniwan.



COVID-19 cases sa Pilipinas tuloy sa paglobo, halos 300,000 na

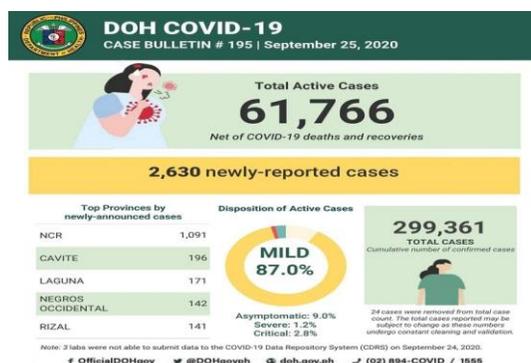
Sa kasamaang-palad, binawian ng buhay ang 69 karagdagang kaso mula sa virus, dahilan para umakyat na sa 5,196 ang kabuuang COVID-19 death toll sa bansa.

Sa kabila niyan, 'di hamak na mas marami naman ang gumagaling. Sumatutal, 232,399 na ang gumagaling mula sa sakit simula nang makapasok ang virus mula sa Wuhan, China.

Kasalukuyang halos 31.80 na ang nahawaan ng virus sa buong mundo, ayon sa mga huling datos ng World Health Organization. Sa bilang na 'yan, 973,653 na ang patay.

BREAKING: Bilang ng COVID-19 cases sa Pilipinas, umabot na sa 299,361; higit 2,600 ang nadagdag

By Dona Dominguez-Cargullo September 25, 2020 - 04:08 PM



Hindi bababa sa 2,600 ang naitalang bagong kaso ng Coronavirus Disease o COVID-19 sa Pilipinas.

Sa huling datos ng Department of Health (DOH) araw ng Biyernes (September 25), umabot na sa 299,361 ang confirmed cases ng nakakahawang sakit sa bansa.

Sa nasabing bilang, 61,766 ang aktibong kaso.

Sinabi ng kagawaran na 2,631 ang bagong napaulat na kaso ng COVID-19 sa bansa.

87 porsyento sa active COVID-19 cases ang mild; 9 porsyento ang asymptomatic; 1.2 porsyento ang severe habang 2.8 porsyento ang nasa kritikal na kondisyon.

Nasa 69 ang napaulat na nasawi.

Dahil dito, umakyat na sa 5,196 ang COVID-19 related deaths sa bansa.

Ayon pa sa DOH, 494 naman ang gumaling pa sa bansa.

Dahil dito, umakyat na sa 232,399 ang total recoveries ng COVID-19 sa Pilipinas.

Read more: <https://radyo.inquirer.net/266426/breaking-bilang-ng-covid-19-cases-sa-pilipinas-umabot-na-sa-299361-higit-2600-ang-nadagdag#ixzz6Z5t1Qr3Y>

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Covid-19: Global deaths may hit two million before vaccine in use - WHO

• 2 hours ago



Image copyright EPA
Image caption The WHO's warning comes as a number of European countries are facing a spike in infections

The global coronavirus death toll could hit two million before an effective vaccine is widely used, the World Health Organization has warned.

Mike Ryan, the WHO's emergencies head, said the figure could be even higher without concerted international action.

The number of Covid-19 deaths is fast approaching one million - nine months after the outbreak started in China.

Mr Ryan also urged Europeans to ask themselves whether they had done enough to avoid the need for lockdowns.

He questioned whether all the alternatives had been implemented, like testing and tracing, quarantine, isolation, social distancing, wearing masks and hand-washing.

Earlier, Spain's capital Madrid brought another eight districts under tougher coronavirus restrictions, which now affect a million people in the city.

In France, staff from bars and restaurants in the southern city Marseille protested against the closure of their workplaces which was brought in on Saturday.

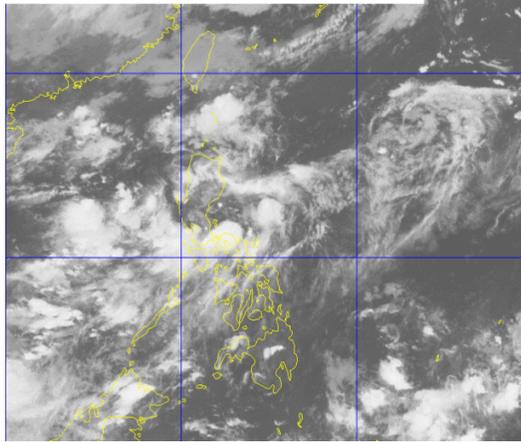
And in the UK, [tougher restrictions were announced in several regions](#) as new daily infections rise.



LPA still won't develop into storm but will intensify habagat — Pagasa

By: [Gabriel Pabico Lalu](#) - Reporter / [@GabriellaluINQ](#)
[INQUIRER.net](#) / 07:23 PM September 25, 2020

DOST PAGASA HIMAWARI-8 IR1 2020-09-25 6:30:00 PM PHT



MANILA, Philippines — The low-pressure area (LPA) east of Luzon is still not expected to intensify as a tropical depression, but it continues to intensify the southwest monsoon or habagat which will bring rains over several parts of the country.

According to the weather updates from the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) on Friday afternoon, the LPA was last seen 150 kilometers east of Casiguran, Aurora.

While the LPA brings rains over Cagayan Valley and other parts of Central Luzon and Calabarzon, the southwest monsoon would cause showers for other parts of Southern Luzon and the Visayas.

Cloudy skies and thunderstorms may be experienced in Metro Manila and nearby provinces by Friday night, but by Saturday morning, the weather may be fair and somewhat warm. Rains would affect the area again during the afternoon and night.

Temperatures in Metro Manila, Laoag, Puerto Princesa, and Legazpi would play around 25 to 32 degrees Celsius, while the usually hot area of Tuguegarao would see something between 25 to 33 degrees due to the LPA.

Weather over Visayas and Mindanao would generally be better than the rest of the country, with temperatures ranging from 26 to 32 degrees Celsius in Iloilo and Tacloban, 26 to 33 degrees in Cebu, and 25 to 34 degrees in Davao City.

No gale warning has been raised as of now despite the monsoon and the LPA, which means fisherfolk and boat transfer operators using small boats can set sail.[ac]

Read more: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1340254/lpa-still-wont-develop-into-storm-but-intensifies-habagat-pagasa#ixzz6Z6oUtADI>

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6 na pagyanig sa Bulkang Taal, naitala sa 1 araw

ni [Thea Janica Teh](#) | September 25, 2020



Nakapagtala ng 6 volcanic quakes sa loob ng 24-hour observation period ang Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) sa Taal Volcano ngayong Biyernes. Nananatiling nasa Alert Level 1 (Abnormal) ang bulkan, ayon sa bulletin nito.

Bukod sa sunud-sunod na pagyanig, nakapagtala rin ang Phivolcs sa Main Crater vent at Daang Kastila Trail ng steaming o fumarolic activity na may taas na limang metro.

Pinaalalahanan din ng Phivolcs ang publiko dahil maaaring maganap sa ilalim ng Alert Level 1 ang biglaang steam-driven o phreatic explosion, volcanic earthquake, ash fall at expulsion ng volcanic gas sa loob ng Taal Volcano Island (TVI).

Inirekomenda rin ng Phivolcs na patuloy na isasara at paiigtingin ang restriksiyon sa TVI, Permanent Danger Zone (PDZ) pati na rin sa Main Crater at Daang Kastila fissure.



Health crisis and the looming water crisis



By [Amado S. Tolentino, JR.](#)
September 26, 2020

“One out of eight people lacks access to clean water... 1.2 billion people cannot drink water without courting disease or death ... Dirty water and lack of a toilet and proper hygiene kill 3.3 million people around the world annually, most of them children under the age of five ... In fifteen years, 1.8 billion people will live in regions of severe water scarcity ...With 83 million more people on earth each year, water demand will keep going up unless we change how we use it”
– National Geographic

AT the inception of the Covid-19 pandemic, the World Health Organization (WHO) immediately counseled, “Wash your hands,” as the first line of defense against the infectious disease followed by, “Wear a mask,” and, “Keep social distance.” Proper hand hygiene requires a most basic commodity — water, clean water — to protect oneself.

WHO’s “Safe Hands” campaign recommends frequent handwashing and proper hand hygiene to prevent the spread of the coronavirus. In this connection, a day in the month of October each year was set aside as Global Handwashing Day long before the present global coronavirus crisis.

The current health crisis led to clarification of the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on access to washing facilities and safe water to mean ensuring everyone’s access to “adequate and equitable hygiene” by 2030. The UN went on to say, “Without handwashing and adherence to good hygiene practices, the health and socioeconomic benefits of improved water supply and sanitation cannot be fully realized and will impede progress towards many of the SDGs, e.g., climate action, quality education, gender equality, sustainable cities and communities, etc.”

While water is key in responding to the challenges of the pandemic, water is not available to everyone, particularly in urban poor settings and rural areas of developing countries.

Looming water crisis

Water crisis seems inevitable as a consequence of climate change, which brings about major global challenges. Among these are loss of water due to deforestation and expansion of agriculture; conflicts over basic resources like water and food exacerbating water scarcity and increase in food costs and food shortage; non-availability of water as a major threat to habitability of many places this century; drought-sparked conflicts over water supply as downriver inhabitants safeguard their share.

Loss of water due to climate change has health implications. Among them: greater incidence of malnutrition; ailments from common cold to pneumonia; risks of communicable disease outbreaks and even death from rising temperature.



Health crisis and the looming water crisis

As the Covid-19 pandemic rages, the world is at a critical crossroads over water. Water supplies and water-dependent resources are declining as the world's population increases. In short, demands for water exceed supplies.

PH water-critical areas

In a study done by the Japan International Cooperation Agency on water demands and shortages in the Philippines, nine major areas were identified as "water-critical areas." These are Metro Manila, Metro Cebu, Davao, Baguio, Angeles, Bacolod, Iloilo, Cagayan de Oro and Zamboanga.

Briefly, it means that in some parts of the Philippines, the water shortage is in a vulnerable state that the small amount of water some residents get, especially during summer, is not enough for vital purposes such as cooking, drinking and personal hygiene. The study went on to say that infant mortality from diarrhea and other waterborne diseases, caused by pathogenic microorganisms that are transmitted in water (e.g., dengue, cholera, typhoid, etc.) are associated with failure to provide clean water.

With the continuing high weather temperature, water rationing has been announced for some parts of Metro Manila. What comes to mind is the water shortage that affected more than 10,000 households in March last year caused by El Niño which brought down the water level at La Mesa Dam to a critical point. Take note there was no epidemic or pandemic at the time.

Water woes are present in many developing countries around the world. In Sri Lanka, for instance, hygiene and health is also a serious concern. Just about only 35 percent of the country's 22 million population receive pipe-borne water. The rest get their supplies from wells, rivers or streams. In their quest for clean and safe water, people have to avoid wells with brackish water as well as rivers and waterways littered with solid waste and garbage. Even the few existing wells are contaminated and polluted due to their proximity to septic tanks.

The water situation as described is much more prevalent in Africa where clean water is scarcest and fetching it is almost always women's work. It is an overwhelming responsibility for women in rural areas where many have to walk for kilometers several times a day to meet the household needs for water.

In southern Ethiopia and northern Kenya, a lack of rain over some years has even made dirty water elusive. Diarrhea caused by bacteria and parasites regularly afflicts people due to lack of proper hygiene and sanitation and from drinking untreated river water. In fact, it is common that 70 percent of patients suffer from waterborne diseases. It is not even uncommon for health centers to lack clean water. Whatever water is available, it is used by patients to drink or take medicines. To think that easily transmissible diseases like HIV and Hepatitis B need water to disinfect patients' rooms, which can only be done once a month for lack of water.

Some ways to avert water crisis

Be that as it may, environment-related water legislation and policies abound in many jurisdictions. In the Philippines, for example, a rainwater collection law (the 1989 Rainwater Collection Facilities and Spring Water Protection Law) mandates construction of wells, rainwater collectors, development of springs, rehabilitation of existing water wells in all barangay in the country. The law remains in the books, barely implemented.



Health crisis and the looming water crisis

In Sri Lanka, provision of pipe-borne water is the response to access water without realizing that water resources are gradually getting scarce. The Lanka Rainwater Harvesting Forum tried to ease the water problem by donating to selected areas pumpkin-type ferro-cement tanks. Water filters into the tanks from the roof during the rainy season to be used during the dry season. This, however, is a stopgap solution that serves a very limited population at best.

In the meantime, the looming water crisis during a health crisis seems to be getting more complex. There are recent reports about movements of people as environmental refugees from uninhabitable areas where water is not available to neighboring countries where water is accessible. (When people seek refuge within their own countries as water refugees they are commonly referred to as ‘internally displaced persons.’)

In Africa, the effort to make clean water accessible falls largely on charity groups with mixed success. A UK-based international nongovernment organization called Water-Aid, one of the world’s largest water-and-sanitation charities, is tackling the job of bringing water to the most forgotten villages of Ethiopia and Kenya. The project ranges from the well-proven advantage of installing gutters on the sloped roof of houses to conduct rainwater to a covered tank, to building a sand dam to capture and filter rainwater that would otherwise drain away, to installing toilets that also generate methane gas for a new communal kitchen.

Involving local people

The real innovation though is involving the local people in designing, building and maintaining new water projects. Specifically, Water-Aid asks the local community to form a WASH — water, sanitation, hygiene — committee that will work with the NGO in planning and involve the village in constructing, maintaining and running projects. Best of all, Water-Aid talks to local people about using latrines, the advantage of boiling drinking water, handwashing and bathing at least twice a week.

A point for consideration in the task of water provision by governments is the people’s thinking about the nature of water. For obvious reasons, someone has to pay for water. Village people, however, think of water as a gift from God because it springs from the earth. But pipes and pumps to bring water to the households do not come free. Indeed, water is most expensive to provide for those least able to afford it.

So, how do we go about providing solutions to water issues and concerns for the purpose of health and wellness? Admittedly, the problem is most often lack of infrastructure such as wells, pipes, pollution control and systems of disinfecting water. Though politically challenging to execute, the solutions are fairly straightforward: 1) investment in appropriately scaled technology; 2) better governance; 3) community involvement; 4) proper water pricing; 5) responsive water providers; 6) training water users on how to maintain their systems; and 7) better and more effective regulation for the use of a most precious asset — water.

As opinion writer Marvel K. Tan (UP CRL) aptly observed: “Water shortage is unthinkable under Covid-19. ... Our water authorities and the water monopolies should better start figuring out a game plan to handle this catastrophe, should it ever happen. ... The plan should address the conservation and practical utilization of water now, before we come even near the prospect of losing the water we need to wash off the virus. More than ever, we cannot have a water crisis now.”

Duterte tells UN: Fight climate change with the same urgency as Covid-19

The president, whose country is predicted to have the highest share of coal in its power mix in Southeast Asia by 2030, urged world leaders at the United Nations General Assembly on 23 September to strengthen their commitment to fight the climate crisis.



President Rodrigo Roa Duterte of the Philippines addresses the general debate of the United Nation General Assembly's 75th session in a video message aired on 23 September. Image: Presidential Communications Operations Office

By [Hannah Alcoseba Fernandez](#)

Sept. 25, 2020

The same urgency in fighting the coronavirus pandemic is needed to tackle climate change, Philippine president Rodrigo Duterte told the United Nations General Assembly on Wednesday (23 September).

Speaking before the assembly for the first time, Duterte said in a [video message](#) that climate change has “worsened the ravages of the pandemic.”

“The same urgency needed to fight Covid-19 is needed to address the climate crisis. This is a global challenge that has worsened existing inequalities and vulnerabilities from within and between nations,” said the chief executive, even as his country is [projected](#) to have the highest share of coal in the power mix for Southeast Asia in 2030.



'No Planet B': Filipino climate protectors want leaders to act immediately on climate crisis

[Gaea Katreena Cabico](#) (Philstar.com) - September 25, 2020 - 5:29pm
MANILA, Philippines — “Walk the talk.”

Filipino climate advocates and environmental defenders sick of lip service from the nation’s leaders stressed this Friday as they demanded urgent and actual actions from the government to address the worsening impacts of climate crisis.

Local activists joined the youth-led “climate strikes” across the world, calling on the government to declare climate emergency and impose moratoria on destructive coal-fired power plants and reclamation projects.

They also demanded accountability from large-scale polluters, stronger climate education and adoption of long-term policies such as use of low-carbon technologies and transition to clean energies.

“Typhoons, droughts, rising sea levels, we experience these every day. We are the second most vulnerable country in the world to the climate crisis, yet our contributions to global greenhouse gas emissions are so little,” Mitzi Jonelle Tan, international spokesperson of Youth Advocates for Climate Action Philippines, said.

‘Protect climate protectors’

Also among their demands is the protection of environmental defenders.

“We are striking today not only to demand concrete climate action in the Philippines but also to defend our very right to protect our climate as well as to defend our right to call for climate justice, to defend our right to live,” Tan said.

Environmental groups feared that the contentious Anti-Terrorism Act could aggravate the attacks experienced by Filipinos fighting the climate crisis and protecting the country’s forests and seas.

Kalikasan People’s Network for the Environment documented at least 167 killings of Filipino environmental defenders under the Duterte administration.

“Filipino environmental defenders combating the climate crisis already face human rights atrocities that will be worsened by Duterte’s terror law. This is why we are striking for our fundamental right to enjoy—and protect—a balanced ecology and safe climate,” Leon Dulce, Kalikasan PNE national coordinator, said.

Duterte’s ‘lip service’

Filipino “climate strikers” also called out Duterte for his “hypocritical” speech at the United Nations General Assembly.

In his maiden speech, Duterte urged world leaders to honor their climate commitments and fight the climate crisis with the same urgency as COVID-19.

But this declaration did not sit well with environmental advocates who said the policies of his government tell a different story.



'No Planet B': Filipino climate protectors want leaders to act immediately on climate crisis

“Shame on you, President Duterte, for not walking your UN climate commitments talk in your own backyard. We are on a climate strike amid the pandemic because of Duterte's relentless pursuit of climate disruptive projects like coal power expansion, land reclamation, and aggressive big mining,” Tan said.

No 'Planet B'

For the Filipino climate activists, there is no “Planet B.”

Greenhouse gas concentrations reaching record levels worsen extreme events such as hurricanes, droughts, floods and unprecedented wildfires.

The historic Paris Climate Agreement calls for limiting of global warming at well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels while pursuing efforts for a tougher ceiling of 1.5°C.

The Philippines, in its submission under the Paris accord, had committed to cut by 70% its carbon emissions by 2030. Studies, however, found that emission reduction targets submitted by countries put the world on track for warming of 2.7 to 3.7°C, far above the Paris climate goals.

“Global leaders have been praising the youth and saying that we will change the future. But the youth in the most affected areas are being silenced and harassed. We are just asking for a chance to live,” Tan said.



Filipino climate activists hold placards calling for climate action in participation with the global climate change protests, in Quezon City, Metro Manila, Philippines, September 25, 2020. REUTERS/Eloisa Lopez

World's youth stage rallies against climate change

Published September 25, 2020 11:28pm
By KATE ABNETT, Reuters

BRUSSELS, Belgium - United under Swedish activist Greta Thunberg, young people rallied worldwide on Friday to demand urgent action to halt catastrophic climate change, in their first global protest since the coronavirus crisis began.

With wild weather wreaking havoc across the world – from fires ravaging the US West, to abnormal heatwaves in the Siberian Arctic and record floods in China – organisers said their aim was to remind politicians that, while the world focused on COVID-19, the climate crisis was more acute than ever.

Demonstrations were planned in more than 3,100 locations, though with pandemic-related curbs limiting the size of gatherings, much of the action shifted online.

In Stockholm, Thunberg and a handful of members of her group, Fridays for Future, assembled outside parliament with signs bearing slogans including "Stop Denying the Climate Is Dying".

"We need to treat the climate crisis as a crisis. It's just as simple as that. The climate crisis has never once been treated as a crisis and unless we treat it as a crisis we won't be able to, so-called, 'solve' it," she told reporters.

A year ago, two global strikes drew more than six million people pour onto the streets, in what organisers said was the biggest climate mobilisation in history.

For Friday's protests, participants were asked to post pictures on social media and join a 24-hour global Zoom call - though mass gatherings were expected in Germany, notably Hamburg, where a court overruled a bid by local authorities to limit numbers, paving the way for more than 10,000 to attend.

ON THE FRONT LINES

Friday's focus was on communities that have contributed little to greenhouse gas emissions, but are on the front lines of devastating climate threats including violent storms, rising seas and locust plagues.



World's youth stage rallies against climate change

In the Philippines, Mitzi Jonelle Tan, a 22-year-old Fridays for Future activist, said recent flooding had wiped out a local COVID-19 testing centre and caused a tree to fall on her home.

"I hate that it is a normal thing to experience these impacts. I hate that it is a normal thing that people are suffering – because they don't need to," she said.

Her government was failing to protect people from both climate change and the coronavirus.

"They are still prioritizing the rich over the poor, they are still not listening to the science," she said.

People in the global South were dying because of climate change, said 19-year-old Belgian activist Anuna De Wever ahead of a planned protest in a Brussels square.

"As one of the richest continents, we (Europeans) have the biggest responsibility to fight climate change in the most ambitious way possible."

Mya-Rose Craig, an 18-year-old Briton, travelled to the Arctic - one of the world's fastest warming regions - with Greenpeace to stage the most northerly protest on an ice floe.

In Germany, large numbers were scheduled to gather in Berlin and Bonn as well as Hamburg.

In the capital, where police had said they also expected 10,000, protesters cycled in groups to Brandenburg Gate. Hundreds sat in face masks, observing social distancing and chanting: "Strikes in school, university and companies. That is our answer to your politics".

Activists in Bogota, Colombia, said they would use the event to urge their government to ratify the Escazu Accord, enshrining protections for those working on environmental justice.

In Australia, thousands of students earlier took part in about 500 small gatherings and online protests, to demand investment in renewable energy and oppose funding for gas projects. --

Reuters

A healthy earth needs indigenous peoples

Evidence shows that lands and waters that are owned and managed by indigenous peoples and local communities are healthier than those that aren't. Governments and multilateral bodies must engage them in discussions about protecting biodiversity.



Indigenous community Callería in Peruvian Amazon. Image: [Juan Carlos Huayllapuma/CIFOR](#), [CC BY-NC-ND 2.0](#)

By [Terry Teegee](#)

Sept. 25, 2020

In May 2019, a [landmark report](#) by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services painted a bleak picture of our planet's health. Around one million animal and plant species – more than ever before in human history – are now threatened with extinction, many within decades.

Pollution is proliferating, land degradation is accelerating, and we are nowhere near on track to achieve global goals for protecting biodiversity and achieving sustainability.

But, even as media touted the report's dire warnings, they largely missed another of its key findings: lands and waters that are owned, managed, and used by indigenous peoples and local communities are much healthier than those that aren't. A growing body of [research](#) supports the clear implication that indigenous peoples have a vital role to play in addressing the biodiversity crisis.

In practice, indigenous peoples continue to play a very limited role in biodiversity discussions.

Only recently have international discussions about environmental issues begun to acknowledge the role of indigenous communities.

Over the last year, delegates of the 196 parties to the [Convention on Biological Diversity](#) (CBD) participated in countless workshops aimed at producing a new international agreement setting common goals and targets for reversing biodiversity decline, using ecosystems sustainably, and ensuring that the benefits they confer are shared equally.

And in their most recent discussions of the [initial draft](#) of the post-2020 framework, the parties recognised the importance of including indigenous peoples in the process. This was an apparent nod to the United Nations [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), which promotes our full and effective participation in all matters that concern us.

A healthy earth needs indigenous peoples

Yet, in practice, indigenous peoples continue to play a very limited role in biodiversity discussions. The second [meeting](#) of the Open-ended Working Group on the Post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework, held in Rome in February, is a case in point. We sat at the back of the room listening to delegates tout the benefits of indigenous knowledge for protecting nature and debate the legitimacy of our rights to our biodiversity-rich territories.

We worked tirelessly to persuade the parties to include our proposed text in the official meeting record. Though some progress was ultimately made, it will not be nearly enough to address the biodiversity crisis. In fact, we did not hear a single proposal that would spur the paradigm shift that our planet so desperately needs.

In my previous career as a professional forester in British Columbia, I saw firsthand the destruction wrought by unsustainable forestry practices, which reflect a utilitarian approach to nature: the planet and its ecosystems are little more than a source of material wealth. This approach is anathema to indigenous knowledge, culture, and laws – the very factors that explain our superior record of environmental stewardship.

Indigenous peoples' connection to our lands, waters, air, and other natural resources is deeply embedded in our cultures and traditions. We hold ceremonies to show our gratitude and respect for the natural gifts on which our survival depends. This instills in us a deep understanding of – and commitment to – our duties and responsibilities as nature's stewards and guardians. We know that we need nature as much as it needs us.

I believe that the world's failure to embrace such a holistic perspective lies at the root of the imbalances that are propelling our planet's destruction. We cannot continue to make the same mistakes. And that means following through and building on the commitments contained in the Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples to protect our rights and engage us fully in discussions of issues affecting us.

Canada offers a promising example. Last November, the government of British Columbia enacted [legislation](#) to implement the UN declaration, enshrining our rights to our lands and waters, our resources, and our self-determination.

It is now required in the province to move toward consent-based decision-making and further collaborate with indigenous peoples on any legislative or policy changes that affect our rights. The federal government is set to replicate this legislation at the national level at the end of this year.

More countries should follow this example, enshrining in legal frameworks the rights of indigenous peoples to govern our own territories and practice our knowledge. This means recognising our governments and laws, which are essential to ensure that our knowledge is transmitted through generations for the benefit of biodiversity.

It also means repealing racist laws designed to oppress indigenous peoples. Such protections will go a long way toward strengthening our communities' resilience and defending the ecosystems we have long protected – sometimes with our lives.



A healthy earth needs indigenous peoples

But, if we are truly to protect biodiversity, this approach must also be reflected at the international level. The parties to the CBD will be meeting, either online or in person, next May to finalise a global biodiversity framework for the next decade and beyond. This will determine the fate of the world's remaining biodiversity – [80 per cent of which is protected by indigenous peoples](#).

Rather than relegate us, yet again, to observer status, the meeting's chairs, with the support of the parties, must allow indigenous peoples to make written submissions that, unless openly opposed by a party, will be included in UN documents. We are the original stewards and guardians of this planet. We know how to protect it. It is time for world leaders to listen to us.

Terry Teegee, a member of Takla Lake First Nation, is the British Columbia Assembly of First Nations Regional Chief and a former registered professional forester.

Protecting and investing in nature is worthwhile, but hurdles remain, sustainability leaders say

Demand for nature-based solutions is increasing, but frameworks and policies need to be developed further in order to encourage greater business investment and ensure effective implementation.



Ecosystems provide valuable services to societies and should be protected, said sustainability leaders. Image: Eco-Business

By [Anne Lee](#)
Sept. 25, 2020

Nature-based solutions to address societal challenges are effectively building resilience for businesses and economies, but their adoption is hindered by credibility issues, weak policies, and a lack of awareness, said sustainability leaders at a virtual conference titled *Bringing Nature into the Great Reset*, hosted by the World Economic Forum (WEF).

By protecting, sustainably managing, and restoring ecosystems, nature-based solutions can address climate change and infrastructure issues while enhancing biodiversity and creating opportunities for social development, leaders concurred.

“When you invest in nature, nature always pays you back,” Pakistan’s Minister of Climate Change, Malik Amin Aslam, declared at the conference.



Whale rescuers face grim task in Australia mass stranding

Published September 25, 2020, 3:56 PM

[by Agence France-Presse](#)

After days wading through chilly waters, surrounded by the pained cries of hundreds of stranded whales on Australia's south coast, rescuers faced the grim task Friday of disposing of the carcasses.



Rescuers work to save a whale on a beach in Macquarie Harbour on the rugged west coast of Tasmania on September 25, 2020, as Australian rescuers were forced to begin euthanising some surviving whales from a mass stranding that has already killed 380 members of the giant pod. (Photo by Mell CHUN / AFP)

In “one hell of an effort”, a crew of around 100 conservationists and skilled volunteers saved 94 of the 470 animals stranded on Tasmania's rugged western seaboard — Australia's largest-ever mass stranding, Tasmanian environment department marine biologist Kris Carlyon told media.

“With this one, we are dealing with something unique, we haven't dealt with a stranding of this type before,” Carlyon said, adding the offshore rescue of such a large number was particularly unusual.

Tasmania Parks and Wildlife lowered its estimate of the death toll from 380 to 350 on Friday, and rescuers remained hopeful they could save up to 20 more of the creatures.

But the focus was shifting to how to dispose of the carcasses as quickly as possible over fears the decomposing corpses could damage the environment in Macquarie Harbour, drift into the paths of boats or attract sharks.

Several methods were being trialled for moving the dead whales — including towing them out to sea before cutting them loose to sink in deeper water.

“They're hard moments, when there's so much to go and it just feels defeating, it feels never-ending,” Wildcare volunteer Josh Gourlay told AFP.

“When you see what it looked like before and what it is now and you think — actually... we've done really well.”

With rescuers braving relentless rains, strong winds and cold waters for hours daily to try and save the struggling animals, he admitted the effort had taken its toll on him.



Whale rescuers face grim task in Australia mass stranding

“You almost need a whale’s thick skin to be out there as well.”

‘We can’t save them all’

Pilot whales — which can grow up to six metres (20 feet) long and weigh a tonne — are known to be highly social.

Some animals have resisted rescue or tried to return to their family after being freed, becoming beached for a second time.

The causes of mass strandings remain unknown despite scientists studying the phenomenon for decades.

Despite some restrandings, there were hopes the surviving whales would recover from the stressful event, Carlyon said.

“Ideally, they will regroup, they will reform those bonds, and they’ll get on with things.”

Gourlay and his fiancée, Corey Young, said crews were still positive despite the physical and emotional burden of the rescue.

“Hearing the crying, that is probably the most distressing part,” he said, adding that the anguished noises from calves separated from their mothers were hard to shake.

But Young said the teams, mostly made up of people accustomed to helping animals in tragic circumstances, were rallying around each other.

“We can’t save them all, that’s for sure... you’ve got to be positive.”