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## Alfred asks DOH not to bring COVID-19 suspects to Tacloban

JOEY A. GABIETA

**TACLOBAN CITY**—The mayor of this city, Alfred Romualdez, has issued an appeal to the Department of Health (DOH) to stop transporting patients confirmed to have afflicted with the coronavirus disease 2019(COVID-19) but are only showing 'mild symptoms.'

Patients who were confirmed to have COVID-19 are brought at the Eastern Visayas Regional Medical Center (EVRMC), based this city.

But Mayor Romualdez said that transporting these patients to Tacloban gives an impression that the city, considered as the regional center of Eastern Visayas, has COVID-19 cases.

Tacloban City, with more than 214,000 people, remains to be COVID-19-free city though it is monitoring nine individuals suspected to have the virus.

"Why bring the patients to Tacloban City, at the EVRMC when they have only showing mild symptoms. Why not just

isolate them at their respective hospitals and not transport them here," Romualdez, in a hastily called press conference, said on Wednesday (April 22).

Romualdez, however, said that if the patient is suffering severe symptoms or the place where he comes from have no needed medical equipment, he would not question the decision of the DOH to transport the patient to the EVRMC.

"For humanitarian consideration, if the patient is suffering severe symptoms, then the city will accept him with open arms. But we have observed that those patients were only (suffering) of mild symptoms," he said.



MAYOR ALFRED ROMUALDEZ

He said that having a COVID-19 patient though coming from outside Tacloban, gives an impression that the city has its own

COVID-19 case and could expose its people of possible transmission of the virus.

Romualdez has placed see Alfred /page 7 ...

### EV cops raise close to P9 million to help gov't assist individuals displaced by COVID-19 pandemic

**TACLOBAN CITY**—Close to P9 million was raised by personnel of the Philippine National Police (PNP) in Eastern Visayas as part of the organization's assistance to help individuals who were affected by the impacts of the coronavirus disease 2019( COVID-19).

This was disclosed by Police Regional Director Bernabe Barba during a virtual press conference on Friday who said that the money they have collected will be forwarded to their central headquarter in Camp Crame.

Barba said that the more than 9,000 personnel of the PNP in Eastern Visayas joined in the fund raising by giving a 'portion' of their salary.

Earlier, PNP chief General Archie Gamboa has called on all police personnel to help people who were greatly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly the poor, by launching a fund-raising he dubbed as 'Team PNP Bayanihan Fund Challenge.'

"We have this fund raising, collected from a part of our salaries, to answer the call of our government to help our people," Barba said.

He said that during their fund-raising activity, which started on April 14, they were able to collect more than P8.9 million from the various police offices and units in the region.

The collected amount was forwarded to their national headquarters on Thursday (April 23), the police regional director said.

Lieutenant Colonel Ma. Bella Rentuaya, police re-

gional spokesperson, said the initiative is an offshoot of a fund-raising project launched by Philippine National Police (PNP) chief General Archie Francisco Gamboa on April 14, 2020 dubbed as "Team PNP Bayanihan Fund Challenge."

The PNP called on all its personnel, regardless of rank and position, to practice the spirit of volunteerism to assist in augmenting funds in support for the government's Social Amelioration Program (SAP).

The move is the PNP's response to Presidente Rodrigo Duterte's call for the entire Filipino nation to raise funds to support the campaign of the government and help those who are greatly affected by the COVID-19 crisis, particularly those belonging to the poorest of the poor families, according to PRO-Eastern Visayas in a statement.

The various offices and units of the PNP in the region are also doing their own share in food-giving to families and individuals hard-hit by the pandemic, dubbed as "Kapwa Ko, Sagot."

Among those assisted by the police organization see EV cops /page 7...

### New case niece of woman from Burauen town

## DOH reports region's 7<sup>th</sup> COVID-19 patient

**TACLOBAN CITY**—A 25-year old woman is the latest confirm coronavirus disease 2019(COVID-19) case of the region.

The new patient is the niece of the 58-year old woman from Burauen town, the first case of Leyte province, Dr. Minerva Molon, regional director of the Department of Health (DOH), said during a virtual press conference Friday afternoon.

Molon said that the woman, identified as Eastern Visayas COVID-19 patient number 7, has

exhibited sore throat and cough on April 18.

Swab sample was taken from her on April 19 which was brought to the Vicente Sotto Memorial Medical Center in Cebu City with the positive result obtained last April 22.

She is currently confined at the municipal isolation unit for observation and management.

Molon said that unlike in the previous COVID-19 patients, the 25-year old woman was not brought at the Eastern Visayas Regional Medical Center (EVRMC), the referral

hospital for the ailment, as she did not have any pre-existing health problem.

The aunt of the latest COVID-19 patient is currently confined at the EVRMC since March 23.

The DOH-8 regional director said that with Burauen now having two confirmed COVID-19 cases, there is now a community transmission of the ailment considering that they lived in the same house.

Molon again reiterated for the public to adopt to the 'new normal' brought by the virus by wearing face mask, observe social

distancing, personal hygiene and staying at home.

"From the beginning we've been calling the public to stay at home. If we stay, we cannot infect others. And from there, we can stop the transmission and spread in early stage," the DOH regional director said.

On Friday, the DOH sent the batch 12 samples comprising 133 specimens from the contact tracing in Tarangan and from other areas.

(JOEY A. GABIETA, ROEL T. AMAZONA, RONALD O. REYES)



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## Quakes rock Leyte, Southern Leyte provinces

TACLOBAN CITY-Series of earthquakes rocked some parts of Leyte and Southern Leyte provinces on Wednesday (April 22) with the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) reporting of damages.

The jolts felt by the two provinces ranged from 1.5 magnitude to 4.6 magnitude.

In Leyte, the quakes were felt in the town of Capoocan having a magnitude of 2.4 am that occurred at around 8:48 am while a 2.4 magnitude tremor hit the town of Matag-ob with a magnitude of 1.5 that occurred at around 8:49 am.

Meanwhile, a series of quakes also hit in Southern Leyte with the provincial disaster risk reduction

management office saying that the quakes did not result to any damages.

The first tremor occurred in Saint Bernard at around 5:45 am having a magnitude of 4.6, another jolt was felt in the town at about 6:37 am having a lesser magnitude of 2.8.

At 6:37 am, another earthquake took place in the town of San Francisco with a magnitude of 2.2.

A separate jolt was felt in the town of Anahawan at 7:01 am with a magnitude of 1.7.

Another earthshaking happened at about 10:39 am with the epicenter in San Juan with a magnitude of 2.4.

All the quakes in Leyte and Southern Leyte were all of tectonic in origin.

(JOEY A. GABIETA)

## DOH to raise at the IATF concern of Mayor Romualdez not to bring COVID-19 patients to Tacloban

TACLOBAN CITY-The Department of Health(DOH) here in the region will formally inform the regional Inter Agency Task Force (IATF) for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) on the concern raised by Tacloban City Mayor Alfred Romualdez over the transfer of patients infected with virus at the Eastern Visayas Regional Medical Center(EVRMC), this city.

"We are hopeful that the task force can come up with a proposal that will benefit both the city and the health department without breaking protocols," Dr. Minerva Molon, DOH regional director, said.

Alfred Romualdez earlier raised his concern on the patients coming from outside the city who are showing symptoms of COVID-19 being brought at the EVRMC as this could pose a health risk to the people of the city.

"The problem is that these COVID-19 positive are residents of areas outside Tacloban, but they are presently at EVRMC. I don't see the logic why they have to bring patients with mild symptoms to Tacloban. That can be handled by isolation facilities of local government units and provincial hospitals," he said.

"With this situation, the risk of transmitting the virus to our health workers is high. I am worried that

health workers in Tacloban may catch the virus from this patient," the city mayor added.

For Romualdez, transferring all COVID-19 patients to the city is a major setback to the city's aim to bring normalcy amid the health crisis.

However, Dr. Minerva Molon, DOH regional director, has assured Mayor Romualdez that it has been strictly following protocols in handling COVID-19 patients from other areas who are brought at the EVRMC.

Molon also said that she already heard the explanation of Romualdez regarding his concern.

"It is actually not a situation but a reality," she added.

see DOH /page 7 ...

## Enumerators to observe protocols PSA pushes labor survey amid COVID-19 threat



**SOCIAL DISTANCING.** The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) here in the region is conducting a labor force amid the threat of the coronavirus disease 2019(COVID-19). But the agency said that they are practicing the protocols like the wearing of face mask and social distancing as shown in the photo during a survey in Albueria, Leyte. (PSA)

Of these respondents, 777 of them will come from Leyte;390 from Eastern Samar;387 from Biliran;389 each for both Northern Samar and Samar; and 384 for Southern Leyte.

The survey, which has a rider survey on the consumer and business rapid assessment survey, started on April 20 and is to end on May 16.

"All PSA personnel will strictly follow precautionary measures against COVID-19 such as wearing of face mask and face shield, physical distancing, proper hygiene and sanitation. They will also observe

all protocols laid down by the local government units," Belas-Javines said.

She also said that the interview may also be conducted through telephone and online interview.

Eastern Visayas has six confirmed COVID-19 cases with two still confined at the Eastern Visayas Regional Medical Center (EVRMC).

"The current national crisis due to COVID-19 pandemic which brought stoppage of work, business operations, transport, and tourism efforts, among others, highlights the need for continuing supply of data, particularly on labor force,

to provide evidence-based narratives on the extent of impact of the crisis on labor and employment," Belas-Javines said, citing the need why the survey is to be conducted during this time of COVID-19 threat.

She also said that the rider survey is also important as this will serve as a basis to assess the impact of COVID-19 for any appropriate policy recommendations that will help stimulate the economy and adapt to the 'new normal of economic activities. (RESTITUTO A. CAYUBIT, JOEY A. GABIETA)

## Biliran town gets new police station building

TACLOBAN CITY - The town of Cabucgayan, Biliran has a new municipal police station (MPS) building.

This was disclosed by its mayor, Marisol Masbang, who told Leyte Samar Daily Express in a mobile phone interview that the new police building is worth P4.8 million which was recently inaugurated.

She added that the building, located in Barangay Magbangon, has 400 square meters total area and a floor area of 288 square meters, with the lot donated by the local government unit.

Police Brigadier General Bernabe Balba, police regional director, said in an interview that the MPS building in Cabucgayan town is the 95th police station inaugurated in Eastern Visayas which is part of the continuing modernization program of the Philippine National Police.

Balba reported that out of 146 police stations here in the region, 102 already have the new standard PNP Building with seven others ongoing construction.

There are only 21 remaining police stations occupying the old standard PNP buildings and 23 other without PNP-owned buildings.

He added that police stations without PNP-owned buildings but have available lots have already been requested for funding from the Directorate for Logistics for the construction of the structure.

"I am indeed grateful for the untiring support of the local government units for donating lots and providing assistance in the construction of PNP buildings. We are hoping for their continued support as we still have 23 stations left without lots," Balba said.

(RESTITUTO A. CAYUBIT)



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# SAP beneficiaries in the region starts to receive cash



**POOREST OF THE POOR.** *The Department of Social Welfare and Development has started this week the distribution of the social amelioration program(SAP) to the region’s poorest of the poor who are hard-hit on the impacts of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).* (Photo Courtesy)

T A C L O B A N CITY-Bernardita Codilan,67, could not contain her happiness after more than an hour of waiting at their barangay hall, finally receive the P5,000 social amelioration program (SAP) of the national government on Wednesday

(April 22) afternoon. Codilan was one of the 6,984 residents of the town of Barugo, Leyte province which was among the first areas in Eastern Visayas to distribute the financial assistance starting on April 18 and concluded four days later.

“Of course, I am happy! This amount is huge for us poor people. This P5,000 will go a long way as I can now buy my medicine for my high blood pressure with the rest of the amount for our food needs,” Codilan, a resident of Barangay District II said.

Town Mayor Ma. Rosario Avestruz said that when she learned that the national government will be providing financial assistance, she immediately moved in the listing of those who could qualify for the aid.

Among those who are to receive the two-time basis P5,000 cash assistance are the senior citizens, lactating mothers, single parents, person with disabilities and the low-income earners who were displaced due to the pandemic caused by the coronavirus disease 2019(COVID-19).

The town mayor reminded the beneficiaries to use the money that they received from the government.

She warned that those who will squander the money other than its original purposes, which to help them during this time of crisis by buying their daily and essential needs, could be delisted for the second

see SAP/page 7 ...

## 20th IB overruns NPA’s lair in Northern Samar, seizes high powered firearms

CAMP GENERAL VICENTE LUKBAN, Catbalogan City- Troops from 20th Infantry (WE LEAD) Battalion, 8th Infantry Division, Philippine Army overran communist terrorist group’s (CTG) lair and seized high powered firearms and other war materiel in an encounter at the vicinity of Barangay P. Rebadulla, Catubig, Northern Samar at about 3 o’clock in the afternoon, April 23, 2020.

Based on the initial report from Lieutenant Colonel Juan A Gullem, commanding officer of 20IB, his troops, while responding to the local residents’ complaint about the CTG’s continued interruption on the completion of government projects in the Pacific towns and hampering the distribution of the Social Amelioration Program (SAP), engaged in a 20-minute firefight which led the CPP-NPA Terrorists (CNTs) to abandon the said lair and withdrew towards the

mountainous area of the said barangay.

The enemy’s lair can accommodate more or less 40 CNTs and has one multi-purpose hall, 11 bunkers, 19 makeshift tents, one comfort room, one kitchen and three posts.

The troops seized two M14 rifles; one AK47 with four magazines; one M16 rifle with seven magazines; one M653; one Cal. 22 (rifle converted); twelve IEDs; one hand grenade; three bandoleers; one Baofeng radio with charger; one cellular phone; twenty backpacks; assorted medical supplies and subversive documents with high intelligence value.

No casualty was reported on the government side while undetermined casualties on the enemy’s side as evidenced by the bloodstains found on the route of withdrawal.

Troops under the 20IB see 20th IB/page 7 ...

### Notice for Publication

A notice is hereby served to the public that Pepsi Cola Products Philippines Inc. located at Maharlika Highway Sto.Niño Tanauan Leyte.

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Commentaries from readers whose identities they prefer to remain anonymous can be accommodated as "blind items". It will be our editorial prerogative, however, to verify the veracity of such commentaries before publication.

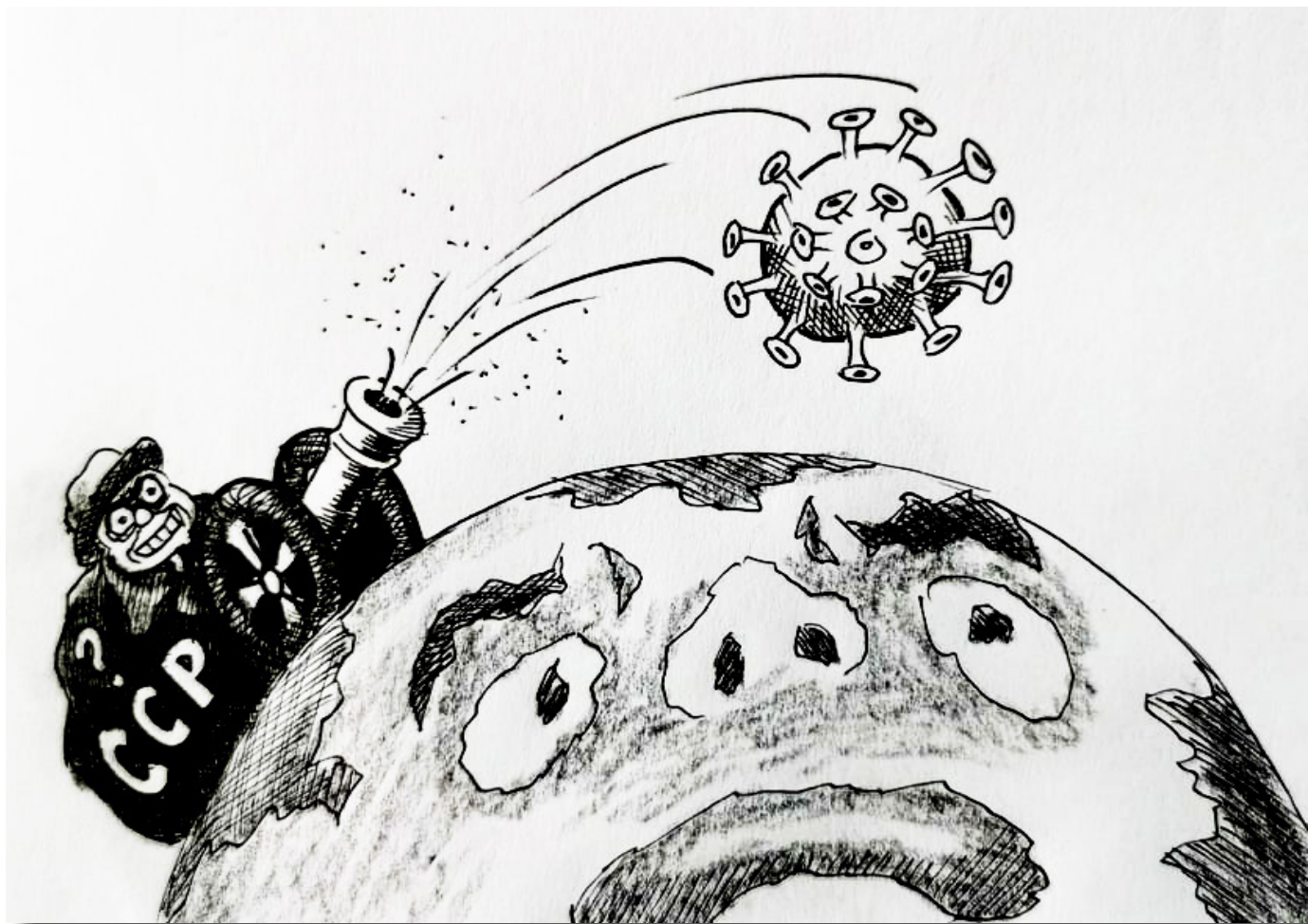
Letters should be as brief as possible, and sent with the writer's name, signature address and phone numbers (if any) to: "Letter to the Editor", Leyte Samar Daily Express. They may be edited for length and clarity

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## An appropriate name

**M**

any Western media, health, and political organizations are now naming the COVID-19 as CCP Virus, which stands for Chinese Communist Party (CCP). This, accordingly, is the most appropriate name after

numerous proofs had surfaced, from the ongoing proves, that the present corona virus came from a Wuhan laboratory, not from a wet market as previously reported.

If it were true that this virus didn't originate from a wet market, which does not exist there based on reports, then that virus must have been the handiwork of the Chinese regime, which directs and controls research activities throughout the country. And, for sure, it must be for crucial reasons that this virus was created; reasons that work to the regime's great advantage in various ways over other countries.

At first, the Chinese government protested against the idea of naming it as Wuhan Virus for its racist implications. With the help and guidance of World Health Organization (WHO), an-

other body accused of acting as China's mouth-piece, they came up with the name COVID-19, which was immediately and widely used afterwards. This new name then is far safer and does not implicate any race or nation.

But with the many evidences pointing to the CCP's role in the production and spread of the virus worldwide—many of which had been suppressed, covered up, and destroyed, in fact—full-scale investigations were still able to gather pieces of documents, images, and other proofs that the CCP was behind such virus production, no wonder why the regime had had plenty of preparations made to combat a global pandemic, such as the prior stockpiling of safety kits, masks, and suits.

As to the likely question of why would the CCP create and spread such a virus, one answer could be its glaring militarization of strategic locations like the West Philippine Sea, the grabbing of other countries' territories, and the strengthening of their defenses while the potentially powerful rivals are desperately crippled by the deadly pandemic—the CCP virus.



**Things To Mind**

DOMS PAGLIAWAN

## Aggression at sea

China's blatant disregard for the international laws of the seas by continuously expanding control of West Philippine Sea territories showcases what kind of men-

tal it has—a bully that disrespects legalities and the rights of other countries. For even those portions that lay well within a country's exclusive economic zone (EEZ) can-

not elude its claims; they are being forcibly occupied, their local residents forced out.

Claimant nations are put to a disadvantage, for sure. China is unfairly using its military forces against the weaker rivals. Against an enormous and overwhelming force, smaller countries cannot help but give way to such aggression. Against their will for, on the other hand, clashing with this giant militarily is tantamount to suicide. China knows using their superior forces is the most effective way of driving away claimant nations.

Sure enough, China succeeds in threatening its rivals. This edge gives the Chinese leaders bloated heads and egos, boosting their superiority complex. It must be for this confidence that they fear nothing at all, and respects nothing as well, even if they know a territory rightfully belongs to a country based on international laws. They are so puffed up and proud and arrogant, brandishing their military might against anyone from claimant nations that might dare to fight them.

see Aggression /page 5...





Commentary

FR. ROY CIMAGALA

Our ghostly foes

NOW that the ECQ is extended to May 15, let's be more skillful in dealing with the extended condition of our restricted lifestyle. And among the things to consider are what we may refer to as our ghostly foes that include not only the invisible Corona virus but also the more nasty dark and negative thoughts we can have, our fears, anxieties and even depression that can eat us up like worms.

But more importantly, let us not disregard the wiles and tricks of the bad spirits, the demons who can easily take advantage of our predicament these days. Let's never ignore them. They are always-around. In fact, these days I am receiving more reports of demonic activities afflicting many people, and requests for deliverance and exorcism have gone up. Let's be forewarned to be forearmed.

to truly live the life in the spirit with God. We are no match against these ghostly foes if we would just depend on our human and natural powers.

If we live by the spirit of God, using to the hilt our God-given faith, hope and charity, we would be convinced beyond any trace of doubt that we have no reason to be afraid, over-anxious or sad. God takes of everything, and he knows how to derive good from evil. With him, everything, including our difficulties and disasters, will always work for the good. (cfr. Rom 8,28)

We should just train our natural powers to be enlightened, guided and strengthened by the supernatural power of God who likes to share it with us by precisely giving us the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity.

Let us have a good grip

Aggression...  
...from Page 4

What are those international laws of the seas for if they are not observed and followed? Where they not created so as to promote peace and order between nations? Why can't China respect them? Is it because, it is claiming maritime territories that are far, far beyond its exclusive economic zone? What about those countries that own those territories based on said laws, don't they have the right to possess them?

No, they don't have that right according to China's actions. They can only keep quiet while this bully is grabbing both lands and waters. In case they protest, they will face China's guns and missiles.

Where there are islands, China builds all sorts of structures, equipping the same with sophisticated military facilities, ready to deliver offensive blows against what they deem to

on our thoughts and feelings so they would not stray away from the path of our faith. We should never dare to think that we are just living on our own, that we are alone and lonely. God is always with us. We have to feel his immense and abiding love for us.

Regarding the evil spirits, neither should we be too afraid of them. They actually cannot do anything against us unless we allow them. But we have to acknowledge that they are the smartest of all conspirators. Just the same, they cannot do anything unless God allows them to tempt us. And if God allows them to do that, it is because a greater good can be derived from such situation.

This is a truth of faith that should always be kept in our mind. We have no reason to be afraid of them, but neither should we be welcoming of them, much less, enter into some dialogue with them. Let's always remember that being spiritual beings, they are far smarter than us no matter how brilliant and smart we think we are. They can always outsmart us.

The thing to do is to dismiss them outright. That is the example Christ himself gave us when he was tempted after his forty days of praying and fasting before he started his public life. (cfr. Mt 4)

be intruders. Where there are no islets, they build artificial ones, likewise arming the same with both offensive and defensive weaponry, really intended to strengthen their claims and to defend the same against their perceived enemies.

In short, what China does is not just to lay claim of contested territories, but to also possess them by way of putting up various structures that reinforce their claim.

In the family of nations, that's not how you should deal with weaker states. If there are disputes, resolutions should be diplomatic, and legalistic. That's how you earn the respect of other nations. But China, again, shows no respect. It gets what it wants by force. It didn't even respect and fulfill its own promises of democratic life for Hong-kong residents. If it cannot respect its own words, how can it respect those of others?



High-Powered Objective

(S & T Enhanced Nations Have Edge)

DR. PACIENTE CORDERO, JR.

One R.I.T.M. for over 100 million Filipinos!

With the Philippines reckless growth of its human population, already counted among the world's top ten highests, I find it absurd to have only one world-class Research and Development dedicated to medical science – the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (R.I.T.M.), sometimes also referred to as Regional Institute for Tropical Medicine. Enough with semantics, but the reality is that the R.I.T.M. is the only research institution where the more 'complex' government and private health cases are referred to.

Is this not glaring example of the Philippine government's low regard on Science and Technology (S. & T.) and Research and Development (R & D)? Well, one will just have to look at the Annual Budget of DOST – supposed to be the country's premier research arm where the best and ac-

tive researchers and scientists in all facets of science and engineering are situated. But what percentage of its budget goes to R & D? In other countries, they are blessed to have the Industry and Private sectors ably augmenting the anemic S & T budget! But, sad to say that the Philippines is unfortunate to have only a negligible percentage of R & D oriented industry and private sectors, ready to help the country advance scientifically and technologically.

The other day, my wife let me listen to Filipino M.D. expressing his 10 cents sentiment about the way the Covid-19 issue is being handled by government. I believe that the situation is chaotic as there is no super body to plan, implement and oversee the strategies crafted to counter the fearsome effects of the China-made viral dis-

ease!. He suggested, and I second his suggestion, for the present leadership to create what he calls "Center for Covid-19", instead of the Inter-Agency Task Force! The Center is supposed to be the core of all planning, monitoring, procurement, distribution, and control of supplies and materials related to Convid-19!

The said type of a Center should have been thought of when the country was hit by SAR, Bird-Flow, ASF, etc. – could be elevated into a Commission type body like the Climate Change Commission. It's never too late in the day for Congress to meet and convene to pass a Law creating the Covid-19 Center/Commission!

We have a Legislative body that has a soft heart for 'politically-tainted' agencies - why the fast laws creating a couple of new Executive Departments?

I would expect the Legislators affected by the Virus and few in the Executive agencies to lead in the creation of a Department tasked to be the rallying point in times health upheaval like the recent Covid-19. And, if only to be more practical and sensible, **to replicate R.I.T.M. one each in the Visayas and Mindanao, at least!** We have an overflowing numbers of medical, nursing, and medical technologists, awaiting in the wings, who could be trained and recruited to man such research institutions.

ooo000ooo

**NEW TOPICS :** "Part of Academic Year to suffer from Covid-19 Effects"

**SHARE S & T THOUGHTS** through E-mail: drpacjr@yahoo.com.

Commentaries from readers whose identities they prefer to remain anonymous can be accommodated as "blind items". It will be our editorial prerogative, however, to verify the veracity of such commentaries before publication.



Pray the Holy Rosary daily for world peace and conversion of sinners (The family that prays together stays together)

Prayer for the Nation and for Those who Serve in Public Office

God, our Father, you guide everything in wisdom and love. Accept the prayers we offer for our nation, by the wisdom of our leaders and integrity of our citizens, may harmony and justice be secured and may there be lasting prosperity and peace.

Almighty and eternal God, You know the longings of our hearts and You protect our rights in your goodness, watch over those in authority, so that people everywhere may enjoy freedom, security and peace.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, forever and ever, Amen. (Courtesy of Daughters of St. Paul)



# 5 DAR-assisted farmer organizations are town’s food supplier amidst COVID-19 crisis

CALBIGA, Samar – They used to supply vegetables and other farm products for the feeding program in Day Care centers throughout this town.

Now, Samar Provincial Agrarian Reform Program Officer Celsa Mabutin disclosed that the local government unit (LGU) is buying all the agricultural products of these five Department of Agrarian Reform (DAR)-assisted farmer organizations here to feed its residents during this global crisis due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

Mabutin further disclosed that the five agrarian reform beneficiaries’ organizations (ARBOs) are the Calbiga Vegetable Growers Association, Panayuran Upland Farmers Association, Brgy. Bulao Farmers Association, Canbagic Farmers Association, and Borong

Active Farmers Association.

The farmers’ products will give variation to the canned goods commonly provided during relief assistance distribution. With this move, the LGU is incorporating nutritious foods to every household.

According to Municipal Nutrition Action Officer and member of the Municipal COVID Task Force, Evelyn Jabonete, in a Facebook post by the National Nutrition Council Region VIII, 2020, issued by Mayor Melchor Nacario, as a precautionary measure to prevent the spread of

available sources of foods in the locality during the quarantine period is very important.

Instead of transporting our agricultural products to other areas, let us serve these to our local households, she added.

With the temporary suspension of holding “tabo” or flea market pursuant to Executive Order No. 10, series of

COVID-19, the LGU buy and pick-up all the farmers’ harvests in their respective areas.

Among the ARBOs’ products purchased by the concerned LGU include: string beans, upo, eggplant, bitter melon, banana, sweet potato, cassava, corn, sweet pepper, gabi, pineapple, loofah, Baguio beans, tomato, okra, hot pepper, ginger and papaya.

Based on the sales record of the five ARBOs, they earned a combined amount of more than

P288,000 from April 3 to 8 and April 13 to 17, or during the quarantine period.

Though the town is now under enhanced community quarantine effective April 15 to 30 this year, pursuant to Executive Order No. 11, series of 2020, issued by Nacario on April 14, farmers and fisherfolks will be given exemption passes by the Municipal

Agriculture Office to go about their daily routine for food security considerations.

Furthermore, DAR-8 Regional Director Stephen Leonidas ordered the field implementers to provide the agrarian reform beneficiaries and ARBOs throughout the region the agency issued quarantine accreditation pass, as authorized by the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Disease (IATF-EID), for the continuous supply of agricultural products.

These five ARBOs, Mabutin said, are recipients of DAR’s Partnership Against Hunger and Poverty (PAHP) program, which is in collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) and the LGU.

Under this collaboration, the LGU purchases farm products from the ARBOs for the feeding program in Day Care Centers of the DSWD.

**(GABRIEL MARK OCEANAR)**



The local government unit of Calbiga, Samar purchases all harvests of the agrarian reform beneficiaries (ARBs) to give variation to the relief assistance provided to its residents. (BENJIE SAMAR)

## Region’s inflation rate rises to 2.2% in March of this year

TACLOBAN CITY- The inflation rate of the region rose to 2.2 percent in March 2020, according to the report from the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA-8).

Wilma Perante, PSA regional director, told Leyte Samar Daily Express that the regional inflation rate is 0.3 percentage point lower than the 2.5 percent national average inflation rate of the same month.

Perante reported that Eastern Samar, Southern Leyte, Biliran and Leyte registered higher inflation rates in March compared with their figures in February 2020. Eastern Samar recorded the highest increase of 0.8 percentage point, then rose to 3.1 percent in March from 2.3 percent in February.

On the other hand, Samar registered a 0.8 percentage point decrease as it dropped to 2.3 percent in March from 3.1 percent in February.

Northern Samar eased

down to 3.5 percent from 3.6 percent in February but still recorded the highest inflation rate among the provinces in the region.

Southern Leyte, meanwhile, posted the lowest inflation rate among the provinces during the month in review at 1.4 percent.

Perante also reported that majority of the commodity groups in the region exhibited higher inflation rates in March compared with their rates in February.

These include housing, water, gas, electricity and other fuels commodity group which registered the biggest increase of 1.0 percentage point, from 0.9 percent deflation in February 2020 to 0.1 percent inflation in March 2020.

“This increase can be attributed to the inflation recorded in the actual rentals for housing index (7.5 percent); maintenance and repair of the dwelling index (2.6 percent); and water supply and miscellaneous

services relating to the dwelling index (0.1 percent) in March 2020. The double-digit deflation rate of 11.0 percent in electricity, gas and other fuels, however, eased the impact of those increases to the overall IR of the commodity group,” Perante said.

Meantime, the PSA director said that the purchasing power of peso (PPP) of the region was recorded at P0.79 in March.

This PPP implies that the goods and services worth P79 in 2012 is worth P100 in March 2020.

All provinces in the region sustained their PPP last month.

Biliran, Leyte and Southern Leyte recorded the strongest PPP at P0.81, followed by Eastern Samar at P0.76 and Samar at P0.74. Northern Samar posted the weakest PPP at P0.73, Perante concluded.

**(RESTITUTO A. CAYUBIT)**

## Eastern Visayas remains peaceful amid COVID-19 crisis, says PRO 8 chief

TACLOBAN CITY- Amid the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) crisis, the Eastern Visayas region is generally peaceful according to the regional director of the Police Regional Office 8 during the Panindugan Virtual Kapihan Friday (April 24) morning hosted by PIA-8 Regional Director Erlinda Olivia P. Tiu.

Police Brig. General Bernabe Mendoza Balba said this can be attributed to the significant decrease by 36.82 percent on the total crime volume of the region from March 16 to April 16, 2020 compared to the same period last year.

Records from the PRO 8 Investigation and Detective Management Division showed that 633 crime incidents were reported from March 16 to April 16, 2020 compared to last year’s 1,002.

PRO-8 report showed that crimes against persons such as murder, physical injuries, rape cases among others drop by 70.44 percent or from 159 incidents to 47.

As to crimes against

property, such as robbery, theft and qualified theft, it went down by 70.88 percent from 79 to 23 incidents.

Meanwhile, non-index crimes also decreased by 26.30 percent from 563 incidents to 131 this year.

“Our latest crime data is indeed a reliable indicator of the positive results of our cooperation and synergy in the fight against all forms of criminality. Our sincere thanks to all stakeholders and government partners in keeping Eastern Visayas safe and secure. Let us continue to be united in our quest towards a peaceful place to live in,” PB Gen. Balba said.

Balba also reported that some 1,700 persons were arrested in the region for different violations in areas implementing enhanced community quarantine.

The regional police director also acknowledged the efforts of the whole Law and Order Cluster of the Regional Task Force for COVID 19.

He likewise reiterated his reminders to the policemen serving as front-

liners as he asked the cooperation of the people of Eastern Visayas.

“I must say that I’m very proud of our frontliners and as a reminder to our frontliners especially the police officers to maintain the basic Filipino values -- Malinis, Magalang at Maaasahan -- especially in the performance of duties in the maintenance of peace and order in the frontlines. I expect you to always wear your protective gears because we want a strong law and order cluster to fight against this COVID-19,” he said.

Balba appeals also to the people of Eastern Visayas to cooperate and follow the quarantine orders and protocols and staying at home to defeat COVID-19.

**(Idl/cba/PIA8)**





Republic of the Philippines  
Tacloban City  
-oOo-  
TANGGAPAN NG SANGGUNIANG PANLUNGSOD

25TH REGULAR SESSION OF THE 14TH SANGGUNIANG PANLUNGSOD HELD AT THE SESSION HALL, LEGISLATIVE BUILDING, CITY HALL, TACLOBAN CITY, ON APRIL 15, 2020.

PRESENT:	Hon. Jerry T. Yaokasin	-	City Vice-Mayor & Presiding Officer
	Hon. Eden Chua-Pineda	-	ABC President/Presiding Officer Pro Tempore
	Hon. Edmund Edward I. Chua	-	SP Member
	Hon. Nikki C. Chua	-	SP Member
	Hon. Leo O. Bahin	-	SP Member
	Hon. Aurora Aimee D. Grafil	-	SP Member
	Hon. Dalisay T. Erpe	-	SP Member
	Hon. Brian Steve G. Granados	-	SP Member
	Hon. Rachelle Erica C. Pineda	-	SP Member
	Hon. Thomas John M. Diaz	-	SK Federation President/Member
ABSENT:	Hon. Maria Elvira G. Casal	-	Floor Leader - (Excused)
	Hon. Evangeline L. Esperas	-	Assistant Floor Leader - (Excused)
	Hon. Jose Mario S. Bagulaya	-	SP Member - (Excused)

ORDINANCE NO. 2020-14-07

AN ORDINANCE REQUIRING THE WEARING OF FACE MASKS AND OTHER SIMILAR PROTECTIVE GEARS IN ESTABLISHMENTS AND PUBLIC SPACES DURING PANDEMICS OR PUBLIC HEALTH EMERGENCIES CAUSED BY INFECTIOUS RESPIRATORY DISEASES AND PROVIDING PENALTIES FOR VIOLATIONS THEREOF

Sponsor:	Hon. Rachelle Erica C. Pineda
Co-Sponsors:	Hon. Edmund Edward I. Chua
	Hon. Eden Chua-Pineda
	Hon. Nikki C. Chua
	Hon. Jose Mario S. Bagulaya
	Hon. Thomas John M. Diaz

WHEREAS, a pneumonia of unknown cause detected in Wuhan, China was first reported to the World Health Organization Country Office in China on 31 December 2019. The outbreak was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern on 30 January 2020 and was eventually called COVID-19. The WHO assessed the outbreak around the clock and was deeply concerned both by the alarming levels of spread and severity, and by the alarming levels of inaction;

WHEREAS, the World Health Organization has made the assessment that COVID-19 can be characterized and declared as a pandemic on 11 March 2020;

WHEREAS, Section 2 of Proclamation No. 922, which was issued by the President of the Philippines declaring a state of public health emergency throughout the Philippines, mandated that all government agencies and LGUs are hereby enjoined to render full assistance and cooperation and mobilize the necessary resources to undertake critical, urgent and appropriate and measures in a timely manner to curtail and eliminate the COVID-19 threat;

WHEREAS, the Department of Interior and Local Government issued Memorandum Circular No. 2020-71 through Secretary Eduardo Año, addressed to all Provincial Governors, City and Municipal Mayors, Punong Barangays, Members of the Sanggunian, DILG Regional Directors and Field Officers, BARMM Minister of the Interior and Local Government, and all other concerned, stating that Local Government Units (LGUs) shall issue local ordinances, executive orders or advisories on the mandatory wearing of face masks, to include imposition of sanctions to non-complaint residents as may be appropriate;

WHEREAS, under Section 1 of the Executive Order No. 2020-03-017 issued by the City Mayor of Tacloban, states that all persons shall be required to wear masks (e.g. reusable, washable, or improvised), when going outside their homes.

NOW, THEREFORE BE IT ORDAINED BY THE SANGGUNIANG PANLUNGSOD IN SESSION ASSEMBLED THAT:

Section 1. **Short Title** - This Ordinance shall be referred to as "FACE MASK ORDINANCE OF THE CITY OF TACLOBAN".

Section 2. **Definition of Terms** - For purposes of this Ordinance, the term:

(1) "Establishment: shall refer to any building, structure, or portion thereof that is used by the government, religious or private entity and organization.

(2) "Face Mask" shall mean a protective mask covering the nose and mouth area of a person, either disposalbe, reusable, washable or improvised by handkerchiefs, scarves and other similar covers with the purpose of protecting the wearer and preventing the spread of the disease.

(3) "Pandemic" shall mean "a worldwide spread of a new disease" as defined by WHO. It is an epidemic occurring worldwide, or over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people.

(4) "Person" shall mean a natural person or juridical person;

(5) "Public Space" shall refer to an area or place that is generally open and accessible to people including but not limited to roads, bridges, alleys, overpasses, sidewalks, public squares, markets, parks, beaches, and transport services.

Section 3. **Policy** - It shall be the policy of the City during a pandemic or public health emergency caused by infectious respiratory diseases:

(1) To require all persons to wear a face mask when going outside their homes, while in transit, inside an establishment and in public spaces.

(2) To require all persons to wear face mask properly covering both nose and mouth.

(3) To require all establishments and mass transportation in operation to refuse entry and delivery of product/service to any person not wearing face mask.

(4) To require all establishments to have at least one legible and visible sign, conspicuously placed in every major entrance, containing the words "No Face Mask, No Entry", or any variation or translation in the local vernacular of such.

Section 4. **Penalties** - Any person found violating the ordinance shall be penalized as follows:

First Offense - One Thousand Pesos (P1,000.00) or its equivalent community service;

Second Offense - Three Thousand Pesos (P3,000.00) or its equivalent community service;

Third and Succeeding Offenses: Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00) or its equivalent community service and/or six months imprisonment as determined by the court;

For purposes of imposing the fine herein set forth for violation of the provisions hereof, the duly bonded barangay officials of the barangay concerned where the violation was actually committed are hereby deputized to receive and/or collect the fine or fees for the City Government of Tacloban and issue the proper receipt thereof.

For every fine imposed and actually collected by the aforementioned barangay, fifty percent (50%) thereof shall be retained and shall accrue to the barangay to form part of their barangay funds. The other fifty percent (50%) shall accrue in favor of the City Government of Tacloban.

Section 5. **Implementation** - This Ordinance shall be strictly enforced by the Office of the City Mayor and its deputies, agents or representatives, the Punong barangay and their Barangay Councils and the Barangay Public Safety Officers (BSPPO), by virtue of this Ordinance are all deputized as law enforcers.

Section 6. **Repealing Clause** - Any ordinance, rules and regulations, or parts thereof, in conflict with, or inconsistent with any provisions of this Ordinance, are hereby repealed or modified accordingly.

Section 7. **Separability Clause** - If for any reason, any section or provision of this Ordinance is declared unconstitutional, or inconsistent with national law, the sections or provisions thereof which are not affected thereby shall remain valid and in full force and effect.

Section 8. **Effectivity** - Due to the urgency of the situation, this Ordinance shall take effect immediately upon its approval and publication. Further, this Ordinance shall take effect every time there is a declaration of a State of Public Health Emergency due to the emergence of pandemics or epidemics caused by infectious respiratory diseases. Should and declared state of public emergency be lifted by the National or City Government of Tacloban, whichever comes last, the regulations imposed in this Ordinance shall accordingly be suspended.

ENACTED, April 15, 2020.

I HEREBY CERTIFY to the correctness of the above-mentioned Ordinance No. 2020-14-07.

ATTESTED:


  
MAILA N. ANDRADE  
SP Secretary

APPROVED: 22 APR 2020

  
ALFRED S. ROMUALDEZ  
City Mayor

(Excused)  
HON. MARIA ELVIRA G. CASAL  
Floor Leader

(Excused)  
HON. EVANGELINE L. ESPERAS  
Asst. Floor Leader

  
HON. EDEN C. PINEDA  
ABC President/Presiding Officer Pro Tempore

  
HON. EDMUND EDWARD I. CHUA  
Member

  
HON. NIKKI C. CHUA  
Member

HON. LEO O. BAHIN  
Member

  
HON. AURORA AIMEE D. GRAFIL  
Member

  
HON. DALISAY T. ERPE  
Member

  
HON. BRIAN STEVE G. GRANADOS  
Member

  
HON. RACHELLE ERICA C. PINEDA  
Member

(Excused)  
HON. JOSE MARIO S. BAGULAYA  
Member

  
HON. THOMAS JOHN M. DIAZ  
SK Federation Pres./Member

Alfred...

...from Page 1

the entire city under restrictive community quarantine effective March 21 which is to end on April 28.

He, however, imposed stricter border control after a confirmed COVID-19 case was transported by the DOH to the EVRMC who come from Burauen, Leyte last April 16.

But in a separate statement, the DOH said that EVRMC has been identified as the referral hospital for those suffering from COVID-19, adding that during the transportation of the patient, their staff strictly follows the protocols like

the wearing of the personal protective equipment with the ambulance used immediately being disinfected to ensure that no virus would be transmitted.

No member of the patient's family is also being allowed during the travel, the DOH said.

It also added that the six confirmed cases have 'co-morbidities' such as asthma, hypertension, and diabetes.

"This is the reason why they were transported to the referral hospital. They need close monitoring and proper management. Also, our manpower, particularly specialist physicians capable of handling COVID-19 cases are in EVRMC," the

DOH said.

"And if the result turned positive for COVID-19 and patient is 60 years old above and with comorbidities then they will be transported to EVRMC," it added.

The DOH also said that all local government units, as the 'primary responders to the public health emergency,' are mandated to prepare their own community and quarantine unit to cater the mild symptomatic suspects.

Currently, there are only two COVID-19 patients confined at the EVRMC- one from Burauen, Leyte and Taranagan, Samar.

EV cops...

...from Page 1

tion was the four orphaned siblings living in Barangay Camparanga of Pambujan town in Northern Samar.

The gesture, posted by the 2nd Northern Samar Provincial Mobile Force Company, on their Facebook, touched netizens that it generated more than 4,400 likes and 1,700 shares

SAP...

...from Page 3

payout scheduled next month.

"If they will spend for other purpose like for a tupada (cockfight) or liquor or worst, for illegal drugs, they will be delisted from the list for those who will receive the second payout," Avestruz said.

For the entire Eastern Visayas, the regional office of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has identified 596,094 beneficiaries for SAP.

Joshua Kempis, informa-

as of April 24.

Various individuals and groups have signified to help the children who live among themselves after their parents were killed in a hacking incident last year. The children, with the

DOH...

...from Page 2

Meanwhile, Darwin Bibar, assistant regional director of the Department

tion officer of the DSWD-8 for disaster response management division, said that they intend to complete the distribution on April 30.

As of Wednesday, about9,413 beneficiaries from the provinces of Leyte (4,443), Samar (1,963), and Eastern Samar (3,007) have received the P5,000 financial assistance.

"We just like to remind to the beneficiaries that this emergency subsidy is meant to help the people sustain their basic needs, especially now that most of people's sources of income have been affected due to COVID-19," Kempis said. (JOEY A.GABIETA)

oldest at 13 years old and the youngest only six years old, is being looked after by their aunt who have her own children and have no steady income of her own. (JOEY A. GABIETA/ RONALD O. REYES)

of Interior and Local Government (DILG) informed that their office has received a letter of Mayor Romualdez regarding his concern on the issue.

He, however, said that they have yet to act on the letter of Romualdez, pending the result of the IATF meeting. (LIZBETH ANN A. ABELLA)

20th IB...

...from Page 3

are on search and pursuit operation to sustain and ensure that the CNTs will be apprehended.

Governor Edwin Marino Ongchuan remarked, "The dedication of uniformed men on the face of this COVID-19 public health emergency is commendable. It clearly attests to the seriousness of our government forces in crushing the enemies of the state. We denounce this act of atrocity and all other acts by individuals or groups who take advantage of this COVID health crisis to sow fear and disorder in the community."

Colonel Lowell R. Tan, commander of 803rd Infantry (PEACEMAKER) Brigade, in his statement, "The overwhelming support of the populace who are already fed up of the rebels' assaults and atrocities provides our security forces timely information leading to a successful operation that brings us one step closer to peace and prosperity." (PR)

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SPECIAL REPORT

Church, villagers to Duterte: Stop mining operations in Homonhon Island

By RONALD O. REYES

CATHOLIC church and villagers in Homonhon Island in Guiuan, Eastern Samar have urged President Rodrigo Duterte to stop the ongoing mining operations in the island.

“The decades-long mining operations in the historic island of Homonhon have caused immense and tremendous environmental and ecological damages. The presence of mining companies in the island has also been a cause of divisions in the communities of the island,” said Fr. Christian Ofilan of the St. John the Baptist Parish in Homonhon, a fishing community of over 4,800 people.

In his online petition, which already earned over 10, 000 signatures as of April 24, Ofilan also appealed to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and other government officials “to give our island time and a chance to heal itself.”

“There is an ongoing silent show of opposition or protest ongoing now in the village,” said Ofilan following the successful shipment of some 7,000 metric tons of chromite ore from mining company Techiron Resources Inc. in the island after the DENR on April 11 overturned its earlier decision to delay the loading activity.

“We are very disappointed. The people feel helpless,” said the 37-year-old priest.

The loading of the mineral ore, with estimated worth of P61 million, happened despite the opposition of the Eastern Samar provincial government and the Diocese of Borongan led by Bishop Crispin Varquez, following the health crisis brought by the deadly coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Earlier, Eastern Samar Governor Ben Evardone banned “all entries of non-residents to the provincial coastlines, regardless of origins” as he placed the entire province under the general community quarantine.

Evardone also tasked concerned government agencies to “refuse the entry of any vessel attempting to dock and enter the

province through the coastlines.”

In his letter dated April 14, Evardone appealed to DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu “to protect the health and safety of our people, to reconsider your decision to lift the suspension order on the loading of chromite ore of Techiron Resources Inc.” in the island.

“The people of Eastern Samar have raised serious concerns on the possible danger this poses to public health while our province is under general community quarantine,” the governor wrote.

However, the Panamanian-registered vessel, MV VW Peace, with a crew of 13 Chinese and four from Myanmar nationals, arrived on April 4 to collect and transport the minerals from the island to China.

A domestic ship facilitated the transfer of the minerals from Homonhon to the foreign cargo vessel which was anchored just few miles away from the island, according to CBCP News.

“The village officials of Pagbabangnan have prepared quarantine protocols and safety measures for all those involved in the loading operations,” said Ofilan.

Since the province is under a general community quarantine, the priest cannot help but lament over the issue on social media.

“It feels like we are on our own at this point. For this government, it is China’s interests first, second our rights,” said Ofilan.

“We can’t trust our government to protect our rights always. This is the bitter truth,” he wrote on Facebook.

Environmental Legal Assistance Center (ELAC) in Eastern Visayas also condemned the “blatant intrusions and disregard of existing quarantine laws and exploitation of our natural resources” in Homonhon.

“We also call upon the national government as well as the respective line agencies, most especially the DENR and the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) to be true to your oaths and the duties of your offices of protecting our valuable natural resources. No one is above the law; and most especially in times like this,



**NO TO MINING OPERATION.** The recent loading activity involving 7,000 metric tons of chromite has ignited the call of the people of the Homonhon Island for the government to ban any mining activity on the island.

they should be reminded that the welfare of the people greatly, if not entirely, outweighs the interest of a few individuals,” the group said in a statement.

**LONG BATTLE AHEAD**

Ofilan said there are currently two active mining operations in the island while they are on community lockdown since March 22.

He identified the other mining company as Emir

Mineral Resources Corporation.

“Like cancer cells, the damage is slowly eating up the entire island. Hinahakot talaga nila yung lupa. Nakaka-flatten talaga ng bundok,” Ofilan said, describing the extent of the environmental damage suffered by the 20 kilometer-long island as nickel, chromite, and other minerals, are being extracted for many years.

“As for my safety, dati natatakot talaga ako nung umpisa palang pumutok yung issue. Pero ngayon okey na naman. I learned that most of those working in these mining companies are locals. The local people have assured me of my safety here,” said Ofilan, who has been assigned in the island for two years now.

Despite the continued inaction of the government,

Ofilan remains thankful to the villagers and other environmental groups for their support.

“I really feel pity for them. Many of them have been fighting this cause for a long time already and it seems that nothing happens. It somehow gives them a sense of hopelessness. Kaya gusto ko lang ipagpatuloy ang laban nila,” he said.



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- ✓ Dementia
- ✓ Learning Disorders in Children
- ✓ Autoimmune Disease
- ✓ Varicose Veins

**PREVENTS AND TREAT**

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