

Raise level of preparedness: Phivolcs

MANILA -- With the series of strong quakes that struck parts of Mindanao in a span of two weeks this month, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) urges the public to be ready and prepared for such calamities.

In an interview with the Philippine News Agency (PNA) on Thursday, Department of Science and Technology Undersecretary for Disaster Risk Reduction and Climate Change and Phivolcs Officer-in-Charge Renato Solidum Jr. reminded the public of the do's and don'ts in times of earthquake.

"The public should

review their earthquake preparedness response during and after shaking," he said.

A magnitude 6.5 earthquake struck at 9:11 a.m. on Thursday, with epicenter in Tullungan, Cotabato. A magnitude 6.6 tremor hit the same area on Tuesday, leaving several persons dead and hundreds injured.

Solidum said the series of earthquakes in Mindanao would not cause a tsunami in the coastal areas since the quake is "far inland."

Then indoors and within a structurally sound building, Phivolcs suggests to (1) Duck under a sturdy desk or table, and hold on to it, or protect your

head with your arms; (2) Stay away from glass windows, shelves, cabinets, and other heavy objects; (3) Beware of falling objects. Be alert and keep your eyes open; and (4) If possible, quickly open the door for exit.

"Houses and buildings, especially those with damages, should be inspected if these are still resistant to a strong shaking. The local government units (LGUs) and engineering organizations should have these inspected," Solidum said.

For those who are outdoors during a quake, the agency suggests to move to an open area and (1) Stay

away from trees, power lines, posts, and concrete structures; (2) Move away from steep slopes that may be affected by landslides; (3) If near the shore and feeling an earthquake, especially a strong one, quickly move to higher grounds in anticipation of possible tsunamis.

Those inside a moving vehicle are advised to stop, get out, and not attempt to cross bridges, overpasses, or flyovers that may have been damaged.

Slopes with tension cracks should be avoided or vacated as strong shaking or prolonged rainfall may cause them to slide. (PNA)

Public-private collaboration to boost maritime economy

MANILA -- Participants of the two-day National Marine Summit 2019 have sought greater collaboration between the government and the private sector to come up with a long-term plan that will further boost the maritime economy in the country.

National Coast Watch Council Secretariat Jose Pascasio presented on Wednesday an adopted resolution approved by stakeholders from the government, the academe, and think-tanks, community-based and non-government organizations, environmentalists and scientists on Tuesday, the first day of the summit.

Plan, which shall be conducted by the National Academy of Science and Technology," Pascasio said during the second and last day of the National Marine Summit.

He said it was also recommended to create a National Investment Plan for Research and Development Infrastructure for the national research fleet and vessel monitoring.

Pascasio said players in the maritime industry and other stakeholders were also encouraged to "provide inputs and needs during the formulation process."

marine protected areas by applying appropriate management tools.

"They also wanted a continued restoration and rehabilitation of coastal and marine environment, as well as of resources destroyed by human activities," Pascasio said.

The resolution, Pascasio said, sought the promotion of cooperation for the effective enforcement of existing laws and for harmonization and coordination for the sustainable use of marine resources.

Duterte asked to immediately approve MIDP

Smart brings free Wi-Fi in cemeteries, transport hubs this Undas

MANILA -- Days before Filipinos flock to the country's cemeteries to observe Undas, Smart Communications Inc. (Smart) on Tuesday announced the rollout of free Wi-Fi in major cemeteries in Metro Manila and transport hubs in the country during the All Saints' and All Souls' days (Nov. 1 and 2).

In a statement, the telecommunications firm said it will deploy free "carrier-grade" Wi-Fi in Metro Manila's biggest cemeteries such as Eternal Gardens Memorial Park in Caloocan, Manila Memorial Park in Parañaque City, Loyola Memorial Park in Marikina City, and Manila North Cemetery from Friday to Saturday.

Those flying home to their provinces and back would also find free Wi-Fi in many airports nationwide.

Smart said these would include "the four terminals of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA), Davao International Airport, Caticlan Airport, Zamboanga Airport and Laoag Airport, to name a few."

For land travelers,

Smart said its free Wi-Fi would be available at integrated bus terminals in Araneta, Bacolod, Cebu North Bus, Cebu South Bus, Imus, Dao, Tacloban, and Meycauayan.

Free Wi-Fi from Smart would also be available in private bus terminals operated by Solid North, Baliwag, Partas, DLTB, and Victory.

For sea travelers, Smart said its free Wi-Fi service will also be available at seaports in Cagayan de Oro, Ozamiz, Cebu, Batangas, Puerto Princesa, and Ormoc.

Smart President and CEO Alfredo Panlilio said the company's efforts in providing free Wi-Fi services is in support of the government's efforts to improve the experience of every Filipino traveler.

"We are happy to support government efforts to improve Filipinos' travel experience by making fast and reliable connectivity more accessible to all, especially during peak travel periods," Panlilio said.

Last week, the Department of Transportation said Malasakit

Help Desks (MHD) would be present in the country's major transport hubs to provide the commuters with assistance on transport-related inquiries, complaints, and other concerns.

Malasakit Help Kits would also be given out through these MHDs containing snacks, bottled water, toiletries, and portable fans.

On Wednesday, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) also announced the deployment of over 2,700 personnel during Undas to help motorists, commuters, and cemetery-goers with any concerns or emergencies. (PNA)

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Citing the resolution unanimously adopted by the participants, Pascasio said there was a proposal to formulate a long-term plan aimed at developing and promoting the maritime industry in the Philippines.

"On Marine research, the recommendation is to call for greater collaboration between the private sector and government for the formulation of the long-term National Research Development and Innovation

mocracy; we must think of ways for them to vote with ease," she said.

Under the proposal, the voting period for LAV will be extended from three days to 30 days.

"Yes they can vote within the 30 days that's my proposal. But printing of ballots is 45 days before election may be a problem because there are so many candidates. It is up to Congress," Guanzon added.

The Comelec commissioner noted that her proposal will be ready this month.

"I am writing them this week. Should be ready before November

Comelec exec seeks expansion of local absentee voting coverage

MANILA -- An official of the Commission on Elections (Comelec) is looking to include more beneficiaries to be covered by the local absentee voting and extend the period for the procedure.

Comelec Commissioner Rowena Guanzon said Wednesday she has drafted a proposal to amend the law, which seeks to allow other registered voters to vote earlier than the rest of the population and additional voting days.

"I have a draft of proposed amendments to Local Absentee Voting (LAV) Act to include all @Comelec, PNP (Phil-

ippine National Police) AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines), DepEd (Department of Education), PWD (person with disabilities), Senior Citizens, Indigenous people and pregnant women. So they can vote one month before election day," she said in her Twitter account @commrguanzon.

Guanzon added the proposal aims to give the beneficiaries a chance to vote with ease.

"So they don't have to suffer falling in line during election day. This way they will be encouraged to vote. We need an inclusive de-

He said it was also recommended to establish a mechanism for cooperation between government, higher education institutions (HEIs), and the private sector to facilitate the development of marine-related education programs.

Pascasio noted that the stakeholders are convinced that there is a need for the "continued" engagement and collaboration between and among government agencies, non-government organizations, maritime organizations, and the HEIs for the development of system for the "gathering, consolidation, assessment and dissemination of information necessary for marine policy-making."

He said the first day of the summit led to an agreement among stakeholders to intensify the assessment of the country's land resources, living and non-living resources, and oceanographic research.

The summit participants also called on the government to scale up

On the first day of the National Marine Summit, stakeholders also supported the call for President Rodrigo Duterte to "immediately" approve the Maritime Industry Development Plan (MIDP) 2019 to 2028, Pascasio said.

The MIDP seeks to understand and address the core problem of the maritime sector, as well as the underlying causes of the problem, in order to plan and implement more responsive programs that meet demand of the maritime industry.

"The summit expresses support for the immediate approval by His Excellency, President Rodrigo Duterte, of the MIDP 2019 to 2028 and setting in motion its implementation," the NCWC secretariat said.

Pascasio said the resolution also backed the conduct of "comprehensive" review of existing legal and institutional arrangements, in a bid to enable local government units to invest in the development of ports and other coastal infrastructures to support maritime development across the country.

He added that summit participants also supported the continued institutionalization of a "comprehensive, modern and efficient" maritime safety and security systems to help prevent maritime accidents, save lives, and protect people and trade. (PNA)

15. Will submit it to the Senate Electoral Reform Committee of Senator Imee Marcos," she added.

Under the law, LAV voters will be voting national positions only, for senators and a party list group during elections. (PNA)