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British Embassy hosts COP26 Scotland climate change conference preview for PH business leaders

Published April 2, 2021, 10:44 AM by Roy Mabasa

The British Embassy in Manila recently convened a virtual roundtable of Philippine business leaders to discuss climate change in the lead-up to the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference of Parties (COP26) to be held in Glasgow, Scotland in November this year.

Nigel Topping, the UN's COP 26 High-Level Champion for Climate Action, keynoted the event where he discussed his role in galvanizing new, more ambitious and most credible climate action from companies, investors, cities, states and regions, and referenced the United Kingdom's own journey in driving down emissions while at the same time growing its economy.

Topping encouraged local businesses to embrace and join the Race to Zero initiative, the flagship global campaign to rally leadership and support from non-state actors for a healthy, resilient, zero-carbon recovery that creates decent jobs, prevents future threats, and unlocks inclusive sustainable growth.

"When you as business leaders raise your ambition, it sends a very strong signal to political leaders and makes it easier for policymakers to be bold. And when bold policy comes, it makes it easier for your peers to intensify their own [climate] ambitions. We call this the 'ambition loop', and hope it delivers a real step up in climate action from governments and the private sector alike," Topping said.

He added that COP26 is the first real test of the 2015 Paris Agreement, which set the long-term goal to net-zero and a process of ratcheting ambition every five years.

Senior Philippine corporate executives from 15 companies across the business spectrum who participated in the discussion highlighted the importance of pursuing and embedding sustainability in their operations, while at the same time tackling the significant challenges posed by COVID-19.

The participation of the Philippine Green Business Leaders showcased the strong commitment of the Philippine business sector to tackle the challenges of climate change mitigation, adaptation, resilience, and sustainability.

British Ambassador to the Philippines Daniel Pruce highlighted the important role of private investment and the business sector and the need for a whole-system approach to achieve success in climate change.

"At the core of the UK's clean growth leadership is delivering for countries most vulnerable to climate change. This of course includes the Philippines which has witnessed stronger and more destructive typhoons throughout the years. If we are to be successful in achieving a cleaner future, the role of private investment is paramount."

Source: https://mb.com.ph/2021/04/02/british-embassy-hosts-cop26-scotland-climate-change-conference-preview-for-ph-business-leaders/





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Manila-based Asian Development Bank said access to climate finance is a key priority for Asia Pacific nations as governments design and implement a green and resilient recovery from the pandemic.

KJ Rosales, file

ADB: Climate finance a priority in recovery

(The Philippine Star) - April 4, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Economies in Asia Pacific, including the Philippines, should prioritize accessing climate finance as they rebound from the pandemic and move toward the new normal.

Manila-based Asian Development Bank (ADB) said access to climate finance is a key priority for Asia Pacific nations as governments design and implement a green and resilient recovery from the pandemic.

ADB said the pandemic presents an opportunity to rebuild economies with more resilient and sustainable infrastructure.

ADB president Masatsugu Asakawa said expanding access to finance is critical if developing economies in Asia Pacific are to meet their Paris Agreement goals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and help adapt to the adverse impacts of climate change.

"We can no longer take a business-as-usual approach to climate change. We need to put ambitious climate actions at the center of development," Asakawa said.

"ADB is committed to supporting its developing member countries through finance, knowledge, and collaboration with other development partners, as they scale up climate actions and push for an ambitious outcome," he said.

ADB maintained that the increasing severity of climate impacts is undermining the development gains Asia Pacific has achieved in recent decades.

The region's economic growth has also come at a high cost of increased greenhouse gas emissions.

In response, the multilateral lender is using a three-pronged strategy to expand access to finance for its developing members as they step up their response to the impacts of climate change.





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First, ADB is targeting that 75 percent of its committed operations support climate change mitigation and adaptation by the end of the decade, with climate finance from its resources to reach \$80 billion until 2030.

Under its Asian Development Fund, it provides grant financing to its poorest members by supporting climate mitigation and adaptation in 35 percent of its operations by volume and 65 percent of its total number of projects by 2024.

Further, ADB is enhancing support for adaptation and resilience beyond climate proofing physical infrastructure to promote strong integration of ecological, social, institutional, and financial aspects of resilience into ADB's investments.

It is also increasing support among the poorest and most vulnerable communities by working with other agencies for a community resilience program to scale up the quantity and quality of climate adaptation finance in support of local climate adaptation actions.

Source: https://www.philstar.com/business/2021/04/04/2088660/adb-climate-finance-priority-recovery





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Memory game teaches kids, adults about Philippine native trees

Gaea Katreena Cabico (Agence France-Presse) - April 2, 2021 - 3:28pm

MANILA, Philippines — Funny Cow Games released an educational game that allows children and kids at heart to learn more about native trees in the Philippines.

ForesTree: A Memory Match-Up Game teaches players about Philippine native trees such as Almaciga, Bignay, Ilang-Ilang, Kamagong, Molave, Narra and Salingbobog while testing and improving their memory.

Players learn by matching illustrations of native trees with their leaves, fruits and flowers. There are two levels: easy and hard.

A learning mode also provides important and interesting information about each type of tree such as their conservation status.

The Philippines had approximately 7.014 million hectares of forests as of 2015. Ninety percent of the country was believed to be covered by forests in the 16th century but it decreased to about 70% in the early 1900s. Between 1934 and the mid-1980s, around 10 million hectares of forests were lost.

In 2011, the government launched the country's most ambitious reforestation effort—the National Greening Program—to increase forest cover in one of the most severely deforested countries in the tropics. It aims to plant indigenous, endemic and native forest tree species in protection areas.

So far, 1.7 billion seedlings have been planted in over 2 million hectares, according to the Forest Management Bureau, an attached agency of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The reforestation program has been extended until 2028.







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Tribute to dad

Gabby Lacuesta of Funny Cow Games said making ForesTree was personal as it closes the loop on his father's 30-year-old idea.

"One idea that he planted early, and which I suspect he truly never let go of, was a game that promoted environmental awareness and activism. He had always been in love with nature, having grown up in the boondocks and fishponds of Davao; the foyer of our house had an enormous painting of a Philippine Eagle staring at you straight on," Lacuesta said in a blog. "ForestTree is probably less dramatic than the environmental game Dad envisioned. But with the educational aspect, classic game format, and the all-age appeal, I hope that the game will be much more impactful, while being ever more relevant now that it was in the 80s," he added.

The game features handmade illustrations of graphic designer Cynthia Bauzon-Arre. It was produced by Forest Cow Games, Bauzon-Arre and the Forest Foundation Philippines.

ForesTree: A Memory Match-Up Game can be downloaded on both iOS and Android.

Source: https://www.philstar.com/business/science-and-environment/2021/04/02/2088592/memory-game-teaches-kids-adults-about-philippine-native-trees





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Atimonan church calls for ecological conversion, end to coal and coal financing

ByBUSINESSMIRROR APRIL 3, 2021



Monsignor Noel Villareal, Our Lady of the Angels Parish Priest, leads the virtual Station of the Cross with the theme of Ecological Conversion.

Church leaders and youth in Atimonan town, Quezon on Good Friday took the lead once more in pushing for a swift and just transition to clean energy for the province and the country and in resisting destructive energy from coal, the continued use of which for power generation goes against the preservation of the integrity of creation.

The call was made during an online devotion session for Holy Week called Daan ng Krus tungo sa Pagbabagong Ekolohikal (Way of the Cross towards Ecological Conversion) of the Our Lady of Angels Parish in Atimonan, inspired by the 2019 Pastoral Letter on Ecology of the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines and Pope Francis's encyclical Laudato Si'.

"Mapagsumikapan nawa naming isulong ang dagliang paglipat sa ligtas, malinis, at murang eherhiya. Tiyakin ang makatarungan at patas na paglipat sa renewable energy sources at ibasura ang mga huwad na solusyon; makiisa sa kampanya sa madaliang pagtatanggal ng mga coal-fired power plants at iba pang nakadepende sa paggamit ng nakaruruming fossil-fuel," read the statement of the Parish of Atimonan, which is the site of a 1.2 GW coal power project proposed by a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Manila Electric Company (MERALCO)'s generation arm.

Coal plants have been on the receiving end of global backlash recently for their contributions to climate change, environmental impacts, increasing costs of construction and maintenance, and high price of electricity produced. Residents are concerned that the project would exacerbate the suffering of local communities from polluting operations of the already installed 2.2 GW coal capacity in the province.

The Parish also called out financial institutions still supporting coal and other destructive projects, urging the public to unite against such financing activities: "Nawa'y magkaisa ang sambayanan sa pagsusulong ng divestment campaign upang ang mga pondo ng aming mga institusyon ay di mapalagak na puhunan sa mga coal-fired power plants, mga kumpanya ng pagmimina at iba pang mapanirang proyekto."

Local financiers of the A1E coal project include the Bank of the Philippine Islands, which, in a December 2020 report by the civil society and church-led campaign Withdraw from Coal, was found to have been the Philippine bank out of 15 others providing the biggest financial services to coal developers and projects from 2009 – 2019.

"The preservation of our natural world and protection of the right of our people – both those in the present and of generations to come – to live in a healthy environment is part and parcel of our duty as stewards of Creation. Quezon and many other provinces in the country have been suffering from coal's poison for far too long. We will not tire in rejecting this dirty energy source and calling out to its financial supporters to fully shift instead to investing in clean technologies until ecological conversion truly happens in our country," said Monsignor Noel Villareal of the Our Lady of Angels Parish.

Source: https://businessmirror.com.ph/2021/04/03/atimonan-church-calls-for-ecological-conversion-end-to-coal-and-coal-financing/





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Concerned citizens file an online petition vs construction of Coron-Culion inter-island bridges

<u>April 3, 2021</u>4 min read

By Glen S. Ramos

PUERTO Princesa City, Palawan – As of today, a total of 8,767 concerned citizens from various parts of the country has signed the "Save Lusong Coral Gardens and World War 2 Shipwrecks! NO TO CORON-CULION BRIDGE" online petition.

The online petition intends to stop the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) from constructing the Coron – Culion Inter-island Bridge.

The online petition was filed at https://www.change.org/p/dpwh-secretary-mark-villar-save-lusong-coral-gardens-and-world-war-2-shipwrecks-no-to-coron-culion-bridge on March 9, 2021, by local divers and residents of the province who feel that the natural ecosystem and pristine marine environment in the area is in grave danger of being destroyed.

The petitioners emphasized that the natural resources and local livelihood in the area will be greatly affected. "We appeal to other government agencies to listen and support our call!"

According to Department of Tourism Secretary Berna Romulo-Puyat, during an interview with Summit Media, her office was not consulted by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) regarding the Coron-Culion Inter-Island Bridge project.

She said that she has been always into sustainable and responsible tourism.

"I've always been pushing for sustainable tourism. Now with the DPWH project, I understand [that] they always have to ask all the different other agencies such as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. It's not like simply they can build, they have to ask first the local community if they're okay with it. We were not asked," the DOT chief said.

"But ako, generally, anything in tourism—I'm the one who's been pushing for [less] carrying capacity; roads should not disturb the environment, it should protect the environment, it should preserve the tourist destination," Romulo-Puyat stated.

Inline image

Map showing the location of the three bridges that will connect islands from Coron to Culion.

The DPWH launched the P4.2 billion projects last March 6, 2021. It will connect Barangay Bintuan in Coron to Lusong and Marily islands in Culion. It will be a bridge that is over 20 kilometers under the Build, Build, Build (BBB) program of the national government.

The bridge construction will be affecting seven of the top underwater attractions in Coron and Culion namely Lusong Coral Gardens, Lusong Gunboat Shipwreck, Irako Shipwreck, Olympia Maru Shipwreck, Kogyo Maru Shipwreck, Morazan Maru Shipwreck, and Akitsushima Shipwreck" in Sangat Bay.





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Six of these underwater sites are considered historical which are composed of Japanese World War II shipwrecks that dates back to September 24, 1944.

The petitioners also stressed that the heavy sedimentation, dredging, and construction of roads connecting islands to mainlands will destroy reefs and damage marine ecosystems.

"Heavy sedimentation from the construction will settle upon these fragile shipwrecks and potentially cause the collapse of these precious historical underwater sites. Nowhere else in the world will you find as beautifully preserved dive sites, in perfect conditions for SCUBA diving, snorkeling, and free diving".

They further explained that that the coral gardens, a popular snorkeling destination among tourists due to its colorful and diverse shallow coral reefs are in "great danger" as it will be within kilometer proximity to the proposed interisland bridges that will be built.

Runoffs and silts can lead to "murky waters which means that the corals will be unable to receive sunlight critical for zooxanthellae (which provide corals their food and calcium carbonate to grow), and heavy sediments, dust, and soil can also settle on the corals and suffocate them".

"Coral bleaching can also result and damaged the reefs not only in Lusong Coral Gardens but in the shipwrecks as well."

The online petition targets 10,000 signatures after which the resulting letter may be delivered to the subject of the petition, usually via e-mail. (AI/MTVN)





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ECQ extended in Metro Manila, 4 provinces for at least one more week

By CNN Philippines Staff

Published Apr 3, 2021 6:13:09 PM



Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, April 3) — Metro Manila, Bulacan, Cavite, Laguna, and Rizal will remain under the strictest community quarantine status as COVID-19 cases continued to spike, Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque announced on Saturday.

The Greater Manila Area will go on enhanced community quarantine for another week after the Department of Health, some mayors, and the independent OCTA Research group endorsed the extension of the lockdown to contain the pandemic. The so-called National Capital Region Plus was earlier placed in a bubble to tackle the surge in infections at a speed never seen before.

"Nagrekomenda po ang inyong IATF na pahabain pa ang enhanced community quarantine ng minimum isa pang linggo sa buong Metro Manila, at mga probinsya ng Laguna, Bulacan, Cavite, at Rizal," Roque said in a short virtual briefing, after a meeting with the Inter-Agency Task Force.

[Translation: Your IATF recommended that we extend the enhanced community quarantine by a minimum of one week in the entire Metro Manila, and in the provinces of Laguna, Bulacan, Cavite, and Rizal.]

The recommendation has been approved by President Rodrigo Duterte, Roque later told reporters.

During this ECQ period, Roque said the government plans to intensify its PDITR or Prevent, Detect, Isolate, Treat, and Reintegrate strategy, which involves visiting residents in their homes to check who has symptoms, and testing as well as isolating them. Roque added local government units and the czars (heads of efforts in contact tracing, treatment, vaccine, etc.) should be monitoring the developments from using this strategy.

If the strategy is seen to be effective, the Greater Manila area could then return to a more relaxed MECQ or modified enhanced community quarantine, Roque said.

Amid the fast-depleting number of available hospital beds for COVID-19 patients, Roque said more beds for moderate to severe cases will be added during ECQ.

"Dito sa linggo ng karagdagang ECQ ay meron tayong 110 additional na moderate to severe beds na bubuksan na po at magiging operational dito sa Quezon Institute," he said. "Sa susunod na buwan hindi po bababa 'yan sa 160 additional moderate to severe bed capacity."

[Translation: During this extended ECQ, we will open 110 additional beds for moderate to severe cases in the Quezon Institute. In the next month, there will be at least 160 additional moderate to severe beds.]





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The Quezon Institute is a hospital in Quezon City that also has an off-site modular hospital catering to moderate COVID-19 patients.

What health experts said

Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said a week of lockdown "is really not enough" to bring down the number of infections and decongest hospitals. She said this prompted the DOH to <u>recommend the extension</u> to the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases, the policy-making body in the government's pandemic response.

OCTA Research experts <u>also backed tighter restrictions for the Metro Manila and nearby provinces</u> to arrest the spread of the coronavirus.

Roque had said extending the ECQ is an "absolute last resort" for the government.

Over the past weeks, the country has been setting new record highs in the number of additional infections and active COVID-19 cases, forcing the government to revert to a week-long ECQ status within NCR Plus from March 29 to April 4.

On Friday, the country logged 15,310 more infections, which include a backlog of 3,709 cases from March 31. Still, the 11,601 confirmed cases that day became the biggest single-day increase in infections, but it was quickly overtaken by the 12,576 new COVID-19 cases reported on Saturday.

The number of active COVID-19 cases, or those who are still battling the disease is also at a record-high at 165,715.

Source: https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2021/4/3/ecq-extended-ncr-plus-april-2021.html





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Lorenzana sa Chinese vessels sa West Philippine Sea: Umalis na kayo diyan!

By Joy Cantos(Pilipino Star Ngayon) - April 4, 2021 - 12:00am



Sinabi ni Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana na dapat ipaliwanag ni Chinese Ambassador to the Philippines Huang Xilian, kung bakit nananatili pa rin at nagpapaikut-ikot ang mga barko sa bahagi ng Julian Felipe Reef gayong maganda na ang panahon.

Philstar com/File Photo

MANILA, Philippines — Mariing sinabi ni Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana na lisanin na ng 44 natitirang Chinese vessels ang Julian Felipe Reef sa West Philippine Sea (WPS).

Sinabi ni Lorenzana na dapat ipaliwanag ni Chinese Ambassador to the Philippines Huang Xilian, kung bakit nananatili pa rin at nagpapaikut-ikot ang mga barko sa bahagi ng Julian Felipe Reef gayong maganda na ang panahon.

"The Chinese Ambassador has a lot of explaining to do. As of our latest maritime and aerial surveillance, there are still forty-four (44) Chinese vessels that are in Julian Felipe Reef. I am no fool," pahayag ni Lorenzana.

"The weather has been good so far, so they have no other reason to stay there. These vessels should be on their way out. Umalis na kayo diyan," anang Kalihim.

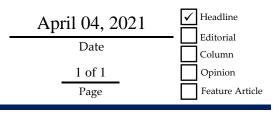
Una nang ipinaliwanag ni Xilian na sumisilong lamang ang mga Chinese vessels sa lugar dahil masyadong maalon ang karagatan.

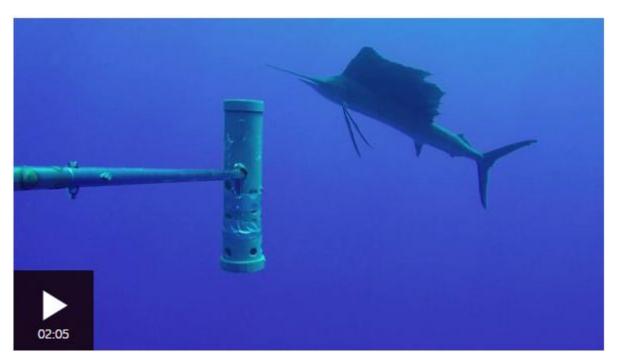
Naghain na ang Pilipinas ng diplomatic protest laban sa China dahil sa nasabing insidente.

Source: https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/bansa/2021/04/04/2088741/lorenzana-sa-chinese-vessels-sa-west-philippine-sea-umalis-na-kayo-diyan/amp/









World's largest ocean monitoring system BRUVS launched

World's largest ocean monitoring system BRUVS launchedClose

Professor Jessica Meeuwig, the Director of the Centre for Marine Futures at the University of Western Australia, has told the BBC about her hopes for a new ocean monitoring system.

The UK government funded project, known as BRUVS, will focus on monitoring marine life in ten British Overseas Territories including Pitcairn and Ascension Island.

Video produced by Anna Boyd

Source: https://www.bbc.com/news/av/science-environment-56606898



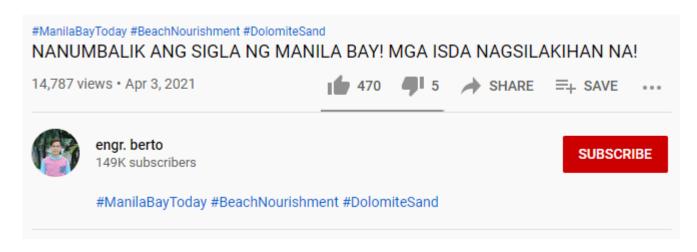




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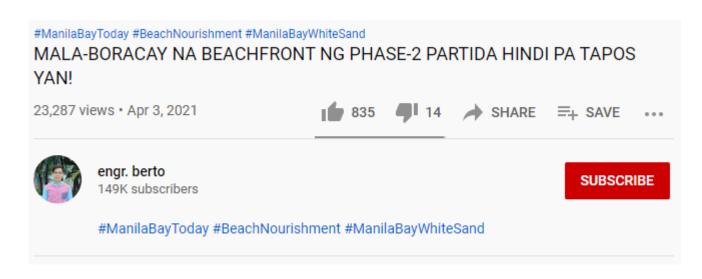




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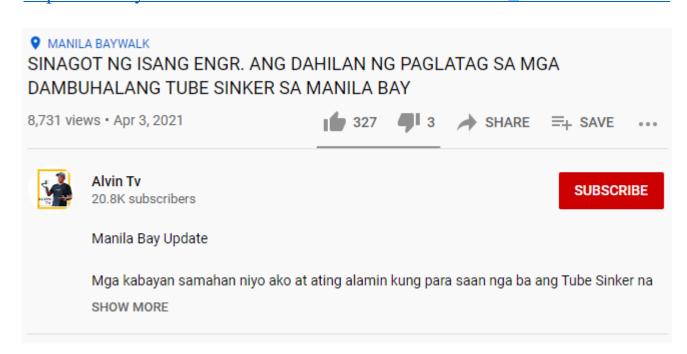




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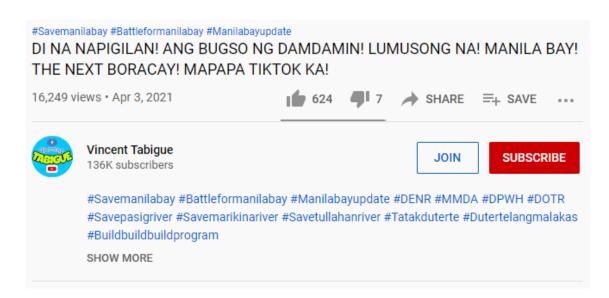


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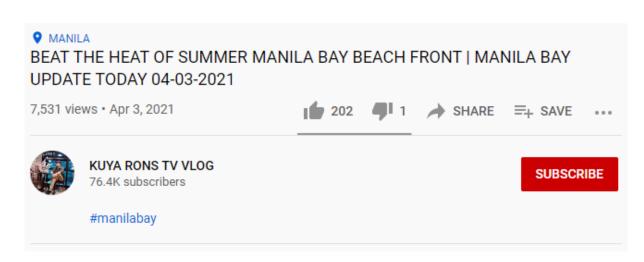




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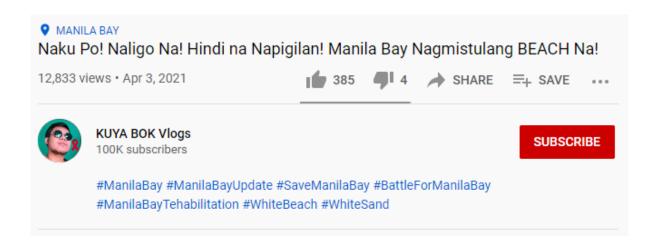




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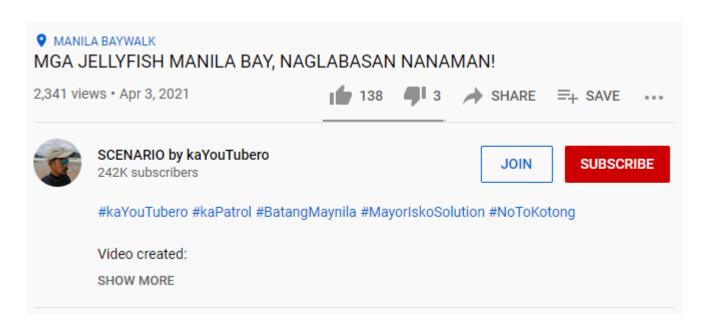




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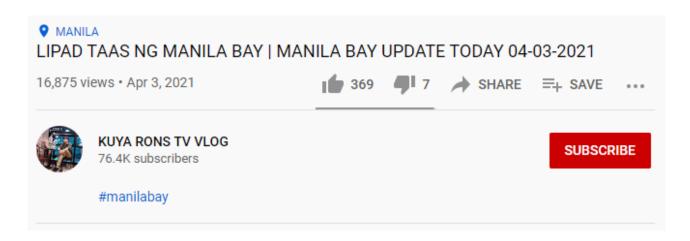




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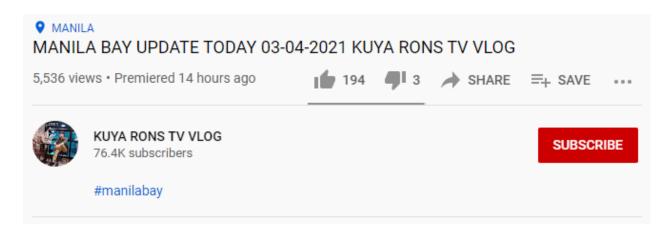




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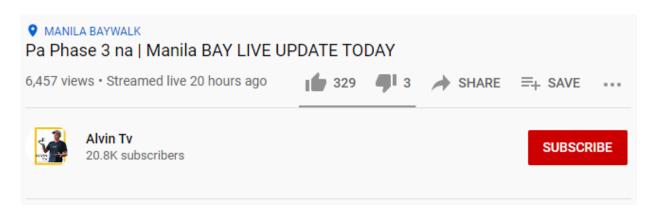




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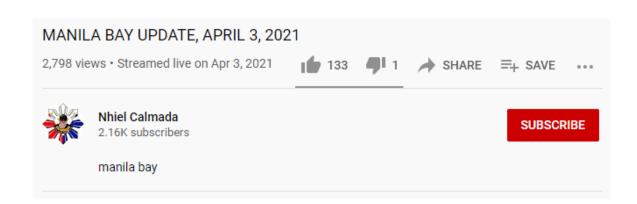




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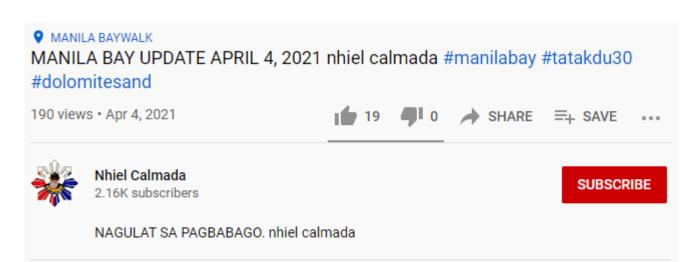




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