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Illegal wildlife traders 'under watch' amid Covid-19 restrictions

May 5, 2021, 4:03 pm



Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu (File photo)

MANILA – Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu warned traders taking advantage of the internet for illegal wildlife trading that their activities are being monitored by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

"Mobility restrictions may cause some deterrence to our wildlife enforcers, but these shall not stop them from implementing environmental laws to protect our natural resources," Cimatu said in a news release on Wednesday.

Cimatu made the statement following the arrest of a certain Benjie Saunar for illegal possession and selling of two umbrella cockatoos (Cacatua alba) in a buy-bust operation conducted by the DENR's Environmental Protection and Enforcement Task Force (EPETF).

The operatives also recovered a palm cockatoo (Probosciger aterrimus) from the suspect's possession.

Saunar was monitored by the DENR- EPETF operatives to have been selling illegal wildlife species online.

He was apprehended in an entrapment operation conducted by the DENR EPETF, in coordination with the Manila Police District-Station 8 and Manila District Anti-Cybercrime Team, led by Maj. Reynaldo Salim at a gasoline station in Sta. Mesa, Manila last April 28.

During the operation, Saunar was not able to present any relevant permits such as a Certificate of Wildlife Registration or Wildlife Farm Permit and Local Transport Permit to support and prove that he is authorized by law to possess, transport, and trade wildlife.

The suspect is currently undergoing inquest proceedings at the Manila City Prosecutors Office and shall be charged with violation of Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Protection and Conservation Act of 2001.

Section 23 of RA 9147 states that collection of threatened wildlife including the by-products and derivatives shall be allowed only for scientific, or breeding or propagation purposes, and provided that only the accredited individuals, business, research, educational or scientific entities shall be allowed to collect for conservation breeding or propagation purposes.

As of May 3, the wildlife species, along with other paraphernalia, such as the motorcycle and cellphone used by Saunar, are under the custody of the DENR-NCR Office, while awaiting the results of the case filed against the suspect. (PR)

Source: https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1139206





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Source: https://maharlika.tv/2021/05/05/illegal-wildlife-traders-under-watch-amid-covid-19-restrictions/?fbclid=IwAR3S4xnWqhPxQNo-">https://maharlika.tv/2021/05/05/illegal-wildlife-traders-under-watch-amid-covid-19-restrictions/?fbclid=IwAR3S4xnWqhPxQNo-">https://maharlika.tv/2021/05/05/illegal-wildlife-traders-under-watch-amid-covid-19-restrictions/?fbclid=IwAR3S4xnWqhPxQNo-"

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DENR praises role of women in PH mining

posted May 05, 2021 at 11:30 pm by Rio N. Araja

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources on Wednesday cited the significant contribution of women in the progress and development of the country's mining industry, as more women leaders are advancing to top-level positions.

"We need the active participation of women in policy formulation and program development not only to advance their rights in terms of decision-making and leadership but to empower them to address environmental challenges and climate change," Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said.

According to Nonita Caguioa, DENR Assistant Secretary for Finance, Information Systems and Mining Concerns, more women are now involved in the mining sector as proven by the growing number of women employees in mining companies and at the DENR's Mines and Geosciences Bureau.

"We have different mining companies in the nickel industry who already have women senior officials. Not only in nickel mining, but we can also see now plenty of women in the mining industry in general," she said.

"There are even those who have just finished college in geology, metallurgy or mining engineering, some of whom are already employed with some of the mining companies or the government service," Caguioa added.

With more women working in the mining industry, she cited laws that promote and protect their rights, such as Republic Act 9710 or the Magna Carta of Women of 2009, RA 7877 or the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995, and RA 7192 or the Women in Development and Nation Building Act of 1992.

Caguioa said conditions on non-discrimination of gender are included in the mining permits and agreements issued by the DENR to "respect the right of women workers to participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting their rights and benefits."

Before joining the DENR, Caguioa graduated with a degree in mining engineering from the Cebu Institute of Technology.

Source: https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/353692





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Top-level mining sector posts are going to women, says DENR

Published May 5, 2021, 8:18 PM by Ellson Quismorio

Women are slowly but surely "taking over" the top-level positions in the local mining sector, and it's probably for the better.



(Photo by Brooke Lark/ Unsplash)

No less than Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu acknowledged this development in a statement Wednesday, May 5.

"We need the active participation of women in policy formulation and program development not only to advance their rights in terms of decision-making and leadership but to empower them to address environmental challenges and climate change," he said.

DENR Assistant Secretary for Finance, Information Systems, and Mining Concerns Nonita S. Caguioa said more women are now involved in the mining sector as proven by the growing number of women employees in mining companies and at the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB).

"We have different mining companies in the nickel industry [that] already have women senior officials. Not only in nickel mining, but we can also see now plenty of women in the mining industry in general," Caguioa said during an online forum organized by the Philippine Nickel Industry Association last April 30.

"There are even those who have just finished college in geology, metallurgy or mining engineering.. [who] are already employed with some of the mining companies or the government service," she added.

With more women being involved in the mining industry, Caguioa has cited laws that promote and protect their rights such as Republic Act (RA) 9710 or the Magna Carta of Women of 2009, RA 7877 or the Anti-Sexual Harassment Act of 1995, and RA 7192 or the Women in Development and Nation Building Act of 1992.

"This is a reminder that discrimination against women is being protected by pertinent laws," she pointed out.

Caguioa said that conditions on non-discrimination of gender are included in the mining permits and agreements issued by the DENR to "respect the right of women workers to participate in policy and decision-making processes affecting their rights and benefits." As a mining engineer, Caguioa also stressed the importance of mainstreaming gender and development in the operations of mining companies in the country to achieve gender equality.





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The online forum on "Promoting Sustainable Development by Advancing the Role of Women in Mining" provided a platform for discussions on the participation of women in governance, industries, and broader society in the promotion of sustainability, progress, and long-term development.

 $Source: \underline{https://mb.com.ph/2021/05/05/top-level-mining-sector-posts-are-going-to-women-\underline{says-denr/}$





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BOC Cebu, DENR 7 tighten measures vs illegal exportation of raw rattan

Wed, 5 May 2021, 11:43 am



TO tighten measures against the unlawful exportation of raw rattan, including unprocessed rattan poles, the Bureau of Customs (BOC)-Cebu and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) 7 agreed to install additional "safety nets" in the current export clearance process.

These safety nets include close monitoring of rattan shipments through a joint inspection to be conducted by both agencies.

According to BOC-Cebu, this is also to protect the local furniture and furnishing export industries in Central Visayas.

Port of Cebu Acting District Collector Atty. Charlito Martin R. Mendoza met with DENR 7 Executive Director Paquito D. Melicor Jr. last week to finalize these measures. (NRC)





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DENR-Biliran encourages seed bombing

By Mary Lailani P. TupazPublished on May 5, 2021

NAVAL, Biliran, May 5 (PIA) -- As the nation celebrated Earth Month in April with the theme, "Restore Our Earth," the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) - Biliran Provincial Office encouraged Biliranons to practice seed bombing to bring back vegetation especially in vacant areas.

In one of PIA-Biliran's Pulong-Pulong ng Bayan over Radyo Natin-Naval, Maria Cristina A. Santos, information officer of DENR-Biliran, urged Biliranons to keep the seeds from the fruits they eat and disperse them in vacant spaces in the community or along highways.

To ensure the seeds will grow and mature, Santos recommended to apply seed bombing, that is covering the seeds with clay or compost to protect the seeds from breaking when launched. Besides, the compost provides nutrients to help the seeds survive and grow.

Santos added, all the 54 employees of DENR-Biliran are each required to produce 300 seedlings of different kinds of trees or fruit-bearing trees for distribution to their clients that someday they may help ensure food security among residents and help in the absorption of greenhouse gasses in our environment.

Meanwhile, Laiza Marie B. Corpin, forest technician and focal person for "Tayo ang Kalikasan" movement, called on each and everyone's responsibility in taking care of the environment.

Corpin disclosed 14 existing People's Organizations (POs) in the entire province of Biliran under the Community-Based Forest Management (CBFM) agreement assisted by DENR in restoring forest areas under the Enhanced National Greening Program. POs under the CBFM agreements have tenurial security and incentives to develop, utilize and manage specific portions of forest lands.

Once the forests are restored, global warming may lessen to the comfort of the humanity and other living organisms.

DENR-Biliran also noted hatchlings in Tingkasan Island in the municipality of Kawayan, and Sambawan Island in the municipality of Maripipi. Thus, people living or occupying the coastal areas in these islands are advised not to introduce concreting of the shorelines for the return of the marine turtles, Corpin added. (IdI/mlt/PIA8 Biliran)

Source: https://pia.gov.ph/news/articles/1074319





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Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1JdWbWarAY4&ab_channel=PTV





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Source: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SVfkSJefy4g&ab_channel=GMANews





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Popular opposition halts a bridge project in a Philippine coral haven

by Keith Anthony S. Fabro on 5 May 2021



- The Philippine government has suspended work on a bridge that would connect the islands of Coron and Culion in the coral rich region of Palawan.
- Activists, Indigenous groups and marine experts say the project would threaten the rich coral biodiversity in the area as well as the historical shipwrecks that have made the area a prime dive site.
- The Indigenous Tagbanua community, who successfully fought against an earlier project to build a theme park, say they were not consulted about the bridge project.
- Preliminary construction began in November 2020 despite a lack of government-required consultations and permits, and was ordered suspension in April this year following the public outcry.

PALAWAN, Philippines — Nicole Tayag, 30, learned to snorkel at 5 when her father took her to the teeming waters of Coron to scout for potential tourist destinations back in 1995. One particularly biodiverse site they found was the Lusong coral garden, southwest of this island town in the Philippines' Palawan province.

"Even just at the surface, I saw how lively the place was," Tayag told Mongabay. "We drove our boat for so many times that I remember the passage as one of the places I see dolphins jumping and rays flying up the water. It has inspired me to see more underwater, which led me to my career as a scuba diver instructor now."



A coral garden in Coron, Palawan. Image by Shawn Landersz via Flickr.

Tayag said she holds a special place in her heart for Lusong coral garden. So when she heard that a government-funded bridge would be built through it, she said was concerned about its impact on the marine environment and tourism industry. Before the





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pandemic, the 644-hectare (1,591-acre) Bintuan marine protected area (MPA), which covers this dive site, received an average of 3,000 tourists weekly, generating up to 259 million pesos (\$5.4 million) in annual revenue. Bintuan is one of the MPAs in the Philippines considered by experts as being managed effectively.

The planned 4.2 billion peso (\$88.6 million) road from Coron to the island of Culion would run just over 20 kilometers (12.5 miles), of which only about an eighth would constitute the actual bridge span, according to a government document obtained by Mongabay.

Tayag said they've been hearing about the project for 20 years now. "[I] didn't give much thought about it before, really." Then, in March this year, Mark Villar, secretary of the Philippine Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), posted the <u>project's conceptual design</u> on his Facebook page.

Tayag said she was shocked that the project was finally going through. "I was even more shocked when I realized it's so close to historical dive sites and to coral garden," she said.

Part of President Rodrigo Duterte's "Build, Build, Build" infrastructure program, construction of the Coron-Culion bridge was scheduled from 2020 to 2023. By November 2020, site clearing had already started in the area designated for the bridge's access road. But on April 7 this year, the Philippine government announced it was suspending the project to ensure mitigating measures for its environmental impact are in place. This follows a public outcry from academics, civil society groups and nonprofit organizations that say the project is fraught with risks and irregularities.

"Without the concerned citizens and organizations who raised the alarm bell in this project, this would have gone in the way of so many so-called infrastructure projects, which are disregarding our sacred rights to a balanced and healthful ecology," said Gloria Ramos, head of the NGO Oceana Philippines.



The Philippine government has planned a 4.2 billion peso (\$88.6 million) bridge road from Coron to the island of Culion to run over 20 kilometers (12.5 miles), of which about an eighth would constitute the actual bridge span, according to government documents.





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Cultural heritage collapse

Tayag is part of a group, Buklod Calamianes, that initiated an <u>online petition</u> seeking to stop the project. They warned of the damage that the bridge construction could pose to the marine environment, as it would sit within a 5-km (3-mi) radius of seven of the top underwater attractions in Coron and Culion. In addition to the Lusong coral garden, these dive sites include six Japanese shipwrecks from World War II.

"Heavy sedimentation from the construction will settle upon these fragile shipwrecks and potentially cause the collapse of these precious historical underwater sites," said the petition, which has been signed by more than 19,000 people.

Palawan Studies Center executive director Michael Angelo Doblado said the shipwrecks need to be protected because they're historically significant heritage sites of local and global importance. "These are evidence that important battles between the American and Japanese air and sea forces happened there."

Doblado, who is also a professor of history at Palawan State University, said the occurrence of these shipwrecks also highlights that the Calamianes island group that includes Coron and Culion was important for the Japanese forces, whose weapons and other equipment relied on Coron as a source of manganese.

"For these wrecks and its local importance to Coron and its people, that would be left to them to decide," he told Mongabay. "Is it really important for them historically as a municipality that they will be willing to preserve and protect it? Or will they be willing to sacrifice and give it up as a price for development?

"It also begs the question, if tourism is one of the major earners of Coron, and the proposed bridge ... will boost its tourism, is it not ironic that the shipwrecks ... will be directly affected by this infrastructure project that is supposed to boost tourism?"



A stingray inside the Irako Maru, a Japanese cargo shipwreck. The shipwrecks in Coron and Culion, which are rich heritage and ecological sites, will be affected by the infrastructure project. Image by David Spencer via Flickr.

The government had touted the bridge as improving connectivity between the islands to boost the tourism and agriculture sectors, among other benefits. But if it really wants to help the local tourism sector, Doblado said, the government "should have carried out a construction plan that skirts or avoids destroying or affecting these shipwrecks which are famous dive sites and considered as artificial reefs that promote aquatic growth and diversity in that area."





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This would swell the construction cost, he said, but would be vital to saving not only the historical underwater ruins but the marine environment and tourism industry in the long run.

Impact on marine ecosystems

The Philippines has around 25,000 square kilometers (9,700 square miles) of coral reefs, the world's third-largest extent, and its waters are known for the highest biodiversity of corals and shore fishes, a <u>2019 study</u> noted. However, the same study showed that the country, located at the apex of the Pacific Coral Triangle, lost about a third of its reef corals over the past decade, and none of the reefs surveyed were in a condition that qualified as "excellent."

The bridge project added to concerns about the loss of hard-coral cover. Tayag's group estimated that it would affect 334 hectares (825 acres) of corals, as well as 140 hectares (346 acres) of mangroves. It said the heavy sedimentation, runoff and silt from the construction could cloud the water, blocking the sunlight that's essential for the growth of the algae that, in turn, nourish the corals.

Coral expert Wilfredo Licuanan from De La Salle University in Manila told Mongabay that the corals and the abundance of sea life they support are quite sensitive to water quality change due to sedimentation. "If you have sediments ... their feeding structures are clogged, light penetration is hindered ... and then there's general smothering of life on the sea bottom."



The bridge project would affect large areas of corals as well as mangroves. Image by Shawn Landersz via Flickr.

When corals are undernourished, he said, it can prevent the calcium carbonate accumulation that constitutes reef growth and that takes tens of thousands of years. "If the corals are not able to produce enough calcium carbonate, your reef is not able to continue to grow and ... will start eroding," Licuanan said.

Once that happens, the reefs will not be able to keep up with climate change-induced sea level rise, and will cease to protect the coastlines from big waves and to serve as habitat for many other species, including those that feed fishing communities. "So, all the ecosystem services of coral reefs are dependent on the position of calcium carbonate skeleton," Licuanan said.

"Any construction activity, be it road building, resort construction, anything of that sort requires that you move earth," Licuanan said. "You dig, you relocate soil, and so on. And





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almost always, that means a lot of the soil gets mobilized and is brought to the sea, causing sedimentation."

That impact to the reef ecosystem will reverberate up to the residents who depend on it for their livelihoods, said Miguel Fortes, a marine scientist and professor at the University of the Philippines. "If you destroy one, you're actually destroying the other," he said in an Oceana online forum.

Fortes said it takes about 35 years for damaged coral reefs to recover. That compares to about 25 years for mangroves and a year for seagrass, both of which are useful in mitigating climate change, he said. In Coron and Culion, these ecosystems provide estimated annual economic benefits of 3.7 billion pesos (\$77.2 million), on top of the 4.1 billion pesos (\$85.2 million) generated by the islands' recreation zones.

Coron Bay's fisheries production is an important spawning and nursery ground, said Jomel Baobao, a fisheries management specialist with the nonprofit Path Foundation Inc., one of the partner implementers of the USAID Fish Right project. The five communities adjacent to the bridge project alone stand to benefit from a total estimated yield of 89 million pesos (\$1.8 million) annually.

"A USAID-funded larval dispersal study showed that Bintuan area is the sink for larvae that come from different sources, making it a rich nursery ground," Baobao told Mongabay. He added that Coron Bay serves to funnel larvae from the Sulu Sea and West Philippine Sea, and any disruption to that flow could affect fishing yields in Bintuan and other areas.

"The narrowest portion in the bay located in Bintuan where the bridge will be constructed is significant to water exchange between these two seas," Baobao said. This might be affected if there will be ecosystem loss or destruction in the area because of the bridge."

The area's reefs are home to economically important species such as red grouper, lobster and round scad, as well as giant clams, according to the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources. Among the coral species that flourish around the Calamianes island group are two endangered ones: <u>Pectinia maxima</u> and <u>Anacropora spinosa</u>. In the Philippines, the latter is found only in the Calamianes.







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No green permits

Preliminary tree cutting and clearing of the road leading to the bridge entrance <u>reportedly began</u> in November 2020, raising fears that it could trigger siltation that could jeopardize the marine park.

In a <u>2020 paper</u>, Licuanan said that management actions, such as enhanced regulation of road construction on slopes leading to the sea and rivers that open into the sea, and consequent limitations on government infrastructure programs that impinge on these critical areas, are crucial in conserving the country's remaining coral reefs.

"Road building practices locally are particularly destructive because they [the DPWH and private contractors] rarely prioritize soil conservation," he told Mongabay.

But despite the recent activity, the project has not received the green light from the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD), a provincial government agency. PCSD spokesman John Vincent Fabello told Mongabay that no strategic environmental plan (SEP) clearance has been issued to the DPWH for the project. The clearance would essentially guarantee that the high-impact project is located outside ecologically critical zones like marine parks.

"They [DPWH] don't have an SEP clearance yet," Fabello said. "Government big-ticket projects still have to [go] through the SEP clearance system of the PCSD. Administrative fines shall be imposed if building commences without the necessary clearance and permits from PCSD and related agencies."

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said it will also require the DPWH to undertake an environmental impact assessment to obtain an environmental compliance certificate and tree cutting permit for the project. "Government projects will still go through the permitting; you have to follow the process ... but it will be faster," said DENR regional director Maria Lourdes Ferrer.

The DPWH confirmed it had not undertaken the required public consultations, feasibility study, or permit applications prior to the start of construction activities. DPWH regional director Yolanda Tangco said they fast-tracked the construction work because the initial 250 million pesos (\$5.2 million) in project funding released to the agency in 2020 would have to be returned to the treasury if it was not spent within two years.

Fortes said this reasoning is unacceptable because projects should not only be politically expedient but also based on scientific evidence and actual user needs.

"To me, this means money still supersedes more vital imperatives [such as] cultural and ecological," he said. "Poor planning is evident here because it entails huge sacrifices."

Tangco said her office expects to receive additional construction funding for 2021 to 2023 from the national government. "But if we have decided not to continue it, we will remove it [in our proposal]. Most probably, we will revert the funding and terminate the contract," she said.





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Coron islands. The DPWH confirmed it had not undertaken the required public consultations, feasibility study, or permit applications prior to the start of construction activities. Image by Dániel Pataki via <u>Flickr</u>.

She added that in the feasibility study expected to be completed in July 2021, the public works office is considering two more route options: "Our alignment isn't fixed. If we can find an alignment with lesser impacts to the environment and Indigenous people, we will pursue that and issue variation and change orders [to the contractor]."

Indigenous communities fight back

The Indigenous Tagbanua community of Culion has slammed the project for failing to obtain their permission through a process of free, prior and informed consent (FPIC), required under Philippine law.

"We don't want that bridge here because we fear that it will affect many — our seas, our livelihoods, our lands we inherited from our ancestors," Indigenous federation chairman Larry Sinamay, who organized a rally on April 5, told Mongabay. "Where would we get our food when our place is destroyed by this project?"

"The social and sacred value of this traditional space to the Tagbanua should be respected by every member of the community, even us outsiders, tourists and developers," said Kate Lim, an archaeologist who has conducted studies in the region. "The concept of ancestral domain is that it's communal and utilized by everyone and not just by one sector only."

In a letter dated March 31, the federation of 24 Tagbanua communities appealed to the national government to halt the project's preliminary construction activities, pending impact assessments.



The Indigenous Tagbanua community of Culion has slammed the project for failing to obtain their permission that's required under Philippine law. Image by anne jimenez via <u>Wikimedia Commons</u> (<u>CC BY</u>





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"If we receive no response to our plea, we will be forced to seek legal remedies to fight for our Indigenous rights provided under the Philippine Constitution, Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act, and other laws related to environment and natural resources," the federation said at the time.

The Tagbanuas have experience standing up to projects they see as imperiling their environment and culture. In 2017, they banded together to stop a <u>proposed Nickelodeon theme park</u>, which also lacked the necessary scientific studies, consultations and permits.

"Even if we are battling a pandemic, we can't forget that our battle to protect Palawan's natural resources must go on," said Anna Oposa, executive director of Save Philippine Seas, who joined the Tagbanuas in fighting the Nickelodeon project. "The Tagbanua IPs have the experience and power to block or at the very least significantly delay this potentially destructive project and come to a consensus with other stakeholders."

While the public pressure has prompted the government to suspend the project, the community says it isn't dropping its guard.

"In a time of pandemic and lockdowns, projects are easily sneaked in and started out of the public's eye who are confined in their homes," Tayag said.

"We are closely monitoring these *bateltelan* [hard-headed] officials. We trust that the government offices looking into this project will do what is right and not just focus on its 'good intention."

Citations:

Licuanan, W. Y., Robles, R., & Reyes, M. (2019). Status and recent trends in coral reefs of the Philippines. *Marine Pollution Bulletin*, *142*, 544-550. doi:10.1016/j.marpolbul.2019.04.013

Licuanan, W. Y. (2020). Current management, conservation, and research imperatives for Philippine coral reefs. *Philippine Journal of Science*, *149*(3), ix-xii. Retrieved from <a href="https://philipournalsci.dost.gov.ph/publication/regular-issues/past-issues/98-vol-149-no-3-september-2020/1225-current-management-conservation-and-research-imperatives-for-philippine-coral-reefs-2

Banner image of fish and anemone in Coron coral reefs by Shawn Landersz via Flickr.

Source: https://news.mongabay.com/2021/05/popular-opposition-halts-a-bridge-project-in-a-philippine-coral-haven/





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Undated stock photo shows jewelry.

Photo by Alissa De Leva on Unsplash

Watchdog group backs drive against cyanide-laced silver jewelry cleaners

(Philstar.com) - May 5, 2021 - 12:41pm

MANILA, Philippines — A toxics watchdog group on Wednesday pushed for stakeholders' unity to finally put an end to the illegal trade of silver jewelry cleaning solutions containing cyanide.

This comes after the Food and Drug Administration issued its Advisory No. 2021-0879 reiterating the prohibition of the dangerous and toxic products.

In a statement, the EcoWaste Coalition said that the illegal trade has gone unabated despite a separate joint advisory by the Department of Health and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources strictly prohibiting the sale of the cleaners.

"For more than a decade, we have heard of many heartrending poisoning stories due to accidental or deliberate ingestion of cyanide-laced silver jewelry cleaners leading to the sudden death of victims, including innocent children who mistook the clear liquid for water," Thony Dizon, chemical safety campaigner at the EcoWaste Coalition said.

"Since 2009, we have repeatedly asked the authorities to resolutely act to stop these deadly cyanide poisoning cases. Thus we welcome FDA's fresh directive reiterating the ban on cyanide-containing silver jewelry cleaners. This we hope would be the final nail in the coffin," he said.

To recall, the FDA issued its reminder after its post-marketing surveillance activities and laboratory testing disclosed that the cleaning solutions are still being in the market.

The FDA advisory reads: "To eliminate potential risks to human health brought about by cyanide exposure, the FDA hereby reiterates the ban on all silver jewelry cleaners containing cyanide that is manufactured, distributed, imported, sold, and offered for sale or promoted in the market/ecommerce marketplaces."

"We therefore call upon all stakeholders, including consumers, silver jewelry stores, national and local health and police offices and others, to work with the FDA toward the effective enforcement of its latest advisory," Dizon said in his statement.

The coalition also expressed alarm over the online sale of unregistered silver jewelry cleaning products, including "Silver Sparkle" which had previously been identified in 2016 as containing cyanide, pointing out that "many of the silver jewelry cleaning products being sold online are not authorized and may contain an undisclosed amount of cyanide, which is highly toxic to people and marine life even at low concentrations."





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It urged the management of online shopping platforms to take down ads by third-party dealers for silver jewelry cleaners not registered with the FDA and to blacklist non-compliant sellers, pointing to the popularity of online commerce amid the coronavirus pandemic.

The coalition in its statement also suggested the use of liquid dish soap, washing detergent, toothpaste, vinegar and baking soda for polishing silver jewelry instead of unauthorized cleaners that may contain cyanide and other harmful chemicals.

"Post-marketing surveillance activities and laboratory testing conducted by the FDA Common Services Laboratory showed that silver jewelry cleaners containing cyanide are still being sold in the market," the FDA Advisory No. 2021-0879 said.

It added that "cases of poisoning from silver jewelry cleaners with clinical features of changes of sensorium, loss of consciousness and hemodynamic instability as possible signs and symptoms of cyanide poisoning, were documented by the National Poison and Management Control Center of the University of the Philippines – Philippine General Hospital up to the year of 2020."





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Three nabbed for illegal mineral transport

BY ALVIN MURCIA @tribunephl_alvi

The National Bureau of Investigation (NBI) on Wednesday reported that it has arrested three individuals who are allegedly illegally transporting quarry minerals in Barangay Candauai, Dumaguete City.

NBI Officer-In-Charge Eric Distor identified the suspects as John Callao, Randy Mapa and Joseph Callao.

Initial reports from the NBI-Dumaguete District Office disclosed that while their operatives were patrolling Barangay Candauai on 28 April 2021, they chanced upon two cargo vehicles traveling and loading sand and gravel.

Authorities flagged down the vehicles and the suspects were asked to present their transport receipts and it was found out that the delivery receipts were expired as they were dated 15 and 22 March 2021.

The suspects were transporting about 10 cubic meters of minerals with an estimated value of P20,000.

The suspects were presented for inquest proceedings before the Prosecutor's Office of Dumaguete City for violation of Philippine Mining Act.





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ADB To Help DMCs Meet Climate Goals

BYCAI ORDINARIO



In file photo: A resident uses a plastic container as a floater while negotiating rising floodwaters in Marikina, Philippines due to Typhoon Ulysses on Nov. 12, 2020.

THE Asian Development Bank (ADB) has committed to help its Developing Member Countries (DMCs) to meet and even exceed their targets under the Paris Agreement.

In a statement, ADB said this can be done by ensuring that 75 percent of the total number of ADB's operations support climate action. The ADB also plans to increase its climate finance resources to \$80 billion by 2030.

These investments will be crucial since, ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa said, the Asia and the Pacific region is already experiencing a sharp increase in climate shocks and stresses.

"Floods, droughts, cyclones, and heat stresses are already impacting livelihoods, food and water security, and the health of millions of people, especially vulnerable populations including women and children and the poorest of the poor," Asakawa said.

"More than 60 percent of the people in the region work in sectors highly susceptible to changing weather patterns. We must invest more in climate adaptation. We are now dangerously close to the point where action could come too little, too late," he added.

ADB aims to take a holistic approach to enhancing adaptation and resilience. In addition to making physical infrastructure climate-proof, it will invest in more projects with climate adaptation as a primary purpose, while promoting strong integration of the ecological, social, institutional, and financial aspects of resilience across its operations.

The Manila-based multilateral development banks aims to increase adaptation and resilience investments including nature-based solutions such as mangroves for coastal resilience, flood risk management-related infrastructure, and climate-smart livelihood practices such as agroforestry.

ADB is also working with partners such as the United Kingdom, the Nordic Development Fund, and other financial institutions and global climate funds to roll out an ambitious community resilience partnership program that will support both governments and communities in Asia and the Pacific in their efforts to scale up pro-poor resilience investments at the local level.

"These actions will complement ADB's ambitious climate finance target," ADB said. "[This will] help developing member countries achieve, and even increase, their Paris Agreement commitments while charting a fair and equitable path to net-zero and climate-resilient development."





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Carbon Taxes

Meanwhile, carbon taxes should now be in the radar of countries if they want to pursue a green recovery, according to experts at the 54th Asian Development Bank (ADB) Governors Meeting.

In the Joint ADB-IMF Webinar: Policies to Support a Green and Inclusive Recovery on Tuesday, International Monetary Fund (IMF) Mission Chief to Vietnam and Division Chief Era Dabla-Norris said raising the price of carbon can be an effective way to reduce emissions.

A relative carbon tax of \$25 per ton implemented over a 10-year period could reduce emissions by over 20 percent. This augurs well for meeting the Paris agreement targets and generating additional revenues for a green recovery.

"A carbon tax of \$50 per ton could generate annual revenue of around 1.4 percent of GDP for the region which could be used to compensate those who were negatively impacted by a carbon tax or to fund a broader scheme to promote reinvestment or to address rising inequality or support adaptation infrastructure," Dabra-Norris said.

Additional revenues are crucial in meeting the Paris Agreement as well as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), according to ADB Economic Research and Regional Cooperation Department Director General and Chief Economist Yasuyuki Sawada.

In a presentation, Sawada said the Asia and the Pacific region's annual investment requirements to meet the SDGs between 2016 and 2030 could reach \$1.5 billion annually or 4 percent of the region's GDP.

This amount is staggering, especially if only governments and multilateral institutions will be working together to pool the funds. Sawada said private green and social financing for the SDGs would go a long way.

Globally, Sawada said, green and social finance have grown rapidly driven by factors such as changing shareholder preferences; hedging and mitigating sustainability risks; and greater resilience under shocks.

Part of the green financing initiatives are green bonds. Sawada said Asian green bond issuers improved their environmental scores after issuing green bonds by as much as 17 percent a year after issuance and 30 percent two years after issuance.

Social Impact Bonds

Meanwhile, social impact bonds, Sawada said, also improved various sectors, including the education of girls in India. These social impact bonds allow private investment to share the risk of green and social investments with the public sector.

"Asian governments can force the growth of green and social finance development through legislation regulation and various physical instruments," Sawada said.

On Monday, ADB President Masatsugu Asakawa said climate change must be addressed given that greenhouse gases (GHGs) have again started to increase.

The ADB President said the Asia-Pacific region is accountable for almost 50 percent of carbon dioxide gas emission. While there was a decrease in GHGs because of the lockdowns last year, especially in the first three quarters of 2020, CO2 emissions have increased by the fourth quarter.





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Asakawa said efforts must be exerted to prevent these levels from rising further, not only to protect the environment but also meet the targets set in the Paris Agreement.

ADB, he said, will do its part through its Strategy 2030 where it introduced two concrete numerical targets—it aims to devote 75 percent of its total operation in number to adaptation and mitigation efforts.

Another target is that between 2019 and 2030, the ADB will provide \$80 billion in climate financing. This will lead to an annual allocation of \$6.7 billion for climate adaptation and mitigation projects.

Source: https://businessmirror.com.ph/2021/05/06/adb-to-help-dmcs-meet-climate-goals/





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Asakawa STAR/File

ADB, South Korea to co-finance \$700 million for climate projects

Louise Maureen Simeon (The Philippine Star) - May 6, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Manila-based Asian Development Bank (ADB) and South Korea are co-financing \$700 million worth of projects in the region over the next three years.

ADB and South Korea recently inked a memorandum of understanding for the co-financing of the multilateral lender's sovereign development projects.

"With Korea's support, we will be able to scale up ADB projects focusing on climate change and information and communication technology, which will be key to support a green, resilient, and inclusive recovery in Asia and the Pacific," ADB president Masatsugu Asakawa said.

Some \$350 million will be for the ASEAN Catalytic Green Finance Facility (ACGF) under the ASEAN Infrastructure Fund and managed by ADB.

ACGF projects co-financed by South Korea will help Southeast Asian economies including the Philippines implement infrastructure projects that promote environmental sustainability, including ocean health, and contribute to climate change goals.

The facility is owned by the finance ministries of the 10 ASEAN member countries and ADB.

ASEAN countries can use this facility to access finance and knowledge for sovereign green infrastructure projects on sustainable transport, clean energy, and resilient water systems.

ACGF has published a set of green investment principles and eligibility criteria and created a pipeline of projects, including its first project approved for financing in 2020.

It has attracted more than \$1.4 billion in co-financing commitments, which will support the Green Recovery Program.

Source: https://www.philstar.com/business/2021/05/06/2096097/adb-south-korea-co-finance-700-million-climate-projects





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Grim outlook for global emissions

ByThe Manila Times

May 6, 2021

OVER the past few weeks, scientists have been sifting through and interpreting climate data for the year 2020, and so far, the news is not good despite some apparent progress.

As most scientists anticipated and most ordinary people would have probably guessed, there was a significant drop in global carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions in 2020 due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic. Large-scale lockdowns and a severe decline in economic activity cut electricity demand, industrial output and transportation activity — in that order, the three largest sources of carbon emissions globally — and led to the biggest drop in emissions since records started being kept. According to the International Energy Agency's (IEA) Global Energy Review 2021, global CO2 emissions declined 5.8 percent, or were almost 2 gigatons less than in 2019. The drop in emissions was nearly five times as great as the next-biggest decline, in 2009, following the global financial crisis.

That, however, is the only good news in the IEA report. Despite the drop in emissions in 2020, they still were enough to drive the concentration of CO2 in the atmosphere to its highest level in history: 412.5 parts per million, about 50 percent higher than at the beginning of the Industrial Age, the IEA report said.

What is even more worrisome is that the anticipated economic recovery this year is expected to result in a surge of emissions that will virtually cancel out last year's decrease. The IEA estimates CO2 emissions will increase by at least 1.5 gigatons in 2021, or about 79 percent higher than in 2020, which would be just slightly less than the "carbon-intensive" increase during the recovery from the global financial crisis. It would be worse, the IEA explained, if not for an expected slow recovery in oil demand, which is largely driven by transport demand; if, however, demand (such as for air travel) recovers more quickly, emissions might exceed the current predictions.

To say that this presents a serious dilemma for the Philippines would be an understatement. The country has just suffered its worst recession in its history, one of the deepest and longest economic contractions in all of Asia. Any increase in economic activity is welcome and must be encouraged, but unfortunately, that will also result in an increase in carbon emissions from the two most polluting sources, power generation and transportation.

In the past, the official response to concerns about the Philippines' contribution to global emissions from its own comparatively dirty power and transport sectors has been to point out that contribution is relatively small, just about 0.3 percent of the global total, and that the Philippines suffers more from climate consequences that are created by other, bigger countries than what it is created here. While all that is true, it can no longer be used as an excuse not to take aggressive, sustained action, as has been the case for the past 25 years, ever since the first global efforts toward climate change mitigation were begun with the Kyoto Protocol.

The Philippines has no moral high ground to demand that the industrialized take action to reduce global emissions or support the country's efforts to develop a "greener" economy unless it is maximizing its own effort and resources. It is fair to say that, compared with previous administrations, more effort is being made under the Duterte administration, but the current administration would find it very difficult to successfully argue that it is doing everything that can be done. It could, and it should be doing much more, not only for the sake of the environment, but for the sake of the more immediate need to restart the pandemic-damaged economy.





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Broadening investment opportunities in renewable energy, accelerating the adoption of cleaner fuel standards, and increasing the pace of the well-intentioned but diffidently implemented public transport vehicle modernization program are three ways in which the government can give sustainability a boost. And as all of these efforts require a great deal of work, the new businesses and jobs created out of necessity will help to boost the economy as well.

Source: https://www.manilatimes.net/2021/05/06/opinion/editorial/grim-outlook-for-global-emissions/870280/



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PHOTOGRAPH BY ANALY LABOR FOR THE DAILY TRIBUNE @tribunephl_ana

GARBAGE collection amid the pandemic has made collectors more wary of germs and viruses which prompted them to wear personal protective equipment while disinfecting garbage at 103 Barangay East Kamias in Quezon City.

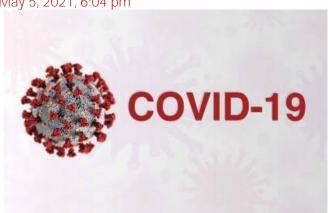




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Close to 9K new survivors bring PH recovery tally to 993,042

By Ma. Teresa Montemayor May 5, 2021, 6:04 pm



MANILA – The country's overall tally of coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) recoveries climbed to 993,042 on Wednesday with 8,961 new recovered cases.

The latest data from the Department of Health (DOH) showed the figure is equivalent to a 92.5-percent recovery rate out of the 1.073.555 accumulative total number of confirmed cases.

The agency also logged 5,685 new infections, bringing the total number of active cases to 62,713.

Of the active cases, about 94.4 percent are mild, 1.8 percent are asymptomatic, 1.6 percent are severe, 1.02 are moderate, and 1.2 percent are in critical condition.

The DOH also recorded 178 new deaths, pushing the death toll to 17,800.

According to DOH data on May 3, about 14.9 percent of 33,449 who were tested turned out positive for the disease.

"Some 22 duplicates were removed from the total case count, and of these, 17 were recovered cases. Moreover, 112 cases that were previously tagged as recovered were reclassified as deaths after final validation," the DOH said.

The agency explained the low number of cases today is due to the low number of samples received by the laboratories on Saturday and Sunday.

Currently, 64 percent of 1,900 intensive care unit beds, 45 percent of 13,500 isolation beds, 51 percent of 6,000 ward beds, and 42 percent of 2,000 ventilators dedicated to patients with Covid-19 are in use nationwide.

Meanwhile, 71 percent of 700 intensive care unit beds, 51 percent of 3,800 isolation beds, 58 percent of 2,200 ward beds, and 53 percent of 800 ventilators dedicated to patients with Covid-19 are being used in the National Capital Region.

The public is reminded to stay at home and to observe minimum health standards when going out.

The DOH urged those experiencing Covid-19 symptoms to immediately isolate and contact the Barangay Health Emergency Response Teams. (*PNA*)

Source: https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1139211





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2 COVID-19 VARIANT LAGANAP NA SA NCR, CALABARZON

written by Judith Estrada-Larino May 6, 2021



Laganap na ang dalawang variant ng COVID-19 sa National Capital Region (NCR) at CALABARZON.

Sinabi ito ni Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire bagama't hindi pa makumpirma ng local experts ng world health organization kung mayruon nang community transmission ng mga naturang variant.

Sa record ng DOH ang Metro Manila ay nakapagtala ng 602 South Africa variant, 358 UK variant cases at 39 P.3 variant habang ang CALABARZON ay mayruong 121 South Africa variant cases, 145 case ng UK variant at anim na kaso ng P.3 variant.

Source: https://www.dwiz882am.com/index.php/2-covid-19-variant-laganap-na-sa-ncr-

calabarzon/





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NTF-WPS assures continuous PH patrol, exercises in WPS

May 5, 2021



Photo courtesy of the Philippine Coast Guard Facebook page.

By NG Seruela

The National Task Force for the West Philippine Sea (NTF-WPS) assured that the Philippines "maintains the deployment of law enforcement patrols and maritime exercises" in the West Philippine Sea.

In a statement issued by the NTF-WPS on Tuesday (May 4), the country will "maintain" its patrols and exercises through Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) and Department of Agriculture – Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) vessels on a "rotational basis over the waters of the Municipality of Kalayaan and our Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ)."

"This is pursuant to our exercise of sovereignty, sovereign rights, and jurisdiction over the West Philippine Sea (WPS), consistent with the government's commitment against illegal unreported and unregulated fishing (IUUF), and to enforce our laws on maritime security and safety and environmental protection," the task force asserted.

It said the BFAR will implement its Integrated Maritime Environment Monitoring System (IMEMS) to "counter IUUF, for the monitoring of fishing vessels, and accounting of fishing catches and landings to ensure effective and efficient fisheries management."

The Philippine National Police - Maritime Group (PNP-MG) Regional Maritime Units are also expected to join the maritime patrols in the area.

Meanwhile, the NTF-WPS stated that it "welcomes" the recent diplomatic protests filed by the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) against the "illegal" Chinese activities within the Philippine territory.

"We condemn in the strongest terms the shadowing, blocking, dangerous maneuvers, and radio challenges conducted by the Chinese Coast Guard (CCG) against PCG vessels BRP Gabriela Silang and BRP Sindangan, during legitimate law enforcement patrols and maritime exercises while in the vicinity of Bajo de Masinloc (BdM) on 24-25 April 2021, as a violation of our sovereignty."

"The NTF-WPS reiterates that our fisherfolk are encouraged to go out and fish in our waters in the WPS," it emphasized.





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The task force highlighted that it will not be discouraged from defending national interest, patrimony, and dignity. It reiterated its call to all nations and stakeholders to "reconsider their actions, cooperate and comply with their international obligations."

"The Philippine Government shall not shirk from its constitutional obligation to preserve and protect our territorial integrity, and the exercise of our sovereign rights," they added. -ilo

Source: https://ptvnews.ph/ntf-wps-assures-continuous-ph-patrol-exercises-in-wps/





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France OKs crucial climate bill

By<u>Xinhua</u>

May 6, 2021

PARIS: France's National Assembly on Tuesday (Wednesday in Manila) endorsed a new bill aiming at reinforcing acts to enable France to meet the goal of reducing its greenhouse gas emissions by 40 percent compared with 1990 levels by 2030. A total of 332 out of 577 deputies of the lower house of the parliament voted for the bill, while 77 were against it. "With this law, we mark a turning point by anchoring ecology in the daily life of French people, leaving no one behind," Environment Minister Barbara Pompili told lawmakers.

Source: https://www.manilatimes.net/2021/05/06/news/world/france-oks-crucial-climate-bill/870360/





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A shortage of these metals could make the climate crisis worse

By Charles Riley, CNN Business

Updated 1447 GMT (2247 HKT) May 5, 2021

London (CNN Business)The world won't be able to tackle the <u>climate crisis</u> unless there is a sharp increase in the supply of metals required to produce <u>electric cars</u>, solar panels, wind turbines and other clean energy technologies, according to the International Energy Agency.

As countries switch to green energy, demand for copper, lithium, nickel, cobalt and rare earth elements is soaring. But they are all vulnerable to price volatility and shortages, the agency warned in a report published on Wednesday, because their supply chains are opaque, the quality of available deposits is declining and mining companies face stricter environmental and social standards.

Limited access to known mineral deposits is another risk factor. Three countries together control more than 75% of the global output of lithium, cobalt and rare earth elements. The <u>Democratic Republic of Congo</u> was responsible for 70% of cobalt production in 2019, and <u>China produced 60% of rare earth elements</u> while refining 50% to 70% of lithium and cobalt, and nearly 90% of rare earth elements. Australia is the other power player.

In the past, mining companies have responded to higher demand by increasing their investment in new projects. But it takes on average 16 years from the discovery of a deposit for a mine to start production, according to the IEA. Current supply and investment plans are geared to "gradual, insufficient action on climate change," it

"These risks to the reliability, affordability and sustainability of mineral supply are manageable, but they are real," the Paris-based agency said in the most comprehensive report on the issue to date. "How policy makers and companies respond will determine whether critical minerals are a vital enabler for clean energy transitions, or a bottleneck in the process."

The minerals are essential to technologies that are expected to play a leading role in combating climate change.

The average electric car requires six times more minerals than a conventional car, according to the IEA. Lithium, nickel, cobalt, manganese and graphite are crucial to batteries. Electricity networks need huge amounts of copper and aluminum, while rare earth elements are used in the magnets needed to make wind turbines work.

Meeting the goals of the <u>Paris climate agreement</u> will require a "significant" increase in clean energy, according to the IEA, which estimates that the annual installation of wind turbines would need to grow threefold by 2040 and electric car sales would need to expand 25 times over the same period. Reaching net zero emissions by 2050 would require even more investment.

"The data shows a looming mismatch between the world's strengthened climate ambitions and the availability of critical minerals that are essential to realizing those ambitions," Fatih Birol, executive director of the IEA, said in a statement. "The challenges are not insurmountable, but governments must give clear signals about how they plan to turn their climate pledges into action."





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The agency said that policymakers should provide more clarity on the energy transition, promote the development of new technology and recycling, enhance supply chain resilience and encourage higher environmental, social and governance (ESG) standards.

The IEA, which advises the world's richest countries and was founded after the oil supply shocks in the 1970s, said that mineral supplies will be the energy security challenge of the 21st century.

"Concerns about price volatility and security of supply do not disappear in an electrified, renewables-rich energy system," it said.

Source: https://edition.cnn.com/2021/05/05/business/climate-crisis-metals-shortage/index.html



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How to regrow a wrecked coral reef

(Image credit: Fragments of Hope)



By Veronika Perkova5th May 2021

When Hurricane Iris hit southern Belize in 2001, the country's magnificent corals were destroyed. But within 10 years, a radical restoration project brought the reef back to life.

With the caye split into two and corals smashed into rubble, the underwater world at Laughing Bird Caye National Park off the coast of Belize looked nothing like the vibrant and colourful place that had thrived with life before Hurricane Iris swept across it in 2001. The storm left the water murky and muddy, while rotting dead creatures washed ashore.

When Lisa Carne first visited the island in 1994, there were so many large, bright reddish-orange interlocking elkhorn corals that she could hardly swim through or around them. The reef was abundant in fish, corals, lobsters, crabs, sponges and sea turtles. But after the hurricane all of this was destroyed. With only a few surviving corals, the scene looked more like a graveyard.

It was not the first time Carne had seen a dead reef. In 1995, she moved full time to Belize from California, and volunteered as a research assistant at Carrie Bow Cay, a Smithsonian field station. She witnessed the effects of the first coral bleaching event in Belize, home to the second longest barrier reef in the world. Bleaching events leave the structure of corals intact, but strip it of the algae that live in an endosymbiotic relationship with the coral polyps. Some coral recover from such events as the algae returns, although many die.

Hurricane Iris was catastrophic in a different way. It not only killed corals but uprooted their structure too, making recovery even harder.

Carne immediately wanted to start replenishing the reefs by planting corals, but it took many years to convince any funders that her idea was viable. People argued, and still do, that without solving the problems that cause corals to die, putting them back on the reef made no sense.







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For five years after Hurricane Iris, the reef lay bare. There were few live corals, schools of fish or lobsters, and the seabed was covered in reef rubble and encrusting sponges. Carne began pitching her restoration ideas in 2002, but for several years had no luck. Then in 2006, the US listed Caribbean acroporid corals (the fastest growing type of branching coral in the Caribbean, and the main reef-building one) as endangered, and a local funder approved Carne's proposal to restore the reef.

Carne began with transplanting 19 elkhorn coral fragments from the main barrier reef around 19 miles (31km) away in a trial. "People were asking me why I'm going so far away for the corals," says Carne. "They thought that these corals were common, like sand. But after two weeks of mapping, I found that they were not everywhere anymore." In fact, she found that **coral structure** and cover had fallen to less than 6% of the national park area, from between 15 and 28% before the storm.

A series of bleaching events followed the hurricane, but not everything was lost. Carne noticed that there were pockets in the reef that still looked relatively healthy. Because the initial 2006 transplants' survival was high (more than 80% still alive today) she continued to identify surviving corals and started reseeding the reefs with them in 2010.



Shallow reefs around islands like those off the coast of Belize help to protect the coast from erosion, as well as supporting rich marine life (Credit: Fragments of Hope)

But restoring a reef is not as simple as it might seem, and involves trial and error, often learning as you go. When scientists first began to explore the idea of reef restoration, they thought that the larger the transplant, the higher the chance of survival. But in 2015 marine biologist David Vaughan discovered that the opposite can also be true – the smaller the piece, the faster it grows. This so-called "micro-fragmentation "enormously accelerated the restoration work"

Whereas in the past, Carne's team would trim corals into roughly 10cm (4 inch) pieces, grow them up in a coral nursery until they reached around 30cm (12 inches) and then plant them out in the reef, this breakthrough allowed the team accelerate growth rates in the nursery for certain coral species, and bypass nursery time for others completely.

Carne worked with other researchers on coral genetics, diseases, bleaching and spawning to seek out the best way to restore the reef. In 2009, Illiana Baums, professor of molecular ecology at Penn State University, advised on the appropriate distance to plant different individuals of each coral species apart to encourage spawning (sexual reproduction – which boost's the reefs genetic diversity and resilience). Successful spawning events were later documented between 2014 and 2016.

Despite these steps forward, the task of replanting corals in over a hectare of shallow reef was too much for a research team of between two and four people. Once Carne's mapping had revealed the extent of damage to the corals, the local people realised how scarce they had become. Fishermen and tour guides from nearby Placencia village were the first to notice the success of the transplanting efforts and they offered to help Carne with the planting.





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Marine life – including lobsters like this – suffered when Hurricane Iris decimated their habitat (Credit: Fragments of Hope)

In 2013, Carne registered a non-profit community-based organisation in Belize called Fragments of Hope and two years later added a US branch. Fragments of Hope developed a coral restoration training course, endorsed by the Belize Fisheries Department, which has certified over 70 Belizeans to date, says Maya Trotz, a professor of civil and environmental engineering at the University of South Florida and a US board member of Fragments of Hope. The restoration supplements local people's incomes from tourism and fishing with restoration jobs.

"Fragments of Hope engages young people, and has created colouring books and puzzles about the reef, featuring artwork of a local artist," says Trotz. "Over 2,500 have been distributed to date to schools across Belize."

So far over 85,000 corals have been planted in the Laughing Bird Caye National Park. Longterm monitoring shows 89% survived after 14 years — much higher than typical survivorship after restoration. Overall, coral cover of the seafloor in the park increased from 6% to 50% between 2010 to 2017. Reports also suggest an upward trend in corals around Belize as a whole, rising from 11% of the seafloor surveyed in 2006 to 17% in 2018 through natural recovery.



Crucial to the success of Fragments of Hope was the local community's involvement with the planting process, alongside researchers (Credit: Fragments of Hope)

The reef restoration work in Belize is unique because it focuses on shallow reefs – the kind that helps protect coasts – in a sparsely populated area. With a relatively small population of roughly 420,000 people, Belize does not put as much pressure on its reefs like its more populous neighbours.

"I think critical factors in the success of Fragments of Hope are the science-based approach, the vast local knowledge, and the dedication and persistence of Lisa," says Penn State University's Baums.

Belize's efforts to protect its reefs have also played a large role. Laughing Bird Caye National Park was established in 1994. Belize banned all shrimp trawling, the use of gill nets, off-shore oil exploration and fully protected its grazing fish families, the parrot and surgeon fishes. As the only organisation that practices reef restoration in Belize, Fragments of Hope has been able to cooperate closely with the government. Together they are now working on a national restoration plan for coral replenishment.





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But despite government restrictions, there has been unchecked coastal development with <u>mangrove cayes in Belize destroyed</u>. There are also <u>plans to build new cruise ports</u>. "It's hard to get up every morning and do what you do when there are bigger decisions being made that you may not control," says Carne.



The Belizean team's work has been replicated with success at other Caribbean islands and beyond (Credit: Fragments of Hope)

Techniques developed by Fragments of Hope have been successfully applied in Colombia, Jamaica and the Caribbean island of St Barts, as well as seven Marine Protected Areas and 10 other sites in Belize. Prior to Covid-19, Fragments of Hope organised exchanges, study visits and workshops to share experience across the Caribbean. People came to learn how to select an appropriate restoration site based on a long set of criteria, set up nurseries, trim corals and use cement for planting. The organisation also shares its methods and experiences **online**.

"Fragments of Hope is a centre of innovation, attracting talent from the Placencia Peninsula and around the world, all inspired by the proactive approach to coral restoration," says Trotz.

After 15 years of restoration efforts, the coral reef at Laughing Bird Caye National Park, which was once a rubble graveyard, is now bursting with life. Staghorn and elkhorn corals are again covering the seafloor, spawning and providing refuge to numerous species. Giant lobsters, crabs, eagle rays and sea turtles, which were abundant prior to the hurricane, now roam around the reef. Schools of parrotfish and surgeon fish have also returned and graze the algae so corals can spread out even more.

Scientists, reef restorers and passionate divers all agree that the coral reef at the Laughing Bird Caye is unique. "I haven't seen this kind of acroporid coverage since late 1970s or early 80s. It's pretty remarkable," says Mark J. Butler IV, professor and eminent scholar at Old Dominion University, one of the many visitors who come to admire the thriving underwater world of the restored reef.

Though the project has seen substantial success, maintaining the reef is likely to be an uphill struggle. Coral bleaching events are becoming more extreme each year due to climate change and storms more frequent and severe. If greenhouse gas emissions are not curbed globally, then few corals are predicted to survive in the "business as usual" scenario. The bleaching events in Belize have been getting progressively worse, Carne says.

But if Carne had waited for zero emissions to begin her work, the reef today may not look much more alive than after Hurricane Iris hit. So while many scholars still criticise the idea of reef restoration in a world of warming oceans, the constant decline of reefs globally has led to projects in over 50 countries, though none yet approach the scale or longevity of the work in Belize.

"When we first started maybe one or two people were doing reef restoration," says Carne. "But nowadays, everybody's doing it. I joke that it's like yoga now."





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How to really reduce plastic use, and why a total ban may not be the real solution

By ... -May 6, 2021



Survey shows Moms agree to ban only plastics with existing alternatives

Plastic pollution is a problem we can't ignore any longer. Every year, 8 million tons of plastic end up in our oceans, killing marine life and harming the environment.

The good news is people are beginning to be aware of the harmful effects of plastic pollution. A recent the Asian parent PH 600 moms found that 51% of them support banning plastics with available replacements, such as disposable cutlery, straws, cups, and plates. Ready to cut down on plastic? To start, here are five simple things you can do to reduce your plastic carbon footprint.

- Reframe caffeine fix. Upgrade your barista's creation by using your own insulated tumbler!
 Coffee cups aren't that easy to recycle: The outside is paper, with a thin layer of plastic
 inside. Reprocessing a cup means having to separate the two, making the recycling
 process a difficult one.
- 2. BYOB. And we mean bag. Single-use plastics—like the one's groceries use to bag produce, or what tiangges place your recent finds in—account for 40% of plastics produced every year. These plastics have a lifespan of minutes to hours in your hands yet linger in the environment for hundreds of years. Make it a habit to pack reusable shopping bags and washable produce net bags the next time you head out.
- 3. Break up with plastic you can live without. Disposable cutlery, straws, and condiment packets—do we really need them? In the US alone, 500 million plastic straws are tossed out daily, with each straw having to take up to 200 years to decompose. The next time you order take-out or have food delivered, ask to skip the plastic cutlery, plates, and packets of ketchup. Doing this can personally save up to 466 items of unnecessary plastic a year!
- 4. Rethink diapers and period products. Make the switch to cloth diapers (they come in adorable designs,) which can cut down on disposable diaper costs and help speed up potty training. As for our monthly visitor? Consider using a menstrual cup, a cloth napkin or pasador or investing in a few pairs of period panties, which have a special layer that helps prevent blood from seeping through.
- 5. Start the recycling process at home. Plastic has gotten a bad rap recently but the truth is, plastic per se is not the issue. It's how we dispose of it. We can live with plastic. Most food products require plastic to keep the food fresh, safe from insects and infestation, and allow it to travel well very important for an archipelago like ours. Banning plastic packaging for food would mean higher risk of contamination, a shorter shelf life, and an increase of up to 30% in food prices.

In the same survey among the Asian parent Moms, 59% don't know that a plastic ban includes banning of food packaging. This means that while moms do agree to ban plastic for the sake of the environment, they are not aware that the proposal includes packaging for food. This will be challenging for moms since most day-to-day basic food items come in plastic packaging to keep them





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affordable like noodles, bread, and the like. In addition, no material has been developed that has the affordability and safety that plastic has – this might come in the future but for now there are just no replacements yet for plastic food packaging.

So, when it comes to plastic use, start the recycling and segregation at home. For instance: any plastic material with food residue cannot be recycled because we lack segregation and processing facilities in the country. So do your part and wash plastic packaging before throwing in a bin specifically for plastics. — Asianparent PH



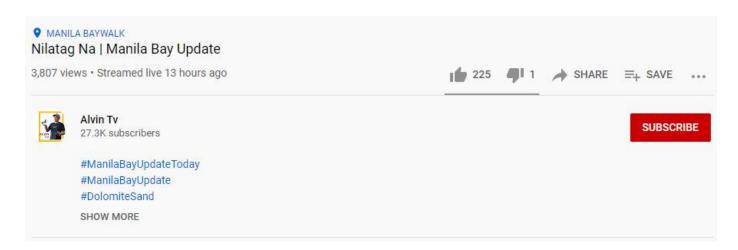




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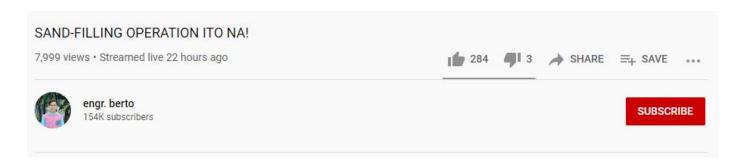




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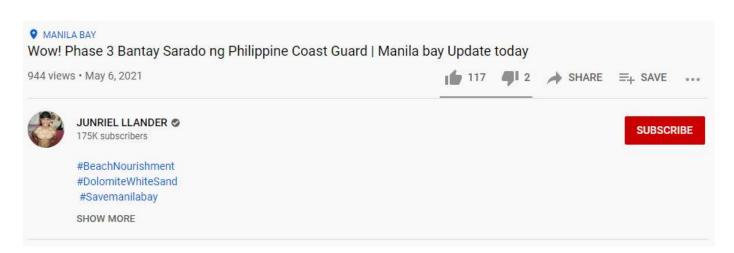


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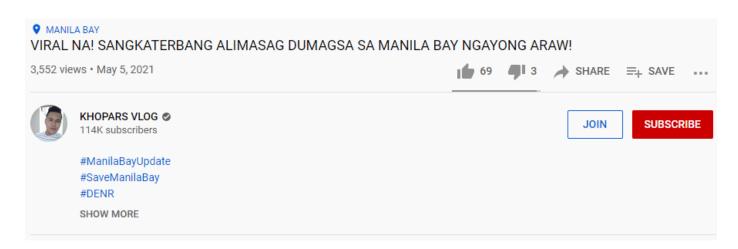


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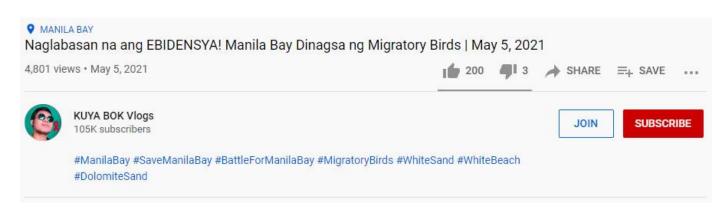


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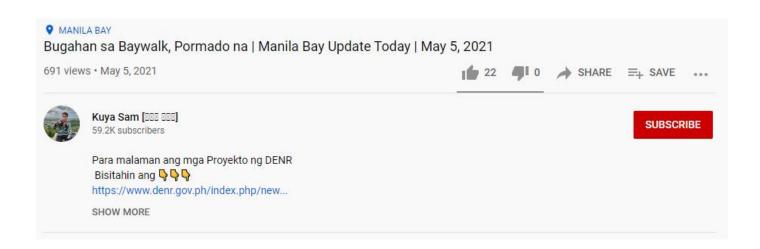




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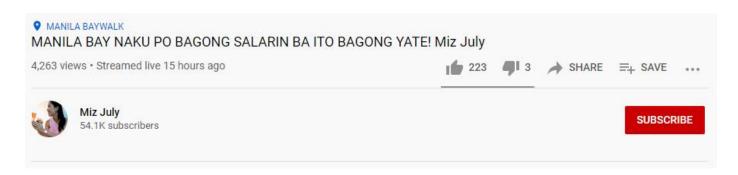


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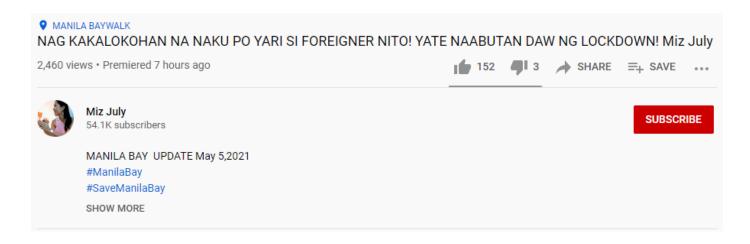




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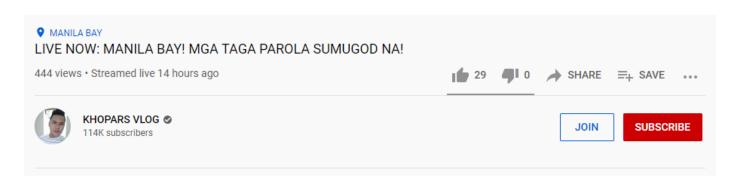




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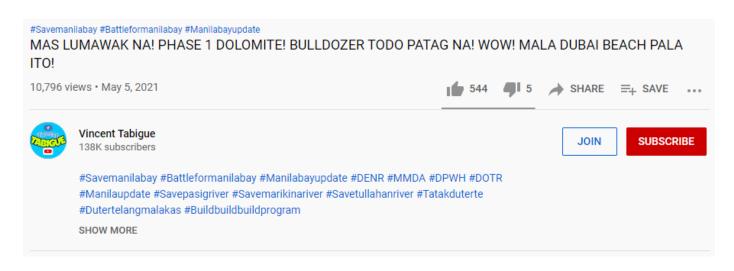




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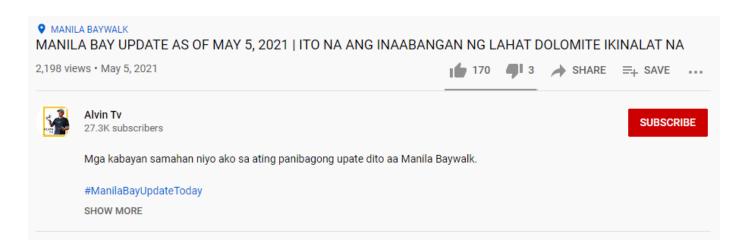




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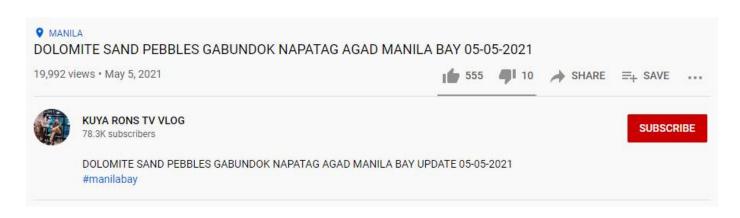




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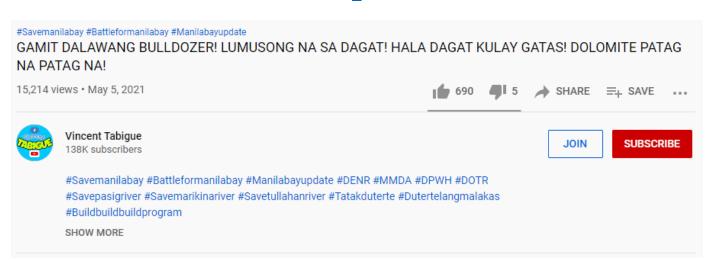
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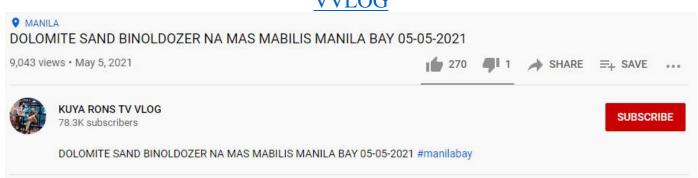


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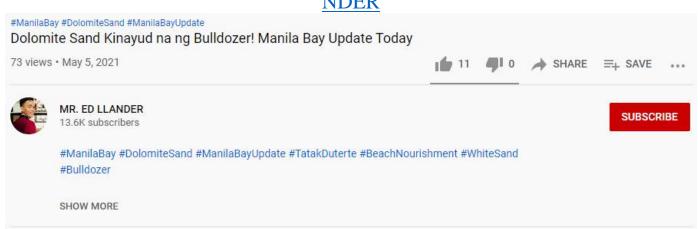


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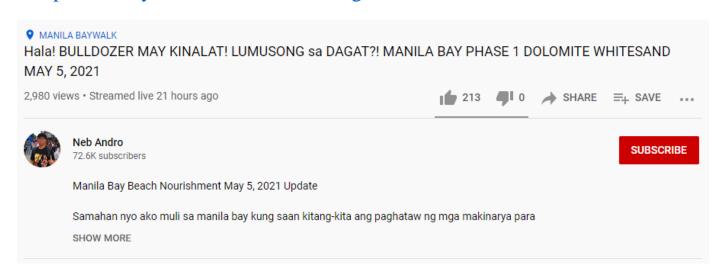




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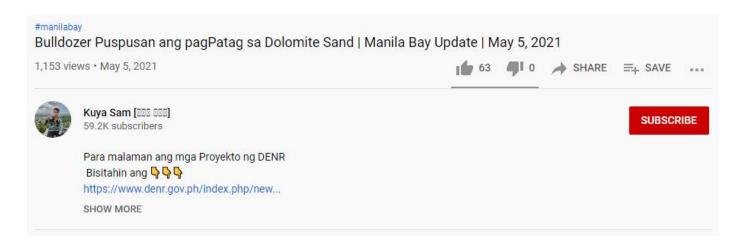


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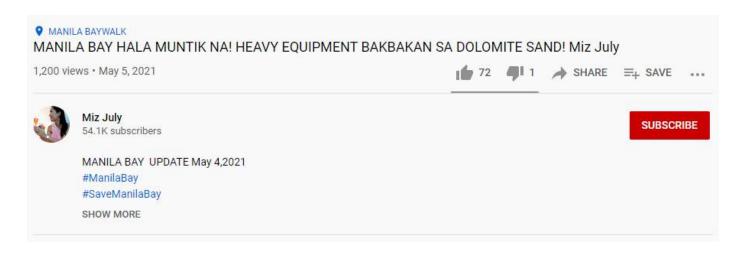




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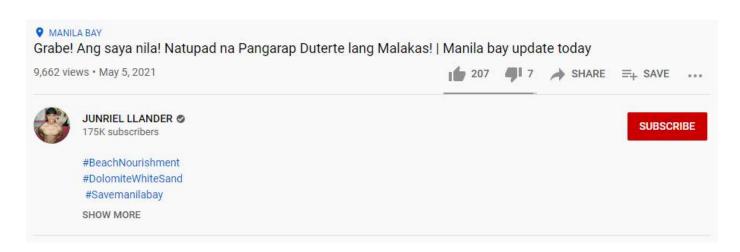


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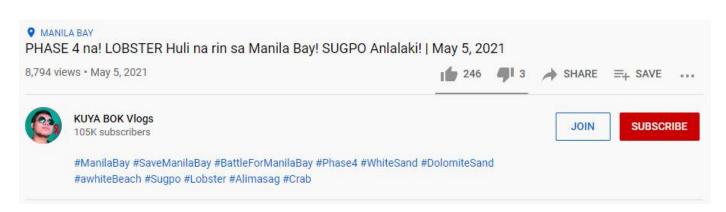


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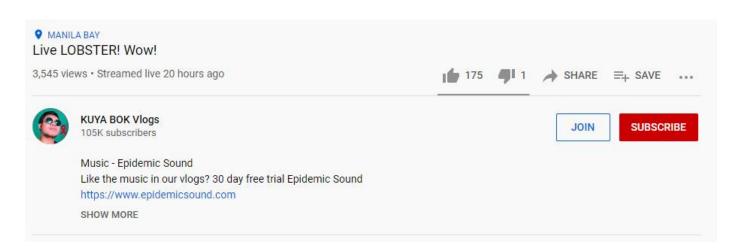




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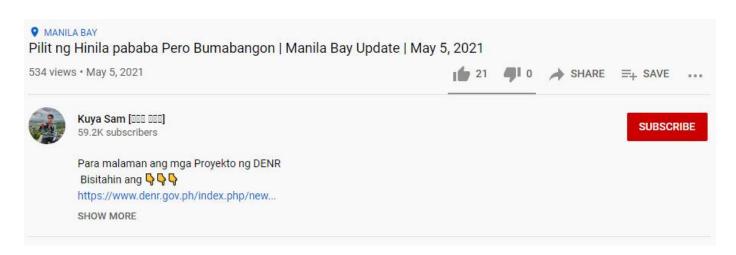




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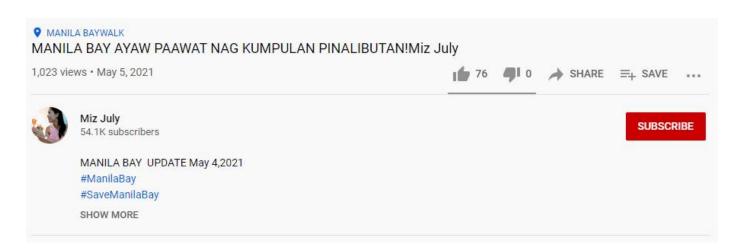




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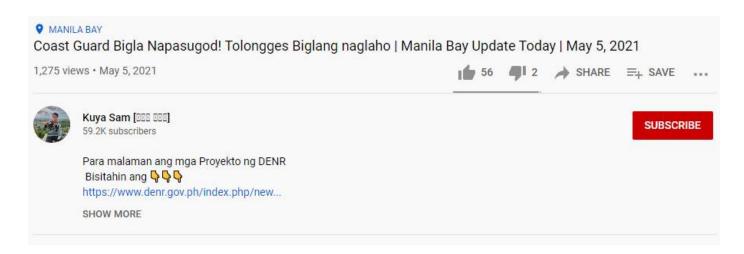




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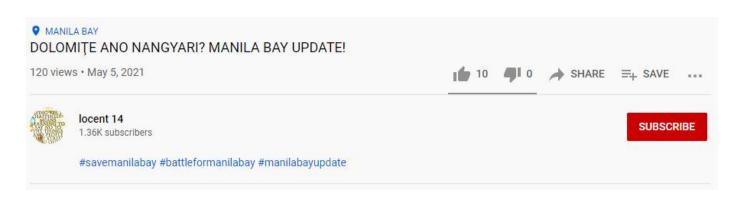




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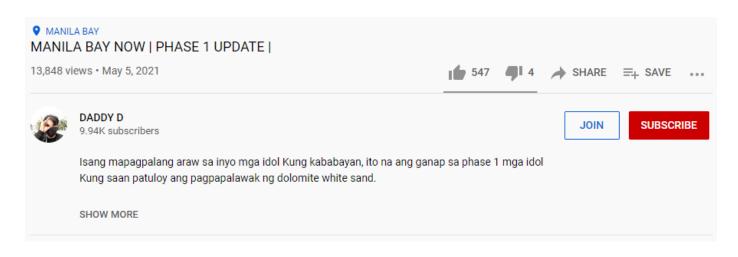




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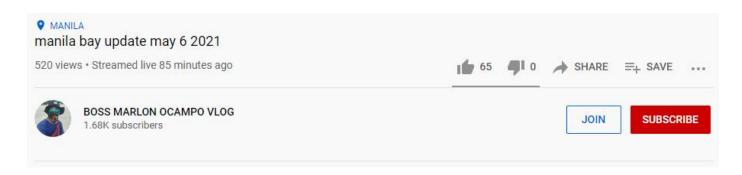




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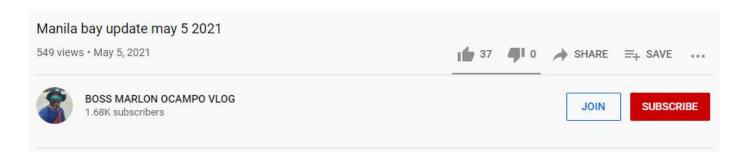




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