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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



CIMATU INILIPAT ANG PAMAMAHALA NG PALAWAN WILDLIFE FACILITY SA DENR-NRDC



December 9, 2020 @ 12:15 AM 7 hours ago

NAGLABAS ng administrative order si Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu na naglilipat ng pamamahala sa Palawan Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Center (PWRCC) mula sa Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) patungo sa Natural Resources Development Corp. (NRDC) na isang corporate arm ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Ang PWRCC na dating kilala bilang Crocodile Farm and Nature Park ay isang breeding place para sa endangered Philippine crocodile at isa rin itong research and rescue center ng iba pang species na endemic sa Palawan tulad ng bearcats at Philippine cockatoos.

Base sa DENR Administrative Order (DAO) No. 2020-10 na inilabas noong Setyembre 17, sinabi ni Cimatu na ang paglilipat ng pamamahala ay dahil na rin sa pangangailangan ng mahigpit na superbisyon sa PWRCC, makakuha ng mas mataas na kita at magkaroon ng “financial stability.”

Naging epektibo ang DAO noong Nobyembre 25 o labing-limang araw matapos ang publikasyon nito sa mga diaryo na may general circulation.

Kabilang din sa paglipat ang lahat ng documents, records, equipment, facilities, supplies and materials, “concerned personnel” maliban sa may hawak ng permanent items sa DENR-MIMAROPA Region, budget at iba pang may kinalaman sa operasyon.

“Within three months from effectivity of this Order, the NRDC, BMB, and the DENR-MIMAROPA Region shall formulate and implement smooth transition of the transfer and develop collaborative arrangements to strengthen the operations of the Center, to be contained in a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA),” nakasaad pa sa DAO.

Ayon din sa kautusan, sa panahon ng transition period, ang NRDC ay kinakailangang magkaroon ng business plan para sa PWRCC, maging ang pagkakaroon ng bago, “innovative, competitive at related business ventures” na may layunin para sa “financial sustainability.”

Sa ilalim ng DAO, ang NRDC ay pinahihintulutang baguhin o ayusin ang presyo, fees at charges na may kinalaman sa PWRCC commercial at business operations, na nakapaloob sa umiiral na batas, panuntunan at regulasyon.



Samantala, mananatili naman sa BMB ang pagpapatupad ng “regulatory authorities” sa crocodile at iba pang wildlife species sa PWRCC.

Ayon kay Assistant Secretary for Climate Change at BMB Director Ricardo Calderon, ang bureau ay magpapatuloy pa rin sa pagbibigay ng technical assistance at guidance sa management at conservation ng wildlife species sa center.

“The BMB has entered into an agreement with NRDC and DENR-MIMAROPA to ensure that the PWRCC shall continue to operate efficiently and effectively as a center for the commercial breeding of saltwater crocodiles and conservation breeding of Philippine crocodiles, as well as for the care and rehabilitation of rescued, donated and confiscated wildlife species in Palawan,” sabi pa ni Calderon.

Idinagdag pa nito na ang NRDC’s business plan ay pauunlarin sa pamamagitan ng pagkonsulta sa BMB upang matiyak na ang conservation aspect ng operasyon ng PWRCC ay sapat.



MinDA exec says illegal mining, logging uncovered in Mt. Apo

By Edwin Fernandez December 8, 2020, 2:30 pm

COTABATO CITY – Mindanao Development Authority (MinDA) chair Secretary Emmanuel Piñol described as "outrageous" the illegal mining operations and illegal cutting of hardwood trees inside the Mt. Apo protected area.

In a Facebook post on Tuesday, Piñol said the mining and cutting of trees were uncovered by a team from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) North Cotabato inside the Mt. Apo protected area in Barangay Don Panaca, Magpet town.

"What makes this discovery totally outrageous was the confirmation that local officials, allegedly protected by Army soldiers, are behind the mining and clearing operations inside one (of) the last remaining forest areas of Mindanao," Piñol said.



OUTRAGEOUS DISCOVERY. Personnel from DENR-North Cotabato inspect the entrance of the tunnel and the mined materials in Barangay Panaca, Magpet, North Cotabato which is well within the Mt. Apo protected area. Personnel of the DENR (inset) also documented the logged area near the illegal mining sites where hardwood trees have been cut. *(Photo courtesy of DENR-North Cotabato)*

He said the poachers have started planting bananas in the areas cleared of natural growing trees in an attempt to cover the logged areas.

"I have directed officials of the MinDA to coordinate with the DENR's Mines and Geosciences Bureau to get to the bottom of this," Piñol, the MinDA secretary who hails in Kidapawan City and a known environmentalist, said.

He said he was preparing a report to be submitted to President Rodrigo Duterte so that the encroachment into the Mt. Apo forest reserves will be stopped immediately. **(PNA)**



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Philippine News Agency

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LOOK | DENR-North Cotabato personnel inspect the entrance of one of the illegal mining tunnels in Barangay Panaca of Magpet town located within the Mt. Apo protected area on Tuesday (Dec. 8, 2020).

The DENR also video documented the wanton cutting of trees near the mine sites by illegal mining operators. via Edwin Fernandez / Photos from FB post of MinDA char Sec. Emmanuel Piñol)



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Residents Rescue Injured Red-Backed Sea Eagle In Ilocos Norte



By [Featuresdesk \(MD\)](#) December 7, 2020

A wounded brahminy kite (*Haliastur indus*) or red-backed sea eagle that was rescued on Saturday near the Padsan River in Barangay San Antonio, Sarrat, Ilocos Norte is now under the custody of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) office here for safekeeping.

According to Eugene Santos, head of the Wildlife Division of the DENR, the stray raptor will be turned over to the Fort Ilocandia Bird Sanctuary on Monday.

While strolling by the river at around 3 p.m. on Saturday, Dyrel Navales and James Lorens Pinuela, both 16 years old and residents of the said village, saw the stray raptor that appeared to be weak.

“It’s our first time to see a bird like that. Because it was not moving, we managed to get closer and we found out he couldn’t fly because his right wing was broken,” Navales said in an interview with the Philippine News Agency on Saturday.

Worried that the bird would die without proper treatment, the boys informed their friends and posted the bird’s condition on social media, hoping it would reach concerned government authorities.

After learning about the discovery of the injured raptor, Police Senior M/Sgt. Noel Abad, who happened to be near the area that time after leading a tree-planting activity, volunteered to pick up the bird and delivered it to the DENR office in this city.

Based on their inspection of the raptor’s features, local authorities established that it was a “young brahminy kite.”

The Fort Ilocandia bird sanctuary is the only wildlife rescue center in Ilocos Norte, which seeks to secure, protect and rehabilitate all wildlife species, such as those that are turned over, abandoned, surrendered or confiscated in the province.

The DENR reminded the public not to capture any wildlife species if they are in good condition and let them live in their natural habitat. But if they are injured, they must be turned over to the nearest DENR office to ensure their well-being. (PNA)

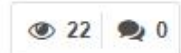
Source: http://thephilippinepost.com/residents-rescue-injured-red-backed-sea-eagle-in-ilocos-norte/?fbclid=IwAR1guHXkot_Vw1vhW8eZ4KPjzhkOy5SUAndMKbJ21Uh5myxsfkGs1JE3A5Q



17 DENR exec sinuspinde, sibakin na lang – Duterte

By Abante Tonite — Last updated Dec 8, 2020

NEWS



Katulad ng nakaugalian na tuwing nagbibigay ng kanyang lingguhang ulat sa bayan, isinapubliko ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte ang mga sinibak o suspendidong mga opisyal ng gobyerno.

Sa kanyang ulat sa bayan Lunes ng gabi, binasa ng Pangulo ang listahan ng mga sinibak at sinuspinde sa tanggapang hawak ni Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu.

Nasa 16 na taga-DENR ang sinuspinde at tinukoy ang mga ito ng Pangulo na sina Shiela Camagon; Nolindo Dutdut; Marlene Menor; Ruby Delia Preciosa Tumamao; Olivia Abitong; Joel Eden; Rowena Pulido; Engr. Nila Castanares; Charlotte Cabiao; Engr. Christina Moquia; Aurora Talua; Merlene Aborka;

Emmanuel Tigpos; Mamerto Caballero; Athea Acevedo; at Romulo Sumaculub.

Sabi ng Pangulo, ipalilipat niya sa ibang lugar ang mga sinuspinde dahil sa isyu ng pagtitulo sa lupa.

"I think these guys will...mag-usap kami ni General Cimatu ilipat sila sa probinsya at saka na – a job that has nothing to do with titling of lands," wika ng Pangulo.

Subalit nagbago ang isip ni Pangulong Duterte at sinabing, "I think I will ask for the records of these guys to the Office of the President. I might just decide to dismiss them. Land titling, kung saan mo ilagay gagawa rin ng kalokohan 'yan."

Source: <https://tonite.abante.com.ph/17-denr-exec-sinuspinde-sibakin-na-lang-duterte/>



P2.4-M AGARWOOD NASABAT NG BOC-NAIA

6 hours ago [jake](#)



Nasabat ng Bureau of Customs – Port of NAIA, sa tulong ng Environment Protection Compliance Division (EPCD) ng Bureau of Customs, ang tatlong bagahe na naglalaman ng may timbang na 28 kilong Agarwood na tinatayang nagkakahalaga na Php2,400,000 sa Fedex warehouse sa Pasay City.

Ang Agarwood ay isang classified sa ilalim ng “Appendix 2” ng Convention on International Trade in - Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES).

Ayon sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), ang Agarwood ay isang ‘resin valued for its distinctive fragrance.’

Ito ay nabuo kung kailan punong-puno at nahawahan ng amag (mold) na tinawag Phialophoraparasitica.

Ang mold infection ang gumagawa sa kahoy para maging dark aromatic resin na tinawag na ‘aloes or aga’ sa kanyang heartwood.

Ang fragrant resin ay gamit sa paggawa ng insenso, pabango at medicinal products partikular sa Middle East at Asia.

Inihayag ng DENR na ang pagbebenta ng agarwood or lapnisan ay illegal sa Pilipinas.

Ito ay natatagpuan sa lamang pusod ng kagubatan sa Mindanao at Visayas.

Kadalasan, ito ang pinupuntahan ng mga dayuhan sa remote villages ng bansa at nagpapatulong para mahanap ang nasabing mamahaling kahoy.

Ayon sa reports, ang treasure ay bihira at mahal na kahoy sa mundo na ang isang kilo ng agarwood fetches ay nagkakahalaga ng P750,000.

Lumalabas sa dokumento na ang packages ay misdeclared bilang “face masks and clothes”, “shoes at hand bags”, at “leather jackets, face masks, man pants”.

Lahat ng tatlong bagahe ay ipinadala ng isang residente mula sa Davao patungo sa United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Sa x-ray inspection, ang packages ay nakitaan ng iba’t ibang images kung ikukumpara sa idineklara ng nagpadala.

Dahil dito, ang bagahe ay naging pakay ng 100% physical examination.

Natuklasan na umaabot ng kabuuang 28 kilos ang agarwood sa isinagawang examination.

Kaugnay nito, ang packages ay tinangkang i-export nang walang kaukulang permits mula sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).



Ang nasabing packages ay isinailalim sa seizure and forfeiture proceedings para sa paglabag sa Section 117 (Regulated Shipments), Section 1400 (Misdeclaration) at Section 1113 (Property Subject to Seizure and Forfeiture), lahat ng Republic Act No. 10863 (CMTA) na may kaugnayan sa Section 27 (i) [Illegal Transport] of Republic Act No. 9147 (Wild Life Act).

Ang kahoy ay itinurnover na sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR). (Joel O. Amongo)



QC mulls creating dep't on climate change mitigation

By Marita Moaje December 8, 2020, 5:50 pm

MANILA – The Quezon City government is planning to create a department that will focus on the local government's programs and efforts to mitigate the effects of climate change.

In a social media post by the city government on Tuesday, Mayor Joy Belmonte said the programs include tree planting activities in flood-prone areas.

Belmonte, together with barangay officials and different civic organizations in Old Balara Area 4, Sitio Payong, conducted a tree planting activity as part of the city's efforts to address the issue.

"Ang Sitio Payong ay isa sa mga bahagi ng lungsod na binaha noong umapaw ang Marikina river dulot ng bagyong Ulysses (Sitio Payong is one of the areas in the city that was deeply flooded when the Marikina river overflowed because of typhoon 'Ulysses')," Belmonte said.



TREE PLANTING. Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte leads a tree planting activity in Barangay Old Balara on Tuesday (Dec. 8, 2020). Belmonte said the city government is planning to form a department that will focus on projects that will help mitigate the effects of climate change. *(Photo grabbed from QC Gov't FB page)*

She added that barangay officials of Matandang Balara seek to plant about 2,000 trees around the vicinity of the Marikina River that is part of the city.

Typhoon 'Ulysses' has affected several areas in Quezon City, dumping heavy rains that submerged several areas and destroyed houses and properties.

About 3,000 families or more than 8,000 individuals were affected in the city as a result of the onslaught of the typhoon.

"Bubuo rin ang lungsod ng drainage masterplan katulong ang Project NOAH (Nationwide Operational Assessment of Hazard) upang matugunan ang pagbaha sa lungsod (the city will also form a drainage masterplan with the help of Project NOAH to find a solution to the problems of flooding in the city)," said Belmonte. **(PNA)**



QUARANTINED WITH HOWIE SEVERINO

National framework vs. climate change needed to solve flooding —Marikina mayor

Published December 9, 2020 12:02am



The Philippine government must prioritize climate change to finally put an end to the perennial problem of flooding that hounds Marikina and other cities east of Manila, Mayor Marcelino Teodoro said Tuesday.

Interviewed on “Quarantined with Howie Severino,” Teodoro said the country needs to improve its “institutional capacity to respond or to mitigate the effects of climate change.”

“I think we should realize that there should be an integrated approach and there should be a national framework in order to put climate change at the forefront of our governance,” Teodoro urged.

The mayor said that the Marikina government alone cannot ease or eradicate the flooding problem since the Marikina River is part of a bigger system.

“We improved on our drainage system, we dredged the river, we have the correct alignment of the river, may easement kami. Pero kung wala naman ganito sa taas, kung ano 'yung nangyari do'n, ang effect, narito sa'min sa downstream community,” he said.

He pointed out that when Marikina gets flooded, so do coastal towns in Rizal and a portion of Quezon City.

In years past, Marikina was known for being one of the areas badly battered by Typhoon Ondoy in 2009.

Last month, Typhoon Ulysses caused [widespread flooding](#) that gave Marikina residents flashbacks to their Ondoy ordeals.

“There should be an analysis, institutional ang approach, long-term ang analysis at intervention na dapat gawin. Hindi pupuwedeng ituro sa isang dahilan lang, e. Very complex problem having a multi-faceted iyong solution natin,” Teodoro said.



The mayor also said bureaucratic bottlenecks were delaying the implementation of the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources' Integrated River Basin Management and Development Master Plan for the Marikina River Basin.

“May mga tinupad naman, may ginawa naman sila... [but] everything is yet to be completed,” he said.

“I think that's the gap that we need to address, 'yung timeline no'ng mga project and programs natin. Ten years is a long period. Dapat mas marami sigurong natatapos pero tingin ko, 'yung bureacratic requirement 'yung nagpapatagal, e.”—**Julia Mari Ornedo/LDF, GMA News**



Groups call for urgent, concrete action on climate emergency

December 7, 2020 1 min read

ART SON/BENJAMIN CUARESMA

Members of the Philippine Movement for Climate Justice and other climate-based organizations hold a press conference to demand an urgent and concrete action following the Lower House's resolution declaring a climate emergency.

The groups' main concern is the lack of binding commitment and allocation of fund in part of the national government to concretize the climate emergency measure. **(AI/FC/MTVN)**

Source: <https://maharlika.tv/2020/12/07/groups-call-for-urgent-concrete-action-on-climate-emergency/?fbclid=IwAR0Ng6cvOGBpmaAKDXcqmS4GjbE98Kzmu9mqXbFh-j-5hN9tCKheR4VObqs>



Pagbuo ng ahensyang poprotekta sa Sierra Madre, aprubado ng House panel

By [RadyoMaN Manila](#) - Dec. 8, 2020 at 5:33am



Inaprubahan na ng House Committee on Government Enterprises and Privatization ang pagbuo ng special government body na siyang magpoprotekta sa bulubunduking Sierra Madre.

Ang panukalang batas ay iniakda nina House Assistant Majority Leader at Rizal 2nd District Representative Fidel Nograles.

Sa kanyang sponsorship speech, nakiusap si Nograles sa kanyang mga kapwa mambabatas na aprubahan ang panukalang batas para mapangalagaan ang Sierra Madre region.

Binanggit din ni Nograles ang kawalan ng pagpapatupad ng environmental protection laws at kawalan ng regulasyon sa aktibidad ng mga tao sa lugar kabilang ang patuloy na pagkakaalbo ng kagubatan at pag-ubos ng natural resources.

Sa ilalim ng House Bill No. 5634, bubuo ng Sierra Madre Development Authority (SMDA) na siyang magsasagawa ng comprehensive survey sa physical at natural resources ng Sierra Madre region at bubuo ng comprehensive plan para mapangalagaan ang resources at maisulong ang social at economic development sa rehiyon.

Bahagi rin ng mandato ng SMDA na magbigay ng makinarya lalo na sa planning, management at technical assistance sa mga investors sa rehiyon at magbigay ng rekomendasyon sa mga ahensya lalo na sa financing at technical support na ibigay sa agricultural, industrial at commercial projects at i-assess at aprubahan ang mga plano, programa at proyekto na ipinapanukala ng mga local government offices o agencies sa rehiyon.

Kabilang din sa functions ng SMDA ay pagplano, pagbuo at pagpondo ng infrastructure projects para sa ilog, baha, tidal control, waste at sewerage works, dams at water supply, kalsada, irrigation at housing.

Trabaho rin nito na pag-aralan ang conservation, improvement, exploration at maintenance ng Sierra Madre Mountain Range.

Source: https://rmn.ph/pagbuo-ng-ahensyang-poprotekta-sa-sierra-madre-aprubado-ng-house-panel/?fbclid=IwAR3viFcWNuC4t_KN64umTqJNEBaOaznsPTqGiLp8MoDPI810Smqp2onP_00



SMC's Ang underscores urgency of river rehab to mitigate floods

By Jonathan L. Mayuga

December 9, 2020

San Miguel Corp. (SMC) President and Chief Operating Officer Ramon S. Ang on Sunday underscored the urgency of rehabilitating the country's rivers in the wake of the massive flooding caused by Typhoon Ulysses last month.

In a news statement, Ang said many Filipinos in Northern and Southern Luzon had to contend with destroyed homes, crops and properties because of massive flooding after the recent strong typhoons that hit the country.

He cited a National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council report which recorded a total of 213 flooding incidents. This, he said, has brought to light the urgent need for mitigation projects that will address the perennial problem of flooding.

In Metro Manila, SMC, which is implementing the P735-billion Bulacan Airport Project, flooding can be avoided by dredging and possibly widening rivers, Ang said, citing the case of flood-prone cities of Malabon and Navotas, which were spared from severe flooding during the onslaught of Ulysses.

This can be attributed to the government pumping stations that may have improved the management and mitigation of flood water in the area, which was further boosted by SMC's dredging of the Tullahan-Tinajeros River system.

"There are many factors that lead to flooding, some are natural-occurring, but many are man-made. We are not fully helpless against flooding, there are ways we can mitigate or minimize their impact," Ang said.

The dredging project has widened and deepened the river by up to 5 meters resulting in no river overflow despite the increased volume of water.

The project costs P1 billion and is aimed at dredging the 27-kilometer stretch of the river system.

It also is among the Corporate Social Responsibility projects of SMC on environmental protection which includes coastal clean-up, tree planting, reforestation, and river rehabilitation.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/12/09/smcs-ang-underscores-urgency-of-river-rehab-to-mitigate-floods/>



Competition law in times of natural disasters

By Atty. Emerson B. Aquende
December 9, 2020



Atty. Emerson B. Aquende

COMPETITION MATTERS

The successive typhoons that devastated large swathes of Luzon in November, and the massive flooding that recently inundated Metro Manila and Cagayan province have once again raised to the national consciousness the vulnerability of the Philippines to natural disasters. To a large part, geography is to be blamed for this curse. The entire east coast of the country faces the Pacific Ocean, which sends our way 20 typhoons every year on the average, at least five of which are destructive.

Accompanying flooding and landslides often aggravate the lethality and destructiveness of typhoons. Fluctuating ocean temperatures caused by climate change further compounds the problem by either increasing the severity of typhoons, or causing droughts, depending on whether the ocean is warmer or colder than normal. It doesn't also help being in the Pacific Ring of Fire, where earthquakes from the occasional movement of the tectonic plates, and volcanic eruptions from the 24 known active volcanoes sprinkled across the archipelago, is frequently expected but cannot be predicted. Given all these adverse factors, it's not surprising that the Philippines is among the countries with the highest risk for natural disasters—9th out of 181 countries in the World Risk Index of 2020. The human and economic cost of natural disasters to the country is staggering. In the past 20 years, the 432 disaster events resulted to 39,946 deaths and estimated damages reaching \$24.2 billion.

Coming from the Albay province, I am no stranger to frequent natural disasters. Super typhoons, landslides, flooding, earthquakes and volcanic eruptions are regular fare for us living at the foot of Mayon Volcano, whose majestic beauty is equaled only by her deadly reputation as the most active volcano in the Philippines with 52 eruptions to her credit since the year 1616. Albay, with the rest of the Bicol provinces, straddles also the typhoon alley where super typhoons birthed by the warm ocean in the months of October, November and December cuts across the archipelago on a diagonal northwest path.

For those of us who live with natural disasters, we know that every natural disaster leaves a lengthy trail of misery in the lives of those impacted. The survivors of natural disasters have to endure lengthy periods of recovery and rebuilding even as they are beset with a host of difficulties and deprivations. Water and electricity services may take weeks (or even months) to be restored in the disaster area, leaving everyone scrambling to buy electric generators and bottled drinking water. Roads may be impassable for days due to landslides, fallen trees and electric poles, or worse, destroyed bridges isolating local communities for a time. Business operations of banks, grocery shops, water refilling stations and other commercial establishments may be interrupted because of damages incurred and employees unable to work, resulting in shortages of basic necessities and prime commodities.

As is most often the case in post-disaster situations, prices of food, other basic necessities, and prime commodities, including building materials, may surge to unjustifiable levels because of price gouging. In many instances, the increase in post-disaster prices are justifiable due to higher input costs of traders and retailers, such as added expenses from cleanup, higher transportation charges, increased labor expenses, and similar legitimate factors. However, there is also no denying that many traders and businessmen will take advantage of the chaos in the market that follows natural disasters to generate more profit just because they can.

The adverse impact of price gouging can be magnified several times under a post-disaster situation. It is particularly injurious to those who belong to the lower income groups who may be denied access to basic necessities and prime commodities because prices have risen beyond their means. Unless the government is able to stabilize the markets immediately, price gouging may worsen the suffering of survivors due to hunger and other deprivations.



While the Price Act allows the government to use price freeze and price ceilings as immediate remedial tools to suppress price gouging, it should not be overlooked that these are not the only tools available in its arsenal. In fact, there are more potent measures that the government can deploy to suppress the more injurious types of price gouging—the kinds committed by cartels, and those practiced by dominant firms and businesses.

The Philippine Competition Act (PCA) offers alternatives, and perhaps even more appropriate remedies to suppress post-disaster price surges. Admittedly, anti-price gouging measures like price freeze and price ceilings are attractive to deploy because these are very visible tools. However, implementing price freezes and price ceilings can be administratively difficult, given the resources needed to enforce it effectively. Worse, it may actually be counter-productive in the long run because these interventions may in fact distort competition in the market. It is argued that allowing post-disaster price increases will result to increase in production (to meet demand), incentivize outside firms to bring in additional supply (because of attractive prices), promote efficient use of in-demand products, and even encourage businesses to stockpile supplies in anticipation of impending natural disasters. Capping prices may produce the reverse results, and even lead to rationing and long queuing.

I even hazard to argue that the PCA offer better tools to address price gouging than price freeze and/or price ceilings because the former is geared towards eliminating anti-competitive conducts and restore market efficiency. Sections 14 and 15 of the PCA, which deals with anti-competitive agreements and abuse of dominance can be better employed as they do not adversely affect, rather aid in, the proper functioning of the market.

Comm. Emerson B. Aquende is the newest member of the Philippine Competition Commission. Before joining the PCC on March 5, 2020, he headed the Legal Education Board, the government agency regulating legal education in the country. He has gained experience in insurance and finance as board director in the United Coconut Planters Life Assurance Corp., UCPB General Insurance Co., Inc., and its various subsidiaries. He practiced law as a litigation attorney, and has accumulated more than 22 years in the academe, 14 years of which as the law dean of the University of Santo Tomas-Legazpi. He currently teaches law in the University of the Philippines College of Law.



Davao City equips “Bantay Dagat” to speed up garbage collection

By Che Palicte December 8, 2020, 4:37 pm



DAVAO CITY - As a support to this city's Bantay Dagat volunteers, the local government has purchased an Offshore Garbage Collector to accelerate waste collection in the city's rivers, creeks, and canal outfall, the City Information Office said Tuesday.

Paul Bermejo, head of the Ancillary Services Unit (ASU), said the equipment can accommodate up to eight cubic meters of garbage.

The newly-purchased Offshore Garbage Collector costs around PHP4 million – funded through a project by the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (DRRMO).

Bermejo said the new equipment will help collect floating garbage, which cannot be easily reached by ASU and Bantay Dagat volunteers.

He said the equipment has a conveyor that lifts the garbage to the area where the garbage is collected.

“This will collect floating debris or garbage that came from the upstream, and discharged through the outfall towards the sea,” he said.

Bantay Dagat is a city government project wherein volunteers from the community are deputized to guard and conduct clean-up drives in the city's coasts and shoreline every Saturday morning. It started operations in August 2017, with 333 volunteers.

Relatively, Bermejo, has called on the Dabawenyos to be responsible in disposing their garbage and to cooperate in the city's efforts to keep coasts and shorelines clean and garbage-free.

“We won't need that (the Offshore Garbage Collector) if all of us will cooperate and avoid throwing garbage in our canals so that they won't be washed to our sea. I hope we educate and discipline ourselves on proper waste disposal,” he added. (PNA)



Davao City equips “Bantay Dagat” to speed up garbage collection

December 8, 2020 2 min read

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Share:

Source: https://maharlika.tv/2020/12/08/davao-city-equips-bantay-dagat-to-speed-up-garbage-collection/?fbclid=IwAR0RoZ_oART3IWEiQSR4YHFaqEgXdzisz5iHJDSpeYwK5n8SR0ZB C5DIFcg



OceanaGold soars on Philippine's move to reopen Didipio

Cecilia Jamasmie | December 7, 2020 | 7:16 am [Markets](#) [News Asia](#) [Australia NZ](#) [South Pacific](#) [Gold](#)



Didipio mine is located 270 km north of Manila. (Image courtesy of [OceanaGold Corp.](#))

OceanaGold (TSX, ASX: OGC) closed 32% higher on the Australian Stock Exchange on Monday after announcing that the Philippine government is moving forward to finalize a long-delayed renewal of an agreement governing the company's Didipio gold-copper underground mine.

Philippines president Rodrigo Duterte has instructed the nation's Department of Environment and Natural Resources to work with OceanaGold and the Department of Finance on a new Financial for Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA), the company said.

OceanaGold kicked off the renewal of the 25-year permit in 2018. After it expired in June 2019 the company kept Didipio operating under a temporary license, but a blockade backed by the local government forced the Brisbane-based miner to suspend operations a few weeks later.

The FTAA's renewal has been slowed down by the covid-19 pandemic, claims that Didipio had been operating outside the Indigenous Peoples's Rights Act, and the Bugkalot tribe had been seeking to expand its domain over parts of the FTAA area.

Slow, steady progress

The mid-tier gold producer recently received a "certification of non-overlap", which states the FTAA area is outside the ancestral domain of local indigenous communities.

OceanaGold said the document proves it has "strong endorsement of the residents in the local communities in and around the Didipio mine, including indigenous peoples."

It is understood that around 75% of the mine's 1,500- workforce has been permanently laid off since June 2019, with 900 let go between October and November.

OceanaGold warned earlier this year it could take up to 12 months to restart the mine from care and maintenance.

The company has overcome conflict with the Philippines government in the past, including a 2017 plan by former environment and natural resources secretary Regina Lopez to suspend several mining operations in the country.

Didipio, which began production in 2013, has measured and indicated resources of 1.3 million ounces of gold and 160,000 tonnes of copper.



Other than Didipio, OceanGold has three more mines — Haile in the United States, and Macraes and Waihi in New Zealand.

The miner's shares closed at A\$2.50 in Sydney on Monday and were trading 36% higher in Toronto on Monday at C\$2.40 apiece, valuing it at C\$1.68 billion (\$1.32bn).



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Motorists pass by a mural painted on the side of the Buendia Flyover along Roxas Boulevard in Pasay City on Sunday night which is a tribute to all frontliners and their unwavering dedication in the fight against the pandemic.

The STAR/Miguel de Guzman

COVID-19 tally in Philippines rises to 442,785 with 1,400 new cases

[Gaea Katreena Cabico](#) (Philstar.com) - December 8, 2020 - 4:00pm

MANILA, Philippines — The total number of coronavirus infections in the Philippines reached 442,785 Tuesday after the Department of Health registered 1,400 new cases.

With 101 additional cases, Benguet reported the biggest increase. It was followed by Davao City with 90, Quezon City with 82, Rizal with 75 and Laguna with 56.

Tuesday's tally did not include data from nine testing laboratories that failed to submit their results on time.

Recoveries reached 408,790 after 139 more people were given a clean bill of health.

But fatalities due to the respiratory disease increased to 8,670, up by 98 from the previous count

Of the 25,325 active cases, 84.8% exhibit mild symptoms, 6.6% are asymptomatic, 5.5% are in critical condition, 2.8% are severe cases and 0.32% have moderate symptoms.

In a televised speech Monday evening, President Rodrigo Duterte urged the public to skip Christmas festivities this year to prevent the further transmission of COVID-19.

“We are saying sorry that there will be a curtailment of so many things that you have been used to during Christmas time. Look at it this way, all of the Christmas of your lifetime, this is the only time the government is asking something from you. This is for you, not for the government,” Duterte said.

The health department has repeatedly asked Filipinos to continue following health protocols such as wearing of face masks and face shields, physical distancing and proper handwashing to prevent the spread of the infection, especially during the holiday season.

Globally, the new coronavirus has infected nearly 67.6 million individuals, with over 1.5 million deaths.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/12/08/2062354/covid-19-tally-philippines-rises-442785-1400-new-cases>



COVID-19 testing ilibre - Duterte

By [Malou Escudero](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon) - December 9, 2020 - 12:00am



Sinabi ni President Rodrigo Duterte na inatasan na niya sina Health Secretary Francisco Duque III at vaccine czar at coronavirus chief implementer Carlito Galvez, Jr., na tingnan kung paano magkakaroon ng murang swabbing at testing.
Andy Zapata Jr.

MANILA, Philippines — Nais ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na magkaroon ng libreng COVID-19 swab testing sa mga testing facilities na pinapatakbo ng gobyerno.

Ayon sa Pangulo, nakita na niya ang kahalagahan ng testing lalo na ang swabbing bagaman at mahal ang presyo nito.

Sinabi ni Duterte na inatasan na niya sina Health Secretary Francisco Duque III at vaccine czar at coronavirus chief implementer Carlito Galvez, Jr., na tingnan kung paano magkakaroon ng murang swabbing at testing.

Ipinunto rin ng Pangulo na problema ang mga walang sintomas dahil naikakalat nila ang virus.

Sinabi pa ni Duterte na problema sa mga mahihirap kabilang na ng mga estudyante ang pagpapa-swab test sa mga paliparan.

Kung nais aniya ng gobyerno na malimitahan ang virus, dapat ay may paraan para maiwasan ang pagkalat nito katulad ng swabbing.

Kamakailan ay itinakda ng gobyerno sa P3,800 ang presyo ng swab test sa mga public facilities at P4,500 hanggang P5,000 sa mga pribadong laboratoryo.

Samantala, tiniyak ni Pangulong Duterte na walang opisyal ng gobyerno ang magkakaroon ng kickback sa pagbili ng bilyon-bilyong pisong halaga ng COVID-19 vaccine.

Ayon kay Duterte, mangangailangan ng P73 bilyon para mabakunahan ang mga Filipino at tiwala siyang magiging malinis ang transaksyon at hindi pagkakakitaan ang pagbili ng bakuna.



Duterte urges public to skip Christmas festivities

[Alexis Romero](#) (Philstar.com) - December 8, 2020 - 1:56pm

MANILA, Philippines — President Rodrigo Duterte has urged Filipinos to skip Christmas festivities this year to prevent the further spread of COVID-19, which has infected thousands of people in the country and has forced the government to spend billions in aid.

Duterte admitted that the pandemic has dampened the celebration of Christmas but maintained that restrictions should be implemented to protect public health.

"As early as now, we are saying sorry that there will be a curtailment of so many things that you have been used to during Christmas time. Look at it this way, all of the Christmas of your lifetime, this is the only time the government will ask something from you. This is for you, not for the government," the president said during a televised public address last Monday.

"So many parties, almost in your adult and younger years, you had parties every Christmas. Would you be kind enough just to skip the - not really frivolous but the festivities, avoid them for now. You avoid it because it is for your own good and for the good of the community and eventually for the good of the country," he added.

Duterte reminded the public that following health protocols increases one's chance of avoiding the virus. He said dying from the virus could be a "painful and a horrible last experience" because it destroys one's body.

"You might think that this is too much. Government does not control us. Of course, we cannot control you individually if what you do is what you want. The problem is we are preventing you from getting other people sick," the President said.

"You have had so many Christmas blowouts and parties. This is one Christmas, the only Christmas maybe that government will interfere in your private affairs," he added.

The 75-year-old Duterte said he is limiting his engagements outside Malacañang as a precautionary measure.

"But at times, I am forced to go out if there is a serious problem outside," he said.

Duterte also saluted the country's medical frontliners and urged them to continue taking care of the sick.

Total firecracker ban

At the same address, Duterte said he is considering imposing a total ban on firecrackers next year. Duterte, who imposed the ban in Davao City as mayor, said firecrackers pose risks to public safety and health since they cause injuries.

"You know, to tell you the truth, I was toying with the idea of making it just like Davao," the president said.



"Maybe, since we are still here, you still have one year...Maybe next December, I will ban firecrackers. It is really a dangerous thing and for reasons of public safety and health. So, I am putting you on a warning that maybe mid-year, I will issue the necessary document...totally banning firecrackers," he added.

Duterte claimed nobody dies or sustains injuries during holiday revelries in Davao City.

In 2017, Duterte issued Executive Order no. 28 limiting the use of firecrackers to community firework displays.

PH can meet expected surge in demand for VCO after promising test results vs COVID-19

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Dec 08 2020 05:51 PM



MANILA - The Philippines has more than enough supply of virgin coconut oil (VCO) for the expected 20 percent demand surge by next year, an industry group said.

The Philippines saw an increase in VCO demand this year as the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) earlier showed test results of VCO easing symptoms of probable COVID-19 cases in as early as the second day of testing.

As of last year, only 30 percent of the 73,000 metric tons VCO production capacity of the country were utilized, said the United Coconut Associations of the Philippines (UCAP) and VCO Philippines.

"Local sales and export of VCO notched north of 20,000 metric tons in 2019. The current local market consumes about 470 metric tons of VCO as of 2019 data," it said.

Both groups are encouraging the Department of Health (DOH) to support and promote VCO as a natural COVID-19 remedy.

"Coconut oils and the inherent medium-chain triglyceride (MCT) properties in it have long been recognized for their antiviral action. Many who tested COVID-19 positive have recovered rapidly by incorporating coconut oil into their daily diet while those who are taking it as a supplement have seen their immunity strengthened," UCAP Executive Director Yvonne Agustin said.

The DOST and Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI) earlier tested 58 probable and suspected COVID-19 cases in Sta. Rosa Laguna, under a 28-day trial.

Half of the patients who ingested VCO with their meals noted significant reduction in inflammation in as early as the second day of tests, compared to the other half who were not given VCO.

Source: https://news.abs-cbn.com/business/12/08/20/ph-can-meet-expected-surge-in-demand-for-vco-after-promising-test-results-vs-covid-19?fbclid=IwAR26CSev0qJStCQrAqJsf9P4hpThN_Jlq_DrCuVuo281opPh4nAj216DJs



Christmas with the coronavirus

[INTROSPECTIVE](#) - [Tony F. Katigbak](#) (The Philippine Star) - December 9, 2020 - 12:00am

December came quickly. That was something I noticed the other day because for a long time it felt like the days were going by so slowly. Then suddenly, the Christmas season was upon us and everything began to speed up. I suppose that this type of thing happens every year, but this year it feels quite different.

Back when lockdowns first began and we were just on the cusp of learning what living with COVID-19 would be like, we all looked ahead to the “end of the year.” I’m not quite sure why we pegged that as the time to look forward to. I think back then we had hoped that by year’s end we would have already found a vaccine, a cure, or that COVID would have just disappeared and that we would enter 2021 from a better and safer place.

Unfortunately, now that we are here, it doesn’t look like any of those things are poised to happen in the weeks ahead. While there are vaccines that are very close to being available, we are not going to get them in time to end the year with any type of mass inoculation. A cure is still nowhere to be found, and instead of loosening its grip, COVID continues to get worse.

It’s a bit disheartening that we have come all this way – almost 10 months – and have made minimal progress in terms of COVID response and making the necessary safety adjustments needed to deal with the disease. We spent a lot of time waiting for the vaccine and very little working on other solutions. I guess you could say we put our eggs in one proverbial basket and crossed our fingers that the vaccine would come sooner rather than later.

I feel that we should have invested more time, manpower, and even infrastructure to implementing better safety protocols. Doing so would have helped Filipinos live safely while waiting for a viable vaccine. While all businesses have done their best to include COVID-ready facilities – social distance markings, face mask/shield requirements, and etc – strict implementation is still lacking.

I have remained home strictly throughout the quarantine. With health concerns that I can’t ignore I have had to rely on my family to venture outside for our essentials. Initially, people were being careful. However, as more time passed, quarantine fatigue set in and people began to become lax in safety protocols. This is scary because the virus hasn’t lessened or weakened. If anything, it’s gaining momentum. In many parts of the world, it’s spiking drastically again even worse than the first wave.

At the grocery, my daughter has noted numerous times that people, despite wearing masks and shields, are not or cannot maintain the proper social distance. Lines see people one foot away (if at all) and most just take this for granted and think that it’ll be fine because they have a mask on. She has had to remind people, more than once, to not be too close.

We all need to remember that these guidelines were put in place to protect us and not to make things harder for no reason. It’s completely understandable to get tired after all this time, but it’s usually when this happens that we let our guard down and our numbers spike promoting another potential lockdown. That is something I honestly don’t think that many of our countrymen would be able to handle.

Another thing I think would have helped immensely is if we had invested in readily accessible and reliable testing. The slow process of tests and the fact that they are cost prohibitive are keeping people from getting tested and this is also aiding in virus spread. If we had found solid options and worked out a sustainable access program, then more people could be tested and this would make a dent in the virus spread.



This holiday season is really unlike any other. With so many people sick and losing jobs, and businesses closing down, it's hard to be merry and difficult to find things to look forward to. But we shouldn't let feeling down be an excuse not to remain vigilant. The only way we are going to get through this is if we all do it together.

So as Christmas approaches, I hope everyone strives to follow COVID safety guidelines. Keep any meetings outdoors with good ventilation, wear masks and shields, and keep gatherings short and below 10 people each. I know it sounds sad and not fun but we've all shown how creative we can be in the past several months when it comes to spending time with people we love. I trust we can find ways to do it again.

And we just have to keep it up until we have access to a vaccine, which is hopefully forthcoming. While I appreciate the speed with which pharmaceutical companies are trying to push it out, I also appreciate the stringent safety protocols these vaccines have to go through to ensure their safety. It's always better to be safe, and if that means waiting just a little bit longer, that's a small price to pay.

Once the vaccine becomes available, I can only hope the government exercises proper discernment and opts for the safest viable option. Until then, we need to remember that COVID hasn't gone anywhere and we still need to do our part to stay safe and protect our families and communities.



MAGKAISA, KUMILOS LABAN SA PANDEMYA AT KORAPSYON



December 9, 2020 @ 12:25 AM 7 hours ago

MARAMING nagaganap sa mga araw na ito.

Mula sa coronavirus disease 2019 o COVID-19 hanggang sa iba pang mga larangan gaya ng pulitika at ekonomiya ng bansa.

Nakikini-kinita natin ang paggaan ng ating pambansang kalagayan sa susunod na mga buwan at isang susi rito ang matagumpay na pakikibaka natin laban sa pandemya.

Pero paano?

UNANG PAGBAKUNA NAGANAP NA

Ginanap sa United Kingdom ang kauna-unahang pagbabakuna sa labas ng mga clinical trial.

'Yun bang === tinurukan si Margaret Keenan, 90- anyos, ng bakuna na bahagi na ng bakunang napatunayang epektibo laban sa COVID-19 at walang masamang epekto sa tao.

Susundan ito sa susunod na linggo ng maramihan nang pagbabakuna sa nasabing bansa.

Kaugnay nito, sinimulan na rin sa Russia ang maramihang pagbabakuna gamit ang kanilang Sputnik V at ginagawa na ito sa Moscow City pa lamang.

Nauna rito, sa China, iniuulat na may isang milyon nang naturukan sa mga sariling-gawa nilang bakuna.

At daan-daang libo na ang nagpaparehistro para magpabakuna sa iba't ibang lugar.

Napakalaki ang tiwala nila sa sarili nilang gawa at sa sarili nilang pamahalaan na sila'y protektahan mula sa pandemya.

KAILAN DARATING SA PINAS?

Sinasabi mismo ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na handa na ang mahal kong Pinas sa pagbili ng bakuna at may pondo nang nasa P70 bilyon para rito.

Ang sabi ng Department of Health, may mga daraan sa clinical trial na bakuna bago sila pupwedeng gamitin sa mga Filipino, kung akma ang mga ito sa katawan natin.



Pero kung talagang epektibo at ligtas ang bakuna, maaaring aabot lang ng maigsiing panahon para mapag-aralan at mailapat o maiturok ito sa mga Pinoy.

Ang problema nga lang, kailan darating ang mga bakuna dahil pinapakyaw na ng mayayamang bansa ang mga bakuna?

Gumagawa naman ng paraan ang World Health Organization at inilalakad mismo ni Pangulong Duterte na walang dapat maiwanan sa pagbabakuna, mayaman man o mahirap na bansa na katulad natin.

Subalit mananatili ang katanungan kung kailan may darating sa bansa na bakuna.

MAGAGANDANG ALOK

Nag-alok ang bansang China ng libreng bakuna para sa Pilipinas na ilang milyong dosage at kung magiging matagumpay ang clinical trial ng mga kompanya nito sa atin, ibibigay sa atin ang teknolohiya at tayo na mismo ang gagawa ng bakuna.

Parehas lang ito sa alok ng China sa ibang mga bansa na roon ginagawa ang mga clinical trial gaya sa Brazil.

Ang Russia, nag-alok ding magtayo ng pabrika ng bakuna sa atin ngunit wala tayong gaanong balita rito.

Ang mahalaga, walang ganitong alok ang ibang mga bansa o banyagang kompanya ng gamot at nanatili sa kanila ang kaisipang pag-aari nila ang kanilang nagawa at ginagawa nilang negosyo o pagkakakitaan.

Itong mga kompanyang ito ang walang pakialam kung magkandamatay-matay ang mga tao sa isang bansa kung wala silang pambili ng bakuna.

Simple lang ang prinsipyo ng mga ito: Walang tubo, walang bakuna.

BIGLANG BAGSAK ANG PRODUKSYON

Medyo kakabahan ka kung mabalitaan mong bagsak ang produksyon ng bakuna.

Ibinalita mismo ng Wall Street Journal na nakabase sa Amerika na hindi nakayanang isagawa ng Pfizer/bioNTech ang plano nitong gumawa ng 100 milyong dosage ng bakuna sa katapusan ng taong ito.

Wala umanong sapat na suplay ng hilaw na materyales at hindi pumasa sa kalidad ang iba sa mga ito.

Paano kung mangyayari ito sa ibang bakuna na ginagawa ng ibang mga kompanya?

Kaya, muling katanungan kung kailan may makararating na bakuna sa Pilipinas.

MAGANDANG BALITA

Mismo sa bibig ni Pang. Rodrigo Duterte nanggaling ang paghahanap ng pamahalaan ng mapagkukunan ng pondo para maging libre na ang swab testing sa Pilipinas.

Sa kasalukuyan, binibili mula sa mga dayuhang bansa ang halos lahat ng mga gamit sa swab test at napakamahal.



Sa mga pribadong testing center, nagkakahalaga ng P4,000 hanggang P5,000-P6,000 ang swab test samantalang nasa P3,800 sa mga testing center ng gobyerno.

Eh, gaano kadalas tinetesting ang mga mamamayan habang naghahanapbuhay?

Ayon sa mga negosyante sa buy and sell na bumibiyahe sa iba't ibang lugar, anak ng tokwa, linggo-linggo silang nagpapa-swab test at sumasakit na ang ilong at lalamunan nila sa kadudutdot ng mga nurse.

Ang mga obrero na nag-aaplay ng trabaho, kailangan din nilang magpa-swab test pero kapag nakapasok na sila, sila na mismo ang babalik at sa gastusing ito.

Napakabigat ang gastusin dito ng mga mamamayan.

TEST KAILANGAN NA KAILANGAN

Kailangan na kailangan ang test upang matukoy ang may COVID-19, maihiwalay kaagad, mailagay sa kwarantana at hindi maihalo at makahawa sa iba.

Kung magagawa ito, magiging epektibo ang laban sa pandemya at makakilos ang mga malusog na mamamayan na maghanapbuhay, magtrabaho, magnegosyo at magsilbi sa pamahalaan at sa mamamayan.

Dito makababangon sa pagdarahop ang maraming mamamayan at makababangon din ang pamahalaan sa bagsak nitong kalagayan upang tuloy-tuloy nitong mapagsilbihin at maprotektahan ang mga mamamayan sa gitna ng pandemya at iba pang hindi kanais-nais na kalagayan.

TAMANG PANAHOON AT PONDO PARA SA PAGBANGON

Sa araw na ito, ibibigay na umano ng Kamara at Senado ang nabuo nilang pambansang badyet para mapag-aralan ng Pangulo at pirmahan ang dapat pirmahan.

Hindi na mauulit ang pagkabalang ng pondong pampamahalaan na dahilan ng pagkabalaho ng pamahalaan sa pagsasagawa nito sa tamang panahon ng mga programa at proyektong kailangan ng mga mamamayan.

Kung magaganap ang pag-apruba at pagpirma ni Pang. Duterte sa badyet na maaaring mahaluan ng pag-veto sa mga peperahin lang ng iba, agad na may magagastos ang pamahalaan simula sa unang araw ng taong 2021.

Kung walang magaganap na korapsyon at pandarambong sa pakakawalang mga pondo sa mga programa o proyekto mula sa nasyunal na pamahalaan hanggang sa mga local government unit, magaganap ang panimula ng pagbangon ng ating bayan sa pagkakalugmok.

Economic recovery o pagbangon ng ekonomiya ang pangunahing punto ng pambansang badyet kaya dapat pagtulong-tulungan nating lahat na gamitin ang badyet na malaya sa kuko ng mga korap at mandarambong.

Marami tayong paraan, kahit sa hanay ng mga mamamayan, upang matulungan natin ang pamahalaan na linisin ang bakuran nito mula sa kamay ng mga korap at mandarambong at upang bawat sentimo ng ating buwis ay mga mamamayan ang makinabang.



Nariryan, halimbawa ang numerong 8888 na pwede nating tawagan o hatiran ng text message na tiyak na makararating mismo sa tanggapan ng Pangulo.

NALALAPIT NA HALALAN

Kung titingnan ninyo ang kalendaryo ng pulitika, mga Bro, malapit nang ganapin muli ang halalang presidensyal — sa taong 2022.

Isang taon at anim na buwan na lamang.

Kaya naman, galaw na nang galaw ang mga politiko, lalo na ang mga may gustong pumalaot sa mga pambansang posisyon gaya ng Pangulo, Pangalawang Pangulo, senador at kongresman, kasama na ang mga partylist.

Para sa mga nakaupo, mga Bro, ‘yang pondong pamahalaan o salaping bayan ang pinag-iinitan nilang kupitan nang husto dahil milyon-milyon at bilyon-bilyong halaga ang mga programa at proyektong ipinapaloob dito.

Ang mga hindi nakaupo, may mga umaasa ring maaambunan ng salaping bayan mula sa maniobra ng mga korap at mandarambong.

Kaya naman, may banta sa pambansang badyet at sa susunod o 2022 na pambansang badyet.

‘Yung bang === may magnanakaw at magnanakaw sa salaping bayan.

Ito ang mga dapat nating bantayan upang magamit ang salaping bayan sa dapat paggamitan nito gaya ng laban natin sa pandemya at pagbangon nating lahat mula sa pagkakalugmok.



PAGASA: Easterlies could cause flooding, landslides in Aurora

posted December 08, 2020 at 11:30 pm

by [Rio N. Araja](#)

The residents of Aurora province should brace for possible flooding and landslides due to the rain caused by the easterlies, the weather bureau said Tuesday.

The province's soil may already be saturated due to previous rainfalls, said Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration hydrologist Rosalie Pagulayan. "There's big chance for flooding in Aurora," she said.

But she said the spilling operations in Ambuklao Dam may not resume anytime soon as it could still accommodate water from the expected light rain.

She said the dam stopped spilling operations midnight Monday.

"If there's no big weather system that can bring much rain over Ambuklao's watershed, that dam will not yet open its gate to release excess water again," Pagulayan said.

She says Aurora's saturated soil can hardly further absorb water, thus increasing the chance of flooding. She says such soil is already soft so it can easily dislodge during rainfall, resulting in landslides.

PAGASA reminded people, particularly those living near the mountain slopes in Aurora, to remain alert about possible rain-induced landslides in their areas.

On Tuesday, PAGASA forecast light to moderate rain and thunderstorms in the province.

"A number of the expected thunderstorms can be severe enough to bring rain that may cause some waterways in Aurora to overflow and flood nearby communities," Pagulayan said.

The rivers and tributaries at risk for overflowing include Casiguran, Aguang and Lower Umiray, PAGASA said.



Magnitude 5.4 quake jolts Bicol, Eastern Visayas

[Helen Flores](#), [Cet Dematera](#) (The Philippine Star - December 9, 2020 - 12:00am)

MANILA, Philippines — A magnitude 5.4 earthquake rattled parts of Bicol and Eastern Visayas on Monday night.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said the temblor struck 35 kilometers northeast of Prieto Diaz town in Sorsogon at about 10:37 p.m.

Phivolcs said the quake was not expected to cause damage, but warned the public of aftershocks.

The quake was felt at Intensity 5, which is classified as strong, in Sorsogon City.

It was felt at Intensity 4 or moderately strong in Bulusan, Castilla and Sta. Magdalena in Sorsogon; Virac, Catanduanes; Naga City; Allen, Biri, Bobob, Catarman, Laoang, Lavezares and Mondragon in Northern Samar, and Legazpi City in Albay.

The quake was felt at Intensity 3 in Irosin, Sorsogon; Calbayog City, Catbalogan City and Jiabong in Samar; Mapanas and Palapag in Northern Samar; Borongan City, Dolores, Llorente, Maydolong, Oras and Taft in Eastern Samar, and Panganiban, Catanduanes.

The temblor was felt at Intensity 2 in General MacArthur and Hernani, Eastern Samar; Palo, Alangalang, Babatngon, Calubian, Dagami and Tacloban City in Leyte; Naval, Biliran, and Masbate City.

An initial Phivolcs advisory that the magnitude of the quake was 6.4 triggered panic among residents in affected areas.

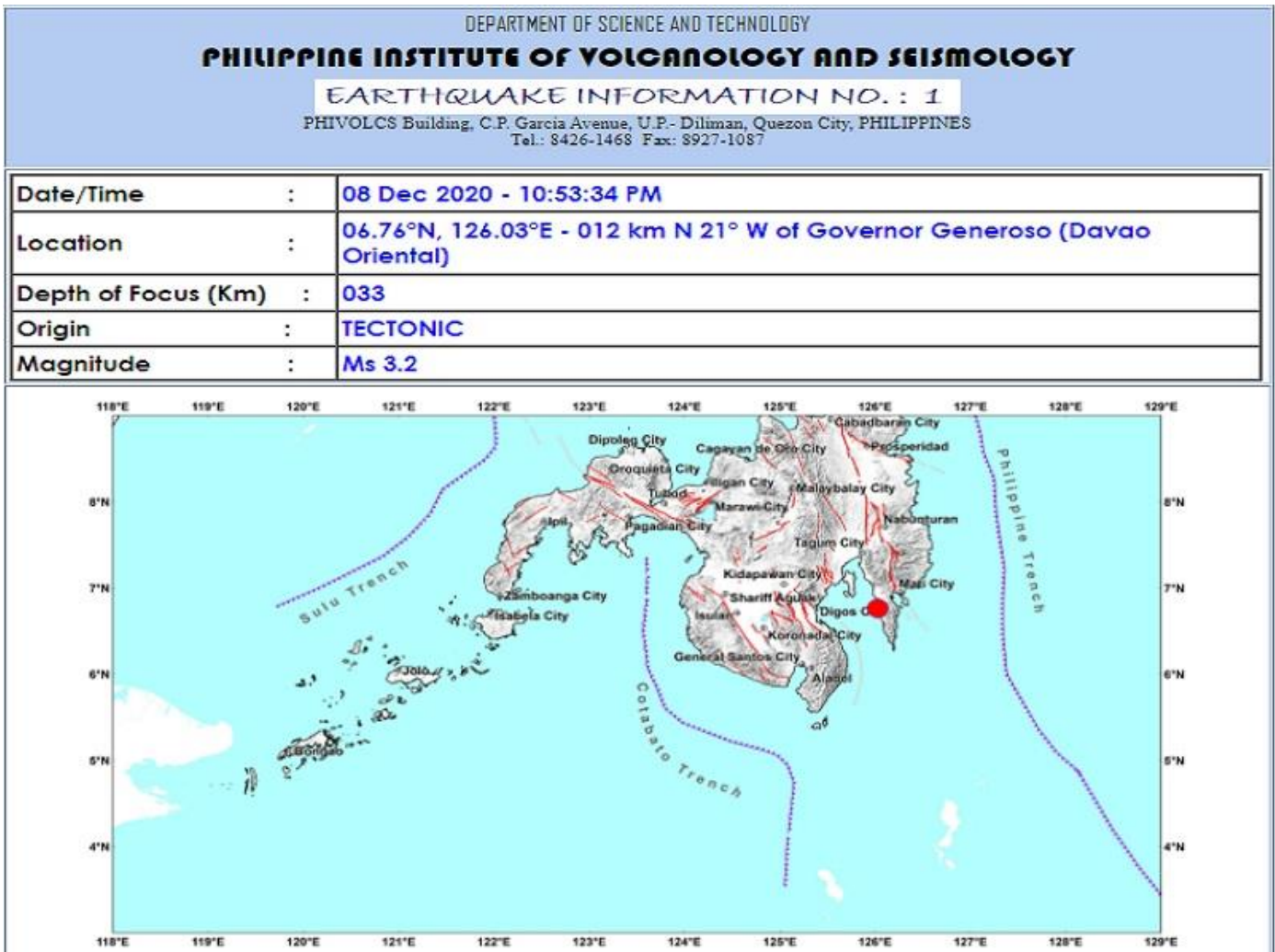
Phivolcs-Bicol resident chief Paul Alanis said it was the first computation produced by their instruments.

Alanis said the magnitude was revised in their next bulletin after more data arrived.



Governor Generoso, Davao Oriental niyanig ng magnitude 3.2 na lindol

By Mary Rose Cabrales December 08, 2020 - 11:06 PM



Niyanig ng magnitude 3.2 na lindol ang lalawigan ng Davao Oriental.

Ayon sa Phivolcs, naitala ang pagyanig sa 12 kilometers nortwest ng bayan ng Governor Generoso, alas-10:53 gabi ng Martes (December 8).

May lalim na 33 kilometers at tectonic ang origin ng pagyanig.

Wala namang naitalang pagkasira ng mga ari-arian, intensities at aftershocks bunsod ng pagyanig.



Post-pandemic stimulus aid brings climate risks

posted December 08, 2020 at 01:00 pm

by [AFP and Catherine Hours](#)

Enormous stimulus packages to boost post-pandemic growth could worsen global warming with huge investments in fossil fuel activities, an international group of researchers has warned.

Around \$12.8 trillion has been pledged to help companies and households recover from the worldwide crisis, with the G20 group of advanced economies accounting for about \$11 trillion of that figure.

That is roughly three times more than what was promised following the global economic crisis in 2008. "This large-scale stimulus spending will shape the global economy for decades to come," according to the Energy Policy Tracker, a group of institutes that compiles data on post-Covid public finance for energy.

"These decisions could trigger unbearable climate disasters or create a resilient and safe economy powered by clean energy," the group said.

The project's partners include Columbia University in New York, the Stockholm Environment Institute, The International Institute for Sustainable Development, and I4CE (Institute for Climate Economics).

They calculate that G20 countries have announced at least \$234 billion in public funding of fossil fuel operations, and \$151 billion in renewable energy.

Other issues that complicate matters include regulatory, fiscal and monetary measures that can contradict each other.

In Canada, for example, money is to be allocated for electric vehicle charging stations and also to support oil companies.

Germany plans to invest one billion euros (\$1.2 billion) in electric vehicles and just as much to renovate diesel-burning lorries.

India has unveiled support for coal and methanol projects along with funds for electric vehicles.

Vivid Economics, an advisory group, has studied 23 economic stimulus plans.

Only five countries or regions presented plans that had positive effects for the climate in its view -- Britain, the European Union, France, Germany, and Spain.

One-third of the EU's unprecedented 750-billion-euro stimulus plan is slated to go to environmental projects.

"Most countries are not seizing opportunities for climate friendly-recovery," said Joel Jaeger, a researcher at the World Resources Institute (WRI).

"More support is going to high-carbon activities than to low-carbon activities."

A prime example is support for airlines, as the International Energy Agency notes that only four out of 30 carriers that are to receive aid must meet environmental conditions.

The IEA called that "a missed opportunity".

Climate dynamics

The United Nations has also voiced concern, notably in the Production Gap Report issued by its environment programme UNEP.

"Government responses to the COVID-19 crisis have tended to intensify patterns that existed prior to the pandemic," the report noted.

"Jurisdictions that already heavily subsidized the production of fossil fuels have increased this support, while those with stronger commitments to a transition to clean energy are now using stimulus and recovery packages to accelerate this shift."



The US administration of President Donald Trump has allocated around \$70 billion to fossil fuel activities, the policy tracker says.

That said, crumbling public transport is also tipped to receive \$26 billion in aid.

But of a total \$3 trillion in spending, just one percent is for environmental operations, the WRI says.

There is nonetheless some hope, as the world's second biggest emitter of greenhouse gases is now mulling a new plan.

President-elect Joe Biden has pledged to spend \$2 trillion over four years on low-carbon infrastructure, for example.

"What Biden will do depends on Congress," where the balance of power depends on the result of elections for two senators from Georgia in January, Jaeger said.

Biden will also have some direct say over reforms such as new vehicle emissions standards.

No place for coal

Meanwhile, China, the world's top emitter of greenhouse gases, approved construction of 17 gigawatts of coal-powered generating stations in the first half of this year, more than in 2018 and 2019 combined, according to the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air (CREA).

Based on official US figures, that would be the rough equivalent of 7,000 utility-scale wind turbines.

"Coal should have no place in any rational recovery plan," UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres told Chinese university students in July.

China has pledged to achieve net zero carbon dioxide emissions by 2060.

Jaeger said that a five-year plan due out in 2021 would give a better idea of where China is headed, and also wants to study India's next annual budget.

"There's still time for governments to change or adjust," he said. "We have more momentum for climate action than we had in years" owing to the US presidential election, plans for carbon neutrality from Japan and South Korea, and a boom in renewable energy.

Michel Fredeau, an energy specialist at the Boston Consulting Group (BCG), said continued reliance on fossil fuels was "a short-term reaction to a global event", and underscored progress made since the Paris Agreement on climate change.

"We cannot invest more to do the same thing," Fredeau said.

Investors have gotten the message and are bringing pressure to deal with the risks, he said.

"Companies are aware of the need to move towards a sustainable model. And states will necessarily be influenced, because they know that their future economies will depend on it."



In this file photo taken on October 27, 2020 Firefighters look out over a burning hillside as they fight the Blue Ridge Fire in Yorba Linda, California, October 26, 2020.

AFP/Robyn Beck

Since Paris deal, climate catastrophes mount

(Agence France-Presse) - December 8, 2020 - 2:24pm

PARIS, France — Record-smashing Antarctic heatwaves, melting glaciers, wave after wave of drought and wildfire, and an unending string of megastorms: since the 2015 Paris deal the deadly effects of climate change have been ever more visible.

"The world has changed since Paris. It has changed for the worst," said Saleemul Huq, from the International Center for Climate Change and Development (ICCCAD) at the Independent University of Bangladesh.

"We're seeing right now the impacts of attributable human induced climate change."

Hotter and hotter

The five hottest years on record have all come since 2015; the World Meteorological Organization said last week 2020 was set to be among the three hottest years in history.

2016 remains the warmest year recorded, with temperatures 1.2C hotter than the historic average. (The Paris accord aims to limit warming to "well below" 2C and to 1.5C if possible).

2020 will make the hottest years list despite it being a year with the La Nina cooling weather phenomenon.

In 2019 most of Europe sweltered in a record-shattering heatwave.

Last June temperatures in the town of Verkhoyansk in Siberia topped 38C; in February researchers recorded a temperature of 20.75C in west Antarctica -- both would be record highs.

Ice melts, seas rise

Such temperature anomalies are disproportionately affecting the poles of our planet.

In October, scientists registered the lowest Arctic sea ice extent ever, and multiple studies have shown how the Greenland ice sheets are melting at unprecedented rates.

The melted ice from glaciers raised global sea levels by 15 centimetres last century, according to UN experts. They warn as many as a billion people could have their way of life threatened by rising seas as soon as 2050.

Storm seasons

Higher and warmer seas mean more and stronger tropical storms.



"If you decrease the amount of Arctic sea ice you start warming up the Arctic and when you start warming up the Arctic you can start changing the circulation of the jet stream which brings weather to us," said Nathan Kurtz from Nasa's Goddard Space Centre.

Hurricanes and other cyclonic storms feed on warmer ocean water and while it is tricky to attribute a single weather event to global warming, the long-term trends are stark.

Each of the last five Atlantic hurricane seasons have seen above-average storm activity. For 2020, it was so intense that scientists ran out of Greek alphabet names for its 30 record storms.

Last year saw two cyclones ravage the coast of Mozambique, razing much of second city Beira, leaving more than 600 dead and hundreds of thousands homeless.

In 2017, much of South Asia and particularly Bangladesh was inundated with floodwaters dumped during a supercharged storm season.

Droughts, wildfires

At the other end of the weather spectrum, droughts are multiplying as temperatures continue their steady upwards march.

This has a profound impact on crop yields, as well as drinking water supply, as the nearly four million inhabitants of Cape Town discovered when the taps nearly ran dry in 2017 after three years of record drought.

The World Weather Attribution (WWA) service calculated that situations such as the threatened "day zero" in the South African metropolis were three times more likely due to climate change.

Long and large drought also creates the perfect, tinder-dry conditions of the mega blazes seen this year in eastern Australia, California and much of Siberia.

In Australia, the probability of intense fire seasons such as 2020's has increased 30 percent since 1990 due to warming, the WWA said.

In Siberia, fires are threatening the permafrost, which contains staggering levels of greenhouse gases.

Fires have also raged across the Amazon, mainly due to deforestation for agriculture. Scientists say more fires are likely due to climate change.

Food crises

Farming is a major source of greenhouse gas emission and its growing intensification of resource use threatens the global food chain.

Last year the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization warned that food production was "extremely sensitive" to climate change, which also threatens to reduce a major source of food as fish stocks diminish.



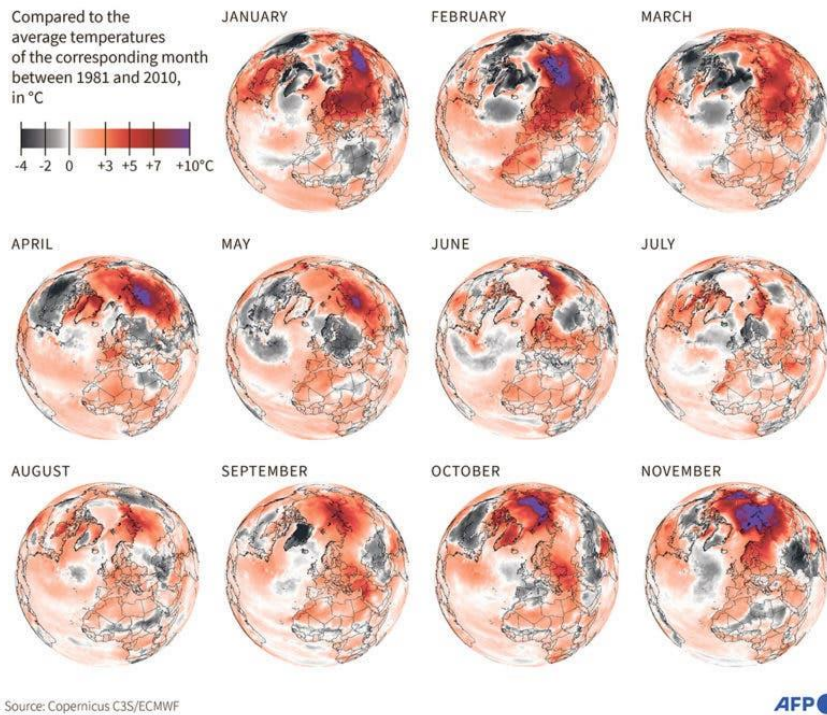
Climate catastrophes worsening – group

By [Agence France-Presse](#)

December 9, 2020

Record-smashing Antarctic heatwaves, melting glaciers, wave after wave of drought and wildfire and an unending string of megastorms: since the 2015 Paris deal the deadly effects of climate change have been ever more visible.

Temperature anomalies in 2020



Maps showing month-by-month temperature anomalies in 2020, centred on Europe and Siberia, which are particularly affected by global warming. / AFP / Simon Malfatto and Sabrina Blanchard

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Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/12/09/news/national/climate-catastrophes-worsening-group/807037/>

The Arctic is getting hotter, greener and less icy much faster than expected, report finds

By [Drew Kann](#), CNN

Updated 2018 GMT (0418 HKT) December 8, 2020



In this view from a passenger plane, melting glaciers are seen during a summer heat wave on Svalbard archipelago on July 28, 2020, near Longyearbyen, Norway.

(CNN) Bitterly cold, frozen and inhospitable to nearly all wildlife apart from polar bears.

This is the image of the Arctic that comes to mind for many.

But in a matter of decades -- a blink of an eye in the history of this planet -- human-caused global warming has transformed the Arctic into a place that scientists say is increasingly unrecognizable.

If the Arctic is a doctor's patient, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Arctic Report Card is its annual physical -- a comprehensive check-up on the health of this vast and important biome.

Today's Arctic is much hotter, greener and less icy than it was even just 15 years ago, when NOAA published its first Arctic Report Card.

And with near-record high surface temperatures and near-record low sea ice observed yet again, the [report card released Tuesday](#) paints a picture of a region that is warming rapidly, at a pace far outpacing scientists' expectations.

"We thought the changes would take a lot longer, and the models were saying they would," said James Overland, an oceanographer at NOAA's Pacific Marine Environmental Laboratory, who has been a part of all 15 Arctic Report Cards and co-authored the portion on surface air temperatures in this edition. "But the rate of change we've seen in the last 20 years -- and especially the last five years -- is beyond what we thought would happen."

Here's a look at the biggest changes observed in the Arctic this year, and what they mean for the rest of the planet.

Extreme heat and dwindling ice

Scientists say the Arctic is a bellwether for the global climate.

As the planet heats up due to human emissions of greenhouse gases, the effects of that warming are felt here first -- and foreshadow the changes to come in lower latitude climates.

"Further south in the US's lower 48, we can handle a change of a couple of degrees in air temperature," Overland said. "But the potential changes in the Arctic that are triple what we see at the mid-latitudes are going to completely change what the Arctic looks like, and that will feedback to the rest of the planet."

From shrinking sea ice and melting on Greenland's ice sheet, to permafrost thaw and even shifts in species distributions, many of the changes observed across the Arctic are being driven by increased air temperatures, Overland said.



Ice floes are shown in the Fram Strait between Greenland & Svalbard, the main gateway through which sea ice leaves the Arctic Ocean. Sea ice in the Arctic has been declining dramatically as the region warms.

The report found that the past year was yet another abnormally hot one in most of the region.

The period between October 2019 and September 2020 was the second-hottest year in the last century for the Arctic, with surface temperatures 1.9 degrees Celsius (3.42 degrees Fahrenheit) warmer than the 1981 to 2010 average. Only 2016 saw higher temperatures than this past year.

The [extreme warmth was especially pronounced in Siberia](#), which saw sweltering temperatures 3 to 5 degrees Celsius (5.4 to 9 degrees Fahrenheit) above average during winter and spring.

Since 2000, the Arctic has warmed more than twice as fast as the rest of the planet, the report says.

All of this extra heat has taken a toll on another critical part of the Arctic ecosystem -- its sea ice.

In addition to serving as a vital habitat for polar bears and walrus, the Arctic's sea ice is a key part of the planet's air-conditioning system, reflecting the sun's energy back into space and keeping temperatures around the North Pole cool.

But last year saw another near-record-low sea ice extent, another sign that this air conditioner is breaking down, scientists say.

Sea ice freezes in winter and melts during summer, and this year's summer minimum extent was the second-lowest ever observed in the 42-year satellite record, according to the report.

The trend of declines in the sea ice's winter maximum extent also continued this year, with March 2020's extent coming in as the 11th-lowest on record.

The 14 years from 2007 to 2020 have all seen the 14 lowest extents on record, and sea ice extents have declined by about 13% per decade since 1979.

It is now no longer a question of "if" we will see an ice-free Arctic in the new few decades -- it is "when," said Walt Meier, a senior research scientist at the National Snow and Ice Data Center and a co-author of the sea ice section of this year's Arctic Report Card.

"For me being about 50-years-old, I thought (an ice-free Arctic in summer) would be something my grandchildren would probably live to see," Meier said. "But now, if I have a reasonably average lifespan, then I'll probably live to see it, which is really stark in my view in terms of how fast things have changed."

A greener, less snowy Arctic

Snow still covers much of the Arctic for up to nine months out of the year. But that too is changing, as warming leads to declines in both the area of land and length of time that it is buried in snow.

The snow cover extent in June 2020 over the Eurasian Arctic was the lowest in the 54-year record, and the North American part of the region saw its 10th-lowest extent.



That snow cover also melted much earlier in parts of the region, especially in Siberia, [which saw record heatwaves in 2020](#).

Though the report found that the duration of snow cover was roughly normal over much of the Arctic, snow cover over huge swaths of Siberia melted as much as a month early, owing to temperatures that were more than 5 degrees Celsius above average.

Another effect of a warmer climate is that the Arctic is growing greener.



An aerial view shows melting permafrost tundra on the Yukon Delta in Alaska. The Arctic has been warming more than twice as fast as the rest of the planet, triggering a host of changes across the region.

Tundra vegetation or "greenness" has been tracked by satellites since the early '80s, and scientists monitor it as a key signal of changes in the region's climate.

While "greenness" has declined sharply in North America since 2016, it has remained above average on the Eurasian side.

And the report finds that looking at the full satellite record, the overall trend is moving toward a greener Arctic, as warmer temperatures thaw the frozen tundra, allowing shrubs and other plant species to take root in places they couldn't in the past.

Taken together, the changes outlined in the report show a region that is being transformed rapidly by warming brought on by human activity.

"This isn't just like a low sea ice year or the permafrost thawing in on one place where the temperatures are rising -- the entire ecosystem is changing," Meier said. "And that's telling you that this isn't a fluke. It's something fundamental that's changing in the Arctic environment."



Tsunami of 1.56 billion masks triggers new wave of marine pollution

Alok Gupta



More than 1.56 billion discarded face masks used as a preventive measure to contain the novel coronavirus transmission will enter oceans in 2020, aggravating plastic pollution and threatening marine life, calculated a report.

These disposed non-biodegradable masks made from polypropylene, weighing between 4,680 and 6,240 metric tonnes, could take at least 450 years to degrade. Microplastics released by them would enter the body of marine creatures, severely impacting their life cycle.

"The 1.56 billion face masks that will likely enter our oceans in 2020 are just the tip of the iceberg," said Teale Phelps Bondaroff, lead author of the report and director of research for OceansAsia, a Hong Kong-based marine conservation organization.

"The 4,680 to 6,240 metric tonnes of face masks are just a small fraction of the estimated 8 to 12 million metric tonnes of plastic that enter our oceans each year," he added. According to various global production projections, around 52 billion masks have been manufactured in 2020 as part of pandemic prevention efforts.

These single-use face masks, made from meltblown plastics, are challenging to recycle due to both composition and risk of contamination and infection, according to the Masks on the Beach: The Impact of COVID-19 on Marine Plastic Pollution report released on Monday.

"An overall loss rate of three percent can be applied to reliable mask consumption numbers to yield the overall number of face masks that enter the environment. Multiplying this number by three to four grams approximates the weight of these masks," said the report.

The discarded face masks would further add to 8 million to 13 million tonnes of waste that ends up in the ocean every year. The amount of global plastic waste in the ocean is expected to triple at the end of 2090, resulting in more plastics than marine creatures.

Because of the lockdown, there has been a surge in takeaway food resulting in a massive pile-up of packaging waste, but solid waste management in municipalities has nosedived. As a result, illegal plastic waste disposal has increased by 280 percent, and the rate of recycling has slumped by more than 5 percent.

Hygiene concerns and greater reliance on take-away food has led to increased use of plastics, particularly plastic packaging," said Gary Stokes, director of operations of OceansAsia. "Meanwhile, a number of measures designed to reduce plastic consumption, like single-use plastic bag bans, have been delayed, paused, or rolled back."



The plastic pile up is constantly releasing microplastics into the water, entering the food chain of marine animals, including a range of fishes consumed by humans. Such contamination is also adversely affecting human health.

"Plastic pollution kills an estimated 100,000 marine mammals and turtles, over a million seabirds, and even greater numbers of fish, invertebrates and other animals each year. It also negatively impacts fisheries and the tourism industry, and costs the global economy an estimated \$13 billion per year," stokes added.

Reusable biodegradable masks, proper disposal and its responsible use could prevent them from entering the ocean, the report suggested.

(Discarded facemasks were found during a beach clean-up drive in Hong Kong. /OceansAsia)



Corals can bounce back from bleaching, if humans don't ruin it: study

Published December 9, 2020, 6:23 AM

by [Agence France-Presse](#)

Some corals can recover from bleaching even in long heatwaves as long as humans don't interfere, scientists said Tuesday, raising hopes for the endangered underwater ecosystems essential to much marine life.



In this underwater photo taken on August 19, 2020 a diver swims over corals off Koh Tao island in the Gulf of Thailand. (Photo by Romeo GACAD / AFP)

Researchers tracked corals of the Kiritimati atoll in the Pacific Ocean through the longest tropical heatwave on record, expecting the reefs to suffer mass bleaching.

But despite sitting in a "hot water bath" for 10 months due to a particularly strong 2015/2016 El Nino, the studied corals survived.

"We were blown away... to find that not only were all the corals not dead! But some of them didn't even look to be in bad shape or bleached," said Julia Baum, co-author of the study published in Nature Communications.

"They had recovered while still under these stressful conditions!" the biology professor at Canadian Victoria University told AFP.

However, there is a catch. Only the corals undisturbed by human stress factors such as water pollution were more likely to survive the heatwave.

"We found that corals were only able to recover from bleaching while at elevated temperatures if they were not also exposed to other strong local stressors," Baum said.

Coral reefs cover less than one percent of the ocean floor but support a quarter of marine species, providing them with food and shelter.

Warming waters due to climate change cause corals to expel the food-producing algae living in their tissues, breaking down their symbiotic relationship and leading to loss of colour and life in the process known as bleaching.

Recent spikes in tropical and sub-tropical sea surface temperatures, magnified by an especially potent El Nino, have triggered an unprecedented mass bleaching of corals, affecting 75 percent of global reefs.

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change in 2018 issued its landmark report on the Paris deal temperature goals — "well below" two degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels and a cap of 1.5C if at all possible.



It found that at 1.5C hotter, more than 70 percent of Earth's coral reefs will likely die off. At 2C, that increases to 99 percent.

But the discovery that certain types of corals can recover from being exposed to long heatwaves offers a "glimmer of hope" for the rich marine ecosystem, the authors said in the study.

The results show local protection strategies can have an impact on saving the corals, providing incentive to continue efforts to protect reefs.

"If we are to save these magnificent ecosystems overall, the world must get climate change under control," said Baum.

"But this new discovery... might buy some corals a bit of time under climate change."



Critically endangered Sumatran orangutan born at Belgian animal park

By Jack Guy, CNN

Published Dec 8, 2020 11:42:33 PM



(CNN) -- An animal park in Belgium has welcomed the arrival of a critically endangered Sumatran [orangutan](#).

The male orangutan, named Mathai, was born on November 28 at Pairi Daiza animal park, spokesman Mathieu Goedefroy told CNN in a statement Tuesday.

He was conceived and born naturally, joining his father Ujian, mother Sari and brother Berani.

Berani is the only other orangutan born at the park. The sibling is four years older and is "showing great and positive interest in the new baby," said Goedefroy.

The brothers can expect to live up to 45 years and Mathai will live with his family until around the age of 10, when he reaches adulthood and will have to find a female partner, Goedefroy said.

At that point experts from the European Endangered Species Program will study Mathai's DNA and that of available female orangutans from around the world to find the best match.

"That way, we ensure a healthy offspring with the best possible genetic qualities, and thus maximizing the odds of survival for the species," said Goedefroy.

Two other adult orangutans at the park, named Gempa and Sinta, are expecting their first child in 2021, according to Goedefroy, who said the park's orangutan program "is going extremely well."

Pairi Daiza is home to a growing group of Sumatran orangutans, and Goedefroy said the park also funds reforestation projects in their main natural habitat.

Orangutans are critically endangered, facing deforestation of their rainforest habitat on the islands of Sumatra and Borneo, in Indonesia.

In the last three decades around 80% of irreplaceable orangutan habitat has been lost, according to wildlife charity Born Free, which reports that there are around 14,000 Sumatran orangutans left.

Pairi Daiza said it funds a reforestation program in Indonesia which planted more than 11,000 trees last year.



Sumatran orangutans are one of three identified species of orangutan. An estimated 45,000-69,000 Bornean orangutans are left, according to Born Free, and fewer than 800 Tapanuli orangutans.

This makes the Tapanuli orangutan, which was only identified in 2017, the rarest great ape in the world, Born Free adds.

This story was first published on CNN.com, [*"Critically endangered Sumatran orangutan born at Belgian animal park"*](#)



Tribesmen save Amazon monkeys

By Agence France-Presse

December 9, 2020

MEDELLIN: Far from the rifle cracks that occasionally rip through the rainforest as local tribesmen hunt mature primates for their meat and soft pelts, a sanctuary in a corner of the Colombian Amazon is offering new life to the orphaned monkeys left behind.

The refuge run by a local leader, Jhon Jairo Vasquez, is giving them a second chance — while gradually changing attitudes in the area — in the indigenous settlement of Mocagua on the banks of the Amazon.

Vasquez has proved to be a father figure for one of the orphans, a three-month-old female woolly monkey, or *Lagothrix*, he's named Maruja. The pair have become inseparable on his hikes through the rainforest, carrying the little primate in a sack on his back.

"I have become the father, and she's become the daughter," said Vasquez, 38. "An indigenous family ate the mother."

Long prized by indigenous hunters for their meat and furry pelts, the woolly monkey is now classified by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature as Vulnerable, appearing on the IUCN's Red List of Threatened Species.

Given their thick brown coat and grey appendages, young woolly monkeys like Maruja are often hunted for the pet trade, with their mothers sometimes killed in the process.

Fourteen years ago, Vasquez helped found the Maikuchiga animal refuge located in the middle of the 700-strong Tikuna indigenous community in Mocagua.

Since 2006, he has been trying to convince locals of the damage caused by "over-hunting," as well as a flourishing illegal wildlife market.

Reluctant at first, the Tikunas have developed a taste for eco-tourism. "Rehabilitated" hunters have become guides who now "protect their wildlife," says Vasquez.

But traumatized orphans continue to arrive in Maikuchiga from other parts of the Amazon. Since its creation, the refuge has rehabilitated about 800 monkeys, according to Vasquez.

The community is located at a spot in the Amazon called the Triple Frontier, where Peru, Colombia and Brazil meet. There is a long history of monkeys being hunted here for meat or for ritual purposes.

They are still shot from trees, mother and baby entwined as they fall, says Vasquez. "The mother does not let go of her baby. And the little one falls attached to its mother. Sometimes, the pellets can injure or even kill it."

The adult's flesh is roasted on a wood fire, as the meat is prized. The small survivors are sold as pets or exhibited to tourists visiting the indigenous communities of the Triple Frontier region.

The lucky ones are rescued by Corpoamazonia, the Colombian government agency in charge of environmental protection, based in nearby Leticia. Luis Fernandez Cuevas, its director, said 22 young primates have been recovered since 2018.

Sometimes these are the result of "voluntary surrenders" by people who claim to have found them by chance, in order to avoid an investigation for trafficking or illegal possession of the animal.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/12/09/news/world/tribesmen-save-amazon-monkeys/806958/>



Mount Everest (C), the world's highest peak, and other peaks of the Himalayan range are seen from air during a mountain flight from Kathmandu April 24, 2010. REUTERS/Tim Chong/File Photo

Mount Everest is higher than we thought, say Nepal and China

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By GOPAL SHARMA, Reuters

KATHMANDU — Mount Everest is higher than previously thought, Nepal and China said on Tuesday, settling a long-running conflict over the height of the world's tallest peak that straddles their shared border.

Kathmandu and Beijing had differed over its exact height but after each sent an expedition of surveyors to the summit they have agreed that the official height is 8,848.86 meters (29,031.69 feet), a bit more than their previous calculations.

Everest is an "eternal symbol of...friendship between Nepal and China," said Nepali Foreign Minister Pradeep Kumar Gyawali, announcing the findings of their surveys on a video call with his Chinese counterpart Wang Yi.

Nepal had never previously measured the height of Mount Everest on its own but had used the 8,848 meters (29,028 feet) estimate made by the Survey of India in 1954 that includes snow.

A Chinese measurement in 2005 determined that the rock height of the summit was 8,844.43 meters (29,017 feet), about 3.7 meters (11 feet) less than the 1954 estimate.

Mountaineers had suggested a 7.8 magnitude earthquake in 2015 which killed nearly 9,000 people in Nepal may have altered the height of Everest.

Nepal, which is home to another seven of the world's 14 highest peaks, sent its first team of surveyors in May last year to measure Everest. Chinese surveyors then climbed the peak in spring this year, when the mountain was closed by both countries for other climbers due to the coronavirus pandemic.



Earthquake

Damodar Dhakal, spokesman for Nepal's Department of Survey, said the Nepali surveyors had used the Global Navigation Satellite System to get "the precise height" of the giant peak.

Garrett Madison of the US-based Madison Mountaineering company said he was excited about climbing the "new heights" on Mount Everest next year.

"Surely some new records for climbing the 'highest Everest' will happen in 2021," the 42-year-old ten times Everest summiteer told Reuters in a text message. "Hopefully I get Everest summit #11 in 2021!"

Many Western climbers use the slightly greater height of 8,850 meters (29,035 feet) determined in 1999 by the National Geographic Society and Boston's Museum of Science, in a survey that used satellite-based technology to measure the peak.

The 2015 earthquake, which occurred during peak climbing season, triggered massive avalanches that killed 18 people at the base, halting the season's mountaineering activities.

The following year, climbers who scaled the summit said an Everest landmark, Hillary Step—a 13-meter (40 feet) near-vertical rock formation below the summit - had collapsed from the impact of Nepal's worst earthquake ever recorded.

Everest has been climbed 10,184 times by 5,789 people from both sides since it was first scaled by New Zealander Sir Edmund Hillary and Sherpa Tenzing Norgay in 1953, according to the Himalayan Database, which maintains records on climbs.

At least 311 people have died on its slopes. — **Reuters**