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DENR

NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Cimatu wants tree-cutting activities in Cotabato monitored

December 13, 2020, 12:35 pm



Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu

MANILA – Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu on Sunday called for intensified monitoring of tree-cutting activities in the same area where authorities recently discovered a small-scale illegal mining operation in Magpet town, Cotabato province.

“We cannot allow people to further destroy our forests especially when we know that flooding is among its direct consequences,” Cimatu said in a press release. “Many Filipinos have suffered enough from the devastation of massive flooding because of forest denudation.”

Cimatu said the local government of Magpet should always be on the lookout for any illegal tree-cutting activity in its area of jurisdiction and coordinate such activity with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Region 12 (Soccsksargen).

According to DENR-12 regional executive director Felix Alicer, the tree-cutting activity was discovered during a Dec. 7 raid conducted in Barangay Don Panaca by operatives of the DENR, Mines and Geosciences Bureau, the local government of Cotabato, and the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The joint operation team then discovered an illegal small-scale mining operation in the area located some 10 kilometers away from the Mt. Apo Natural Park.

The mining site has not been declared a “minahang bayan” or a common area where small-scale miners are allowed to operate, prompting Cimatu to order its immediate closure.

The operation also led authorities to a five-hectare area that has been cleared of trees, around 300 meters away from the mining site.

The felled trees were identified as Ulian and Agoho. Some 15.296 cubic meters of log were also seen at the site.

Alicer said the “cleared area” is suspected to be intended for land conversion, particularly as a banana plantation, considering that the vicinity of Barangay Don Panaca is within a banana-growing town.

“What we are seeing here is that the threat to denudation is not so much on timber poaching but land conversion,” Alicer said. “A banana plantation has higher economic benefits.”

Alicer noted that barangay officials in the area are not empowered to apprehend the suspects.

“The barangay chiefs around the area, however, have helped us monitor the site which prevented the suspected planned land conversion,” he said.

Alicer said they have not yet been able to remove the logs from the site because it can only be reached after a two-and-a-half hour-walk through rugged terrain. (PR)

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1124601>



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December 13, 2020 3 min read

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Alicer noted that barangay officials in the area are not empowered to apprehend the suspects.

“The barangay chiefs around the area, however, have helped us monitor the site which prevented the suspected planned land conversion,” he said.

Alicer said they have not yet been able to remove the logs from the site because it can only be reached after a two-and-a-half hour-walk through rugged terrain. **(PNA)**

Source: https://maharlika.tv/2020/12/13/cimatu-wants-tree-cutting-activities-in-cotabato-monitored/?fbclid=IwAR1_rh0G1-d8XQf77XfhOl4zsTgPgck-RHmRHOHDZxQkfsmc0tPxK-JQjg4



Cimatu wants tree-cutting in Cotabato town monitored

Sunday, December 13, 2020 Cory Martinez14

INTENSIFIED monitoring of tree-cutting activities must be done in Magpet, Cotabato, the same area where authorities recently discovered an illegal small-scale mining operation.

This was the call of Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu, stressing that the local government of Magpet should always be on the lookout for any illegal tree-cutting activity in its area of jurisdiction and coordinate such activity with the DENR Region 12.

"We cannot allow people to further destroy our forests especially when we know that flooding is among its direct consequences. Many Filipinos have suffered enough from the devastation of massive flooding because of forest denudation," Cimatu said.

DENR-12 Regional Executive Director Felix Alicer said the tree-cutting activity was discovered during the Dec. 7 raid conducted in Bgy. Don Panaca by operatives of the DENR, Mines and Geosciences Bureau, the local government of Cotabato, and the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The joint operation team then discovered an illegal small-scale mining operation in the area located some 10 kilometers away from the Mt. Apo Natural Park.

The mining site has not been declared a minahang bayan or a common area where small-scale miners are allowed to operate, prompting Cimatu to order its immediate closure.

The operation also led authorities to a five-hectare area that has been cleared of trees, around 300 meters away from the mining site.

The felled trees were identified as Ulian and Agoho. Some 15.296 cubic meters of log were also seen on the site.

Alicer said the "*cleared area*" is suspected to be intended for land conversion, particularly as a banana plantation, considering that the vicinity of Barangay Don Panaca is within a banana-growing town.

"What we are seeing here is that the threat to denudation is not so much on timber poaching but land conversion. A banana plantation has higher economic benefits," Alicer added.

Alicer noted that barangay officials in the area are not empowered to apprehend the suspects. *"The barangay chiefs around the area, however, have helped us monitor the site which prevented the suspected planned land conversion,"* he said.

At the same time, Alicer said they have not yet been able to remove the logs from the site because it can only be reached after a two-and-a-half hour-walk through rugged terrain.



DENR asks Cotabato province town to be on guard vs illegal logging activities

Published December 13, 2020, 12:20 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu has asked the local government of Magpet town in Cotabato province to remain vigilant against illegal logging activities in the area.



(MANILA BULLETIN FILE PHOTO)

Cimatu said the local government of Magpet should always be on the lookout for any illegal tree-cutting activity and coordinate such with the DENR-Region 12 (Soccsksargen).

“We cannot allow people to further destroy our forests especially when we know that flooding is among its direct consequences,” the DENR chief pointed out.

“Many Filipinos have suffered enough from the devastation of massive flooding because of forest denudation,” he added.

According to DENR-Soccsksargen Regional Executive Director Felix Alicer, a tree-cutting activity was discovered during raid conducted on Dec. 7 at Barangay Don Panaca by operatives of the DENR, Mines and Geosciences Bureau, local government of Cotabato, and Armed Forces of the Philippines.

The joint operation led to the discovery of illegal small-scale mining operation in the area located just 10 kilometers away from the Mt. Apo Natural Park.

The mining site has not been declared a “minahang bayan” or a common area where small-scale miners are allowed to operate, prompting Cimatu to order its immediate closure.

Likewise, around 300 meters away from the mining site was a five-hectare area that has been cleared of trees, such as Ulian and Agoho. Some 15.296 cubic meters of log were also seen on the site.

Alicer said the “cleared area” is suspected to be intended for land conversion, particularly as a banana plantation.

“What we are seeing here is that the threat to denudation is not so much on timber poaching but land conversion. A banana plantation has higher economic benefits,” he pointed out.

Alicer also noted that the barangay officials are not empowered to apprehend the suspects but “have helped us monitor the site which prevented the suspected planned land conversion.”

He said the logs have yet to be removed from the site, citing the difficulty of reaching the area, which can only be reached after a two-and-a-half hour-walk through rugged terrain.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/12/13/denr-asks-cotabato-province-town-to-be-on-guard-vs-illegal-logging-activities/>



Illegal tree-cutting discovered in mine site

By ... -December 14, 2020

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources ordered the intensified monitoring of tree-cutting activities near Mt. Apo Natural Park in Magpet, Cotabato where authorities recently discovered an illegal small-scale mining operation.

According to Felix Alicer, DENR regional executive director for Soccsksargen, the small-scale mining in Barangay Don Panaca operation which has since been ordered closed by Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu covers a five-hectare area that has been cleared of trees.

Alicer said the area is suspected to be converted into a banana plantation.

“What we are seeing here is that the threat to denudation is not so much on timber poaching but land conversion. A banana plantation has higher economic benefits,” he said.

Alicer also said that barangay officials in the area are not empowered to apprehend suspects and they are only capable of helping in the monitoring of the site which prevented the suspected planned land conversion. – Jed Macapagal



DENR to probe quarry operations in Rizal

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](https://business.inquirer.net/313738/denr-to-probe-quarry-operations-in-rizal) / 04:45 AM December 12, 2020

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is set to investigate quarry operations in Rizal that may have led to the massive flooding in parts of the province and Marikina City during the onslaught of Typhoon “Ulysses” (international name: Vamco) last month.

The DENR said in a statement that its regional office in Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Rizal and Quezon) had formed four composite teams to begin the probe upon the urging of the Rizal provincial government. The typhoon submerged several areas and destroyed infrastructure in the province, prompting the provincial government to declare Rizal under a state of calamity.

The groups formed by the DENR would zero in on quarry operations within the Marikina River Basin using aerial mapping drones.

Each team would include a representative from the DENR’s regional office and central and regional representatives from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB), Environmental Management Bureau and Biodiversity Management Bureau.

This is in line with a memorandum order earlier issued by the MGB wherein it suspended at least 11 quarry and crushing plant operators within the basin that is connected to the Marikina River.

Of the 11 suspended companies, the DENR said five were holders of mineral production sharing agreements—a permit granted by the government that allowed contractors to mine specific areas. These are Asensio-Pinzon Aggregates Corp., San Rafael Development Corp., Montalban Millex Aggregates Corp., Hardrock Aggregates Inc. and Rapid City and Development Corp.

Also suspended were six firms with existing mineral processing permits—Oxford Mines Inc., Viba Aggregates and Marketing, Amiterra Aggregates Corp., Dream Rock Resources Phils. Inc., Superior Aggregates Inc. and ATN Holdings Inc.

These suspensions would hold until the completion of the composite teams’ assessment.

“The DENR has to reevaluate the operation of all mining companies in the area so we can find out whether they contributed to the massive flooding during the onslaught of Typhoon Ulysses,” Environment Undersecretary Jim Sampulna said.

In relation to this, MGB director Wilfredo Moncano also instructed the contractors to use their respective Development of Mining Technology and Geosciences Funds to conduct research on the sediment influx of their quarry operations to determine its contribution to the siltation of the Marikina River. —**Karl R. Ocampo**



Mining in North Cotabato town ordered stopped

Published December 13, 2020, 9:45 AM

by [Philippine News Agency](#)

COTABATO CITY (PNA) – North Cotabato Governor Nancy Catamco and Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) 12 (Soccsksargen) Director Felizardo Gacad Jr. on Friday afternoon issued a cease and desist order (CDO) against illegal mining activity in Barangay Don Panaca, Magpet, North Cotabato.

Both officials signed the joint order following the discovery of illegal mining activity inside the Mt. Apo protected area last week.

Catamco said an investigation being carried out by the provincial government, the MGB-12, and the local environment office of Magpet seeks to find answers on the mining tunnel discovered in Don Panaca.

“Caring for our environment is everyone’s business. We all know that this is a shared responsibility,” she said.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu earlier directed the MGB-12 to seize “tools and equipment, the mined mineral, and equipment at the mining site” but no operator or miner was found when environment officials raided the area last December 8.

At least 28 sacks of ore were recovered.

The MGB and provincial officials noted that no license has been issued allowing the “Minahang Bayan” or Small-Scale Mining Contract anywhere in Magpet.

Go seeks crackdown on quarrying

By Bernadette E. Tamayo

December 14, 2020

SEN. Christopher Lawrence “Bong” Go urged the government to crack down on unsanctioned quarrying operations as he raised the need to stop environmentally destructive activities nationwide. The senator stressed this as the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) investigated quarrying activities that might have caused floods.

The investigation focused on quarry operations in Rizal province, which was devastated by floods when Typhoon “Ulysses” (“Vamco”) hit the country in November.



NEW MALASAKIT CENTER Sen. Christopher "Bong" Go opens the country's 95th Malasakit Center in Marikina City on Dec. 11, 2020. The center, located at the Amang Rodriguez Memorial Medical Center, is the city's first. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Go on Friday said quarrying activities must be stopped once the DENR proves that quarrying was behind the massive flooding in some parts of Luzon.

In an interview after the launching of the country's 95th Malasakit Center in Marikina City, Go recalled the complaints of flood-hit residents when he and President Rodrigo Duterte visited Albay.

“Yun ang reklamo ng mga tao. Nagsisigawan, ‘Mr. President, ipa-suspende n’yo na po ito, ipatigil n’yo po ang quarrying dito’ (That was the complaint of the people when I and President Duterte landed in Guinobatan, Albay. They were shouting, Mr. President, please stop the quarrying here,” Go recalled.

“If that is the reason, then it must be stopped. So, let us wait for the results of the investigation of DENR if quarrying was indeed the cause [of the flooding],” the senator said.

He added that only the DENR can determine if there is a need for stricter quarrying regulations.

“Kita n’yo ang pagdurusa ng ating mga kababayan dahil sa baha. Ang iba nga d’yan, ‘di pa nakakauwi dahil nasiraan talaga ng bahay (You saw the misery of those hit by floods. Some of them haven’t returned home because their houses were destroyed,” Go said.



NVizcaya gov files appeal vs OceanaGold

By Leander C. Domingo, TMT

December 13, 2020

BAYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya: Gov. Carlos Padilla has appealed to President Rodrigo Duterte to discontinue mining operations in this province, particularly the two government-sanctioned large-scale operations of OceanaGold Philippines Inc. (OGPI) and FCF Minerals Inc. (FCF).



OceanaGold Philippinesâ€™ Didipio gold and copper mine in Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya. PHOTO FROM OCEANAGOLD

OGPI has been contracted by the national government to operate the Didipio Gold and Copper Project in Kasibu town while FCF was also contracted to operate the Runruno Gold-Molybdenum Project in Quezon town, both under a 25-year Financial and Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA).

Due to the June 10, 2019 expiration of the initial validity of the 25-year FTAA, OGPI has suspended the company's operation for more than a year now and has been working with the national government for its renewal possibly for another 25 years.

Padilla appealed to Malacañang, following Duterte's instructions to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the Department of Finance to renegotiate and finalize the renewal of OGPI's FTAA.

An FTAA is a license issued to a multinational company that shares technology and resources to explore and extract minerals in the Philippines. OGPI's FTAA, which was the first in the country under the Mining Act of 1995, covers 10,266 hectares, including the temporarily suspended mine in a 925-hectare area in Barangay Didipio.

Duterte's order to the DENR also came after the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples issued to OGPI a Certification of Non-Overlap (CNO), which states that the FTAA area is outside the ancestral domain of the indigenous group, comprised of the Bugkalot tribe.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) said Nueva Vizcaya province's Bugkalot tribe that stays near OGPI applied to expand its ancestral domain, which would include the Didipio Mine's FTAA area of operation. This development has delayed the renewal of the OGPI, which has been addressed with the NCIP issuance of the CNO.

In his letter to Duterte, Padilla expressed his apprehensions against the continued mining, which included, among others, that Barangay Didipio and Barangay Runruno are sub-watersheds of the Cagayan River and that these are "critical watersheds," which need protection.

"Continuous operation of OGPI and FCF endangers the lives of the community," he said.

Padilla cited the declaration made by the National Economic and Development Authority that Nueva Vizcaya is a "watershed haven and agroforestry hub," which makes the province the "life support system" of Region 2 (Cagayan Valley) and neighboring areas.



“Our watersheds supply water both for irrigation services and hydroelectric power,” he said.

Appealing for the nonrenewal of the OGPI FTAA, Padilla said the expansion of the company’s mining operation would endanger the unexplored areas and that it may affect some famous tourist destinations in the mineral- and agriculture-rich upland town of Kasibu.

The governor also cited the MGB Geohazard Map, published in 2012, indicating that Nueva Vizcaya is “highly susceptible” to landslides.

According to Padilla, the MGB in 2011 has also listed the province as No. 3 among the 10 landslide-prone provinces in the Philippines.

OGPI claims otherwise that the FTAA renewal has the “strong endorsement of the residents in the local communities in and around the Didipio Mine including other Indigenous Peoples in the area.”

“The company looks forward to the continued engagement with the national government with the goal of finalizing the FTAA renewal,” OceanaGold said in a statement.

It also added that “as a contractor of the Philippine government and a responsible multinational miner, the company is ready and waiting to restart the Didipio operations and to continue contributing to the Philippines’ post-Covid-19 recovery.”

Earlier, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu came out with an order to close illegal small-scale mining operations in the province and ordered the MGB-Region 2 to look for an area for the possible establishment of a Minahang Bayan for displaced miners, particularly those near the Runruno Mine.

MGB Region 2 Director Mario Ancheta said the secretary’s order of finding a Minahang Bayan site results in having the displaced miners legalized and regulated to ensure their safety and to provide for their continued livelihood while preventing further destruction of the environment.



Blood on their hands

“Large-scale mining permits over some 1,000 hectares of watershed and wildfire sanctuary have been approved despite Masungi Georeserve being a watershed re-vegetation since 1904.



Published 7 hours ago on December 14, 2020 12:20 AM

By [Aldrin Cardona](#) @tribunephil_drin



At the height of typhoon “Ondoy” in 2009, there was this news video clip from a formerly freely airing media outlet that was shown on repeat mode like it was a recurring nightmare.

I hope to see this aired again so that it would haunt the nights of those responsible for the degradation of our forests and their encroachment on our natural wildlife areas.

It was of a group of people floating aimlessly on a corrugated roof obviously detached from a house where water from the Sierra Madre, the longest mountain chain in Luzon, came down barreling through villages and lives, which got scarred due to man’s greed.

The group included children crying for mercy.

A bare-chested man, the only one to give hope and courage to the helpless party, stood up to wave at the group of equally helpless people also trapped by flood on top of a bridge — a flyover. It was a call for help that was silenced by the clapping dance of muddy water, which seemed to be cheering to the onslaught it had caused.

From nowhere, a man threw a small net to the floating party in hopes of saving all five or six of them. It missed.

The roof was traveling too fast to be saved.

When it got under the bridge, the roof did not float again on the other side. All its passengers were lost.

The death toll from that second-most devastating tropical cyclone of the 2009 Pacific typhoon season was pegged at 710. They could have been part of this forgotten statistic.

Government officials then looked at deforestation and human activities within the mountain range where the Marikina Valley sits as reasons that caused the great deadly flood. In the end, only the great volume of rainwater was called the culprit. None was heard from them since then.

While “Ondoy” is distant, it should not be just a memory confined to our thoughts of the past — like that video clip of death.

No violent death should be faint in history.



It should haunt the perpetrators like they're living on Elm Street, or they become Elliot Spencer's subject of sadomasochism. They deserve a slow, painful, guilt-driven death.

Hopefully, Risa Hontiveros — yes that senator subject of many paid socmed troll hate — would be their Krugger or Hell Priestess.

Hontiveros would be chasing the operators of the companies quarrying in the Province of Rizal and its fringes.

These operations, coupled with slash-and-burn farming and illegal logging activities, are the primary causes of flooding in the valleys and downslopes of the Sierra Madre. No amount of urban development should be paid for by the lives and properties of those living in and outside of the areas where the water falls.

Hontiveros not only flagged the quarrying operations that now dot the mountains around Rizal, Marikina, Quezon City, Antipolo and neighboring areas, she also alleged that land-grabbing activities in the province's wildlife sanctuaries are damaging what is left of the mountains that serve as our natural barriers against strong typhoons.

She vowed to probe these activities. Her office also promised that there will be no letup in the investigation once it proceeds.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) seemed to have taken the cue from Hontiveros' statement that on the same day when it came out, the agency had scampered to suspend the quarrying and crushing plant operations of 11 firms in Rizal.

The DENR's Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) named some of these firms as Asencio-Pinzon Aggregates Corp., San Rafael Development Corp., Montalban Millex Aggregates Corp., Hardrock Aggregates Inc. and Rapid City Realty and Development Corp., which had their Mineral Production Sharing Agreements suspended effective 2 December.

Also suspended were the Mineral Processing Permits of six other mining firms in the region — the Oxford Mines Inc., Viba Aggregates & Marketing, Amiterra Aggregates Corp., Dream Rock Resources Phils. Inc., Superior Aggregates Inc. and ATN Holdings Inc.

An 11 December 2020 Daily Tribune report said: "The MGB suspension is in compliance with the memorandum issued by the Geosciences Bureau Director ordering all regional directors of the temporary suspension of all quarry and crushing plant operations in Rizal Province within the coverage of Marikina River Basin, which river system drains toward the Marikina River."

"Among the mentioned mining firms is Rapid City Realty and Development Co., which was also called out by Hontiveros for encroaching Masungi Georeserve in February this year."

"The conservation area is protected by the DENR Administrative Order 1933-33 or the Masungi Strict Nature Reserve and Wildlife Sanctuary, which extremely prohibits quarrying and mineral exploration in the area."

She said large-scale mining permits over some 1,000 hectares of watershed and wildfire sanctuary have been approved despite Masungi Georeserve being a watershed reservation since 1904.

Those are 116 years that the area should have been protected, just enough years for soil-hugging trees to stand proudly and protect the people and wildlife that symbiotically live with them.



I asked Hontiveros' key staff if the probe would include government officials who are linked or have financial interests in some of these firms and those not listed yet in the DENR suspension.

The reply was yes, no name will be spared from being called because there's blood on their hands.



The mining industry can save the economy

December 13, 2020 | 7:04 pm

Numbers Don't Lie

By Andrew J. Masigan

Following an anticipated 9.8% economic contraction for 2020, Japanese investment bank Nomura expects the Philippines to recover at a slower pace of 6.8% next year, instead of the government's projection of 7.5%.

The Philippines will only approximate the GDP levels of 2019 in the second semester 2022, said the Japanese financial giant.

This is due to the combined effects of having the smallest stimulus package in the region, slow-to-rebound consumer confidence, and the inability to attract FDIs at the same level as our neighbors. Exacerbating matters is the damage wrought on MSMEs and the slow recovery of the tourism, transport and hospitality sectors.

Now more than ever, the Duterte government must find ways to raise revenues and generate business activities to hasten economic recovery. Fortunately, the country has an untapped treasure trove of resources to fall back on.

Like Australia and Canada, the Philippines is endowed with a colossal amount of metals and mineral deposits.

Our cache of minerals amounts to well over a trillion US dollars, according to the Chamber of Mines. Our estimated levels of metallic and non-metallic minerals was at 7 billion metric tons and 50 billion metric tons, respectively, as per the last comprehensive audit conducted in 1994.

Gold deposits in the Philippines are among the largest in the world with reserves estimated at 101.6 million metric tons. Iron ore reserves are at 298 million metric tons. Among non-metallic minerals, limestone reserves are approximately 19.5 billion tons while marble reserves are at 14.5 billion tons. The Philippines leads the world in chromite resources too.

Despite our enormous mineral resources, the contribution of the mining industry to the economy remains minuscule. As of last year, the share of the mining output to GDP was a mere .06%. It contributed only 1.2% to national tax collection, and comprised only 6.3% of exports. In terms of jobs, it employed less than .04% of the workforce. In contrast, the mining sector in Indonesia accounts for 21% of exports and 7% of GDP.

The reason for the underwhelming performance is the moratorium imposed on new mining permits back in 2012 and the ban on open pit mining in 2017.

It will be recalled that former President Noynoy Aquino signed Executive Order 79 imposing a moratorium on the issuance of new mining permits while the government updated the outdated Mining Act of 1995. Among the contentious issues was an excise tax rate of only 2% of market value of gross output. The former Chief Executive felt that the people's share was too low and proposed sweeping amendments to the tax structure.



Today, mining companies are charged a 4% excise tax; a 5% reservation royalty; a 1% indigenous people's royalty; and 30% corporate income tax, on top of VAT. Over and above these taxes, mining companies are also required to appropriate 1.5% of their annual operating cost for social development and management programs. Despite the higher tax structure, the moratorium on the issuance of mining permits has not been lifted.

All taxes considered, mining companies in the Philippines are made to pay an effective tax rate of between 70% to 72%, according to the Chamber of Mines. Our tax system is higher than that of Peru, Chile, South Africa, and Australia. Still, mining companies are making a beeline to invest in the Philippines given the amount of untapped resources.

The pandemic has caused the Philippines to fall further behind the region's development race, not to mention relegating millions to unemployment and hunger. Hence, we must use our natural resources to fill the gap. Not to do so is like depriving our starving children of food when there is a treasure trove which can be tapped to fill their stomachs.

To unlock the potentials of the mining industry, we must first lift the moratorium on mining permits and lift the ban on open pit mining. After all, excise tax rates have already been doubled and safeguards to ensure sustainable and responsible open pit mining are already in place.

Unbeknownst to many, only 2% of the country is being explored today, says the Chamber of Mines. We need to accelerate exploration to get a better idea of our mineral resources — where they are, and how large a cache exists. The technology used for exploration is non-invasive and has no negative impact on the environment.

Open pit mining has been made a political issue given its supposed damage to the environment. But open pit mining, also known as open-cast mining, is an accepted global practice in the extraction of ores that lay near the surface. It is used when the mine is structurally unsuitable for tunneling. The US has over 1,800 open pit mines in operation, all of which are proven safe, efficient, and cost-effective. There are only two open pit mines in the Philippines and both have been declared safe and environmentally sound. It's all a matter of doing it according to sustainable protocols.

When retired, open pit mines can be rehabilitated into agro-forestry or agricultural purposes. A good example is Philex Mine's Sibutad project. After its closure, the mine was transformed into a rainforest where new trees are planted at a rate of some 18.5 hectares per day. It holds the distinction of being the largest industrial tree-planting operation in the country's history.

To deprive the country of its God-given resources is not only irresponsible, it is immoral. This is why I strongly advocate the reactivation and development of the mining industry. While I understand that we must be looking after the environment, it must also be balanced with our need for jobs, tax revenues, and opportunities for wealth generation. We need not reinvent the wheel. Canada and Australia provide a roadmap on how to manage the mining industry in a responsible and inclusive manner.

Even as I write this, there are three pending projects in Mindanao, caught by the ban, that can generate some \$36 billion in output for the country. Government will be remiss not to reactivate these projects.



The ban on open pit mining was a departmental order by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), and the Mining Industry Coordinating Council (MICC) has since handed-down its recommendation to lift it. We hope the DENR, with the blessings of the President, will consider doing so at the soonest time so the industry can get moving again. We understand Oceana Gold is waiting in the wings with a sizable investment and the prospect of employing thousands of workers should they be given the go signal.

The DENR has also recommended lifting the moratorium on the issuance of new mining permits to the Office of the President (OP). We urge the OP to accede to the recommendations given the urgency of our needs and the strict sustainable protocols already in place. The sooner the moratorium is lifted, the sooner the industry can work on all cylinders to contribute to the economy.

Andrew J. Masigan is an economist



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I I W A N A N A N G
D E N R .
Pinangunahan ni
Department of En-
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Resolution Divi-
sion Chief Julie

Gorospe-Ibuan (pangatlo sa kaliwa) ang pamamahagi ng 100 hygiene kits sa estudyante ng Philippine School for the Deaf (PSD) at 100 bamboo tumblers sa National Council on Disability Affairs (NCDA) kasabay ng pagdiriwang ng 29th Deaf Awareness Week noong Nobyembre 18 base na rin sa Proclamation No. 829, s. 1991. Ang DENR sa pamamagitan ng Persons with Disability (PWD) Desk nito ay aktibo sa pagsuporta sa mga grupo ng PWD upang matiyak na walang maiiwan sa kanila sa gitna ng COVID-19 pandemic at nitong mga nakalipas na kalamidad. Katuwang din sila ng ahensiya upang magkaroon ng maayos na kapaligiran. Kabilang sa larawan si NCDA Information, Education, and Communication Division Chief Rizalio Sanchez (dulong kaliwa). *(From DENR Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service thru Precy F. Lazaro)*



DENR hosts waste management lecture

[IAN OCAMPO FLORA](#)

December 13, 2020

MASSIVE environmental education lectures on the proper management of solid waste were recently conducted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to beef up awareness on proper waste disposal.

This started with the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources based in Guiguinto, Bulacan, as it hosted a series of lectures on how to educate the public and raise awareness on the importance of solid waste segregation.

The lecture series was participated by 235 barangay councilors, health workers, garbage collectors and Pantawid Pamilyang Pilipino Program beneficiaries from the towns of Norzagaray, San Miguel, San Ildefonso, Sta. Maria and Baliuag in Bulacan.

An ecological solid waste management action plan was also crafted during the event to monitor the progress of waste management in the said towns.

Source: <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1879917/Pampanga/Local-News/DENR-hosts-waste-management-lecture>



Climate Change Commission appeals for ensured climate action

Published December 13, 2020, 3:14 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

The Philippines' Climate Change Commission (CCC) appealed to global and national leaders to ensure that climate ambition and action remain alive in support of the goals of the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, which was adopted by 195 countries, including the country, in 2015.



(Zaldy Comanda / FILE PHOTO / MANILA BULLETIN)

The agreement was formally adopted through Decision 1/CP.21 during the 21st Conference of Parties (COP21) of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) in Paris, France on Dec. 12, 2015.

As a landmark agreement to combat climate change and accelerate and intensify actions and investments needed for a sustainable low carbon future, the Paris Agreement brought developed and developing nations for the first time into a common cause – to undertake ambitious efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, mostly in the form of carbon dioxide, and adapt to its effects.

It primarily aims to keep the global temperature rise this century to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5°C. It also aims to strengthen the countries' resilience to climate change impacts, as well as increase mobilization of climate finance for adaptation and mitigation initiatives.

CCC urged developed countries to take greater action to support these ambitious goals.

Sufficient financial flows, technologies, and capacity development support should be made available to developing countries and the most vulnerable countries, it added.

The Agreement also puts in place transparency, compliance, and reporting mechanisms to track the progress of these goals.

While the CCC recognized that the Paris Agreement spurred many countries to increase pledges on climate finance and to commit net zero carbon emissions targets, the Commission believes that countries still need to present more ambitious climate plans, in line with the coronavirus recovery plans, to ensure that the 1.5°C long-term temperature goal of the Paris Agreement is achieved.

The CCC noted that the Paris Agreement requires countries to communicate their greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets and outline mitigate and adaptation options through their Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), which need to be submitted by the end of this year.



The climate body also mentioned that House Resolution No. 1377 calling for the declaration of a national climate emergency in the Philippines, the issuance of a moratorium on new coal power projects, and the adoption of a sustainable finance framework in the banking and financing industry are some of the ambitious announcements of the Philippines towards low-carbon and climate-resilient development.

It also hopes that the celebration of the fifth anniversary of the Paris Agreement puts the climate crisis at the heart of the global agenda and reminds all nations of the common goal and aspiration they committed to five years ago for a safer, healthier, and more sustainable planet for all.



UP develops low-cost, air-quality monitor

By [The Manila Times](#)

December 14, 2020

RESEARCHERS from the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman, in partnership with the Department of Science and Technology – Philippine Council for Industry, Energy and Emerging Technology Research and Development (DoST-PCIEERD), has developed low-cost, high-quality aerosol monitors to help find ways in minimizing air pollution in cities.

Spearheaded by Dr. Len Herald Lim, Project Robust Optical Aerosol Monitor (ROAM) was initiated to measure particulate matter concentration in the air. It provides crucial information to create policies and programs for environmental protection.

“ROAM units use a different method in detecting particles that does not require the manufacture/fabrication of specialized parts typical of contemporary commercial instrumentation. This allows a much lower production cost, smaller maintenance requirement and an exclusive research chain,” said Lim.

The team has already produced 10 optical aerosol monitors. Four of these have been verified for performance through collocation experiments with aerosol equipment used by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Environmental management Bureau while the remaining six are being tested for performance and will be subject to stricter collocation experiments when conditions permit.

The ROAM team is now exploring the creation of a spin-off company through DoST-PCIEERD’s Funding Assistance for Spin-off and Translation of Research in Advancing Commercialization or Fastrac program to help advance the commercialization of its technology and bring this citizen science project to the community.

Dr. Enrico Paringit, DoST-PCIEERD executive director, expressed hope that the technology can be adopted by local government units.

New family of Philippine eagles sighted

By Ruth Palo

December 13, 2020

DAVAO CITY: The Philippine Eagle Foundation has confirmed the sighting of a new family of the country's national bird in the forest of Lupon, Davao Oriental.



In a rare sighting, Philippine eagles thrive in Davao Oriental's Mount Kampalili-Puting Bato Key Biodiversity Area on Dec. 8, 2020. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Three Philippine eagles have been spotted during a four-day assessment of potential tourism sites in the area conducted by the province from Dec. 7 to 10, 2020.

According to Eden Jhan Licayan, the provincial photographer, a young Philippine eagle was first spotted, perched on a tree near its nest while emitting a peaceful call.

During the second assessment day, Licayan and his team spotted two more eagles, flying over the forest canopy, that are bigger than the first one sighted.

Meanwhile, Philippine Eagle Foundation Head for Research and Development Dr. Jason Ibanez confirmed that they were, indeed, Philippine eagles, based on their plumage and general appearance.

He said the eagle family is within the Mount Kampalili-Puting Bato Key Biodiversity Area of Davao Oriental, which is one of the few large habitats of Philippine eagles in Mindanao.

Davao Oriental is known to host a sizable population of Philippine eagles, including the rescued Mal'lambugok, which was released in the municipality of Caraga in September.

Ecotourism has been considered by the province as one of the key means to preserve its natural resources and promote the community's stewardship and management of these highly valued resources while providing alternative livelihood for the locals and promoting peace in the community.

The provincial government sees the area's potential for bird watching, which has both economic and conservation potential.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/12/13/news/regions/new-family-of-philippine-eagles-sighted/809343/>



Gov. Suarez questions Kaliwa Dam project

December 13, 2020 9:19 PM by [Kristan Carag](#)



Quezon Province Gov. Danilo Suarez (Photo from the official website of Quezon Province)

Quezon Province Gov. Danilo Suarez questioned the plans of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) for the Kaliwa Dam project.

Suarez said on Friday, December 12, that the MWSS plans to loan funds from China and hire Chinese constructors for the construction of Kaliwa Dam.

“Bakit ka uutang na babayaran ng tax payers? Kasi kapag umutang ka may interes iyan. Anong ibig sabihin niyan? Mahal ang tubig mo,” Suarez said during DZRH’s *Damdaming Bayan*.

The governor also shared that Quezon province proposed that the national government construct the dam along Kanan river, and not along Kaliwa River.

“Kukunti ang tubig ng Kaliwa. Ang malaki ang tubig ay Kanan,” Suarez explained.

“Itong amin ay private sector ang gagawa, hindi tayo mangungutang. Why are we going to borrow money when there is PPP (Public-Private Partnership) who is willing to fund it at no cost for the government,” he added.

The Kaliwa Dam project, also known as New Centennial Water Supply Project, seeks to reduce the dependence of Metro Manila and nearby provinces to Angat Dam for water supply by building another dam.



Who's the real beast?

“If we love places like Masungi Georeserve in Rizal... we must protect it and urge government to provide the safeguards these places need from encroachers.

Published 7 hours ago on December 14, 2020 12:20 AM

By **Dinah S. Ventura** @tribuneph1_dina



Land grabs, professional squatting and quarrying are also words that gained prominence in the midst of the coronavirus pandemic.

If typhoons “Rolly” and “Ulysses” failed to unleash the floodgates of sense to authorities concerned, perhaps ever-strident calls to protect our natural resources would.

But whom are we kidding?

Decades of calls, shouts and whatnot have fallen on deaf ears.

Mountains are still getting chopped off like countless trees in forests long gone, and nobody is there to police the abusers because, well, either some of them are in fact the abusers or just not enough people really care.

It takes real commitment to get anywhere in the realm of environment protection.

Many activists have died for this cause, and some of those who were not actually murdered for their dedication simply left the earth without having finished the job. All because the problem is too deep and wide.

Maybe — just maybe — the coronavirus pandemic can offer a new perspective for those who still don't understand why the earth needs saving now.

Or why marauders should halt at once, if they have not been stopped yet.

Why should government impose stronger measures against the unabashed destruction of marshlands, forests, watersheds and other protected areas?

Why should it demand enforcement and cooperation to better safeguard these ecological treasures?

The reason is here and now: it is not only typhoons and the floods the destruction of natural resources and ecological imbalance brings, but also diseases like COVID-19.

To put it bluntly: Mess with nature and the backlash will be deadly indeed.

When COVID-19 was beginning to encroach the globe sometime in March, World Health Organization officials made an observation that the virus named SARS-CoV-2, which causes COVID-19, based on all evidence at the time, had a “natural animal origin” and “most probably has its ecological reservoir in bats.”



In effect, tampering with nature leads to various diseases — it has not just made the floods worse every year.

And just like the COVID-19 pandemic, it is not a problem of just one nation or a few — everyone on this planet feels it, everyone has a stake in it.

What, then, is being done about it now?

The Philippines has many laws against environmental abuse. We also have quite an active sector raising alarm after alarm whenever some lapses or abuses are spotted.

Yet the problem persists.

The permits keep getting signed by either ignorant leaders or just plain greedy ones.

Citizens keep reporting illegal activities, and government keeps saying all the right words.

We keep kidding ourselves every year, comfortable in our safe spaces, until an invisible virus invades it — and until murky waters engulf it, taking every material assurances we surrounded ourselves with away.

With what's left of intact ecosystems and biodiversity in our country, we should protect with utmost dedication.

There is no more leeway for neglect; they are almost all gone.

People should stop destroying natural wildlife habitats and sanctuaries if we do not want more animal-related diseases spreading around the world and trapping us like animals ourselves.

Mining and construction companies should follow the laws and stop quarrying and crushing the earth until mountains no longer serve their purpose.

Citizens should support those who keep abusers in line, rather than commercial and business monsters who grab protected areas, gobble up natural resources and let us pay for it with our lives.

If we love places like Masungi Georeserve in Rizal, the last few nature destinations near urban jungles like Metro Manila, we must protect it and urge government to provide the safeguards these places need from encroachers.

If high-value tourist destinations like Aklan's Boracay and Albay's Mayon Volcano can be opened to construction and quarrying activities to the detriment of residents in the area, how much more those that are even under conservation laws?

"How were companies able to secure large-scale mining permits over some 1,000 hectares of watershed and wildfire sanctuary despite Masungi Georeserve being a watershed reservation since 1904 in the first place? That is 116 years that the area should have been protected, and yet these permits show otherwise," Senator Risa Hontiveros asked in a recent statement.

Now who are to blame for this, really? Perhaps, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources should answer that right away, before another major flood sweeps away resolve.



Plastic, ban na sa Parañaque

On Dec 13, 2020



SIMULA sa Enero ng susunod na taon, ban na sa lahat ng establisyimento sa lungsod ng Parañaque ang paggamit ng single-use plastic.

Nabatid na naantala noong Hunyo ang pagpapatupad ng City Ordinance No. 18-40, pagbabawal sa single-use plastics sa lungsod, dahil sa COVID-19 pandemic.

Sa ilalim parin ng ordinansa, tanging ang manufacturers ang papayagang gumamit ng plastic para sa packaging, habang ang mga supermarket at public market vendors ay kailangang gumamit ng biodegradable plastic.

Aabot sa P5,000 ang multa sa kada paglabag, habang sa ikatlong paglabag ay kakanselahin ang business permit at ipasasara ang establisyimento.

Layon ng ordinansa na mabawasan ang problema ng bansa sa plastic waste na una nang ipinatupad sa mga lungsod ng Makati, Pasig, Muntinlupa, Pasay at Quezon.(Gaynor Bonilla)

Source: https://www.policefilestonite.net/2020/12/13/plastic-ban-na-sa-paranaque/?fbclid=IwAR1gBng5PE1sbn-7rNTUhyEsEW_JgykFeRSUm1nszS7-oJQIsxMe8



Environment program



PAMPANGA. Magalang Mayor Romy Pecson leads the distribution of tricycles to villages for their clean and green program. (Contributed photo)

December 13, 2020

PAMPANGA. Magalang Mayor Romy Pecson leads the distribution of tricycles to villages for their clean and green program. (Contributed photo)

Source: <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1879915/Pampanga/Local-News/Environment-program>



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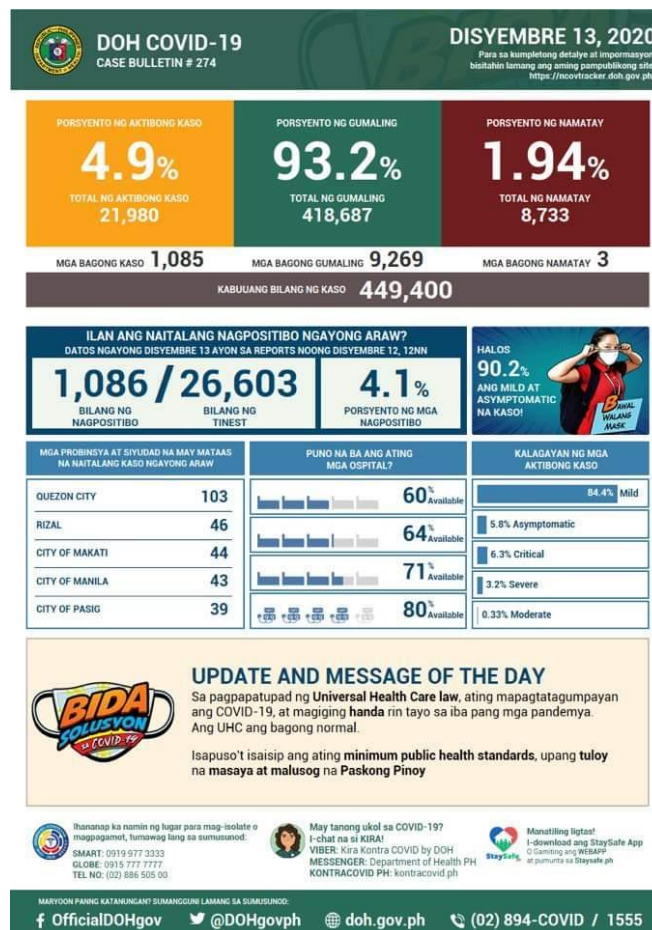
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BREAKING: Mga gumaling sa COVID-19 sa Pilipinas, nasa 418,687 na; Higit 9,000 ang nadagdag

By Angellic Jordan December 13, 2020 - 04:04 PM



Hindi muli bababa sa 1,000 ang panibagong kaso ng Coronavirus Disease o COVID-19 sa Pilipinas.

Sa huling datos ng Department of Health (DOH) bandang araw ng Linggo (December 13), umabot na sa 449,400 ang confirmed cases ng nakakahawang sakit sa bansa.

Sa nasabing bilang, 21,980 o 4.9 porsyento ang aktibong kaso.

Sinabi ng kagawaran na 1,085 ang bagong napaulat na kaso ng COVID-19 sa bansa.

84.4 porsyento sa active COVID-19 cases ang mild; 5.8 porsyento ang asymptomatic; 0.33 porsyento ang moderate; 3.2 porsyento ang severe habang 6.3 porsyento ang nasa kritikal na kondisyon.

Nasa tatlo naman ang napaulat na nasawi.

Dahil dito, umakyat na sa 8,733 o 1.94 porsyento ang COVID-19 related deaths sa bansa.

Ayon pa sa DOH, 9,269 naman ang gumaling pa sa COVID-19.

Dahil dito, umakyat na sa 418,687 o 93.2 porsyento ang total recoveries ng COVID-19 sa Pilipinas.

Source: <https://radyo.inquirer.net/279480/breaking-mga-gumaling-sa-covid-19-sa-pilipinas-nasa-418687-na-higit-9000-ang-nadagdag>



National budget naipasa on time – Yap



December 13, 2020 @ 9:44 AM 21 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Hindi naging hadlang ang problema sa House speakership para maantala ang pagpasa sa 2021 national budget.

Ayon kay House Appropriation Chairman at ACT-CIS Partylist Rep. Eric Yap, nasunod ng Kongreso at Senado ang hiling ng Palasyo na maipasa ang budget bago matapos ang taon.

“We made sure na hindi maapektuhan ang usapin sa budget kahit nagkaroon ng problema sa liderato ng Congress few months ago” sabi ni Cong.Yap.

Ani Yap, kahit nagkaroon ng sigalot sa House leadership, hindi nadamay ang pagpasa sa budget.

Sinabi ni Yap na ito ang kauna-unahang pagkakataon na isang bagitong mambabatas at miyembro pa ng partylist ang naging chairman ng appropriations committee.

“Noong una nagdududa ang ilan na baka hindi umabot ang 2021 budget dahil bagito ang chairman ng appropriation, pero pinawi natin ang pangamba nila” pahayag ni Yap.

Si Yap ay first nominee at miyembro ng ACT-CIS Partylist na siyang may pinakamaraming nakuhang boto noong nakalipas na election.

Ngayon linggo ay isusumite na sa Pangulo ang 2021 national budget para kanyang lagdaan matapos aprubahan ng bicameral committee. **RNT**

7 beses na pagyanig, naitala sa Bulkang Taal

By [RadyoMaN Manila](#) - Dec. 13, 2020 at 1:09pm



Nakapagtala ang Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) ng 7 beses na pagyaning sa Bulkang Taal sa nakalipas na 24 oras.

Batay sa abiso ng PHIVOLCS, bahagya ring nagbuga ng abo ang bulkan.

Dahil dito, itinaas ng PHIVOLCS ang Alert Level 1 sa bulkan kung saan mahigpit na ipinagbabawal ang paglapit sa Permanent Danger Zone (PDZ) nito.

Pinayuhan na rin ng ahensya ang Civil Aviation Authorities na huwag padaanin ang mga sasakyan panghipampapawid malapit sa bunganga ng bulkan.

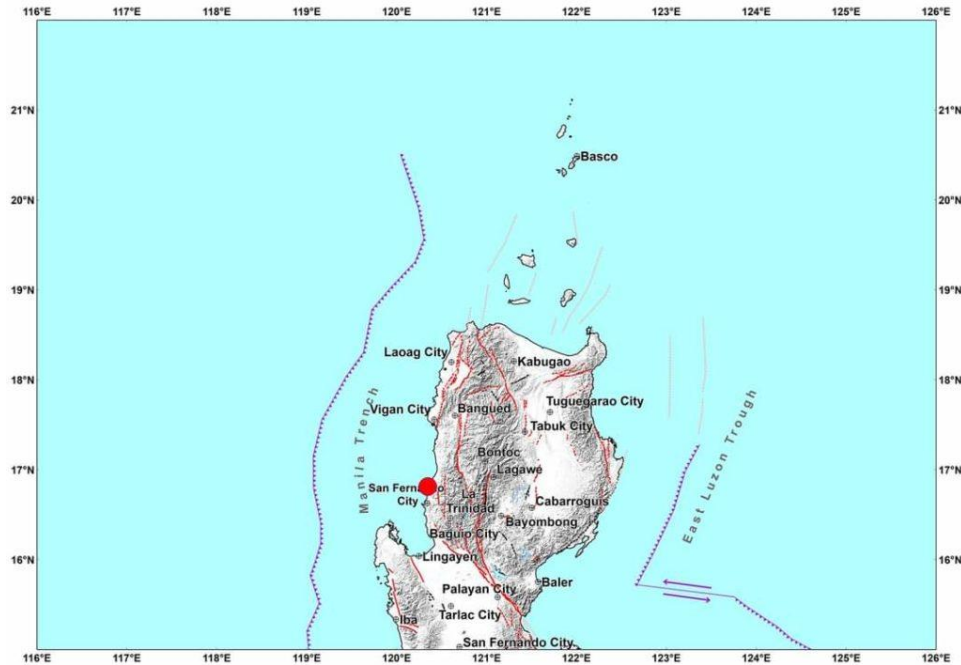
Inabisuhan na rin ng PHIVOLCS ang mga local government units (LGUs) na malapit sa Taal Volcano na maging alerto at bantayan ang mga update ng ahensya ukol sa aktibidad ng naturang bulkan.

Source: https://rmn.ph/7-beses-na-pagyanig-naitala-sa-bulkang-taal/?fbclid=IwAR1EBT1hBul-wxCGnFvAObb3_vdZAX_6eF8N0oKQi5VILwxfrmjj1RG-IdM



La Union, niyanig ng magnitude 4.1 na lindol

By Angellic Jordan December 13, 2020 - 03:32 PM



Tumama ang magnitude 4.1 na lindol sa La Union.

Ayon sa Phivolcs, namataan ang episentro ng lindol sa layong 6 kilometers Southwest ng bayan ng Luna.

Naramdaman ang pagyanig bandang 2:53 ng hapon.

68 kilometers ang lalim nito at tectonic ang origin.

Bunsod nito, naitala ang instrumental intensity 1 sa City of Dagupan.

Wala namang napulat na pinsala sa Luna at mga karatig-bayan.

Wala ring inaasahang aftershocks matapos ang pagyanig.



UN chief wants worldwide 'state of climate emergency'

December 13, 2020, 11:16 am



STATE OF CLIMATE EMERGENCY. United Nations Secretary-General Antonio Guterres delivers a speech at the Climate Ambition Summit at the UN headquarters in New York, on Dec. 12, 2020. Guterres called for a worldwide "state of climate emergency" to tackle global warming. *(Mark Garten/UN Photo/Handout via Xinhua)*

UNITED NATIONS – UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Saturday called for a worldwide "state of climate emergency" to tackle global warming.

Five years after the Paris Agreement on climate change, the world is still not going in the right direction, he told the Climate Ambition Summit co-convened by the United Nations and the governments of Britain and France.

The Paris Agreement promised to limit temperature rise to as close to 1.5 degrees Celsius as possible. But the commitments made in Paris were far from enough to get there. And even those commitments are not being met, he noted.

"Carbon dioxide levels are at record highs. Today, we are 1.2 degrees hotter than before the industrial revolution. If we don't change course, we may be headed for a catastrophic temperature rise of more than 3 degrees this century. Can anybody still deny that we are facing a dramatic emergency?" he asked.

"That is why today I call on all leaders worldwide to declare a state of climate emergency in their countries until carbon neutrality is reached."

Some 38 countries have already done so, recognizing the urgency and the stakes. All other countries should follow, said Guterres. *(Xinhua)*



UN chief calls for worldwide 'state of climate emergency'

Published December 13, 2020, 6:16 PM

by [AFP & Xinhua](#)

UNITED NATIONS — UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Saturday called for a worldwide “state of climate emergency” to tackle global warming.



UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres

(Photo by Angela Weiss / AFP / FILE PHOTO / MANILA BULLETIN)

Five years after the Paris Agreement on climate change, the world is still not going in the right direction, he told the Climate Ambition Summit co-convened by the United Nations and the governments of Britain and France.

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“That is why today I call on all leaders worldwide to declare a state of climate emergency in their countries until carbon neutrality is reached.”

Some 38 countries have already done so, recognizing the urgency and the stakes. All other countries should follow, said Guterres.

The recovery from COVID-19 presents an opportunity to set economies and societies on a green path in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, he said.

But that is not yet happening. So far, the members of the Group of 20 largest economies in the world are spending 50 percent more in their stimulus and rescue packages on sectors linked to fossil fuel production and consumption, than on low-carbon energy. This is unacceptable, he said.

“The trillions of dollars needed for COVID recovery is money that we are borrowing from future generations. This is a moral test. We cannot use these resources to lock in policies that burden future generations with a mountain of debt on a broken planet.”

To achieve carbon neutrality by 2050, meaningful cuts are needed now to reduce global emissions by 45 percent by 2030 compared with 2010 levels, he said.

This must be fully reflected in the revised and strengthened Nationally Determined Contributions that the signatories to the Paris Agreement are obliged to submit well before the UN Climate Change Conference next year in Glasgow, Scotland.



Britain has pledged to cut emissions by 68 percent by 2030 compared to 1990.

The European Union has agreed to cut emissions by at least 55 percent by 2030 compared to 1990, he noted.

“These decisions deserve to be emulated. Every country, city, financial institution and company needs to adopt plans to reach net-zero emissions by 2050, and start executing them now, including by providing clear short-term targets. Key emitting sectors such as shipping, aviation and industry must also present and implement new, transformational roadmaps in line with this goal.”

Fast-growing China, the world’s biggest emitter, outlined limited new ambitions in green energy at a virtual “Climate Ambition Summit” addressed by more than 70 leaders.

President Xi Jinping said China would work to reduce the intensity of its emissions by 65 percent by 2030, compared with 2005 levels.

He promised to “aim to peak carbon dioxide emissions before 2030,” repeating a pledge he made in September, when the world’s second-largest economy said it would achieve net-zero emissions by 2060.

But Xi reiterated China’s view that while it is still developing economically, richer countries should step up more.

More than 110 countries have committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2050.

Under the Paris deal’s “ratchet” mechanism, countries are required to submit renewed emissions cutting plans – termed Nationally Determined Contributions or NDCs – every five years.

The deadline for this is December 31.



UN chief urges state leaders to declare climate emergency



Antonio Guterres —REUTERS

LONDON—UN chief Antonio Guterres has called on governments to declare a “state of climate emergency” and make good on their promises to slash carbon pollution as they recover from the pandemic.

Speaking at the opening of the Climate Ambition summit, held online to mark five years since the Paris climate deal, Guterres warned that nations’ current commitments were “far from enough” to limit temperature rises to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

“If we don’t change course, we may be headed for a catastrophic temperature rise of more than 3.0 degrees this century,” he said.

“That is why today, I call on all leaders worldwide to declare a state of climate emergency in their countries until carbon neutrality is reached,” he added.

Taking part

UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson, China’s President Xi Jinping, and France’s Emmanuel Macron are among leaders taking part in the virtual summit.

More than 75 heads of state are expected to announce renewed emissions cutting targets or signal great intent to help the most vulnerable nations deal with increasingly frequent climate disasters.

The Paris deal enjoined nations to limit warming to “well-below” 2C through sweeping cuts to greenhouse gas emissions.

But progress has stalled even in the face of growing public anger over the state of the planet and a string of scientific reports warning of the dangers of inaction.

Net-zero targets

The UN says emissions must fall 7.6 percent annually through 2030 to keep the 1.5C temperature cap in play.

In 2020, as the pandemic brought lockdowns and restrictions on movement, emissions fell a record 7 percent, the United Nations said this week.

Yet Guterres said governments were missing the chance to green their economic recoveries.

He said G-20 nations—responsible for the lion’s share of carbon pollution—were spending 50 percent more in their rescue packages on sectors linked to fossil fuels than to low-carbon energy.



“This is unacceptable. We cannot use these resources to lock in policies that burden future generations with a mountain of debt on a broken planet,” he said via videolink.

Guterres urged countries that had already announced net-zero targets to make good on their promises and to accelerate emissions cuts in line with the science.

“Every country, city, financial institution, and company needs to adopt plans to reach net zero emissions by 2050—and start executing them now, including by providing clear short-term targets,” he added. —AFP



UN chief urges global summit to declare 'climate emergency'

posted December 13, 2020 at 06:00 am

by [AFP and Jitendra Joshi, Anna Malpas, Patrick Galey](#)

UN chief Antonio Guterres on Saturday urged world leaders to declare a "state of climate emergency" and shape greener growth after the coronavirus pandemic, as he opened a summit marking five years since the landmark Paris Agreement.



UN chief Antonio Guterres. AFP

The Climate Ambition Summit, being held online, comes as the United Nations warns current commitments to tackle rises in global temperatures are inadequate.

The commitments made in Paris in 2015 were "far from enough" to limit temperature rises to 1.5 degrees Celsius, the UN secretary-general said in his opening address to the summit, which is co-hosted by Britain and France.

"If we don't change course, we may be headed for a catastrophic temperature rise of more than 3.0 degrees this century," he said.

"That is why today, I call on all leaders worldwide to declare a State of Climate Emergency in their countries until carbon neutrality is reached," he added, arguing the recovery from COVID-19 presented a rare opportunity to recalibrate growth.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson told the climate summit that a traumatic year of pandemic was ending with the hope of vaccines coming on-stream.

"My message to you all is that together, we can use scientific advances to protect our planet, our biosphere against a challenge far worse, far more destructive, than even the coronavirus pandemic," he said.

For its part, Britain was acting on climate not because it was a nation of "mung bean-eating eco freaks" but because scientific progress would allow the creation of "millions" of green jobs, Johnson added.

Speaking slots were handed to countries that submitted the most ambitious plans to accelerate their Paris promises.

These include Honduras and Guatemala, which were hit last month by a pair of monster hurricanes, as well as India, which is battling increasingly erratic weather patterns and air pollution.

Business figures set to speak include Tim Cook, the chief executive of Apple, which has committed to making its whole supply chain carbon neutral by 2030.

But major economies including Australia, Brazil and South Africa are absent.

Brazil's far-right President Jair Bolsonaro has dismissed the scale of destruction to the Amazon rainforest opened up by his climate-sceptic policies.

The United States, the world's second-largest polluter after China, left the Paris Agreement under President Donald Trump. President-elect Joe Biden plans immediately to re-enter the accord, and has set a goal of carbon neutrality by 2050.



"We haven't come close to the bold action that's needed, and today, we have no time to waste," Biden said in a statement Saturday, reiterating a pledge to convene leaders of major economies for his own climate summit within 100 days of taking office next month.

'Moment of accountability'

Speakers at Saturday's summit were delivering short video messages, with organisers saying they would announce "new and ambitious climate change commitments" and that there would be "no space for general statements".

Under the Paris climate accord, signatories committed to action to limit temperature rises to "well below" 2.0 Celsius above pre-industrial levels, and to try to restrain them to 1.5C.

But the UN warned this week that temperatures remain on course to rise more than 3.0C this century, creating a crisis that will "dwarf the impacts of Covid-19".

The summit is a stocktaking exercise five years after the Paris accord was signed and a prelude to the UN's COP26 climate change conference in Scotland next November. That was meant to happen last month but was delayed by the pandemic.

Greenpeace called Saturday a "moment of accountability for leaders".

Under the Paris deal's "ratchet" mechanism, countries are required to submit renewed emissions cutting plans — termed Nationally Determined Contributions or NDCs — every five years.

The deadline for this is December 31.

Countries are set to announce efforts to reduce national emissions, long-term strategies, and financial commitments to support the most vulnerable.

More than 110 countries have committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2050. China, the world's biggest polluter, announced in September plans to achieve net-zero emissions by 2060.

The summit comes as EU leaders on Friday committed to the goal of reducing emissions by 55 percent by 2030 compared to 1990 levels.

Britain -- out of the EU since January -- this month announced it would seek to reduce emissions by 68 percent over the same period.

Johnson has presented plans for a "green industrial revolution" creating up to 250,000 jobs. Before the summit opened, he committed to ending all direct British government support for the fossil fuel sector overseas.



UN sa mga world leaders: Magdeklara na ng ‘climate emergency’

By **Bombo Bam Orpilla** -December 13, 2020 | 3:11 AM

Hinikayat ngayon ng United Nations (UN) ang mga world leaders na magdeklara na ng “climate emergency” sa kani-kanilang mga bansa upang masimulan ang aksyon sa paglaban sa mapaminsalang global warming.

Pahayag ito ni UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres sa kanyang talumpati kasabay ng ikalimang taong anibersaryo ng 2015 Paris Agreement.

Ayon kay Guterres, tila hindi umano sapat ang mga umiiral nang commitments sa buong mundo para malimitahan ang pagtaas ng temperatura.

“Can anybody still deny that we are facing a dramatic emergency?” wika ni Guterres. “That is why today, I call on all leaders worldwide to declare a State of Climate Emergency in their countries until carbon neutrality is reached.”

Binatikos din nito ang mayayamang mga bansa sa paggastos sa 50% ng kanilang pondo para sa COVID-19 pandemic sa fossil fuel kaysa sa low-carbon energy.

“So far, the members of the G20 are spending 50% more in their stimulus and rescue packages on sectors linked to fossil fuel production and consumption, than on low-carbon energy,” ani Guterres.

“This is unacceptable. The trillions of dollars needed for COVID recovery is money that we are borrowing from future generations,” dagdag nito. “We cannot use these resources to lock in policies that burden future generations with a mountain of debt on a broken planet.”

Sa kasalukuyan, nasa 38 bansa pa lamang ang nagdeklara ng climate emergency kaya hinimok ni Guterres ang iba pang mga lider na gayahin ito.

Kaugnay nito, kapwa nangako ang China at India na kanilang sisikapang mapababa ang carbon pollution sa kani-kanilang bansa.

Sinabi ni Chinese President Xi Jinping na palalakasin nila ang kapasidad ng kanilang wind and solar power ng hanggang 1,200 gigawatts sa susunod na dekalda.

Sa panig naman ni Prime Minister Narendra Modi, paiigtingin nila ang paggamit ng malinis na pagkukunan ng enerhiya at “on target” aniya sila na makamit ang itinakdang emmissions norms sa ilalim ng 2015 Paris agreement. (AFP/ Reuters)

Source: <https://www.bomboradyo.com/un-sa-mga-world-leaders-magdeklara-na-ng-climate-emergency/>

World urged to move on 'climate emergency' after pandemic

Jitendra Joshi and Patrick Galey, Agence France-Presse

Posted at Dec 13 2020 09:07 AM



Glaciers in China's bleak, rugged Qilian mountains are disappearing at a shocking rate as global warming brings unpredictable change and raises the prospect of crippling, long-term water shortages, scientists say. The largest glacier in the 800-km (500-mile) mountain chain on the arid northeastern edge of the Tibetan plateau has retreated about 450 meters since the 1950s, when researchers set up China's first monitoring station to study it. Picture taken with a drone. *Carlos Garcia Rawlins, Reuters/File*

LONDON - The United Nations on Saturday urged leaders to declare a global climate emergency and shape greener growth after the coronavirus pandemic, as nations took gloomy stock five years since the landmark Paris Agreement.

Fast-growing China, the world's biggest emitter, outlined limited new ambitions in green energy at a virtual "Climate Ambition Summit" addressed by more than 70 leaders.

In the dying days of Donald Trump's administration, the US government was one notable absentee after abandoning the Paris pact.

But President-elect Joe Biden issued a statement arguing there was "no time to waste", as he prepares to embrace the deal anew and to host his own climate summit within 100 days of taking office next month.

"Welcome back, welcome home!" French President Emmanuel Macron told the Americans, switching to English in his summit address.

Nations not invited by the organizers included Brazil and Australia, which both stand accused of ignoring the crisis under their right-wing governments in the buildup to the UN's next major climate summit next year, COP26, in the Scottish city of Glasgow.

Commitments made in Paris in 2015 were already "far from enough" to limit temperature rises to 1.5 degrees Celsius, UN secretary-general UN chief Antonio Guterres said in his opening address to the summit, which was co-hosted by Britain and France.

"If we don't change course, we may be headed for a catastrophic temperature rise of more than 3.0 degrees this century," he said.

"That is why today, I call on all leaders worldwide to declare a State of Climate Emergency in their countries until carbon neutrality is reached," he added, arguing the recovery from COVID-19 presented a rare opportunity to recalibrate growth.

'ECO FREAKS'

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson told the summit that "the promethean power of our invention" was yielding vaccines against the disease, and should be unleashed too for the climate.



Heading into the summit, Johnson committed to ending all direct UK support for the fossil-fuel sector overseas. And he has presented plans for a "green industrial revolution" creating up to 250,000 jobs, especially in renewable energy.

"We are doing this not because we are hair-shirt-wearing, tree-hugging, mung-bean-munching eco freaks," he told the summit.

"We are doing it because we know that scientific advances will allow us, collectively as humanity, to save our planet and create millions of high-skilled jobs as we recover from COVID."

Israel and Pakistan vowed to phase out coal-fired power plants. But while India touted its green credentials, there was little new in the way of action from a country that is battling increasingly erratic weather patterns and air pollution.

President Xi Jinping said China would work to reduce the intensity of its emissions by 65 percent by 2030, compared with 2005 levels.

He promised to "aim to peak carbon dioxide emissions before 2030", repeating a pledge he made in September, when the world's second-largest economy said it would achieve net-zero emissions by 2060.

But Xi reiterated China's view that while it is still developing economically, richer countries should step up more.

Smaller countries attending the online summit included Honduras and Guatemala, which were hit last month by a pair of monster hurricanes.

Maldives President Ibrahim Mohamed Solih, whose low-lying country could be wiped out by rising seas in the Indian Ocean, said: "The Maldives will do all that it can to address the climate emergency.

"We call on the international community to do the same," he said, noting that rich countries had been promising more technical and financial help "over many decades".

In his own message, Pope Francis stressed that both the pandemic and climate change "weigh most heavily upon the lives of the poor and vulnerable".

'FROM DISASTER TO CALAMITY'

More than 110 countries have committed to becoming carbon neutral by 2050.

Under the Paris deal's "ratchet" mechanism, countries are required to submit renewed emissions cutting plans — termed Nationally Determined Contributions or NDCs — every five years.

The deadline for this is December 31.

Tim Gore, head of climate policy at Oxfam, bemoaned a missed opportunity on Saturday.

"The Climate Ambition Summit lacked real ambition. World leaders must step up in the next 12 critical months to pull the world back from the brink of catastrophic climate change," he said.

There were few new commitments on short-term emissions cuts, and little on help from richer countries to poorer ones to help them adapt to climate change and decarbonize their economies.

"We must not stumble from COVID-19 disaster into climate calamity," Gore said.

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Source: https://news.abs-cbn.com/overseas/12/13/20/world-urged-to-move-on-climate-emergency-after-pandemic?fbclid=IwAR1meZAx_MrkWEQKt9RfqPU15kei73C9JsM2pf0Jm2EidmGOfaY8C-pkrUE



Pope commits Vatican to net zero carbon emissions by 2050

Philip Pullella, Reuters

Posted at Dec 13 2020 02:30 PM



Pope Francis conducts a Mass on the feast day of Our Lady of Guadalupe in St. Peter's Basilica, at the Vatican, December 12, 2020. *Remo Casilli/Pool/Reuters/file*

VATICAN CITY - Pope Francis urged countries on Saturday to work towards net zero carbon emissions and committed Vatican City - the world's smallest state - to reaching the target by 2050.

Francis, who has championed environmental causes since his election in 2013, told a UN climate summit the 108-acre (44-hectare) city-state surrounded by Rome would be doing its bit to fight climate change.

"The current pandemic and climate change, which are not only environmentally relevant, but also ethically, socially, economically and politically, affect, above all, the lives of the poorest and most fragile," he said in a video message to the summit.

"In addition to adopting some measures that cannot be postponed any longer, a strategy is needed to reduce net emissions to zero," Francis said.

He committed the Vatican "to reducing net emissions to zero by 2050," as well as intensifying environmental management efforts and furthering the rational use of natural resources such as water and planting more trees.

A Vatican statement said the city-state was moving ahead with plans to substitute all its combustion engine cars with electric or hybrid vehicles.

It said the Vatican, which began installing solar panels in 2008 and banned single-use plastic bags last year, was now recycling 65% of its waste and aimed to reach 75% in 2023.

In his address, Francis said the Holy See was committed to promoting, in Catholic schools and elsewhere, "an education for integral ecology" to favor development and sustainability and encourage economic policies that respect the environment.

In 2015, Francis wrote a landmark encyclical "Laudato Si" (Praised Be) on the need to protect nature. It backed scientific evidence that human activity was to blame for global warming.

Francis also strongly backed the Paris agreement to limit the global rise of temperatures and has said he was saddened by US President Donald Trump's decision to withdraw from it.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/overseas/12/13/20/pope-commits-vatican-to-net-zero-carbon-emissions-by-2050>



Air pollution from coal-fired PH power plants causing hundreds of deaths per year, says think tank

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Dec 13 2020 05:28 AM



Despite years of laying the groundwork for a greener economy, the Philippines' energy mix remains predominantly brown. *Photo by Pixabay*

MANILA — Hundreds of people are dying in the Philippines every year because of air pollution coming from 28 coal-fired power plants in the country, and figures are set to increase if the country continues to rely on coal plants, a study has revealed.

Isabela Suarez, analyst at Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air, said air pollution in the country is a “health crisis in the making.”

The [group's study](#) showed that 28 coal-fired power plants caused 630 air pollution-related deaths every year, and nearly 68 percent of the estimated premature deaths were in Luzon.

“The real danger for air pollution on our health is long-term exposure. the longer we are exposed to dangerous levels of air pollution, the higher the risk. The sooner we could address this problem, and the sooner we could control emissions . . . The better it is for our health, the more reduced the cost would be,” Suarez said in an interview on ANC.

The Department of Energy in [late October](#) announced a moratorium on accepting new applications for greenfield coal power plants but coal plants under construction and with approved permits can proceed.

According to the DOE's statement, the moratorium on the endorsements for such plants, coupled with the opening up of the country's geothermal sector to “greater foreign investments,” was just some of the innovations the agency will be implementing.

“As the [DOE] re-evaluates the appropriateness of our current energy mix vis-a-vis our energy goals, I am optimistic that this would lead to more opportunities for renewable energy to figure prominently in our country's energy future,” Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi had said.

But Suarez said the country would be dependent on coal energy in the next 40 years as some coal-powered power plants are still in the pipeline.

These proposed plants will be responsible for 26,000 premature deaths among Filipinos “over its lifetime,” she said.

“These are deaths that could have been entirely avoided without pollution from these coal-fired power plants . . . Those most vulnerable to the effects of air pollution (are) elderly, children, people with pre-existing conditions, as well as pregnant women,” Suarez added.



The government, she said, should instead start focusing on renewable energy to prevent these deaths especially during the time when the world is battling COVID-19.

“It is time to go all in on renewable energy... It is really a no-brainer when we look at these health costs and these economic costs, they have long been ignored or haven't been prioritized in our energy transition,” Suarez said.

“This needs to be prioritized in the time of COVID which is a health pandemic, and coal plants are also a health crisis in the making.”



China vows reduced emission by 65 percent

Developed countries should step up their provision of funds, technologies and support in capacity-building to developing countries

Published 4 hours ago on December 14, 2020 03:00 AM

By [TDT](#) [@tribunephl](#)



CHINA President Xi Jinping promises to aim to peak carbon dioxide emissions before 2030. PETER KLAUNZER/Agence France-Presse

LONDON, United Kingdom (AFP) — China and India edged forward in their commitment to lower carbon pollution on Saturday, issuing a string of promises that experts said fell short of action needed from the two emerging giants.

President Xi Jinping told a virtual climate summit that China would work to reduce the intensity of its emissions by 65 percent by 2030, compared with 2005 levels.

Xi promised to “aim to peak carbon dioxide emissions before 2030,” repeating a pledge he made in September, when the world’s largest emitter said it would achieve net-zero emissions by 2060.

He told the summit that renewables would account for 25 percent of China’s primary energy consumption by 2030, and it would aim to have 1,200 gigawatts of solar and wind capacity installed by then.

More than 70 heads of state were addressing the Climate Ambition Summit, co-hosted by Britain, France and the United Nations on the fifth anniversary of the landmark Paris Agreement.

Under the Paris deal, countries must resubmit new plans to cut emissions every five years, with current commitments insufficient to achieve the accord’s primary goal of limiting global warming to “well below” 2.0 degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit).

The UN said this week that global carbon pollution fell a record seven percent in 2020 due to pandemic response measures that curbed free movement and electricity demand.

But it said that the emissions of China — the first to lock down and to reopen its economy after the virus emerged in the city of Wuhan a year ago — fell just 1.7 percent as Beijing sought a swift rebound from Covid-19.

Xi reiterated China’s view that while it is still developing economically, richer countries should step up more.



“Developed countries should step up their provision of funds, technologies and support in capacity-building to developing countries,” he said.

Li Shuo, a China expert at Greenpeace, said Xi’s announcement on Saturday “will increase China’s effort to further reduce carbon intensity and ensure exponential growth of wind and solar power over the next decade.”

“However, Beijing has the potential to do more. Making its emissions peak earlier than 2025 is still something it should strive for,” he told AFP.

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi said his country — the fourth largest emitter — would seek to have 450 gigawatts of renewable capacity installed by 2030.

He said that by 2047 — the centenary of independence from Britain — India “will not only meet its own targets but will also exceed your expectations.”

But to the disappointment of campaigners, India has yet to set a date for when it hopes to achieve carbon neutrality.

Emails from the edge: Svalbard's polar bears are sending messages to scientists

By Temujin Doran, Max Burnell and Tom Page, CNN

Updated 1756 GMT (0156 HKT) December 9, 2020

(CNN) Polar bears take some cajoling as pen pals. First you need to find one, then sedate it and quickly give it the necessary tools before it wakes up. It's an awkward first encounter -- how many friendships do you know that start with a tranquilizer dart? -- and admittedly a one-sided correspondence, but soon they're sending messages daily.

Every morning, Jon Aars, a senior researcher at the Norwegian Polar Institute, receives a batch of emails from several female polar bears in the High Arctic, checking in and letting him know where they are. "It's always a nice way to start the day," he says.

Svalbard, a Norwegian archipelago north of the mainland, is an ideal place for Aars to study a section of the world's estimated [26,000 remaining polar bears](#). "(There are) about 300 living in Svalbard year-round," he explains, "if you fly for one hour, most of the time you find one."

Each year, Aars and his colleagues at the Institute capture around 70 polar bears and fit them with a tracking collar which continuously logs movement. Once a day the collar makes a satellite call, transmitting the last 24 hours of data back to the Institute, where it lands in Aars' inbox.

"Data from movement has been very important to understand how they react and how they might respond to climate change," Aars explains.

These large mammals are canaries in this frigid coal mine. A warming climate means a vast amount of sea ice is melting in the region, and rising temperatures are also preventing seasonal ice -- which melts and recurs annually -- from forming in places it once did. Several seal species -- polar bears' main prey -- rely on sea ice, Aars explains, and more often than not, where sea ice can be found, so too polar bears. But these creatures are being forced to move with the times.

"Because conditions change, (polar bears) will use more time on land and look for different options," he explains. "They hunt reindeer, they will take more birds and eggs. We have seen that bears are in different areas than they used to be -- so much further north."

[Find out more about Call to Earth and the extraordinary people working for a more sustainable future](#)

Along with the tracking collar, the Institute weighs bears and takes samples to monitor their health and diet, as well as testing for evidence of pollutants. The collar can also record body temperature, which can tell scientists if a bear has moved inside a den -- an indication the animal is going to give birth.



A sedated polar bear awaits testing and tracking by the Norwegian Polar Institute.



Sea ice loss is also having an impact on where polar bears are born, says Aars: "A layer of sea ice on top of the ocean makes it possible for bears to walk long distances. Important areas that they used to go to give birth to cubs are more or less lost, because you don't have sea ice on those islands anymore."

Bears are now swimming as far as 200 kilometers (124 miles) to reach an island den, he adds, something they did not need to do 20 years ago.

"Polar bears are optimistic animals," Aars says. "It seems that they are quite resistant, and they are doing quite well despite the fact that they've lost a lot of their habitat." Despite the odds, Svalbard's polar bear numbers do not appear to have decreased in the last 20 years, he says.

That may not always be the case, though. According to [NASA](#), summer ice in the Arctic is shrinking by more than 13% each decade, and this year the National Snow and Ice Data Center (NSIDC) reported the [second lowest levels of summer sea ice ever recorded](#). The 14 lowest levels of sea ice have all occurred in the past 14 years, according to the NSIDC.



Aars, who has worked on Svalbard since 2003, says "glaciers are not where they used to be," and have retreated hundreds of meters, even kilometers.

Put simply, the prognosis is not good. "You don't find polar bears anywhere in the Arctic where you don't have sea ice at least seasonally," says Aars. "Change is so significant and so fast, we will reach some stage in the future where it will get much harder to be a polar bear in Svalbard."

In the meantime, his research could reveal how to help his pen pals hold out a little longer.

"What is important for us is that all this data tells us how they will respond in the future," he adds. "Of course, you cannot do a lot ... but if you still have some sea ice, enough that they would be able to be there, then it is very important to know what else you can do to make sure those species can do as well as possible."

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