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DENR

NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Syndicates behind illegal harvest of giant clams posing as researchers- Cimatu

Published May 15, 2021, 4:04 PM

by [Bethena Unite](#)

Beware of individuals posing as researchers only to harvest giant clams for illicit trade.



CLAMMY HANDS? – A Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) diver carefully re-seeds a giant clam on March 11, 2021. (FILE PHOTO)

This was the warning of Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu to the public after more than 300 pieces of giant clam shells in Johnson Island and 150 tons of giant clams in Green Island both in Roxas, Palawan were seized in March and April, respectively.

According to the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) Executive Director Teodoro Jose Matta, a certain Dr. Rosalee Tequillo, who identified herself as the national facilitator of the National Redemption Program for Fossilized Giant Clams, admitted that she is buying the giant clams for scientific research.

“There was an admission on the part of Dr. Tequillo that they were engaged in the collection and possession of giant clamshells or ‘taklobo’ (*Tridacna gigas*) but she was not able to prove that it was for scientific purposes. Her mention of the ‘buyer’ has inclined us to believe that it was not truly for scientific or breeding or propagation purpose,” Matta explained.

He added that Tequillo failed to provide valid documentary evidence to prove that their activities are legal, bolstering suspicion that the wildlife resources are actually up for illicit trade.

“She was also not able to present any document from the Office of the President (OP) about the National Redemption Program. The only evidence she presented is a document purportedly from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) National Director Commodore Eduardo Gongona which they use to justify their collection and possession of giant clam species,” Matta said.

“But upon examination of said document, the PCSDS (Palawan Council for Sustainable Development Staff) found that it did not and does not, in any way give, Dr. Tequillo and her group or any private individual any authority to collect, extract or possess fossilized giant clam species,” he added.

The PCSDS warned the group that “the conduct of such undertaking under the guise of possessing legal authority from the OP and the BFAR and misinforming the public, carry the imposition of corresponding sanctions under the law.”



This compelled the agency to build a case against the erring individuals behind the illegal trade of giant clams in Johnson Island and Green Island in Roxas, Palawan for violation of Republic Act (RA) 9147 or Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2001.

“Our vast wildlife resources, especially in Palawan, considered as the country’s ‘last ecological frontier,’ should be protected with utmost responsibility from frauds. This is the reason behind the DENR’s stringent laws and policies on wildlife and its scrutiny of individuals who want to gain access or control over these species,” Cimatú said.



Cimatu nagbabala vs walang konsensyang indibidwal na sangkot sa illegal trade ng giant clams sa Palawan



May 14, 2021 @ 7:58 PM 1 day ago

Manila, Philippines – Hinimok ni Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu ang publiko na gumawa ng ibayong pagi-ingat sa pakikitungo sa mga individual na nagkukunwang mga scientific researcher upang manguha lamang ng mga giant clams para sa kaniyang illegal na pangangalakal.

Ginawa ni Cimatu ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ang pahayag matapos ang Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) kabilang ang iba pang ahensya ng gobyerno ay makakumpiska ng mahigit 300 piraso ng giant clam shells sa Johnson Island at 150 tons ng giant clams sa Green Island kapwa sa Roxas, Palawan nitong Marso at Abril ng kasalukuyan taon.

“Our vast wildlife resources, especially in Palawan, considered as the country’s ‘last ecological frontier,’ should be protected with utmost responsibility from frauds. This is the reason behind the DENR’s stringent laws and policies on wildlife and its scrutiny of individuals who want to gain access or control over these species,” ani Cimatu.

Ayon sa DENR si PCSD Executive Director Teodoro Jose Matta ay nakasama ang isang Dr. Rosalee Tequillo na nagpakilalang sa kanyang sarili bilang national facilitator ng National Redemption Program for Fossilized Giant Clams at “buyer” ng giant clams para sa scientific purposes.

“There was an admission on the part of Dr. Tequillo that they were engaged in the collection and possession of giant clamshells or ‘taklobo’ (Tridacna gigas) but she was not able to prove that it was for scientific purposes. Her mention of the ‘buyer’ has inclined us to believe that it was not truly for scientific or breeding or propagation purpose,” ipinaliwanag pa ni Matta.

Sinabi pa nito na nabigo si Tequillo na magpakita ng valid documentary na ebidensya na magpapatunay ng kanyang legal na aktibidad.



“She was also not able to present any document from the Office of the President (OP) about the National Redemption Program. The only evidence she presented is a document purportedly from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) National Director Commodore Eduardo Gongona which they use to justify their collection and possession of giant clam species,” ayon pa kay Matta.

“But upon examination of said document, the PCSDS (Palawan Council for Sustainable Development Staff) found that it did not and does not, in any way give, Dr. Tequillo and her group or any private individual any authority to collect, extract or possess fossilized giant clam species,” idinagdag pa nito.

Nagbabala pa ang PCDS sa mga grupo na nagsasagawa ng mga aktibidad at nagkukunwang legal authority mula sa Office of the President at sa BFAR at nagbibigay ng maling balita sa publiko at may kaukulang batas hinggil dito sa ilalim ng batas. (Santi Celario)



Illegal Trade of Giant Clams in Palawan

Cimatu warns public vs unscrupulous individuals behind illegal trade of giant clams in Palawan

by  **Village Connect** about 14 hours ago



Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu urged the public to exercise extra precautions when dealing with individuals who pose as scientific researchers only to harvest giant clams for illicit trade.

Cimatu issued the statement after the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) together with other concerned government agencies, seized more than 300 pieces of giant clam shells in Johnson Island and 150 tons of giant clams in Green Island both in Roxas, Palawan in March and April, respectively.

"Our vast wildlife resources, especially in Palawan, considered as the country's 'last ecological frontier,' should be protected with utmost responsibility from frauds. This is the reason behind the DENR's stringent laws and policies on wildlife and its scrutiny of individuals who want to gain access or control over these species," Cimatu said.

PCSD Executive Director Teodoro Jose Matta met with Dr. Rosalee Tequillo, who identified herself as the national facilitator of the National Redemption Program for Fossilized Giant Clams and "buyer" of the giant clams for scientific purposes.

"There was an admission on the part of Dr. Tequillo that they were engaged in the collection and possession of giant clamshells or 'Taklobo' (Tridacna gigas) but she was not able to prove that it was for scientific purposes. Her mention of the 'buyer' has inclined us to believe that it was not truly for scientific or breeding or propagation purpose," Matta explained.

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The PCSDS warned the group that "the conduct of such undertaking under the guise of possessing legal authority from the OP and the BFAR and misinforming the public, carry the imposition of corresponding sanctions under the law."

The DENR, through PCSD, said it is currently building a case against the culprits behind the illegal trade of giant clams in Johnson Island and Green Island in Roxas, Palawan for violation of Republic Act (RA) 9147 or Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2001.

Matta said the PCSD will "remain firm in its commitment to clamp down on illegal wildlife trade in Palawan and ensure a sustainable environment for Palaweños."

PCSD is an attached agency of the DENR by virtue of Executive Order No. 734 series of 2008.



DENR pushes for at-source waste segregation through local ordinances

By Ma. Alaine P. Allanigue Published on May 15, 2021



DENR Usec. for Solid Waste Management and LGUs Concerns Benny D. Antiporda

QUEZON CITY, May 15 (PIA) -- Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has urged local government units (LGUs) to pass ordinances that will direct barangays to implement waste segregation at source.

DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and LGUs Concerns Benny D. Antiporda said cities and municipalities nationwide should focus on waste segregation at source for the effective collection and disposal of solid waste.

Antiporda echoed his call for efficient and effective handling of solid waste during a recent dialogue with local officials, organized by environmental health group EcoWaste Coalition.

"Propose to your local council to create an ordinance that will act on those who do not practice segregation in their barangays," Antiporda said.

"It is already stated in RA (Republic Act) 9003 (Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000), but let us strengthen it with the help of your council," he added.

Antiporda, who is also the alternate chair of the National Solid Waste Management Commission, recommended the creation of inter-barangay enforcement group or designation of "environmental marshals" in every barangay within a city/municipality to monitor solid waste management practices in neighboring barangays.

He also encouraged the LGUs to discuss the allocation of funds to address problems on the collection of biodegradable and residual waste.

"Kindly... allocate funds for biodegradable and residual wastes," Antiporda said.

He likewise reiterated the commitment of the DENR to provide technical and financial assistance to the LGUs on their solid waste management programs to ensure the effective implementation of solid waste management in the country. (PIA NCR)

Source: <https://pia.gov.ph/news/articles/1075269>



Tree of the gods

DENR races to draft guidelines for commercial cultivation of rare, valuable Aquilaria timber species, source of precious agarwood.

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA

MAY 16, 2021



A DRAFT administrative order that may pave the way for the commercial propagation of the agarwood-producing Aquilaria tree species in the Philippines amid the pandemic is now being reviewed by a technical working group of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Central Office.

Once it passes the crucial assessment, the draft administrative order will be submitted to the Office of the Secretary of the DENR for signing, finally putting in place guidelines for the establishment of commercial or backyard tree farms for the purpose of producing agarwood.



A farm worker cuts off portions of an infected Aquilaria tree, revealing dark aromatic resins that would produce agar.

Listed under Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, trading of Aquilaria species is regulated and requires a specific permit to import and export.

Endangered species

COMMONLY called Lapnisan, Aquilaria tree species naturally occur in Southeast Asian and Asian countries and only one or two species are common to one or more countries.

In the Philippines, Aquilaria is an endangered species, which means it is in danger of being extinct, all because of the frenzied hunt for agarwood and its exotic fragrance.



The DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau is eyeing the establishment of agarwood farms starting with the commercial propagation of *Aquilaria* as a conservation measure, with hopes of preventing the illegal trade that targets *Aquilaria* tree species in the deep forests of the Visayas and Mindanao.

"The draft guideline is still with the planning and technical working group undergoing review," Atty. Theresa Tenazas, chief of the DENR's Wildlife Resource Division, told the BusinessMirror.

Nevertheless, she said, interested parties may now apply for a wildlife collector's permit (WCP) for the purpose of gathering *Aquilaria* trees, which they can propagate, perhaps as an income-generating venture amid pandemic economic difficulties. The prospect of the draft guidelines eventually getting the approval may happen soon.

Seeds and seedlings of *Aquilaria* are also now available on the market, as some countries have started commercial propagation of the unique tree species, it was learned.

"I think so. It will be approved, eventually. As a policy-making body, we recommended it. It is now in the planning and technical working group for further study," says Tenazas.



Targeted commodity

BECAUSE it is expensive, agarwood is a target of illegal wildlife traders. The market for this rare wood product is not local but outside the country. "Buyers are from other Asian countries, not here," Rogelio Demelletes, a wildlife law enforcer from the DENR-BMB, told the BusinessMirror.

Those who brave the dense forests of the Visayas and Mindanao in search for agarwood, he said, are highly motivated by the cost of this rare commodity.

First-class agarwood can fetch up to \$100,000 per kilo. "When you say first class, it is very fragrant," says Demelletes. Less fragrant agarwood can fetch from P500,000 to P1 million per kilo, he said.

Collection, propagation

ONCE put in place, Tenazas said, the guidelines would allow the process for wildlife collectors' permit application to start rolling.

"Once approved, those with a wildlife collector's permit will need to have a wildlife culture permit for trees. That's the counterpart of a wildlife farm permit," Tenazas said.

Upon approval by the DENR-BMB, applicants for wildlife culture permits can start the commercial propagation of *Aquilaria* trees.



“Right now, we are open for wildlife collector’s permit. They can apply anytime. The problem is we still haven’t identified the areas where these trees can be found,” she said.

She said the DENR-BMB and the Forest Management Bureau (FMB) might need to conduct a survey to identify the areas where the collection can be allowed.

The conduct of mapping and surveying to identify the areas is also integrated into the draft guideline submitted by the DENR-BMB.

“The DAO proposes limited collection depending on the population of agarwood in an area,” she said. “We still have to work with the FMB for the mapping of the location of agarwood,” she said.

Authorities have made several arrests against those who have been caught illegally transporting small quantities of agarwood. While the agarwood the perpetrators collected is in small quantities, it is highly possible that they have already cut several trees to collect even just a kilo.

“It’s hits and misses. Not all Aquilaria they can find are agarwood. But they cut it down, nevertheless,” Demelletes said.

What is agarwood?

AGARWOOD, also called the “wood of the gods,” is one of the most expensive woods in the world.

Sought for its fragrance, agarwood comes from several species of Aquilaria trees.

Asian Forest Cooperation Organization (AFoCo) Executive Director Ricardo L. Calderon said agarwood is formed in the heartwood of Aquilaria trees when infected with a type of mold. As the infection progresses, a dark aromatic resin called agar is produced.

With its distinct fragrance, agarwood is used in incense and perfume, and sometimes for its medicinal value.

“Due to the depletion of the tree species from the wild caused by over-harvesting and habitat loss, it was listed under Appendix II of CITES in 2004,” Calderon said.

“Agarwood is highly revered in Hinduism, Chinese folk religion and Islam,” Calderon, a forestry expert, said.

He believes that through commercial propagation, overharvesting can be avoided as a legal source of the precious commodity becomes available in the Philippines.

Huge economic potential

BECAUSE of its commercial value, plantations have already been developed in Malaysia, Sri Lanka and Cambodia, said Calderon, who initiated the crafting of the proposed guideline for the commercial propagation of Aquilaria trees and agarwood during his stint as director of the DENR-BMB.

Calderon said there’s economic opportunity in agarwood farming. Even backyard farming, he said, is quite promising.

Other countries have developed a way to produce agarwood, which is also possible in the Philippines, Calderon said.



The science behind it is already known and there are ways to make it happen in tree farms. While agarwood takes a decade or more to develop in the forest, in tree farms, agarwood can be mature in three to five years, according to Calderon.

“Agarwood is produced naturally in the forest when the tree is injured. In the plantations in Cambodia and Indonesia and in Papua New Guinea, they intentionally injure the trees for the mold to develop and produce agarwood,” says Calderon.

According to Calderon, the DENR through its forestry experts can help provide the much-needed training and capacity building for would-be agarwood farmers.

“We have Filipino foresters who have been employed in some of the tree farms doing these,” he added.

Aquilaria, he said, are usually found in secondary forests, between 300 and 400 meters above sea level. “These are rolling areas,” says Calderon.

But in tree farms, he said, it can be grown in low-elevation areas.

“In our proposed regulation, it can even be done in backyards. As long as they register the tree, they can get a permit to harvest it once it develops agar,” he said.

Images courtesy of Jurate Buiviene | Dreamstime.com, Daphanyc | Dreamstime.com and Witthawas Srisujit | Dreamstime.com



Treasure hunting no longer under MGB

By Hazel GloriaPublished on May 15, 2021

CEBU CITY, May 15 (PIA) -- The Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Central Visayas (DENR-7) is no longer the governing agency on treasure hunting activities.

MGB-7 Legal Officer Atty. Cid Jerome Navarez explained during the recent Kapihan sa PIA interview that treasure hunting activities are now under the National Museum of the Philippines (NMP) in view of Republic Act 4846 as amended by Presidential Decree 374, otherwise known as the "Cultural Properties Preservation and Protection Act."

The NMP is the government agency to implement the provision of this act and to regulate treasure hunting activities in public and private lands as the disposition of recovered hidden treasures or things of value, said Navarez.

"Among the mandates of the NMP is to enforce the law to include the monitoring, documentation, registration of cultural properties, issuance of licenses, certification, permits, information dissemination and research," he added.

MGB-7 will continue to provide technical assistance on geohazard assessment, among others, as provided within their mandate and jurisdiction if the area is protected or safe for treasure hunting activities.

Applicants for a treasure-hunting activity must first secure a clearance from the local government unit if the area to be excavated is public land.

Navarez assured the public that any report submitted to their office related to treasure hunting will be forwarded to the National Museum for proper action.

He urged the public to be vigilant and report to the authorities any illegal treasure hunting in their area. (hfg/PIA7)



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Source: <https://www.bignetwork.com/news/269485565/treasure-hunting-no-longer-under-mgb>



Hawk-eagle rescued in Agusan Sur handed over to DENR

By Alexander Lopez **May 15, 2021, 4:03 pm**

RESCUED HAWK-EAGLE. Executive Director Nonito M. Tamayo of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Caraga (DENR-13) receives a rescued juvenile male Philippine hawk-eagle (*Nisaetus pinskeri*) from an employee of the Philsaga Mining Corporation (PMC) on Friday (May 14, 2021). The bird of prey, which was found in good condition, was turned over to the Regional Wildlife Rescue Center in Kitcharao, Agusan del Norte, for further observation. *(Photo courtesy of DENR-13)*

BUTUAN CITY – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Caraga Region (DENR-13) formally received a rescued male Philippine hawk-eagle (*Nisaetus pinskeri*) from the Philsaga Mining Corporation (PMC) on May 14.

The eagle was rescued by a resident in Barangay Bunawan Brook, Bunawan, Agusan del Sur, and was turned over to PMC on May 13, DENR-13 said in a statement Saturday.

“The head security reported the incident to PMC President Atty. Raul C. Villanueva, who immediately called DENR-13 RED Tamayo for the turn-over of the wildlife since it cannot be possessed without a permit,” DENR-13 said.

According to DENR-13, the rescuer first thought the juvenile male raptor was a Philippine Eagle.

“The DENR-13, through a technical personnel, made a species identification of the rescued raptor and it turned out to be a hawk-eagle locally called ‘lawin,’” it said.

It added that hawk eagles are considered endangered species under the DENR Administrative Order No. 2019-09 or the Updated National List of Threatened Philippine Fauna and their Categories.

The eagle was found in good condition without any signs of injury but was recommended to be acclimatized because it is already tamed or imprinted based on its behavior.

“The bird of prey is now placed in a cage at the Regional Wildlife Rescue Center in Kitcharao, Agusan del Norte for further observation and health assessment before its release back to the wild,” DENR-13 said. **(PNA)**



News5
13h · 🌐

Isang juvenile Philippine hawk-eagle ang nai-turnover sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Region XIII sa tulong ng isang mining corporation sa Rosario, Agusan del Sur nitong Biyernes, May 14.

Kasalukuyan itong nasa pangangalaga ng Regional Wildlife Rescue Center sa Kitcharao, Agusan del Norte para obserbahan bago pakawalan sa kagubatan.

📍: DENR Caraga/Facebook

See Translation



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 **ABS-CBN News** 11h · 🌐

TINGNAN: Isang Philippine hawk-eagle ang binigay sa pangangalaga ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources sa Bayugan 3, Rosario, Agusan del Sur Biyernes.

Ang naturang endangered species ay nasagip ng residente sa Sitio Maghilot, Bunawan Brook na itinurn-over naman niya sa Philsaga Mining Corporation, na siyang nagbigay ng ibon sa DENR.

Nasa mabuting lagay at walang problema sa kalusugan ang lawin, ayon sa beteryaryo, ngunit kailangan nitong dumaan sa acclimatization dahil tamed o imprinted aniya ito.

Nasa Regional Wildlife Rescue Center sa Kitcharao, Agusan del Norte ang ibon para sa karagdagang pagsusuri bago ito pakawalan.

BASA HIN DITO ang kaugnay na ulat: <https://bit.ly/33Nji2R>

See Translation




  986

28 Comments 64 Shares



Dgte to set up pyrolysis tech for useful waste

By Jennifer TilosPublished on May 15, 2021



DUMAGUETE CITY, May 14 (PIA) -- The city government of Dumaguete and contractor for the installation of pyrolysis gasification technology have signed a deal to convert garbage to useful by-products.

This is in line with the city's commitment to sustainably manage garbage collection and disposal.

A total of P21.9-M is awarded to the winning bidder, Suki Trading Corporation, to set up the technology with an environment pollution control device and supporting equipment.

Mayor Felipe Antonio Remollo said that since the 40-old dumpsite was already closed, the garbage produced by the households and establishments will be sorted at the Central Materials Recovery Facility (MRF) located in the city's Eco-Park by the former scavengers now employed by the city government.

The contractor will install and set up one set of pyrolysis gasification process with an environment pollution control device along with two sets of sorting conveyors with wet and dry scrubbers, and two units of food waste pulverizers.

Under the contract, the bidder will also provide two units of non-recyclable waste bottles, glass bottle pulverizers, one unit of plastic densifier/melting machine with EPCD, one unit of mortar mixer, one unit hollow block machine, one units non-biodegradable shredders, two units of municipal waste shredder, one unit of rotary composter/bio-reactor, and two units of heavy duty biodegradable shredder.

These equipment and machines will turn garbage into useful by-products such as pavers, hollow blocks, and other construction materials that can be used for the various infrastructure projects and in the maintenance of roads.

On the other hand, biodegradable waste can be processed to become organic fertilizers.

It is expected that the project will start and become operational in August 2021 after the personnel of the Eco-Park shall have completed the skills training for the transfer of technology.

Remollo urged the City Environment and Natural Resources Office to ensure the regular collection of garbage.



He appealed for the citizens and establishments to practice proper waste segregation and recycling to reduce the volume of garbage generated every day.

Policemen and barangay tanods are assigned at the entrance and exits of the old dumpsite to prevent any resident or establishments from dumping their garbage there.

Victoriano Ocon, president of Suki Trading Corporation, and Remollo signed the contract agreement with City Legal Officer Manuel Arbon and Rodney Juntilla in the presence of the members of the city council, City ENRO Chief Chilvier Patrimonio, Engr. Letty Duran of the Eco-Park Management, and other department heads.

Remollo credited the city councilors for supporting the project, which will help solve the decades-old problem of managing the disposal of garbage in accordance with Republic Act 9003, the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000. (jct/PIA7 Negros Oriental with reports from CPIO)



Gloria Bandojo in Payatas, Quezon City is one of Republic Cement's partners in its sustainable waste management program that seeks to collect plastic waste and recover usable components and energy from them for use in cement manufacturing.

Photo Release

Women against waste

(Philstar.com) - May 14, 2021 - 10:00am

MANILA, Philippines — A thirty-year veteran of various landfills and wastes consolidators, Gloria Bandojo stands proud amid her unconventional workplace in Payatas, Quezon City—a dumpsite that she herself says is “dirty and smelly,” with no hint of disdain. After all, it is this dumpsite that has enabled her to send her eight children to school.

“*Marangal na hanapbuhay ang pagbabasura namin* [Being a garbage collector is an honorable profession],” states Bandojo. “*Hindi ko maatim na humingi, umasa o magnakaw sa iba. Tsaka kundi dahil sa amin, baka ga-bundok na ang basura ng Metro Manila.* [I do not want to simply beg, rely on others or steal just to survive. Besides, without us, garbage in Metro Manila would be a mountain full.]”

In San Jose del Monte, Bulacan, Marianita Maraat is in a similar situation. A solo parent of five children ages eight to 16 years old, Maraat could only look back on how miserable their lives were.

“*Dati, araw-araw akong nag-iisip kung paano ko maitatawid ang maghapon ng mga anak ko.* [I used to worry how I would get my children and I through the day.]” she said.

Having learned upcycling skills from the City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO), she collects plastic packaging to make into wallets and bags.

Now, she can earn as much as P17,000 every month especially during the Christmas season. “*Ngayon, napag-aaral ko na ang mga anak ko sa private school* [Now, I am able to send my children to study in private schools],” she shared.

She also supports other wastes pickers by providing a kilo of rice in exchange for a kilo of clean, dry plastic wrappers, which she uses for her trade.

Bandojo and Maraat are just two of the hundreds of ordinary Filipinos—usually female breadwinners—who play a valuable role in the sustainable waste management program of Republic Cement's resource recovery arm ecoloop.



By partnering with local government units (LGU), waste consolidators, as well as manufacturing companies that utilize plastic packaging, Republic Cement seeks to close the loop and prevent plastic waste from ending up in landfills and oceans.

ecolooop hauls and converts most of these wastes through a revolutionary cement manufacturing process called co-processing. It involves the recovery of residual minerals and energy from the wastes, which are then utilized in the processing of cement itself.

“Making a difference in the environment is what makes me wake up in the morning with energy to start my day,” shared Angela Edralin, director of ecolooop.

“There are challenges along the way but being a woman has allowed me to make a unique contribution to this field that will hopefully pave the way for other women to do the same or even better,” she added.

San Jose del Monte CENRO engineer Thelma Bautista similarly beams with pride on how seemingly useless waste can provide valuable livelihood opportunities for others.

“Ms. Mara is a living testament that garbage can help better one’s life,” she says of her protégé. “Napakasipag niya kaya masarap tulungan. [“It’s gratifying to help her because she’s very industrious.”]” she said.

P&G establishes ‘Forest for Good’ in Sierra Madre Mountain Range

By [Luz Iglesias](#), TMT May 16, 2021

Multinational consumer goods company [Procter & Gamble](#) (P&G) [Philippines](#) proudly announced at its Sustainability Summit that the company has successfully reduced over 80 percent of greenhouse gas emissions from local operations, way ahead of its global target of cutting 50 percent by 2030.

The said Summit, which was hosted virtually with a theme “#ItsOurHome,” also saw the launch of its “Forests for Good” program. The event further focused on increased awareness about the climate and solid waste landscape, and discussed the actionable solutions stakeholders like them, its consumers and partners — NGOs, tech companies, and the government — could take towards greater sustainability.



To establish Philippines’ Forest for Good, the company entrusted each employee with trees, planted on their behalf by farmers in the [Sierra Madre](#) mountain range.

Participated by its employees, business leaders, external partners, and sustainability advocates from the industry, NGOs and social enterprises, the Summit panel included [National Solid Waste Management Commissioner Crispian Lao](#), Chief Revenue Officer of Plastic Flamingo [Gauthier Belhomme](#), CEO and Founder of Ecomatcher [Bas Fransen](#) and Director for Partnership at Fostering Education and Environment for Education ([FEED Inc](#)) [Anne-Marie Bakker](#).

During the event, the company declared accelerated commitment to strengthen progress towards its global Ambition 2030 goals. Ambition 2030 aims to make responsible consumption possible for consumers through holistic, comprehensive interventions across four aspects which the company controls: its brand innovations, supply chain operations, trusted partnerships that impact society, and their employees.

As a result, the company vowed a long-term commitment to make significant and meaningful impact in the environmental areas of Climate, Water and Waste.

Taking action for climate, net zero emissions

Their Climate goal is to achieve carbon neutrality by the end of the decade. They will do this by cutting Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions at P&G sites globally by buying 100 percent renewable electricity and increasing energy efficiency. Their Cabuyao plant is already using renewable electricity and has successfully cut more than 80 percent of its manufacturing GHG emissions ahead of the company’s global targets.

To further offset the unrecoverable emissions, the company is supporting natural climate solutions that help conserve, protect and restore forests with global partners such as Conservation International and its recently launched Forests for Good program. Beyond helping in P&G’s net zero emissions goal, Forests for Good aims to actively protect nature, beginning with 12 pilot programs in 12 months across its Asia Pacific, Middle East and Africa (AMA) region, by planting trees that help improve local ecosystems.



The upcycled plastic school chairs from P&G Philippines and World Vision's 'Pag-Asa sa Basura' program are now being used by teachers and parents for the pickup and submission of modules as the schools transition to blended learning.



(Top row, from left) Chief Revenue Officer of Plastic Flamingo Gauthier Belhomme; Summit host Robi Domingo; CEO and Founder of Ecomatcher Bas Fransen. (Bottom row, from left) Director for Partnership at Fostering Education and Environment for Education (FEED Inc) Anne-Marie Bakker; P&G Philippines Communication Director Anna Legarda-Locsin; and National Solid Waste Management Commissioner Crispian Lao.



The company's Cabuyao plant already uses renewable electricity and has successfully cut more than 80 percent of its manufacturing GHG emissions ahead of their global targets.

Philippines is one of the pilot countries supporting this natural climate solution and will help forestation efforts in the Sierra Madre Mountain Range.

To establish Philippines' Forest for Good, the company entrusted each employee with trees, planted on their behalf by farmers in the Sierra Madre mountain range. Employees can name their tree, virtually travel to see it up close, check on it and learn more about it as it grows, and learn more about the farmer who planted it.

Today, there are 5,000 trees and counting in Forest for Good in Sierra Madre and the company will continue to help in the reforestation efforts for the Philippines' longest mountain range and "Luzon's backbone".

Forests for Good in the AMA region has partnered with EcoMatcher to pilot their blockchain technology that increases forestry transparency and accountability, together with local conservation organizations in each country where they are starting this journey. In the Philippines, [FEED Inc.](#) is the local conservation partner of Ecomatcher and P&G. The program better enables employees, partners and consumers to have strong visibility and tracking of the impact they have from planting trees.



Active water conservation

The company is also on track to achieving its global water goals to increase water efficiency at its sites and source at least 5 billion liters from circular sources. The P&G Cabuyao plant tracks its overall water consumption and recycles wastewater inside the plant. Their 2030 goal is to promote and support water conservation and protection for people and nature.

P&G AMA also recently announced acceleration of these goals by developing a water stewardship action plan in accordance with the externally recognized Alliance for Water Stewardship standard for 100 percent of the company's manufacturing sites located in high water stress areas by end of 2022. This will significantly help as water scarcity is a challenge facing many parts of the world including several across the AMA region.

Enabling plant and consumer waste management

P&G AMA has also certified that 100 percent of its plants as Zero Manufacturing Waste to Landfill, including its local Cabuyao manufacturing plant.

To help reduce post-consumer waste, P&G is committed to comprehensively work on and invest in packaging design and innovation across brands as well as collaborating with external stakeholders on piloting waste infrastructure interventions across several of its markets.

In the Philippines, the company has already eliminated the virgin plastic overwrap packaging on its Safeguard multi-packs and are now using 100 percent recycled paper carton material. The change saves 8,500 kilometers worth of plastic waste every year, equivalent to one thousand times the length of the world-famous Boracay shoreline. Their brand Herbal Essences and its new product, bio: renew collection, also now uses post-consumer recycled material for its bottle packaging. Ultimately, they will make 100 percent of its packaging recyclable or reusable by 2030 and will also cut the use of virgin plastic in packaging by 50 percent.

Even before 2030, the company is committed to use significantly more recyclable and reusable materials in their locally customized bundles and promos in an effort to reduce waste and contribute to a more circular economy.

“We will reduce the use of virgin plastic and start using alternative materials in our Philippines’ product bundling activities as well as point-of-sale materials found inside stores,” committed Raffy Fajardo, P&G President and General Manager for Philippines.

“P&G, our people and our brands will continue to use our expertise, operations and scale to build a better world for all,” he continued.

Fajardo also emphasized the importance of employee participation by building a culture of sustainability among its employees, enabling them to be Green Citizens who can create and integrate sustainable actions in their work and homes.

According to them, educating employees does not only help the company but also helps close the gap between intention and action and unlock the potential of individual contributions. According to a new study in the US by P&G, 72 percent of people want to do more to be sustainable at home. But fewer than half of people make environmentally conscious choices at home as often as they'd like. For most people, “not knowing how” is the biggest barrier to acting sustainably.

These declarations and programs are the latest from P&G, who is putting its weight behind being a Force For Good and a Force for Growth.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2021/05/16/weekly/the-sunday-times/filipino-champions/pg-establishes-forest-for-good-in-sierra-madre-mountain-range/873267/>



Binata huli sa aktong namumutol ng kahoy



May 15, 2021 @ 1:54 PM 16 hours ago

ISABELA-Huli sa akto ang isang binata ng pulisya sa pamumutol ng kahoy sa Purok #1, Gen Aguinaldo, Ramon, Isabela.

Sa ipinarating na ulat ni PLt. Noli Cipriano, hepe ng PNP Ramon kay PCol. James Melad Cipriano, Provincial Director ng Isabela Police Provincial Office o IPPO ang naaktuhan namumutol ng kahoy ay si George de Gracia, 30-anyos, furniture maker na tubong Cordon, Isabela at pansamantala nanirahan sa Barangay Ambatali, Ramon, Isabela.

Una rito, nakatanggap ng tawag mula sa konsernadong mamayan na mayroon namumutol ng kahoy sa lugar.

Kung kayat agad nagbigay direktiba si PLt. Cipriano para tugunan ang sumbong ng konsernadong mamayan para sa kaukulang aksyon kung saan ay tumambad sa kapulisan ang walang uabas na pamumutol ng kahoy ng suspek.

Nang birepikahin ng kapulisan kung mayroon permit sa pamumutol ng kahoy ay walang maipakita ng suspek maliban lamang sa permit nito sa chainsaw.

Agad dinala sa himpilan ng pulisya ang suspek at kanyang nilagaring kahoy na umaabot sa 35 board feet para sa kaukulang dokumentasyon. **REY VELASCO/Jun Fuentes**

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/binata-huli-sa-aktong-namumutol-ng-kahoy/?fbclid=IwAR1uQ7jcRtdplPpqBZDfi7nPvICGvlGa1qs0y0oEnuK1WO39Cs53NdM612Q>

16 MAY 2021, SUNDAY



NEWS ALERTS

COVID-19 NEWS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Members of the Manila Police District Station 5 round up more than 100 individuals at the Ferguson basketball court in Ermita, Manila on May 6, 2021 for violating the curfew and health protocols.

The STAR/Miguel de Guzman

COVID-19 deaths in the Philippines top 19,000

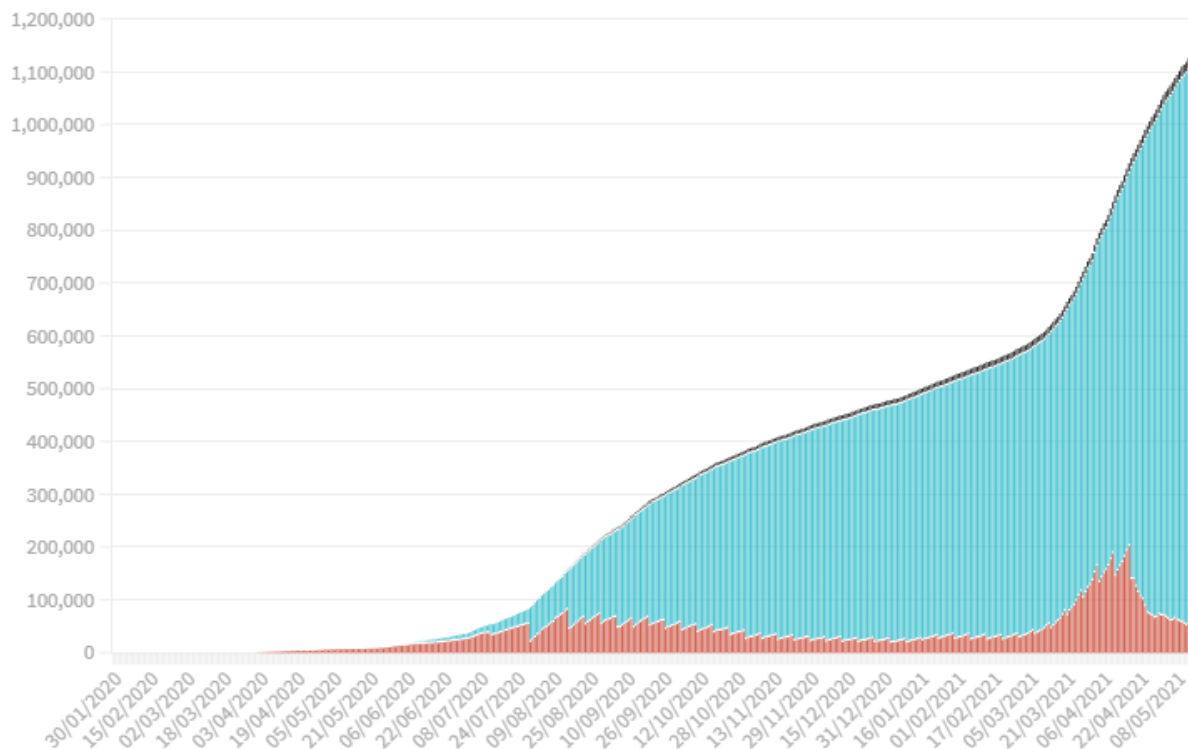
(Philstar.com) - May 15, 2021 - 4:00pm

MANILA, Philippines — Health authorities on Saturday recorded 6,739 additional COVID-19 cases, bringing the total number of infections to 1,138,187.

- Active cases: 56,709 or 5.0% of the total
- Recoveries: 8,952, pushing total to 1,062,427
- Deaths: 93, bringing total to 19,051

The coronavirus pandemic in the Philippines

Active Cases Recoveries Fatalities



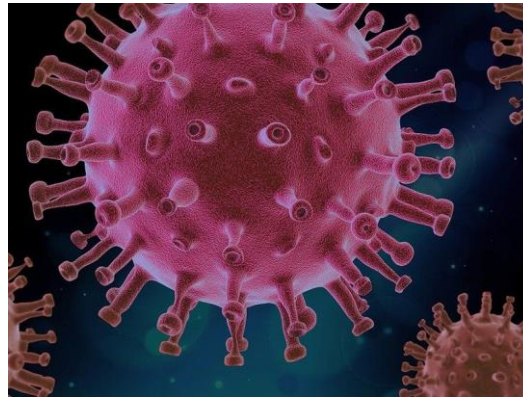
Source: Department of Health • As of May 15, 2021, 4 p.m.



What's new today?

- Three people **contracted** COVID-19 after coming into close contact with a returning Filipino migrant worker who was found to be a carrier of a variant of the disease first seen in India, the health department said Saturday. It is not yet clear if the three persons are also carriers of the B.1.617 variant which has been classified as one "of concern" by the World Health Organization.
- The average new COVID-19 cases per day in Metro Manila have **decreased** by 30% to just 1,644 new infections over the past week, the independent OCTA Research said in its latest bulletin.
- The government is **targeting** to inoculate 120,000 people against COVID-19 daily in the National Capital Region in a bid to achieve herd immunity in the country's outbreak epicenter by November 27, vaccine czar Carlito Galvez Jr. said. He added that the government hopes to meet its 120,000 daily vaccination target by June and increase it by as much as double in July.
- The World Health Organization issued a grim **warning** that the second year of COVID-19 was set to be "far more deadly", as Japan extended a state of emergency amid growing calls for the Olympics to be scrapped.
- Starting today, Metro Manila and nearby areas are under a general community quarantine "**with heightened restrictions**," until May 31.

— **Bella Perez-Rubio with a report from Xave Gregorio**



Artist's rendition of the coronavirus disease.

Image by PIRO4D from Pixabay

Philippines detects 10 more cases of coronavirus variant first detected in India

(Philstar.com) - May 15, 2021 - 6:03pm

MANILA, Philippines — Philippine health authorities announced Saturday that they detected 10 more cases of the more infectious coronavirus variant which was first identified in India, bringing the total number of cases of this variant to 12.

All but one of the 10 new patients infected with the B.1.617.2 variant are from the MV Athens Bridge from India, where 12 Filipino seafarers contracted COVID-19.

Four of them are still admitted in a Manila hospital, while five are in an isolation facility, the DOH said.

The DOH said samples from only nine of the 12 seafarers were sequenced, as samples from the remaining three were “not eligible” for the process.

A seafarer who disembarked in Belgium and flew back to Manila via the United Arab Emirates also contracted the B.1.617.2 variant. He arrived in the Philippines last April 24 and completed his isolation last May 13.

Health authorities said they also detected 13 new cases of the coronavirus variant first identified in the United Kingdom (B.1.1.7), seven of the variant first identified in South Africa (B.1.351) and one of the variant first identified in the Philippines (P.3).

Of the additional B.1.1.7 cases, 10 are local cases and three are from returning overseas Filipinos. All of them have recovered except for one who has died.

Among the new B.1.351 cases, two are local cases, two are returning overseas Filipinos and three are still being verified whether they are local cases or not. Of them, one has died, two are still active and four have recovered.

The additional P.3 case is from Region IX and has succumbed from COVID-19.

The variants first identified in India, UK and South Africa have been declared as variants of concern. A variant of concern is defined as one with increase in transmissibility, increase in virulence or change in clinical disease presentation, and decrease in effectiveness of public health measures or available diagnostics, vaccines and therapeutics.



The B.1.617 variant, first found in October 2020, carries several mutations, including the L452R and E484K.

The L452R mutation is associated with increased transmissibility and reduced antibody neutralization, which may help the virus get past antibodies. Meanwhile, the E484Q mutation, which is similar to E484K mutation, may also help the virus escape immune response.

Both the B.1.1.7 and B.1.351 variants carry the N501Y mutation, which is associated with increased transmissibility, while B.1.351 carries the E484K mutation, which may help the virus dodge some antibodies. — **Xave Gregorio with reports from Gaea Katreena Cabico**



In this photograph taken on May 12, 2021 a volunteer (4L) comforts a family member of a child who died due to the COVID-19 coronavirus at a crematorium in New Delhi.

AFP/Arun Sankar

Indian COVID-19 variant sparks concern, and questions

(Agence France-Presse) - May 15, 2021 - 4:20pm

LONDON, United Kingdom — The coronavirus strain first linked to the COVID-19 epidemic in India has now spread to at least 44 countries and been classified as a "variant of concern", but health authorities still know relatively little about it.

Spotted for the first time in October 2020 in India, it this week joined the British, South African and Brazilian variants in the World Health Organization's (WHO) highest threat category.

Here is what we do and do not know about the strain.

One variant or three?

The name "Indian variant" describes a strain -- B.1.617 -- that in fact groups together three distinct subvariants sharing some, but not all, of several mutations.

Two of the three have been detected in dozens of countries around the world, while the third has not spread much beyond India.

The WHO said on Tuesday that although there "may be important differences among the three sublineages", there is currently not enough evidence to tease out individual classifications, so it grouped them together as a single "variant of concern".

More transmissible?

In India, where the number of officially-recorded COVID-19 deaths has passed a quarter of a million, there are suspicions that this new variant may have accelerated the virus spread.

But it is more complicated than that, according to the WHO.

It said there were potentially several factors driving the exploding epidemic, including variants that could be more transmissible; religious or political mass gatherings that increased social mixing; and reduced use of public health measures.

"The exact contributions of each of these factors on increased transmission in India are not well understood," it said.

However, it did say that the three sublineages "appear to have higher rates of transmission". They have been observed, for example, to spread more rapidly in other countries once they gain a foothold.



Other health bodies around the world have also warned about signs of heightened contagion.

Indeed, all three subvariants contain a pair of mutations associated with greater transmissibility.

In a report released on Thursday, Public Health England looked at one of the sublineages -- B.1.617.2 -- which has "grown rapidly in England", with more than 1,300 cases identified across the United Kingdom.

It said this version of the coronavirus is "at least as transmissible" as the so-called English variant, which itself is faster-spreading than earlier versions.

But assessments of transmissibility depends a lot on who is and is not being tested.

The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control has warned that targeted genetic testing of travellers from India may have caused an "overrepresentation" of the Indian variant in the UK and the EU surveillance.

More dangerous?

The ECDC says there is no information available on the severity of symptoms caused by the Indian variant.

There is also only very limited data on how well the variant evades the body's immune response, and the WHO says the potential impact on vaccine efficacy and the risk of re-infection remains unclear.

A recent study that has not yet been peer reviewed noted a reduction in the efficacy of BioNTech/Pfizer and Moderna vaccines on the B.1.617.1 sublineage.

This sublineage has a mutation to the virus' spike protein, E484Q, that is similar to the one found in the South African and Brazilian variants, both of which are suspected of leading to reduced vaccine efficacy and an increased risk of re-infection.

But the ECDC points to small studies suggesting that B.1.617.1 can be neutralised by monoclonal antibodies, as well as blood plasma from previously infected or vaccinated people.

It said there was no data for the second sublineage, which does not include the E484Q mutation.

So far "we are pretty confident overall that the vaccines generally will be covering this variant", Marco Cavaleri, the European Medicines Agency head of vaccine strategy, said this week.

But faced with a host of uncertainties over the variant's impact on the virus itself and how this affects public health measures, the WHO said further robust studies are "urgently needed".



A volunteer carries the body of a child who died of Covid-19 coronavirus for the last rites at a crematorium in New Delhi on May 12, 2021.

Arun Sankar/AFP

Pandemic to be 'far more deadly' this year, WHO warns

[Robin Millard](#) (Agence France-Presse) - May 15, 2021 - 9:32am

GENEVA, Switzerland — The World Health Organization issued a grim warning on Friday that the second year of Covid-19 was set to be "far more deadly", as Japan extended a state of emergency amid growing calls for the Olympics to be scrapped.

"We're on track for the second year of this pandemic to be far more deadly than the first," said WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

The mood also darkened in Japan where the coronavirus state of emergency took in another three regions just 10 weeks before the Olympics, while campaigners submitted a petition with more than 350,000 signatures calling for the Games to be cancelled.

With Tokyo and other areas already under emergency orders until the end of May, Hiroshima, Okayama and northern Hokkaido, which will host the Olympic marathon, will now join them.

Japanese public opinion is firmly opposed to holding the Games this summer.

Swiss tennis great Roger Federer said Friday that "what the athletes need is a decision: is it happening or isn't it?"

"I would love to play in the Olympics... But if that doesn't happen due to the situation, I would be the first to understand," he added.

The pandemic has killed at least 3,346,813 people worldwide since the virus first emerged in late 2019, according to an AFP tally of official data.

Sputnik vaccines reach India

India meanwhile started deploying Russia's Sputnik V coronavirus vaccine, the first foreign-made shot to be used in the country that has been reeling from an explosion in cases and deaths.

The first token batch of Sputnik vaccines -- reportedly 150,000 doses -- arrived on May 1 and a second delivery is expected in the next few days.

A number of leading India-based drugmakers have agreements for local production of Sputnik V with the aim to produce over 850 million doses of the jab per year.



India has been adding roughly as many new Covid cases daily as the rest of the world put together.

More than 260,000 Indians have died, according to official figures.

In Europe, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson warned that the arrival of the B.1.617.2 variant, one of those believed to be driving the Indian surge, could delay reopening of society and the economy.

"This new variant could pose a serious disruption to our progress," Johnson said.

Britain's health ministry has tracked the variant in northwest England and in London.

Germany has already added the UK back onto its list of "risk areas" requiring extra checks -- but not necessarily quarantine -- for incoming travellers.

Elsewhere around the continent, tourist hotspots are opening up.

Greece kickstarted its tourism season on Friday, hoping to reverse last year's miserable summer.

"I hope to forget this damn Covid," said Jil Wirries, a 28-year old student from Hanover, Germany, collecting luggage on the island of Crete.

"Everything is terrible in Germany... people are depressed... I'm so happy to be here."

France and Spain launched tourism campaigns this week too.

But in the United States many were confused a day after the top health agency lifted all mask-wearing requirements for fully vaccinated people.

'Milestone'

The move has raised questions about how to implement it -- the foremost being, how do you tell if a person is fully vaccinated?

It has led to a patchwork of regulations around the country. Some states never had mask mandates in the first place. Others lifted them well before the new advice. Some were reviewing the idea, but others such as Maryland and Virginia rushed to implement it.

Major companies are also weighing their options. Retail giant Walmart was among those who said Friday it would lift its mask mandate for fully vaccinated staff and customers.

But United Food and Commercial Workers, a union which represents 1.3 million people, came out unequivocally against.

"Essential workers are still forced to play mask police for shoppers who are unvaccinated and refuse to follow local COVID safety measures. Are they now supposed to become the vaccination police?" it said.

"My initial reaction was supportive, but the more I think about it, I wish they had said, 'Let's do this on July 1. If you aren't vaccinated yet, this is your chance to go do it,'" said airborne disease specialist Linsey Marr.



The WHO also said Friday that even the vaccinated should keep wearing masks in areas where the virus is spreading.

"Vaccination alone is not a guarantee against infection or against being able to transmit that infection to others," WHO's chief scientist Soumya Swaminathan said.

More than 580,000 people have died in the US of Covid-19. But almost 60 percent of US adults have now received one or more doses, while cases are falling fast, and children are also now being vaccinated.

The WHO, however, urged wealthy countries to stop vaccinating children and instead donate doses to poorer nations.

"I understand why some countries want to vaccinate their children and adolescents, but right now I urge them to reconsider and to instead donate vaccines to Covax," said WHO chief Tedros, referring to the global vaccine-sharing scheme.

In sports, the Turkish Grand Prix, which was only drafted onto the Formula One calendar as a replacement for the cancelled Canada GP two weeks ago, was itself axed on Friday.

Formula One chiefs announced they will instead return to the sport's safe haven of Austria.

16 MAY 2021, SUNDAY



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