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HECKLING, NAME-CALLING INSTEAD OF 'REASONED DISCOURSE'

Of 'drama' and dolomite: When gov't spokespersons shoot from the hip

By: [Cathy Cañares Yamsuan](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:30 AM October 24, 2020

Dealing with critics is a difficult but integral part of a government spokesperson's work. When the same official makes unseemly comments, dismisses earnest questions and lashes out at those seeking answers, or, worse, heckles a person in grief, they become targets of citizens' outrage.

Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda described researchers of the University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute (UPMSI) as "bayaran" (paid hacks) for questioning the controversial dolomite "white sand" project in Manila Bay—and was promptly called out on social media and told to quit his job.

Antiporda, a former tabloid publisher and ex-president of the National Press Club, also demanded an audit of the UPMSI budget, saying the Department of Environment and Natural Resources had paid it "half a billion [pesos] since 2016" for consultation.



Benny Antiporda —SENATE PHOTO

'Drama serye'

He subsequently apologized for his remarks, saying his emotions had gotten the better of him. But he brushed off calls for him to resign, saying only President Duterte could make him do so. Celine Pialago, spokesperson of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, drew much flak from netizens for mocking the burial of the 3-month-old child of detained activist Reina Mae Nasino as mere histrionics ("drama serye sa hapon").

The former government TV anchor who campaigned for 2016 presidential candidate Mar Roxas posted the message on her Facebook page without provocation.

While she eventually issued an apology for "being insensitive" to the plight of grieving mothers, Pialago stood pat on her position that Nasino, who is charged with illegal possession of firearms and explosives, deserved the large number of armed escorts at the burial.



Celine Pialago —INQUIRER PHOTO

'Irrelevant'

Disturbing comments made by government mouthpieces are nothing new. Mr. Duterte's spokesperson Harry Roque once crowed about "beating" the prediction of UP researchers that the number of COVID-19 cases would reach 40,000 by the end of June.

Roque had declared that his personal opinions became "irrelevant" when he was sworn in as the President's spokesperson in 2017. He thus raised eyebrows when he described as an "astute political move" then Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano's recent suspension of the session at the House of Representatives to prevent a takeover by then Marinduque Rep. Lord Allan Velasco under a term-sharing agreement.



Harry Roque —MALACAÑANG PHOTO

Reasoned discourse

(Roque's position also did not discourage him from getting around quarantine restrictions to pose with dolphins, or post TikTok dance videos.)

The spokesperson's job of explaining policy or decisions is "best served through reasoned discourse," says political commentator Luis Teodoro, a former dean of the UP College of Mass Communication.

"It didn't use to be necessary to remind government officials that the citizens of this rumored democracy have the right and duty to call government to account [because people] are entitled to hear from them more than profanities, arrogance and evasion," he points out.

Teodoro, who writes a column for BusinessWorld and is corporate secretary and board trustee of the Center for Media Freedom and Responsibility, says that even if an official later takes back a statement as a personal opinion, any declaration from him or her "on public issues is likely to be interpreted ... as government policy, hence the need for them to weigh their words carefully."

Integrity plus

He adds: "It defies understanding why some regime officials launch into name-calling tirades rather than, for example, explain why the suggestions of UPMSI on the rehabilitation of Manila Bay is unacceptable.



“The same can be said about dismissing the grief of a mother over the death of her child as merely staged for dramatic effect while at the same time accusing her of committing crimes for which she has not been convicted.”

Joy Buensalido, a highly regarded figure in corporate public relations, advises her clients “to carefully select spokespersons who must have the integrity, credibility and dignity to be able to respond well to questions, especially to criticism or to malicious attacks to their company.”

Buensalido writes a column for Business Mirror and once chaired the Philippine chapter of the International Public Relations Association. She is president and CEO of Buensalido and Associates Public Relations, a company that advocates “positive thoughts and actions.”

Instead of clawing back, a professional spokesperson “should not be easily provoked” and must always be able to bring the discussion or interview to a level “that is not personal, and always stick to the message that he is expected to deliver,” Buensalido says.

‘Not just for anyone’

She says the same principle should apply to government representatives who “should never publicly express their personal opinions even when they or the agency they represent are being criticized or attacked...”

“Admittedly, this is a difficult and challenging job and it is not just for anyone who knows how to speak articulately,” Buensalido says, adding: “It requires a deep understanding and knowledge of all the issues at hand, sincerity, diplomacy and a huge amount of patience and empathy.”

Tone-setter

Teodoro points out that eventually, it is a country’s Chief Executive who sets the tone and shapes the messaging of his or her administration on public issues.

He observes: “But uniquely among our presidents, all of whom have at least tried to endow what their policies and what they say with at least a semblance of respect for dissenting views, over the four and a half years that he has been President, Mr. Duterte has disdained criticism, dismissed them as of no value, insulted critics and even threatened them, and in general cultivated a give-them-hell model of what passes for regime discourse.”

A glaring consequence now unfolding, according to Teodoro, is how Mr. Duterte’s “more belligerent officials” are “adopting that model as their own in dealing with criticism and citizen concern over the wisdom, justice and effectivity of government policies.”

The confidence could be coming from the perception that Mr. Duterte remains unscathed by criticism, as reflected in his “phenomenally high approval and trust ratings,” Teodoro says.

But here’s a caveat: “Even if those ratings accurately reflect public sentiments, they are not as transferable as these [spokespersons] may think.”

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1351884/of-drama-and-dolomite-when-govt-spokespersons-shoot-from-the-hip>



Philippine News Info

12h · 🌐



LOOK: DOLOMITE SANDS SURVIVES STORMY WEATHER BEGINNING 2ND WEEK OF OCTOBER.

The Dolomite Sands of Manila have survived turbulent weather yet again in the last few days in Metro Manila.

Credits to the owner of the image.



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'Kalibasib:' A symbol of hope, inspiration

Dead but not gone

By Jonathan L. Mayuga October 25, 2020



The last captive-bred Philippine tamaraw, "Kalibasib"

Considered as the last captive-bred Philippine tamaraw, "Kalibasib" breathed his last on October 10.

With one blind eye and a limp in one leg, Kalibasib, or "Kalikasan Bagong Sibol," could have died of old age.



Mounts Iglit-Baco National Park, an Asean Heritage Park, is home to a wide variety of flora and fauna, including the critically endangered Philippine tamaraw, the country's most iconic land mammal which can only be found on the island of Mindoro.

At his age, "Kali," as he was fondly called, could very well be the longest-living and perhaps the oldest Philippine tamaraw until he died. Kalibasib's death was discovered around 2:30 p.m. Born on June 24, 1999, Kalibasib was 21 when he died. Normally, a Philippine tamaraw could live up to 20 to 25 years.

A heartbreaking loss

Even though Kalibasib lived a full life at the Tamaraw Gene Pool Farm in Barangay Manoot in the municipality of Rizal in Occidental Mindoro, his heartbreaking demise was considered a big loss for the Tamaraw Conservation Program (TCP), officials of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said.

"It was unfortunate. Kalibasib has been with us since we started the captive-breeding program. He was the only progeny of our herd at the Tamaraw Gene Pool," DENR Assistant Secretary Ricardo Calderon told the BusinessMirror in an interview on October 12.

Neil Anthony del Mundo, assistant protected area superintendent of the Mounts Iglit-Baco National Park (MIBNP) and TCP coordinator, said that over the years, forest rangers at the park, as well as communities around the protected area, have associated themselves with Kalibasib.



Cause of death

Dr. Mikko Angelo Reyes, a wildlife veterinarian who performed the necropsy on Kalibasib on October 16, said the iconic land mammal died of cardiac failure.

“Apparently, Kalibasib was also suffering from chronic liver failure. We found evidence of liver cirrhosis. His liver is dark, indicating his lingering ailment for five years,” Reyes told the BusinessMirror in an interview on October 21.

He said they will still conduct histopathology on Kalibasib’s heart, liver, kidney and lungs to thoroughly determine what caused the liver failure that led to the tamaraw’s demise.

Symbol of hope, inspiration

For many, Kalibasib was a symbol of hope and his very presence in the Tamaraw Gene Pool Farm for more than two decades has become an inspiration in the conservation of the species and the rest of Mindoro’s biodiversity.

Considered as the country’s most iconic land mammal, the Philippine tamaraw is endemic or known to exist only on the hinterlands of Mindoro Island, their last known habitat which is equally extremely vulnerable to various threats.

“Many people who don’t have the opportunity of seeing a live tamaraw has seen what the tamaraw looks like by simply visiting our gene pool because of Kalibasib,” del Mundo told the BusinessMirror in an interview on October 19.

Best legacy

Asean Centre for Biodiversity Executive Director Theresa Mundita S. Lim said Kalibasib’s existence raised certain ethical questions on captive breeding, whether it is effective or not in contributing to the conservation of tamaraws.

“Having been born in captivity, Kalib has never seen his natural habitat and may not have survived if he were released. The best legacy he would have left is raising awareness on the plight of his wild relatives,” Lim, a former director of the DENR’s Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), told the BusinessMirror via Messenger on October 20.

For those who are not as fortunate to see tamaraws in the wild, Kalib provided the opportunity to bring the tamaraw closer to more people, Lim said.

“In a sense, he became an ambassador for his kind. His death should send a strong message to step-up efforts to conserve the tamaraw, otherwise his sad fate would have been in vain,” she added.

Preserving Kalibasib

Del Mundo said he has already contacted the National Museum of Natural History to preserve Kalibasib’s body.

“We are waiting for the National Museum experts to come to perform the taxidermy on Kalibasib. Because of the travel restrictions brought about by the pandemic, we are keeping Kalibasib in a storage facility until they [museum experts] arrive here in Mindoro,” he said.



Del Mundo said the National Museum has yet to respond to the official request of Occidental Mindoro Gov. Eduardo Gadiano to perform the taxidermy on Kalibasib.

The decision to preserve Kalibasib, he said, is logical so that even though he is dead, the memory of Mindoro's famous tamaraw will remain.

"We are also planning to bring Kalibasib in every town in Mindoro upon the request of local officials, because the people would really want to see Kalibasib. For one week maybe, we will allow the LGU [local government unit] to keep Kalibasib so that the people in their town will be able to see him," del Mundo said.

Public information, education

Del Mundo said after making the rounds, Kalibasib will be secured and showcased for public viewing at a museum to be built in the vicinity of the Tamaraw Gene Pool Farm.

This way, the tamaraw will continue to serve a higher purpose of educating the public about the importance of protecting and conserving the tamaraws.

Calderon, the concurrent director of BMB, agreed.

"It is only fitting to put him [Kalib] at the Tamaraw Gene Pool Farm, instead of capturing live tamaraws to replace him," said Calderon, who also nixed the idea of reviving the tamaraw captive-breeding program.

Call to action

The Mindoro Biodiversity Conservation Foundation Inc. (MBCFI) said the demise of Kalibasib should be considered a good reason for the government to strengthen the research on the species.

"We need to give the tamaraw the best chance of recovery because if our current efforts for the remaining 480 individuals in the wild are the same, [the species] will go extinct by 2050," said MBCFI Executive Director Grace Diamante.

Regular funding for the TCP, she said, is needed to boost the ongoing conservation efforts for the tamaraw and their habitat in Mindoro.

"Through an administrative order, regular funding for the conservation of the tamaraw should be made available to hire more forest rangers," she added.

The MBCFI is also pushing for the adoption of a management action plan for the conservation of the tamaraw, including the creation of a policy-making or governing body that will promote the welfare of the species and save them from extinction.

Extremely vulnerable

Kalibasib belong to an extremely vulnerable species. Scientifically called *bubalus Mindorensis*, the Philippine tamaraw, which is also known as the Mindoro dwarf buffalo.

It was listed as critically endangered by the DENR and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature as early as 2000.



Only around 480 tamaraws were counted in the last count the DENR made at the MIBNP in 2019, although del Mundo said he believes there are other population of the wild tamaraw outside the MIBNP.

Expanding territories

Attributed to the effort to expand the coverage of the annual tamaraw count, Calderon said the number of buffalos counted every year continues to increase.

While the count is not proof of an increasing population, the fact that more juveniles have been counted over the years means the tamaraws are breeding successfully on their own in the wild. “From the 1990s, the population of the tamaraws is steadily increasing. We intend to expand our coverage [of the annual count] because we received reports of sightings outside MIBNP,” Calderon said.

Still, he said other areas within MIBNP have not yet been covered by the annual count, which means that there may be more tamaraws out there than what is currently believed to be.

New population

A forestry expert, Calderon said he believes there are more tamaraws deep in the forest of MIBNP and, possibly, in other mountainous areas nearby.

“We learned and verified from our people on the ground that there are tamaraws on nearby Mount Calavite, a protected area near MIBNP,” Calderon said.

The tamaraws are somewhere in the hinterlands of Mount Calavite within the Mount Calavite National Park, also on Mindoro Island.

“The tamaraw in nearby [Mount] Calavite are stocky and slightly bigger,” Calderon said. He said this could be because there are less tamaraw inhabiting the area, which means there is less competition for food among the herd.

Captive-breeding part 2?

Del Mundo confirmed the newly discovered population in Mount Calavite.

As coordinator of the TCP, he said he intends to include some areas in MCNP in the tamaraw count next year.

He also disclosed that they are in talks with experts from various international conservation advocacy groups and scientific bodies for a study of the tamaraw population on Mount Calavite and to determine the prospects of starting anew a captive-breeding program for Mindoro’s dwarf buffalo.

“The population there is small and may need a boost,” said del Mundo partly in Filipino. He said a proposal from DENR partners for the study has been presented to the DENR-BMB prior to Kalibasib’s demise.

Way forward

For Calderon, however, the Tamaraw Conservation Program is already succeeding and a captive breeding-program is not likely going to happen for now.



He said strengthening the program means strengthening the conservation effort of the species and their natural habitats.

To better protect the Mounts Iglit-Baco National Park and other protected areas in general, he said the DENR-BMB is seeking for an additional P50-million budget for biodiversity conservation—including programs to combat illegal wildlife trade and protecting areas set aside for conservation

“The tamaraws are better left breeding on their own in their natural habitat,” he said.

Image credits: [Gregg Yan, ACB](#)



P1.1 million raised to help Mindoro's tamaraw rangers, forest rangers

Published October 24, 2020, 8:51 AM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

Around ₱1.1 million has been raised by some 150 individuals and institutions to help Mindoro's tamaraw rangers and forest wardens, many of whom lost their jobs because of the pandemic.



TCP rangers monitor Mindoro's Iglit-Baco Natural Park
(James Slade via Global Wildlife Conservation / MANILA BULLETIN)

The funds will be turned over on Oct. 29 to cap off the Tamaraw Month, celebrated in the Philippines every October.

"The Tamaraw Conservation Programme (TCP) and Mounts Iglit-Baco Natural Park (MIBNP) are indebted to those who have and will continue to help us," said TCP head Neil Anthony del Mundo.

"The assistance to be given to our wardens and rangers will go a long way in keeping both our tamaraws and protected areas safe," he added.

Since March, 2020, most of the Philippines has been under General or Enhanced Community Quarantine, which led to the temporary closure of the country's national parks to prevent COVID-19 from spreading.

This left Mindoro's Iglit-Baco Natural Park with little funding, cutting off the sole source of income for 32 wardens and one ranger, all members of Mindoro's indigenous Taw'buid, Buid and Iraya tribes.

Only 23 TCP rangers and three wardens are currently patrolling a core area of 2,500 hectares inside the 106,655-hectare Iglit-Baco park, which hosts at least 480 of the world's last 600 tamaraws.

An online fundraising campaign, #TogetherforTamaraws, was launched in July to provide conservation frontliners their wages, supplies, and equipment so they can continue protecting the tamaraw.

It is led by the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) project under the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Biodiversity Management Bureau (DENR-BM) and DENR-MIMAROPA (Oriental Mindoro, Occidental Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon, Palawan).



Also in July, the Philippine Parks & Biodiversity NGO further created the Tamaraw Society for its 20 for 20 campaign where they called on 20 organizations or individuals to pledge or raise ₱20,000 each.

“These creative fundraising efforts show how the worst times can also bring out the best in people,” says DENR-BMB Assistant Secretary Ricardo Calderon.

“Our Bayanihan Spirit lives on through crowdfunding. We thank our partners, donors and contributors in proving how everyone can do their part for conservation,” he added.

DENR-BMB, UNDP-BIOFIN and its allies will continue the fundraising efforts for Mindoro’s tamaraw rangers. Individuals who wish to donate can click bit.ly/TogetherForTamaraws or email biofin.ph@undp.org while those who wish to join the Tamaraw Society can click bit.ly/TamarawSociety.

“This is a critical time for Philippine biodiversity,” said UNDP Deputy Resident Representative Enrico Gaveglia.

“With Philippine protected areas undermanned because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the threat of plant and animal poaching is at its highest. We need to do our part in ensuring that our conservation frontliners have the means and capacity to continue their mission. After all, if not for the TCP and MIBNP rangers working hand in hand with the Mangyan communities of Mts. Iglit-Baco, the tamaraw might well be extinct,” Gaveglia also said.

The past few months have been a challenging time for tamaraw conservation in the country. In September, MIBNP and TCP rangers successfully intercepted and caught three tamaraw poachers drying meat inside the park. The poachers later escaped and remain at large.

Kalibasib, the world’s only captive-bred tamaraw, also died last Oct. 10 after 21 years in captivity.

Tamaraw populations today are fragmented, with only four remaining populations spread throughout Mindoro.

From an estimated 10,000 heads in 1900, tamaraw numbers plummeted to under 100 heads in 1969.

Conservation efforts have paid off tremendously, helping the population recover to over 600.



Toyota adopts 10-ha mangrove plantation area in Lian, Batangas

By [Wheels.ph](https://wheels.ph)

October 24, 2020



Toyota Motor Philippines Corporation (TMP) recently signed a memorandum of agreement (MOA) with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the local government of Lian, Batangas to clean-up, rehabilitate and preserve a 10-ha mangrove plantation area along the coastlines of Lian.

This project is in support of DENR's National Greening Program and aligned with the global All-Toyota Green Wave Project. Under the MOA, TMP commits to plant 25,000 mangrove propagules by 2023 and provide necessary resources that will help protect marine life and biodiversity in the area, which then help in providing livelihood for the local community.

The signing ceremony was participated in by TMP vice president for General Services Department Cathy Benitez, Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office (MENRO) representative Alvin Jonson, and City Environment & Natural Resources Office officer-in-charge (OIC) Isagani Amatorio. After the simple signing ceremony, volunteers from TMP and Lian Fisherfolk Association planted 5,000 mangrove propagules in the adopted area and collected over 471 kg. of wastes.

Throughout the activities held, volunteers followed strict health protocols set by the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases to ensure the safety and health of participants. TMP remains committed to the environment as it continuously implements programs aligned with the Toyota Environmental Challenge 2050 aimed at creating a more sustainable future for the next generations.



Illegally cut timber products seized



ZAMBOANGA. Environment enforcement personnel, backed by policemen, seize illegally cut Bangkal wood in Situbo village, Tampilisan, Zamboanga del Norte. A photo handout shows policemen and environment personnel stand guard on the illegally cut lumber, which the owner abandons upon sensing the arrival of lawmen. (SunStar Zamboanga)

October 24, 2020

ENFORCEMENT personnel of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) backed by policemen seized illegally cut timber products early this week in the province of Zamboanga del Norte, a DENR official said Saturday, October 24.

Rosevirico Tan, DENR regional information officer, said the illegally cut timber products were found by the enforcement team in Situbo village, Tampilisan, Zambopanga del Norte following receipt of reliable information from a concerned resident.

But Tan said the timber products were abandoned by the owner upon sensing the arrival of the team from the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (Cenro) of Liloy, Zamboanga del Norte and personnel from Tampilisan Municipal Police Station.

The recovered illegally cut timber products consist of 1,466 board feet of Bangkal wood with an estimated value of P58,653.20.

Tan said the confiscation was made for violation of Section 78 of Presidential Decree 705 as amended by Executive Order 277 or the Revised Forestry Code of the Philippines.

The confiscated lumber is now placed and deposited at the DENR Sub-station in Gatas, Kalawit, Zamboanga del Norte. **(SunStar Zamboanga)**



Group airs concern over armed men in protected area

Published October 24, 2020, 3:02 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

Conservation group Masungi Georeserve Foundation has expressed alarm over the presence of armed men who have constructed a fence in a restoration project area in the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape in Rizal.

The foundation, which is managing the restoration and conservation of the site in Baras, Rizal, found out about the illegal activity last Friday as they were on their way “to reinforce the station of our rangers, who have been bravely protecting this area from rampant illegal logging.”

“The site is part the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape under Presidential Proclamation 296, which can never be any person or any company’s private property, as it is a protected area and wildlife sanctuary. It has been protected by various laws since 1904 as a critical watershed,” the conservation group explained.

“As the authorized manager of the site, we asked for their title or permit, but they could not present any. We likewise gave our contacts so they can submit these, to no avail,” it said.

The Masungi Georeserve explained that without a title, there is simply no ownership, as well as deals of so-called “rights” and tax declarations are not proofs of ownership, especially in protected forestland, it added.

The group appealed to President Duterte to put a stop to the rampant land speculation and trafficking in Masungi, and all other forests and watersheds in the country.

“They have suffered way too long and our collective future from floods, landslides, water loss, and climate change is kept hostage,” it stressed.

The group said it has already sent letters to its implementation partners Department of Environment and Natural Resources, National Bureau of Investigation, local government of Baras, and Barangay Pinugay “to help quash the repeated violations, and abuse and neglect of our forests.”



Marine experts on scientific mission to protect Southern Leyte's rich coral site

Published October 24, 2020, 7:31 AM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

A team of marine experts has embarked on a 22-day scientific expedition to protect a rich coral, site including 17 marine protected areas in Southern Leyte.



(Oceana Philippines / MANILA BULLETIN)

Onboard the expedition ship MV Discovery Palawan, scientists and crew, headed by overall expedition coordinator and Oceana Philippines' coral-rich marine protected areas campaign leader Marianne Saniano, started the new expedition to Panaon Island last October 16. Assisting Saniano are senior ban illegal fishing campaign leader Danny Ocampo and Dr. Badi Samaniego, who serves as the expedition's assessment leader.

The team will be assessing corals, seagrass, and fish using scientific survey methods. The science expedition in Southern Leyte comes after the successful and historic expedition to the Benham Bank in the Philippine Rise in 2016. In 2018, parts of the Philippine Rise undersea feature were declared marine resource reserve under a presidential proclamation.

"This time around, our sails are headed south with the shared goal of protecting one of the most important coral reefs in the country – Panaon Island," Oceana vice president Gloria Estenzo Ramos said.

"Studies have shown continued decline in coral cover in the country. However, the coral reefs in this region remain to be some of the least disturbed habitats in the Philippines," she pointed out.

The area is covered by the 50 Reefs Initiative of Bloomberg Philanthropies Agency and partners to create safeguards for 50 priority reefs in the region that are most resilient to the impacts of climate change and have the ability to help repopulate neighboring reefs over time.

Panaon Island is described as having high coral species diversity in a study done by Coral Cay Conservation.

"These accolades make Panaon Island's coral reefs truly an underwater gem that deserves robust protection and recognition," Ramos said.

During the early days of the expedition, the team initially observed "massive" foliose corals and "wide patch" of soft corals.

The expedition crew also noted that "though the site was not a (marine) sanctuary, it is already comparable to Tubbataha."



“This will be an experience like no other where scientific data collection will be done while observing strict safety protocols and social distancing,” Ramos noted.

She assured that a strong and dedicated team onboard composed of scientists and crew are all committed to strengthening marine conservation efforts amid the pandemic.

“Protecting ecologically significant marine habitats remain paramount, if not more so, as we face the challenges and changes brought by the global pandemic, and fisheries, biodiversity and climate crises,” Ramos said.



BIRDWATCHER'S DELIGHT

'Oop!' A rare sighting in Tanay

By: [Dieter Reichert](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

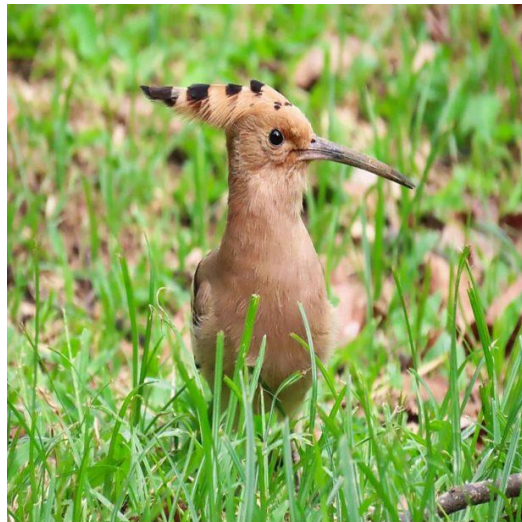
[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:06 AM October 25, 2020

Who you, hoopoe?

The repeated call “oop, oop, oop” gave rise not only to its English name hoopoe but also to its scientific Latin name *Upupa epos*. It belongs to the bucerotiformes order of birds that also includes the hornbills.

About the size of a dove, the Eurasian migratory bird has pink-beige plumage and a slim, slightly curved bill. It has a black-tipped crest which, when folded and flat, means that the bird is relaxed and at ease. When excited or during landing, the crest rises to an arc.

While the woodpecker searches for food on vertical surfaces like tree trunks, the hoopoe forages exclusively on horizontal surfaces on the ground in the short grass, but it nests in trees or walls.



LIKE SEEING A POLAR BEAR ON EDSA A hoopoe was recently spotted in a privately owned nature reserve in Rizal. —GREG ENRIQUEZ/CONTRIBUTOR

Epic encounter

In the 2000 book “Guide to the Birds of the Philippines,” coauthor Robert S. Kennedy noted how hoopoe sightings in the country had been rare, recounting “only 1 record in December from Palawan and about 5 records from Bataan.”

But perhaps the town of Tanay, Rizal province, may now be added to the short list of places with documented hoopoe visits

On Oct. 5, around 2 p.m., it was a sunny Monday afternoon at the sprawling Epic Park, a privately owned nature reserve in Tanay that has lain largely undisturbed for over a century, when park employee Nonoy Burce spotted an unfamiliar bird about five meters away and foraging for food under a tamarind tree.

Nonoy called out to fellow employee Greg Enriquez, who quickly got his camera. The result was five snapshots and a minute-and-a half video of the park’s rare feathered guest.



Greg used a Canon Powershot SX70 HS. The still images were shot at f / 5.6, 175mm, 1/320 sec, ISO 500, with no flash; the video was taken with the camera resting on a tripod.



PHOTO BY GREG ENRIQUEZ/CONTRIBUTOR

Rewarding

The hoopoe returned the next day, around 6:30 a.m. during a drizzle. It lingered closer to the property owner's house, then flew to an aratiles tree, then to the roof, before more pictures could be taken.

The hoopoe has not been seen since but the “oop, oop, oop” call was heard again on Oct. 14. Social distancing?

Horst Kessler von Sprengisen, a German ornithologist and longtime Philippine resident to whom this writer mentioned the hoopoe visit, remarked that “it was like seeing a polar bear on Edsa!”

The property owners, Dr. Walter and Annabel Brown, were rewarded with the unique sighting for their respect for nature and for preserving natural habitats. The photographer was rewarded for his patience and dedication with this once-in-a-lifetime experience.

—**CONTRIBUTED**



Recycle, gawin nang mandatory

Saturday, October 24, 2020 [Marlon Purificacion](#)

ILANG taon nang pinaigting ang kampanya para sa 3Rs sa basura o ang Reduce, Recycle at Reuse pero nangunguna pa ring problema ng bansa ang tambak na basura.

Katunayan, bawat lokal na pamahalaan ay may kanya-kanya ring ordinansang ipinatutupad upang masolusyunan ang sandamakmak na basura sa kani-kanilang nasasakupan na kadalasan ding nagiging dahilan ng pagbaha pagsapit ng tag-ulan.

At sa kabila rin ng mga asignatura para sa proper waste management, hindi maikakaila na isa rin sa mga lugar na kadalasang maraming nahahakot na mga basura ay sa ating mga paaralan.

Kaya naman, maganda ang isinusulong na panukala ni Senador Ramon 'Bong' Revilla Jr. na mag-oobliga sa lahat ng paaralan na i-recycle ang lahat ng papel at iba pang materyales na ginagamit sa kanilang araw-araw na operasyon.

Sa Senate Bill 696 o ang proposed Recycle Waste Act, sinabi ni Revilla na mayorya ng problema sa kalikasan sa bansa ay dahil sa mga aktibidad at pagpapabaya ng tao.

"The Philippines is suffering from the degradation of the natural environment. It has 50 major rivers now polluted because of abuse and neglect. Approximately two-thirds of the country's mangroves have been lost. In one century, we had cut down close to 97% of our original forests," pahayag ni Revilla sa kanyang explanatory note.

Binigyang-diin ni Revilla na marami pang environmental issues sa bansa tulad ng climate change, high risk for agriculture and food security at waste management problems.

Sa gitna nito, sinabi ng senador na may mga hakbangin na kailangang gawin ang taumbayan at ang edukasyon ang unang hakbang para makahanap ng solusyon.

Batay sa panukala, lahat ng paaralan ay oobligahing gumamit ng papel at iba pang materyales na may 15 percent recycled material sa lahat ng proyekto at aktibidad.

Kailangan ding isama ng Department of Education at ng Commission on Higher Education sa pakikipagtulungan sa Department of Environmental and Natural Resources sa school curriculum ang recycling.

Mandato rin ng DepEd alinsunod sa panukala ang implementasyon ng komprehensibong multi-material recycling program.

Sa sandaling maging batas, ipalalathala sa DepEd ang lahat ng mga paaralang hindi susunod sa mga probisyon nito.

Siguro nga mas magiging epektibo kung sa halip na pagpapaalala lamang ay gagawin nang mandatory ang pagre-recycle ng mga papel at iba pang materyales na ginagamit sa mga paaralan para sa pagbabawas natin sa bultong basura sa bansa.

Alam naman natin na likas na rin sa mga Filipino na kapag hindi sapilitan ang pagpapatupad ng regulasyon ay marami pa rin ang gumagawa ng palusot at alibi upang hindi sumunod dito.

Bukod dito, sa murang edad pa lamang ng mga bata dapat lamang na maturuan sila ng disiplina sa tamang pagtatapon ng basura upang hindi bumaho ang Pilipinas sa paglipas ng mga taon.



Wala itong pinag-iba sa mga nakikita at nababasa nating reklamo laban sa mga iresponsableng pagtatapon ng mga ginamit na face mask at face shield na pangunahing gamit sa pag-iwas laban sa COVID 19.

Bukod sa inisyatibo ni Caloocan Councilor Vince Hernandez na paglalagay ng mga basura laan lamang sa mga used face mask at shield, hanggang ngayon wala pa tayong nakikitang mga malinaw na polisiya hinggil sa tamang pagtatapon ng mga ito.

Sana bago mahuli ang lahat magkaroon ng totoong pagtalima sa mga hakbangin para sa tamang waste management sa bansa.



SMC affiliate Northern Cement Corp. is capable of consuming up to 1.5 million tons of plastic waste per year. It is targeting to reduce use of traditional fuel by up to 50 percent and substitute this with plastic waste.

Edd Gumban, file

Plastic waste to fuel SMC cement plants

[Iris Gonzales](#) (The Philippine Star) - October 25, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — San Miguel Corp. (SMC) will utilize its plastic waste to fuel its cement manufacturing facilities as part of its sustainability efforts.

SMC affiliate Northern Cement Corp. (NCC) is capable of consuming up to 1.5 million tons of plastic waste per year. It is targeting to reduce use of traditional fuel by up to 50 percent and substitute this with plastic waste.

SMC president and COO Ramon Ang said that with technology, it is easy to convert plastic waste to energy.

“Northern Cement has been using this on a smaller scale. Other major manufacturers, both locally and globally, have also been using this. It’s a more environment-friendly and sustainable alternative to using traditional fuels,” Ang said.

The company’s plan to expand and ramp up its use of plastic waste for energy for Northern Cement can now be implemented with the completion of its materials handling facility in Pangasinan.

“With our materials handling facility ready, we can now expand this program,” Ang said. He urged assemblers, local governments and companies to collect and sell their plastic waste to SMC.

“Together, we can help our environment in a substantial way, and at the same time, create more livelihood opportunities for so many Filipinos during this time of pandemic,” Ang said.

The cement which NCC will produce will be used by the construction industry, which in turn is seen creating more jobs for Filipinos especially in this time of COVID-19.

“We continue to look for actual solutions where we can get the best outcome for the greatest number of people,” Ang said.

While NCC’s technology can allow for all types of plastics to be processed and converted to energy, Ang said they are especially targeting plastic bottles, which make up a significant amount of total plastic waste in the world.

In 2017, SMC discontinued its Purewater plastic bottled water business to demonstrate its commitment to greater sustainability.

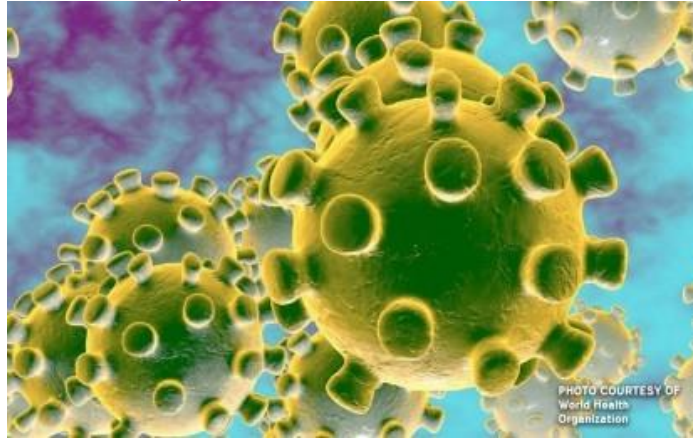
Last year, SMC built the country’s first asphalt road using recycled plastic waste. This was done for a company-owned logistics facility used by vehicles with heavy loads as part of a pilot test to determine its viability.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/business/2020/10/25/2052028/plastic-waste-fuel-smc-cement-plants>



DOH reports 442 new Covid-19 recoveries

By Marita Moaje **October 24, 2020, 6:08 pm**



MANILA – The Department of Health (DOH) on Saturday reported 442 new recoveries from the coronavirus disease (Covid-19), bringing the total number of reported recoveries in the country to 313,112.

The DOH also recorded 2,057 new cases bringing the total Covid-19 active cases at 47,773.

The number of cumulative cases of Covid-19 since the onset of the pandemic is now at 367,819, according to the DOH bulletin.

Of the 2,057 reported cases, some 1,892 or 92 percent of these occurred within the recent 14 days -- from October 11 to October 24.

The top provinces by newly announced cases are Rizal with 107 new cases, Caloocan City with 102, Quezon City with 96, Benguet with 92, and Davao City with 91.

The top regions with cases in the recent two weeks were the National Capital Region (NCR) with 506 or 27 percent, Region 4-A with 369 or 20 percent, and the Cordillera Administrative Region (CAR) with 142 or 8 percent.

The DOH also reported 19 new deaths bringing to 6,934 the total reported deaths.

Of the 19 deaths, the DOH said 16 of these occurred in October which is at 84 percent, 2 in September or 11 percent, and 1 in April or 5 percent.

The deaths were from the NCR with 8 or 42 percent, Region 6 with 3 or 16 percent, Region 4-A with 3 or 16 percent, Region 7 with 2 or 11 percent, Region 9 with 1 or 5 percent, CAR with 1 or 5 percent, while one case is still for validation.

According to the bulletin, 37 duplicates were removed from the total case count, and of these, 21 were recovered cases.

Furthermore, 12 laboratories were not able to submit their data to the Covid-19 Data Repository System (CDRS) on October 23.

The DOH assures that these numbers undergo constant cleaning and validation. (PNA)

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1119625>



Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said yesterday that members of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases are meeting with the President here this weekend to make an assessment.

Presidential photo/Ace Morandante

Duterte, IATF set to tackle quarantine classifications

[Edith Regalado](#) (The Philippine Star) - October 25, 2020 - 12:00am

DAVAO CITY, Philippines — President Duterte is expected to announce tomorrow the government's decision on the quarantine status in different parts of the country for the month of November.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said yesterday that members of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) are meeting with the President here this weekend to make an assessment.

"We still do not know what would be the final new classifications (for quarantine per area)," he said.

The National Capital Region (NCR or Metro Manila) remains under general community quarantine (GCQ), along with the province of Batangas and the cities of Tacloban, Bacolod, Iligan and Iloilo, until Oct. 31.

Only the province of Lanao del Sur and Marawi City are placed under the stricter modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) this month. The rest of the country enjoys the more relaxed quarantine status of modified GCQ.

The IATF is expected to tackle the various recommendations of the different localities in the country as the national tally of COVID-19 cases reached over 366,000 yesterday.

The Department of Health (DOH) said over 313,000 of this number are recoveries while 6,915 are deaths.

The President arrived here last week and is expected to stay until after All Souls' and All Saints' Days next week, during which he is reported

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/10/25/2052126/duterte-iatf-set-tackle-quarantine-classifications>



Countries battle rising virus cases, as WHO sees 'exponential' rise

Tom Barfield with Agence France-Presse bureaus

Posted at Oct 24 2020 09:31 PM



An ambulance worker wearing a full personal protective equipment is disinfected outside the emergency unit of Severo Ochoa hospital amid the COVID-19 outbreak in Leganes, outside Madrid, Spain, October 16, 2020. *Sergio Perez, Reuters/file*

Grim data highlighted the struggle for authorities around the world to bring the coronavirus pandemic under control Saturday, as the US reported 80,000 infections in a single day, France extended a curfew to two-thirds of citizens and Germany's death toll passed 10,000.

The World Health Organization had earlier warned of an "exponential" rise in infections threatening health systems' ability to cope.

But populations weary of social isolation and economic hardship have pushed back against fresh restrictions to slow the resurgent virus' spread, including overnight clashes in hard-hit Naples between Italian police and hundreds of protesters.

In the US, COVID-19 has become a central election issue ahead of a November 3 vote, with President Donald Trump on Friday promising attendees at a Florida rally that "we're going to quickly end this pandemic, this horrible plague."

Meanwhile challenger Joe Biden matched Trump's vow to make a vaccine available for free to all who want it "whether or not you're insured" and said the Republican incumbent has "given up" on controlling the outbreak.

Johns Hopkins University had earlier reported 79,963 new American cases in 24 hours, a new record, although the number of daily deaths has remained broadly stable since the beginning of autumn at between 700 and 800.

Overall, more than 223,000 people have died from Covid-19 in the US.

France on Friday followed Spain past the milestone of one million cases, while the government extended an overnight curfew designed to slow the spread to affect some 46 million people.

"Whatever we do in the coming days and weeks, the toll will grow heavier," Health Minister Olivier Veran told lawmakers.

And after Germany recorded its 10,000th death from the coronavirus, Chancellor Angela Merkel told citizens that "the order of the day is to reduce contacts, to meet as few people as possible" in a weekly video podcast.

In Poland, President Andrzej Duda tested positive for Covid-19, although an aide wrote on Twitter that he was "fine".

- 'Close to capacity' -

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus had on Friday warned that "too many countries are seeing an exponential increase in Covid-19 cases and that is now leading to hospitals and intensive care units running close to or above capacity -- and we're still only in October."

"We urge leaders to take immediate action to prevent further unnecessary deaths."



That message was echoed by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), whose director Andrea Ammon warned of a "highly concerning epidemiological situation".

But moves to reintroduce restrictions were met with protest in parts of the continent.

In Naples, hundreds of demonstrators turned out after a call on social media to resist a new curfew in parts of Italy, throwing objects at police and setting rubbish bins on fire.

The country is reeling from its worst post-war recession after a gruelling two-month national lockdown prompted by one of Europe's worst outbreaks, and authorities have so far been reluctant to repeat the drastic quarantine restrictions seen then.

Wales entered a full lockdown on Friday evening, a day after Ireland shut down, while Poland adopted a nationwide "red zone" lockdown mandating the partial closure of primary schools and restaurants.

Only Sweden, which famously refused to lock down earlier this year, continued to stick to its guns despite a rise in cases.

After Spain became the first European country to officially record a million Covid-19 cases earlier in the week, Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said Friday the real number of infections was likely more than triple that number.

- 'We're overwhelmed' -

Across the planet, Covid-19 has now claimed the lives of 1.1 million people and infected close to 42 million, with the WHO warning the northern hemisphere was at a critical juncture.

Belgium has seen one of Europe's deadliest per capita outbreaks and has found itself suffering some of the highest second-wave infection rates in Europe.

"We're losing. We're overwhelmed. We're bitter," said Benoit Misset, head of the intensive care unit at the University Hospital in the city of Liege, where several of his staff are having to work despite being positive -- if asymptomatic -- themselves.

Work has continued on the international quest to find a vaccine for the disease, with clinical trials for one candidate developed by AstraZeneca and Oxford University resuming in the United States on Friday, six weeks after a test subject became ill.



BANSANG MILYONARYO SA COVID-19 MAGIGING 8 NA



October 23, 2020 @ 8:40 AM 2 days ago

KAMAKAILAN lang, apat na bansa lang ang milyonaryo sa coronavirus disease-19.

'Yun bang === may milyong kaso ng COVID-19.

Sila ang United States na ngayo'y may 8,585,748 kaso, ang India na may 7,708,947, ang Brazil na may 5,300,649 at Russia na may 1,463,306.

Nitong nagdaang 3-4 araw, pumasok na rin ang Spain na ngayo'y may 1,046,641 at ang Argentina na may 1,037,325.

Kumakatok na rin sa liga ng mga milyonaryo sa pandemya ang France na may 999,043 kaso at Colombia na may 990,270 kaso ngayong tanghali at maaaring milyonaryo na rin sila mismo hanggang gabi ng araw na ito.

Ang pagiging milyonaryo sa pandemya ay kinatatakutan dahil nangangahulugan din ng daan-daan o libong patay araw-araw.

Itong US nga lang, may 1,001 patay kagabi at 580 ngayong umaga kaya may 228,276 nang kabuuang patay.

PINAS BALIK NO. 20

Noong pumalo sa No. 18 sa world ranking ang mahal kong Pinas sa COVID-19, biglang nagtatalak ang mga kritiko ng administrasyon.

Pabaya, walang silbi, mali at kung ano-anong salita pa ang ipinupukol sa pamahalaang Duterte.

Ngayon naman, ang matagal nang napag-iiwanan nating mga bansang Germany at Indonesia, mabilis na humabol sa Pinas at sila ngayon ang No. 18 at 19, ayon sa pagkakasunod.

Ipagpalagay na nating may epekto ang pagtigil at pagdahan-dahan ng Philippine Red Cross sa pagsasagawa ng mass testing, lalo na sa mga overseas Filipino worker, dahil sa problema sa utang ng PhilHealth na P1 bilyon na 'di pa nababayaran, hindi kaya talagang humuhupa na ang COVID-19 sa bansa?

At kung humuhupa, tiyak kong kabilang sa mga pangunahing dahilan ang mga aksyon ng pamahalaang Duterte laban sa pandemya.



Kasama na rito ang paggawa at pagpapairal ng iba't ibang batas sa giyera sa COVID-19 gaya ng Bayanihan Act 1 at 2 na sinasabayan ng mga local government unit.

Kaya naman, para sa mga kritiko, ang pangunahing tanong ay: Ano-ano naman ang naikontribusyon ninyo para humupa ang pandemya sa mahal nating Pinas?

Ang inisyatiba nating lahat na isama sa mga pinairal na batas sa giyera sa pandemya ay lubhang mahalaga na pagsama-samahin natin.

At hangga't maaari, maglabas man tayo ng sama ng loob, dapat na nakatuon sa sama-samang kaisipan at pagkilos laban sa pandemya at hindi sa pagpapabagsak ng ating pamahalaang Duterte na higit na sinasandigan at pinagkakatiwalaan ng 91 porsyento ng mamamayan

EUROPA BALIK-LOCKDOWN, KONTROL

Nang medyo humupa-hupa ang COVID-19 sa Europa, karamihan sa mga pamahalaan ng mga bansang ito ang nagluwag sa kanilang mga patakaran sa lockdown at iba pang kontrol sa lipunan.

Nagbukas sila ng mga face-to-face na eskwela, nagbukas sila nang buo sa mga matataong lugar gaya ng mga restoran, sports arena, dancing hall, pasyalan, club, hotel, beach, pabrika, opisina, transportasyon sa tren at eroplano at iba pa.

Nagluwag din sila sa pagsusuot ng face mask, face shield, social distancing at maging sa COVID testing.

Hayun, biglang dumami ang nagka-COVID-19 sa kanila, kabilang na ang Germany na mabilis na lumagpas sa atin sa world ranking.

Ang Spain pumasok na sa liga ng mga milyonaryo sa pandemya at ilang oras lang, papasok na rin ang France sa pagkakaroon ng mahigit 40,000 kaso sa nakalipas na 24 at still counting pa.

Karambola sila ngayon kaya may mga isinara o itinigil na aktibidad gaya ng mga eskwela, sports arena, club, dancing hall, beach at iba pa, sabay ng mga pagsusuot ng face mask, social distancing at iba pa.

PIGILING MAGING MILYONARYO ANG PINAS

Paano natin iugnay ang mahal kong Pinas sa nagaganap sa Europa?

Sa ngayon, umiiral ang general community quarantine at modified general community quarantine sa maraming lugar at naging epektib ang mga ito bilang kabilang sa mga pangunahing armas laban sa pandemya.

At sinasabing, may go signal na sa ilang matataong lugar na magpuno ng tao ngunit may social distancing, pagsusuot ng face mask at face shield at iba pang patakaran laban sa COVID-19.

Tanging ang mga iskul lang ang hindi pinapayagang magkaroon ng mga estudyante para sa face-to-face class.

Kaya sinasabing humuhupa na ang pandemya sa Pinas?



Kung ang mga ito ang dahilan ng paghupa, dapat nating ituloy ang pagsunod sa mga batas, health protocol at disiplina.

Hanggang sa darating ang araw na mabakunahan ang lahat laban sa nakamamatay at nakahahawang sakit.

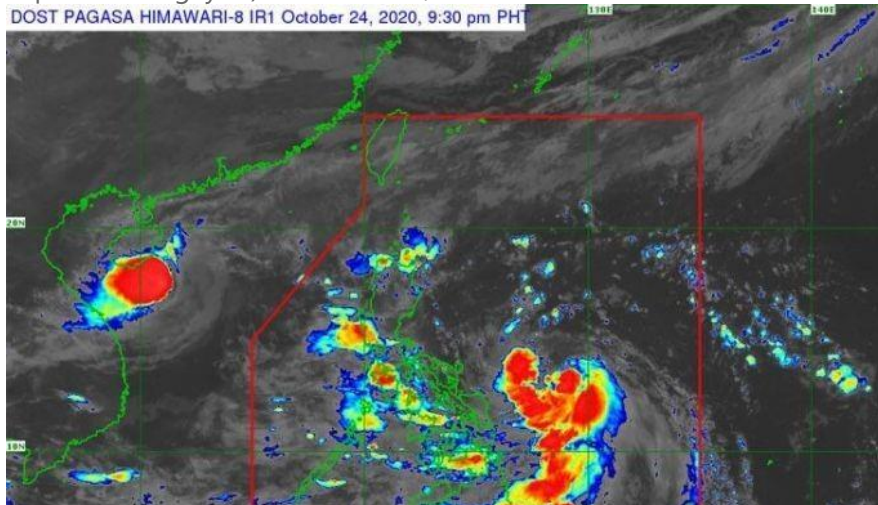
Huwag nating piling normal na ang lahat at saka tayo magwawala gaya ng nangyayari sa Europa.

At magtulong-tulong tayong pigilin na maging milyonaryo sa COVID-19 ang mga Filipino.



'Quinta' bahagyang lumakas

By [Angie dela Cruz](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon) - October 25, 2020 - 12:00am



Alas-10 ng umaga, ang sentro ni Quinta ay namataan ng PAGASA sa layong 660 kilometro silangan ng Catarman, Northern Samar o nasa layong 730 km silangan ng Juban, Sorsogon.

PAG-ASA

MANILA, Philippines — Bahagyang lumakas ang bagyong Quinta habang kumikilos papunta sa Philippine sea.

Alas-10 ng umaga, ang sentro ni Quinta ay namataan ng PAGASA sa layong 660 kilometro silangan ng Catarman, Northern Samar o nasa layong 730 km silangan ng Juban, Sorsogon.

Kumikilos ito sa bilis na 30 km bawat oras taglay ang lakas ng hangin na 55 kph at pagbugso na umaabot sa 70 kph.

Nakataas ang signal number 1 ng bagyo sa Catanduanes.

Inaasahang magla-landfall si Quinta sa buong Bicol Region ngayong Linggo ng gabi hanggang Lunes ng umaga at pagkatapos ay kikilos pakanluran papunta ng Southern Luzon sa Lunes.

Ang bagyong si Quinta at ang Severe Tropical Storm na si "Saudel" na nasa labas ng Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR) ay magdadala ng katamtaman na minsay malakas na pag-ulan sa buong MIMAROPA, Bicol Region, Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula, Bangsamoro, Northern Mindanao, at Caraga.

Kahapon ng alas-10 ng umaga, ang sentro ni Saudel" ay nasa layong 805 km kanluran ng Northern Luzon taglay ang lakas ng hangin na 110 kph at pagbugso na 135 kph.

Patuloy ang pagkilos nito papunta sa central portion ng Vietnam.

Sa Miyerkules ay inaasahang nasa labas na ng bansa si Quinta.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/bansa/2020/10/25/2052105/quinta-bahagyang-lumakas/amp/>



PAGASA warns of flash floods, landslides due to twin storms

posted October 25, 2020 at 12:50 am

by [Maricel Cruz](#)

The state weather bureau on Saturday warned of possible flash floods or landslides during moderate to heavy rains in several areas due to Tropical Depression Quinta and the trough of severe tropical storm Pepito, which is already out of the Philippine area of responsibility.



ROADS BLOCKED. A landslide completely blocks this road between Claveria and Sta. Praxedes towns in Cagayan Province on Saturday, while the combined rains from storms 'Pepito' and 'Quinta' eroded this road (inset) also between the two towns, which the Cagelco electric cooperative and DPWH in Region 2 are trying to fix. Meanwhile, to prepare for when 'Quinta' hits the Bicol region on Sunday, members of the Philippine Coast Guard's Deployable Response Group (DRG) prepare lifeboats and other gear (also inset). CAGELCO, DPWH, PCG photos

The two weather systems are forecast to bring cloudy skies with scattered rain showers and thunderstorms over the island provinces comprising the MIMAROPA Region, the Bicol Region, the Visayas, Zamboanga Peninsula, Bangsamoro area, Northern Mindanao, and Caraga, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said, in its 24-hour forecast.

Meanwhile, ahead of the World Tsunami Day on November 5, Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Undersecretary Renato Solidum, Jr. is urging local government units (LGUs) to plan and prepare for it.

In a taped DOST report aired on Friday afternoon, Solidum said the Philippines was prone to tsunamis because of its archipelagic nature and had earthquake generators.

"Based on studies, there are about 10-14 million people living near the shores that may be hit if a tsunami happens," he said.

A weather disturbance is classified as a tropical depression like Quinta when it packs winds of 61 kilometers per hour or less near the center, while a severe tropical storm such as Pepito is one that packs 81 to 117 kph near the center.

At 3 p.m. on Saturday, the center of Quinta was estimated at 635 kilometers east of Juban, Sorsogon with maximum sustained winds of 55 kilometers per hour near the center and gustiness of up to 70 kph.

Meanwhile, Pepito was estimated outside the PAR at 860 km west of Northern Luzon with maximum sustained winds of 100 kph near the center and gustiness of up to 125 kph.

The frontal system is also expected to bring cloudy skies with scattered rain showers and thunderstorms over Batanes, Cagayan, including the Babuyan Islands, Apayao, and Ilocos Norte.

Flash floods and landslides are also possible.

Partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rain showers may prevail over Metro Manila and the rest of the country due to localized thunderstorms.

PAGASA said Quinta would move generally west-northwestward or northwestward this Saturday, then would turn westward on Sunday morning through Monday.



Quinta was expected to make landfall over the Bicol Region between Sunday evening and Monday morning, then track westward over the Southern Luzon area on Monday.

Sea travel will be risky over the said areas, especially for small seacraft.

Moderate to rough seas (1.5 to 2.5 m) will meanwhile prevail over the western seaboard of southern Palawan and the eastern seaboard of Central and Southern Luzon.

Solidum said that in the last 400 years, all the tsunamis that happened in the country were locally-generated, wherein the public has no time to prepare as this kind of tsunami reaches the shore right away.

The strongest, he said, happened on August 17, 1976 during the magnitude 8.1 Moro Gulf earthquake that killed around 8,000 people.

The other type of tsunami or the distant tsunami that originates from a distant source would enable people to prepare at least one to 26 hours before it reaches the shore.

LGUs and the public need to prepare, Solidum emphasized.

One must remember the three signs that a tsunami is approaching: "Shake, Drop, and Roar". This means that shaking or a strong earthquake would happen; a sudden drop of water would be noticeable, and an unusual sound or noise would be heard.

"These observations are very useful as these would provide a warning at the local level," he said.

He urges the LGUs to download the HazardHunter app, as this would guide them about locations at risk for volcanic eruptions, tsunamis, and other hazards.

"They need to find areas that are safe to put the evacuation centers. The app would also guide them on which roads to take heading to the evacuation centers. The roads they should take must be roads that are safe and not prone to landslides," he said.

Solidum added that the public must also prepare their Go-bags for such events.



The Plastic Myth and the Misunderstood Triangle

[Article](#)

Oct. 23, 2020 11:58AM EST



What happened to all that plastic you've put in the recycling bin over the years? Halfpoint / Getty Images

By Dr. Kate Raynes-Goldie

Of all the plastic we've ever produced, only 9% has been recycled. So what happened to all that plastic you've put in the recycling bin over the years?

Hands up if you grew up thinking that recycling plastic waste is key to saving the environment.

It turns out that for decades [the recyclability of plastics was grossly oversold](#) by the plastics industry.

The creation of this recycling "myth" is why, despite 30 years of being diligent recyclers, we have things like the [Great Pacific Garbage Patch](#).

In fact, we've only recycled 9% of all the plastics we've ever produced. And, our use of plastics is still increasing every year.

The reality of the situation is that recycling plastics is actually really hard and expensive.

Triangle of Mistruths

The myth created around plastic recycling has been one of simplicity. We look for the familiar triangle arrows, then pop the waste in the recycling bin so it can be reused.

But the true purpose of those triangles has been misunderstood by the general public ever since their invention in the 1980s.

These triangles were actually created by the plastics industry and, according to a report provided to them in July 1993, [were creating "unrealistic expectations"](#) about what could be recycled. But they decided to keep using the codes.

Which is why many people still believe that these triangular symbols (also known as a [resin identifier code](#) or RIC) means something is recyclable.

But according to the American Society for Testing and Materials International (ASTM) – which controls the RIC system – the numbered triangles "[are not recycle codes](#)." In fact, they weren't created for the general public at all. They were made for the post-consumer plastic industry.



In other words, the symbols make it easier to sort the different types of plastics, some of which cannot be recycled – [depending on the recycling facility](#).

"Unfortunately, just placing your plastic into the recycling bin doesn't mean it will get recycled," says Lara Camilla Pinho. She is an architect and lecturer at the UWA School of Design who is researching novel uses of plastic waste.

"The recycling system is complicated and often dictated by market demand. Not all plastic is recyclable. We cannot recycle plastic bags or straws for example."

Behind the Scenes

So, what makes recycling plastics so difficult?

"Essentially, there are two types of plastics – thermoplastics and thermosets. While thermoplastics can be re-melted and re-molded, thermosets contain cross-linked polymers that cannot be separated meaning they cannot be recycled," says Lara.

"Even thermoplastics have a limit to the amount of times we can recycle them, as each time they are recycled they downgrade in quality."

Even when plastics are recyclable, it is [often more costly](#) than simply making new plastics.

Sugar, Seaweed and Mushrooms

If the conventional recycling system isn't working, what else can we do with all the plastic we've created?

Lara is looking for ways to add value to recycled plastics such as using it in the design and development of architectural products. She hopes to use these architectural products to help underserved communities that are disproportionately affected by plastic waste.

In addition to recycling, we also need to find ways to reduce our use of virgin petroleum-based plastics.

Bioplastic is one such product that has been getting a lot of hype over the last few years. And although they're better than petroleum-based plastics, bioplastics also come with their own [set of challenges](#).

"There are already a lot of bio-based alternatives to plastic, such as bagasse – a byproduct of sugar cane processing," says Lara.

[Mycelium](#), a type of fungi we most often associate with mushrooms, are also providing an interesting plastic alternative.

"In the field of architecture, mycelium is starting to be used as an alternative to plastic insulation, but also as compostable packaging and bricks," says Lara.

"The bricks take around five days to make and are strong, durable, water resistant and compostable at the end of their use."

[Hy-Fi Tower](#), created by [The Living](#), is an example of a building made from these bricks.



And finally, there's seaweed.

"[Seaweed is] cheap and can reproduce itself quickly without fertilizers. In architecture, there is use for seaweed as an alternative to plastic insulation but also as cladding," says Lara.

More Money, More Problems

While all these alternatives are great, the main cause of our plastic dilemma is not scientific or technological, but economic.

As long as it remains [cheaper to create new plastics](#) from fossil fuels rather than from bioplastics or from recycling, we're going to be stuck with plastic garbage islands floating in our oceans.

The true cost to our health and our environment has yet to be included in the equation. But once it is, maybe that is when the real shift will happen.

Reposted with permission from [Particle](#).



ACB chief: Consider biodiversity in food systems, gardening trends

By [BusinessMirror](#)
October 25, 2020



A woman rice farmer winnows rice grains from the chaff.

The Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) recently called for creative and innovative ways to integrate nature considerations into agriculture, fisheries and even in urban gardening in order to simultaneously conserve nature and boost the resilience of food systems.

“Among the ecosystem services that humans derive from biodiversity are food and nourishment. However, coupled with the further deterioration of food security at the global level, agriculture remains one of the drivers of biodiversity loss... Indeed, it is necessary to consider biodiversity when crafting and implementing food program,” ACB Executive Director Theresa Mundita Lim, said in her statement for the recent celebration of the World Food Day.

The ACB joined the international community in celebrating the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, reiterating the vital role that healthy and rich biodiversity plays in the current food systems.

Efforts to mainstream biodiversity considerations into the agriculture and fisheries sector’s development processes in Southeast Asia are among the main thrusts of the ACB.

On 28 August, the ACB, with the European Union, through the Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas Project, supported a forum on mainstreaming biodiversity in agriculture in Thailand.

The forum, organized by Thailand’s Office of the Natural Resources and Environmental Policy and Planning, highlighted measures to strengthen efforts in the country’s agriculture sector to mainstream biodiversity through strengthening action plans and developing and implementing biodiversity responsive policies.

Citing the 2020 scoping study on biodiversity and health in the region, conducted by the United Nations University-International Institute of Global Health and supported by the ACB and the EU, Lim highlighted the need to enhance agricultural biodiversity, as well as to invest in germplasm conservation.



“This undertaking will ensure the conservation of identified climate-resilient crop varieties and the diversity of fish and livestock resources,” she said.

Lim noted that maximizing effective agrobiodiversity practices will help improve crop diversity and address micronutrient deficiencies affecting the population.

Meanwhile, Lim also suggested improving access to user-friendly national public databases on native and endemic plant species to guide plant enthusiasts and agricultural experts alike on which plants to grow.

The ACB’s Asean Clearing House Mechanism, which provides information on plant species, including their endemism and conservation status, may likewise be accessed by the public.

“With the right information and awareness-raising on propagating native plant species and its short- and long-term ecological and economic benefits, this growing trend on urban gardening may be guided to be more biodiversity-friendly, serving both the public and the environment,” Lim said.

Image credits: [Dedi Suwidiantoro](#)



First ever nest of Asian giant hornets found in US

[Agence France-Presse](#) / 05:53 PM October 24, 2020



A sample specimen of a dead Asian Giant Hornet from Japan, also known as a murder hornet, is shown by a pest biologist from the Washington State Department of Agriculture on July 29, 2020 in Bellingham, Washington. Image: AFP/Getty Images North America/ Karen Ducey

After months of meticulous tracking, authorities in the western American state of Washington on Friday said they had uncovered the first-ever nest of the deadly Asian giant hornet in the country.

The nest was found on Thursday by Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) entomologists on a property in Blaine, near the border with Canada, the agency said in a statement.

It added that an attempt to eradicate the nest of wasps — the world’s largest hornet species also known as the “murder hornet” — would take place on Saturday.

“The successful detection of a nest comes after a WSDA trapper collected two live Asian giant hornets on Oct. 21, Wednesday, caught in a new type of trap the agency had placed in the area,” the statement said.

“Two more hornets, also living, were found in another trap the morning of Oct. 22 when WSDA staff arrived in the area to tag the previously trapped hornets with radio trackers and follow one back to its nest,” it added.

Scientists in the state have been actively searching for the Asian giant hornet since the first such insect was detected in December 2019 and after one of the wasps was trapped in July in Whatcom County, where Blaine is located.

Several more of the invasive pest not native to the United States were subsequently caught, all in the same region.

The WSDA believes there was a good chance that there are more nests and “stopping this cold is very crucial,” said Sven Spichiger, an entomologist with WSDA, during a press conference Friday afternoon.

“If it becomes established, this hornet will have negative impacts on the environment, economy, and public health of Washington State,” the WSDA said.

It is unclear how the wasps — which have orange and black markings and are nearly two inches (five centimeters) in length — arrived in the U.S.



Scientists warn that unless the insect is eliminated in the next couple years, it could spread in North America and become permanently established.

The hornets, which are native to East Asia and Japan, usually don't attack people but they are known for decimating honeybee colonies.

The hornets slaughter honeybees by literally biting their heads off. The hornets then occupy honeybee nests for up to a week or more, feeding on the pupae and larvae.

In Japan, where the insects are hunted and eaten, some 30 to 50 people die each year from their venomous and excruciating sting. **IB**



Galapagos sees record rise in penguins, flightless cormorants

[Agence France-Presse](#) / 06:04 PM October 24, 2020



The Galapagos penguin is one of the smallest species of penguins in the world. Image: Charles Darwin Foundation via AFP

The Galapagos penguin is one of the smallest species of penguins in the world, measuring up to 35 centimeters, and the cormorants on the islands are the only type to have lost their ability to fly — but they have developed diving skills.

“The number of cormorants has reached a record number, according to historical data dating back to 1977, while the number of penguins is at the highest since 2006,” said a statement from the Galapagos National Park, which carried out the census.

The population of Galapagos penguins, the only ones living on the Earth’s equator, increased from 1,451 in 2019 to 1,940 in 2020, it added.

Flightless cormorant numbers increased from 1,914 to 2,220 over the same period.

The study was carried out by the park and the Charles Darwin Foundation in September with the main colonies present on the Isabela and Fernandina islands and on the Marielas islets, to the west of the archipelago classified as a natural heritage site.

Paulo Proano, Ecuadorian minister of environment and water, said the census results reflect the “good state of health of the population” of birds in the archipelago, located some 1,000 kilometers (625 miles) off the Ecuadorian coast, according to the park.

The park said the presence of the La Niña climatic phenomenon, which helps to provide more food for the birds, has contributed to the increase in their populations.

Another factor was the coronavirus pandemic, which has limited disturbances to nesting areas because of the drop in tourism, the park added.

The islands, which served as a natural laboratory for the English scientist Charles Darwin for his theory of the evolution of species, takes its name from the giant tortoises that live there. **IB**

Source: <https://technology.inquirer.net/105004/galapagos-sees-record-rise-in-penguins-flightless-cormorants>



Galapagos sees record rise in penguins, flightless cormorants

posted October 24, 2020 at 11:57 am

by [AFP](#)

Quito, Ecuador - The population of Galapagos penguins and flightless cormorants, two species endemic to the islands, has seen a record increase, study results released Friday showed.



(FILES) Handout file photo taken on October 26, 2018 and released by the Charles Darwin Foundation showing a Galapagos penguin standing in Isabela Island, in Galapagos archipelago, Ecuador. - Galapagos National Park registered a record increase in the population of penguins and flightless cormorants, both species endemic to the archipelago, according to a census published on October 23, 2020. (Photo by - / Charles Darwin Foundation / AFP)

The Galapagos penguin is one of the smallest species of penguins in the world, measuring up to 35 centimeters, and the cormorants on the islands are the only type to have lost their ability to fly -- but they have developed diving skills.

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Source: <https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/337664>



Smuggler with 118 elephant tusks nabbed



By Agence France-Presse

October 25, 2020

YAOUNDE: Cameroon authorities arrested four ivory smugglers attempting to transport nearly 120 elephant tusks through the country's south, officials said on Friday. The group had trafficked nearly 675 kilograms (1,500 pounds) of the illicit cargo from neighboring Gabon, which is home to more than half of Africa's remaining forest elephants. They hid their haul in the bottom of a van with a false compartment, state television reported.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/10/25/news/world/smuggler-with-118-elephant-tusks-nabbed/785254/>



Captive bred salmon harmful – research



By Agence France-Presse

October 25, 2020

STUTTGART: Releasing captive-bred Atlantic salmon into the ocean, a long-standing practice to boost stocks for commercial fishing, reduces the rate at which wild populations reproduce and may ultimately do more harm than good, researchers cautioned. On average, salmon born in hatcheries in Ireland’s Burrishoole catchment only produced a third as many offspring in the North Atlantic compared to wild fish, according to a study in the Royal Society’s biological research journal *Proceedings B*. “We have also shown that — in years where you have a greater input from captive-bred Atlantic salmon — the ability of the population as a whole to produce more wild-bred fish is reduced in subsequent years,” lead author Ronan James O’Sullivan, an evolutionary biologist at University College Cork, told Agence France-Presse.



Hydrogen fuels China's green economy

Published 16 seconds ago on October 25, 2020 06:10 AM

By [Xinhua](#)



GUANGZHOU, China (Xinhua) — China's positive progress in the hydrogen industry not only helps the country combat climate change and accelerate its transformation to a green economy but also facilitates its carbon neutrality goal before 2060, an official with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) said.

Beate Trankmann, the resident representative of the UNDP China, made the remarks at the just concluded UNDP Hydrogen Industry Conference 2020 held in Foshan, south China's Guangdong Province.

The event drew experts from organizations and scientific research institutions, as well as over 300 enterprises in the fields of hydrogen energy and fuel cells from home and abroad.

The hydrogen economy is still relatively new, but countries like Japan and the Republic of Korea are making plans and investments to boost the industry, Trankmann said, noting that the UNDP is currently working with China to develop the hydrogen economy.

China plays an important part in the world's fuel cell and hydrogen fuel-cell vehicle industry, the representative said. The country currently has a fleet of more than 7,000 hydrogen fuel cell vehicles, such as cargo vans and trucks for commercial use, accounting for over half of the world's total.

"By developing these vehicles, you raise public awareness, and you raise demand for fuel cell vehicles because ultimately you want a private consumer market when the industry matures," Trankmann said.

She added that hydrogen industry clusters have been taking shape in China's Beijing-Tianjin-Hebei and Pearl River Delta regions, as well as the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area.