

28 OCTOBER 2020, WEDNESDAY



DENR

NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Cimatu nagbabala vs produktong pambahay na may HFCs



October 27, 2020 @ 10:04 PM 8 hours ago

Manila, Philippines-Pinaalalahanan ni Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu ang publiko na iwasan ang paggamit ng mga produktong pambahay na naglalaman ng hydrofluorocarbons (HFCs) na nagpapabilis sa pagdami ng greenhouse gas at nagdudulot ng matinding kontribusyon sa climate change.

Ayon sa DENR, ang HFCs ay ginagamit na propellant sa mga hair spray, deodorant, insecticide at disinfectant na isa sa pinakatinatangkilik na produkto sa pamilihan dahil sa COVID-19 pandemic.

“By choosing not to buy products containing HFCs, consumers will be reducing GHG levels and sending a message to companies not to continue to use the propellant in their products,” sabi ni Cimatu.

Ginawa ng environment chief ang pahayag bilang pagsuporta sa “awareness-raising efforts” ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau sa pamamagitan ng Philippine Ozone Desk.

Ang POD ang nangangasiwa at nakikipag-ugnayan sa mga proyekto at polisiya upang ma-phaseout ang ozone depleting substances kaugnay ng commitment ng bansa sa Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer at ng Kigali Amendment to the Montreal Protocol.

Ang Kigali Amendment ay isang pandaigdigang kasunduan upang unti-unting mabawasan ang paggamit at produksyon ng HFCs na siyang pumalit sa ozone-destroying chlorofluorocarbons na dating ginagamit sa mga air conditioner at refrigerant.

Nabatid pa sa ulat na ang HFCs ay kalaunang napatunayang malakas na GHG na maaaring mga daan hanggang libong beses na mas malakas sa carbon dioxide na nakapag-aambag sa climate change per unit of mass.

Sa katatapos na webinar na inorganisa ng POD, sinabi ni public awareness officer Joylan Nephi Babia na habang ang halos lahat ng aerosols sa pamilihan ngayon ay walang ODS, ang ibang mga produkto naman ay gumagamit pa rin ng alternatibong HFCs na malaki ang kontribusyon sa global warming.

Nagbabala si Babia na ang HFCs ay may mataas o napakataas na “global warming potential” mula sa 12 hanggang 14,800.



Partikular na sinabi nito ang HFC 134a na ginagamit na propellant sa disinfectant sprays na may “global warming potentials na 1,300 para sa 100-year scale.”

Pinaalalahan din nito ang mga mamimili na gumamit na lang ng disinfectant spray na gumagamit ng LPG o hydrocarbons tulad ng propane, butane at isobutane bilang propellant dahil mas environment-friendly ang mga ito at may maliit na global warming potentials.

Dahil ang HFCs ay mahalagang alternatibo sa CFCs, hindi ito kaagad-agad na matatanggal sa pamilihan.

Ang HFCs ay nabuo matapos ang phaseout ng CFCs at hydrochlorofluorocarbons (HCFCs) na kinailangan sa ilalim ng Montreal Protocol noong 1987.

Ang climate benefit sa pagbabawas ng HFC emissions ay tinanggap na sa buong mundo dahil upang magkaroon ng amendment ang Montreal Protocol na kilala naman ngayon bilang Kigali Amendment, na nanawagan sa mga mauunlad na bansa na simulan nang i-phase down ang HFCs hanggang 2019 at sa developing countries na “follow with a freeze between 2024 and 2028.”

Ang Pilipinas ay kasalukuyang nakatuon sa pag-phaseout ng dapat huling batch o grupo ng ODS-HFCs kung kailan ang iskedyul ay tatagal ng 27 taon mula 2013 hanggang 2040. **SANTI CELARIO**



METRO

Taytay fishers to collect water hyacinths

Published 2 hours ago on October 28, 2020 04:20 AM

By [Neil Alcober](#)



Fisherfolk in coastal barangays of Taytay, Rizal will be compensated by the national government for every kilo of water hyacinth they are able to collect from rivers and other waterways.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has partnered with the Taytay local government unit to assist them clear Pasig River and adjacent rivers of water hyacinth and garbage.

Vic Badaguas, Taytay General Services Offices chief, said DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda sought assistance from the municipal government for clearing and declogging efforts.

“It’s a joint project to clear Pasig River of water hyacinths that go downstream. For this to be addressed, a concerted joint effort among local government units is needed, and Taytay was chosen as pilot area,” Badaguas told Daily Tribune in a phone interview.

“This is to clean Laguna Lake of water hyacinths so that these will not flow out of Laguna Lake to adjacent rivers and Manila Bay,” he added.

The Taytay official said the DENR will deputize fisherfolk to remove floating water hyacinths that have been swept away from the river banks.

“They will be compensated P1.50 for every kilo of water hyacinth. They will load these into their bancas and transport these to a buying station. The LLDA (Laguna Lake Development Authority) and DENR will assign a barge for this purpose,” he said.

The project will be handled by the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) and funded by the national government.

Aside from causing floods, thick water hyacinth beds also pose a problem to small vessels using the river as the plants hamper navigation.



Daily Tribune (Philippines)

DENR: Dolomite sand still intact

Contrary to some reports, the dolomite white sand was not washed out. It was just covered by black sand

Ecology · Department of Environment and Natural Resources · Disasters
28 Oct 2020 [+2 more](#) BY FRANCIS T. WAKEFIELD @tribunephil_FTW

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) yesterday said the dolomite sand that was deposited in Manila Bay was not washed away by strong waves or currents caused by Tropical Storm “Pepito” (Saudel) and Typhoon “Quinta” (Molave).

Jonas Leones, DENR Undersecretary for Policy, Planning and International Affairs, said he personally went to Manila Bay and inspected the area where the dolomite sand is.

Critics of the Manila Bay Nourishment Project expressed fears the sand was washed away by bad weather.

However, Leones said the DENR employed engineering interventions to prevent strong waves and currents from washing it away.

Some expressed about 10 percent of the beach area where the sand was piled has been covered with black sand as a result of the bay’s current and waves.

“Contrary to some reports, the dolomite white sand was not washed out. It was just covered by black sand,” Leones told Daily Tribune in a phone interview.

The DENR official maintained overlaying white sand in Manila Bay as part of the beach nourishment project has not been com-

pleted yet following the decision by Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu to suspend the operations of two mining firms in Alcoy, Cebu, allegedly for extensive damages they brought to the marine ecosystem, which were tapped to supply the material.

Manila Bay earlier grabbed headlines as environmental groups criticized the move to place rock along the shores of Manila Bay to expand the beach, saying it would hurt the natural ecosystem in the area and in Cebu, where the dolomite comes from.

The DENR said the beach nourishment project is a significant component of the Manila Bay re-

habilitation program, which dates back to 2008 when the Supreme Court (SC) issued a writ of continuing mandamus directing the DENR and other government agencies to clean up, rehabilitate and preserve the historic bay known globally for its spectacular sunset.

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10 percent ng dolomite sand sa Manila Bay inanod na sa karagatan – DENR

On Oct 27, 2020



INANOD na sa karagatan ang nasa 10-porsyento ng dolomite sand sa Manila Bay bunga ng tuluy-tuloy na pag-uulan.

Ayon kay Environment Undersecretary Jonas Leones, natabunan na ang artificial white sand ng mga itim na buhangin.

Dagdag pa ni Leones, naglagay sila ng dolomite sand sa tubig upang imbes na regular black sand, ang artificial white sand ang aanurin sa beach.

“Nakikita natin ‘yong magiging problema. Puwede laging mag-adjust. So later on, lalagyan parin namin ng dolomite ‘yon pati sa tubig na para at least kapag lumakas ‘yong wave, hindi na black sand ang dadalhin ng tubig, white sand na,” sabi ni Leones.

Bahagi ang pagtatambak ng dolomite sand sa Baywalk ng rehabilitation program ng Manila Bay.

Source: https://www.policefilestonite.net/2020/10/27/10-percent-ng-dolomite-sand-sa-manila-bay-inanod-na-sa-karagatan-denr/?fbclid=IwAR3e_eOMgY8-dXC2SWXQhhbrdO6BzRrPX6AsHrc5EMXCjVyfyINz2_Ud92E



10-porsento ng dolomite sand sa Manila Bay, inanod na sa karagatan – DENR

By [RadyoMaN Manila](#) - Oct. 27, 2020 at 6:03am



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Ang pagtatambak ng dolomite sand sa Baywalk ay bahagi ng rehabilitation program ng Manila Bay.

Source: https://rmn.ph/10-porsento-ng-dolomite-sand-sa-manila-bay-inanod-na-sa-karagatan-denr/?fbclid=IwAR0B2LjjVkTFQ2dTctuM31-fHIR4zxY-IamP3_rXL4pGo1MIE4Z12I9M-G8



ABS-CBN News

12h · 🌐



Isang araw matapos ang pananalasa ng bagyong #QuintaPH, lalo pang nabawasan ang mga dolomite "white sand" sa Manila Bay.

Halos kalahati na ng land area ng mga itinambak na artificial white sand ang nawala kumpara noong pansamantalang buksan ang lugar sa publiko.

May ilan namang mga dumarayo pa rin para silipin ang artificial white sand beach. Ang iba ay tuloy pa rin sa pagse-selfie habang ang iba nama'y tinitingnan ang lagay nito matapos ang magkakasunod na sama ng panahon. #WeatherPatrol Video mula kay George Calvelo, ABS-CBN News

BASA HIN DITO ang kaugnay na balita: <https://bit.ly/37IOX80>



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GMA News

October 26 at 8:45 PM · 🌐

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Natabunan ng black sand ang artificial white sand sa Manila Bay dahil sa mga nagdaang malalakas na pag-ulan. Sa taya ng DENR, humigit-kumulang sampung porsyento ng dolomite sand ang inanod rin sa dagat. | via [Bernadette Reyes/GMA News](#)

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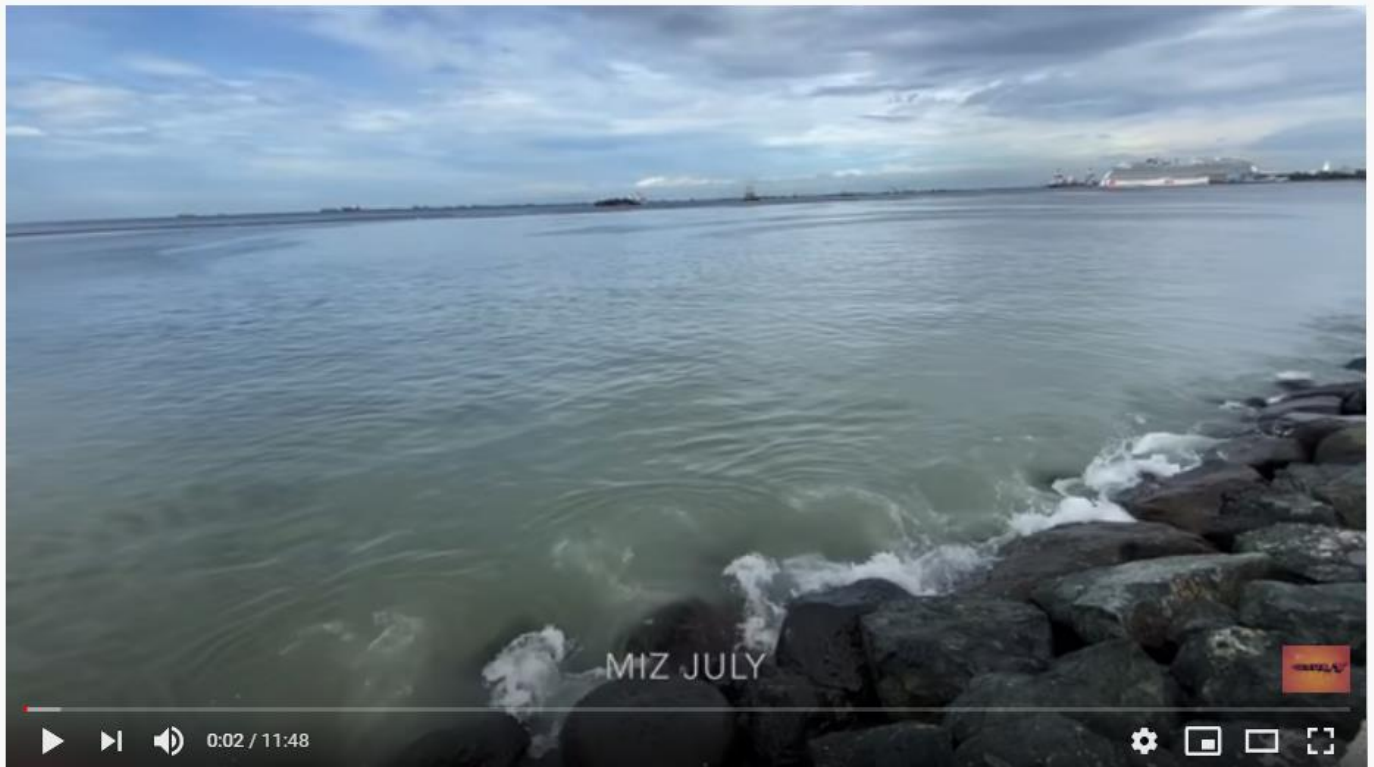
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Kumpanya na naglagay ng harang sa bahagi ng Masungi Georeserve, pinagpapaliwanag

By **Bombo Sol Marquez**

-October 27, 2020 | 7:21 PM

Bibigyan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) hanggang Huwebes ang isang pampridadong kumpanya upang magpaliwanag sa paglalagay nito ng harang sa isang bahagi ng Masungi Georeserve na matatagpuan sa Rizal.

Ayon kay Environment Undersecretary Jonas Leones, naglabas na ang ahensya ng shiw cause order para sa Rublou Inc., para ilatag ang kanilang ebidensya na magpapatunay na sa kanila ang bahagi ng lupa na kanilang inaangkin.

Malinaw aniya itong paglabag sa batas na nagbibigay proteksyon sa mga lugar na basta na lamang aangkinin ng kung sino man.

Sa ilalim ng Republic Act 7586 o ang National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 1992, ang Masungi Georeserve ay protektado laban sa kung ano mang uri ng human exploitation. Mahigpit ding ipinagbabawal ng nasabing batas ang paglalagay ng harang dito na walang naipapakitang permit.

Ikinaiinis din umano ni Leones ang kaliwa't kanang grupo na nagsasabing sila ang may-ari ng lupa dahil sa kakulangan ng tauhan upang maayos na mamonitor ito ng gobyerno.

Naalarma naman ang Masungi Georeserve Foundation dahil sa naglabasang impormasyon na ilang bahagi ng naturang lugar ang kasalukuyang pinalilibutan at binabantayan ng mga armadong lalaki.

Sa kabila nang pagkakatanggal sa mga inilagay na harang ay hindi pa rin maiwasan ni Billie Dumaliang, trustee at advocacy officer ng nasabing grupo, na mag-aalala dahil baka balikan ang lugar ng mga taong umaangkin dito.

Kinokondena rin umano ng grupo ang paggamit ng dahas o taktika para lamang makuha ang bahagi ng Masungi forest at sirain ang kapaligiran.

Ang bahagi na nilagyan ng harang ay aabot ng 1,000 ektarya. Parte ito ng Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape at Masungi Wildlife Sanctuary and Strict Nature Reserve.

Sa pamamagitan naman ng isang pahayag ay sinabi ng Rublou Inc., na ang bahagi na kanilang hinarangan ay parte ng ancestral domain ng Dumagat-Remontados tribe.

Source: <https://www.bomboradyo.com/kumpanya-na-naglagay-ng-harang-sa-bahagi-ng-masungi-georeserve-pinagpapaliwanag/>



Presence of Armed Men Threatening Efforts To Protect Masungi Georeserve In Baras, Rizal

On Friday, Oct. 23, armed men fenced portions of the protected site under reforestation, even if they were unable to present any documents allowing them, according to the Masungi Georeserve.

Neil Jayson Servalos Tuesday, October 27, 2020



Two of the armed men currently guarding a fenced portion of the Masungi Georeserve. Photo by Billie Dumaliang

Park rangers in Masungi Georeserve in Baras, Rizal, a protected conservation site, are facing imminent threats to their safety as armed men continue to hound protected land in the area, the management of the conservation site said on Monday, Oct. 26.

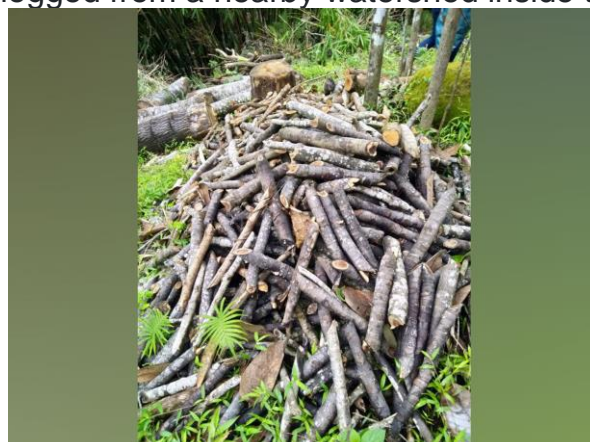
On Friday, Oct. 23, armed guards fenced off portions of the protected site under reforestation, even if they were unable to present any documents allowing them to do so, according to the Masungi Georeserve.

Billie Dumaliang, Masungi Georeserve's advocacy officer and trustee, told **The Philippine STAR** that the presence of armed men has prevented park rangers from doing their rounds in the conservation site, which is part of their mission to protect and preserve the site's land and its diverse wildlife.

"Their mere presence (armed guards) there are already a threat to their safety," Dumaliang said in an interview.

According to Dumaliang, the foundation has been trying to dismantle the illegal settlement of the armed guards as they keep returning and rebuilding the fences.

Inspection on the site early Monday by rangers and the foundation raised fears that the pieces of young trees the guards used to enclose a parcel of land they claim belongs to Rublou Inc., were illegally logged from a nearby watershed inside the site.



Rublou has subsidiaries involved in meat distribution, real estate and renewable energy. Masungi management said the guards also identified themselves with Green Atom, Rublou's renewable energy subsidiary.

According to its website, Green Atom's board of directors is chaired by Luizo Ticman, a retired Philippine National Police official who had earlier been accused of harassing owners of a parcel of land also in Rizal.

The guards, who were first reported to have erected fences in the area on Friday, have been surveilling the area days before the incident.

Lack of environmental enforcement

The Masungi Georeserve is engaged in an ambitious restoration and rewilding of about 3,000 hectares of degraded lands around the limestone formations in its Geopark Project.

The reservation has suffered from alarming tree and animal poaching, as well as quarrying and land trafficking operations.

The area fenced off by the guards is part of the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape and the Masungi Wildlife Sanctuary and Strict Nature Reserve. These were declared protected areas under Proclamation No. 296 issued in 2011, meaning that they must be protected against destructive exploitation.

"I think everyone, including the government, recognizes the lack of environmental enforcement and the lack of protection afforded to rangers. That is why the DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources) is pushing for a new law on this," Dumaliang said.

During Monday's inspection, Dumaliang also bared that vast charcoal pits were seen in the previously fenced area, whiffs of which indicate that they were fresh.





“We try to remove the fences, however, every day, the armed guards return and build structures in the area,” she said.

Masungi Georeserve fears that the guards were still in the area despite the dismantling of their fences.

“They are still around the area, with their barracks in a resort in Sitio San Roque. Our rangers are trying to hold the fort,” Dumaliang said.

Masungi reported the incident to the police in hopes of protecting the land and their rangers against the threat of the guards, but were implored to file a blotter report instead. Dumaliang said they would be following up for a response.

Reached for comment, Baras municipal police chief Capt. Junar Briones said sending armed individuals to take over lands is not allowed, especially without pertinent documents.

But he explained the police cannot intervene in civil cases. But if the armed men in the area were to disrupt peace and order in the protected area, they would be ready to respond.

“There is a nearby Regional Mobile Force Battalion camp in the area, ready to respond to any disorder. We are in constant communication with the management of Masungi,” Briones told **The STAR**.

Masungi Georeserve called on a multisectoral approach to ensure that those violating laws that protect the site’s areas from encroachment and exploitation will be brought to justice.

“Meanwhile, all actors including civil society need to work together to make sure those who make a mockery of the law and our protected areas are actually convicted. Right now they feel they can get away with it. We need sustainable solutions if we want to save whatever’s left of our forests,” Dumaliang said.

Source: <https://www.onenews.ph/presence-of-armed-men-threatening-efforts-to-protect-masungi-georeserve-in-baras-rizal?fbclid=IwAR3Wak-KVSSzU2a7oK3WjHhcnSY4qFGmREUPp7pEHZO1ZkcutGYP4F8FuGI>



Solon wants policies on waste management reviewed

October 27, 2020 2 min read

File photo

MANILA – A lawmaker at the House of Representatives on Monday urged concerned government agencies to address the policy gaps in waste management that made the country as “foreigners’ dumping ground”.

Misamis Oriental Rep. Juliette Uy said companies abroad who dump their garbage in the Philippines have local collaborators that take advantage of procedural and discretionary loopholes in waste recycling regulations, as well as waste-to-energy policies.

“They are able to import the garbage and are complicit in making our country the foreigners’ dumping ground because they take advantage of government regulations and loopholes,” Uy said. “I strongly urge the DENR [Department of Environment and Natural Resources], Bureau of Customs, and Department of Trade and Industry to review the laws and regulations these importers are taking advantage of.”

Uy warned that others may just use the garbage as a disguise or cover to import other contraband like illegal drugs.

She said there may be insiders at DENR, Department of Trade and Industry, and Customs who are “intimately familiar” with the regulations and procedures and are conniving with the importers and consignees.

“The foreign companies and the importers cannot possibly carry out their schemes without the collaboration of insiders,” she said. “Careful scrutiny of the documents could lead to the discovery of patterns like money trail, signatories, date and time stamps, favorite freight forwarders, and other indicators of modus operandi.” (PNA)

Source: https://maharlika.tv/2020/10/27/solon-wants-policies-on-waste-management-reviewed/?fbclid=IwAR1dj1b_y3LBUya1FzSWkGbo3EDr9rARVNvPTUC-vjBtcCW948tTAHeZptA



Veterinary student turns over venomous cobra to DENR



ZAMBOANGA. A Veterinary student, Teodoro Yanuyan III, of Dumalinao, Zamboanga del Sur, turns over last week a venomous spitting cobra to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. A photo handout shows Yanuyan holds the cobra, which was trapped in a garden net of his neighbor. (SunStar Zamboanga)

October 27, 2020

A VETERINARY student known in his neighborhood as "snake man" turned over last week a highly venomous species of spitting cobra to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) office in Zamboanga del Sur.

Teodoro Yanuyan III of Dumalinao, Zamboanga del Sur said the snake, a matured Samar Cobra locally known as "Dupong," was caught at the garden of his neighbor.

Yanuyan said his neighbor called him to help catch the snake trapped in a garden net before it could harm anyone, especially children.

Yanuyan added that neighbors always call on him whenever there are snakes found in their houses or garden.

The Samar Cobra is a highly venomous species of spitting cobra native to the Visayas and Mindanao islands.

Yanuyan, a veterinary student, believes that the snake was disturbed in its habitat following a heavy downpour the previous night.

"We are fully aware that all wildlife, including snakes, are protected under Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act, as we have learned this during an information campaign conducted by the DENR in our community," Yanuyan said.

The Samar Cobra was received by Heracleo Calasang Jr., enforcement division officer-in-charge, who praised Yanuyan for his noble act.

The snake was immediately brought to the Regional Wildlife Rescue Center in Baclay, Tukuran to ensure that it is fit and healthy before its release back to wild. **(SunStar Zamboanga)**

Source: <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1874856/Zamboanga/Local-News/Veterinary-student-turns-over-venomous-cobra-to-DENR>



New gumamela hybrid developed in Laguna

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Oct 27 2020 03:46 PM



Photo from the website of UP Los Baños

MANILA -- A new hybrid of hibiscus, locally known as gumamela, has been developed in Los Baños, Laguna.

Hibiscus rosa-sinensis "Emmeline Aglipay-Villar" was bred by Dr. Pablito Magdalita, a professor and scientist at University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB).

It was named after Atty. Emmeline Aglipay-Villar, an undersecretary of the Department of Justice, as tribute to her and her body of work.

"I've never, ever, in my wildest dreams imagined that a flower will be named after me," Villar said during the virtual launch event for the gumamela hybrid, as quoted by UPLB in a statement on its [website](#).

"I dedicate this honor to all the women and children who are victims of abuse and exploitation. Let this [hibiscus hybrid] be a symbol of hope for all of us and may it remind us that despite all the pain and suffering, flowers bloom," she added.

H. rosa-sinensis "Emmeline Aglipay-Villar" is part of UPLB's Women in Public Service Series, described by the university as "a collection of hibiscus hybrids named after women leaders who have served the nation through their work in the public sector, as well as in their private capacity."

The flower features "a spinel red petal with cadmium orange edges and red eye."

Source: https://news.abs-cbn.com/life/10/27/20/new-gumamela-hybrid-developed-in-laguna?fbclid=IwAR0u5ZNFdYINeivwhQBTszH52_hLjw9yn1iRZgP-vhHHE_rP-KVJefKsqwU



Environment advocates conduct research expedition on Panaon Island in Southern Leyte

Published October 27, 2020, 6:19 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

While the average coral cover in the Philippines is at 20 percent, within the site of a marine research expedition in Panaon Island, Southern Leyte is a stunning 70 percent cover, according to an environmental conservation group.

Panaon Island is the latest hub of a 22-day multidisciplinary marine expedition led by Oceana Philippines' marine scientists and volunteers.

They started to photograph, film, and research corals, seamounts and other unique marine ecosystems in the area last Oct. 16.

Panaon Island is bounded by four bodies of water—Surigao Strait, Visayan Sea, Sogod Bay and Pacific Ocean. Its rich biodiversity is crucial in ensuring food security, laying the ground for poverty alleviation measures, and enhancing the well-being of surrounding coastal communities.

“The reef mounts in Panaon are especially noteworthy considering that while the average coral cover in the Philippines is at 20 percent, those within the expedition site have a remarkable 70 percent cover,” Oceana said.

Coral reefs are vital to a healthy ocean ecosystem by providing habitat to countless marine species, it pointed out.

“Panaon Island is one of the areas identified to likely survive the negative impact of global climate crisis, thus, the urgency to protect it now,” Oceana vice president Gloria Estenzo Ramos said. Citing the Reefs at Risk Revisited report published by the World Resources Institute in 2011, it was found that 90 percent of the world's corals are projected to die by 2050 because of rising oceans temperatures and acidity due to climate change.

The water around Panaon Island is identified as one of the 50 priority reefs of private sector-backed initiative, which includes Bloomberg Philanthropies, that helps ensure ocean ecosystems survive and thrive despite the growing threat of climate change.

Other Philippine reefs included in this priority list are in Napantao, also in Southern Leyte, and two in Palawan.

This year's expedition led by Oceana is in partnership with the provincial and municipal governments in the area and various partner-stakeholders.

Southern Leyte Gov. Damian Mercado has given the province's support to Oceana's expedition. Also part of Oceana's goal is to conduct a socioeconomic survey for coastal communities in the island, provided that the coronavirus situation improves.

Oceana, which participated in the government-led Philippine Rise (formerly known as Benham Rise) expedition in 2016, faced several challenges while planning for the launch of the Panaon mission during the pandemic.

These include having the crew undertake RT-PCR testing for coronavirus and go through the required 14-day isolation as well as complex logistics planning in order for the crew to minimize landing onshore for supply run.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/10/27/environment-advocates-conduct-research-expedition-on-panaon-island-in-southern-leyte/>



A woman checks her own temperature on this October 25, 2020 photo.
The STAR/Edd Gumban

COVID-19 cases in Philippines rise to 373,144

(Philstar.com) - October 27, 2020 - 4:18pm

MANILA, Philippines — The country's coronavirus tally rose to 373,144 after more than 1,524 new infections were recorded, the Department of Health said Tuesday.

Total cases climbed by 1,524 from the previous day.

The areas with the most number of newly-reported COVID-19 cases were Negros Occidental with 115 cases, Cavite with 76, Benguet with 72, Quezon City with 67 and Laguna with 65.

The DOH also reported 353 more recovered patients, raising the overall number of COVID-19 survivors to 328,602. Total recoveries accounted for [PERCENT] of the cumulative cases.

But 14 additional fatalities due to the respiratory disease were logged. To date, the death toll stands at 7,053.

Of the total confirmed cases, 37,489 or 10% were active infections.

Metro Manila retains GCQ status

Metro Manila, the epicenter of the nation's coronavirus outbreak, will remain under general community quarantine until November 30, President Rodrigo Duterte announced Tuesday morning.

Aside from the capital region, other areas that will be under GCQ from November 1 to 30 include Batangas, Lanao del Sur, Iloilo City, Bacolod City, Tacloban City and Iligan City.

Researchers studying the coronavirus outbreak in the country urged local governments, especially in high-risk areas, to further intensify their efforts at testing, tracing and isolation. The OCTA Research group also said the implementation of "more aggressive and effective" localized lockdowns with stricter border controls is urgently needed in high-risk areas.

COVID-19 has infected over 43.42 million people across the globe, with over 1.15 million deaths. — **Gaea Katreena Cabico**

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/10/27/2052633/covid-19-cases-philippines-rise-373144>



Metro Manila, 6 other areas to remain under GCQ until Nov. 30

By Azer Parrocha October 27, 2020, 10:03 am



President Rodrigo Duterte. (Presidential photo)

MANILA – Metro Manila will remain under general community quarantine (GCQ) status until November 30 along with other areas, President Rodrigo Duterte announced in a pre-recorded address aired Tuesday morning.

In his speech, Duterte said the mayors of Metro Manila wanted to retain the current quarantine classification in the region.

“Ang gusto ng mga mayor, karamihan, gusto nila (the majority of mayors want to), make it permanent because they have seen the goodness of the result na (that) it has considerably lowered the number of people infected with the microbe,” Duterte said.

He explained that the decision to retain the GCQ status is for everyone’s own good.

“So gusto nila ito. Palagay ko naman sa inyo rin itong kapakanan (I think this is for your own good). Look, we are not here to make your life miserable or sad. We are here to make your life comfortable and to make you happy,” he added.

Aside from Metro Manila, Batangas, Iloilo City, Bacolod City, Tacloban City, Iligan City, and the province of Lanao del Sur will also remain under GCQ status.

Last week, Metro Manila mayors recommended retaining GCQ status for the rest of the year.

Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque earlier said their proposal is subject to the approval of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID).

He also admitted that the IATF is hesitant about further relaxing quarantine restrictions as it may result in a possible spike in coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) cases.

In a Palace press briefing, Roque said that the new quarantine classifications are still subject to appeal by local government units (LGUs).

LGUs may submit their appeals before the IATF-EID until Wednesday, he added.

As of Monday, the Philippines logged 371,630 confirmed Covid-19 cases, with 36,333 active cases, 328,528 recoveries, and 7,039 deaths. **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1119801>



TAMANG DESISYON ANG GCQ SA MM AT ANG 8 DARATING NA BAGYO



October 28, 2020 @ 12:30 AM 6 hours ago

HUWAG nating balewalain ang coronavirus disease-19, gayundin ang kambal na amihan at La Niña.

Tingnan ninyo, sa 215 bansa, kasama ang ilang teritoryo ng ilang malalaking bansa, naglalaro tayo sa pang-20 sa rami ng biktima ng COVID-19.

Ito namang amihan na may dalang lamig at kakambal na La Niña, sinasabi ng Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration na maaaring magdala ng nasa walong bagyo mula Nobyembre-Disyembre 2020 hanggang Pebrero 2021.

Ang isipin natin, habang nananalasa ang COVID-19, dagdag naman na pahirap ang mga dalang kalamidad na darating sa ilalim ng amihan at La Niña.

SI QUINTA AT KALAMIDAD

Itong si bagyong Quinta ay tila nabuo sa pagdating ng amihan at pagsisimula ng La Niña.

Naging signal no. 3 ito at nanalasa mula sa Kabikulan at Timog Katagalugan hanggang sa Metro Manila, bahagi ng Central Luzon at bahagi rin ng Ilocos Region.

Sinabayan ito ng amihan na nagdala ng mga pag-ulan na nanalasa rin sa parte ng Cagayan at ilang bahagi ng Ilocos Region.

Napakarami ang sinirang ari-arian ni Quinta sa dala nitong bugsong hangin na 180 kilometro kada oras.

Bukod sa dalang ulan ng bagyo, nagpakawala rin ng tubig ang mga dam na napuno ng tubig-ulan na lumikha ng malawak na baha sa Central Luzon at Cagayan Valley na sumira sa maraming pananim, lalo na ang palay.

Kung paano nasira ang mga ari-arian, kasama ang mga bahay, sa bagyo, gayundin na lumikha ng malaking pinsala ang mga pinakawalang tubig ng mga dam sa mga lugar na walang bagyo.

Sa ibang salita, mga Bro, kalamidad, gutom at paghihirap ang idinating ng amihan at La Niña.

Hindi lang ang mga magsasaka at iba pang nasiraan ang nakaranas ng gutom at paghihirap kundi maging ang libo-libong stranded sa mga biyahe at bakwit.

Paano ang mga darating na walong bagyo at malalakas na ulan sa amihan at La Niña sa susunod na apat na buwan?



COVID-19, SAKIT AT KAMATAYAN

Hindi biro-biro ang COVID-19.

Huwag nating maliitin ang dala nitong kamatayan araw-araw at libo-libong pinaparalisa nito, pwera pa ang kanilang mga pamilya.

Alam naman natin na sa oras na tinamaan ang isang tao, hindi lang siya ang napaparalisa kundi maging ang miyembro ng kanyang pamilya at kapitbahay.

Naparaparalisa sila dahil sa awtomatikong lockdown na pinaiiral ng pamahalaan na maaaring nasyunal o lokal.

Heto ang dapat tandaan: May 37,489 aktibong kaso sa buong bansa at kung ganito sila karami, paano ang kanilang mga pamilya, kapitbahay, katrabaho at nakasalamuha nilang paralisado rin?

Hindi rin biro-biro ang patay na 14 kahapon ngunit nauna rito ang 57 patay noong Oktubre 21, 36 – Okt. 22, 132 – Okt 23, 19 – Okt. 24, 43 – Okt 25 at 62 – Okt. 26,

At may severe o critical kahapon na 1,480 na maaaring mamatay anomang oras o kaya ay mapaparalisa na habambuhay.

STATE OF CALAMITY AT BALIK-GCQ

Maaaring magkaroon ng deklarasyon ng state of calamity ang ilang lokal na pamahalaan na dinaanan ng bagyong Quinta.

Magandang magkaroon ng state of calamity na kahit panlaban man lang sa pagsasamantala ng mga negosyante sa presyo ng mga batayang bilingin o pangangailangan.

Isa pa, magagamit ang mga natitirang calamity fund na nakalaan sa bawat buwan ng taon.

Makatutulong din ng malaki ang balik-general community quarantine sa ilang lugar sa problema sa pandemya.

Kasama ngayon sa GCQ areas ang Metro Manila, Batangas, Iloilo City, Bacolod City, Tacloban City, Iligan City, Lanao del Sur.”

Sabi nga ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte, hindi para pabigatin ang paghihirap ng mga mamamayan sa nabanggit na mga lugar kundi para iligtas sila sa pagkakasakit at kamatayan.

Ang isipin naman natin, paano ba tayo makatutulong kahit man lang sa ating mga kapitbahay na nangangailangan ng ayuda?

Ang totoo, nagkakaroon ng donation fatigue o kapaguran sa pagtulong at ang iba, talagang nasairan na rin.

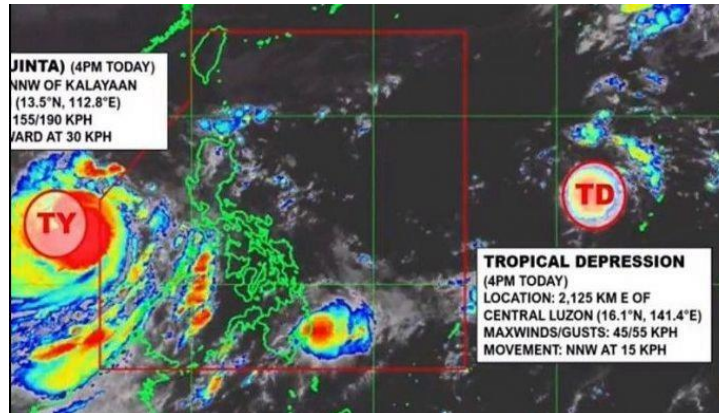
Pero kung nanamnamin natin ang ating pagkatao bilang mga Pinoy, gaano man kaliit ang bawat maiaambag natin, kapag pinagsama-sama ang lahat, aba, dambuhalang pwera ‘yan.

Tandaan lang natin ang kasabihang, “Hindi mabubuo ang piso kung walang sentimo.”



Bagong bagyo eentrada ng PAR, tatawaging 'Rolly'

(Philstar.com) - October 27, 2020 - 7:43pm



Kuha ng bagyong papangalanang "Rolly" oras na pumasok ng Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR) pinakamaaga bukas, ika-28 ng Oktubre.
Videograb mula sa Facebook ng Dost_pagasa

MANILA, Philippines — Nagbabadyang pumasok ng Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR), pinakamaaga bukas, ang isang sama ng panahon na ngayo'y isa nang ganap na bagyo.

Bandang 4 p.m. nang matagpuan ang nasabing tropical depression 2,125 kilometro silangan ng Gitnang Luzon, na magdadala ng hanging may lakas na 45 kilometro kada oras malapit sa gitna.

May bugso itong papalo nang hanggang 55 kilometro kada oras at kumikilos sa direksyong hilaga hilagangkanluran sa bilis na 15 kilometro kada oras.

"The Tropical Depression will move northwestward or west-northwestward today through Thursday, then southwestward by Friday towards Bicol Region-Eastern Visayas area," ayon sa forecast ng PAGASA, Martes.

"On the forecast track, it may enter the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR) tomorrow evening or Thursday."

Tatawagin itong Tropical Depression Rolly oras na pumasok ito ng PAR.

Tinatayang lalakas pa ito hanggang maging tropical storm sa susunod na 72 oras. Sa Linggo, maaaring severe tropical storm na ito 135 kilometro mula sa Legazpi City, Albay.

Matatandaang naging bagyo ang dating low pressure area (LPA) kaninang 8 a.m., ngunit wala pa ring international name hanggang ngayon.



Tinutumbok nito ang Pilipinas kahit kalalabas lang ng Typhoon Quinta kaninang 8 a.m. Kahit wala na sa PAR ang naunang bagyo, signal no. 1 pa rin sa Kalayaan Islands.

"Bagama't nasa gitna na po ng West Philippine Sea si Typhoon Molave (Quinta), 'yung kanyang outer rainbands ay meron pa rin pong pag-uulap at pag-ulan na dinadala dito sa may MIMAROPA areas, sa Western Visayas at even po sa kay Zamboanga Peninsula at Sulu archipelago," wika ni Ariel Rojas, weather specialist ng PAGASA.

"Kaya may mga aasahan pang mga pag-ulan ngayong hapon at mamayang gabi."

Bago ang bagyong Quinta, matatandaang kalalabas lang ng PAR ng bagyong "Pepito" noong nakaraang linggo, na [nagdulot ng P121.7 milyon pinsala sa iba't ibang bahagi ng bansa](#). — **James Relativo**



US' chemical wastes poison Pacific – book

By [Global Times](#)

October 28, 2020

ADELAIDE: Public anger has grown after a new book revealed how the United States poisoned various islands in the Pacific with toxic chemical waste that has endangered the lives of local people and seriously damaged ecosystems for decades. Chinese officials and experts have urged the US to reflect on the damage it has done and its repeated refusal to join international efforts to safeguard the environment.

The Marshall Islands, located between Hawaii and Australia, continue to be affected by US atomic tests long after some of its atolls were contaminated by nuclear waste and rendered uninhabitable for local residents as a result.



The Atomic Bomb Dome seen at dusk on August 4, 2020 in Hiroshima, western Japan, as the city of Hiroshima marks the 75th anniversary of the US atomic bombing. AP PHOTO

A new book, *Poisoning the Pacific*, written by British journalist Jon Mitchell, has detailed the US' military use of toxic materials including radioactive waste, nerve agents, and dioxin-tainted Agent Orange across islands in the Pacific. A lot of irradiated soil has been transported and dumped on some of the islands.

The book cites 12,000 pages of documents released under the US Freedom of Information Act and quotes some of the island's residents, as well as military veterans and researchers. It reveals how the US violated the human rights of local indigenous people and contaminated the ocean.

Mitchell's book documents several attempts by the US departments of state and defense to block his work, *The Guardian* reported.

Runit Island in the Marshall Islands served as a massive concrete tomb for the US to dump over 70,000 cubic meters of radioactive debris, including plutonium-239, a legacy of the Cold War atomic race, the book revealed.

But the site is leaking radioactive substances into the sea area, as the US Department of Energy has admitted, while claiming the amount is within safe limits.

After paying more than \$600 million in resettlement and radiation-related treatment for affected communities over recent years, the US now refuses to pay more as it says the problem should be resolved by local governments.

A research study in 2019 by researchers at Columbia University found that the radiation level on the Marshall Islands — where the US conducted over 65 nuclear tests during the nuclear arms race — are very worrisome, as the levels are even higher than at Fukushima and Chernobyl in some areas.



Their findings showed that gamma radiation in some areas was “well above” the legal exposure limit established in agreements between the US and the Republic of the Marshall Islands, US media outlet Fox news reported.

“When solid nuclear waste is exposed to the air, it is a considerable threat to human beings. Or a nuclear leak could seep into agricultural products through groundwater and end up harming people,” Chen Zhi, an associate professor of the Department of Engineering and Applied Physics at the University of Science and Technology of China, told the Global Times on Monday.

“If the nuclear waste leaks into the ocean, it also poses a risk to the safety of fishermen and makes it more difficult to control its spread,” Chen said.

Similarly, residents of Guam in the Western Pacific were also victims of US poisoning, as the US used the area to store a large amount of Agent Purple, a powerful herbicide and defoliant used by the US military during the Vietnam War.

The poisoning is believed to have caused higher incidences of infant death and birth defects, according to a report in 2015.

Mitchell’s book also disclosed how a US soldier in Guam who was asked to spray Agent Orange around the base got skin inflammation and later suffered from Parkinson’s syndrome and ischemic heart disease, while his daughter got cancer.



Air pollution linked to 15 percent of coronavirus deaths: study

Published October 27, 2020, 9:03 AM

by [Agence France-Presse](#)

Long-term exposure to air pollution may be linked to 15 percent of Covid-19 deaths globally, according to research published Tuesday that highlights the health risks posed by greenhouse gas emissions.

Previous research has showed how air pollution from exhaust fumes and factories takes two years off the life expectancy of every man, woman and child on Earth.

Now experts in Germany and Cyprus say they have estimated the proportion of deaths from coronavirus that can be blamed of the exacerbating effects of air pollution.

Their study, published in the journal Cardiovascular Research, drew on health and disease data from the US and China relating to air pollution, Covid-19 and SARS — a serious lung disease similar to Covid.

They combined this with satellite data of global exposure to particulate matter — microscopic particles — as well as ground-based pollution monitoring networks, to calculate to what extent air pollution can be blamed for Covid-19 deaths.

In East Asia, which has some of the highest levels of harmful pollution on the planet, the authors found that 27 percent of Covid-19 deaths could be attributed to the health effects of poor air quality.

In Europe the proportion was 19 percent, compared with 17 percent in North America.

“If both long-term exposure to air pollution and infection with the Covid-19 virus come together then we have an adverse effect on health, particularly with respect to the heart and blood vessels,” said paper co-author Thomas Munzel.

He said that air pollution made known Covid-19 risk factors such as lung and heart problems more likely.

Specifically, the team noted that particulate matter appeared to increase the activity of a receptor on lung cell surfaces, ACE-2, which is known to be involved in the way Covid-19 infects patients.

“So we have a double hit: air pollution damages the lungs and increases the activity of ACE-2, which in turn leads to enhanced uptake of the virus,” said Munzel, a professor at the University Medical Center of the Johannes Gutenberg University, Mainz.

– ‘Remedy is reduce emissions’ –

The authors stressed that attributing Covid-19 deaths to air pollution did not mean that pollution itself was killing people with Covid — though they didn’t rule out such a cause-effect linkage.

Jos Lelieveld, of the Max Planck Institute for Chemistry, told AFP that the research suggested “the pollution particles are a co-factor in aggravating the disease”.

He said their estimates suggested that more than 6,100 Covid deaths in Britain could be attributed to air pollution. In the US that figure is around 40,000.



The authors said that without a fundamental change in how cities power themselves, including a transition to clean and renewable energy sources, air pollution would continue to kill huge numbers of people even after the pandemic recedes.

“The pandemic ends with the vaccination of the population or with herd immunity through extensive infection of the population,” they wrote.

“However, there are no vaccines against poor air quality and climate change. The remedy is to mitigate emissions.”



This picture taken on August 3, 2018 shows steam coming out from cooling towers of the Maibarara Geothermal plant in Santo Tomas, Batangas, south of Manila.

AFP/Noel Celis, File

Air pollution linked to 15% of coronavirus deaths: study

[Patrick Galey](#) (Agence France-Presse) - October 27, 2020 - 7:45pm

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Medical workers take care of patients suffering from the coronavirus disease (COVID-19), at the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of the Max Smart Super Speciality Hospital in New Delhi, India, September 5, 2020. Picture taken September 5, 2020.

REUTERS/Danish Siddiqui

Air pollution linked to 15 percent of coronavirus deaths —study

Published October 27, 2020 5:17pm

By PATRICK GALEY, Agence France-Presse

PARIS — Long-term exposure to air pollution may be linked to 15 percent of COVID-19 deaths globally, according to research published Tuesday that highlights the health risks posed by greenhouse gas emissions.

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"However, there are no vaccines against poor air quality and climate change. The remedy is to mitigate emissions." — **AFP**



60,000 flee L.A. wildfire

The inferno nearly quadrupled in size by afternoon, jumping a highway and covering the area with a huge plume of smoke and ash.

Published 3 mins ago on October 28, 2020 02:00 AM

By [Agence France-Presse](#)



FIREFIGHTERS look out over a burning hillside as they fight the Blue Ridge Fire in Yorba Linda, California. Some 60,000 people fled their homes near Los Angeles on Monday. / Robyn Beck/agence france-press

LOS ANGELES, California (AFP) — Some 60,000 people fled their homes near Los Angeles on Monday as a fast-spreading wildfire raged across more than 7,200 acres (3,000 hectares), blocking key roadways and critically injuring two firefighters.

The so-called Silverado Fire erupted early in the morning in the foothills of Irvine, about 37 miles (60 kilometers) southeast of Los Angeles, and quickly spread with no containment, fueled by dry conditions and erratic winds that prevented firefighting aircraft from flying.

“It’s nuts — even inside the car, my eyes, my nose and my throat stung,” said Frederic Tournadre, a French man whose company in Irvine sent all its employees home.

The inferno nearly quadrupled in size by afternoon, jumping a highway and covering the area with a huge plume of smoke and ash.

About 20,000 homes were evacuated along with several public schools that were set to remain shut on Tuesday.

The National Weather Service warned that the combination of low humidity, dry vegetation and strong winds had created “the most dangerous fire weather conditions” this year.

It said the region will remain under a red flag warning — signifying a high risk of wildfire — through Tuesday evening.

Why it's getting harder to mine gold



(Image credit: Jeff J Mitchell/Getty Images)

By Chris Baraniuk 27th October 2020

The price of gold has rocketed during the pandemic, but mining it is getting more difficult. Chris Baraniuk reports on challenges and controversy at one of the UK's biggest planned mines.

Article continues below

For 1,000 days, the caravan stood with banners and placards pinned to its side: “We are not afraid. This is our land. This is our home. We will die for it.” Irish flags flutter in the wind. This is the **anti-gold mine protest site** set up by a group of locals in County Tyrone, Northern Ireland.

With 460 million-year-old veins of gold strewn hither and thither in the rock deep underfoot, the prospect of a mine in Curraghinalt, in a remote corner of the Sperrin mountains, has been talked about for decades – but it has never yet materialised. A recent application by a mining company to extract the seams of precious metal, has brought the prospect closer still. If successful, the firm says it could bring new jobs and money to the area. But many here want to keep things the way they are.

“I devote all my time to this campaign, I just feel it’s our future,” says Fidelma O’Kane, a retired social worker and lecturer who is concerned about the potential environmental impacts of the mine.

“My main worry is that the water will be poisoned, the air will be poisoned, the land will be contaminated – and ultimately people’s health will suffer,” she adds, explaining that she would never accept a mine, of any kind, in this area.

The company hoping to extract precious metals here, Dalradian Gold, says that it has put in place a swathe of environmental safeguards, and promises several economic benefits for locals. Still, **the online planning proposal for the mine** has attracted tens of thousands of comments, mostly negative, and a public inquiry will now take place to decide what will happen next.



Some in the nearby settlement of Gortin have objected to the planned gold mine (Credit: Alamy)

Heralded by some as a potential boon for Northern Ireland, where jobs and investment opportunities stagnated during the 30-year period of conflict known as the Troubles, experts say Curraghinalt could become home to the largest gold mine in the UK, were it to go ahead.

The question now hovering over the rolling Sperrins is, what is more valuable: keeping the gold in the ground, or taking it out?

This query could hardly be voiced at a more pivotal moment. The price of gold rocketed during the pandemic, spurring renewed interest in excavation projects and even an **illegal mining boom in parts of the Amazon rainforest**. Yet gold is proving ever-more difficult to release from the ground. The technical challenges may be well known, but environmental protests and local politics are less predictable. At what point does mining gold stop being worth the effort?

Last year, global gold production fell by 1%, the first decline in a decade, according to the World Gold Council, which promotes the gold industry. Some analysts argue we have reached “peak gold” – which means that the maximum rate of extraction has passed and the production of gold will continue to fall until, eventually, mining for it shall cease entirely.

However, demand for the stuff shows no sign of slowing down.

“It’s kind of a perfect storm,” says Matt Miller, vice president of equity research at CFRA Research, an investment analysis company. “Or, a better way to say it is, the fundamentals for gold may never be stronger than they are now.”

According to CFRA, about half of the world’s gold, excluding that still buried in the ground, is used in jewellery. As for the other half, one quarter is held by central banks and a final quarter is owned by private investors or used in industry.

Miller is among those who believe we have reached peak gold. The price of a single ounce of the glittering yellow metal breached \$2,000 (£1,550) this summer and still rests comfortably above \$1,900 (£1,470). Twenty years ago, the same ounce would sell for less than a quarter of that amount. The latest surge, following the emergence of Covid-19, has been linked to weakening currencies, including the US dollar. Governments are borrowing huge sums to pay for their pandemic response plans and printing money to fill the gap, say analysts, which means that the value of currency has become more volatile. Gold on the other hand is viewed as a stable asset, of which there are finite amounts, meaning that investors deem it trustworthy.



Questions and protests from some in the local Gortin community have led to a public inquiry (Credit: Alamy)

But Covid-19 has also caused disruption to gold mining operations themselves and supply is not likely to bounce up to meet rising demand any time soon. As such, the gold mining industry is actually sitting on the makings of a “major crisis”, argues Miller.

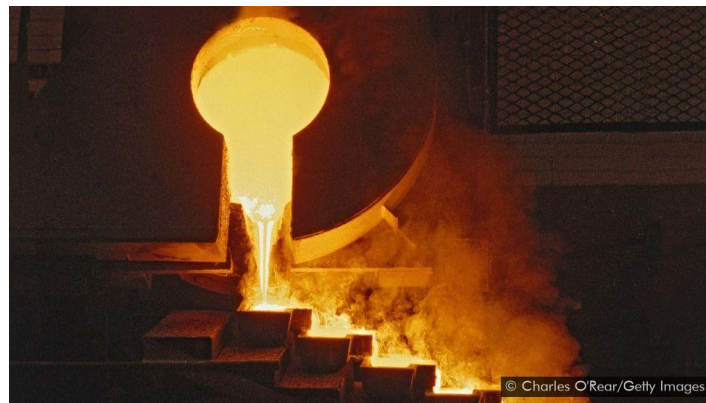
“My view is that gold demand will continue to trend upwards,” he says. “More and more of that is going to come from the recycling, which basically means that gold is trading hands.”



He predicts that recycling old jewellery, coins or even the seemingly miniscule amounts of gold in the circuit boards of electronic devices, will become an increasingly significant source of the metal in the future. CFRA's data suggests that around 30% of the world's gold supply in the past 20 years was actually recycled, not mined. Refineries that recycle "scrap" gold – old jewellery, coins and bars – do use toxic chemicals and energy in their processes, but some environmental impacts may be much lower than mining. One recent study of gold refineries in Germany found that, kilogram for kilogram, the production of 99.99% pure gold via recycling was 300 times less carbon intensive than mining it from underground or open pit mines.

This means that obtaining one kilogram of recycled gold would produce 53kg of CO2 equivalent – but to mine a kilogram of the same material would cause 16 tonnes of CO2 equivalent to be emitted. Recycling scrap gold from electronics fell in between the two but was still better than mining – at one tonne of CO2 equivalent for every kilogram of gold turned out.

Like any large-scale industrial operation, gold mining can also have local effects on the environment. Public opposition to gold mines in some parts of the world has become a barrier to gold production, says Miller. Such resistance does not only exist in Tyrone. Take the Pascua-Lama mine in Chile, for instance. After years of protests from local activists on environmental grounds, the project was halted by regulators.



Gold is in high demand, but supply from mines is dwindling (Credit: Charles O'Rear/Getty Images)

But where gold mines have become established, they can become giant operations. The world's largest produce many tonnes of gold annually and the biggest of them all, Nevada Gold Mine in the US, churns out more than 100 tonnes every year. Even smaller gold mines can support the livelihoods of many people within the communities that bloom around them. Take the city of Val d'Or (Valley of Gold) in Quebec, Canada. There's been a town there ever since gold was discovered in 1923. Various other metals including copper and lead are now also extracted in the area and a surplus of mining jobs has attracted people to Val d'Or in recent years. The town's ice hockey team, the Foreurs, even has a mascot with a hard hat named "Dynamit" – a reference to the dynamite used to blast away rock in mining.

Political barriers

As for Curraghinalt, it was bloodshed that kept the gold in the ground for many years. During the Troubles, several political and sectarian groups in Northern Ireland turned to violence, carrying out shootings and bombings, for example. So when one company eyed the potential for a mine at Curraghinalt in the 1980s, it struggled to obtain a permit for explosives, given the security risks of keeping them on-site at the time.

But a decade later, Curraghinalt seemed to promise a more hopeful future, remembers Adrian Boyce, professor of applied geology at Scottish Universities Environmental Research Centre. Around the time of the Good Friday Agreement (the political accord signed in April 1998 that helped bring an end to the Troubles), Boyce and colleagues took part in an initiative to study the geology of Curraghinalt and assess its commercial potential.

"It was really a fresh hope for the people of Northern Ireland and that's the impact that I saw for it," he recalls. "At a time when, you know, not a lot of people were investing in Northern Ireland."



He mentions the Omagh bombing, in which a group calling itself the Real IRA detonated a car bomb on a Saturday afternoon in August 1998, killing 29 people, including a woman who was pregnant with twins. Omagh is a 20-minute drive from Curraghinalt. In the minds of some, the economic opportunities of a brand new gold mine offered Northern Ireland a chance to escape the horrors of the past – and still offers the local area economic hope for the future.



After protestors objected to Dalradian's proposed use of cyanide, the company dropped that plan (Credit: Alamy)

Back in the 1990s, it was the price of gold that ultimately stymied the mine's prospects, says Boyce. But that is no barrier now. And, he says, the size of the mine – Dalradian estimates it could produce 130,000 ounces (4 tonnes) annually for 20 years or more – makes it unique in the UK.

“For gold, Curraghinalt is far and away the biggest gold mine that’s ever been found in the UK,” says Boyce. “It dwarfs everything else.”

Yet the story of Curraghinalt speaks to the challenges of industrial gold mining in 2020, especially when operating near existing communities in an area of natural beauty. The mine is situated in a fairly remote part of Northern Ireland surrounded by farms and wilderness. Omagh, for instance, has a population of fewer than 20,000 people.

Since 2009, Dalradian has been excavating samples from below ground at its site in Curraghinalt while promoting plans for the mine to locals. The proposals include building an underground mine, rather than an open pit-style project, and extracting ore that would be processed partly in Tyrone, partly overseas.

Following fierce opposition, in 2019 Dalradian **dropped its plan to use cyanide at the site**. In some gold mining operations, solutions containing cyanide are used to dissolve gold from ore mined out of the ground so that the metal can be extracted and collected. Dalradian also says it has reduced water usage by 30% and gas emissions by 25% as part of its aim to become Europe’s first carbon neutral mine.

But campaigners continue to express concerns that chemicals could be washed into nearby rivers and harm local wildlife. Pollution from the mine could also negatively affect people’s health, they claim. And they also fear that a large heap of “tailings” – waste material extracted from the mine and left aboveground – would blight the area’s scenery.

BBC Future had arranged to tour Dalradian’s site in Tyrone but the company cancelled the visit two days before it was due to take place without explanation.

In a statement, a spokesman for Dalradian said: “This is a safe and environmentally responsible project which will emulate the successes of other modern mines in Europe.”

The company says it has listened to the community, offering tours and changing its mining processes when concerns were raised.

“People can also be assured that the project is being scrutinised by an independent, robust planning process and that it has been designed to meet exacting standards. We’ve held around 100 meetings with regulators so far and the local Public Health Agency has made no objection to the project on public health grounds.”

And regarding the tailings: “The dry stack will have an average thickness of 17m (56 feet), will be replanted during operations, is located in a natural hollow and will be blended into the local landscape.”



Human activity in the Sperrins dates back thousands of years (Credit: Alamy)

In a recent application for permission to discharge materials including heavy metals into a nearby stream, Dalradian also mentioned corrosive substances such as sulphuric acid and sodium hydroxide. On this point, the spokesman said, “Although it’s not expected that they will be used routinely, as they will be stored on-site they must be listed in the discharge consent.”

A treatment plant would be used for water management, he added, and noted that the mine offered a “massive opportunity” at a time when Northern Ireland’s economy faced uncertainty over Brexit.

While campaigners like O’Kane say they will not accept the mine under any circumstances, there are certainly some who would. It is difficult to get a sense of exactly how many in Tyrone are for or against. The Northern Ireland Department for Infrastructure planning portal contains more than 41,000 public comments about Dalradian’s proposals, more than 90% of which are objections. When asked by BBC Future why many of these responses appeared to be duplicates, the department said it believed the figures were an “accurate summary” of representations received.

Duplicates can arise for a number of reasons, a spokesman said: “They can relate to individuals making a representation on more than one occasion given there has been various amendments to the proposal.”

With a public inquiry now looming over the plans, it’s up to the authorities to investigate and represent the interests of local people before coming to a decision about whether the works ought to go ahead, suggests Boyce. “Let the politicians do what politicians are paid to do,” he adds.

In recent years, across the Irish Sea in Scotland, local objections were raised over plans for a different mine, at Cononish, in Loch Lomond National Park. Boyce notes that environmental concerns were voiced there, too, but ultimately the project gained support and was granted planning permission. The first gold from the mine **could be produced as early as November.**

A mine at Curraghinalt that proved to be productive would certainly attract interest from investors, argues Chris Mancini, a research analyst at Gabelli Gold Fund, which invests in gold. And he argues that it would be safe, environmentally speaking.

But it won’t do for some. For Fidelma O’Kane and her fellow campaigners, the mine has become anathema – a threat to the very character of the place where they live.

“The area is a beautiful area, it’s designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty,” insists O’Kane. “We don’t want it industrialised with heavy industry.

“The clean, green image of our country would be gone forever.”

Whatever happens next at Curraghinalt, there’s no doubt that Dalradian’s efforts have sparked many discussions locally about what people would be willing to accept. It’s the sort of debate that could well become more common if the price of gold remains high and companies seek out small but nonetheless lucrative gold deposits in places that may have little or no tradition of gold mining.

Then again, if we really have reached peak gold, the rush might not last very long.

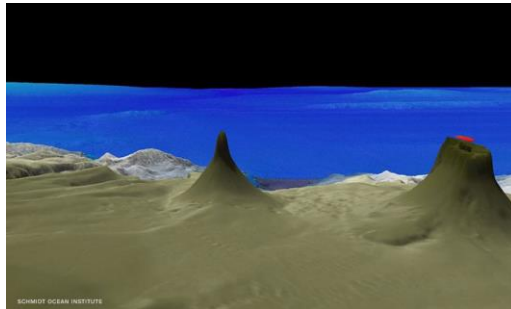
Source: <https://www.bbc.com/future/article/20201026-why-its-getting-harder-to-mine-gold>



'Massive' coral reef taller than the Empire State Building discovered in Australia

By Amy Woodyatt, CNN

Published Oct 27, 2020 9:13:48 PM



(CNN) -- A "massive" new reef measuring 500 meters (about 1,600 feet) has been discovered in Australia's Great Barrier Reef, making it taller than some of the world's highest skyscrapers.

Scientists found the detached reef, which is the first to be discovered in more than 120 years, in waters off North Queensland while on an expedition aboard research vessel Falkor, ocean research organization Schmidt Ocean Institute announced Monday.

The reef was first discovered on October 20, as scientists completed an underwater mapping of the seafloor of the northern Great Barrier Reef.

At 500 meters high, it is taller than the Empire State Building (381 meters to the top floor), the Sydney Tower (305 meters) and the Petronas Twin Towers (451.9 meters.)

Using an underwater robot named SuBastian, the team explored the reef on Sunday, and live streamed footage of the exploration.

Experts say that the base of the "blade-like" reef measures 1.5 kilometers wide (nearly 1 mile), rising 500 meters to its shallowest depth of 40 meters below the ocean surface.

There are seven other tall detached reefs in the area, including the reef at Raine Island -- a significant green turtle nesting site.

Robin Beaman, who led the expedition, said he was "surprised" by the discovery.

"To not only 3D map the reef in detail, but also visually see this discovery with SuBastian is incredible," he said in a statement.

"This unexpected discovery affirms that we continue to find unknown structures and new species in our ocean," Wendy Schmidt, co-founder of Schmidt Ocean Institute, said in a statement.

"The state of our knowledge about what's in the ocean has long been so limited. Thanks to new technologies that work as our eyes, ears and hands in the deep ocean, we have the capacity to explore like never before. New oceanscapes are opening to us, revealing the ecosystems and diverse life forms that share the planet with us."

The Great Barrier Reef, the world's largest coral reef, covers nearly 133,000 square miles and is home to more than 1,500 species of fish, 411 species of hard corals and dozens of other species.

But the reef is facing a crisis -- recent studies have shown that it has lost 50% of its coral populations in the last three decades, with climate change a key driver of reef disturbance.

This story was first published on CNN.com, ["Massive' coral reef taller than the Empire State Building discovered in Australia"](https://cnnphilippines.com/world/2020/10/27/-Massive--coral-reef-taller-than-the-Empire-State-Building-discovered-in-Australia.html)

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