

DENR: No letup in fight vs. illegal wildlife trade

posted April 07, 2020 at 05:40 pm by **Rio N. Araja**

Amid the coronavirus disease 19 (COVID-19) pandemic, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu on Tuesday vowed to pursue the government's fight against illegal wildlife trade and uphold the country's ecological integrity.

"We will not be complacent even in today's worst global humanitarian crisis. We assure the public that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources would not cease in going after illegal wildlife trade criminals, especially those who have seized the opportunity to take advantage of the crisis through wildlife trafficking," Cimatu said.

He lauded their wildlife enforcers for their continued coordination with all of their partner agencies, particularly with the Bureau of Customs and the National Bureau of Investigation, to fight illegal wildlife trade.

"Just like the other front liners in health, food security, social service, military and economic government institutions, our indefatigable wildlife enforcers have committed to continue with their public service and duty to protect our country's natural resources. For the same sacrifices they make, we ought to give them their much-deserved salute," Cimatu said.

Source: https://manilastandard.net/news/national/321260/denr-no-letup-in-fight-vs-illegal-wildlife-trade.html?fbclid=IwAR2NnPYpyxyIFVHPvYI2JtISDyuR2ERY901r9P_NlGQJkTpryHcYOTGEag

Monitoring continues on illegal wildlife trade

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said that the ongoing coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic will not stop the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) from pursuing individuals involved in the illegal wildlife trade and upholding the country's ecological integrity.

In a statement, Cimatu said that the department will not let its guard down against illegal traders who may have taken advantage of the current health crisis to allow illicit activities to proliferate.

"We will not be complacent even in today's worst global humanitarian crisis. We assure the public that the DENR would not cease in going after illegal wildlife trade criminals, especially those who have seized the opportunity to take advantage of the crisis through wildlife trafficking," he added.

Cimatu said that the DENR wildlife enforcers, similar to the COVID-19 frontliners in health and security, are committed to continue with their public service and duty to protect the country's natural resources.

He lauded the wildlife enforcers who continue to coordinate with the DENR's partner agencies such as the Bureau of Customs and the National Bureau of Investigation to fight illegal wildlife trade.

Last month, the Enforcement Division of DENR National Capital Region successfully rescued a Philippine pangolin (*Manis culionensis*) in Quiapo, Manila, which was brought to the Wildlife Rescue Center of the Biodiversity Management Bureau in Quezon City for proper medical treatment and care.

The Philippine pangolin, which was implicated by some scientists as the source of the COVID-19 virus, is endemic in Palawan province and listed as "critically endangered species" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. It is also believed to have healing properties that can be used for traditional medicine and cuisine, making the scaly animal a target for illegal wildlife trade in East Asia. TIO @tribunephil_3na





Pagmonitor sa illegal wildlife trade tuloy kahit may COVID-19 pandemic

April 7, 2020 @ 3:53 PM 15 hours ago

Views: 94

Manila, Philippines – Para labanan ang illegal wildlife trade tiniyak ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na ipagpapatuloy nito ang pagmonitor at pangangalaga sa ating mga yamang gubat upang mapangalagaan ang “ecological integrity” ng bansa sa gitna ng Coronavirus disease 2019 o Covid-19 pandemic.

“We will not be complacent even in today’s worst global humanitarian crisis. We assure the public that the DENR would not cease in going after illegal wildlife trade criminals, especially those who have seized the opportunity to take advantage of the crisis through wildlife trafficking,” ayon kay DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatú.

Kasabay nito, pinuri din ni Cimatú ang mga DENR wildlife enforcers na patuloy na nakikipagtulungan sa mga partner agencies partikular sa Bureau of Customs at National Bureau of Investigation upang labanan ang illegal wildlife trade.

“Just like the other frontliners in health, food security, social service, military, and economic government institutions, our indefatigable wildlife enforcers have committed to continue with their public service and duty to protect our country’s natural resources. For the same sacrifices they make, we ought to give them their much-deserved salute,” sabi pa nito.

Magugunitang nitong nakalipas na buwan, nakumpiska ang Enforcement Division ng DENR National Capital Region sa pamumuno ni Forester Orly Cariazo at ng Barangay 384 patrollers ng lokal na pamahalaan ng Maynila ang Philippine pangolin (*Manis culionensis*) sa Quiapo, Maynila. Ang naturang hayop ay dinala sa Wildlife Rescue Center ng Biodiversity Management Bureau sa Quezon City para magamot at maalagaan.

Ang Philippine pangolin na sinasabi ng mga siyentipiko na pinagmulan ng COVID-19 virus, ay matatagpuan sa probinsiya ng Palawan. Ito ay naitala bilang “critically endangered species” ng International Union for Conservation of Nature. Pinaniniwalaan din na ginagamit ito sa tradisyunal na medisina at pagluluto dahil na upang maging target ang scaly anteater na ito ng illegal wildlife trade sa East Asia.

Noong Marso 26 nang suspendihin naman ni Cimatú ang pagtanggap, pagproseso at pag-isyu ng ‘transport-related permits’ at iba pang dokumento para sa lahat ng wildlife upang maiwasan ang pagkalat ng COVID-19. **Santi Celario**

Source: <https://remate.ph/pagmonitor-sa-illegal-wildlife-trade-tuloy-kahit-may-covid-19-pandemic/>

Criticisms won't help win war vs virus—DENR exec

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

-April 7, 2020

AN official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Tuesday reminded critics of the Duterte administration that negative criticisms would not help win the war against the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19).

Benny D. Antiporda, DENR undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units (LGUs) Concerns, said while constructive criticisms are welcome as it helps the government realize its mistakes, ouster calls on social-media platforms, he said, are apparently not helping.

“I, myself, criticize the government but oust Duterte? That is not helping at all. We are fighting a war against an unseen enemy and right now, we need the people to fight like one,” he told the BusinessMirror in a telephone interview.

Antiporda defended at least two DENR officials from Regions 1 and 2 who issued memorandum circulars telling DENR regular, job orders and service contract employees to refrain from criticizing the Duterte administration in various social-media platforms in connection with the government’s Covid-19 response.

In separate memorandums circulating on social media, Marcos G. Dacanay assistant regional director for Management Services of DENR Region 2 and Crizaldy M. Barcelo, assistant director for Management Services of Region 1, called out on regional directors of the Environmental Management Bureau, Mines and Geosciences Board, and DENR officials from the provincial down to city and municipal levels, pointing out that there are social-media posts of persons under job order and contract of service criticizing the government’s response to Covid-19.

Such negative criticisms on social media are not helping any, they said.

Barcelo, in his order, directed job order employees and those under contracts of service, to submit their work-from-home accomplishment reports to him.

Sources said the issuance of the memorandum order reportedly emanated from Assistant Secretary Joan A. Lagunda of Administration, Human Resources and Legislative Affairs, who issued an “informal order” through their Viber chat room.

The order was apparently taken seriously and was put in black and white, drawing flak from “netizens” as the controversial memorandum orders and the Viber message started to circulate on various social-media platforms.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/04/07/criticisms-wont-help-win-war-vs-virus-denr-exec/>

Is DENR's memo vs employees' online dissent against free speech?

By Catalina Ricci S. Madarang

- April 7, 2020 - 2:39 PM



Digital illustration by Mudassar Iqbal from Pixaba

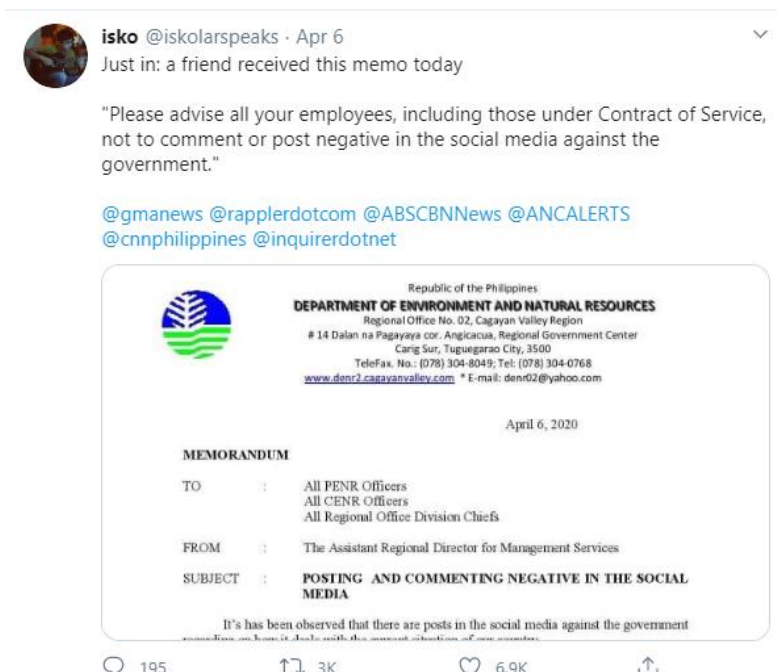
The **Department of Environment and Natural Resources** released a memorandum discouraging its employees from posting criticisms against the government's **COVID-19 efforts** on social media.

The memo was issued and signed by Marcos Dacanay, assistant regional director of DENR's Management Services last Monday.

“Please advise all your employees, including those under Contract of Service, not to comment or post negative in (sic) the social media against the government,” the memo read.

“As a government employee, we should exemplify discipline to the community and promote cooperation to the government,” it added.

The memorandum was not released publicly but Twitter user @iskolarspeaks managed to take obtain a copy of the memorandum from his friend and shared it on the microblogging platform on the same day it was issued to employees.



Is DENR's memo vs employees' online dissent against

April 8, 2020

TITLE: free speech?

PAGE 1/ 2/5

DATE

Environment Undersecretary **Benny Antiporda** later confirmed the issuance of this memo to reporters.

However, Antiporda clarified that it was just a reminder to DENR employees.

“This is just a simple reminder. There is no disciplinary action against that. It’s their freedom also but it’s just to remind them that you know, you don’t bite the hand that feeds you,” Antiporda [told](#) ABS-CBN News.

“It is just to remind them that the government needs the help of each and every one,” he added.

The memorandum was also based on the [Code of Conduct for Government Employees and Public Officials \(Republic Act 6713\)](#), according to Civil Service Commissioner **Aileen Lizada**.

Government employees should be reminded that they represent the agency they work for when making negative comments.

“Sometimes hindi natin matanggal yung pagkatao ng isang empleyado. Dapat they should bear in mind, when you post something, you carry with you yung pagiging government employee. Kaya, ingat dapat,” Lizada [said](#) in a statement sent to ABS-CBN.

“Kasi, kung hindi mo titutulungan ang agency mo, magko-comment ka pa ng negative, bakit ka nandyan?” Lizada added.

New directive violates laws on free speech and expression

A number of lawmakers criticized the DENR’s new memorandum, citing that the government employees has the right to free speech despite them being civil servants.

“Civil service does not deprive government workers of their freedom of expression,” Kabataan Rep. **Sarah Elago** [tweeted](#).

Bayan Muna Rep. **Eufemia Cullamat** also added that this is considered censorship or constraint of political speech, which is prohibited by the **1987 Constitution**.

“This amounts to prior restraint, or content based regulation, or censorship of political speech proscribed by the constitution,” Cullamat [said](#).

Historian and blogger Kristoffer Passion, a government employee, likewise stressed his civic duty of raising societal concerns as a Filipino citizen.

“Some people may switch off their democracy-button without batting an eye, but I won’t. It is my birthright, a heritage we all share since the Revolution of 1896,” he said.

Is DENR's memo vs employees' online dissent against

April 8, 2020

TITLE: free speech?

PAGE 1/ 3/5

DATE

He also said that prohibiting dissent is also a violation of a government employee's oath, which a part of it states: "Magsasalita ako laban sa katiwalian at pagsasamantala." Passion attached a screenshot of it in his tweet.



Kristoffer Pasion @indiohistorian · Apr 6, 2020



I'm sorry, my being a government employee doesn't stop me from doing my civic duty of making our leaders accountable. Some people may switch off their democracy-button without batting an eye, but I won't. It is my birthright, a heritage we all share since the Revolution of 1896. [twitter.com/iskolarspeaks/...](https://twitter.com/iskolarspeaks/)

isko @iskolarspeaks

Just in: a friend received this memo today

"Please advise all your employees, including those under Contract of Service, not to comment or post negative in the social media against the government." @gmanews @rapplerdotcom @ABSCBNNews @ANCALERTS @cnnphilippines @inquirerdotnet



Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES
Regional Office No. 02, Cagayan Valley Region
14 Dalan na Pagayaya cor. Angicacua, Regional Government Center
Carig Sur, Tuguegarao City, 3500
TeleFax. No.: (078) 304-8049; Tel: (078) 304-0768
www.denr2.cagayanvalley.com * E-mail: denr02@yahoo.com

April 6, 2020

MEMORANDUM

TO : All PENR Officers
All CENR Officers
All Regional Office Division Chiefs

FROM : The Assistant Regional Director for Management Services

SUBJECT : POSTING AND COMMENTING NEGATIVE IN THE SOCIAL MEDIA

It's has been observed that there are posts in the social media against the government regarding on how it deals with the current situation of our country.

In this regard, please advise all your employees, including those under Contract of Service, not to comment or post negative in the social media against the government. As a government employee, we should exemplify discipline to the community and promote cooperation to the government. In this way, we enjoin the community to support the government in fighting the CoVid-19.

The government cannot win this battle alone, we should unite and together we will rise again as one.

For information and guidance.

ENGR. MARCOS G. DACANAY



Kristoffer Pasion
@indiohistorian

To silence dissent even among gov employees is not only a Constitutional violation, it is a violation of every gov employee's oath: "Magsasalita ako laban sa katiwalian at pagsasamantala."

Is DENR's memo vs employees' online dissent against

April 8, 2020

TITLE: free speech?

PAGE 1/ 4/5

DATE

PANUNUMPA NG KAWANI NG GOBYERNO

Ako'y kawani ng gobyerno, / tungkulin ko ang maglingkod /
nang tapat at mahusay./
Dahil dito, / ako'y papasok nang maaga /
at magtatrabaho ng lampas sa takdang oras / kung kinakailangan.

Magsisilbi ako nang magalang at mabilis / sa lahat ng
nangangailangan./
Pangangalagaan ko ang mga gamit, / kasangkapan /
at iba pang pag-aari ng pamahalaan./

Pantay at makatarungan / ang pakikitungo ko sa mga lumalapit /
sa aming tanggapan./
Magsasalita ako / laban sa katiwalian at pagsasamantala./
Hindi ko gagamitin / ang aking panunungkulan / sa sarili kong
kapakanan./

Hindi ako hihingi o tatanggap ng suhol, / sisikapin kong
madagdagan /
ang aking talino at kakayahan / upang ang antas ng paglilingkod sa
bayan /
ay patuloy na maitaas./

Sapagkat ako'y isang kawani ng gobyerno / at tungkulin ko ang
maglingkod /
nang tapat at mahusay, / sa bayan ko at sa panahong ito, /
ako at ang aking mga kapwa kawani / ay kailangan tungo sa isang
maunlad, /
masagana / at mapayapang Pilipinas./

Sa harap ninyong lahat / ako'y taos pusong nanunumpa.

♡ 355 4:15 PM - Apr 6, 2020



💬 114 people are talking about this



The employee's oath was also posted on the official Facebook page **Office of the Ombudsman**.

The post about it, dated 2016, read: "I deal with those who come near is equal and fair at our office. I will speak out against corruption and exploitation."



The Section 4 of Article III of the Constitution read: "No law shall be passed abridging the freedom of speech, of expression, or of the press, or the right of the people peaceably to assemble and petition the government for redress of grievances."

Moreover, it was also ruled in the [case](#) of The People of the Philippine Islands vs Isaac Perez in 1923 that:

Is DENR's memo vs employees' online dissent against

April 8, 2020

TITLE: free speech?

PAGE 1/ 5/5

DATE

“Criticism is permitted to penetrate even to the foundations of Government. Criticism, no matter how severe, on the Executive, the Legislature, and the Judiciary, is within the range of liberty of speech, unless the intention and effect be seditious.”

Meanwhile, spoken word artist Alfonso Manalastas, countered Antiporda's remark.

“The hand that feeds you is the people, not the government. Sit down, Antiporda,” Manalastas said.



Alfonso Manalastas @not_alfonso

The hand that feeds you is the people, not the government. Sit down, Antiporda. twitter.com/abscbnnews/sta...

ABS-CBN News @ABSCBNNews
Replying to @ABSCBNNews @arianne_merez

Antiporda on the memo: This is just a simple reminder. There is no disciplinary action against that. It's their freedom also but it's just to remind them that you know, you don't bite the hand that feeds you | via @arianne_merez

349 7:27 PM - Apr 6, 2020

114 people are talking about this

Source: <https://www.interaksyon.com/trends-spotlights/2020/04/07/165912/is-denrs-memo-vs-employees-online-dissent-against-free-speech/>

EMB cites Luzon lockdown for low land, air pollution

posted April 07, 2020 at 05:05 pm

by [Butch Gunio](#)

The Environmental Management Bureau in Region 3 has reported a downward trend in collection of residual waste and industry-produced pollutant ozone in Central Luzon this March when the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) started to hold off the coronavirus pandemic.

The EMB report, provided by Regional Director Wilson L. Trajeco to Manila Standard, cited the Luzon-wide ECQ to have an effect on the decrease in waste collection.

This follows Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu's directive to continue proper solid waste management in localities and sanitary landfills (SLFs) throughout the quarantine period.

"Total residual waste disposed of at sanitary landfill facilities in Region 3 exhibited an increasing trend from January to December 2019. However, from January to March 25, 2020, we noticed a dramatically declining behavior of residual waste disposal at SLFs," Trajeco said.

The provinces of Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga and Tarlac showed "a synchronously declining residual waste collection and disposal," he said.

Trajeco noted the ECQ also poses a challenge to local government units on proper waste management. Asked whether the EMB should step in to push LGUs to comply with their mandate of solid waste collection, Trajeco said it is within the power of the Department of the Interior and Local Government to pressure LGUs into compliance.

Applications for permits to transport special waste such as hazardous waste and sewage for treatment, storage and disposal facilities have also significantly declined.

Lung pollutant ozone, which is an oxidant produced by heavy industries and operation of vehicles, was recorded at an all-time low at .017 microgram per normal cubic meter (ug/m³) on March 24, several days after the ECQ was enforced.

Trajeco attributed this decline to reduced commercial and industrial activities, as well as fewer vehicles on the road.

However, greenhouse gasses like carbon dioxide and nitrous oxide exhibit inconsistent levels of emission as shown in the graph, while sulfur dioxide, which is caused by burning of fossil fuels like coal and petroleum, as well as smelting of mineral ores, shows a steady increase.

"This is probably due to the diverted flights to the Clark International Airport from Manila," Trajeco said.

EMB said a more consistent decline in the emission of these gasses is seen once the Clark International Airport implements its planned closure of its facilities to passenger planes today.

Meanwhile, the volume of particulate matter, which is the sum of all mainly hazardous solid and liquid particles suspended in the air (mixture includes both organic and inorganic particles, such as dust, pollen, soot, smoke, and liquid droplets), also declined in majority of areas in the region.

‘Manila Bay reclamation policy may be revisited,’

TITLE: PRRD hints

PAGE 1/ 1/2

April 8, 2020
DATE

‘Manila Bay reclamation policy may be revisited,’ PRRD hints

Published April 7, 2020, 5:12 PM

By **Genalyn Kabling**

President Duterte has raised the possibility of allowing reclamation projects in Manila Bay to raise revenues for the government’s efforts to address the COVID-19 pandemic.



President Rodrigo Roa Duterte (PCCO / MANILA BULLETIN)

The President floated the idea after worrying about the government’s insufficient funds for the COVID-19 response, including social amelioration programs for the affected sectors.

“*Malapit na. Ilang buwan lang ang reserba natin. Talagang ako handa akong ipagbili ‘yung buong Dewey Boulevard sa gustong mag-reclaim. Bigyan ninyo ako ng bigas, i-approve ko* (The decision point is nearing. Our reserves will last for a few months. I am prepared to consider selling the entire Dewey Boulevard to those who want to reclaim it. Give me rice and I’ll approve it),” Duterte said during his public address Monday night.

Duterte however admitted his misgivings on projects to reclaim the land along Manila Bay, saying he has opposed such activity to protect the environment and the sustainability of country’s capital.

“*Hindi ako pumayag na mag-reclaim. Because a reclamation sa Manila Bay would trap us environmentally — mag-collapse ang Manila* (I don’t allow reclamation because a reclamation of Manila Bay would lead to an environmental trap and the collapse of Manila),” he said.

“I would say *may mga siyudad na bago, mga apartments, mga high-rise*. But then the city of Manila, given its lack of ‘*yung water treatment o treatment sa waste wala, so ‘pag ganon ang ginawa mo, patay ang Maynila* (I would say there are new cities, high-rise apartments but then the city of Manila given its lack of water treatment facilities, if you do that, Manila will collapse),” he said.

Given his opposition to the private sector-led reclamation projects in Manila, Duterte has advised potential investors to just wait for his successor.

“*So sabi ko kung gusto ninyo, you just wait for two more years, bahala na kayo. Ang susunod sa akin, he will decide for us* (I told those interested, you just wait for two more years, that will be up to my successor. He will decide for us),” he said.



‘Manila Bay reclamation policy may be revisited,’

TITLE: PRRD hints

PAGE 1/ 2/2

April 8, 2020

DATE

Back in February, the President declared that he would not allow reclamation projects initiated by the private companies in Manila Bay due to its environmental impact on the capital. He said he would only allow reclamation activities only if these are connected with government projects.

Asked about the President’s position on the Manila bay reclamation, Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles said no official directive has yet been issued on the matter.

Source: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/04/07/manila-bay-reclamation-policy-may-be-revisited-prrd-hints/>

No Manila Bay reclamation yet

[Christina Mendez](#) (The Philippine Star) - April 8, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The government will not allow any reclamation project in Manila Bay to proceed until President Duterte issues an executive order, Secretary to the Cabinet Karlo Nograles said yesterday.

“Status quo for now until (the President) issues a written order,” Nograles said.

He issued the statement after Duterte, in a national address on Monday night, said he is rethinking his stance against the reclamation of Manila Bay since the government needs funds to feed families affected by the enhanced community quarantine in Luzon.

“Give me rice, I will approve” the projects, Duterte said in Filipino.

He said the country’s rice reserves would last only a few months and he is “ready to sell off the entire Dewey Boulevard,” referring to Roxas Boulevard, which runs along Manila Bay’s coastline.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/nation/2020/04/08/2006208/no-manila-bay-reclamation-yet>

No consent from Duterte to push through with Manila Bay reclamation projects —Nograles

Published April 7, 2020 1:22pm

President Rodrigo Duterte has not approved reclamation activities in Manila Bay, a Malacañang official said Tuesday.

“Unless you see a paper to that effect signed by him, then no, status quo pa rin,” Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles said during a virtual press briefing.

Nograles issued the clarification after Duterte on Monday hinted at allowing reclamation projects in exchange for food assistance amid the public health emergency caused by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

“Talagang ako handa akong ipagbili ‘yung buong Dewey Boulevard sa gustong mag-reclaim. Bigyan ninyo ako ng bigas, i-approve ko ‘yung -- kasi hindi ako pumayag na mag-reclaim,” Duterte said.

“[T]he City of Manila, given its lack of ‘yung water treatment o treatment sa waste wala, so ‘pag ganon ang ginawa mo, patay ang Maynila.”

Duterte said in February said he would no longer allow massive land reclamations by the private sector until the end of his term in 2022. — **Virgil Lopez/RSJ, GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/metro/732971/no-consent-from-duterte-to-push-through-with-manila-bay-reclamation-projects-nograles/story/>

Duterte still not inclined to allow Manila Bay reclamation

By Azer Parrocha April 7, 2020, 4:29 pm



MANILA – President Rodrigo Duterte is still against any proposal from private companies to conduct massive land reclamation activities in the Manila Bay, Malacañang said on Tuesday.

Presidential Spokesperson Salvador Panelo made this remark after Duterte, in a public address late Monday night said allowing reclamation activities would result in the “collapse” of Manila.

“Ang sinabi ni Presidente kahapon, hindi siya inclined magbigay ng permit (What the President said yesterday is that he’s not inclined to give a permit),” Panelo said in a virtual presser.

In a separate virtual presser, Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles said Duterte would not allow the reclamation of Manila Bay, which is currently one of the subjects of the government’s rehabilitation efforts.

“Unless you see a paper to that effect signed by him, then no, status quo *pa rin* (it’s still status quo),” Nograles said.

In his address, Duterte said reclaiming Manila Bay might result in environmental degradation.

“Hindi ako pumayag na mag-reclaim (I didn’t allow reclamation). Because a reclamation sa (in) Manila Bay would trap sa ... environmentally mag-collapse ang Manila (lead to Manila’s collapse),” he said.

Environmental group Climate Reality Project also warned against reclamation activities in Manila Bay, saying it would displace thousands of residents, cause flooding, and destroy its biodiversity.

Duterte earlier said he might only consider government-related reclamation projects.

In February 2019, the President signed Executive Order 74, transferring the power to approve reclamation projects to the Office of the President through the Philippine Reclamation Authority (PRA).

There are about 25 proposed projects to reclaim 10,000 hectares from Navotas City to Cavite.

PRA General Manager Joselito Gonzales said about four reclamation projects in Manila Bay have been approved - the Navotas City Coastal Bay Reclamation Project, Pasay 360-Hectare Reclamation Project, Pasay 265-Hectare Reclamation Project, and the Horizon Manila 418-Hectare Reclamation Project.

The projects, however, need to undergo value engineer approval before reclamation efforts can begin.

Duterte said the property developers could wait for his successor to pitch their proposed reclamation activities in Manila Bay. **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1099106>

NAMRIA airs side

The National Mapping and Resource Information Authority (NAMRIA) has assured its cooperation in connection with government's efforts to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

"Through the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and our ship commanders, we are in close coordination and communication with Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA) and other government authorities to ensure the welfare of our personnel and other potentially affected persons," said NAMRIA in a statement.

NAMRIA said it has complied with the SBMA order to quarantine its four ships and their crew totaling 86 officers and non-commissioned officers.

"To date, we have already complied with the 14-day mandatory quarantine period and so far, all personnel aboard are fine and no

one has exhibited any COVID-19 symptoms or any sign of illness," NAMRIA said.

Meanwhile, NAMRIA said a crew member of *BRP Hydrographer Cayetano Palma*, a NAMRIA-owned ship, who tested positive for the coronavirus on 29 March is doing fine and in good spirits.

The crew member was again tested on 4 April and is waiting for the result.

It denied reports that the crew member had been regularly taking liberties from December until March.

"It is rather unfortunate that the published information generated ridicule and negative reactions both from the mainstream and social media platforms as well as from the people of Subic and Olongapo against NAMRIA and our personnel," the statement read.


REY BANCOD @tribunephil_rey

 **ABS-CBN News** 5 hrs · 🌐

OFF LIMITS. Pahinga muna ang Boracay Island ngayong summer matapos ipagbawal ang paglangoy sa naturang white beach.

Bahagi umano ito ng ipinatutupad na enhanced community quarantine sa lugar upang maiwasan ang pagtitipon-tipon ng mga residente.

Naglagay na rin ng red flag ang mga awtoridad sa lugar bilang simbolo na bawal munang maligo rito. (🗣️: Alan Palma, Sr.) | ulat ni Regi Adosto, ABS-CBN News



0:09 / 0:24

👍❤️👎 721 167 Comments 72 Shares

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/abschnNEWS/videos/2899664520116268>

8 Vietnamese crewmen of boat held for poaching in Tawi-Tawi

By: [Frances Mangosing](#) - Reporter / [@FMangosingINO](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 04:16 PM April 07, 2020

MANILA, Philippines—Eight Vietnamese crewmen of a Philippine-registered boat were arrested in Turtle Island in Tawi-Tawi for alleged poaching, the military said on Monday (April 6). Tran Van Phuc, Nguyen Thanh Doan, Nguyen Thanh Tung, Tran Thanh Luy, Thach Trong, Nguyen Trung Hieu, Nguyen Tan Luc, and Nguyen Van Kham were onboard FB Amina when they were arrested on April 3, the Western Mindanao Command said in a statement.

Citing a report from the Turtle Island Municipal Police Station, the Wesmincom said the boat was in waters between Taganak and Boan Island when it was apprehended.

“The report is in relation with our campaign against poaching,” Mayor Mohd Faizal Jamalul was quoted as saying.

The crewmen were temporarily held near the Taganak shoreline while an investigation was being carried out.

Lt. Gen. Cirilito Sobejana, Wesmincom chief, said charges were being prepared against the Vietnamese.

Edited by TSB

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1255205/8-vietnamese-crewmen-of-boat-held-for-poaching-in-tawi-tawi#ixzz6IyKOZaAw>

Mining, export of mineral ores allowed amid lockdown

[Louise Maureen Simeon](#) (The Philippine Star) - April 8, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The government maintains that mining operations, including the export of mineral ores, are allowed despite the enhanced community quarantine.

This after anti-mining and green groups questioned the mineral ore export permit granted to Techiron Resources Inc. despite the imposed lockdown in Eastern Visayas.

“Until there is an official issuance from IATF (Interagency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases) and OP (Office of the President) against continued mining operations, you just continue,” Mines and Geosciences Bureau director Wilfredo Moncano said in a text message.

Last March 31, the MGB-Eastern Visayas issued the mineral ore export permit to Techiron for the export of 7,000 wet metric tons of chromite ore concentrate.

The exports worth P61.2 million are bound for China and were sold to Lee-Mah Trade Limited.

Techiron’s mineral production sharing agreement is valid until 2034. Its mine site is located in Homonhon Island in Guiuan, Eastern Samar.

Meanwhile, listed Nickel Asia Corp. said its subsidiaries Taganito Mining Corp. and Hinatuan Mining Corp. are now allowed to resume operations.

In a regulatory filing, Nickel Asia said Surigao del Norte Gov. Francisco Matugas has reversed his earlier order which suspended all mining operations in the province amid the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 or COVID-19.

In the latest order, there will be continued operations of export companies, including mining companies and mineral processing plants, and the entry of foreign vessels of export-oriented companies within the province will be allowed.

With the lifting of the suspension of mining operations in Surigao Del Norte, Nickel Asia will resume their mining operations and ore shipment activities.

Further, it will require foreign vessels chartered to deliver ores to their clients to strictly observe the quarantine guidelines mandated for the crew of the vessels and the stevedores loading ores onto the vessels.

Groups decry violent dispersal of barricade vs mining

April 8, 2020

TITLE: firm in Nueva Vizcaya

PAGE 1/ 1/2

DATE

Groups decry violent dispersal of barricade vs mining firm in Nueva Vizcaya

The Alyansa ng mga Novo Vizcano para sa Kalikasan says OceanaGold Philippines has made attempts to bring their fuel tanks to a site in Barangay Didipio – despite local resistance

Kyle Aristophere Atienza

Published 7:20 PM, April 07, 2020

Updated 7:20 PM, April 07, 2020



Photos from United People of Kasibu

MANILA, Philippines – Several environmental groups decried the violent dispersal of a barricade against the attempted entry of a foreign-owned mining company's fuel tanks in Barangay Didipio, Kasibu town, Nueva Vizcaya.

Amid the [enhanced community quarantine](#) (ECQ) in Luzon due to the coronavirus, residents sat on the ground – while following physical distancing – in front of a fuel tank to show their opposition to the entry of OceanaGold Philippines Inc (OGPI) on Monday, April 6.

In a video posted by Alyansa ng mga Novo Vizcano para sa Kalikasan, members of the Philippine National Police (PNP) in full riot gear were caught dispersing the people's barricade. They also used truncheons and nightsticks to break up the crowd, causing commotion among the residents.

This led to the dispersal of the 29-manned barricade and the arrest of anti-mining advocate Roland Pulido, chairman of Didipio Earth Savers' Movement Association (Desama).

During the dispersal, 3 were initially handcuffed: Pulido, and residents Elena Calingayan and Nardo Pugong. Other protesters were able to escape the police dragnet.

Calingayan and Pugong were later released, while only Pulido was brought to the police station for allegedly violating Republic Act 11332 or the "Mandatory Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Health Events of Public Health Concern Act." He also allegedly resisted and disobeyed a person in authority.

Pulido was released on Tuesday, April 7, after posting bail of P6,000.

In a [statement](#) on April 6, OceanaGold Philippines clarified that it needed to deliver backup fuel to the Dipidio Mine, which has an advanced pumping station. With the diesel supply reaching a low point, the company said there might be a significant risk of environmental damage and loss of existing underground infrastructure if the mine floods.

Groups decry violent dispersal of barricade vs mining

April 8, 2020

TITLE: firm in Nueva Vizcaya

PAGE 1/ 2/2

DATE

They added that they were able to get approval from Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, and the Office of the President to deliver the fuel, as well as an order from the Department of the Interior and Local Government to break up the barricade.

Opposition to mining

The local government unit of Barangay Dipidio, however, has not allowed any of the fuel delivery to pass through the blockade.

Local officials, including Nueva Vizcaya Governor Carlos Padilla, and residents are against the continued operation of OceanaGold in the village.

On June 25, 2019, Padilla released an executive order ordering the Nueva Vizcaya Provincial Government, Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO), the PNP, Kasibu municipality and Barangay Dipidio to stop any operations by OceanaGold Philippines.

This came after the expiration of the mining firm's 25-year Financial Technical Assistance Agreement on June 20, 2019.

OGPI filed a plea of injunction in June 2019 before the Bayombong Regional Trial Court (RTC) to challenge Padilla's executive order. However, the Bayombong court denied the plea on July 25 in the same year, citing that the mining firm had "not clearly proven at this point its clear and unmistakable right to be protected."

Worried that the mining firm will still try to continue its operations, Dipidio residents, along with local groups, began setting up a makeshift barricade in front of the mining site's entrance in July 2019.

According to ANVIK, OceanaGold Philippines has attempted to bring their fuel tanks to the mining site at least 6 times in March, despite pending renewal of its FTAA. (READ: [\[ANALYSIS\] Time for Duterte to shut down this mining company](#))

This spurred residents to hold human barricades instead in April 2020, getting the support of local church leaders and civil society groups.

Mining companies not on lockdown?

Kalikasan Peoples' Network for the Environment (Kalikasan PNE) said the operation of OceanaGold Philippines is "the latest in a growing number of incidents of mining companies enjoying exemptions from the community quarantine lockdowns."

Citing the participation of the local government units (LGU) in the province and the United People of Kasibu coalition, the group asserted that the Australian-Canadian company should have ceased operating and immediately embarked on its final mine rehabilitation and closure.

The Alyansa Tigil Mina (ATM) slammed the use of unnecessary force in dismantling the "non-violent and legitimate protest" action of Didipio residents.

Governor Padilla also empathized with the protesters. "My heart bleeds for our brave men and women of Didipio who had to suffer and be arrested for expressing their resistance against mining, a great menace to Mother Earth," he said. – **Rappler.com**

Source: <https://www.rappler.com/nation/257275-groups-decry-violent-dispersal-barricade-mining-firm>

Forest fires reported in Tanay, Antipolo

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published Apr 7, 2020 8:51:26 AM



Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, April 7) —Several wildfires have erupted in Antipolo and Tanay areas as Rizal province remains under total lockdown, a conservation park in the area reported Monday night.

“Our team recorded forest fires around the Antipolo and Tanay areas. The call for vigilance for our forests extends not only to threats of quarrying and illegal logging, but also of forest fires as we enter the dry season,” Masungi Georeserve in Rizal said in its advisory on Facebook.

 **Masungi Georeserve**
on Monday 

FOREST FIRES RECORDED IN RIZAL

Last night, our team recorded forest fires around the Antipolo and Tanay areas. The call for vigilance for our forests extends not only to threats of quarrying and illegal logging, but also of forest fires as we enter the dry season. According to studies, most if not all forest fires in the Philippines are caused by humans, either intentionally for kaingin, charcoal production, etc, or unintentionally through negligence or carelessness (FAO Rep...
[See More](#)



Citing the Food and Agriculture Organization, Masungi said forest fires are usually caused by humans for kaingin, charcoal production, or unintentionally out of negligence or carelessness.

"Many times, burned forests and degraded lands pave the way for land grabbing, conversion and unsustainable development when people say that 'burned lands are no longer forest lands'," the management added.

"At the frontlines of forest protection, we continue to defend Masungi and surrounding areas against fires and attempts of quarrying amid the lockdown," Masungi said.

"Now is the time to heighten forest protection all over the country," it added.

Masungi did not indicate whether the fires are likely to reach the conservation area anytime soon.

Luzon has been placed under an enhanced community quarantine since March 17 as the government addresses the rising cases of COVID-19 in the country.

This has led to temporary suspension of jobs and other means of income, especially among daily wage and low income earners in the region.

Source: https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/4/7/Antipolo-Tanay-wildfires-Masungi.html?????&fbclid=IwAR1u4XvUD6sEfNGuJUtl-ufgwXgrJh1W8UdKiqjOdL_rObFYcwUCJKCspUI

Ten Knots group receives world's first Sea Turtle

TITLE: Friendly tourism certification

PAGE 1/ 1/2

April 8, 2020

DATE

Ten Knots group receives world's first Sea Turtle Friendly tourism certification

By [BusinessMirror](#)

-April 7, 2020



Turtle release at Lio Beach. Jamie Dichaves

El Nido, Palawan—El Nido Resorts and Lio Tourism Estate was awarded as the first in the world to receive the Sea Turtle Friendly Tourism Certification by the Wildlife Friendly Enterprise Network (WFEN).

Working with WFEN since 2017 to develop, implement and pilot best practice guidelines for resorts, tour operators and other tourism businesses to contribute to conservation, El Nido Resorts and Lio Tourism Estate have demonstrated their commitment to sustainability and the protection of biodiversity including critical mangrove, seagrass, and coral reef ecosystems.

The tourism estate is a group of private island resorts and a tourism estate in the Philippines that is part of the Ten Knots Group, a subsidiary of the Ayala Land Inc.

The four stand-alone resort properties—Apulit Island, Miniloc Island, Lagen Island and Pangulasian Island—as well as the 325-hectare (ha) Lio Tourism Estate, have met the requirements for mitigating key threats to sea turtles and their survival through their Be Guard, Respect, Educate El Nido (Be GREEN) program.

This includes implementing best practices to minimize negative impacts on sea turtles. Among conservation actions are ensuring beachfront lighting that does not cause disorientation of hatchlings, and conducting active sea turtle patrols by staff help to protect nests, hatchlings, and adult turtles from poaching and other key threats.

In addition, guest education is prioritized to highlight actions tourists can take to keep sea turtles safe. These include keeping a respectful distance from sea turtles in the water, never feeding them, and minimizing litter and marine pollution during their stay.

The properties have eliminated disposable plastic products and host beach cleanup to help address the global issue of marine plastic pollution.

Ten Knots group receives world's first Sea Turtle

April 8, 2020

TITLE: Friendly tourism certification

PAGE 1/ 2/2

DATE

Located in Palawan, the province that is referred to as the “last ecological frontier” of the Philippines, Ten Knots properties span several islands in the municipalities of El Nido and Taytay—such as Miniloc, Lagen, Apulit and Pangulasian.

In the mainland, they have Lio Tourism Estate, better known as “Lio Beach”—a 325ha sustainably masterplanned mix-use destination.

With over 850 species of fish, 45 genera of corals, and at least a hundred species of birds, El Nido also hosts five out of seven marine turtle species in their waters; its beaches are important nesting habitat for three, including the endangered Green, the critically endangered Hawksbill and the vulnerable Olive Ridley sea turtle.

Other rare and protected species found on the resort properties include the Palawan hornbill, the Asian fairy-bluebird, and the Philippine pangolin.

“This certification comes at an opportune time as Ten Knots celebrates its 40th anniversary this year,” said Ten Knots Group Director for Marketing Joey Bernardino. “It validates our efforts, showing us how we are on the right track when it comes to preserving the environment.”

“We are proud to add Ten Knots as part of the global Wildlife Friendly family of brands,” said Julie Stein, executive director and co-founder of WFEN. “They are a model we hope other resorts around the world will be inspired by it to protect our fragile marine resources through tourism that advances conservation outcomes for species like sea turtles.”

The Sea Turtle Friendly Tourism program will be open to global applicants early this year. Its standards were developed in collaboration with leading sea turtle experts around the world, including Romy Trono, the Wider Caribbean Sea Turtle Conservation Network, and others.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/04/07/ten-knots-group-receives-worlds-first-sea-turtle-friendly-tourism-certification/>



PAGGAWA NG LOKAL NA PPE SISIMULAN NA

April 7, 2020 @ 2:10 PM 17 hours ago

Views: 94

ILANG kompanya sa Pilipinas ang nagsama-sama at nangakong gagawa ng nasa 10,000 araw-araw na personal protective equipment laban sa Covid-19, ayon na rin sa kahilingan ng pamahalaan.

Binubuo ang PPE ng kumpletong gamit mula sa ulo hanggang katawan, kamay at paa ng mga frontliner natin.

Takip sa mukha, mask na surgical at N95, kasuotang damit na dapat ay dalawang suson hanggang tatlo, glove at iba pa.

Darating na umano ang mga materyales sa paggawa ng mga ito mula sa ibang bansa.

Sa mask, may isang kompanya na gumagawa na ang pangunahing abaca ang materyales nito na napakarami sa Kabikulan.

Sa ibang salita, kahit mura ang mga lokal na gawa, malamang na malaki rin ang gagastusin ng pamahalaan sa pagbili ng mga kagamitang ito.

Parang tulad din ng ginagawang test kit ng University of the Philippines-National Institute of Health na may presyo.

Ang mahalaga, makamemenos tayo at maiwasan natin ang katulad ng dating halaga ng mga test kit na imported na umaabot sa P20,000-30,000 kada piraso o yunit.

Ang test kit yata ng UP-NIH ay nasa P1,500 lamang at sana maging ganito rin ang mga PPE na gawin ng mga kompanyang pribado.

Siyempre pa, iba pa ang daang libo umanong PPE na binibili ng ating pamahalaan mula sa ibang bansa.

Ibang usapan, mga Bro, ang mga donasyon ng kahit sino, kahit pa ang mga posibleng ibibigay ng katulad ng UP-NIH at mga pribadong kompanya.

13 DOKTOR ANG PATAY

Kung pagbabatayan ang mga balita, may 13 doktor nang Pinoy ang nagbuwis ng kanilang buhay sa giyera sa COVID-19

Kabilang sa mga pinakahuling biktima si Dr. Mary Grace Lim, 40 anyos at nakatalaga sa Asian Hospital and Medical Center.

Ilang araw ang nakararaan, magkasunod na namatay ang mga mag-asawang doktor na senior citizens at taga-Cebu na sina Dr. Dennis Tುದtud at Dr. Helen Tುದtud.

May namatay na rin tayong nars.

Ang totoo, hindi na mabilang sa daliri ang mga naka-quarantine na doktor makaraang mamamatayan ang mga ospital na kanilang pinaglilingkuran.

May mga natagpuan nang positibo samantalang Person Under Investigation at Person Under Monitoring ang iba.

Isang malaking dahilan ng kanilang kamatayan ang pagsalang nila sa giyera na kulang-kulang ang kanilang mga kagamitan.

Kumbaga, may ilan sa mga ito ang parang mga koboy na may baril ngunit wala namang bala.

Kung may bala man, mahihinang klase kaya madali silang kapitan mismo ng sakit ng mga taong kanilang ginagamot.

BANTAYAN SILA

Habang nagaganap ang kamatayan ng ating mga doktor at nars at naka-quarantine ilang daan sa mga ito na tauhan ng mga public at private hospital, naririyang naman ang malaking pagnanais ng ibang mga bansa na kumuha ng mga doktor at nars na Filipino.

Ang Germany ang lantarang gustong kumuha ng mga medical professional sa atin, lalo na ang mga nurse, para mag-alaga umano sa mga biktima ng COVID-19.

Pero ewan lang kung may bibiyaheng mga doktor at nurse na Pinoy kahit doble o triple sa sahod o kita nila sa Pinas ang alok ng mga ibang bansa.

Isa pa, habang may namamatay na mga doktor at nars sa Pinas, mas matindi ang kalagayan ngayon sa Europa gaya ng Italy na napakarami nang doktor at nars ang namamatay at maging ang Germany na meron nang 100,315 kabuuang biktima na 3,936 kritikal at 1,597 patay.

Pero pinakamagandang harangin ng Pilipinas ang pag-alis ng mga doktor at nars dahil kailangan na kailangan natin sila.

Gawin nila ang pag-aabroad kung tapos na ang pandemic sa mahal kong Pinas.

NAPAKAHIRAP NGUNIT DAPAT MAG-INGAT

Ang totoo, napakahirap ang mag-ingat laban sa COVID-19.

Tingnan ninyo, nang lumaki na ang bilang ng mga nate-test, lumolobo rin ang bilang mga nagpo-positive at kung gayon, maging ang kanilang mga nahahawaan na maituturing na Person Under Investigation at Person Under Monitoring.

‘Yun pala, hindi kailangang bumahing at umubo ang isang may sakit.

Magsalita at kausap mo lang siya, mahahawaan ka na at pupwede ka ring mahawaan sa iba na may layong nasa 6 piye o makapitan ng virus na nagtatagal sa ere o hangin ng nasa 3 oras.

Paano pa ang pagkahawa mula sa mga asymptomatic na sa kalaunan ay mga positibo, PUI at PUM na rin?

At ang masama, pinapasok rin pala ng virus ang utak ng tao na dahilan ng kanyang pagkawala ng memorya at hindi pagkakilala sa sarili niya at iba.

Kasunod nito ang ibang mga galaw sa katawan gaya ng panginginginig at labis na panghihina hanggang sa mamatay ka o maging kritikal.

SOCIAL DISTANCING AT LOCKDOWN

Pero itong social distancing at stay at home na mga patakarang epektibong panlaban sa pagkalat ng Covid-19 na naging dahilan ng pagsasara ng mga negosyo at pagkakitaan at paghinto ng public transportation ay matindi rin.

Sana, magtulong-tulong tayo na itawid ang isa’t isa sa mga problema sa krisis at gutom na ibinunga ng mga ito.

Panahon nang tingnan natin ang maitutulong sa ating kapwa sa halip na sisihin ang ating gobyerno sa mga pagkukulang nito.

Makukumpleto lang ang serbisyo ng gobyerno kung gagalaw rin tayo lahat para ayudahan ito sa pagsulong nito ng kanyang pangunahing tungkuling paglingkuran at protektahan ang mamamayan sa matindi at totoong banta sa kalusugan at buhay.

Source: <https://remate.ph/paggawa-ng-lokal-na-ppe-sisimulan-na/>

CSC moves deadline of SALN filing to June 30 amid COVID-19 crisis

Published April 7, 2020 11:19am

The Civil Service Commission (CSC) has extended the deadline for the filing of Statement of Assets, Liabilities and Net Worth (SALN) for government employees to June 30 in light of the enhanced community quarantine being implemented in Luzon due to COVID-19 crisis.

This is in accordance with the CSC Memorandum Circular No. 9 issued by CSC Chairperson Alicia Bala last April 3, which gives public officials and employees additional 60 days to file their SALN.

“Those filing their SALN Forms between the period after April 30, 2020 and June 30, 2020 will not be subjected to any administrative case relating to the non-filing of the SALN Form. However, those not filing their SALN Forms will still be liable if they fail to file the same by June 30, 2020,” the memo reads.

Likewise, the same memo allows departments, agencies, and offices until August 21 to submit the filled out SALN forms to the appropriate repository agencies.

“The foregoing parameters shall be subject to changes in case of any further issuances by the appropriate authorities, department and/or task force pertaining to the national emergency brought by COVID-19,” the memo states.

Under the Philippine Constitution, all public officials and employees, whether regular or under temporary status, are required to file a SALN.

In addition, the Code of Conduct and Ethical Standards for Public Officials and Employees also mandates public officials and employees “to accomplish and submit declarations under oath of, and the public has the right to know, their assets, liabilities, net worth and financial and business interests including those of their spouses and of unmarried children under 18 years of age living in their households.”

The enhanced community quarantine has banned mass transport and suspended work in various industries to limit movement and prevent mass gathering amid the COVID-19 threat. It was supposed to end on April 12 but was extended to April 30. --**Llanesca T. Panti/KBK, GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/732947/csc-moves-deadline-of-saln-filing-to-june-30-amid-covid-19-crisis/story/>

Duterte extends Luzon-wide quarantine to April 30 - IATF

Published April 7, 2020 9:53am

Updated April 7, 2020 10:18am

By VIRGIL LOPEZ, GMA News

President Rodrigo Duterte has extended the enhanced community quarantine in Luzon to April 30 to curb the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles said Tuesday.

Nograles said the President accepted the recommendation of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) to extend the Luzon-wide quarantine until 11:59 p.m. of April 30.

Duterte earlier announced he was inclined to extend the Luzon-wide quarantine to April 30.

“Provided, that all exemptions granted by the Office of the President or the IATF shall continue to be in effect for the duration of the extended ECQ,” said Nograles, citing the resolution passed by the IATF on Monday.

“Provided further that such extension of the ECQ shall be without prejudice to the discretion of the President to relax the implementation of the ECQ in some local jurisdictions, or the granting of exemptions in favor of certain sectors, as public health considerations and food security may warrant.”

Nograles said an extension is necessary in order for the government to determine the impact of the ECQ and further increase health capacity in Luzon and other areas, including ramping up COVID-19 testing to 8,000 to 10,000 tests per day with a turnaround time of 24 hours.

Asked if the ECQ will be expanded to Visayas and Mindanao, Nograles said, “We will continue to monitor Visayas and Mindanao. But they are not obliged or under ECQ.”

"Right now, wala pang need," he said.

Vice President Leni Robredo and several lawmakers have called for an extension of the enhanced community quarantine, which was originally scheduled to end on April 13, to slow the spread of the virus.

Some senators, however, said food supply and movement of essential goods and services must be ensured and that there should be mass testing for the disease to allow early detection and treatment of cases.

The Philippines has, so far, recorded 3,660 COVID-19 cases with 163 deaths and 73 recoveries.

Duterte extends Luzon-wide quarantine to April 30-

April 8, 2020

TITLE: IATF

PAGE 1/ 2/2

DATE

Earlier in the day, the National Economic Development Authority ([NEDA](#)) [said it is expecting an economic slowdown](#) as a result of the Luzon-wide enhanced community quarantine.

"Hindi pa po namin masyado ma-quantify, pero ini-expect namin talaga na magkakaroon ng slowdown ang economy during the first quarter," NEDA Undersecretary Rosemarie Edillon said in an interview on Dabol B sa News TV.

Edillon, however, conceded that the worst is yet to come at this point, considering that restrictions during the COVID-19 quarantine period have hampered the flow of goods, among other issues.

"Two weeks lang ng enhanced community quarantine ang nahagip ng first quarter, kaya slowdown [ang expectation]. The second quarter is a different story," she said.

Labor Secretary Silvestre Bello III earlier said the enhanced community quarantine has already affected 1.8 million workers.

The government has initially allotted P100 billion as social amelioration aid for 18 million low income families and has increased subsidy for beneficiaries of the Conditional Cash Transfer (CCT) program amid the COVID-19 pandemic.—**AOL, GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/732935/iatf-recommends-extension-of-luzon-wide-quarantine-to-april-30/story/>

Duterte adviser says businessmen want one-week quarantine extension after April 30

Published April 7, 2020 5:13pm

Most of the businesses in the Philippines want another round of “reset” for the Luzon-wide enhanced community quarantine to ensure that efforts of the government in containing COVID-19 paid off, Presidential Adviser for Entrepreneurship Joey Concepcion said Tuesday.

Concepcion made the statement after [President Rodrigo Duterte extended the Luzon-wide enhanced community quarantine](#) until April 30.

“Ang dalawang reset ay puwede na, pero ang gusto ng maraming negosyante para sigurado ay gumawa pa tayo ng isa pang reset,” Concepcion said.

The third “reset” may be for another week of extension after April 30.

“Ito ay para ‘yung nagawa nating dalawang reset ay hindi masasayang,” Concepcion said.

Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles said an extension was necessary in order for the government to determine the impact of the ECQ and further increase health capacity in Luzon and other areas, including ramping up COVID-19 testing to 8,000 to 10,000 tests per day with a turnaround time of 24 hours.

Business leaders earlier proposed a shift to [selective quarantine at the barangay level](#). - **NB, GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/money/economy/733027/duterte-adviser-says-businessmen-want-one-week-quarantine-extension-after-april-30/story/>



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/134752476678442/posts/1728309873989353/?app=fbl>



Philippine Star 14 hrs · 🌐

The first Filipino-built satellite has finally reentered the Earth's atmosphere, officially ending its mission that has gone way beyond its original life expectancy. | via Jarvic Mateo

Initially expected to stay in orbit only for two years, Diwata-1 — the first microsatellite designed and developed by Filipinos — was launched into space in March 2016.

It has stayed in orbit for four years, sending back satellite images used for assessing impact of disasters, monitoring vegetation and bodies of water and observing weather patterns.

On Monday, the Diwata-1 was located close to the widely accepted boundary between the outer space and the Earth's atmosphere, according to the STAMINA4Space Program of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST).



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/134752476678442/posts/1728044500682557/?app=fbl>

Great Barrier Reef bleaching worst – scientists

By [Agence France-Presse](#)

April 8, 2020

BRISBANE: Australia’s Great Barrier Reef had suffered its most widespread coral bleaching on record, scientists said Tuesday in a dire warning about the threat posed by climate change to the world’s largest living organism.

James Cook University professor Terry Hughes said a comprehensive survey last month found record sea temperatures had caused the third mass bleaching of the 2,300-kilometer reef system in just five years.



BAD TO WORST Australia’s Great Barrier Reef has suffered its most widespread coral bleaching on record, scientists say — a dire warning about the threat posed by climate change to the world’s largest living organism. AFP PHOTO

Bleaching occurs when healthy corals become stressed by changes in ocean temperatures, causing them to expel algae living in their tissues, which drains them of their vibrant colours.

“We surveyed 1,036 reefs from the air during the last two weeks in March to measure the extent and severity of coral bleaching throughout the Barrier Reef region,” Hughes said. “For the first time, severe bleaching has struck all three regions of the Great Barrier Reef — the northern, central and now large parts of the southern sectors.”

The damage came as February brought the highest monthly sea temperatures on the Great Barrier Reef since Australia began keeping records in 1900.

The reef is worth an estimated \$4 billion a year in tourism revenue for the Australian economy, but is at risk of losing its coveted world heritage status because warmer oceans brought about by climate change have damaged its health.

Back-to-back bleaching events in 2016 and 2017 prompted the government agency overseeing the reef to downgrade its long-term outlook to “very poor.”

Bleaching was first seen on the reef in 1998 — at the time, the hottest year on record — but as temperature records continue to tumble its frequency has increased, giving coral less time to recover.

James Cook University professor Morgan Pratchett said although bleaching did not necessarily kill all corals, some were expected to fare worse than others.

More than half of shallow-water corals in the reef's northern reaches died in the 2016 bleaching. "We will go back under water later this year to assess the losses of corals from this most recent event," Pratchett said.

AFP

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/04/08/news/world/great-barrier-reef-bleaching-worst-scientists/71138/>

Great Barrier Reef suffers third mass bleaching event in

April 8, 2020

TITLE: five years

PAGE 1/ 1/3

DATE

Great Barrier Reef suffers third mass bleaching event in five years

By Helen Regan, CNN

Published Apr 7, 2020 3:40:58 PM



(CNN) — Australia's Great Barrier Reef has experienced its most widespread bleaching event on record, with the south of the reef bleaching extensively for the first time, a new survey has found.

This marks the third mass bleaching event on the reef in just the last five years and scientists say that the rapid warming of the planet due to human emissions of heat-trapping gases are to blame.

Aerial analysis conducted by Terry Hughes, director of the ARC Center of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies at James Cook University, and others from the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority, found that coastal reefs along the entire length of the iconic reef -- a stretch of about 1,500 miles (2,300 kilometers) from the Torres Strait in the north, right down to the reef's southern boundary -- have been severely bleached.

"We are all in shock really at how quick this has happened," said Hughes. "Three severe bleaching events in five years is not something we anticipated happening until the middle of the century."

Warm ocean temperatures are the main driver of coral bleaching, which is when corals turn white as a stress response to water that is too warm. This happens because they are expelling the algae that grows inside them, which is their main energy source and gives them their color.

Bleaching doesn't kill coral immediately. But if temperatures remain high, eventually the coral will die, destroying a natural habitat for many species of marine life.

Hughes said he took about 11 flights over nine days in March criss-crossing the full length of the Great Barrier Reef, surveying 1,036 reefs from the air to measure the extent and severity of the coral bleaching.

What he saw was unprecedented.

"For the first time, severe bleaching has struck all three regions of the Great Barrier Reef -- the northern, central and now large parts of the southern sectors," he said.

Of the reefs surveyed this year about a quarter were severely affected, while a further 35% had modest levels of bleaching.

The bleaching event this year is not only the largest, in terms of the area affected, but also second most severe on record, the scientists found, with the damage likely to be lasting and irreparable.

Great Barrier Reef suffers third mass bleaching event in

April 8, 2020

TITLE: five years

PAGE 1/ 2/3

DATE

In 2016, bleaching killed more than half of the shallow-water corals on the northern region of the Great Barrier Reef. A second mass bleaching in 2017 meant the coral could not recover.

This year, the cumulative footprint of bleaching has expanded further south, affecting more fragile and heat-sensitive corals.

Hughes said they won't know the full extend of the loss of corals until they go back to the same reefs conduct underwater surveys in October or November.

Bleaching events getting more frequent

Coral reefs are some of the most vibrant marine ecosystems on the planet -- between a quarter and one-third of all marine species rely on them at some point in their life cycle.

And none is more vital than the Great Barrier Reef.

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

It's also a vital resource to Australia's economy, contributing more than \$5.6 billion annually and supporting tens of thousands of jobs.

As bleaching expands and becomes more frequent, corals are at greater risk of dying off -- and that will be devastating not only for the region's biodiversity, but for the thousands of people whose life and livelihood depend on the reefs.

The scientists' main concern this year is the southern region, which escaped the bleaching during 2016 and 2017 as water temperatures were close to normal, Hughes said.

Because it has not been bleached before, this portion of the reef has more coral that is sensitive to the heat. Most susceptible to dying off are ecologically important species such as the staghorn, or branching, corals that are ideal habitats for an array of species of fish and other marine life.

"When we go back underwater in a few months time, we anticipate significant mortality or loss of those corals," Hughes said.

He anticipates that as much as half of these "red reefs" that suffered the most severe bleaching this year to have died because that's what happened in the northern reefs in 2016.

Another concern is the shrinking gap between one mass bleaching and the next. The first recorded bleaching event along the Great Barrier Reef occurred in 1998 -- then the hottest year on record.

Four more severe bleaching events have occurred since, in 2002, 2016, 2017, and now in 2020.

This year, February saw the highest monthly sea temperatures ever recorded on the reef since records from the Australian Bureau of Meteorology began in 1900. Many reefs experienced temperatures that were 3°C above the normal summer maximum.

"That's incredibly destructive. Those extreme temperatures can kill the coral very quickly," Hughes said. "We really are on uncharted territory here in terms of rising temperatures."

Fewer opportunities for recovery

Past bleaching events have typically occurred in years with a strong El Nino-Southern Oscillation, a climate phenomena that can increase the odds of a host of extreme weather events around the globe.

But as summers get hotter year on year in Australia, scientists found that bleaching can occur even when El Nino is not active.

That could have a huge impact on whether the reefs can recover.

Great Barrier Reef suffers third mass bleaching event in

April 8, 2020

TITLE: five years

PAGE 1/ 3/3

DATE

Hughes said it takes about a decade for the fastest growing corals to make a full recovery. As bleaching events become more frequent, there are fewer opportunities for the corals to rebound.

"Normal recovery rates for the reef are being impinged by the scale of the loss of the adult root stock -- that's the grown up corals that make the babies," Hughes said.

Reefs are important because they protect shorelines and coastal regions from erosion and extreme weather events. They are also source of food security for millions of people around the world.

According to a study by the United Nations on the Economics of Ecosystems and Biodiversity, coral reefs benefit about 850 million people worldwide, with at least 275 million depending directly on reefs for livelihoods and sustenance.

Already in Australia, fish stocks on the Great Barrier Reef are declining because of loss of habitat, Hughes said.

You take out the coral, the ecosystem collapses and marine life dies.

The mass bleaching conditions were also observed in late March by Coral Reef Watch, which uses remote sensing and modeling to predict and monitor for signs of bleaching.

Dr. C. Mark Eakin, coordinator of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) Coral Reef Watch, told CNN last month that because of the massive amounts of heat the world's oceans have already absorbed, the reef likely won't have the chance to recover before it bleaches again.

"If it takes decades for a reef to recover ... what chance do we have for reefs recovering when events are coming back this fast?" he said.

Though researchers around the world are exploring ways to revive reefs, Eakin says those efforts will not be enough if we don't address the root cause of their demise -- human-caused climate change.

"We have to address climate change if we want to have coral reefs in the future."

This story was first published on CNN.com. "[Great Barrier Reef suffers third mass bleaching event in five years.](#)"

Source: https://cnnphilippines.com/world/2020/4/7/Great-Barrier-Reef-mass-bleaching.html?fbclid=IwARobC1mb9JjxC1451o57sGA-HK1qVbv8w_KlVRmjWlkWxdBpAksy9E5wY

Virus severs Brazilian Amazon from world

Published 15 hours ago
on April 7, 2020 03:11 PM
By **Agence France-Presse**



Deep in the Amazon rainforest in northern Brazil, where rivers are the only highways, the coronavirus pandemic is sharply limiting boat traffic, leaving villages even more cut off from the world than before.

Canoes, motor boats and ferries are the cars, trucks and buses of the Amazon, bringing people and goods to remote communities that can only be reached by river — sometimes with a journey of more than a week.

But because of the pandemic, authorities in Amazonas state have restricted river traffic to essential travel, seeking to stop the spread of the virus in a region that could be particularly vulnerable to it.

Cargo transport is operating normally, but passenger transport is restricted to exceptional circumstances such as medical emergencies and essential services like paramedics and police, said Jerfeson Caldas, regional coordinator for national health agency Anvisa.

Even those trips are bound by special rules: boats can only operate at 40 percent of their passenger capacity and must supply water, soap and hand sanitizer.

The restrictions amount to the jungle equivalent of the isolation measures now in place for around half the world's population.

“Amazonas depends on rivers for more than 85 percent of the transport we survive on. Unfortunately, people here are now living a sad reality because of this crisis,” said Alessandra Martins Pontes, a transportation planning expert at Amazonas Federal University.

Hammock distancing

Passengers usually make the trip on “regionals,” big diesel-engine ferries that replaced the steam-powered paddle boats of the 19th century.

Travelers typically sleep on hammocks they bring themselves, slung one above the other like bunk beds.

But not in the time of COVID-19. The authorities have ordered all hammocks be placed a minimum of two meters (yards) apart.

Amazonas is the biggest state in Brazil, a densely forested expanse of more than 1.5 million square kilometers (600,000 square miles), equal to about the size of Peru and Ecuador combined.

It has registered 532 cases of the new coronavirus so far — mostly in the state capital, Manaus — with 19 deaths.

The fear is what will happen if the virus progresses into the rainforest, particularly the indigenous communities that live there.

Indigenous peoples are particularly vulnerable to imported diseases, as they have been historically isolated from germs against which much of the world has developed immunity.

Remote indigenous communities have been decimated in the past by diseases including smallpox and flu.

Authorities reported last week that a first indigenous woman had tested positive for the new coronavirus in Amazonas, a health worker from the Kokama ethnic group who came into contact with an infected doctor.

Natural isolation

The transport restrictions affect hundreds of families, indigenous or not, that live from fishing and gathering in stilt-house villages along the Amazon and its tributaries.

“Movement is very limited now. Outsiders can’t even go to the protected nature reserves” where most of those families live, said Edervan Vieira, a technical adviser to an association of farmers and fishermen in Caruari, a week’s trip upriver by boat from Manaus.

No COVID-19 cases have been reported here yet. But he says he worries about the economic effects of the transport restrictions on families that depend on sales of their surplus produce to buy whatever they cannot make locally.

“We have what we need to survive here: fruit, fish, cassava flour,” said Maria Cunha, 26, who lives in the protected nature reserve of Medio Jurua.

“But living in the forest also brings its challenges.... What worries us is if we have to go to the city for an emergency, because that’s when we would risk bringing the virus back home.”

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/04/07/virus-severs-brazilian-amazon-from-world/>



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/134752476678442/posts/1727835660703441/?app=fbl>

Two giant pandas finally mate after 10 years of trying

By: [Ryan Arcadio](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 06:41 PM April 07, 2020



Giant pandas Ying Ying and Le Le. Image: Instagram/@hkoceanpark

Two giant pandas have finally succeeded to mate after 10 years of attempts in Hong Kong's Ocean Park. The female and male pandas, named Ying Ying and Le Le, mated yesterday, April 6, the center said in a statement on the same day.

"Since late March, Ying Ying began spending more time playing in the water, while Le Le has been leaving scent-markings around his habitat and searching the area for Ying Ying's scent," the park explained. "Such [behaviors] are consistent with those common during breeding season, which occurs once every year between March to May."

Along with the changes in the female's hormonal levels, the center's animal care teams confirmed that the pandas have entered this year's breeding season.

"The teams have been closely monitoring the giant pandas' body conditions and [behavioral] changes and deemed it a peak oestrous this morning for natural mating opportunity," it added.

"Male and female giant pandas are sexually mature starting at ages of seven and five respectively," the park's executive director in zoological operations and conversation Michael Boos explained.

He also pointed out that while the two pandas arrived in the center in 2007, they only began attempts at natural mating in 2010. The success of their coupling also means there is a higher chance of Ying Ying getting pregnant compared to artificial insemination.

"If successful, signs of pregnancy, including hormonal level fluctuations and [behavioral] changes may be observed as early as late June, though there is always a chance that Ying Ying could experience a pseudo-pregnancy," Boos said.

The park will continuously monitor the female's hormonal levels and behavioral changes. The gestation period for giant pandas ranges between 72 and 324 days. Meanwhile, pregnancy confirmation can only be detected with an ultrasound scan earliest 14 to 17 days before birth. **JB**

Source: <https://technology.inquirer.net/98030/two-giant-pandas-finally-mate-after-10-years-of-trying#ixzz6lyFbTzgm>

Giant pandas Ying Ying and Le Le mate for the first
time at Hong Kong's Ocean Park

PAGE 1/ 1/2

April 8, 2020
DATE

Giant pandas Ying Ying and Le Le mate for the first time at Hong Kong's Ocean Park

South China Morning Post

Posted at Apr 07 2020 08:49 AM



Pandas rest in their enclosure at the Chengdu Research Base of Giant Panda Breeding in Chengdu in China's southwestern Sichuan province on March 25, 2020. Two giant pandas in Hong Kong have moved a step closer to having their offspring finally after successfully mating for the first time on Monday. *AFP/file*

The giant pandas Ying Ying and Le Le at Hong Kong's Ocean Park have moved a step closer to having their offspring finally after successfully mating for the first time on Monday.

After repeated failures and a miscarriage in the past 10 years, the black-and-white heartthrobs made it at the age of 14 during the ongoing mating season between March and May, the park said.

Their behavior is seen as a breakthrough as male and female giant pandas become sexually mature at the age of 7 and 5 years respectively.

Signs of pregnancy, if any, are expected to be observed at the earliest in late June.

"Since Ying Ying and Le Le's arrival in Hong Kong in 2007 and attempts at natural mating since 2010, they unfortunately have yet to succeed until this year despite years of trial and learning," Michael Boos, executive director of the park's zoological operations and conservation, said.

"The successful natural mating process today is an extremely exciting news for all of us, as the chance of pregnancy via natural mating is higher than by artificial insemination."

In 2015, Ying Ying and Le Le joined a national program in Wolong, Sichuan, the biggest panda reserve in Mainland China, at which Ying Ying was mated with different pandas and also artificially while Le Le's semen was used to artificially inseminate other pandas.

Ying Ying was soon confirmed pregnant, but then miscarried. Several rounds of false alarms took place in the following years.

Boos said the park would closely monitor Ying Ying's hormonal levels and behavioral changes as the gestation period for giant pandas ranges between 72 and 324 days. Pregnancy could only be confirmed through an ultrasound scan 14 to 17 days before birth at the earliest.

Ocean Park bailout plan 'will help fund attraction's revival'

Giant pandas Ying Ying and Le Le mate for the first
time at Hong Kong's Ocean Park

PAGE 1/ 2/2

April 8, 2020
DATE

The debt-ridden Ocean Park has been closed for the public since January 26 to minimize the risks of the spread of the coronavirus.

"If the mating was successful, signs of pregnancy, including hormonal fluctuations and behavioral changes may be observed as early as late June. But there is always a chance Ying Ying could experience a pseudopregnancy," Boos said.

Tourism lawmaker Yiu Si-wing welcomed "the good news" of the successful mating.

"It gives us some hope when Hong Kong is clouded with so much negative news," he said.

The park has tightened its belt, and is in the process of seeking a HK\$10.6 billion (US\$1.36 billion) funding from the government for a makeover.

It is facing a cash crunch as it revealed in January that it only had about HK\$400 million at hand at that time, sufficient for operations until the end of this year. The park is also burdened with about HK\$6 billion in debts.

Yiu urged the park to revise its funding plan as tourism was battered by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/overseas/04/07/20/giant-pandas-ying-ying-and-le-le-mate-for-the-first-time-at-hong-kongs-ocean-park>

Pandas use lockdown privacy to mate after a decade of

April 8, 2020

TITLE: trying

PAGE 1/ 1/2

DATE

Pandas use lockdown privacy to mate after a decade of trying

Published April 7, 2020 9:04pm

Stuck at home with no visitors and not much else to do, a pair of pandas in Hong Kong finally decided to give mating a go after a decade of dodging the issue.

Like half the planet, Ying Ying and Le Le have only really had each other for company since coronavirus-caused lockdowns shut off the flow of guests to their themepark pad.

And like couples everywhere, they've been making the best of the time on their own.

"Since Ying Ying and Le Le's arrival in Hong Kong in 2007 and attempts at natural mating since 2010, they unfortunately have yet to succeed until this year upon years of trial and learning," said Ocean Park conservation official Michael Boos.

The park released photos of the pair embracing in an enclosure uncharacteristically free from prying eyes and cameraphones.

Pandas are notoriously bad at reproducing, especially in captivity.

But vets had their hopes up when the monochromatic lovers started showing an interest in each other during the short spring mating season.

For those who knew where to look for the tell-tale signs, ursine love was in the air.

"Since late March, Ying Ying began spending more time playing in the water, while Le Le has been leaving scent-markings around his habitat and searching the area for Ying Ying's scent," the park said.

"Such behaviours are consistent with those common during breeding season, which occurs once every year between March to May," it added.

Experts will now monitor Ying Ying for signs of pregnancy, but it may be quite some wait as the gestation period for giant pandas ranges from 72 to 324 days.

The park said confirmation of pregnancy can only be detected by an ultrasound scan some 14 to 17 days before birth.

But Ying Ying might exhibit hormonal fluctuations and behavioural changes as early as June if fertilisation has occurred.

The announcement was a rare bit of good news as Hong Kong reels under a recession and movement restrictions caused by the coronavirus.

Pandas use lockdown privacy to mate after a decade of

April 8, 2020

TITLE: trying

PAGE 1/ 1/2

DATE

Ocean Park, which is earmarked for a HK\$10.6 billion (\$1.4 billion) bailout from the city government, has been shuttered since late January because of the pandemic.

"It's a good time to make baby bear when you are on holiday and have no pressure," wrote Janet Mok.

Chan Fong added: "It's no pressure when no one is watching." -**Agence France-Presse**

Source: https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/world/733068/pandas-use-lockdown-privacy-to-mate-after-a-decade-of-trying/story/?utm_source=GMAnews&utm_medium=Facebook&fbclid=IwARom7gHQvDcHeoeWW6LhEbU3ByDlGTHHokipsDq1rH7Zqf-Oatfy1Hg6Q

Ukraine continues to battle forest fire near Chernobyl

Associated Press / 07:04 PM April 07, 2020



A Geiger counter shows increased radiation levels against the background of the forest fire burning near the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in Ukraine. Image: AP/Yaroslav Yemelianenko

Emergency teams in Ukraine on Monday continued battling a forest fire in the contaminated area around the Chernobyl nuclear power plant that has raised radiation fears.

Police said they tracked down a person suspected of starting the blaze by setting dry grass on fire in the area. The 27-year-old man said he burned grass “for fun” and then failed to extinguish the fire when the wind caused it to expand quickly.

Two blazes erupted Saturday in the zone around Chernobyl that was sealed after the 1986 explosion at the plant.

Firefighters said they managed Monday to put out the smaller of the two fires, which engulfed about five hectares (12 acres), but the second one continued burning, covering about 20 hectares (50 acres). They said they were using aircraft to extinguish the blaze.

The authorities said that radiation levels in the area engulfed by fires substantially exceeded normal levels, but the emergencies service said radiation levels in the capital, Kyiv, about 100 kilometers (60 miles) south, were within norms.

The 2,600-square-kilometer (1,000-square-mile) Chernobyl Exclusion Zone was established after the April 1986 disaster at the plant that sent a cloud of radioactive fallout over much of Europe. The zone is largely unpopulated, although about 200 people have remained despite orders to leave.

Blazes in the area have been a regular occurrence. Some of them start when residents set dry grass on fire in the early spring — a widespread practice in Ukraine, Russia and some other ex-Soviet nations that often leads to devastating forest fires.

Ukrainian police said that they beefed up patrols in the area around the Chernobyl zone to prevent new fires. **RGA**

Read more: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1255345/ukraine-continues-to-battle-forest-fire-near-chernobyl#ixzz6IyGszTYq>