



Ugnayan ng DENR at Lions Clubs Int'l mas titibay sa pagkahalal kay Antiporda bilang District Governor

May 25, 2020 @ 5:43 PM

<https://remate.ph/ugnayan-ng-denr-at-lions-clubs-intl-mas-titibay-sa-pagkahalal-kay-antiporda-bilang-district-governor/>



Manila, Philippines – Tiyak na magiging mas matibay ang ugnayan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) at Lions Clubs International (LCI) dahil sa pagkakahalal kay Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny D. Antiporda bilang District Governor ng District 301-A2 na tinaguriang “largest civilian service organization.”

Si Antiporda ay naihalal na “unopposed” bilang District Governor para sa Lion Year 2020-2021 sa pamamagitan ng online election na pinamahalaan ng LCI Multiple District 301 Philippines noong Sabado (Mayo 23). Ang naturang halalan at bilangan ay ginanap sa pamamagitan ng online election gamit ang election runner at “live stream” sa Facebook.

Ayon sa ulat, sa pamamagitan ng LCI District 301-A2, inaasahan ni Antiporda na mas lalakas pa ang ugnayan ng organisasyon sa DENR sa pangangalaga at tamang paggamit ng kalikasan at likas na yaman ng bansa.

“My dual role as DENR Undersecretary and official of a civilian service organization allows me to expand my reach, help even more people and champion the cause of environmental protection,” sabi pa ni Antiporda.

Nabatid pa na ang District 301-A2 ay binubuo ng walong rehiyon at 84 Lions Clubs na mayroong 3,000 miyembro.

Bilang bagong halal na District Governor, inaasahan din ni Antiporda na magsisilbi siyang coordinator ng LCI.

Ayon pa kay Antiporda, mas palalakasin pa niya ang ugnayan ng DENR at LCI sa pamamagitan ng pagbibigay ng proteksyon sa kalikasan o kapaligiran na isa sa limang ‘global causes’ ng LCI.



Ugnayan ng DENR at Lions Clubs Int’l mas titibay sa pagkahalal kay Antiporda bilang District Governor

Nabatid na kabilang sa limang global causes o pangunahing pinagtutuunan ng pansin ng LCI ang mga proyektong may kinalaman sa vision, cancer, diabetes, hunger at environment.

Aniya, mas magiging aktibo ang LCI partikular na ang District 301-A2 sa pagkakaroon ng coastal at river clean-ups, tree planting activities at solid waste management projects.

“We will engage in pro-environment activities as we have done in the past. We do these activities not only here in Metro Manila, but also in provinces like Quezon, Palawan and Masbate,” dagdag pa ni Antiporda.

Ayon pa sa opisyal, bibigyan niya ng prayoridad ang pagkakaroon ng “environmental lectures sa mga paaralan upang magkaroon ng partisipasyon ang mga kabataan sa pagbibigay ng proteksyon sa kalikasan base na rin sa nakasaad sa Republic Act 9512 o ang National Environmental Awareness and Education Act of 2008.

“I want to target the school children, especially those who are in the rural areas and mountain barangays,” pagdidiin pa ni Antiporda.

Kabilang sa pagtutuunan nito ng pansin sa “environmental lectures” ang tungkol sa waste management, clean air, clean water at pagpapahalaga sa biodiversity.

Kaugnay nito, dahil naman sa COVID-19 pandemic, sinabi rin ni Antiporda na susundin nila ang ipinatutupad na alituntunin sa “new normal” at pag-aaralan din ang mga isasagawang hakbang tungkol sa environmental lectures kapag nagsimula na ang pasukan ng mga estudyante.

“We want to instill behavior change among our children today because once they acquire the proper information and knowledge on how to take care of our environment, they will become our staunch partners in environmental protection,” sabi pa ni Antiporda. Santi Celario



Antiporda elected Lion's Club governor

May 26, 2020

By Joel dela Torre

People's Journal

<https://journal.com.ph/news/nation/antiporda-elected-lions-club-governor>

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is looking forward to building a much stronger partnership with Lion's Club International (LCI) with the election of Undersecretary Benny Antiporda as governor of the world's largest civilian service organization.

Antiporda was elected unopposed as Governor of LCI's District 301-A2 during an online election held last Saturday and aired live-stream on Facebook.

As the new governor, he is expected to leverage the organization's social mobilization work to help the DENR in promoting the conservation, management, development and proper use of the country's environment and natural resources.

"My dual role as DENR Undersecretary and official of a civilian service organization allows me to expand my reach, help even more people and champion the cause of environmental protection," the DENR official said.

District 301-A2 is composed of 84 Lions Clubs with 3,000 members spanning across 8 regions in the Philippines. As the newly installed District Governor, Antiporda will oversee activities of the entire District 301-A2 and will serve as coordinator for LCI.

Antiporda vowed to work towards strengthening the partnership of the DENR and LCI in terms of environmental protection. He said LCI, particularly District 301-A2, will be active in conducting more coastal and river cleanups, tree planting activities and solid waste management projects.

"We will engage in pro-environment activities as we have done in the past. We do these activities not only here in Metro Manila, but also in provinces like Quezon, Palawan and Masbate," Antiporda said.

The DENR official said he will prioritize the conduct of environmental lectures in schools to involve children in the protection of the environment, pursuant to Republic Act 9512 or the National Environmental Awareness and Education Act of 2008.

"I want to target the school children, especially those who are in the rural areas and mountain barangays," Antiporda said, underscoring that lecture topics would include solid waste management, clean air, clean water and biodiversity conservation.

Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, Antiporda said they have to adapt to the "new normal" situation and plan how to hold with the environmental lectures once classes resume.

"We want to instill behavior change among our children today because once they acquire the proper information and knowledge on how to take care of our environment, they will become our staunch partners in environmental protection," Antiporda pointed out.



DENR Usec. Benny Antiporda, nahalal bilang governor ng Lions Club International

By RadyoMaN Manila

May. 26, 2020 at 3:30pm

<https://rmn.ph/denr-usec-benny-antiporda-nahalal-bilang-governor-ng-lions-club-international/#>

Inaasahang mas lalakas pa ang ugnayan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) at Lions Clubs International (LCI) sa pangangalaga at tamang paggamit ng kalikasan at likas na yaman ng bansa.

Kasunod ito ng pagkakahalal kay DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda bilang Governor ng District 301-A2 na itinuturing na “largest civilian service organization” sa pamamagitan ng isang online election.

Ayon pa kay Antiporda, bilang Lions Club Governor, magiging coordinator siya ng LCI.

Dahil dito, mas palalaksin ng DENR at LCI ang paglulunsad ng coastal at river cleanups, tree planting activities at solid waste management projects.

Ang District 301-A2 ay binubuo ng 84 Lions Clubs na mayroong 3,000 miyembro sa walong rehiyon ng Pilipinas.

Sinabi pa ni Antiporda na bibigyan din niya ng prayoridad ang pagkakaroon ng environmental lectures sa mga paaralan upang magkaroon ng partisipasyon ang mga kabataan sa pagbibigay ng proteksyon sa kalikasan.



P500,000 kamagong, narra found abandoned in Mauban

Published May 26, 2020, 3:13 PM

By Danny Estacio

<https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/05/26/p500000-kamagong-narra-found-abandoned-in-mauban/>

MAUBAN, Quezon – The joint operatives of the local Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), and Maritime police have recovered almost P500,000-worth of illegally cut narra and kamagong after the unidentified owner abandoned these at the coastal area of Sitio Quezon, Barangay Sadsaran on Monday evening in this town.

According to Major Manuel Magat, head of the 403rd Philippine National Police (PNP) Maritime precinct, they received information from a concerned citizen at about 10:30 pm that illegally cut logs were seen at the coastal area of Barangay Sadsaran.

Magat said he immediately dispatched his team, under Sgt. Jose Manajero, to conduct validation.

After confirming the information, a team composed of the PNP Maritime, PCG Mauban and the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) proceeded to the area.

The authorities found some 48 fitches of kamagong and narra with a total volume of 1,995.42 board feet and an estimated market value of P486,250. These were abandoned by still unidentified illegal logs trader.

The forest products were brought to DENR-CENRO impounding area at Barangay Cagsiay 2, for proper disposition, while an investigation was still on-going to determine the owner of the logs.



May 26, 2020 4:20PM

<https://www.facebook.com/1577352838/posts/10220064281508802/?app=fbl>



Herzon Gallego

1 hr · 🌐



DENR 13 BREAKING NEWS

DENR 13 CENRO Bayugan apprehends 250 pieces lauan fitches in Esperanza riverbank.

By HERZON GALLEG0, Chief,Public Affairs Office,DENR 13, Caraga Region

DENR Enforcement Operatives in CENRO Bayugan,Agusan del Sur headed by its technical division head Greg Bayutas apprehended 250 pieces of illegally-cut lauan fitches (4,000 bd.ft) along the river bank at Purok 8,Barangay Sta.Fe in Esperanza, Agusan del.Sur during a search and retrieval operation on Monday.

In his report to CENRO Norman Asugan,and DENR 13 Regional Executive Director Atty. Felix S. Alicer through the PENRO of Agusan del Sur Joey F.Concha ,the apprehended lumber fitches were believed stockpiled by the timber poachers at the riverbank in that area. Bayutas said the poachers were believed to be waiting for appropriate time to tow the illegally-cut forest products to a designated buyer but an informant reported his find to a forest monitoring river checkpoint under team leader Geovanni Go.



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Turtle hatchlings released in Zamboanga del Norte

May 25, 2020

https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1857697/Zamboanga/Local-News/Turtle-hatchlings-released-in-Zamboanga-del-Norte?fbclid=IwAR3tPyhkQCZbjXrwf_wuBu5aErVYR90OcyGmd71zT0OafvWxVSzVYtNNwE

OFFICIALS of the Community Environment and Natural Resources (Cenro) in Piñan, Zamboanga del Norte has sent back five Olive Ridley Turtle hatchlings to their natural habitat.

The release of the turtle hatchlings, which was held Friday, May 22, in Dawo village, Dapitan City, was in line with the celebration of International Day for Biological Diversity (IDBD) and observance of the Month of Ocean.

Dr. Adelaida Borja, head of Cenro-Piñan, said these five hatchlings were rescued in a weakened state and were nursed back to health by Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) personnel prior to their release.

Borja said the release of the turtle hatchlings is a joint collaboration work between Cenro office in Zamboanga and the Department of Agriculture, through the BFAR headed by Cyril Patangan, who contributed technical expertise in ensuring the survival of the hatchlings.

This year's IDBD celebration is anchored on the theme, "Our Solutions are in Nature."

Meanwhile, Borja said her office is working closely with BFAR in terms of monitoring identified turtle nesting sites within the Municipality of Piñan.

Earlier, the Cenro in Liloy, Zamboanga del Norte, has also released a male Green Sea Turtle back to its natural habitat.

The turtle, which was freed in Dansalan village, Labason in the same province, was rescued by two fisherman in Liloy. **(SunStar Zamboanga)**



Disregard for nature, surge of pandemics

May 26, 2020

By Romulo F. Nieva Jr., RN, MHSS

<https://www.pna.gov.ph/opinion/pieces/304-disregard-for-nature-surge-of-pandemics>

AS the world continues to find various ways to address COVID-19 pandemic and slowly recover from its impact, this global tragedy is unleashing a sad reality- how wildlife trade and habitat destruction threaten human health. It undeniably reminds us how urgently we need to rethink and change our relationship with the environment. However, the role of biodiversity as a critical facet of pandemic prevention remains highly ignored in the current public discussion.

The COVID-19 pandemic is never an isolated case. We should have known a pandemic-like coronavirus was going to emerge because other viruses, such as SARS, H1N1, MERS-CoV, Ebola, and HIV, also “jumped” the species barrier from animals. The wildlife trade and loss of animal habitat are known huge drivers, facilitating the easier spread of viruses from one animal to another and then to humans or also known as “spillover events”. This transfer, also termed as zoonosis, happens when an infection carried by an animal, like a bat, becomes transmissible to a human.

The habitat destruction

There is a wealth of evidence that habitat destruction is increasingly displacing disease-carrying wild animals. According to the United Nations Environment Program, increasing contact between people and wild animals is a product of biodiversity loss due to deforestation, rapid urbanization, and extreme agricultural development. And one of the challenges is that vast forests have disappeared, so animals themselves have come in closer contact with each other. Deforestation also alters the environmental conditions, creating puddles of water, which is an ideal habitat for mosquitoes, contributing to spikes in vector-borne infections like Dengue and Malaria.

As much as 425 million acres of the forest may be destroyed by 2030, leading to greater risks of new disease outbreaks in the future, according to the World Wildlife Fund. This would make the Philippines a potential “thriving site” due to the country’s deforestation activities. ***Based on the estimates of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), about 47,000 hectares of forest cover is lost each year, attributed primarily to widespread illegal logging and weak safeguard in protected areas.*** The continuing deforestation in the country could make the Philippines more vulnerable to the emergence of new infectious diseases, as it loses one of its main protective barriers from possible outbreaks. The DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau reported that the forest cover in the country declined from 21 million hectares, or 70 percent of its land area, in 1990 to about 6.5 million hectares by 2007.



Disregard for nature, surge of pandemics

Pandemic and wildlife trade

The proximity between people and wildlife carries huge disease risks. World Health Organization found that infectious diseases cause about a quarter of human deaths. About 60% of mortalities were zoonotic in origin. Of the zoonoses, more than 70% were from wildlife. Specifically, both SARS and COVID-19 are types of coronavirus that have been traced to wildlife trading activities in China. The virus may have spilled over to humans from an animal and “evolved” after infecting people. Putting stressed, injured, and sick animals into cages together is an “incubator” for new deadly pathogens.

A 2019 United Nations (UN) report indicated that illicit poaching and trafficking of wildlife worldwide continue to thwart conservation efforts, with nearly 7,000 species of animals and plants reported in illegal trade involving 120 countries. Over the past decade, the illegal wildlife trade, which is a multibillion-dollar industry, has become substantially worse and more organized. This traction has been partly due to a lack of collective and sufficient action from authorities worldwide. With this global illegal shipping of wildlife, from Africa or Asia, and to different parts of the world, the pandemic is going to be a chronic threat.

The Philippines has been identified as a consumer, source, and transshipment point of illegally traded wildlife products and by-products used for furniture displays, accessories, and jewelry, medicine, or “mystical cure”. In a paper published in 2019, the Asian Development Bank noted that the value of wildlife trade in the Philippines is estimated at ₱50 billion a year (roughly equivalent to \$1 billion), which includes the damage to habitats incurred during poaching, the market value of wildlife and its resources, and loss in potential ecotourism revenues. The top three illegally traded species in the country by number of confiscated individuals from 2010 to 2019 were the Palawan pangolin, the common hill myna, and the tokay gecko, based on the DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau data.

Time for real change

It’s totally understandable how the global community is desperate to discover a cure or treatment for COVID-19. But a disease- or germ- specific response is never going to be enough in the long run. A single vaccine or medicine is not a “blanket cure” to all pandemics. We need bold and clearer policy shifts to protect the people, wildlife, and the environment.

In a highly globalized world, a single country response is clearly insufficient. The international community through UN agency and its mechanisms must intensify a more solid and collective action with a sense of urgency. Pandemic risks as part of existing Global Health Security Agenda must be seriously revisited. The reduction and ultimate loss of natural capital can have extreme consequences on human health and security.



Disregard for nature, surge of pandemics

Hence, developing sustainable and effective solutions needs recognition of the larger factors of underlying global biodiversity loss and its impact on global health.

Global unity is a crucial element here not political division. The political chaos between the US and China would be a barrier to attaining bolder steps to address biodiversity loss. We've observed US leaders pointing the fingers at the Chinese government without recognizing how the global economy drives the wildlife trade. The tepid policy response of the Chinese government to wildlife trade was very apparent. They should have learned from the past failure during the SARS pandemic, but they still had allowed wildlife trade in its territory. It's time to stop our own insatiable demand and disregard for the world's wildlife. That means halting illegal wildlife trade and the supply chain and providing alternative livelihood support for those who depend on these activities.

COVID-19 will not be the last pandemic. If we fail to solve the systemic causes, new ones will surely emerge, more fatal, and even more damaging to our economy. We are part of nature where our health is connected to the health of wildlife, and the entire well-being of the environment. Let's remember that a healthy natural environment is our real first line of defense against the pandemic.



Philippine Eagle Foundation seeks donation in support to PHL Eagles and other wildlife

Published May 26, 2020, 1:46 PM

By Ivy Tejano

<https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/05/26/philippine-eagle-foundation-seeks-donation-in-support-to-phl-eagles-and-other-wildlife/>

DAVAO CITY – The Philippine Eagle Foundation (PEF) is knocking to everyone’s heart for donations, to sustain the needs of the eagles and other wildlife at Philippine Eagle Center (PEC) in Barangay Malagos in Calinan District of this city.

As the battle against coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) continues, the government has no choice but to take the necessary measures, including the prohibition of gatherings and travel for leisure, to ensure good health and safety of everyone.

The announcement due to COVID-19 led to many businesses to close. And this also affects the income of the zoos and conservation centers around the world like PEC, which rely on visitors’ admission fees for their maintenance.

PEF confirmed the indefinite closure of the center in a statement. It said that with the temporary closure of the PEC, comes losing the foundation’s largest source of revenue – admission to the center.

“As a non-profit organization, PEF primarily relies on this and donations to fund its day-to-day operations. With the center closed indefinitely, the foundation faces depleting resources for the food and care of over 100 animals,” the PEF said.

The PEF added that as a home to Philippine Eagles and other wildlife, the foundation needs to provide not only nourishment for these animals but also safety from threat to their health and well-being.

“Through your donations to this campaign, you can help the PEF and PEC provide the animals not only with proper care, but with the necessary measures to ensure also their safety during this difficult time,” the PEF added.

The foundation said that any amount one can spare will benefit the important work of looking after the eagles and other wildlife at the center, as they can purchase personal protective equipment (PPEs) for their animal keepers and provide daily subsistence for the animals.

It added that their animal keepers are the frontliners in conservation. They carry on with their daily tasks of taking care the national bird, which everyone knows that is already endangered nowadays, and other animals at the PEC.

The PEC is the only breeding and rehabilitation facility for eagles. It is the home to 36 Philippine eagles and 81 endangered raptors, mammals, and reptiles. But the center had to temporarily close until further notice due to COVID-19 and avian flu.

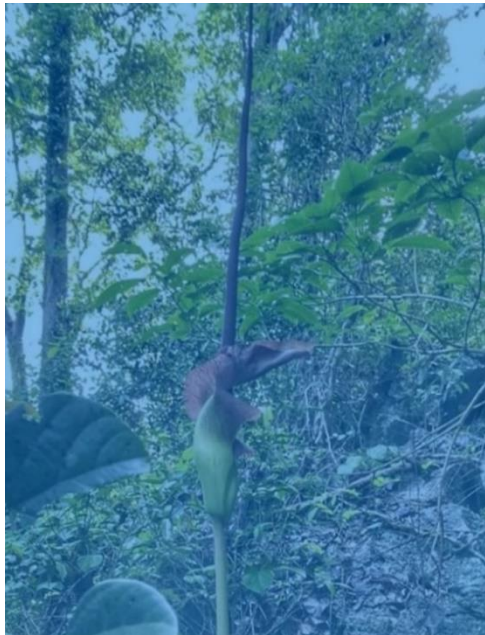


Iba't ibang uri ng 'world's tallest flower', nakitang namumulaklak sa Antique

Cherry Palma, ABS-CBN News

Posted at May 26 2020 07:58 PM

https://news.abs-cbn.com/life/05/26/20/ibat-ibang-uri-ng-worlds-tallest-flower-nakitang-namumulaklak-sa-antique?fbclid=IwAR1_RC7CHPnGnC4WTTCF7icoQMFTVuYUNcVpDDroVG2QoT5CNG3b27D3sfg



Sa mga larawang kuha ng residenteng si Kim Francisco sa kanilang pribadong lote sa Barangay Sumaray, San Remegio, Antique makikita ang namumulaklak na variety ng amorphophallus flower.

Nakitang namumulaklak ang isang uri ng amorphophallus flower sa San Remegio, Antique. *Larawan kuha ni Kim Francisco.*

Ayon kay Mayor Mar Mission Jr. ng San Remegio, Antique, ipinakita nila sa isang botanist ang mga bulaklak at nakumpirmang isang uri nga ang nga ito ng amorphophallus flower o ang tinaguriang "world's "tallest flower."

Umabot sa 7 talampakan at 9 pulgada ang diyametro ng pinakamatangkad na amorphophallus flower na nakita sa lugar.

Ayon kay Mission, ang topograpiya ng bayan ang tinitingnang dahilan kung bakit tumutubo ang naturang bulaklak.

"Ang San Remegio is a mountainous area, 70% of this during rainy season mahirap daanan. Wala kaming factory dito. Wala kami employment. Wala kaming restaurant. Wala kaming hotel," aniya.

Dagdag pa ng alkalde, matagal nang nakikitang tumutubo ang iba't ibang klase ng amorphophallus flower sa kanilang lugar pero hindi gaanong nabigyan ng atensyon.

"Definitely buong bayan ang makikinabang nito. Kayo mismo kung saan may mga rare species diyan at ma-serve natin and ma-convert natin into tourist spot diyan. Definitely kayong mga residente ang maka-benefit niyan kasi it can create employment and business," dagdag pa ni Mission.

Aabot ng kalahating oras ang biyahe patungong Barangay Sumaray mula sa bayan ng San Remegio.

Hangad ng alkalde na mapaayos ang daan patungo sa mga namumulaklak na amorphophallus para makatulong sa pagpapaunlad ng turismo sa bayan.



ALOKASYON NG TUBIG, DINAGDAGAN NG NWRB NGAYONG MAYO

May 26, 2020 @ 10:02 AM

<https://remate.ph/alokasyon-ng-tubig-dinagdagan-ng-nwrp-ngayong-mayo/>

Magandang balita sa mga nasa Metropolitan Manila at mga kalapit na lalawigan ng Bulacan, Rizal at Cavite na pinaglilingkuran ng dalawang water concessionaires na Manila Water Company at Maynilad Water Services.

Simula nitong May 14, 2020 ay itinaas ng National Water Resources Board (NWRB) ang alokasyon ng tubig sa 48 cubic meters per second (CMS) mula sa dating 46 cms na mula sa Angat Dam.

Ibig sabihin nito, tuloy-tuloy ang pagdaloy ng tubig sa mga kabahayan at ospital na nangangailangan ng malinis na tubig maliban na lamang kung may ginagawang pagsasaayos sa mga tubo na isinasabay ng water companies.

Paliwanag ng NWRB, pinayagan nila ang karagdagang alokasyon dahil sa mas mainit na panahong nararanasan ngayong buwan ng Mayo na pumapalo mula 40C hanggang 45C ang heat index na posibleng magdulot ng heat stroke.

Pero paalaala ng NWRB, bagama't operational level ang tubig sa Angat Dam na nasa 190.77 meters above sea level (MSL) habang isinusulat natin ito, kinakailangan pa rin ang pagtitipid at wastong paggamit sa tubig.

Mismong ang Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) na ang nagsabi na ang madalas na thunderstorm na may kabuntot na malakas na pag-ulan na nararanasan ngayon ay hudyat na malapit nang pumasok ang panahon ng tag-ulan sa ating bansa.

Kaya naman, payo ng NWRB, dapat na ugaliin na ang rainwater harvesting, recycling and re-using.

Malaking katipiran ito sa bayarin sa tubig lalo na at marami ang nabawasan ang kita dulot ng ipinatutupad na community quarantine sa halos buong bansa.



Baguio's water quality 'improves' under ECQ

By Gaby B. Keith
May 27, 2020

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/05/27/news/regions/baguios-water-quality-improves-under-ecq/727391/>

BAGUIO CITY: It is not just the air but also the Summer Capital's water quality that benefited from the eight-week restrained human activity during enhanced community quarantine (ECQ).

The city is currently under general community quarantine.

Rhenan Diwas, officer in charge of the City Environment and Parks Management Office (Cepmo), said since the start of the ECQ, a marked improvement has been observed in the wastewater influent (raw) and effluent of the 34-year-old Baguio Sewage Treatment Plant (BSTP).

He added that the influent and effluent not only significantly decreased but also became compliant with the water quality standards of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Based on a water test result conducted by the Cepmo-Wastewater, Water and Air Monitoring Division, the wastewater influent in February 2020 reached almost the maximum level at 8,557.18 cubic meter (m³) per day but suddenly dropped at 4,369.97 m³/day in March 2020.

The wastewater quality also improved and now falls within the standards set under DENR Administrative Order 1990-35 ("Effluent Standards for Different Water Quality Parameter") and DAO 2016-08 ("Water Quality Guidelines and General Effluent Standards") whereas it gained failed laboratory results from January to February 2020.

Diwas attributed the improvement to a decreased population as most tourists, university students [boarders] and migrant workers left the city at the onset of the ECQ.

He noted that Baguio City was packed with tourists in February 2020 in anticipation of the 25th Panagbenga, which was canceled because of the threat from the novel coronavirus.

"Also, the closure of majority of the commercial activities (restaurants) and limited operation of public market and slaughter house were seen as contributory to the less turbid wastewater discharges," Diwas said.

He added that while population and economic activities are the major factors of environmental pollution, these too are recognized forces that boost the city's economy, thus he suggested measures to balance human activities and environmental sustainability.

The city, Diwas said, should pursue the rehabilitation and upgrading of the BSTP to expand its coverage to other barangay (villages); continue the rehabilitation of sewer lines; improve septage management system, which includes additional septage facilities; rehabilitate the public market to include its own sewerage facility; and transfer the slaughterhouse outside the CBD — central business district — and to include a sewage facility for animal waste and others.

"Most importantly, discipline among the populace. Change should begin within ourselves," he added.



World Metrology Day at NML, opens Water Flow System Facility

By [The Manila Times](#)

May 27, 2020

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/05/27/public-square/world-metrology-day-at-nml-opens-water-flow-system-facility/727374/>



The 120 L and 1 200 L Collection Tanks mounted on weighing scales

WITH water stress comes floods and drought, which exacerbates delivery and access to clean water supplies especially in citified areas like Metro Manila.

Thus, in celebration of World Met Day, the National Metrology Laboratory (NML) of the Industrial Technology Development Institute (DoST-ITDI) announces opening of its Water Flow Calibration Facility.

The P18 million infrastructure, acquired through a project on Strengthening Physical Metrology Capabilities of NML, aims to assist the country's water concessionaires in improving their forecasting, monitoring, and management of water supplies.

Use of the facility hopes to address the problem of too much water or too little water. Further, it realizes one of the country's commitments in Legal Metrology to establish a metrological infrastructure for testing of water meters in the country. With this, buyers of water are protected from sellers of water.

NML is thus enjoining concessionaires of water utilities and water metering regulatory agencies of our government to harmonize their verification test procedures with the international standards.

Using water as reference liquid, the Automatic Flowmeter Calibration System can calibrate flowmeters with sizes ranging from DN (nominal diameter) 25 to DN 100. It has two test lines that can accommodate at most two units under test depending on size and type of flowmeter.

The Flow Laboratory started operation early this year providing calibration services to the land development and subdivision industry, concessionaires of water utilities, including the manufacturing, petroleum, and construction sectors.

Fully trained technical staff on Liquid Flow Measurement and Calibration are now preparing for accreditation of the facility's flow calibration service under the terms of ISO/IEC 17025:2017.



Local govts refusing OFWs to be issued show cause orders — exec

By Darwin Pesco

May 26, 2020

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/05/26/news/latest-stories/local-govts-refusing-ofws-to-be-issued-show-cause-orders-exec/727298/>

LOCAL government units (LGUs) refusing returning overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) into their homes will receive show cause orders, an Interior official assured on Tuesday.

According to Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Undersecretary Epimaco Densing, all LGUs should welcome the OFWs as they have been cleared of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) based on the tests.

“We leave it to LGUs if they have extra protocols, but they cannot reject OFWs,” Densing said in a television interview.

Interior Secretary Eduardo Año said on Monday that all 24,000 OFWs who had been quarantined were tested negative for the Covid-19.

On the matter of the delay of the OFWs’ release from quarantine facilities, Densing said that coordination among the government agencies was ongoing.

Lt. Gen. Guillermo Eleazar, commander of the Joint Task Force (JTF) Covid Shield, said that all police officers were alerted to the influx OFWs back to their hometowns.



MGA OFW DAPAT TANGGAPIN, TATANGGING LGU MAKAKASUHAN

May 26, 2020 @ 10:08 AM

<https://remate.ph/mga-ofw-dapat-tanggapin-tatangging-lgu-makakasuhan/>



SIMULA sa mga araw na ito hanggang Disyembre 2020, tinataya ng ating mga awtoridad na aabot sa 300,000 overseas Filipino worker ang uuwi sa mahal kong Pinas.

Napakalaking bilang ito, mga Bro, na dapat nating asikasuhin.

Bagsak kasi ang ekonomiya ng buong mundo dahil sa coronavirus disease-19 at marami nang employer ang bagsak din.

Kaya sinisibak na ang mga OFW sa kanilang mga trabaho dahil sa kawalan ng maipampasahod sa mga ito.

Bukod sa kawalan na ng trabaho at sahod, kapag kinapitan ang mga ito ng COVID-19, nakararanas na ng diskriminasyon ang mga ito.

'Yun bang === tanging mga sariling mamamayan ng isang bansa ang binibigyan ng tamang pag-aasikaso sa mga ospital samantalang pinababayaan ang mga OFW na maaaring mamatay o mabalda sa COVID-19.

Sinisipa rin sila ng mga pamahalaan ng ibang bansa palabas para makabawas sila ng kanilang mga alalahanin dahil nga bagsak ang kanilang ekonomiya at ang mga sariling mamamayan na lang ang kanilang pinagtutuunan ng pansin.

TRABAHO PARA SA NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

Dahil sa pagdagsa ng mga jobless na OFW, parami na nang parami ang tumatakbo sa mga bakuran ng ating mga embahada, konsulado at iba pang opisina ng ating pamahalaan para magpasaklolo sa pag-uwi nila sa Pinas.

Lalo na ang mga walang naipon, sinipa sa trabaho, nagkakasakit, undocumented o ilegal na OFW at iba pa.

Maswerte nang kaunti ang mga nagiging residente sa pinuntahan nilang bansa sa bisa ng pag-aasawa at iba pang paraan, ang mga may kakayanang mamasaha, ang mga kayang padalhan ng pamilya ng pamasaha pauwi, pinauwi at binalikat ng kanilang mga employer ang mga pamasaha nila at iba pa.

Pero maaaring higit na marami ang aasa o umaasa na ng pagkuha sa kanila ng pamahalaan sa pamamagitan ng eroplano at barko.



MGA OFW DAPAT TANGGAPIN, TATANGGING LGU MAKAKASUHAN

Matapos nito, ilalagay sila sa mga quarantine at isasailalim sa mga pagsusuri kaugnay ng COVID-19.

TRABAHONG LGU

Sa ilalim ng balik-probinsya program at talaga namang pag-uwi ng mga OFW sa kani-kanilang mga bayan at barangay, maaaring iku-quarantine pa rin sila ng mga Local Government Unit, gaya ng ginagawa sa mga galing sa ibang lugar tulad ng Metro Manila na sentro ng COVID-19.

Kaya naman, magkakatuwang ang mga pamahalaang barangay at bayan o lungsod sa pagtatayo ng mga quarantine area.

Ang mga pag-test sa kanila para malaman kung negatibo o positibo sila ay trabaho na ng mga ospital na may kakayahang magsagawa nito.

Kasama sa mga trabaho ng mga lokal na pamahalaan ang pagtiyak na maayos at magandang tanggap ang mga OFW ng kanilang mga pamilya at pamayanan.

Ang totoo, pinangingilagan ng mga pamilya at kanilang mga kaanak, kapitbahay at kabarangay ang mga balik-probinsya na tao o OFW sa suspetsang galing sila sa ibang lugar na may COVID-19.

Kaya hindi rin magiging masaya ang pagdating at pag-uwi ng mga ito at masusuwerte ang mga may makauunawa nang madali at tatanggap agad sa mga ito.

Mas madali rin silang makahanap ng trabaho, gaya ng inihahanda ng pamahalaan sa kanila na trabaho pagbalik nila, partikular ang mga proyektong pambayan o imprastraktura at iba pa.

24,000 OFW COVID-FREE NA

Ang magandang balita, mga Bro, maaaring hindi na iku-quarantine ang 24,000 OFW sa Metro Manila at makadidiretso na ang mga ito sa kanilang mga tahanan.

Sinabi mismo ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na inutusan na niya ang lahat ng sangay ng pamahalaan na magtulong-tulong sa pagpapauwi sa kani-kanilang mga lalawigan, lungsod, bayan at barangay ang mga magbabalik-probinsya, lalo na ang mga OFW.

Partikular sa mga OFW, hindi na dapat alalahanin ng mga Local Government Unit ang pagiging banta ng mga OFW sa kani-kanilang lugar dahil dumaan na ang mga ito sa COVID-19 test at deklaradong COVID-free na ang mga ito.

Idiniin kagabi ni Pang. Duterte na walang lokal na pamahalaan na haharang sa mga OFW na umuwi sa kani-kanilang tahanan dahil tadhana ito ng Saligang Batas.



MGA OFW DAPAT TANGGAPIN, TATANGGING LGU MAKAKASUHAN

Kung may problema man, dapat humingi ng pahintulot ang mga LGU mula sa Inter-Agency Task Force para sa lockdown o anomang makahaharang sa pagbabalik-tahanan ng mga OFW.

Tanging ang pambansang pamahalaan lamang ang pupwedeng mag-utos ng anomang harang sa mga OFW at wala nito ang mga lokal na pamahalaan.

MAGANDANG BALITA

Kahit papaano, may magagandang balita mula mismo sa mga lokal na pamahalaan.

Maraming LGU ang nagpapatayo ng mga quarantine area na bago o kaya'y kumukuha ng mga nakatayo nang bahay, hotel, motel at iba pang lugar para gawing quarantine area.

Paghahanda lang ang lahat ng ito bilang tugon sa mga programang Balik-Probinsya at pag-uwi na rin ng mga OFW at may duda sa kalagayang pangkalusugan ng mga dumarating.

Tiyak na ilalapat na rin ang mga quarantine area na suspetsado ng nasabing sakit o nawalan kayang papeles na nagsasabing COVID-free sila.

Matatandaang kautusan ng pambansang pamahalaan na magtayo ang mga lokal na pamahalaan ng mga quarantine area para makatulong ang mga ito na kumontrol sa paglaganap ng sakit.

Kaya naman, salamat sa mga tumutugon at nakatugon na.

Sana, kung gaano tayo kaluwag at kasaya sa pagtanggap ng mga OFW na malulusog at kumikita at nakapagpapadala ng \$30 bilyon sa Pinas taon-taon, ganoon din tayo ngayon sa kanila sa gitna ng mga pagdududa na carrier sila ng sakit, jobless at purdoy.



Duterte orders LGUs to accept returning OFWs

May 26, 2020

BY GENALYN KABILING

http://tempo.com.ph/2020/05/26/duterte-orders-lgus-to-accept-returning-ofws/?fbclid=IwAR27PwDnz6xk0Uv1j26FbYUN5GTUuL88_W_DytPlfp4tuh4LQblr4e8jNOA

PRESIDENT Duterte has directed local government officials to “open the gates of your territories” to returning overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), saying it would be “cruel” and unlawful to stifle the right of people to travel and go home.

In his latest public address Monday night, the President told local officials to accept the repatriates who have been declared “safe” from the coronavirus infection, saying only the national government can impose travel restrictions in the country.

Duterte issued the remarks after learning that some local officials were blocking the return of Filipino repatriates despite completing their testing and quarantine requirements.

“Only the national government can impose restrictions on travel because it is the only agency that can declare that there’s an emergency of national interest and that power of declaration is not shared by anybody, it’s the national government,” he said.

“I’m ordering you to accept them, open the gates of your territories and allow the people, allow the Filipino to travel wherever they want,” he said.

He said local officials are not allowed to “unilaterally” declare the closure of their borders. He cautioned that they might be sued if they block the return of returning residents to their hometowns. “Mahirap ‘yan. Magkagulo tayo,” he said.

If LGUs want to impose certain border controls, Duterte said they should get permission from the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases.

“It is a right of constitutional right of people to travel and go home. Do not impede it, do not obstruct the movement of people because you run the risk of getting sued criminally.

Duterte also asked mayors and governors to treat the repatriates as fellow Filipinos. He maintained that repatriates, who underwent testing and quarantine, have been cleared of any infection.

President Duterte earlier ordered health and labor authorities to facilitate the return of the 24,000 OFWs stuck in Metro Manila quarantine centers within a week. The results of the testing should be immediately released so those who test negative can finally go to their places of residence.



Mayors: NCR on GCQ by June 1

posted May 26, 2020 at 08:25 pm by Manila Standard

<https://www.manilastandard.net/news/top-stories/324600/mayors-ncr-on-gcq-by-june-1.html>

The mayors of Metro Manila have recommended placing the National Capital Region under general community quarantine starting June 1, an official from the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) said Tuesday.

The Metro Manila Council, composed of the mayors of the metropolitan's 16 cities and one municipality, will submit the recommendation to the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Disease (IATF), according to MMDA General Manager Jojo Garcia.

This is before the government's coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) task force may decide on Wednesday whether to further ease restrictions in Metro Manila and other areas under modified enhanced community quarantine, Malacañang said Tuesday.

The IATF will meet today to discuss the fate of community quarantines after May 31. Its decision is subject to the final approval of President Rodrigo Duterte.

"We will wait for the IATF's decision because we expect them to decide tomorrow. The important thing is to look at the disease's doubling rate, our critical care capacity, and of course attention to our economy," presidential spokesperson Harry Roque Jr. said at a televised briefing.

At present, only the cities of Cebu and Mandaue are under the enhanced community quarantine.

Metro Manila, Laguna, Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Angeles City, and Zambales will be under modified ECQ until May 31 unless earlier lifted or extended by the government, while the rest of the country is under the less strict general community quarantine.

Majority of the country's more than 14,000 COVID-19 cases were recorded in Metro Manila.

Meanwhile, President Rodrigo Duterte has tapped one of his presidential advisers, Ramon "RJ" Jacinto, as the new undersecretary of the Department of Information and Communications Technology, Malacañang announced on Tuesday.

In a press statement, Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said Jacinto's appointment paper was signed on May 22.



Mayors: NCR on GCQ by June 1

Roque said Jacinto's new designation was "co-terminus with the appointing authority".

Jacinto's appointment came after Duterte recently accepted the resignation of DICT Undersecretary Eliseo Rio Jr. who resigned on January 31 this year.

Roque said the Palace was confident that Jacinto would be able to fulfill his job as the new DOST official.

"We are confident that Usec. Jacinto will serve DICT with dedication and integrity and will contribute to achieving the Department's mandate under the current administration," he said.

Before his new stint, Jacinto served as the Presidential Adviser on Economic Affairs and Information Communications Technology, with the rank of undersecretary.

Jacinto, a musician, and businessman campaigned for Duterte in the 2016 presidential elections. He also composed a campaign jingle for Duterte.

Jacinto graduated with honors from the Ateneo de Manila with a degree in Economics. He continued his studies by taking up law at the University of Santo Tomas in Manila. With PNA



Balik Probinsiya has 60,000 enrollees so far, says NHA chief

ByCai Ordinario

May 26, 2020

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/05/26/balik-probinsiya-has-60000-enrolees-so-far-says-nha-chief/>



A tobacco farmer in Ilocos Sur is seen in this BusinessMirror file photo collecting crabgrass

THOUSANDS of Metro Manila residents are keen on abandoning their city dreams by enrolling in the government's Balik Probinsiya program, according to the National Housing Authority (NHA).

NHA General Manager Marcelino P. Escalada, Jr., the concurrent Balik Probinsiya, Bagong Pag-Asa (BP2) Council executive director, said after just 10 days, the BP2 has over 60,000 enrollees composed of both individuals and families.

If they qualify, Escalada said they will receive an "average and immediate (assistance for) individuals (worth) P25,000 (and) families (worth) P150,000." These endowments also include non-cash benefits that will allow them to make a new start in their home provinces.

"This is an option, this is an opportunity waiting for (residents of Metro Manila) to go back to the province for good," Escalada said.

"(To those who are interested), the opportunity has come and we will make this a window of opportunity (for them)," he added.

At the end of the NHA briefing on Tuesday, the application counter of the Balik Probinsya dashboard showed there were 60,254 online and on-site applications.

This was composed of 32,951 applications of those travelling alone and 27,303 applications of those travelling with family.

At this rate and given the minimum estimates made by the NHA, BusinessMirror estimates that the government can spend around P823.775 million for individuals and P4.095 billion for families.



Balik Probinsiya has 60,000 enrolees so far, says NHA chief

These estimates could still increase given the expected number of applications in the coming days. Previously, Escalada said the government expects the number of applicants to reach a million over a period of six months.

On Tuesday alone, at the start of the 2-hour NHA briefing, the number of online and on-site applications was at 59,756. This jumped by 498 online applications by the end of the briefing.

Included in the cash benefits is around P3,000 to P35,000 in transportation assistance; livelihood assistance of P5,000 to as much as P50,000; transitory family support of around P17,000; and rental subsidy good for six to 12 months for those who said they did not have a home to go back to.

Housing units

Escalada said in a period of six to 12 months, it is hoped that families could find permanent housing for themselves or their families.

The NHA committed to build mass houses in provinces where many of the enrolees would be located, but could not yet determine the number of houses they need to build and how much funding this will require.

This, Escalada said, will be determined in 2021 and 2022. He stressed that since housing is a “basic service,” the national government has to finance it and no loan will be secured to build these permanent residential units.

However, once these units are built, Escalada said they will not be free. “As a general rule, walang libreng pabahay (no free housing).”

He said if families will avail themselves of these housing units, they need to pay P500 per month once they start occupying them.

Currently, Escalada said housing units built by NHA have a standard floor area of 28 square meters and a lot area of 40 square meters. Each unit costs around P450,000 to P530,000.

The 6- to 12-month period given to families, Escalada said, would also allow the NHA to either build homes for these enrolees or help these individuals and/or families make their own arrangements via the Key Shelter Agencies (KSA) such as the Pag-Ibig Fund.

The NHA GM said that while some may find the size of housing units small or would not be comfortable for them, he said “comfort” is a relative term.



Balik Probinsiya has 60,000 enrollees so far, says NHA chief

The sizes of the units, Escalada said, are standard for the NHA and will allow the government to charge a relatively small sum for these units, particularly for Informal Settler Families.

He said if individuals and/or families have more means or are employed, they can always turn to Pag-Ibig or private institutions.

Profile of enrollees

Based on the data obtained by NHA, the top provinces where applicants want to go back to are Leyte, Samar, Negros Occidental, Northern Samar, Eastern Samar, Southern Leyte, Camarines Sur, Zamboanga del Norte, Bohol, and Pangasinan.

Escalada said many of the applicants were those affected by Typhoon Yolanda, particularly those included in the Yolanda Corridor. For those in Mindanao, many of the applicants come from conflict areas such as Lanao where the Marawi Siege occurred.

“Most of the enrollees right now in the Balik probinsiya, Bagong pag-asa, are also victims of calamities, either man-made or natural calamities,” Escalada said.

Majority of applicants are between the ages of 26 and 35 years old, followed by those aged between 18 and 25 years old. More than half or 54.4 percent of enrollees are males.

The top technical skills they want to pursue in their provinces are Agri-businesses, agriculture, food/bars, Other Skills, and construction. Majority of them are high school graduates and college graduates.



‘Balik-Probinsya’? Look for long-term solutions, not stop-gap measures

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 04:01 AM May 27, 2020

<https://opinion.inquirer.net/130186/balik-probinsya-look-for-long-term-solutions-not-stop-gap-measures>

There have been talks on how to decongest densely populated cities in the aftermath of the COVID-19 lockdown, with legislators quick to make proposals seemingly from a magician’s hat.

First, Sen. Bong Go resurrected the “Balik Probinsya” program. Other senators soon chimed in and put their stamp of approval. It was met with so much aplomb that Executive Order No. 114 (Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-Asa) was created faster than anyone could say “COVID-19.” Then Surigao del Norte Rep. Robert “Ace” Barbers proposed a bill limiting the maximum number of residents per barangay to 15,000.

Not bad, guys. Gold star for your quick reactions. For coming up with carefully deliberated policies that won’t have massive ramifications—well, the jury’s still out.

While those proposals might have sounded good, genius even, during a late-night brainstorming session, they just don’t hold up in the light of day. Those initiatives might help decongest Metro Manila and complement the ongoing physical distancing measures in the short term. But like other policies that have been put forth recently, these two are knee-jerk, stop-gap measures that will surely bite the country’s proverbial ass sooner rather than later.

Sure, EO 114 looks good on paper. If the rural diaspora bites and heads back to the country, the population density of Metro Manila and outlying areas will be reduced. By proxy, physical distancing will also be easier to enforce. Less people, more space between them. Heck, it might even solve the perpetual traffic problem in those areas. But what will happen when migrant workers return to their hometowns? Are there jobs waiting for them? Is there enough space there, or has the province become overcrowded as well? What will happen to provinces that have managed to preserve their pristine environment when people start flocking in droves to reside there? It seems like the proponents of a return to the provinces forgot to ask these questions. Because, while tackling high population density is a terrific thing, the key is to simultaneously decongest such areas without congesting others.

Limiting the maximum carrying capacity of a barangay also sounds like a good idea. If that were the case now, maybe the people who needed the social amelioration package would have already received it. But what will happen to barangays that have more than 15,000 people? Will the surplus populace be forced out and relocated to other



‘Balik-Probinsya’? Look for long-term solutions, not stop-gap measures

barangays with fewer people? What will happen to their homes? If they won't be relocated, what will be done so the barangay doesn't pass the threshold? Will new barangays be created? Is there space for new ones, or are borders just going to be redrawn without considering land area?

If there's anything we can all learn from this pandemic, it's that we need to be creative and quick in finding solutions, solutions that were needed yesterday. But there's also a need for cautious discernment, so that whatever policies come out of the mouths of legislators and policymakers at least seem like they've been vetted instead of just plucked out of thin air.

Now is also the time for them to think long-term; see the big picture, rather than have a myopic view. Politicians should be in it for the long haul.

And speaking of long haul, here's something to consider: population control. Let the term linger for a bit. Yes, it looms large and it's contentious, but if there's anything that just might help the Philippines solve its numerous problems, that just might be it. Let the conversation begin.



Mangyan tribesmen, tamaraw, threatened by hunger and disease

By Gregg Yan

May 27, 2020

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/05/27/public-square/mangyan-tribesmen-tamaraw-threatened-by-hunger-and-disease/727371/>

THE old chief exhaled and the hut was enveloped in blue smoke. “I remember,” whispered Fausto Novelozo, chief of the Taw’buid tribe. “That a sickness drove us from the mountains. Measles we got from siganon or lowland visitors. Half our village of 200 died.”

Fufu Ama or tribal elder Ben Mitra with a gadun or short bow, used for hunting small prey like birds and lizards.



We’re in the village of Tamisan Dos, one of two newly-established Mangyan communities at the foothills of the Iglit-Baco Natural Park in the province of Mindoro Occidental. Measles drove Fausto’s people closer to town, where they can have better access to western medicine.

For the reclusive Taw’buid, death and disease are part of life, hindering them from protecting an animal they revere — the critically-endangered tamaraw (*Bubalus mindorensis*), only 600 of which remain today.

Malaria, tuberculosis, measles and other diseases have always taken a steady toll on Mindoro’s Mangyan population, estimated at 200,000. About 60 PERCENT of Mangyan children are malnourished and almost all go hungry during the rainy season which lasts from June to October.

With torrential rains turning Mindoro’s streams into raging rivers, many cannot visit their upland ricefields and must hunt or gather whatever food they can.

Taw’buid means ‘people from above’ and is among two names the tribe calls itself — the other being Batangan or ‘felled forest.’

Contact with the Taw’buid has been established through missionary groups and the Tamaraw Conservation Programme (TCP), which employs tribesmen as trackers and rangers.



Mangyan tribesmen, tamaraw, threatened by hunger and disease

For the Taw'buid, serving as a ranger is an honor and a stepping-stone to become a fufu-ama or tribal elder — making them natural allies to conserve the world's most endangered buffalo. Fufu-amas Henry Timuyog, Fuldo Gonzales, Oskar Bongray and Pedro Salonga are some of the many Taw'buid who have served as TCP rangers.

The nationwide lockdown spurred by Covid-19 is also taking a toll on communities and institutions dependent on ecotourism revenues. UNDP is preparing crowdfunding campaigns in the Philippines and other nations to keep these communities afloat — especially as government funds are being redirected to fight the growing pandemic.

Back in the Iglit-Baco Park, a weathered man in a loincloth emerged from a field of upland corn. “Help us. We need medicine,” coughed Ben Mitra, a Taw'buid fufu-ama. Our column, already returning to the lowlands, stops to dig out whatever medicine we have left.

“Fadi-fadi,” he says in Taw'buid, accepting our goods. Thank you. As we trek back down, I pray they'll be spared from disease and the fate of chief Fausto's now-abandoned forest village. Like many of the country's protected areas, the Iglit-Baco Natural Park exists in a fragile balance. One outbreak is all it takes — but we can all pitch in to prevent it. Contact biofin.ph@undp.org to know more.



Bill creating virology institute filed

on May 26, 2020 08:27 PM

By Keith A. Calayag

<https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/05/26/bill-creating-virology-institute-filed/>

VIROLOGY is the study of viruses and their effect on people.

A bill establishing the Philippine Virology Science and Technology Institute (VIP) has been filed at the House of Representatives days after Department of Science and Technology Secretary Fortunato dela Peña requested for a legislation creating an institute that will focus on studying the field of virology.

Under House Bill 6793 or the “Virology Institute of the Philippines Act of 2020,” the institute shall conduct research and development activities on the viruses and viral diseases in humans, plants, and animals.

“It (VIP) shall act as a venue for scientists, both here and abroad, to work collaboratively to study viruses of agricultural, industrial, clinical and environmental importance.”

The bill, which was authored by Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, states that the institute shall establish strategic partnerships with the world’s leading scientists, virology centers and institutes and conduct pioneering researches that will advance the frontiers of virology in the country.

According to the bill’s explanatory note, HB 6793 would be a complimentary measure to House Bill 6096 which seeks creation of Center for Disease Control and Prevention — an agency which will tackle the public health aspects of combatting infectious diseases.

The sum of P2 billion is appropriated as initial operating fund of the institute.

Meanwhile, Zambales Rep. Cheryl Deloso-Montalla also filed a bill with the same intent.



PH halts clinical trial of hydroxychloroquine in new COVID-19 patients upon WHO's advice

By CNN Philippines Staff

Published May 26, 2020 12:22:44 PM

<https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/5/26/DOH-stops-hydroxychloroquine-trial-coronavirus-patients-.html>

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, May 26) — COVID-19 patients in the country who are participating in the World Health Organization's 'solidarity' trial, a global effort to find a cure for the deadly viral illness, will stop taking the anti-malarial drug hydroxychloroquine after safety concerns have been raised, the Department of Health announced on Tuesday.

"This morning, nagpalabas na po ng sulat ang ating proponent at pinadala sa ating opisina na sinasabi nga po nila (Our proponent has sent a letter to our office, saying) that we are pulling out and we are stopping from giving this hydrochloroquine to our patients because of WHO's advise," Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire told reporters in a media forum.

The solidarity trial is a global effort to find a cure for the deadly viral illness by testing remdesivir; lopinavir/ritonavir; lopinavir/ritonavir with interferon beta-1a; and hydroxychloroquine on patients.

"Now with regard to the results, o anumang resulta nito sa ating mga pasyente hanggang ngayon na naospital, hindi pa ho natin pwedeng ilabas yan dahil (Whatever its results are on our patients will remain confidential, as) we are on the clinical trial phase," Vergeire added.

She later clarified in a briefing that the use of the drug will be postponed only on patients who have not yet started the treatment while those who have already received the drug will continue taking it until their treatment is complete.

"[Para] sa mga pasyenteng sumasailalim na sa treatment na ito, magpapatuloy sila hanggang matapos nila ang kanilang treatment," she said.

[Translation: For the patients who are already undergoing this treatment, they will continue until the treatment runs its course.]

This was also the advice of the WHO, she told CNN Philippines in a text message.

At least 150 Filipino patients are taking part in the clinical trial, Dr. Marissa Alejandria, the Philippine representative for the international clinical trial, told CNN Philippines last week.

WHO announced on Monday that it is suspending its clinical trial on hydroxychloroquine, while its board is doing a review on safety data.

WHO Director General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said the decision was based on the large study published on Friday in the medical journal The Lancet, which disclosed that seriously ill COVID-19 patients who were treated with hydroxychloroquine or chloroquine were more likely to die.

United States President Donald Trump has repeatedly touted the drug as a possible treatment for COVID-19 despite experts' warning against it. He has said he is taking it himself to prevent contracting the viral infection.

Meanwhile, clinical research continues on other drugs or combinations, namely remdesivir; lopinavir-ritonavir and lopinavir-ritonavir plus interferon beta, WHO said.



WHO stops hydroxychloroquine trials over safety concerns

on May 26, 2020 03:35 PM

By Agence France-Presse

<https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/05/26/who-stops-hydroxychloroquine-trials-over-safety-concerns/>

The World Health Organization suspended trials of the drug that Donald Trump has promoted as a coronavirus defense, fuelling concerns about the US president's handling of the pandemic that has killed nearly 100,000 Americans.

Trump has led the push for hydroxychloroquine as a potential shield or treatment for the virus, which has infected nearly 5.5 million people and killed 345,000 around the world, saying he took a course of the drug as a preventative measure.

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has also heavily promoted hydroxychloroquine while the virus has exploded across nation, which this week became the second most infected in the world after the United States.

But the World Health Organization said Monday it was halting testing of the drug for COVID-19 after studies questioned its safety, including one published Friday that found it actually increased the risk of death.

The WHO "has implemented a temporary pause... while the safety data is reviewed", its chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said, referring to the hydroxychloroquine arm of a global trial of various possible treatments.

Trump announced last week he was taking the drug, explaining he had decided to take after receiving letters from a doctor and other people advocating it.

"I think it's good. I've heard a lot of good stories," Trump told reporters then, as he declared it safe.

Trump dismissed the opinions then of his own government's experts who had warned of the serious risks associated with hydroxychloroquine, with the Food and Drug Administration highlighting reported poisonings and heart problems.

Trump has been heavily criticized for his handling of the virus, after initially downplaying the threat and then repeatedly rejecting scientific analysis.

The United States has by far the world's highest coronavirus death toll, reaching 98,218 on Monday, with more than 1.6 million confirmed infections.

Despite the WHO suspension, Brazil's health ministry said Monday it would keep recommending hydroxychloroquine for COVID-19.

"We're remaining calm and there will be no change," health ministry official Mayra Pinheiro told a news conference.



WHO stops hydroxychloroquine trials over safety concerns

Bolsonaro is a staunch opponent of lockdown measures and like Trump has played down the threat of the virus, even as Latin America has emerged as the new global virus hotspot.

Brazil has reported nearly 375,000 cases, widely considered to be far fewer than the real number because of a lack of testing, and more than 23,000 deaths.

Chile also is in the grip of a virus surge, with a record of nearly 5,000 infections in 24 hours on Monday.

‘Thrilled to break the isolation’

While South America and parts of Africa and Asia are only just beginning to feel the full force of the pandemic, many European nations are easing lockdowns as their outbreaks are brought under control.

In hard-hit Spain, Madrid and Barcelona on Monday emerged from one of the world’s strictest lockdowns, with parks and cafe terraces open for the first time in more than two months.

Elsewhere, gyms and swimming pools reopened in Germany, Iceland, Italy, and Spain.

And slowing infection rates in Greece allowed restaurants to resume business a week ahead of schedule — but only for outdoor service.

“I’m thrilled to break the isolation of recent months and reconnect with friends,” said pensioner Giorgos Karavatsanis.

“The cafe in Greece has a social dimension, it’s where the heart of the district beats.”

Despite the encouraging numbers, experts have warned that the virus could hit back with a devastating second wave if governments and citizens are careless, especially in the absence of a vaccine.

The latest reminder of the threat came from Sweden, where the COVID-19 death toll crossed 4,000 — a much higher figure than its neighbors.

The Scandinavian nation has gained international attention — and criticism — for not enforcing stay-at-home measures like other European countries.

‘What will happen if I die’

The extended lockdowns, however, have started to bite globally, with businesses and citizens wearying of confinement and suffering immense economic pain.



WHO stops hydroxychloroquine trials over safety concerns

Unprecedented emergency stimulus measures have been introduced, as governments try to provide relief to their economies, with the airline and hospitality sectors hit particularly hard because of travel bans.

Lufthansa became the latest major global company to be rescued, as the German government agreed a 9 billion euros (\$9.8 billion) bailout for one of the world's biggest airlines.

But analysts have warned that the pandemic's economic toll will be even more painful for countries far poorer than Western nations.

In the Maldives, a dream destination for well-heeled honeymooners, tens of thousands of impoverished foreign laborers have been left stranded, jobless, and ostracised as the tiny nation shut all resorts to stop the virus.

"We need money to survive. We need our work," said Zakir Hossain, who managed to send about 80 percent of his \$180 a month wage to his wife and four children in Bangladesh before the outbreak.

"I heard that if a Bangladeshi worker dies here, they don't send his body back and he is buried here," he said. "I am worried what will happen if I die."



Human activity threatens billions of years of evolutionary history, researchers warn

By Amy Woodyatt, CNN

Published May 26, 2020 10:51:35 PM

https://cnnphilippines.com/world/2020/5/26/Human-activity-threatens-billions-of-years-of-evolutionary-history--researchers-warn.html?fbclid=IwAR0u6n98_soSb2BIQ1Xgp71kICzJWJpxDiDXLqtAvbmeHVEATFdYzFd-1ao

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(CNN) - Human activity could drive extinction and destroy billions of years of evolutionary history, which has produced remarkable creatures such as the punk-haired Mary River turtle, the yellow eyed Aye Aye lemur and the Chinese crocodile, researchers have warned.

In a study published in the Nature Communications journal on Tuesday, researchers explored how the areas home to the world's most threatened amphibians, mammals, birds and reptiles are being affected by our "human footprint," which could lead to the loss of "the most unique animals on the planet."

Scientists from Imperial College London and the Zoological Society of London found that regions that are home to the greatest amounts of unique evolutionary history -- such as the Caribbean, large swathes of Southeast Asia and the Western Ghats of India -- are being degraded due to "unprecedented" levels of human pressure, such as habitat loss, agricultural expansion and meat consumption.

As a result, "evolutionary distinct" species such as the Chinese crocodile lizard, the Shoebill, a large bird found in Africa's swamps and wetlands, or the long fingered, yellow eyed nocturnal Aye-Aye lemur -- could be lost to extinction.

Entire groups of closely related species, like pangolins and tapirs, could also be lost, taking with them billions of years of evolutionary heritage, experts warned.

Using the tree of life methodology -- a model which shows the relationships between organisms alive and extinct -- researchers studied vertebrates, mammals and reptiles which were classified as "critically endangered," "endangered" and "vulnerable."



Human activity threatens billions of years of evolutionary history, researchers warn

"We calculated how much evolutionary history we would lose. And that number came out cosmically large, even I didn't expect that myself," Rikki Gumbs, lead author of the study and PhD researcher at Imperial College London and ZSL, told CNN.

When adding together the cumulative years of evolutionary history that would be lost in the event of extinction, "around 50 billion years of evolutionary history is under threat," he added.

Gumbs told CNN that, as a result of human encroachment on natural habitats around the world because of farming, housing and meat consumption, there is a decline of some of the "most unique animals on the planet."

"We're starting to see the current impact of this on the world's biodiversity -- on the most unique animals on the planet, and also the most important areas where they still persist," he said.

"Intrinsically, losing any species is a real loss just because it exists and it has a right to exist and it has a value in itself," he told CNN.

"But the tree of life also is a real thing. You know, it seems quite abstract that we draw these branches between these species -- just like our relationships with our parents and our grandparents," he explained. "The genetic relationship, it does exist -- we can't see it, but it is represented across this diversity. So as we lose the species, we are losing a part of our entire evolutionary heritage across the planet, and also large parts of diversity," he said.

Research showed that among the biggest threats to threatened species was eating meat, Gumbs said.

"We know from all the data we have for threatened species, that the biggest threats are agriculture expansion and the global demand for meat. Pasture land, and the clearing of rainforests for production of soy, for me, are the largest drivers -- and the direct consumption of animals."

"It's not too late -- we can identify these areas and still, where these species are clinging on, we can hopefully influence conservation actions to protect these and restore these areas," he said.

The study also warned that more research is needed, especially into lizards and snakes, to fully understand the extinction risk posed.

For years, scientists have warned that we are in the midst of a mass extinction -- the first one in the planet's history caused by humans.

In January, a United Nations agency warned that we have just 10 years to save Earth's biodiversity and our remaining wildlife, or face severe consequences for human survival.

More than a million species already face extinction, and three quarters of the Earth's land has been significantly altered because of shrinking habitats, the exploitation of natural resources, climate change and pollution.



World needs 'green recovery,' health pros tell G20 leaders

Published May 26, 2020 6:19pm

By MARLOWE HOOD, Agence France-Presse

<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/scitech/science/739871/world-needs-green-recovery-health-pros-tell-g20-leaders/story/>

PARIS — Trillions of dollars, euros and yuan pouring into post-pandemic economies must build a "healthy and green recovery," 200 medical groups representing 40 million health professionals worldwide told G20 leaders Tuesday in an open letter.

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The twenty nations accounting for 90 percent of global GDP should prioritize investment in public health, clean air, clean water and a stable climate in order to boost resilience against future health crises, said the letter.

"We have witnessed first-hand how fragile communities can be when their health, food security and freedom to work are interrupted by a common threat," the letter said, describing the COVID-19 pandemic that has sickened more than five million and claimed nearly 350,000 lives since the start of the year.

"These effects could have been partially mitigated, or possibly even prevented, by adequate investments in pandemic preparedness, public health and environmental stewardship."

The next G20 summit is scheduled for November.

A June meeting of G7 leaders was scrapped due to the global health crisis, but US President Donald Trump said last week it could still take place at the White House and Camp David, a summer retreat outside Washington DC.

Backed by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Global Climate and Health Alliance, the letter highlighted the health-wrecking impact of air pollution, which causes some seven million premature deaths each year.

'New health threats'

"Before COVID-19, air pollution was already weakening our bodies," the World Medical Association, the International Council of Nurses, the World Organization of Family Doctors and two hundred other groups said.

"A truly healthy economy will not allow pollution to continue to cloud the air we breathe and the water we drink," the letter continued. "It will not allow unabated climate change and deforestation, potentially unleashing new health threats upon vulnerable populations."

Promoting the hashtag #HealthyRecovery, the appeal called for removing hundreds of billions of dollars in subsidies for oil, gas and coal, the main drivers of both global warming and air pollution.



World needs 'green recovery,' health pros tell G20 leaders

It also underscored the need to boost renewable energy, such as solar and wind power.

"Healthy lives depend on a healthy planet," said World Medical Association President Miguel Jorge. "We need a comprehensive approach, a healthy and green recovery, and we need it now."

Health workers—from cleaning crews to doctors, in hospitals and nursing homes—have been hit especially hard by the pandemic.

While there is no official tally, tens of thousands have been infected with the virus, and hundreds have died.

At the beginning of May, the International Council of Nurses reported that at least 90,000 nurses worldwide—possibly twice as many—had caught the virus.

Hundreds of health professionals have died, including many during the initial outbreak in Wuhan, China, the pandemic's epicenter. — **AFP**



Holcim reopens cement plants

posted May 26, 2020 at 07:40 pm

by [Jenniffer B. Austria](#)

<https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/324570>

Holcim Philippines Inc., one of the leading cement producers in the country, said it resumed the operations of its facilities in La Union, Bulacan, Manila, Batangas and Davao following the easing of quarantine restrictions.

Holcim said in a disclosure to the stock exchange it restarted manufacturing and logistics operations with stronger health and safety controls in all its sites nationwide after pausing cement production in compliance with government quarantine measures against COVID-19.

The cement firm's plant in Lugait, Misamis Oriental remained operational during the ECQ to support customers and construction activity in North Mindanao.

Holcim Philippines president and chief executive John Stull said the company completed health and safety controls against COVID-19 to protect its people and partners at its sites. "We are ready to continue supporting our partners nationwide as they build important structures and contribute to reinvigorating the economy," Stull said.



May 26, 2020 10:30PM

<https://www.facebook.com/27254475167/posts/10158391646410168/>



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TINGNAN: Matapos ang ilang araw na pagbuhos ng ulan, daan-daang white turmeric plants ang umusbong sa Masungi Geopark Project reforestation site. Ayon sa Masungi Georeserve, bukod sa pampalasa, ginagamit din bilang gamot ang naturang halaman. (Photo courtesy: Masungi Georeserve)

See Translation



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Australia bushfire smoke linked to hundreds of deaths

posted May 26, 2020 at 04:10 pm

by AFP

<https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/324546>

Smoke from Australia's deadly recent bushfires is linked to an estimated 445 deaths and more than 4,000 hospitalisations over several months, a government inquiry heard Tuesday.

More than 30 people died as a direct cause of the blazes and thousands of homes were destroyed in late 2019 and early 2020, leaving affected communities devastated.

The Royal Commission -- tasked with finding ways to improve how Australia deals with natural disasters -- heard from an environmental health specialist that the overall toll was estimated to be far higher when accounting for impacts from the bushfire smoke.

Fay Johnston, associate professor at the University of Tasmania's Menzies Institute for Medical Research, said its modelling found there were 445 deaths attributable to the fires as well as 3,340 hospital admissions and 1,373 emergency room visits.

"Our estimates for the last season were at Aus\$2 billion (\$1.3 billion) in health costs associated with premature loss of life and admissions to hospitals," she added.

Johnston said that was "about 10 times higher" than in preceding years, despite not including costs associated with ambulance callouts, lost productivity or some diseases where impacts would be difficult to model, such as diabetes.

"There's fluctuation year to year, of course, but that was a major departure from anything we had seen in the previous 20 years," she added.

Johnston said 80 percent of Australians -- or about 20 million people -- were affected by smoke from the vast blazes, which burned more than 10 million hectares of land.

Sydney was blanketed by grey toxic haze for weeks as mega-blazes ringed Australia's biggest city, while other major centres including the capital, Canberra, were also shrouded by hazardous smoke.

Bushfire-prone Australia has seen dozens of inquests into the causes of bushfires and steps that could be taken to mitigate them. But many measures recommended by inquiries going back to the 1930s have still not been implemented.

The current inquiry is required to report its findings by August 31 ahead of the next bushfire season.



Day's highest heat index recorded in 3 cities at 47°C

Published May 26, 2020 9:56pm

By JOAHNA LEI CASILAO, GMA News

<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/scitech/weather/739912/day-s-highest-heat-index-recorded-in-3-cities-at-47-deg-c/story/?fbclid=IwAR2Wb7mZOSRBZNMHjSEBtRuKvcdw5aXi4g0OIVveJ339RaKs7z87cBhG07E>

Butuan City, Dagupan City, and Roxas City on Tuesday reported the day's highest heat index or human-perceived temperature at 47°C, according to PAGASA.

This is followed by Sangley Point, Cavite City with 45°C and Calapan City, Dipolog City, and the Science City of Munoz which all reported a heat index of 44°C.

PAGASA STATIONS WITH THE HIGHEST COMPUTED HEAT INDEX		
TUESDAY, 26 MAY 2020		
BUTUAN CITY	47°C	11:00 AM
DAGUPAN CITY	47°C	2:00 PM
ROXAS CITY	47°C	2:00 PM
SANGLEY POINT, CAVITE CITY	45°C	2:00 PM
CALAPAN CITY	44°C	2:00 PM
DIPOLOG CITY	44°C	11:00 AM
SCIENCE CITY OF MUÑOZ	44°C	2:00 PM

PAGASA said that heat cramps and heat exhaustion is possible and may lead to heat stroke amid continued physical activity.

Meanwhile, the Science Garden, Quezon City reported a heat index of 41°C at 2 p.m.