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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service

DENR, humirit sa Kongreso na bigatan pa ang parusa sa R.A. 9147

July 19, 2020 - 07:02 PM



Humihirit si Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu sa Kongreso na bigatan pa ang parusa sa Republic Act (RA) 9147 o ang Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2001.

Ayon kay Cimatu, ito ay dahil sa nagiging paulit-ulit lamang ang paglabag ng mga sindikato.

“RA 9147 should be amended to include a mandatory minimum jail term of six years for those found guilty of the criminal acts defined under the law,” ani Cimatu. “This is to make sure that convicted offenders will be able to serve their sentence and will not be eligible for probation,” pahayag ni Roy.

Sinabi ito ni Cimatu matapos ang isang task force sa ilalim ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ay nakaaresto ng dalawang suspek sa ilegal na pagbebenta ng wildlife Tondo, Manila.

Sa pamamagitan ng entrapment operation, nasagip ng Philippine Operations Group on Ivory and Illegal Wildlife Trade (Task Force POGI), ang 42 threatened at endangered species na mga pagong na tinatayang nagkakahalaga ng Php550,000 mula kay Eumir Rommel Raganit at Bruce Kenneth Tan na ngayon ay nahaharap sa kasong paglabag sa RA 9147.

Kasama sa mga nasagip ay 11 black pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*), na itinuturing na critically endangered sa ilalim ng DENR Administrative Order No. 2019-09 o ang “Updated List of Threatened Philippine Fauna and their Categories.”

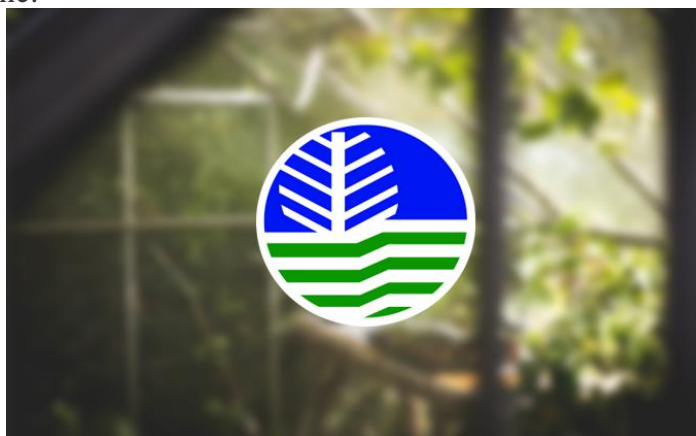
Nakalista rin ang black pond turtle sa ilalim ng Appendix I ng Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora o CITES. Ibig sabihin, ang bilang ng species na ito ay napakaliit na at maaaring nang maubos o maging extinct sa mundo kaya mahigpit na ipinagbabawal ang pagkalakal sa mga ito.

P37-million illegal wildlife seized

Published July 19, 2020, 2:53 PM

by Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is seeking the amendment of the country's wildlife law as culprits appear undeterred by the punishments provided for under it following the confiscation of an accumulated ₱37-million worth of illegal wildlife while the country was placed under community quarantine.



(MANILA BULLETIN FILE PHOTO)

Just last July 10, the Philippine Operations Group on Ivory and Illegal Wildlife Trade or Task Force POGI under the DENR arrested two suspected illegal wildlife traders during an entrapment operation conducted in Tondo, Manila.

It recovered 42 various species of threatened and endangered turtles with an estimated value of ₱550,000 from Eumir Rommel Raganit and Bruce Kenneth Tan, who are now facing charges for violation of the Republic Act (RA) 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2001.

Among those recovered from the suspects were 11 heads of black pond turtle (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*), which is classified as critically endangered species under the DENR Administrative Order No. 2019-09 or the Updated List of Threatened Philippine Fauna and their Categories.

The black pond turtle is also listed in Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora which means that the species is threatened with extinction and is not allowed for commercial trade.

According to Rogelio Demelletes, DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) senior ecosystems specialist and Task Force POGI head, illegal wildlife trade has been showing no signs of slowing down even during the pandemic.

The task force, composed of wildlife enforcers from various agencies, including the BMB and the Environmental Crime Division of the National Bureau of Investigation, has been able to confiscate ₱37 million worth of illegal wildlife and nabbed a total of seven individuals in five separate operations conducted since March, he said.

One of those arrested was repeat offender Sharon Jonjon Lim, who was caught selling illegally trafficked raptors in Sampaloc, Manila, on June 6.

In July last year, Lim was apprehended for illegal possession and trade of 13 rare animals, including three peregrine falcons worth ₱250,000 in the black market.

"We at the DENR Task Force POGI never let our guard down against illegal wildlife trade even as the country faces the worst public health crisis of this generation," Demelletes said.

Despite government efforts, he said that wildlife trade and trafficking continued to prevail because the penalties provided in RA 9147 seemed “too light” to deter wildlife crime.

“The penalties appear to be not enough to make wildlife offenders stop their criminal acts as the fines are too low compared to the millions they earn from trading wildlife species,” he said.

“First time violators are also easily granted probation once convicted. They can also bail when caught. This proves that there is really a need for higher penalties and longer jail time for illegal wildlife trading and possession,” he added.

Under RA 9147, the penalty depends not only on the act committed but also on the conservation status of the wildlife.

The highest penalties are imposed on those guilty of killing critically endangered wildlife—jail term of six years and one day to 12 years and/or payment of fine ranging from ₱100,000 to ₱1 million.

For hunting and trading, the penalty ranges from two to four years of imprisonment and/or fine of ₱30,000 to ₱300,000 for hunting and ₱5,000 to ₱300,000 for trading wildlife.

For the mere transport of wildlife, the penalty is six months to one-year imprisonment and/or ₱50,000 to ₱100,000 fine.

“RA 9147 should be amended to include a mandatory minimum jail term of six years for those found guilty of the criminal acts defined under the law,” Secretary Roy Cimatu said.

“This is to make sure that convicted offenders will be able to serve their sentence and will not be eligible for probation,” he added.

Iligal na bentahan ng wildlife, bigyan ng mabigat na

July 20, 2020

DATE

TITLE: parusa

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Iligal na bentahan ng wildlife, bigyan ng mabigat na parusa

July 19, 2020 @ 3:48 PM 15 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Upang masugpo ang iligal na pagbebenta ng wildlife dapat umanong ipataw ang mabigat na parusa ng batas dahil sa kasalukuyan parusa sa ilalim ng Republic Act (RA) 9147 o ang Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2010, nagiging paulit-ulit lamang ang paglabag ng mga sindikato ayon kay Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu.

“RA 9147 should be amended to include a mandatory minimum jail term of six years for those found guilty of the criminal acts defined under the law,” ani Cimatu. “This is to make sure that convicted offenders will be able to serve their sentence and will not be eligible for probation.”

Sinabi ito ni Cimatu matapos ang isang task force sa ilalim ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ay naaresto ang dalawang suspek sa iligal na pagbebenta ng wildlife noong Hulyo 10, 2020 sa Tondo, Manila.

Ayon sa DENR sa pamamagitan ng entrapment operation, nasagip ng Philippine Operations Group on Ivory and Illegal Wildlife Trade (Task Force POGI), ang 42 threatened at endangered species na mga pagong na tinatayang nagkakahalaga ng Php550,000 mula kay Eumir Rommel Raganit at Bruce Kenneth Tan na ngayon ay nahaharap sa kasong paglabag sa RA 9147.

Sinabi pa ng DENR na kasama sa mga nasagip ay 11 black pond turtles (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*), na itinuturing na critically endangered sa ilalim ng DENR Administrative Order No. 2019-09 o ang “Updated List of Threatened Philippine Fauna and their Categories.”

Nakalista rin ang black pond turtle sa ilalim ng Appendix I ng Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora o CITES. Ibig sabihin, ang bilang ng species na ito ay napakaliit na at maaaring nang maubos o maging extinct sa mundo kaya mahigpit na ipinagbabawal ang pagkalakal sa mga ito.

Ayon sa DENR ang Task Force POGI ay binubuo ng mga wildlife enforcer mula sa iba’t ibang ahensya, kasama na ang Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) ng DENR at ang Environmental Crime Division ng National Bureau of Investigation.

Iligal na bentahan ng wildlife, bigyan ng mabigat na

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Walang ipinapakitang pagbagal sa iligal na pagbebenta ng wildlife kahit sa gitna man ng pandemya, ayon kay Dr. Rogelio Demelletes, Senior Ecosystems Specialist ng BMB at pinuno ng Task Force POGI.

Nabatid pa na may Php37 milyong halaga na ng wildlife ang nabawi ng Task Force POGI sa pitong mga suspek na naaresto sa limang magkakahiwalay na operasyon simula Marso, kung kailan unang inilagay ang bansa sa ilalim ng community quarantine para mapigilan ang pagkalat ng COVID-19.

Isa sa mga naaresto ay si Sharon Jonjon Lim, na ilang ulit nang lumabag sa batas. Noong Hulyo ng nakaraang taon, nahuli na si Lim dahil sa pagbebenta at pagmamay-ari ng 13 uri ng wildlife, kasama na ang tatlong peregrine falcon na nagkakahalaga ng Php250,000 sa black market. Noong Hunyo 6 muling nahuli si Lim dahil sa pagbebenta ng mga raptors sa Sampaloc, Manila.

“We at the DENR Task Force POGI never let our guard down against illegal wildlife trade even as the country faces the worst public health crisis of this generation,” pagdiin ni Demelletes.

Ngunit sa kabila ng mga pagsusumikap ng pamahalaan, mahirap masugpo ang krimen na ito at patuloy pa rin ang iligal na pagbebenta ng wildlife dahil magaan nga lang ang mga parusa sa ilalim ng RA 9147.

“The penalties appear to be not enough to make wildlife offenders stop their criminal acts as the fines are too low compared to the millions they earn from trading wildlife species,” sabi ni Demelletes.

“First time violators are also easily granted probation once convicted. They can also bail when caught. This proves that there is really a need for higher penalties and longer jail time for illegal wildlife trading and possession,” dagdag pa niya.

Sa ilalim ng RA 9147, ang parusa ay depende hindi lamang sa ginawang kasalanan, kundi pati na rin sa conservation status ng wildlife na kinuha o binenta.

Ang pinakamalaking parusa ay para sa pagpatay ng critically endangered wildlife. Mayroon itong pagkakakulong mula anim na taon hanggang 12 taon at multa mula Php100,000 hanggang Php1 milyon.

Para sa hunting at pagbenta ng wildlife, ang parusa ay mula dalawa hanggang apat na taong pagkakakulong at/o kaya multa Php30,000 hanggang Php 300,000 para sa hunting at Php 5,000 hanggang Php 300,000 para sa iligal na pagbebenta.

Para sa pag-transporta ng wildlife, ang parusa ay anim na buwan hanggang isang taong pagkakakulong at/o kaya multa na mula Php50,000 hanggang Php100,000. **Santi Celario**

Source: <https://remate.ph/iligal-na-bentahan-ng-wildlife-bigyan-ng-magbigat-na-parusa/>



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Cimatu: Mabigat na parusa ng batas kailangan sa pagsugpo ng ilegal na bentahan ng wildlife

Mabigat na parusa ng batas ang kailangan upang masugpo ang ilegal na pagbebenta ng wildlife dahil sa kasalukuyang parusa sa ilalim ng Republic Act (RA) 9147 o ang Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2001, nagiging paulit-ulit lamang ang paglabag ng mga sindikato, ayon kay Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu.

"RA 9147 should be amended to include a mandatory minimum jail term of six years for those found guilty of the criminal acts defined under the law," ani Cimatu. "This is to make sure that convicted offenders will be able to serve their sentence and will not be eligible for probation."

Sinabi ito ni Cimatu matapos ang isang task force sa ilalim ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ay nakaaresto ng dalawang suspek sa ilegal na pagbebenta ng wildlife noong Hulyo 10 sa Tondo, Manila.

Sa pamamagitan ng entrapment operation, nasagip ng Philippine Operations Group on Ivory and Illegal Wildlife Trade (Task Force POGI), ang 42 threatened at endangered species na mga pagong na tinatayang nagkakahalaga ng Php550,000 mula kay Eumir Rommel Raganit at Bruce Kenneth Tan na ngayon ay nahaharap sa kasong paglabag sa RA 9147.

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Ang Task Force POGI ay binubuo ng mga wildlife enforcers mula sa iba't-ibang ahensya, kasama na ang Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) ng DENR at ang Environmental Crime Division ng National Bureau of Investigation.

Walang ipinapakitang pagbagal sa ilegal na pagbebenta ng wildlife kahit sa gitna man ng pandemya, ayon kay Dr. Rogelio Demelletes, Senior Ecosystems Specialist ng BMB at pinuno ng Task Force POGI.

May Php37 milyong halaga na ng wildlife ang nabawi ng Task Force POGI sa pitong mga suspek na naaresto sa limang magkakahiwalay na operasyon simula Marso, kung kailan unang inilagay ang bansa sa ilalim ng community quarantine para mapigilan ang pagkalat ng COVID-19.

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"We at the DENR Task Force POGI never let our guard down against illegal wildlife trade even as the country faces the worst public health crisis of this generation," pagdiin ni Demelletes.

Cimatu: Mabigat na parusa ng batas kailangan sa

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Ngunit sa kabila ng mga pagsusumikap ng pamahalaan, mahirap masugpo ang krimen na ito at patuloy pa rin ang ilegal na pagbebenta ng wildlife dahil magaan nga lang ang mga parusa sa ilalim ng RA 9147.

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Paglalagay ng real- time Air Quality Monitoring System sa Maynila, pinasalamatan ni 'Isko'

By Susan G. De Leon Published on July 19, 2020

LUNGSOD CALOOCAN, Hulyo 19 (PIA) --Malaking pasasalamat ang ipinaabot ni Manila Mayor Francisco 'Isko Moreno' Domagoso sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) makaraang maglagay ito ng real-time Air Quality Monitoring System (AQMS) sa Mehan Garden nitong nakaraang linggo.

Ayon sa punong lungsod, adhikain ng Pamahalaang Lungsod na palawakin ang mga 'green spaces' sa Maynila kaya't lubha niyang ikinagalak at ipinagpasalamat nang ialok ng DENR ang paglalagay ng AQMS sa lungsod.

"Walang kubit-balikat ang sabi ko, ilagay n'yo po sa Maynila. Para naman masukat natin ang effort ng city to make more open green spaces and cleaner air through this first-ever-in-the-country machine donated by DENR," pahayag ng alkalde.

Layunin ng DENR na suriin ang datos mula sa real-time AQMS upang tulungang maitaas ang kalidad ng hangin sa Kamaynilaan.

Ayon kay DENR-EMB NCR Regional Director Atty. Domingo M. Clemente, Jr., isa ang air pollution sa mga nangungunang 'environmental risk' sa buong mundo kaya't mahalagang intindihin ang sanhi at solusyunan ito.

"We have the Teledyne T640 PM analyzer, the first ever in the Philippines. Ito po ang makina na sumusukat sa kalidad ng hangin. There is a need to understand and improve our air quality," aniya.

Tiniyak naman ni Department of Public Services (DPS) Director Kenneth Amurao na patuloy ang kooperasyon ng kanilang departamento sa iba't ibang ahensya ng pamahalaan at ilang mga pribadong sektor upang isulong ang pagkakaroon ng mas malinis hangin at kapaligiran sa Lungsod ng Maynila.

"Hindi po tayo hihinto sa pagkakaroon lamang ng Air Quality Monitoring Station sa Lungsod ng Maynila, but we will practice consistency in our policy. Consistent po ang ating pakikipag-ugnayan sa national government and the private sector for current and future projects that will help our city, specially the ones that will promote a cleaner and greener environment," ani Director Amurao. (PIO Manila/PIA-NCR)

PENRO-Pampanga suspends work July 20-26 to disinfect office

By Marna Dagumboy Del Rosario July 19, 2020, 7:37 pm



CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga – An employee of the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) has tested positive for coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19), the agency confirmed on Sunday.

The real time reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) test of the patient was conducted last July 16, and a confirmatory test was released on July 18.

With this, PENRO officer Laudemir Salac said the agency will temporarily close its office from July 20-26 to give way to an “intensified” disinfection of the entire work place, and also for tracing of people who came in close contact with the patient.

PENRO employees will also be tested for Covid-19, Salac said.

The scheduled closure, according to him, might be extended depending on the result of the tests of the majority of PENRO personnel.

He added that PENRO will continue to deliver its services online such as through email and social media as it adopts work from home arrangements. **(PNA)**

DENR employee among 6 men nabbed for ‘tigbakay’

By: Alven Marie A. Tintim - Multimedia Reporter - CDN Digital|July 19,2020 - 07:47 PM

CEBU CITY, Philippines — An employee of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is among six people arrested in two separate police operations against illegal cockfighting or tigbakay in Toledo City and Danao City on July 19, 2020.

Seth Peter Mahilum Ariate, 43, of the DENR and his neighbor Rowen Sombingo, 28, were caught after police raided a tigbakay in Sitio Ylaya, Barangay Talavera, Toledo City at around 1:30 p.m. today, said Police Staff Sergeant Jonathan Cuizon of the Toledo Police Station.

Cuizon said that they responded to a report about the tigbakay in the area, but when they arrived the crowd engaging in the illegal cockfighting broke up and ran in different directions.

Cuizon said that they only managed to arrest Ariate and Sombingo.

The two men were currently detained at the Toledo City Police Station pending the filing of charges for violating Presidential Decree 449 or the law on illegal cockfighting.

“Sige naman mi ani pahinumdom nila nga bawal. Amoang gipangutana ni sila kung ngano mi padayun gihapon sila nga kabalo sila bawal wala naman ni tubag nag mahay siguro,” said Cuizon. (We always reminded the public that illegal gambling is prohibited. When we asked them [the arrested] why they violated they law, they could no longer answer, maybe they regretted what they have done.)

Meanwhile, about the same time or at past 1 p.m., policemen in Danao City caught four men, who bet and participated in a tigbakay in Sitio Caputatan, Barangay Guinacot, Danao City.

Aljun Batucan Barbero, 25; Ireneo Bolocano Dinglasan, 42; Christian Giango, 30 and Alexis Bohol Conde, 27; were caught by police, who responded to the area after receiving a report of the illegal cockfighting activity there.

The four men were detained at the Danao City Police Station pending the filing of charges./dbs

'Aling Tindera' waste-to-cash program launched in Manila

By ... -July 20, 2020



Plastic Credit Exchange (PCEX) founder Nanette Medved-Po (Photo from PCEX)

The Plastic Credit Exchange (PCEX), the country's first homegrown global non-profit plastic offset organization, together with the City of Manila, and with the support of the PepsiCo Foundation, recently introduced the Aling Tindera Waste-to-Cash program.

PCEX founder Nanette Medved-Po and Manila Mayor Isko Moreno Domagoso signed a memorandum of agreement to roll out 100 network partners over three years covering all of the city's 897 barangays.

Under the Aling Tindera program, PCEX incentivizes women-owned sari-sari stores to become collection points for post-consumer plastic waste and establishes the community infrastructure for the aggregating, storing, and efficient transport of the waste to partner processing facilities.

The program gives income opportunities for women micro-entrepreneurs and city residents. It is also a more organized informal sector of waste collectors.

Domagoso said that the Aling Tindera Program is "applicable, doable, and sustainable" as this will generate some income for the community and encourage more sensible and responsible citizens to participate.

This initiative forms part of PCEX's broader plastic offset mechanism inspired by the carbon offset industry. Plastic offsetting enables businesses to take action in stopping plastic waste from polluting our waterways and ending up in nature.

'Aling Tinderas' are women sari-sari store owners invited by the City of Manila to partake in this initiative. To jumpstart their new micro-enterprise, PCEX will provide each one with a purposefully designed 20-foot container, one manual baler donated by the PepsiCo Foundation, and starting capital.

The journey from 'Waste to Cash' begins in Aling Tindera's neighborhood, where residual plastic has little to no value and ends up contaminating nature. In response to this challenge, the Aling Tindera container will serve as an aggregation hub where any member of the community may sell post-consumer plastic by the kilogram. Simple bystanders become empowered not only to depollute their environment, but make extra income.

Using the manual baler, Aling Tindera compacts the plastics she buys into blocks that are easier to store and transport. Once she fills up her container, offset partners through PCEX purchase the lot from her and ensure they are processed using environmentally sound technologies.

PCEX commits to transparency to the public and its clients. Together with SGV & Co.'s Climate Change and Sustainability Services (CCaSS) practice, PCEX will perform compliance audits for both plastic footprint as well as the entire value chain of offset operations, including the Aling Tindera plastic collection model.

"We hope to expand our network of professional services firms and work with them to refine standards for verification to make sure that we are doing our part to make sure that no plastic winds up in nature," said Medved-Po.

Source: https://malaya.com.ph/index.php/news_special_feature/aling-tindera-waste-to-cash-program-launched-in-manila/

AFP starts desalination project construction in

July 20, 2020

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AFP starts desalination project construction in Mavulis Island

By Mark Djeron C. Tumabao Published on July 19, 2020



Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief of staff and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Filemon T Santos Jr PA leads the groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of a Desalination Plant System Project in the island on July 10. (NAVAL FORCES NORTHERN LUZON photo)

TUGUEGARAO CITY, Cagayan, July 19 (PIA) - The troopers of the naval detachment in the island northernmost island of the country, Mavulis in the Province of Batanes will soon no longer travel 8 hours to get water for drinking in Itbayat Island.

This after Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief of staff and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Filemon T Santos Jr PA, led the groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of a Desalination Plant System Project in the island on July 9.

Lt. Jaypee Abuan PN, public affairs officer of the Naval Forces Northern Luzon, said the desalination project is an initiative of General Santos recognizing the importance of having a sustainable source of drinking water in the island.

Abuan said troopers at the island's detachment though have a source of water for drinking in the island thru spring, it is still not enough, thus the need to travel to Itbayat Island.

"Nakita niya [General Santos] na tubig ang pangunahing pangangailagan kaya pinursige niya na magkaroon ng desalination plant sa isla sa pakikipagtulungan sa AFPSLAI," said Abuan.

With the establishment of desalination plant system, saltwater is desalinated to produce water suitable for human consumption, not only for the troopers but also fishermen needing water during their stay near the detachment.

Abuan said the construction has already started and once the delivery of all the needed equipment including the generator and the desalination plant equipment itself is done, the project is expected to be completed before August ends.

Once completed, Abuan said it can desalinate and store up to 3,000 liters of water suitable for human consumption.

The project is a combined efforts of the Naval Forces Northern Luzon, Naval Construction Engineering Brigade, 522nd Engineering Construction Brigade of the Philippine Army and North Luzon Command according to Abuan.

AFP starts desalination project construction in

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On the other hand, General Santos during his visit in the island also led the symbolic flag raising with the troops.

The Chairman of the Joint Chiefs extended his message of congratulations and appreciation to the construction team and to the personnel assigned at the Naval Detachment.

He also made a commitment to the troops that he will endeavor to provide them with more recreational facilities in the island, ordered the study for the construction of a cellular communication system to improve access to communication, and to explore the possibility of granting Hazardous Duty Pay to all assigned troops in the Mavulis detachment.



Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) chief of staff and the chairman of the Joint Chiefs, General Filemon T Santos Jr PA leads the symbolic flag raising in Mavulis Island. (NAVAL FORCES NORTHERN LUZON photo)

During his visit, General Santos was accompanied by Joint Forces Commander Northern Luzon, LtGen Ramiro Manuel A Rey PA and other senior officers of GHQ and NOLCOM.

The establishment of the naval detachment in Mavulis Island is considered to be a highly significant strategic initiative of the Armed Forces of the Philippines. It strengthens the Philippines' ownership over the island and clearly asserts its sovereign rights over its national territories.

The detachment also functions to assist and protect local fishermen who fish in the area. The location also provides a strategic littoral monitoring platform for all vessels transiting our northern boundaries. (MDCT with reports from Lt. Jaypee Abuan PN, public affairs officer of the Naval Forces Northern Luzon/PIA-2)

2 die in excavation collapse

July 19, 2020 | Filed under: Headlines,News | Posted by: Tempo Desk

CEBU CITY — A 22-year-old man and a 13-year-old boy died after a hole that they dug up caved in in Barangay Guinocot, Danao City, northern Cebu.

The hole collapsed around 9 p.m. Friday and it was past 3 a.m. last Saturday when rescuers were able to recover the bodies of Phil Bryt Giangan and Kent Daniel Casas Maglinte.

The bodies were buried about seven feet deep.

Police Cpl. Mark Anthony Manulat, desk officer of the Danao City Police Station, the two victims dug a hole to extract sand in a river that has dried up.

When the digging reached seven feet, the two dug another hole that formed the excavation like a tunnel.

Police said some residents rushed to the area when the hole collapsed but they failed to save the two victims.

A backhoe was used to dig up the two bodies, police said.

Although prohibited, some residents hauled sand in the area and sell it to their buyers, police said.

“Usually, they haul sand at night when there are no policemen patrolling. There had been complaints because of the diggings in that area,” Manulat said.

Police said the boy’s parents denied that their son hauled sand upon their instruction. **(Calvin D. Cordova)**

Covid cases in Philippines surpass 67,000

Published 12 hours ago on July 19, 2020 06:04 PM

By [MJ Blancaflor](#)



THE number of coronavirus cases in the Philippines rose to 67,456 as the Department of Health (DOH) recorded 2,241 new infections Sunday.

In its latest bulletin, the health department said 1,625 of the new cases were from Metro Manila, 115 from Laguna, 76 from Cavite, 75 from Rizal, and 55 from Cebu.

As of this writing, the Philippines has the highest number of active cases in Southeast Asia with 43,160 cases, surpassing Indonesia and Singapore.

The number of recoveries also jumped to 22,465 after the country recorded 398 new survivors, while the death toll rose to 1,831 as 58 more patients died.

58 more COVID deaths raise PH tally to 1,831

By [Gerard Naval](#) - July 20, 2020



MORE than 2,200 new coronavirus disease (COVID-19) cases were reported yesterday by the Department of Health (DOH) and 58 more deaths that raised the number of fatalities in the country to 1,831.

In its latest bulletin, the DOH said 2,241 new cases brought the total number of COVID-19 cases in the country to 67,456, counting the 1,841 reported on Friday and 2,357 on Saturday.

Of the new cases reported, majority (1,652) came from the National Capital Region while 115 came from Laguna, 76 from Cavite, 75 from Rizal and 55 from Cebu.

Of the newly-reported deaths, the DOH said majority are from Central Visayas with 54, while NCR accounted for just 1. The DOH also noted that 25 of the new deaths happened in July while 33 died last June.

Last Friday, 17 more deaths and 311 new recoveries were reported while 113 deaths and 321 recoveries were reported last Saturday.

The DOH said there were 398 new recoveries, meaning the number of patients who have recovered from the deadly virus now stands at 22,465.

In a bit of good news, the Department of Foreign Affairs said no new COVID case or fatality was reported among overseas Filipinos, describing this as a “peaceful Sunday.”

The DFA, however, cautioned this could be due to late reports from embassies and consulates worldwide, particularly in the Middle East where governments are very strict in releasing data.

As of Saturday, the DFA said 9,000 Filipinos in 65 countries have been infected with COVID-19, with 634 having died and 5,321 having recovered.

The Middle East/Africa remained as the region with the highest cases and fatalities among Filipinos at 6,483 cases and 364 deaths, respectively, though majority of them are in the Middle East where more than two million Filipinos are living and working.

Europe registered 1,070 cases and 95 deaths while the Americas reported 698 cases and 169 deaths. The Asia-Pacific region reported 771 cases and six deaths, according to the DFA.

PALACE EXPLAINS SPIKE

Malacanang said the continued increase in the number of COVID-19 cases in the country is a result of aggressive testing being done by the government to determine those infected and eventually to isolate them and control the spread of the pandemic in the country.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said it is unfortunate that some quarters had failed to recognize the results of the actions taken by the government and focused instead on the number of cases that are being reported.

“While it is true that cases are still increasing, this is foremost attributed to our aggressive testing that we now have. The sad reality is that the virus is not going away easily until we develop a vaccine or find a cure,” he said.

He added that while there is an increase in cases, there is also a “tremendous increase in the number of recoveries and a sharp decline in the number of deaths.”

The Department of Health (DOH) reported that 1,058,764 tests had been done as of July 18.

As of July 19, 67,456 cases had been recorded by the DOH, including 22,465 recoveries.

Two crew members of the newly-commissioned BRP Jose Rizal, the Navy’s first missile-capable warship, have tested positive for COVID-19, according to a Navy official.

The two were among Navy personnel who underwent swab tests after a Navy junior officer, who attended the ship’s commissioning on July 10 in Subic, Zambales, learned he was COVID-19 positive on July 11.

Navy public affairs office chief Lt. Cdr. Maria Christina Roxas said the two Navy personnel “were already evacuated to a quarantine facility ashore for further treatment.”

Roxas also said that Navy chief Vice Adm. Giovanni Carlo Bacordo, who was among the top military and defense officials who attended the commissioning ceremony, tested negative for the deadly virus.

Other top Navy officials who also attended the ceremony who have tested negative are Navy Vice Commander Rear Adm. Rey Dela Cruz, Philippine Fleet Commander Rear Adm. Loumer Bernabe and Offshore Combat Force commander Commo. Karl Decapia.

DND Secretary Delfin Lorenzana and AFP chief Gen. Felimon Santos Jr., who were also present in the ceremony, announced last week that they were negative of the virus.

Lorenzana and Santos were exposed to Lorenzana’s Senior Military Assistant, Col. Rolly Nerona, who found out he was COVID-19 positive on July 13.

BRP Jose Rizal is preparing to depart on July 29 to attend the Rim of the Pacific Exercise, the world’s largest maritime exercise. The US-hosted multi-lateral exercise is due to be held in Hawaii from August 17 to 31.

Roxas said other Navy personnel who will compose the RIMPAC contingent, aside from the ship’s crew, were scheduled to undergo testing at the Philippine Area in Sta Maria, Bulacan.

In a related development, the DOH said the country’s reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) test kits are ready for commercial use.

In a public advisory, the DOH said the GenAmplify (Version 2) is now available for public use.

“We are proud of our homegrown scientists, who continue to use their talent to benefit not only the Filipino people but the rest of humanity as well,” the DOH said.

“After several months of collaboration, we are proud to say GenAmplify version 2, the country’s very own RT-PCR test kit, is finally ready for commercial use,” it added.

This latest development comes after the DOH earlier noted that “minor deficiencies” have been found in the initial version of GenAmplify.

The DOH said it appreciates the efforts of the Manila Health Tek team as they worked closely with an independent laboratory expert panel in addressing key issues of version 1 of GenAmplify. – *With Ashzel Hachero, Jocelyn Montemayor and Victor Reyes*



2,241 kaso ng COVID-19 naitala ngayong araw

July 19, 2020 @ 4:20 PM 14 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Nadagdagan pa ng 2,241 bagong kaso ng COVID-19 sa bansa base sa tala ng Department of Health ngayong Linggo, July 19.

Sa kabuuan, nasa 67,456 na ang bilang ng nagpositibo sa sakit kung saan nasa 43,160 ang aktibong mga kaso kabilang ang mga nakarekober at nasawi.

Sa NCR, nakapagtala ng 1,625 na kaso habang 115 sa Laguna, 76 sa Cavite, 75 sa Rizal at 55 sa Cebu.

Ang mga naiulat na bilang ng kaso ay nai-report ng 74 mula sa 84 na licensed laboratories sa bansa.

Umabot naman sa 22,465 ang mga gumaling na sa sakit matapos madagdagan ng 398 ngayong araw.

Habang karagdagang 58 naman ang naitala sa mga pumanaw sanhi para umabot na sa 1,831 ang kabuuang nasawi sa COVID-19 sa bansa.

Sa bilang ng mga nasawi, naitala ang 33 nitong June at 21 nitong July sa Region 7.

Tig-isa naman ang naitala ngayong July sa Region 1, 9,11 at NCR. **Jocelyn Tabangcura-Domenden**

PAGE THREE

Senators welcome state nurses' pay hike

Published 4 hours ago on July 20, 2020 02:10 AM

By [Hananeel Bordey](#)



Senators on Sunday welcomed the increase of state nurses' salary emphasizing its benefits to those who serve as frontliners in the country's fight against COVID-19.

Senators Panfilo Lacson and Francis Pangilinan have welcomed the development noting that the "much-needed" and "well-deserved" pay hike will help nurses in their everyday work, especially during their fight against the virus.

"Definitely, no amount is enough to show our appreciation for the sacrifices and hard work of our nurses, especially those in the front lines. Still, this pay increase — which was sought even before the COVID pandemic hit — will be of help to them in one way or another," Lacson said.

"As all of us are now dealing with the 'new normal' due to the pandemic, the pay increase should hopefully make a difference for them," he added.

Pangilinan, on the other hand, lauded the wage increase which he tagged as long-overdue.

"This is a welcome development. The Philippine Nursing Act of 2002 was enacted long ago but it took 18 years to implement the increase in their salaries. One of the most important frontliners are our nurses and this is only one of the many ways where we can show support during this pandemic," he said.

The opposition lawmaker urged the government to ensure that the nurses will receive their back pay from January noting the risk of COVID-19 to medical workers who work for the government.

"The service that our nurses are rendering is dangerous and exhausting because of the COVID. They are doing this even though they receive low salaries. They do this because of their love for the country and their countrymen. They are the true heroes," he said.

On Friday, the Department of Budget and Management issued Budget Circular 2020-4 which upgraded the entry-level salaries of state nurses from Salary Grade 11 to 15.

To recall, the senators have included the funding for the state nurses' pay hike in the 2020 General Appropriations Act.

DILG exec wants shame campaign against pandemic ‘pasaway’ Pinoys

Published July 19, 2020 10:37pm

n official from the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) suggested a shame campaign against Filipinos who do not wear masks and obey health protocols amid the coronavirus pandemic.

According to a “24 Oras Weekend” report on Sunday, Interior Undersecretary Martin Diño clarified that the shame campaign was not directed towards people who test positive for COVID-19.

A London-based group earlier found that [91 percent of Filipinos always wear masks](#) whenever they go out while 83 percent regularly wash their hands with soap and water.

Diño also said that Oplan Kalinga, a house-to-house campaign that seeks to transfer COVID-19-positive individuals from their homes to quarantine facilities, will also serve as an awareness campaign.

He added that it may help neighbors of people with COVID-19 to take more precautions against the virus. — **Julia Mari Ornedo/DVM, GMA News**

Experts: Cebu on its way flattening the curve but...

By: Morexette Marie B. Erram - Multimedia Reporter - CDN Digital | July 19, 2020 - 04:54 PM



An aerial shot of the Marcelo Fernan Bridge that connects Mactan Island to mainland Cebu. CDN Digital photo | Brian J. Ocho

CEBU CITY, Philippines — Experts from the academe have noted a decrease in Cebu island's coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) transmission rate.

In its 12th coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) forecast report dated July 16, 2020, the OCTA Research team said they observed a downtrend in the number of new COVID-19 cases in Cebu. It was penned by OCTA Research fellows Guido David, Ranjit Singh Rye, Ma Patricia Agbulos, and Rev. Fr. Nicanor Austriaco.

“In Cebu province (referring to Cebu as an island), the average reproduction number R_t during ECQ has gone down to 1.14 from a high of 2 (based on our last forecast of June 29, 2020),” portions of the document read.

But despite this trend, researchers still classify it as a high-risk area due to the ‘high number of community transmissions’, prompting a recommendation for local officials to continue the island-province’s strict quarantine strategy.

Based on their observations, the team attributed the decline in the number of new COVID-19 cases in Cebu to interventions made by the national and local governments in implementing stricter health protocols.

“In Cebu, the strategy to contain the virus has been working. The stricter quarantine status together with the scaled-up testing, tracing, isolation, and treatment strategies implemented by the national and local governments and supported by the community have significantly decreased the R_t (reproduction number),” the study said.

It also added that Cebu is now making progress in terms of flattening the curve. But to make sure such a trend will be sustained, experts said strict quarantine strategies should be continued.

“Cebu province (including the cities of Cebu, Mandaue, and Lapu-Lapu) has been able to contain the surge and is on the way to flattening the epidemic curve. For Cebu City, we recommend the continuation of the strict quarantine strategy to sustain the gains already achieved,” they said.

The report also warned the government of a premature downgrading of Cebu City’s quarantine status.

“We caution the national government against prematurely downgrading the quarantine status in Cebu City and the NCR... If an ECQ or MECQ status is sustained in Cebu City for another 14 days, then the whole province will be on a trajectory towards flattening its epidemic curve,” it added.

The city, which happens to be the province’s capital, is the lone area in the country that remained under a [modified enhanced community quarantine \(MECQ\)](#). Its neighboring cities and municipalities, however, have since shifted to a more relaxed general community quarantine (GCQ).

It can be recalled that the national government’s anti-coronavirus task force placed Cebu City back under ECQ, the strictest form of community quarantine, last June 16 due to high case doubling time and utilization rates in hospitals reaching critical levels.

Last July 16, it was downgraded to MECQ and is expected to last until July 31.

Projection

In the same study, experts projected that the total number of COVID-19 cases nationwide could go beyond 85,000 by the end of July, with 2,000 deaths.

“Assuming that the reproduction number, R_t remains and there is no significant change in the interventions and strategies by the government, based on our revised projections, the current number of cases in the Philippines will increase to more than 85,000 and 2,000 deaths by end of July 2020,” said the report.

Data from the Department of Health (DOH) showed that the country has recorded a total of 67,456 COVID-19 cases as of July 19. Of this number, 1,831 were classified as mortalities while 22,465 others as recoveries.

Researchers also raised concern on the increase in Metro Manila’s COVID-19 transmission rate. Among the recommendations they provided to the government in addressing this matter was to have the National Capital Region (NCR) be placed back under stricter quarantine settings, similar to what happened in Cebu City.

“We believe that this option will work in the NCR as well,” they said.

In Cebu, most parts of the province have been downgraded to a modified GCQ (MGCQ).

The areas that remain under GCQ are the cities of Mandaue, Lapu-Lapu, Talisay, and the towns of Consolacion and Minglanilla, all of which recorded a high number of COVID-19 cases, and in close proximity with Cebu City.

Data from the DOH in Central Visayas (DOH – 7) showed that Cebu, as an island, has already documented over 13,000 coronavirus cases with close to 400 deaths, and around 6,000 recoveries.
/dbs

HEADLINES

Cebu hub beefs up virus blitz

Published 6 hours ago on July 20, 2020 12:05 AM

By [Michelle R. Guillang](#)



A convalescent plasma center of the Philippine Red Cross (PRC) is set to open in Cebu City that is expected to improve the supply of antibodies from donors who have recovered from the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

PRC chairman Senator Richard Gordon said on Sunday the facility will accommodate COVID-19 survivors who intend to donate their plasma containing the anti-bodies to strengthen the immunity system of patients suffering from the disease.

“Convalescent plasma therapy is still experimental, but so far, it has been effective to COVID patients to help their fast recovery,” Gordon stressed.

The senator noted that medical experts have recorded a 90 percent recovery rate among COVID-19 patients who received the convalescent plasma during the first few days after they got infected.

Better chance of survival

Plasma helps critically ill patients boost their immune system as it contains the antibodies which helped the recovered patients fight off the coronavirus, he said.

“We will slowly grow the center in Cebu. We will put several apheresis machines there,” Gordon added.

An apheresis machine separates the plasma from the blood withdrawn by a donor, who is then carefully screened.

Maya Gamboa Arcega, a regular blood donor of PRC, became its first convalescent plasma donor after recovering from COVID-19 around June.

“I am in constant communication with PRC because I’m a regular blood donor. However, they called me around last week of May or June to invite me for blood donation. I told them that I am in quarantine because I tested positive and I will just contact them once I turn negative,” Arcega recalled.

When she had recovered, some PRC staff went to her office to see if she’s qualified to donate her plasma.

Convalescent plasma donors go through consultations with medical professionals to inform them of the process.

Secrecy to remain

Arcega urged her fellow COVID-19 survivors to donate their plasma as she assured that their identities will not be divulged by the private humanitarian organization.

“Helping during this time is critical. Just imagine, the plasma we give can relieve the patients who are currently suffering the same condition we had to go through before,” Arcega said.

“It’s a fulfillment that we get to help others. The help we give, God will return it. He will provide us,” she continued.

The PRC opened its first convalescent plasma center in Port Area, Manila on 13 July.

As of Sunday, it collected plasma from 10 recovered patients while nine had received it.

DOST exploring lagundi as a treatment for COVID-19

Published July 19, 2020 9:37pm

The Department of Science and Technology is exploring herbal medicine lagundi as a potential treatment for the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

According to Mav Gonzales' Sunday report on "24 Oras Weekend," DOST Secretary Fortunato dela Peña said lagundi had anti-viral and anti-inflammatory properties that could possibly help improve the treatment of COVID-19 patients.

"Itong lagundi, siya kasi ay mayroong approval as a drug for cough, 'yong mga parang sa respiratory. 'Yon ang kauna-unahang halamang gamot na naging available over the counter sa mga botika at ngayon may mga anti-viral na properties at tsaka mayroon din siyang anti-inflammatory. Tamang-tama siyang subukan para sa pag-address ng mga symptoms ng COVID-19," dela Peña said.

He, however, said lagundi would only be tested on mild COVID-19 cases.

"Para sa mga mild cases kasi ang ia-address dito ay 'yong symptoms kamukha ng ubo, sakit ng lalamunan, lagnat at ang titignan diyan ay kung mawawala ang mga symptoms na 'yon kasi siyempre magiginhawahan ang pasyente," dela Peña said.

Aside from lagundi, the DOST was also exploring other herbal medicines such as virgin coconut oil and tawa-tawa for the treatment of COVID-19.

Dela Peña also clarified that clearance from the Food and Drug Administration was needed before commencing with clinical trials. — **Ma. Angelica Garcia/DVM, GMA News**

Poe files bill to institutionalize online gov't services

Published July 19, 2020 8:15am

Senator Grace Poe has filed a measure seeking to institutionalize e-governance to allow Filipinos to avail of government services without having to physically come and wait in line inside various agencies.

Poe filed Senate Bill 1683 or the proposed E-Government Act of 2020 in a bid to enable the public to file and receive personal claims or loans as well as business-related requirements with ease through an interconnected online government system.

“It is only proper to be assured of the transparency and efficiency of a government that is just a click away from its citizens,” she said.

Under the measure, the "interoperability" or the capacity of government agencies to operate along with each other online and in a standardized manner will be implemented.

“The government should be able to address queries and concerns interactively through capable online staff supporting an extensive, up-to-date list of FAQs (frequently asked questions and answers),” Poe said.

The bill mandates the integration of all business registration-related transactions with various government agencies, as well as real-time service of the procurement process online involving bidding and contract agreements.

At the same time, the bill requires all government agencies to reconcile their payment system in one database, and establishes vital measures to protect the public from data breaches, such as insulating computer networks against unauthorized usage and encryption of personal data.

In order to carry out the provisions of the measure, Poe underscored the need to improve the country's connectivity infrastructure.

“Now is the best time to ramp up initiatives to give Filipinos fast and reliable internet connection to truly enable them to shift to online transactions with national agencies and local government units,” she said.

“The call for digital transformation in delivering service is more urgent now in the time of pandemic – when mobility is hampered, physical interactions are minimized, and having access to government services in the safety of our homes is more crucial than ever,” she added.

The Department of Information and Communications Technology is mandated to come up with a timely and efficient e-government master plan that should be updated as the need arises.

“Our people expect the government now more than ever to look after them with concern and compassion, having exhausted all their resources and strength trying to cope with this pandemic,” Poe said. —Erwin S. Colcol/KG, GMA News

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/747508/poe-files-bill-to-institutionalize-online-gov-t-services/story/>

Metro restrictions remain as coronavirus continues

Published July 19, 2020, 11:14 PM

by Manila Bulletin

The four months of lockdown that began on March 16 are expected to contract the Philippine economy by 8 percent this year, making it one of the slowest to recover in Asia, according to an assessment by London think tank Capital Economics.

The Philippine economy is deemed to have entered a technical recession in the second quarter of this year, after a 0.2 percent decline in output in the first quarter. This was well below the government's expectation of 2 to 3.4 percent.

The continuing lockdown and inadequate fiscal support will delay recovery in the Philippines, the London think tank said. In contrast, China, Vietnam, and Taiwan will have the fastest recovery in the region, with their success in confining the spread of the coronavirus.



Our own Philippine economic officials led by Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III had been hoping for an easing of the restrictions in Metro Manila and Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon), which account for some 70 percent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

If the General Community Quarantine (GCQ) in Metro Manila and Calabarzon had been eased into a Modified GCQ (MGCQ), as many had hoped last July 15, economic activity would considerably pick up. But the national government decided instead to keep the region in GCQ. Secretary Dominguez bowed to the decision recommended by the government's health experts.

Several other areas in the country have already been upgraded into Modified General Community Quarantine (MGCQ), the final step before a final "new normal" with minimum restrictions. Among these are Laguna, Cavite, and Rizal, just south of Metro Manila. This is tribute to their success in keeping coronavirus cases down in their areas.

Metro Manila has to remain in its present GCQ. A great deal will depend on the ability of its 16 local government units to keep down infections and deaths in their respective areas with the help of the police.

They have another 15 days to prove themselves. We hope they will be able to keep down new coronavirus cases in these 15 days, so that the restrictions will be further lifted and economic activity will begin to go back to normal.

The resumption of business and industry will raise the economy from the depths of recession into which it has fallen. More important to most people, it will help bring back life as they once knew it – in their homes with their families, in their schools and public markets, their streets and parks, and in their churches.

Covid-19: Long-term life changes loom

By [BusinessMirror Editorial](#)

July 20, 2020

The quarantines imposed in every country have challenged the lives of virtually 7 billion people. Even as the quarantines have been lifted and modified, there remains great dissension as to the effectiveness of this response to the pandemic.

While it is difficult to quantify/qualify the success of this containment measure, it is equally difficult to argue with the fact that nations that lifted their quarantines have suffered a surge in cases and deaths.

On May 22: “Israel has largely brought the virus under control in the country and lifted most lockdown restrictions.” Now we read: “Israel thought it had crushed Covid-19. Then cases surged—and restrictions were reinstated.”

Jun 5, 2020—“Mexico is starting to bustle again as the country gradually reopens after a quarantine that hammered its economy.”

July 17, 2020—“Mexico has registered some 38,000 Covid-19 deaths, the fourth highest total in the world, and recorded over 324,000 cases, somewhere around the seventh-highest.”

Of perhaps greater importance and concern is what the world is going to look like one year from now.

Not since the “9/11 terrorist” attack has international travel been so negatively affected. A recent study concluded: “Grounded for many months, airlines are beefing up their summer schedules—though the number of flights will be a fraction of their pre-pandemic frequency.”

It is estimated that 100 million people have been put out of work because of the collapse of international travel for both tourism and business. It will take years to return to “normal.”

But there is a more human side of that data. At the end of June, Saudi Arabia canceled the Hajj to foreigners. In 2017, the number of pilgrims coming from outside Saudi Arabia to perform the rites of Hajj was officially reported at 1,752,014. Recognizing the significance of this “Pillar of Islam,” how many people missed a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity this year because of the pandemic?

The television and film industry in the US have been closed for months. Production and release dates are still question marks on the calendar. Initially, “The 2021 Oscars will not be canceled.” In Hollywood fashion, it has “been postponed to April 2021.”

The 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo is now going to start in July 2021. Again, how many athletic once-in-a-lifetime opportunities will be forfeited?

In times of great turmoil, people tend to turn to their religious faith for comfort. But that is a challenge in the time of Covid. Places of worship have been closed around the world. Even now as some restrictions on public gatherings are eased, churches are still at the front line of government concern. “The city of Toronto has announced that they will be banning the sacrament of Holy Communion in Catholic Churches. The Ontario Ministry of Health has issued guidelines to “suspend activities including the sharing or distributing materials or objects, which may include but is not limited to: books, communion, microphones, prayer mats, prayer shawls, water, etc.”

We are being encouraged by government and forced by the rules to adopt work from home protocols. The consultancy firm KPMG International warns “social-distancing measures” will “dramatically cut the amount of miles Americans travel by car” by a 10 percent permanent reduction. How many industries and jobs globally will be affected by less use of transportation?

Hopefully, the worst of the pandemic may be over, but the long-term consequences have just started.

The travelers that we are

By [Thomas M. Orbos](#)

July 20, 2020



Thomas M. Orbos

STREET TALK

Last week, I wrote about the significance of the number of ships that are currently anchored off Manila Bay and how the Philippines can become a maritime power hub in a post pandemic world. As I have mentioned, being the second-largest source of merchant marines that man the world's fleet of ships can serve as a good reason for our "pivot" to make the Philippines a marine transport hub this side of the globe. Hence, it would do well if our government provides the infrastructural as well as institutional support to make this happen. This week, I would like to pay tribute to that indomitable spirit of the Filipino; the same spirit that makes us leave the comfort of our motherland to find better opportunities for ourselves and our families and endure the hardships that go along with it.

It may seem that travel and adventure is in our DNA. All over the globe, in almost all corners, and whatever the climate is, you would find a Filipino, if not a community of Filipinos in some shape or form. You have that Filipino nurse in most hospitals in the western hemisphere; the crew in the oil fields in the Middle East, the Pinay singer that belts the perfect Whitney Houston song with her Filipino band in almost all hotels worldwide, which are most likely staffed by some Filipinos as well. But this is not just a recent phenomenon. The Filipino diaspora has been there as early as centuries ago. Filipinos were even ahead of the colonial settlers of the Americas as crewmembers of the Spanish galleons of the Manila- Acapulco galleon trade route, jumping ship and eventually establishing "Manila," the early settlement close to what is now New Orleans. Or the "Alaskeros," the Filipino migrants who arrived in Alaska to work in their fishing boats some two centuries ago, and the "Manongs" who worked in the many plantations in California and Hawaii.

For most of our brother Filipinos, past and present, they go abroad because life here in our motherland has been generally difficult. There is that inherent need to find better life and provision for our families that makes us endure long bouts of loneliness, low pay, and maltreatment. But such is true as well with other nationalities. The many Chinatowns in the world, the Little Indias and Koreatowns attest to their ancestors' journey to seek a better way of life. Maybe what sets us Filipinos apart is our ability to adapt and eventually "melt" into our environment. Rather than cloister ourselves in our communities where we try to relive our former lives in the motherland, we open ourselves to the stimuli of the new world, albeit sometimes losing our identity in the process. One good reason why there is no enduring Filipino town or Little Manila in any of the places where we have ventured. But Filipinization does creep in these adapted communities and for some reason, it comes out with a better blend for the good of both cultures. We see this in its subtle results—intermarriages as well as the Filipino contribution to the many cultures we find ourselves in.

Indeed, we Filipinos venture, survive and adapt. The stoppage brought about by the pandemic is only temporary. Our overseas Filipino workers brothers and sisters will go back to their adopted shores as soon as they will be allowed to do so and resume bringing in the needed dollars and other foreign currencies that keep together the bodies and souls of their families, not to mention their role in keeping our economy afloat. But it may be good that in this pause of their journeys, they're back in our shores. All of us who benefited from their hard work should show our gratitude to them. And what better testament to show them these than the homes they leave behind; the communities and the whole country are in good condition and that their efforts have not gone to waste. It is a challenge for all of us collectively as a country that we must always yearn to meet.

Thomas "Tim" Orbos was formerly with the DOTr and the MMDA. He is an alumnus of the McCourt School of Public Policy of Georgetown University and the MIT Sloan School of Management. He can be reached via e-mail at thomas_orbos@sloan.mit.edu

Group seeks review of coal info

July 19, 2020

People's Tonight



THE Power for People Coalition (P4P) on Thursday raised the alarm on the depiction of coal as the cheapest energy source available to the country.

In the hearing on the billing shock experienced by customers of the Manila Electric Company (Meralco) in May and June, the distribution utility was rebuked for adding natural gas for its baseload requirements as the latter is allegedly cheaper.

"We are glad that Congress is finally holding Meralco accountable for securing power contracts that would generate least cost rates. This is something that P4P has advocated for so long," said Gerry Arances, P4P Convenor.

In recent years, coal has been under fire globally for its contributions to the climate crisis, increasing costs in operating coal power plants, and vulnerability of electricity prices to demand and supply changes, among other factors which has led some countries to abandon it as a source of energy.

"The Philippines has some of the highest electricity rates in Asia but using more coal will only drive up prices more. As of 2019, coal occupies the largest share in our national power mix at 38%. There is nearly 6 GW of coal in Luzon alone, which is almost double the 3.5 GW installed capacity of natural gas in the same area. Much of the high generation costs that Meralco charges from its consumers comes from coal," Arances explained.

"Meralco's generation charge for renewable energy from November 2017 to April 2018 never exceeded ₱5.05 per kilowatt hour. Compare that to coal's wildly volatile prices which reached as high as ₱59.72 in the same period. Clearly one energy source is cheaper than the other," said Arances.

In addition, the energy advocate said that coal incurs hidden costs for consumers, such as passed on charges and external costs shouldered by communities affected by coal operations.

P4P in a position paper appealed to policy makers to consider renewable energy as a solution to the problems encountered with Meralco and as part of the national recovery plan from COVID-19.

"At the end of the day, there is no reason to settle for coal, which is highly polluting and costly, when the Philippines has an abundant indigenous renewable energy potential at 250 GW, excluding solar power. Even if natural gas is used as bridging fuel, all roads must lead to fully maximizing renewables," said Arances.

HOUSE leaders on Sunday backed coronavirus disease-19 mass testing to reopen the economy and preserve jobs as they took note of the alleged blunders of Health Sec. Francisco Duque III in defeating the spread of coronavirus disease-19 (COVID-19) that eroded people's trust on his department.

Source: <https://journal.com.ph/news/nation/group-seeks-review-coal-info-0>

Coral bleaching hits Tubbataha Reef

Published July 19, 2020, 12:54 PM

by Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz

Coral bleaching in some parts of Tubbataha Reef has been observed from May to June as the corals may have been stressed by changes in conditions such as temperature, light, or nutrients, according to the monitoring results released by the Tubbataha Management Office (TMO) last July 13.

During the annual fish and coral monitoring in Tubbataha from May 26 to June 2, TMO researchers observed some coral bleaching in the permanent monitoring sites in the vicinity of Kook, Delsan Wreck, and Jessie Beazley Reef.

Fire corals (*Millepora*) were the most affected in these sites, the researchers said.

The coral colonies observed at the time were not completely white in color but were only partially bleached, they said.

However, the team said two massive corals (*Porites*) near the dive site Terraces were completely bleached.

In its monitoring conducted from June 23 to 24, the TMO researchers observed that other kinds of corals have turned from florescent to completely white in color.

“These include encrusting (*Isopora*), branching (*Stylopora*, *Pocillopora*, and *Millepora*), foliose (*Montipora*), massive (*Goniopora*), solitary corals (*Fungia*), and even soft corals in most sites in Tubbataha,” they said.

“Coral bleaching was observed in patches,” they added.

Citing the Philippine Coral Bleaching Watch’s five-point bleaching scale, the TMO said the severity of bleaching in the North and South Atolls can be considered mild to moderate (Category 1 to 2), while bleaching can be described as moderate (Category 3) in the eastern side of Jessie Beazley Reef.

They further observed that behind the ranger station inside the lagoon are varying degrees of bleaching among branching and tabular (*Acropora*), massive (*Porites*), solitary (*Fungia*), and other kinds of coral.

“Some of the corals have started to show signs of stress, turning florescent, while others were completely white,” they said.

The severity of bleaching in the lagoon was described as moderate (Category 3).

They noted that coral bleaching was observed between the depths of two to 15 meters, with water temperature between 300 to 310 degrees Celsius.

A bleached coral is not yet dead and can bounce back when conditions become bearable and tolerable.

But if faced continuously by stressors, bleached corals could die in the long run.

Source: https://mb.com.ph/2020/07/19/coral-bleaching-hits-tubbataha-reef/?fbclid=IwAR0GxnIJBcRACO4PDi_BVBMXwGWTNWgpMS3o_GA8o2pFEKEcrlg5xkigeig

4 new products that show Corporate America is
getting serious about climate change

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4 new products that show Corporate America is getting serious about climate change

By Jordan Valinsky, CNN Business

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Diageo has created the world's first ever 100% plastic free paper-based spirits bottle.

(CNN) -- From burping cows to an all-electric SUV, big companies introduced new products this week that will help cut the climate change risk.

And for good reason: Climate change is one of the biggest risks to business' long-term survival. Massive amounts of plastic have piled up in landfills, some emitting greenhouse gases and contributing to global warming over the near eternity they take to degrade.

Also, consumers are increasingly seeking out companies that value cutting their climate risk. Here are some new "green" products that came out this week:

Burger King's new Whopper

Burger King has sold a meatless alternative to its iconic Whopper for about a year using Impossible's plant-based product. But for the meat eaters out there, Burger King is making the flagship burger a little more planet friendly.

The chain announced this week it's changing its cows' diet by adding 100 grams of lemongrass to reduce methane emissions, aka cow burps and farts. Those emissions are one of the key contributors to climate change because the gas traps the sun's heat and warms it.

The Restaurant Brands International-owned company said the new lemongrass-fed beef is being used in Whoppers at some restaurants in Austin, Los Angeles, Miami, New York and Portland.

Around 50% to 65% of all methane emissions come from human activities, including factory farming, according to the Environmental Protection Agency.

Johnnie Walker's paper bottles

Johnnie Walker drinkers will soon be able to pour their Scotch whisky from a planet-friendly bottle. It announced the creation of a paper-based spirits bottle made from sustainably sourced wood earlier this week.

"The technology will allow brands to rethink their packaging designs, or move existing designs into paper, whilst not compromising on the existing quality of the product," Diageo said in a release.

The plastic-free packaging is expected to debut early next year and will help the company meet sustainability goals set by the United Nations.

4 new products that show Corporate America is
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Nissan's electric SUV

Nissan this week debuted its first all-electric SUV, called the Ariya, which can drive up to 300 miles on a single charge. The new vehicle comes a decade after it became one of the first major car companies to offer an all-electric car when it introduced the Leaf.

Electric vehicles haven't met the mass adoption as predicted. Last year, they only made up just 2.6% of all cars sold globally, according to the International Energy Agency. Besides the Leaf, the only other electric vehicle Nissan offers widely is the eNV, a plug-in version of the Nissan NV van, which isn't sold in the United States. Nissan executives have said the company will come out with eight new electric vehicles by 2022.

The Ariya will go on sale in Japan in the middle of 2021 and in United States later next year. It starts at about \$40,000.

Chipotle cauliflower rice

Chipotle is testing riced cauliflower as customers' tastes continue to shift toward plant-based and low-carb options.

The cilantro-lime flavored rice alternative is currently available in 55 restaurants in Denver and throughout Wisconsin for a limited time.

Like its "regular" rice counterpart, naturally grown foods could help reduce climate change, according to a 2018 study. It found that as a result of population growth and the continued consumption of Western diets high in red meats and processed foods, the environmental pressures of the food system could increase by up to 90% by 2050.

However, Chipotle doesn't foresee offering a meat alternative, like Beyond or Impossible, because it's too processed and doesn't align with its mission of serving "whole" foods. It does offer vegan sofritas, a braised and chopped tofu, and is one of the most vegetarian friendly chains out there.

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Global hunger level alarms UN

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By [Elmer N. Manuel @tribunephl Imer](#)



The World Food Program (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) has warned that hunger threatens to soar to devastating levels in 25 countries in the coming months due to the impact of the global coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

The greatest concentration of need is in Africa, but countries in Latin America and the Caribbean, the Middle East and Asia — including middle-income nations — are also being ravaged by crippling levels of food insecurity.

The two Rome-based United Nations (UN) agencies sounded the alarm in a joint report published Friday as the WFP announced that it is scaling up food assistance to an unprecedented 138 million people who face desperate levels of hunger as COVID-19 tightens its grip on some the world's most fragile countries.

The cost of the WFP's response is estimated at \$4.9 billion — representing nearly half the updated COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan, launched this week — with an additional \$500 million special provision to prevent famine in countries most at risk.

“Three months ago at the UN Security Council, I told world leaders that we ran the risk of a famine of biblical proportions,” said WFP Executive Director David Beasley.

“Today, our latest data tell us that, since then, millions of the world's very poorest families have been forced even closer to the abyss. Livelihoods are being destroyed at an unprecedented rate and now their lives are in imminent danger from starvation.”

“Make no mistake — if we do not act now to end this pandemic of human suffering, many people will die,” he added.

Most of the 25 “hotspots” named in the report stretch from West Africa and across the Sahel to East Africa, including the Sahel, as well Democratic Republic of the Congo, Mozambique and Zimbabwe.

It also identifies, in the Middle East, Iraq, Lebanon, Syria and Yemen; in Asia, Bangladesh; and in Latin America and the Caribbean, El Salvador, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, Nicaragua and Venezuela.

Citing some examples, it says that COVID-19 is compounding a raft of existing problems in South Sudan, making the prospect of famine loom ever larger in areas where intercommunal fighting makes humanitarian access tough or impossible.

In the Middle East, the pandemic is exacerbating Lebanon's worst-ever economic crisis, where food insecurity is growing fast not only among citizens, but also 1.5 million Syrians and other refugees.

Hardest hit in Latin America are more than five million Venezuelan migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers in neighboring countries, the report says, adding that worsening economic conditions in host countries could well make matters worse.

According to WFP estimates, the number of people living in acute food insecurity in countries affected by conflict, disasters or economic crises could jump from 149 million before the pandemic took hold to 270 million by year's end if assistance is not provided urgently.