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DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service

Cimatu to Cebu City on new burial site: Minimize cutting of trees

By: Morexette Marie B. Erram - Multimedia Reporter - CDN Digital|July 20,2020 - 07:58 PM



Environment Secretary and IATF-Visayas Chief Implementer Roy Cimatu (right) inspects a 2-hectare site in Sitio Baksan, Barangay Sapandaku, Cebu City as a potential site for a public cemetery. | via Morexette Marie Erram, photos courtesy of DENR-Central Visayas.

CEBU CITY, Philippines — Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu has instructed Cebu City Hall officials to ‘minimize cutting of trees’ if they will be pushing through with their plans to open up another public cemetery.

This was according to an environment official on Monday, July 20.

The Department of Environment of Natural Resources in Central Visayas (DENR-7), in a series of messages sent to the media, said the city government was told to ensure conversion of a vacant lot in the hinterlands to a burial site has minimal impact to the environment.

“The instructions of the Secretary (Cimatu) is to minimize the cutting of trees...Per tree inventory conducted by the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO), Cebu City, there are 102 trees mostly mango and gmelina that may be affected by the project,” said Dr. Eddie Llamedo, chief of DENR-7 Planning Division.

Lawyer Rey Gealon, City Legal Officer and Cebu City’s spokesperson, announced on Monday that they had chosen the two-hectare property in Sitio Baksan, [Barangay Sapandaku](#) to be used as a public cemetery called Cebu City Botanical Memorial Garden.

“Sa proposed site sa atong Cebu City Memorial Garden, nauyunan na. Mao kini ang luna sa may Sitio Baksan, Barangay Sapangdaku,” said Gealon in a press conference.

(The proposed site for the Cebu City Memorial Garden was agreed upon. And it will be on a lot located in Sitio Baksan, Barangay Sapangdaku.)

The area was also inspected by Cimatu and Retired Major General Mel Feliciano earlier on Monday. Cimatu and Feliciano are currently the chief implementer and deputy chief implementer respectively of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases in Visayas (IATF-Visayas).

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Llamedo said the technical working group from DENR was currently having a meeting to come up with their recommendations on the matter.

Cebu City has been scrambling for a place to be utilized as a public cemetery. The lack of burial sites in the city has been a concern as the number of deaths related to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has continued to increase.

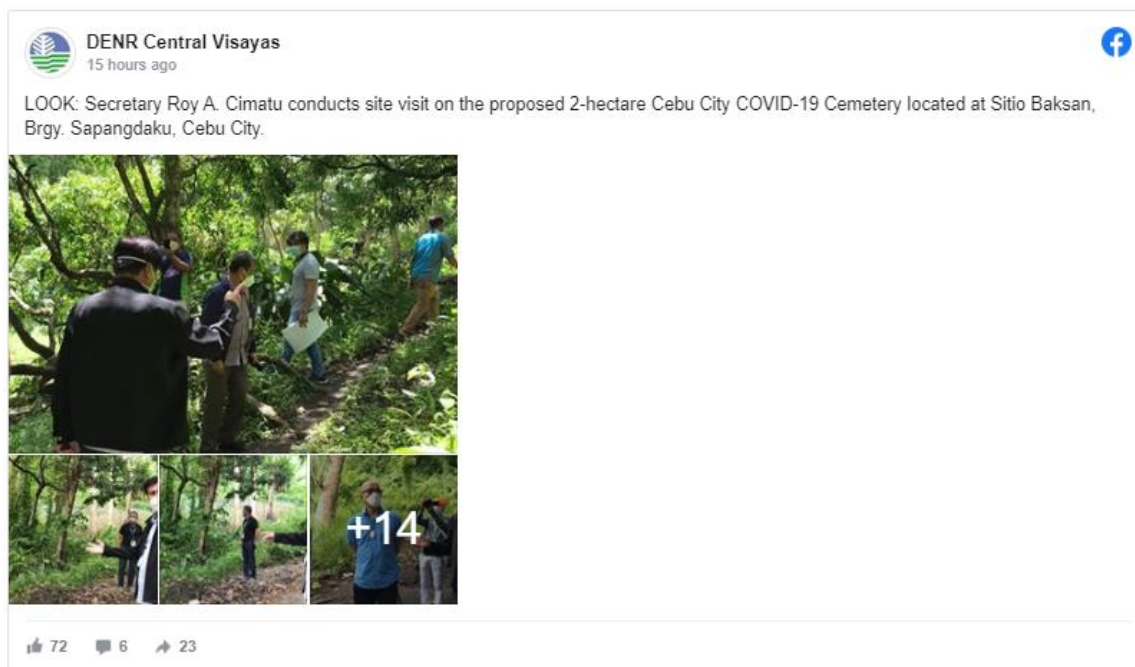
The city government was supposed to use portions of a [30-hectare city-owned lot in Barangay Guba](#). However, their decision was met with widespread criticisms when they decided to cut down at least 300 mahogany trees without securing the necessary permits.

The Department of Health in Central Visayas (DOH – 7) has documented a total of 411 COVID-19 deaths from Cebu City, the highest among all areas in the region. /dbs

DENR chief visits proposed site for Cebu City COVID-19 cemetery

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Jul 20 2020 07:06 PM



Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu visited the proposed 2-hectare Cebu City coronavirus disease (COVID-19) cemetery at Barangay Sapangdaku, Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said Monday.

"The instruction of the Secretary is to minimize the cutting of trees. Cebu City Councilor Dave Tumulak committed to integrate the presence of the existing trees in the design of the plan," Antiporda said.

The timberland area is owned by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources Region 7, which earlier stopped construction work at a proposed burial site for COVID-19 fatalities in the city's Barangay Guba as some 300 Mahogany trees at a protected area there were cut without permit.

Antiporda said there are 102 trees, mostly mango and Gmelina, that may be affected by the project in Barangay Sapangdaku, based on the inventory conducted by the Community Environment and Natural Resources office of Cebu City.

"The tree replacement policy at a rate of 1:100 will be applied if there are trees that need to be cut down. And the cutting should be covered by a tree cutting permit," Antiporda said.

The Cebu City government has notified that existing cemeteries are already getting full.

Based on the latest bulletin of the Department of Health Region 7, Cebu City has logged 8,072 confirmed COVID-19 cases, as of 5 p.m. of July 19, 2020.

The death toll is 411, while the active cases are 3,241.

Meanwhile, the planned cemetery is making residents nearby worried for the safety of their health.

But the city government is giving assurances that all remains to be buried there are properly sealed.

It will also secure permits from the DOH and DENR before the project can be started.

Cimatu was assigned by President Rodrigo Duterte last month to oversee the COVID-19 response efforts in Cebu City following an alarming increase in COVID-19 cases there.

-- with a report from Jude Torres, ABS-CBN News

Source: https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/07/20/20/denr-chief-visits-proposed-site-for-cebu-city-covid-19-cemetery?fbclid=IwAR3S_r28moqM4jauknOCrhDDIUI18YY1knXoJVz5ezoF_iWyPMkDSsEAib8



ABS-CBN News

14h · 🌐

TINGNAN: Nagsagawa ng site visit si Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu sa 2 ektarayang lupain na iminumungkahing gawing #COVID19 cemetery sa Sitio Baksan, Brgy. Sapangdaku sa Cebu City. (Larawan mula sa DENR)



👍❤️ 371

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Source:

https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10158608591385168&id=27254475167&fs=0&focus_compouser=0



GMA News

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LOOK: Visayas Overseer Sec. Roy Cimatu and other officials visit the site of the proposed 2-hectare Cebu City Covid-19 Cemetery in Brgy. Sapangdaku, Cebu City. 📷: DENR Central Visayas | via Ian Cruz



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Stricter law needed to curb illegal wildlife trade: Cimatu

July 20, 2020, 6:34 pm



MANILA – A more stringent law is needed to curb illegal wildlife trade as culprits are not deterred by the punishments provided under Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2001, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said Sunday.

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

Cimatu made the statement after a task force under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) arrested two suspected illegal wildlife traders during an entrapment operation conducted in Tondo, Manila on July 10.

The Philippine Operations Group on Ivory and Illegal Wildlife Trade or Task Force POGI recovered 42 various species of threatened and endangered turtles with an estimated value of PHP550,000 from Eumir Rommel Raganit and Bruce Kenneth Tan, who are now facing charges for violation of RA 9147.

Among those recovered from the suspects were 11 heads of black pond turtle (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*), which is classified as “critically endangered” under DENR Administrative Order No. 2019-09 entitled “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 or CITES, which means that the species is threatened with extinction and is not allowed for commercial trade.

Task Force POGI is composed of wildlife enforcers from various agencies, including the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) of the DENR and the Environmental Crime Division of the National Bureau of Investigation.

Dr. Rogelio Demelletes, BMB senior ecosystems specialist and Task Force POGI head, said the illegal wildlife trade has been showing no sign of slowing down even during the pandemic.

The task force, he said, has been able to confiscate PHP37 million worth of illegal wildlife and nabbed a total of seven individuals in five separate operations conducted since March, when the country was first placed under community quarantine to contain the spread of Covid-19.

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 also apprehended for illegal possession and trade of 13 rare animals, including three peregrine falcons worth PHP250,000 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, Demelletes 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,” Demelletes 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 a fine ranging from PHP100,000 to PHP1 million.

For hunting and trading, the penalty ranges from two to four years of imprisonment and/or fine of PHP30,000 to PHP300,000 for hunting and PHP5,000 to PHP300,000 for trading wildlife.

For the mere transport of wildlife, the penalty is six months to one-year imprisonment and/or PHP50,000 to PHP100,000 fine. **(DENR PR)**

Tougher law to stop wildlife trade needed -- Cimat

July 20, 2020

By [Joel dela Torre](#)

[People's Journal](#)

A more stringent law is needed to curb illegal wildlife trade which authorities said has showed no signs of slowing down even during the entire COVID-19 crisis.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimat said that illegal traders seemed not deterred by the present punishment provided under Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2001

“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,” Cimat said.

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

On July 10, 2020, the Philippine Operations Group on Ivory and Illegal Wildlife Trade or Task POGI arrested two suspected illegal wildlife traders during an entrapment in Tondo, Manila.

In that operation, POGI recovered 42 various species of threatened and endangered turtles with an estimated value of P550,000 from Eumir Rommel Raganit and Bruce Kenneth Tan.

The two are now facing charges for violation of RA 9147.

Among those recovered from the suspects were 11 heads of black pond turtle (*Geoclemys hamiltonii*), which is classified as “critically endangered” by the DENR.

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

Since March, the task force has been able to confiscate P37-million worth of illegal wildlife and nabbed a total of seven individuals in five separate operations conducted when the country was first placed under community quarantine to contain the spread of COVID-19.

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 also apprehended for illegal possession and trade of 13 rare animals, including three peregrine falcons worth P250,000 in the black market.

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



Antiporda: Disposal facility para sa hazardous materials, sapat

July 20, 2020 @ 6:50 PM 12 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Tiniyak ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na mayroong sapat na disposal facility o pagtatapunan ng mga hazardous material na pangunahing ginagamit ngayon ng frontliners partikular na ang mga doktor at nars na nagsusuot ng Personal Protective Equipment (PPE).

Sa interbyu kay DENR Usec. Benny D. Antiporda, Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns sa DZBB, siniguro niya ang publiko na walang dapat ikapangamba sa mga nakakalasang medical material dahil tinututukan ito ng kanyang opisina.

Sinisiguro nila ang tamang pagtatapon ng mga ito para hindi na makapinsala pa ng iba.

Bukod sa pagsisiguro ng tamang disposal ng mga hazardous waste ay kanila ring iniingatan ang kalusugan ng mga naghahakot dito sa pamamagitan ng tutok na koordinasyon sa Local Government Units sa pagprotekta sa mga garbage collector.

Nauna nang pinaalalahanan ng DENR ang publiko na dapat ihwalay ang mga face mask at hazardous materials mula sa kanilang household waste upang maiwasan ang pagkakahawa ng coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19). **Santi Celario**

DENR-2 beefs up solid waste drive

posted July 20, 2020 at 07:15 pm

by [Brenda Jocson](#)

Tuguegarao City—The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Region 2 has reminded the agency officials of the use of locally produced reusable water bottles instead of the prohibited single-use plastics such as PET (polyethylene terephthalate) bottles in line with measures on solid waste management.

Gwendolyn Bambalan, DENR Region 2 executive director, said in their executive committee meeting that environment officers in the region should be proactive in promoting environmental management, particularly within the regional government center here.

“Let us encourage other government agencies to be role models on cleanliness and proper waste disposal,” Bambalan said.

To intensify solid waste management, she said the DENR and the Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) will be preparing mechanisms to promote environmental management among government agencies within the government center.

Bambalan noted that as the lead and oversight agency in the implementation of Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, the EMB was ordered to strictly monitor the compliance with the law of local government units and other government agencies. Brenda Jocson

“We should know the data on how many LGUs have issued ordinances and monitor the implementation of those ordinances. We should also convince other local chief executives to support us in our campaign for proper waste disposal,” she said.

Meanwhile, Bambalan has earlier issued a memorandum order to all regional and field officials to observe zero single-use disposable materials in the workplace as well as in the respective homes and communities, encouraging the use of practical alternative materials such as eco-friendly and reusable bags and refillable glass bottles.

Mining companies, permittees required to have bamboo

July 21, 2020

TITLE: plantations

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Mining companies, permittees required to have bamboo plantations

By Jaime S. Cabag Published on July 20, 2020

ILOILO CITY, July 20 (PIA) – The Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) Region VI has coordinated with mining companies and permit holders here on their commitment regarding the directive of Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu for these companies to devote part of their permit areas to bamboos.

Earlier, Cimatu directed mining companies to allocate a portion of their permit area for the establishment of a bamboo plantation to help the country's economic recovery program in the face of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Developing bamboo resources and technology has actually been pursued by the government prior to the COVID-19 health emergency to achieve socio-economic and environmental sustainability. Bamboo is seen as the next alternative for lumber and as an effective greening agent to increase forest cover.

MGB-6 issued a press statement through their Information Officer Laralournie Artajo citing that Cimatu has already instructed their Bureau in September 2019 to direct mining companies to allocate at least 10% of their mined-out areas to bamboos.

With the economic impact of the pandemic, the Secretary recently instructed MGB to require mining companies to establish a bamboo plantation equivalent to another 10% of their declared final mining area, bringing the total target bamboo plantation area to at least 20%.

MGB specified in its memorandum that for mining companies, contractors, and permit holders without a mined-out area yet that is under rehabilitation, a bamboo plantation outside of its contract area can be considered as an offset for the required bamboo plantation.

Mining companies can enter into a memorandum of agreement with private landowners and people's organizations for the establishment of the bamboo plantation, and ensure that the bamboo plantation is being cared for and its growth being monitored.

In Region 6, Artajo said in view of the new directive from the Secretary, they have reached out to the concerned companies and permittees on increasing their allocated area for bamboo plantation.

Meanwhile, Engr. Mierbert Wed M. Naldoza of MGB-6 won in the on-the-spot essay writing contest organized by the DENR Region 6 held to mark Environment Month in June.

The participants came from the regional office, filed offices and the line bureaus of DENR, MGB and the Environment Management Bureau.

The essay writing contest was anchored on the theme "The Joy and Pain of Being a Frontliner in COVID-19 Pandemic."

Mining companies, permittees required to have bamboo
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Naldoza, a mining engineer in the MGB Regional Office 6, wrote a piece "Losses and Gains: A Pandemic Experience" and bested all other 14 entries. It talks about his experiences and reflections on the COVID-19 pandemic and how this affected him as a person and as a mining engineer working in the public sector who usually works with a group of people in the field.

The top three winners were given cash prizes --P3,000, P2,000 and P1,000, respectively, token and certificates of recognition. (MGB-6/JSC/PIA6)



Leader News Philippines

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PMPI Statement on the secretive resurrection of SMI's ECC

The Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) of the Sagittarius Mining Inc. that was cancelled by then DENR Sec. Regina Lopez and technically invalidated because of non-implementation beyond the 5-year limit, was said to have been resurrected from the grave by the Office of the President. The Philippine Misereor Partnership, Inc. (PMPI) stand with the Blaans communities, NGOs and Peoples Organizations, and the Diocese of Marbel in the belief that the Tampakan Copper-Gold Project (TCGP) will not only bring devastation to the lives and culture of indigenous and rural communities, but will bring environmental destruction to the five ancestral domains of the Blaans, four provinces South Cotabato, Sarangani, Sultan Kudarat and Davao del Sur, rainforests, shrub lands, and agricultural lands.

If the Tampakan Copper-Gold Project commences, it will cause the degradation of water catchment of Mt. Matutum and its six (6) rivers Altayan, Dalal, Manit, Mal, Manteo and Taplan, with farmers and irrigators, fisherfolks and some 40,000 Muslims dependent on freshwater from Lake Buluan negatively impacted. The project could also induce disaster as the proposed mine site will be on top of the Cotabato Fault Zone a West-Northwest Strike slip fault Zone and a Stratovolcano 1.

We are dismayed and surprised that the Office of the President, as informed by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources - Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) Region 12 Director Omar Saikol in an article published by MindaNews, that Sagittarius Mines, Inc. ECC was "reacquired"2.

The ECC for the Tampakan Copper-Gold Project was approved during DENR Secretary Ramon Paje's time. The approval came with requirements that should be fulfilled by SMI, one of which is the Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC) from Indigenous Peoples living within the ancestral domains that will be affected by the TCGP. Until now, no consent was fully given by the Blaans contrary to SMI's claim that all did. We believe that the resurrection of the ECC is irregular. The ECC of SMI's TCGP is a contract (Financial/Technical Assistance Agreement or FTAA) with public interest, entered into by the President of the Philippines and Sagittarius Mines, Inc. and should not be transacted in secrecy.

Furthermore, the late and former DENR Secretary Gina Lopez has nailed this ECC to its coffin when she cancelled the said document. Based on the DENR Environmental Management Bureau's published "What you should know about – Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and the Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) clearly states that "The ECC loses its validity if a project has not been implemented within five (5) years from ECC issuance."

How does one "reacquire" an ECC that is already cancelled and invalidated? The ECC for the Tampakan Copper-Gold Project was issued in 2013, the MindaNews report states that on May 6, 2019 the Office of the President, like a grave robber in the dead of the night, dug deep, stole the body, and miraculously resurrected a long deceased ECC to life. We believe that the resurrection of ECC from its grave is instead a death blow to the Blaans of Tampakan and its neighboring towns and regions. The Duterte regime's fixation to make mining and the extractive



PMPI Statement on the secretive resurrection of SMI's
ECC

TITLE :

industry as its main driver for recovery and development foretells a grim future of destruction for the people and environment. This administration is set to kill endemic species and other sentient beings living inside forests and under rivers of Marbel-Buluan watershed for the love of everything that glitters. Mining does not provide job. Mining does not give revenue. Who then gets the filthy bucks? Photo credit: Rappler

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1 Share

Aussie firm defends right to operate Didipio mine

By [Leander C. Domingo, TMT](#)

July 21, 2020

KASIBU, Nueva Vizcaya: Australian OceanaGold miner has expressed optimism that the company will be back to normal operations at its Didipio Gold and Copper Project in this gold-deposit rich upland town.



The Didipio Mine of OceanaGold Philippines Inc. that straddles Quirino and Nueva Vizcaya. PIA PHOTO

In a statement, OceanaGold Philippines Inc. (OGPI) said it would continue to defend its right to operate the Didipio Mine temporarily while it completes its financial and technical assistance agreement (FTAA) renewal process.

“To this end, OceanaGold intends to follow the usual appeal process with the Court of Appeals (CA) and, if necessary, to the Supreme Court of the Philippines,” OceanaGold said.

Recently, the CA 16th Division affirmed the regional trial court (RTC) decision denying OGPI’s injunctive relief that the latter sought to continue its operation pending its FTAA renewal with the Office of the President.

“Since the initial term of the FTAA already expired without it being renewed yet, there is no prevailing agreement on which the petitioner can anchor its right to continue its mining operations,” the CA decision stated.

OceanaGold’s 25-year FTAA became effective on June 20, 1994 and that its initial term expired on June 20, 2019, but with the issuance of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau’s position that the firm’s operation can continue pending its FTAA application for renewal.

An FTAA is a permit issued to a multinational company that will share technology and resources to explore and extract minerals in the Philippines.

The operation, however, was suspended after Gov. Carlos Padilla’s order directing local government units to restrain any operations of the company.

Source: https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/07/21/news/regions/aussie-firm-defends-right-to-operate-didipio-mine/743836/?utm_medium=Social&utm_source=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR3pOTHPuYz_CLO2yDqrNnAfmgvGIIx5il8hYt04t-7HPtXEk0QkCfYG8_w#Echobox=1595270534

Air quality monitor installed at Mehan Park

Published July 20, 2020, 2:14 PM

by [Minka Tiangco](#)

A real-time Air Quality Monitoring System (AQMS) was recently installed at Mehan Park in Ermita, Manila to check the air quality in the city of Manila.



AIR MONITOR – A Teledyne T640 PM analyzer, an air quality system that is the first of its kind in the country now sits at Mehan Garden in Ermita, Manila to monitor the air quality in the city of Manila. (Manila PIO photo)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) entered into a partnership with the Manila city government and donated a Teledyne T640 PM analyzer.

The said equipment is reportedly the first in the country. It measures particulate matter (PM 2.5), or atmospheric particulate matter with a diameter of 2.5 micrometers from power plants, motor vehicles, airplanes, burning wood and plants, volcanic eruptions, and dust storms, among others.

The data gathered by the equipment will be analyzed and used for public information, identification of critical areas, and research studies, among others.

DENR-EMB NCR Regional Director Domingo Clemente, Jr. said there is a need to understand and improve air quality because air pollution is one of the leading “environmental risks” in the world.

Manila Mayor Francisco “Isko Moreno” Domagoso said they agreed to the installation of the AQMS to see if efforts to clean and add more green spaces in the city are working.

“Walang kibit-balikat ang sabi ko, ilagay n’yo po sa Maynila. Para naman masukat natin ang effort ng city (I did not hesitate and told them to put it in Manila so we can measure the efforts of the city pertaining to the environment) to make more open green spaces and cleaner air through this first-ever-in-the-country machine donated by DENR,” Domagoso said in his speech.

A recent report by Asia Blue Skies Program showed that air quality in parts of the Philippine capital, particularly Rizal Park and Mendiola, neared pre-enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) levels from June 22 to 28 after months of cleaner air due to suspended mass transportation and quarantine restrictions.

The group said this may have been caused by “changes in human activity.”

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/07/20/air-quality-monitor-installed-at-mehan-park/>

3 suspects nabbed for illegal logging

July 20, 2020



The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Protection Enforcement Task Force has arrested three men for smuggling lumber.

The Highway Patrol Group (HPG) eyed the suspects in Malabon City with the lumber and was raided by authorities after they parked the truck.

The three suspects have shown no documents proving the legal cutting of timber from Bulacan. They refused to give details about their illegal operation. The confiscated forest products are worth almost Php 100,000. The truck used is now impounded while they are under the custody of authorities. The suspects will face charges in violation of the Forestry Code. – *Report from Cleizl Pardilla*

PENRO-Cagayan, planong bumuo ng Cagayan Environmental task force

By [Bombo Digna Bingayen](#) -July 18, 2020



Ismael Manaligod

TUGUEGARAO CITY-Inihayag ng Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office(PENRO)-Cagayan na nais nilang bumuo ng Cagayan Environmental task force para matigil na ang iligal na aktibidad lalo na ang pamumutol ng kahoy sa probinsiya.

Ayon kay Ismael Manaligod, PENRO Officer, kung sakali na ito’y maipatupad, magiging “one stop shop” na ang enforcement unit kung saan magsama-sama na ang mga law enforcement agencies kasama ang national agencies at Local Government Unit(LGUs) sa pagbabantay sa kalikasan.

Sa ngayon, sinabi ni Manaligod na kasalukuyan ang ginagawang pag-iikot ng forest enforcement sa lalawigan kung saan nasa 30,000 board feet na ng kahoy ang nasabat simula ng tanggalin o i-lift ang enhance community quarantine (ECQ) bilang pag-iingat sa covid-19.

Aniya, karamihan sa mga nakuhang kahoy ay mula sa bayan ng baggao, Penablanca at Sta Ana.

Nabatid na may ipinasa ng resolusyon ang Provincial board para sa pagbibigay ng otorisasyon sa gobernador na pumasok sa Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) para sa pagbuo ng Cagayan Environmental Task Force.

Source: <https://www.bomboradyo.com/tuguegarao/penro-cagayan-planong-bumuo-ng-cagayan-environmental-task-force/?fbclid=IwAR05RIADyRbRjXCxGguXLOrJn-Mqr7FipaAqUUeF-1x67lclh5oTIGH64uA>

Pampanga office closed

Published 3 hours ago on July 21, 2020 03:10 AM

By [Jonas Reyes](#)



SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga — The Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO)-Pampanga has suspended operations after one of its employees contracted the coronavirus.

The closure was posted on Sunday, and was confirmed after the employee showed a positive result from the RT Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) test conducted on 16 July.

PENRO officer Laudemir Salac said the office will temporarily be closed from July 20 to 26 to give way for disinfection while employees get tested for Covid-19.

Contact tracing is being done while management mulls possible extension of the closure.

Salad assured everyone that the DENR PENRO-Pampanga will continue to provide services via the new normal scheme, such as online services such as emails, social media messaging and work from home arrangements.

Meanwhile, Nueva Ecija now has 133 recorded coronavirus cases as of Sunday.

According to the Nueva Ecija Inter-Agency Task Force, eight new cases were added to the tally on Sunday night.

Patient no. 120 is a 40-year-old man from Magsalisi, Jaen who went to Divisoria on 5 July. He got tested on 17 July and came out positive.

Patient 127 is a 58-year-old woman from Navao, Jaen who was married to patient 114. Her husband died on 14 July.

She experienced Covid-19 symptoms on 17 July so she decided to get herself tested, which the positive result came out the same day. She is now inside a facility quarantine.

Patient 128 is a 36-year-old security officer who has a travel history in Quezon City. He is currently admitted in PJGMRMC.



ENRO-Pampanga pinasok ng COVID-19; kinandado ng isang linggo

July 20, 2020 @ 9:39 AM 20 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Nagpositibo ang isang empleyado ng Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) sa coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19), ayon sa ulat.

Kaugnay nito, sinabi ni officer Laudemir Salac na pansamantala itong isasara mula July 20 hanggang July 26 para sa disinfection.

Isasalang din aniya sa COVID-19 test ang mga empleyado.

Dagdag naman dito, patuloy ang serbisyo ng PENRO sa online platform tulad ng email at social media dahil sila ay naka-work from home. **RNT/FGDC**

Empleyado ng CENRO sa Samal Island, patay sa pananambang

ni [Lolet Abania](#) | July 20, 2020



Isang empleyado ng City Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) sa Samal Island, ang namatay matapos na tambangan ng hindi pa nakikilalang mga salarin.

Kinilala ang biktima na ai Florente Corone, 54-anyos, empleyado ng CENRO sa Samal Island.

Naganap ang pananambang sa Purok 1B Barangay Pina, Samal District Island bandang alas-12 kanina. Pauwi na ang biktima sakay ng kanyang SUV sa bahay, kung saan may motorsiklong sumusunod sa kanya. Dalawang lalaki ang sakay ng motorsiklo nang bigla pagbabilin ang biktima. Tadtad ng bala ang katawan ng biktima nang isugod sa ospital subalit dead on arrival na ito.

May natagpuang mga basyo ng .45 caliber at 9mm pistula sa pinangyarihan ng krimen.

Patuloy ang imbestigasyon ng Igapos Police sa motibo sa naganap na pananambang.



Isang green sea turtle ang nailigtas ng DENR Davao Region at PCG sa Sta. Cruz, Davao del Sur. Nadiskubrenang nakakain ng basurang plastik ang pawikan kaya binigyan ito ng vitamins para maibalik ang maayos na kalusugan nito.

DENR Davao



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Palawan Council for Sustainable Development

13h · 🌐

BLUE-NAPED PARROT TURNED OVER UNDER CUSTODY OF PCSDS

One (1) Blue-Naped Parrot (*Tanygnathus lucionensis*), locally known as "Pikoy" was turned over to the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development Staff (PCSDS), today, July 20, 2020 at around 11 AM.

The Blue-Naped Parrot has a length size of 28 CM (Beak to tail size) and a wingspan of 44CM. The said species was turned over by a concerned citizen from Bgy. Milagrosa, Puerto Princesa City.

The concerned citizen reported that she saw the parrot perched on a bamboo plant beside their house, yesterday, July 19, 2020.

She added that the parrot might have been tamed already and familiar to humans that she easily got the parrot from the bamboo.

The Blue-Naped Parrot is listed as Critically Endangered according to the PCSD Resolution No. 15-521's Updated List of Threatened Terrestrial and Marine Wildlife in Palawan and their Categories.

If there are any similar incidences or illegal activities involving our wildlife species, please call or text our PCSD hotline numbers 0935 116 2336 (Globe/ TM) and/or 0948 937 2200 (Smart/ TNT).

Thank you so much! Let us keep the wildlife in the wild!



👍❤️ 60

1 Share



Palawan Council for Sustainable Development

9h · 🌐

2 PHILIPPINE RAT SNAKE TURNED OVER TO PCSDS

JULY 20, 2020 – The first Philippine Rat Snake (*Coelognathus erythrurus*) was turned over today by a concerned citizen to the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development Staff (PCSDS) at around 2:20 PM. The rat snake has a length of 149 cm and weighed more or less 200 grams.

The concerned citizen was identified as Mrs. Jessica Bacosa-Olbes, a resident of Bgy. Tiniguiban, Puerto Princesa City. Upon the interview of the Wildlife Traffic Monitoring Officer (WTMO) with her, she said that her husband noticed that there were two snakes that were moving and crawling beneath the basement of their house where their chickens and ducks are located at around 1:15 PM. He thought they were Cobra Snakes so he thrust one of the snakes with a knife and slightly wounded it at its side while the other snake swiftly managed to escape from his hands. When they noticed that the wounded snake was not a Cobra snake and does not pose a threat to their safety, they immediately reported it to the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development Staff (PCSDS) to capture the wounded snake and take good care of it.

The rat snake was turned over by the WTMO to a better facility at Palawan Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Center (PWRCC) later this day for its wounds to be treated and for its health to be restored.

In another development, the second rat snake was reportedly captured with the help of the husband of Mrs. Olbes and was reported to the PCSDS at around 5:30 PM today. The snake was quickly recovered from the residence of Mrs. Olbes by the PCSDS – WTMO's and was examined thoroughly for its health condition prior to its release in an undisclosed forested area in the outskirts of Puerto Princesa City. By estimate, the 2nd rescued Rat Snake has almost the same size and weight with the 1st captured snake.

If you happen to find any wildlife creature within your vicinity, please report it immediately to our office thru hotline numbers 0935-116-2336 (Globe/TM) and 0948-937-2200 (Smart/TNT). You may also send a message to our Facebook page for your concerns.



👍❤️👏 21

3 Shares

Sufficiency

[FIRST PERSON](#) - [Alex Magno](#) (The Philippine Star) - July 21, 2020 - 12:00am

The rains have come. But the water level at Angat Dam has not risen.

The dam supplies 98% of fresh water to the Metro Manila area. Mercifully, we went through the dry months without water rationing. Hopefully, later in the year when a mild La Nina happens, the dam fills up and water pressure could be elevated to normal.

Until the Kaliwa dam project is done, some years down the road, we will be entirely reliant on what Angat Dam could supply. It is, lest we need to be reminded, a small and ancient dam badly in need of a rehab. Should it fail to deliver its usual supply, the metropolis will be uninhabitable.

Younger Filipinos might not remember the times when water was a truly scarce commodity in the capital region. Tap water, where it was available, was rationed to a few hours each day. In many communities, most of them poor, water had to be purchased by the drum at over sixty times their normal cost. The water crisis punished the poor most.

During those times, water from Angat was sufficient and the city had less than half the population it now hosts. But the distribution system was shot. About two thirds of the water that came through the pipes were either pilfered or lost to leaks. There was no way we could build a functional, not to mention competitive, economy under these conditions.

On top of all of these, the metropolitan area had no water treatment to speak of. Wastewater spilled into the waterways that drained into Manila Bay. When a storm hit, the dirty water flowed back into our homes.

The situation in the early nineties was dire and getting direr. This is why the law that enabled privatization of the water concessions. The law was aptly called the National Water Crisis Act of 1995.

By the time this law was passed, government was desperate. The MWSS did not have the money or the engineering capacity to rebuild the distribution system and reinforce the only dam supplying the urban areas responsible for over half the gross domestic product.

While the water distribution system deteriorated, urbanization was increasing rapidly. New pipes will have to be laid and new pumps installed. Leaks will have to be detected and bypassed. Pilferage will have to be stopped by installing water meters even among informal settlers.

Climate change threatened our water sources. Pollution was killing our waterways. Algal blooms and increasing organic waste was threatening Laguna de Bay, considered a supplemental fresh water source. Waste was killing our rivers and streams. Loss of forest cover caused a rise in turbidity levels, clogging our existing water treatment plants.

With rising environmental consciousness, we raised technical standards for water quality flowing through our antiquated pipes. The standards we adopted exceeded European Union standards. But compliance raised capital requirements and operating costs. The old MWSS setup simply could not manage.

A desperate government turned to the private sector for help. Only our largest corporate entities could borrow the money to rebuild our distribution system, recruit engineering talent and get an upgrade going in the shortest possible time.

The capital region and surrounding areas were subdivided into the west and east zones for water distribution. The water concessions would be distributed to two concessionaries so that they could benchmark performance against each other. The bidding was designed in such a way that the contract was awarded to the consortia (including foreign water companies that had the knowhow) that offered to charge the lowest tariffs for the water distributed. In order to make a profit, the winning bidders had no choice but improve the volume of revenue water.

In addition, the winning bidders were obligated to build a sewer system and provide wastewater treatment. Government, in all the decades it controlled water distribution, never managed to build a sewer system. Between today and the end of the water concession contracts, Maynilad and Manila Water will need to invest P465 billion to meet its service obligations.

Both the bidding design and the service obligation targets specified impressed everyone. The water privatization case in the Philippines was fully documented for other countries to copy.

The privatization of water service worked in a way I could only dream of when I carried water from the neighborhood deep well to my fourth floor apartment for my young family to use. In a few short years, water was available 24/7. The amount of water lost to leaks and pilferage dropped dramatically. Even with the reduced water pressure used to conserve the water stock at Angat Dam, I could shower in the same fourth floor apartment I live in all hours of the day.

Even if the water concessionaires triple their tariffs tomorrow, I will still be happy. That will still be very much cheaper than buying water from the water carts that plied the metro when government was running the distribution system. Efficient distribution spares us the need to store water in bins that magnified the spread of dengue in our communities.

Privatization solved the distribution problem. But that is only part of the equation.

Since government retained control over the provision of bulk water supplies, nothing happened in the over two decades since the distribution system was privatized. The concessionaires do not have enough water to sell.

Our bulk water supply is not sufficient. On hindsight, it might have worked better if government, when it privatized water distribution, should have fully privatized the provision of new water sources as well.

PRRD to be 'physically present' at Batasang
Pambansa for 5th SONA

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July 21, 2020
DATE

PRRD to be 'physically present' at Batasang Pambansa for 5th SONA

By Azer Parrocha July 20, 2020, 3:18 pm



SONA. President Rodrigo Duterte delivers his 4th State of the Nation Address (SONA) at the House of Representatives in Quezon City on July 22, 2019. Malacañang announced on Monday (July 20, 2020) that Duterte will be physically present at the Batasang Pambansa for his 5th SONA on July 27, 2020. *(Presidential file photo)*

MANILA – President Rodrigo Duterte will be “physically present” at the Batasang Pambansa Complex to deliver his fifth state of the nation address (SONA) on July 27, Malacañang said Monday.

Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said Duterte has decided to show up while allowing only a limited number of 50 guests in the venue.

“The President will be physically present in Batasan pagdating po ng (for his) SONA,” he said in a virtual Palace briefing. “He has confirmed that he will attend unless there are supervening events.”

Roque said a schedule has been set for rehearsals but did not mention the date.

Last week, Senate President Vicente “Tito” Sotto III said the number of attendees will be limited to a maximum of 50 people who will all be subjected to rapid antibody testing.

He said 25 seats will be reserved for the executive department, 13 for the House of Representatives and 12 for the Senate.

According to Roque, Duterte’s 5th SONA will focus on the national government’s response to the prevailing coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic.

“I think it will be obvious that he will be talking about Covid-19, impact on the country, and steps taken to deal with Covid-19,” he said.

Roque said Duterte will also talk about his priorities for his remaining two years in office.

Virtual protests

To minimize the spread of Covid-19, Roque urged groups and individuals planning to stage protests to take their assemblies online.

“Ang pagtitipon-tipon po ay magresulta sa mas mabilis na pagkalat ng sakit na ito. Puwede naman po magprotesta rin online (Gatherings could result to the faster spread of this disease. They can hold protests online),” he said.

Batasang Pambansa is located in Quezon City, which forms part of Metro Manila.

Metro Manila is currently under general community quarantine (GCQ). Under quarantine guidelines, mass gatherings with attendance of up to 10 percent of a venue's capacity will be allowed.

Last week, Quezon City issued a memorandum that allows the arrest of persons caught violating health-related ordinances following a spike in Covid-19 cases in the city.

"Ito naman po ay para sa kalusugan ng lahat. Merong ordinansya at may katungkulan po ang mga kapulisan na ipatupad and ordinansang ito (This is for the health of everyone. There is an ordinance and the police have the duty to implement it)," Roque said.

Previously, Roque urged rallyists to hold online protests on Labor Day (May 1) and Independence Day (June 12) but this did not stop them from taking it to the streets.

Unedited speeches

Following the call made by media groups for the Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO) to air unedited versions of Duterte's public addresses, Roque reiterated that he was unaware that the July 13 speech in Jolo, Sulu was edited.

He explained that if there were any omissions done in the speeches, Duterte himself would call the attention of the PCOO.

"Kung meron naman pong magrereklamo siguro kung siya ay na-censor, ang Presidente po mismo so iiwan nalang po natin diyan 'yan (If there is someone who would complain about the speeches being censored, it would be the President himself so let's leave it there)," he said.

Earlier, he vowed to join the future activities of Duterte so as not to miss the key points the President might raise.

He also assured that there is no policy to edit Duterte's speech delivered in any of the latter's scheduled activities before it can be aired on television. **(PNA)**



Metro Manila, which accounts for about half of the nearly 70,000 coronavirus disease 2019 cases in the country, has been under the lenient general community quarantine since June.

AFP/Maria Tan

Back to ECQ for Metro Manila? Wait and see – Palace

[Alexis Romero](#) (The Philippine Star) - July 21, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The government is not yet considering placing Metro Manila under the strictest lockdown scenario again, but will monitor developments in the following days to determine if quarantine measures in the capital region should be adjusted, Malacañang said yesterday.

Metro Manila, which accounts for about half of the nearly 70,000 coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases in the country, has been under the lenient general community quarantine since June.

The Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) eased quarantine restrictions in Metro Manila in line with the government's policy of gradually reopening the economy while responding to the pandemic.

But infections in Metro Manila continue to rise, prompting some senators to propose that the capital region revert to the strictest enhanced community quarantine (ECQ). However, the government is not keen on the suggestion.

“That’s not being considered for now. Suggestion of UP (University of the Philippines) was MECQ (modified enhanced community quarantine),” presidential spokesman Harry Roque said in a text message to The STAR when asked whether it was possible for Metro Manila to be placed under ECQ.

Under ECQ, only selected industries like business process outsourcing and export-based firms and essential sectors like food production and health care are allowed to operate. More businesses can resume operations under MECQ but mass transportation and public gatherings remain restricted.

Roque previously said that UP experts had recommended that Metro Manila be placed under MECQ to stem the spread of the virus. Duterte had agreed to tighten quarantine measures in Metro Manila but changed his mind after coronavirus policy chief implementer Carlito Galvez Jr. and Interior Secretary Eduardo Año informed him of the plan of mayors to intensify local lockdowns.

“We will see what will happen within the next two weeks,” Roque said at a press briefing.

He noted that Metro Manila mayors are implementing localized lockdowns, setting up isolation facilities, and expanding their testing capabilities to arrest the further spread of the virus.

At the same briefing, Roque said it would be up to local governments to decide whether to adopt the suggestion of Interior Undersecretary Martin Diño to conduct a shame campaign against quarantine violators.

“We are leaving that to local governments. What we want is to have a common ordinance especially in Metro Manila because we have two weeks to slow the spread of cases,” the Palace spokesman said.

Roque also maintained that the government won’t release the names of persons infected with COVID-19 as doing so would violate privacy laws.

“Let us respect the privacy of those who got sick although there is a need to report to the DOH (Department of Health) those who are sick. But we won’t make public their names,” he added.

Roque also chided critics of the government’s pandemic response, reiterating that the number of persons infected with COVID would have reached 20 million had the government not acted decisively.

“You can be assured that we won’t be lax. We know that the number of cases is rising not just because of aggressive testing but also because many are catching the virus. We won’t get tired of urging everyone to observe minimum health standards,” Roque said.

“To our critics, open your eyes and minds about the hundreds of thousands of lives that were saved because of the action of the government,” he added.

Meanwhile, Roque said those who intend to organize online cockfights should seek permission from IATF.

He said the Department of the Interior and Local Government was in favor of allowing cockfights in areas under the most lenient modified general quarantine as long as there is no live audience.

“But this has to be approved first by the IATF. The proponents of online cockfight that has no live audience should write to the IATF,” Roque said.

Palace tells mayors give free swab tests

The national government has donated several RT-PCR machines to the local governments so that is why we are calling for recipients to do what the City of Manila did – give free tests to your constituents

BY MJ BLANCAFLOR
@tribunephil_MJB

Malacañang yesterday appealed to mayors and other local executives to emulate the City of Manila in providing free swab tests to their constituents to boost the country's efforts in battling the coronavirus pandemic.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said the national government has donated machines used for real-time polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) tests to local government units.

"The national government has donated several RT-PCR machines to the local governments so that is why we are calling for recipients to do what the City of Manila did – give free tests to your constituents, if not for all," Roque said in a briefing joined by Manila Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso.

During the briefing, Domagoso underscored the importance of testing efforts to determine who needs to be isolated and treated.

The city recently launched its first COVID-19 drive-thru testing facility located in front of the Bonifacio Shrine beside city hall that tests residents and non-residents for free.

The results will be available within 24 hours either through text or e-mail.

Another COVID-19 drive-thru was opened at Quirino Grandstand over the weekend, where lanes were put up for every vehicle type, such as four-wheeled ones, tricycles and pedicabs and bicycles and motorcycles.

So far, there are 91 laboratories nationwide which can conduct RT-PCR tests.

Meanwhile, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) yesterday said it will be temporarily suspending its operations at its offices in ASEANA Macapagal and NCR-West today, 21 July, for disinfection activities.

In a statement, the DFA said that the measure was done to manage and prevent possible risks of COVID-19 infection as Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Brigido Dulay said the department has "been hit by COVID again."

Dulay said applicants affected by the closure may reschedule their appointments within 30 days as their office resumes service on Wednesday, 22 July.

On the other hand, all other DFA Consular Offices in the country will remain operational.

"The DFA requests the public's understanding and cooperation as we continue to battle against this pandemic," it stated.

Palace admits 'slow' SAP 2nd tranche

Published 2 hours ago on July 21, 2020 04:26 AM

By [MJ Blancaflor](#)



The distribution of the government's cash aid for the coronavirus pandemic was "slow," Malacañang admitted Monday, as it expressed hopes that the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) will finish the payout by the end of July.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said this after the DSWD vowed to complete by 31 July the distribution of the second tranche of the Social Amelioration Program (SAP), which was delayed for nearly a month due to reports of duplication in names on the list of beneficiaries.

"It's really slow. I can say that the Palace finds the processing of the second tranche slow," Roque said during a Palace briefing.

The Palace official also noted that over 3.3 million beneficiaries so far have received the second round of government aid which amounts to P20.1 billion.

The DSWD previously said the distribution was taking some time to validate the list of beneficiaries, as well as mobility constraints in reaching far-flung areas and conflict-torn provinces.

Malacañang has earlier apologized for the delay in the distribution of the second tranche of subsidy for low-income families and promised to hasten the process.

In April, Social Welfare Secretary Rolando Bautista announced that the agency partnered with the Department of Information and Communications Technology to facilitate the automated distribution of the second tranche through app "ReliefAgad" to allow families with cash cards to register online.

Based on President Rodrigo Duterte's report to the Congress on 12 June, 98 percent of the estimated 17.9 million beneficiaries have received the first tranche of the cash aid amounting to P100 billion.

Cusi: Multi-pronged battle will stop virus

Published 6 hours ago on July 21, 2020 12:05 AM

By [MJ Blancaflor](#)



Coronavirus testing would not solely curb the pathogen's transmission, Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi said, arguing that the stricter implementation of health protocols are needed to flatten the COVID-19 curve.

Cusi said this could not be stressed further if the structure of government battling the pandemic will not function properly.

The public, he stated, must also do its share.

"We need the structure of the government to function or work properly," he stressed. "It's time to make the structure work."

His remarks came after seven medical organizations have expressed that the increasing cases of COVID-19 might be due to rapid test kit usage — which was flagged by experts since it could generate false positive and false negative results.

The groups warned that the continued use of rapid test kits for clearance to return to work may result in infected individuals being cleared and inadvertently spreading the virus.

Cusi also said the barangay leaders are the best teams to implement and enforce the protocols established by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases and the Department of Health.

"Let's focus more on the stricter enforcement of use of mask, hand sanitizing and washing and social distancing. Targeted testing is being done by the government and other private agencies but it's through mass cooperation that we could minimize the spread of the virus," he added.

"Looking for the infected is looking for problems where we don't have the solution yet," he added. "It is creating bigger problems for the government."

Cusi also said the whole of government should be stakeholders in the fight against the virus.

"We should make accountable all those responsible (in this fight)," he added.

Cusi is also in the forefront of the government's campaign against COVID-19 as Chief of the Cabinet Officer for Regional Development and Security (CORDS) for Region IV-B (Mindoro, Marinduque, Romblon and Palawan).

The Philippines currently has more than 67,000 COVID-19 cases, more than 41,000 of which are active cases. Ninety percent of these cases are considered as mild.

Critical cases, according to official count, are only at 0.4 percent, the same percentage of patients with severe symptoms.

The government recently lifted the enhanced community quarantine status in Central Visayas which has shown marked improvement in the number of cases since it reverted to the strictest quarantine regulation three weeks ago.

The National Capital Region remains as the country's epicenter of the contagion as all countries affected by the pandemic waits for the development of a vaccine or medicine to cure the patients.

Go pushes for stronger mandatory face mask policy

By [BusinessMirror](#)

July 20, 2020

SEN. Christopher Lawrence “Bong” Go is pushing for a stricter implementation of policy on the mandatory wearing of face masks in public to control the spread of the virus.

In a recent interview, Go cited an expert recommendation that wearing the right kind of masks significantly decreases risk of spreading the virus.

“I am urging the government to enforce a stronger mask-wearing policy in the country. Let us make this a discipline among all Filipinos as we continue our fight to stop the spread of Covid-19,” Go said.

“According to experts, wearing the right kind of mask decreases the risk of spreading the virus by 85 percent. With social distancing and the use of face shields, the risk may be reduced by more than 90 percent. This is why, in the absence of a vaccine, wearing a mask remains a must,” he added.

Go also urged the government to provide masks for those who cannot acquire, or afford them. He added that he will talk to the Executive department to discuss how government can provide face masks to poor Filipinos.

“I am urging the government to use its resources to provide face masks, especially to the poor. *Importante po ang mga mahihirap na 'di makabili ng mask, ito ang gawan nila ng paraan,*” he mentioned.

“Ito po ang aking isusulong ngayon. Mananawagan po ako at kakausapin ko ang Executive department. Papakiusapan ko si Pangulong Duterte na magawan ng paraan na mabigyan ng mask ang mahihirap nating kapatid...sana unahin nila ang mahihirap, katulad ng 4Ps beneficiaries na talagang kasya lang ang pera sa pagkain, 'di kayang bumili ng mask,” he added.

Go also said he hopes that the provision of face masks to the poor be considered as one of the specific measures the government may implement under the proposed Bayanihan to Recover as One or the Bayanihan 2 Act which will be tackled in the Senate again once Congress session resumes.

Earlier, Go appealed to export-oriented local manufacturers of medical supplies and equipment to retain most of their outputs for use in the Philippines. This is to address the scarcity of certain medical supplies and equipment given worldwide shortage amid the pandemic.



COVID-19 cases sa bansa, halos 69K na

July 20, 2020 @ 4:56 PM 14 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Umabot na sa 68,898 ang kumpirmadong kaso ng COVID-19 sa bansa kung saan nakapagtala ng bagong kaso na 1,521 ngayong July 20.

Sa nasabing bilang ng mga kaso, nasa 43,991 ang aktibong kaso kabilang ang mga nakarekober at mga pumanaw.

Ayon kay Usec Maria Rosario Vergeire, ang reported cases ngayong araw ay mga isinumite ng 62 mula sa 84 licensed laboratories sa buong bansa.

Sa new reported cases, ay mayroon 1,290 fresh at 312 late cases.

Karagdagang 607 naman ang naitala sa recoveries kaya umabot na sa 23,071 ang kabuuang mga gumaling sa sakit.

Nadagdagan naman ng 4 na biktima na nasawi kung saan umabot na sa 1,835 ang total deaths.

Sa apat na nasawi, ang dalawa rito ay nangyari ngayong Hulyo.

Dalawa rito ay galing sa Region 7, isa sa Region 11 at isa sa NCR.

Ayon pa sa datos ang age range ng mga pumanaw ay nasa edad 58 hanggang 68 pataas kung saan tatlo sa mga pumanaw ay edad 60 pataas. **Jocelyn Tabangcura-Domenden**

DoH reports 79 more clustering of cases

Published 3 hours ago on July 21, 2020 03:30 AM

By [Gabbie Parlade](#)



Amid a significant increase in the number of cases daily reported, the Department of Health (DoH) on Monday announced that more clustering of cases have been identified in various facilities and areas of the country.

In a media briefing, Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire revealed that nationwide there are now around 638 clusters after 79 more from 15 to 17 July have been reported.

Out of the total, 24 were among jail facilities, 49 in hospitals, and 513 others were among communities.

Among the top regions with the most clusters were the National Capital Region (NCR) with 170, Central Visayas with 122, and CALABARZON at 55.

Vergeire said that these were the top regions including Western Visayas, Central Luzon, and Northern Mindanao identified by DoH after acquiring the highest increase in new cases in the country this week.

Earlier, the Bureau of Corrections reported recent deaths among inmates including those who were considered to be high-profile due to COVID-19 which are yet to be verified.

Vergeire said that the DoH is closely monitoring closed setting facilities such as jails and hospitals due to a higher risk of transmission.

“It’s the same protocol that we have although we are mostly monitoring closed institutions because we know the probability and risk of transmission in those areas,” she said.

However, when asked about verifying the identity of the deceased prisoners who were immediately cremated, she said that the question should be referred to the Department of the Interior of Local and Government being under their jurisdiction.

Meanwhile, Vergeire said that cases in Cebu at present have been decreasing amid stricter community quarantine protocols implemented after reporting a surge in its cases.

“Based on the report from the National Task Force and based on the report by our regional office the cases have been declining if comparing the numbers from the previous week to last week’s number in Cebu,” she said.

She likewise added that DoH will continue its strict monitoring of the situation in the area in the next few weeks.

As of Sunday afternoon, the Philippines has acquired over 67,000 cases with recoveries at more than 22,000 and a death toll of 1,831.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/07/21/doh-reports-79-more-clustering-of-cases/>

130,000 COVID-19 cases by August? UP team says

July 21, 2020

TITLE: it's not meant to scare but inspire action from people

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DATE

130,000 COVID-19 cases by August? UP team says it's not meant to scare but inspire action from people

By: [Jovic Yee](#) - Reporter / [@jovicveeINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 08:45 PM July 20, 2020

At least 130,000 cases of novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) by end of August.

A team of experts at the University of the Philippines (UP) said the projection was not meant to stoke fear but was a reminder to everyone to do their share in helping stop the transmission of SARS Cov2, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19.

Dr. Darwin Bandy, of the UP COVID-19 Pandemic Response Team, said on Monday (July 20) that each time the team comes out with mathematical models and projections, these were just meant to allow the government to prepare its response and inspire a change of behavior toward the pandemic among the people.

“We use these models to estimate the hospital capacity, project the peak and duration [of the infection] as a way to prepare as well as create behavioral change,” said Bandy.

“That if interaction, contact is reduced, we may be able to change and improve our situation,” Bandy said.

“We shouldn't fear these models. These can serve as a guide for us to change our behavior and improve our response,” he added.

Earlier, the UP team projected that the country's total COVID-19 cases by end-July would be anywhere from 51,095 to 67,795. On Monday, the Department of Health (DOH) recorded an additional 1,521 cases, pushing the national tally to 68,898 cases, very close to the UP projection. UP's upper limit projection by the end of July is 84,515. By end-August, the number of cases may range between 99,523 to 130,677.

According to Bandy, the public will know that the national response is headed to the right direction if there is a declining positivity rate and the reproductive number of the SARS-CoV-2 virus falls to less than one.

“If we see the positivity rate decline, this means that we are improving in detecting cases and there are fewer people getting sick,” said Bandy.

“If the reproductive number is less than one, it means that our response is getting better and we are able to control the pandemic,” he said.

DOH data showed the positivity rate to be 8.4 percent. At the start of July, the positivity rate is at 8.5 percent.

Based on June 24 data, the virus' reproductive number, or the possible number of persons that can be infected by a single case, is 1.59. This meant that for every case of infection, there was likely to be more than one case of infection as a result of transmission. The reproductive number was 1.05 on July 1, using June 14 data.

Bandy noted, though, that while the current number of cases is a bit high, this can be associated with the country's ability to better detect cases now due to factors like expansion of testing capacity.

130,000 COVID-19 cases by August? UP team says

July 21, 2020

TITLE: it's not meant to scare but inspire action from people

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Of 1,521 new cases reported by 62 out of the 84 accredited testing laboratories, 1,209 are patients who tested positive in the last three days, while 312 were confirmed to infected four days ago or earlier.

The spread of the infection appears to be locked in Metro Manila as the overpopulated metropolis accounted for more than 80 percent of new cases, or 1,237. A far second are Cavite and Laguna provinces, each with 51 cases, followed by the provinces of Rizal (34) and Davao del Sur (22).

There are now a total 23,072 patients who have recovered from COVID-19 with the recovery of 607 more patients. The death toll, however, rose to 1,835 as four patients had died.

All four died this month. Two of them are from Central Visayas. The two others are from Metro Manila and Davao.

Of the nearly 44,000 active cases, 90.6 percent are patients with mild symptoms while 8.5 percent have none.

Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said at the weekend the Metro Manila mayors met with the National Task Force for COVID-19 to discuss setting up more treatment and monitoring facilities for patients with mild or no symptoms.

She said plans are being worked out with six hotels that could serve as quarantine facilities while the Department of Public Works and Highways had committed to build more isolation sites.

There are to date 638 clusters of COVID-19 cases, of which 79 were recorded between July 15 and 17. There is a clustering of cases if an area has reported two or more cases.

Of 79 new clusters, Metro Manila had the most infected communities with 29 reported clusters, followed by Calabarzon (11), Central Luzon (8), Bicol (5) and Western Visayas (5).

The number of hospitals and jails with reported clustering of cases is still 49 for hospitals and 24 for jails.

As of July 18, at least 3,938 health care workers had contracted the virus. Of these, 712 are considered as active cases.

The national average number of days it takes cases of infection to double is 8.44. In Metro Manila, it is 8.84 while in Central Visayas, it is 9.68 days.

Vergeire said that while the situation in Cebu appeared to have improved, it was still too early to say if transmission of the virus had been stabilized.

“We’re still monitoring,” Vergeire said.

“The numbers have gone down but I cannot say if it’s already plateauing because we need to first see a trend,” she said.

She said data that the DOH was seeing was just “one week compared to the previous week.”

As of July 19, Cebu City accounted for 373 of new cases reported last week, fewer than the 516 cases it recorded the previous week. Manila had the most new cases last week (2,086), followed by Quezon City (1,017), Mandaluyong (620), Navotas (353) and Makati (346).

TSB

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/07/21/doh-reports-79-more-clustering-of-cases/>



DRUGLORDS SA BILIBID BINIBITAY NG COVID

July 20, 2020 @ 8:19 AM 23 hours ago

Manlaban ka o hindi, patay ka kung kumapit sa iyo ang coronavirus disease-19 o COVID-19.

At nagaganap ito sa New Bilibid Prison sa Muntinlupa City, Correctional Institute for Women sa Mandaluyong City at iba pang mga piitan na nakakalat sa buong Pinas.

Ang isang good news o bad news, depende kung sino ang kausap mo, walo sa mga binitay ng COVID-19 ang druglord.

Anim umano ang Chinese at dalawa ang Pinoy.

Tatlo sa mga druglord na ito ang kabilang sa Bilibid 19 (aba, tunog COVID-19) na kinandado sa Building 14 dahil konektado sa kaso ng isang sikat na politiko na isinangkot sa droga.

At isa umano sa mga binitay ng COVID-19 at na-cremate na, si Jaybee Sebastian, ang nagsampa ng demandang katiwalian at iba pang kriminal na kaso laban sa isang politiko na nakakulong sa akusasyong ginamit ang kanyang kapangyarihan para magkapera sa droga.

INILILIGTAS SILA

Bagama't napatunayan na ng mga hukuman na nagkasala ang marami sa mga preso na "persons deprived of liberty" ang bansag ngayon, hindi nangangahulugang pinababayaang sila ng pamahalaan na basta bitayin na lang sila ng COVID-19.

Ayon sa mga ulat, may 700 preso sa iba't ibang piitan sa bansa ang tinamaan ng sakit at nasa 125 o higit pang miyembro ng Bureau of Jail Management and Penology ang tinamaan din.

At inilalagay ang mga ito sa mga quarantine facility sa loob o labas ng mga kulungan upang magamot at gumaling sa sakit.

Nasa 311 na umano ang gumaling at ibinalik na ang mga ito sa selda.

Wala namang nakatitiyak kung ano ang magiging ending ng iba pang mga biktima.

Gayunman, nasa 15,000 na umano ang napalayang preso sa pahintulot ng Supreme Court upang maiwasan ang siksikan sa mga bilangguan na posibleng pagmulan ng kamatayan mula sa nakahahawa at nakamamatay na sakit.

Kabilang sa mga kumilos upang mapalaya ang marami sa mga detenido at convicted ang Public Attorney's Office sa ilalim ni Atty. Persida Acosta.

Kabilang sa mga pinalaya ang mga lumampas na ang pagkakaulong sa kanilang sentensya, matatanda at maysakit at may magagaan o kaduda-duda ang mga kasong kinahaharap.

HATID-OFW-LSI DRIVERS BANTAYAN

Gaano na ba karami ang mga tsuper ng mga sasakyang gamit sa paghahatid ng mga Locally Stranded Individual at Overseas Filipino Worker?

May mga nagkasakit o namatay na ba sa kanila.

At kung nagkasakit o namatay sila, gaano na karami ang nahawaan nila?

Ano-ano ang ginagawa ng mga kinauukulan upang maiwasang mahawa o makahawa ang mga tsuper?

Nagtatanong tayo, mga Bro, dahil may natagpuang bus driver na kinapitan ng COVID-19 sa Candon City, Ilocos Sur na naghahatid ng mga OFW kung saan-saan.

Sinabi ni Mayor Eric Singson na isa ring doktor na huling biyahe ng bus driver ang Ilocos Region ngunit naunang naghatid ng mga OFW sa Kabikulan, Tarlac at Abra.

Nasa quarantine facility na ito upang magamot at hindi makahawa.

Ngayon, may contact tracing nang ginagawa ang mga kinauukulan.

Hindi kaya ang ganitong kalagayan ang isa sa mga dahilan kaya't mabilis na lumalaganap ang COVID-19?

O bantayan ang iba pang mga tsuper, lalo na ang mga pampublikong sasakyan na araw-araw na may kontak sa hindi nila alam kung may COVID-19 o wala.

Basta alalahanin na lang siguro ang daan-daang tricycle driver na tinamaan sa Mandaluyong City.

MAG-INGAT, MAG-INGAT, MAG-INGAT

Nitong nagdaang dalawang araw, heto ang mga rekord sa COVID-19.

Nitong Hulyo 18, may 2,357 na kinapitan ng sakit at 113 ang namatay.

Kahapon naman, may kasong 2,241 at 58 ang namatay.

Sa huling ulat, mga Bro, 67,456 na ang kabuuang may sakit at 1,831 na ang namamatay habang 22,465 pa lang ang nakarerekober.

Sa araw na ito, tiyak na madaragdagan pa ang mga biktimgang kinapitan, namatay at nakarekober.

Napakabilis ang pagdami ng mga biktima at habang dumarami ang mga kinakapitan at namamatay sa sakit at mga nakarerekober na muling nagpopositibo, asahan natin ang paglobo ng may COVID-19.

Kaya mahigpit na pag-iingat ang dapat nating gawin gaya ng palagiang pagsusuot ng face mask, physical o social distancing, paghuhugas ng kamay o paliligo kaya, pagsunod sa mga patakaran sa paglabas ng mga tahanan at pagpasok sa trabaho, pagbiya-biyahe at iba pa.

Heto pa ang mahahalaga, mga Bro, pagsasailalim ng mamamayan sa mga pagsusuri o test na isinasagawa ng mga local government unit, pambansang pamahalaan at pribadong sektor... at pag-uulat nating mamamayan sa mga awtoridad sa mga pinagsususpetsahan nating kinapitan ng sakit.

Source: <https://remate.ph/druglords-sa-bilibid-binibitay-ng-covid/>

Cebu City's COVID-19 recoveries outnumber active cases

Annie Perez, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Jul 20 2020 09:10 PM

CEBU CITY - The number of COVID-19 patients in Cebu City who recuperated from the disease is higher than the city's current active cases, the Department of Health in Central Visayas said in its latest bulletin.

As of Sunday, the city has logged 4,420 recoveries, while its active cases are 3,241.

The total number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in the city is 8,072, including 411 deaths.

According to Mayor Edgardo Labella, the high rate of recovery is a welcome development even as testing and tracing continues.

"We will not stop until we reach the standard of the World Health Organization," said Labella.

The DOH Region 7 said the high number of recoveries could be a factor to downgrade the quarantine status of the city.

"People are now aware. It is a good indicator and a good factor," said DOH-7 spokesperson Dr. Mary Jean Loreche who attributed the recoveries and slow spike of new cases to the strict modified enhanced community quarantine.

However, Loreche said that this should not make people complacent.

"We have to look at the recoveries at two prongs," she added noting that while it may be good news, it should make others aware that community transmission is still happening.

Every week, the Cebu City Quarantine Center discharges more than 50 patients since the quarantine period started.

Meanwhile, jeepney drivers in the city held a lightning rally to air their desire to regain their livelihood.

Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board Region 7 Director Eduardo Montealto said special permits are issued first to buses since it is easier to implement physical distancing inside buses.

Only 10 buses were allowed to travel despite the prohibition of any mode of public transportation under an MECQ classification.

"But the mayor asked (for it), for the authorized persons outside authority," explained Montealto.

Since the imposition of the MECQ in the city, most industries started to open, although with little to no customers.

LPA east of Luzon may intensify within 2 days

July 12, 2020 | Filed under: Metro News, News, Regional | Posted by: Tempo Desk

By ELLALYN V. RUIZ



The low-pressure area east of Luzon has the potential to intensify into a tropical depression within 48 hours, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said Sunday.

Once it develops into a tropical depression, it will be given the local name “Carina.”

PAGASA estimated the location of the LPA at 710 kilometers east of Tuguegarao City, Cagayan around 10 a.m. Sunday.

“The public and local disaster risk disaster and management offices concerned are advised to continue monitoring for updates regarding the potential development of this weather disturbance,” the State weather bureau said.

PAGASA added that tropical cyclone wind signals may be hoisted in the initial severe weather bulletin as soon as the LPA develops into a tropical cyclone and moves closer to the country.

It is likely to bring scattered light to moderate with at times heavy rains over Aurora, Quezon, Batanes, Cagayan, Isabela, Nueva Vizcaya, Quirino, Albay, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, Catanduanes, Masbate, and Sorsogon within 24 hours.

Residents in these areas, especially those in high-risk communities, were warned of possible floods and landslides that may occur during heavy or prolonged rainfall.

PAGASA weather specialist Robb Gile said that even if the weather disturbance may not make landfall over the Philippines, the public and the local authorities concerned should still take necessary precautionary measures against possible heavy rainfall brought about by the potential tropical cyclone.

Fisherfolk and others using small seacraft should also take necessary precautions when venturing over the eastern seaboard of Luzon and Visayas as the LPA may trigger rough to very rough sea conditions.

Carina will be the first tropical cyclone to form inside the Philippine Area of Responsibility this month and third in 2020.

Based on the PAGASA’s historical data from 1948 to 2016, an average of two to four tropical cyclones enter or form in the PAR in July.

WEATHER IN THE REST OF THE COUNTRY

The intertropical convergence zone (ITCZ) is seen to prevail over Mindanao, bringing partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rain showers mostly in the afternoon or evening.

Localized thunderstorms, particularly in the afternoon or evening, may persist over Metro Manila and the rest of the country.

PAGASA warned the public that the occurrence of severe or intense thunderstorms may trigger flash floods or landslides in high-risk areas.

Malaysia finds 1,800 tonnes of illegal toxic waste dumped at port

By [Jessie Yeung](#), CNN

Updated 0743 GMT (1543 HKT) July 20, 2020

(CNN) Malaysia has discovered 110 containers of illegally dumped toxic waste in what authorities are calling "the biggest finding of its kind" in the country's history, according to [state media Bernama](#).

The containers were dumped last month at the Port of Tanjung Pelepas, in Johor state, Bernama reported on Sunday. Inside was 1,864 tonnes of electric arc furnace dust (EAFD) -- a hazardous by-product of steel production, containing toxic elements such as lead and chromium.

They were brought into the country from Romania and falsely declared as concentrated zinc, officials said.

"The discovery of the EAFD, on transit in Malaysia and bound for Indonesia, is the biggest finding of its kind in Malaysian history," said Environment and Water Minister Tuan Ibrahim Tuan Man in the Bernama report.



Malaysian authorities discovered 110 shipping containers of waste at the Port of Tanjung Pelepas in June 2020.

Malaysia is sending the waste back to Romania and asking Interpol to investigate.

Since China banned plastic waste imports in 2018 in an attempt to clean up its environment many countries have looked for alternative dumping grounds for their trash, creating problems for countries including Cambodia, Malaysia and the Philippines.

To limit irresponsible dumping, last year 187 countries added plastic to the Basel Convention, a treaty that regulates the movement of hazardous materials from one country to another. But the problem has continued regardless.

EAFD, the illegal shipment found in Malaysia, is classified as toxic waste under the Basel Convention, of which Malaysia is a signatory. Only the US, one of the world's biggest plastic producers, and Haiti have not ratified the agreement.

Global trash crisis

The waste dumping crisis has garnered greater global attention in recent years, as countries like Malaysia and the Philippines have begun naming and shaming waste exporters and sending dumped trash back to their ports of origin.

[Last May](#), Malaysia sent back 450 tonnes of plastic waste to their countries of origin, including the the United Kingdom, Canada, the US, Japan, and the Netherlands.

Malaysia finds 1,800 tonnes of illegal toxic waste
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"We urge the developed countries to review their management of plastic waste and stop shipping garbage to developing countries," said Yeo Bee Yin, Malaysia's then-minister of energy, science, technology, environment and climate change.

But the problem has persisted; Malaysian authorities have already identified and halted at least 28 attempts to illegally import waste this year, Tuan Man said according to Bernama.

Waste dumping has even escalated into highly publicized diplomatic clashes; last year, Philippine President Rodrigo Duterte recalled his ambassador to Ottawa after Canada missed a deadline to take back tonnes of its garbage. The Canadian government finally repatriated their trash after Duterte said he was prepared to "declare war" over the issue.

Many of these governments, as well as nonprofit and environmental organizations, hailed the 2019 Basel Convention amendment as a step in the right direction. It specifically addressed the issue of plastic waste -- a huge concern for health and environmental experts.

Most types of plastic aren't biodegradable, and are extremely durable. That means the plastic products made today will probably persist for centuries, if not millennia, according to the Basel Convention site. Over time, some products break down and add to the vast collections of microplastics in our seas, air and food.

The trash industry has also created a rise in unlicensed plastic recyclers. Last year, Malaysian authorities found at least 148 unlicensed recycling factories that pollute local communities with toxic fumes and contaminate bodies of water.

When investigators searched through one such factory in the rural town of Jenjarom, they found tons of plastic from overseas -- a wrapper for Poland Spring bottled water from Connecticut, a bottle of Palmer's Cocoa Butter Formula manufactured in New Jersey, and a bag of Metcalfe's Skinny Popcorn packaged in the United Kingdom.

A new amendment to the Basel Convention, which will come into effect in 2021, will allow only clean, homogeneous, and readily recyclable nonhalogenated polymers to be freely traded globally.

Most polar bears could struggle to survive in the Arctic by 2100, study finds

By **Drew Kann**, CNN

Updated 1726 GMT (0126 HKT) July 20, 2020



(CNN) For many people, there is one animal that comes to mind when they think of creatures threatened by climate change: the polar bear.

In recent years, [images of emaciated bears searching desperately for food](#) have made the Arctic's apex predator the poster child for the effects of global warming.

Now, as the planet continues to warm rapidly, a [new study brings another dire warning](#): If humans fail to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, most populations of the iconic species could struggle to survive beyond 2100.

Already, some populations have likely crossed key thresholds that will make their survival difficult, and perhaps impossible, according to the findings of the study published Monday in the journal *Nature Climate Change*.

However, there is a glimmer of hope that some bears can be saved.

Though the number of polar bears is likely to be greatly reduced in some regions, moderate cuts to heat-trapping gas emissions in the coming decades could allow them to persist in a few pockets of the Arctic.

As the Arctic's sea ice goes, so go the polar bears

Polar bears are the largest terrestrial carnivores on Earth, but their fate is intimately tied to what happens to the Arctic's sea ice.

They rely on the ice as a platform to catch seals -- their prey of choice -- because they are not skilled enough swimmers to catch them in the open water, says Péter K. Molnár, an assistant professor at the University of Toronto Scarborough and one of the authors of the study.

The life of a polar bear has always been characterized by periods of feast and famine. In winter, when the sea ice is at its greatest extent, the bears try to gorge themselves on seals to build up energy stores to survive the lean summer months, when the ice melts and they are forced onto land.



A polar bear cub is shown in Svalbard, Norway. A new study finds that polar bears in most regions of the Arctic could struggle to survive beyond 2100 if humans do not reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Most polar bears could struggle to survive in the

TITLE: Arctic by 2100, study finds

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But as the region's sea ice declines as it has in recent decades, bear populations in some parts of the Arctic are being forced to go longer and longer without food.

"Ultimately, the bears need food and in order to have food, they need ice," said Molnár. "But in order for them to have ice, we need to control climate change."

Figuring out how long bears in different regions can fast before reproduction and adult survival are impaired was the researchers' first challenge.

The study found that the length of time a bear can survive without food varies by region and the condition of the bear, but that cubs are the first to be impacted by a lengthy fast.

Adult females with cubs are generally the second-most vulnerable, followed by adult males and finally, solitary females, some of which can fast for a staggering 255 days before their chances of survival decline steeply, the researchers estimate.

Next, the researchers looked at projections for Arctic sea ice under two different climate change scenarios to see how long the bears could be forced to go without food in the future.

The [Arctic's sea ice has shrunk dramatically in recent decades](#), particularly during summer.

The last 13 years from 2007 to 2019 have been the lowest 13 years for summer sea ice in the satellite record, which dates back to 1979, according to Walt Meier, a senior research scientist at the National Snow and Ice Data Center.

Since the mid-1990s, the Arctic has [experienced levels of warming that are more than double the global average](#). Exceptionally high air temperatures are behind the Arctic's declining sea ice and are being driven mainly by people burning fossil fuels, Meier says.

Looking into the future, other studies have found that [the Arctic could be ice-free in summer as soon as 2040 or 2050](#).

"The question is not 'if' we'll see an ice-free summer in the Arctic -- it's 'when,'" Meier said.

'... They are not completely doomed if we change our behavior'

By combining their estimates for how long polar bears can fast with Arctic sea ice projections, the researchers were able to estimate for the first time when polar bears in 13 different regions could face trouble in the future.

Some populations, like those in Canada's Hudson Bay, may have already crossed thresholds that will impact reproduction and survival.

And the future will likely look far worse for the bears without efforts to curb global warming.

Under a "business as usual" climate scenario, where humans fail to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, nearly all polar bears in the Arctic -- outside of perhaps a few groups in Canada's remote Queen Elizabeth Islands -- may struggle to survive by 2100, the study found.

However, if humans are able to muster moderate cuts to global emissions, the chances that bears in other regions will persist beyond the end of this century increase.

The authors say that ultimately, these findings show that the fate of polar bears lies in our hands.

"I'm well aware that the story we're telling is a grim one," Molnár said. "But there is also an element of hope that they are not completely doomed if we change our behavior."

Masks are not a substitute for other public health measures, WHO official says

By Naomi Thomas, CNN

Published Jul 21, 2020 2:01:37 AM



Photo courtesy: Achmad Ibrahim/AP

(CNN) - The World Health Organization supports the use of masks as part of a comprehensive strategy for COVID-19, but they cannot be used as a substitute for other public health measures, said Maria Van Kerkhove, WHO's technical lead for COVID-19.

Van Kerkhove said WHO is hearing about changes in policies from many governments, who are applying mask use as part of their COVID-19 strategy, particularly in areas with active transmission or where physical distancing is not possible.

"We support the use of masks as one of the tools that can be put in place. However, it is not a substitute for other public health measure that also must be in place," Van Kerkhove said at a WHO briefing in Geneva on Monday. "You cannot substitute the use of a mask for hand hygiene – for cleaning your hands. You cannot substitute the use of a mask for physical distancing. You cannot substitute the use of the mask for testing, finding cases, for contact tracing, for quarantining cases."

Everything has to be done as a part of a comprehensive approach, Van Kerkhove said.

This story was first published on CNN.com, ["Masks are not a substitute for other public health measures, WHO official says"](#)