

DATE: JULY 31, 2020

DAY: FRIDAY

DENR

IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service

DENR inaugurates solar-powered sewage treatment

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DENR inaugurates solar-powered sewage treatment plant near Manila Bay

Published July 30, 2020, 7:19 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Thursday unveiled a solar-powered sewage treatment plant (STP) to help address the problem with household wastewater discharge that contributes to the pollution in Manila Bay.



(Photo from Pete Dacuycuy)

DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu and Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) chairman Danilo Lim led the unveiling of the facility, which is capable of treating 500,000 liters of wastewater per day.

Also with them were Manila Yacht Club President Commodore Robert “Bobby” Joseph, former Rotary Club of Manila President Jackie Rodriguez, and media practitioner Pete Dacuycuy. The project will ensure that no untreated wastewater from the three major drainage outfalls flows into the Manila Bay, Cimatu said.

These outfalls are the Padre Faura outfall, Rajah Soliman/Remedios drainage outfall across Aristocrat Restaurant, and Manila Yacht Club outfall.

The establishment of STPs and wastewater interceptors aims to address the problem with the low percentage of sewerage system coverage in Metro Manila.

Domestic wastewater discharge is used water from households consisting of both toilet waste and gray water.

Treatment of wastewater will be done through the installation of wastewater interceptors on different drainage outfalls that lead to Manila Bay to receive and control the untreated wastewater from households within the community.

The STP will then process and treat the domestic wastewater coming from the interceptors before releasing it into the Manila Bay.

Cimatu earlier said the STP will help to slowly bring down Manila Bay’s coliform level to acceptable levels.

The standard coliform level for coastal waters which is safe for swimming and other similar recreational activities is at only 100 most probable number per 100 milliliter (mpn/100ml).



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Even before the completion of the project, the DENR last January reported that fecal coliform count at the Padre Faura outfall was down to 920,000 most probable number per 100 milliliter (mpn/100ml) from its pre-rehab record of 7.21 million mpn/100ml.

From 35 million mpn/100ml recorded before the rehabilitation began, the coliform level at the Rajah Soliman/Remedios drainage outfall went down to 11 million mpn/100ml.

The coliform level at the Manila Yacht Club outfall was 54 million mpn/100ml from a high of 110 million mpn/100ml.



Philippine Star

13h

DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu and MMDA Chairman Danny Lim lead the ribbon-cutting during the inauguration of the solar-powered sewage treatment plant installed along Roxas Boulevard in Manila on Thursday.

The solar-powered sewage treatment plant is part of the Manila Bay rehabilitation program of the DENR.



Jayjay Magcamit and 107 others

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DENR opens first solar-powered sewage treatment

July 31, 2020

TITLE: plant in Manila Bay

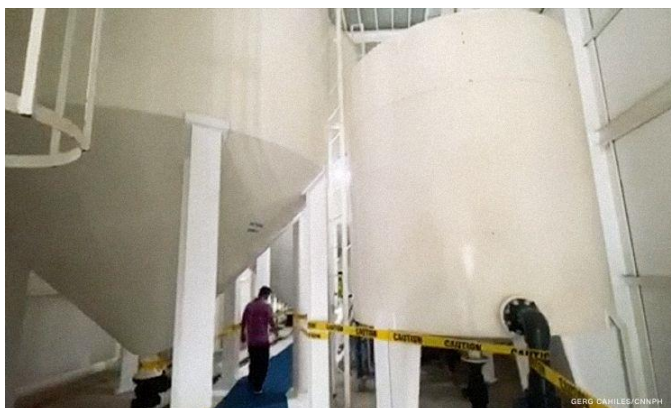
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DENR opens first solar-powered sewage treatment plant in Manila Bay

By [Gerg Cahiles, CNN Philippines](#)

Published Jul 30, 2020 9:01:00 PM



Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, July 30) -- As part of the rehabilitation of Manila Bay, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) opened a solar-powered sewage facility in Manila Baywalk area on Thursday morning.

DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu said that facility is the first of its kind in the country. It will treat water coming from three waterways in Malate, Manila area namely Padre Faura Drainage, Remedios Drainage, and Estero de San Antonio de Abad, before being discharged to Manila Bay.

The water treatment plant may process up to 500,000 liters of water at any given time and may store up to 2,000,000 liters of water in its tanks.

Based on the tests carried out on July 29, the coliform level of water that passed through the plant has significantly dropped - from around 3,000,000 MPN/100 milliliter (mL) to 770 MPN/100mL.

Cimatu said the DENR aims to achieve 200 MPN/100mL, which is a "swimmable" level.

"Let us see how the water treats itself," said Cimatu. "Kasi tini-treat din niya yung sarili niya eh. Kung wala na rin naman dumi na pumapasok, nagno-normalize by itself and we expect 200 yan MPN."

[Translation: Because it is also treating itself. If nothing contaminates it, it normalizes on its own, and we can expect a 200 MPN.]

The Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) will be in-charge of the maintenance and operations of the water treatment plant.

"Now that the first STP (sewage treatment plant) of the Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program is finally operational, we are confident that this will help improve the quality of water being discharged to Manila Bay," said MMDA Chairman Danilo Lim.

Cimatu said the DENR suspects that other than the three waterways, there could be more water outlets that discharge wastewater into Manila Bay.

"This is the same experience that we had in Boracay," he said. "Akala natin wala nang mga lumalabas sa pipes kasi na-plug na natin, merong ilang nakatago pala na mga tubo. So we will be again employing the same methods we used in Boracay na titignan natin with this 1 1/2 kilometer stretch kung merong mga hidden or nakatago na tubo na papunta sa Manila Bay."

[Translation: This is the same experience that we had in Boracay. We thought that nothing comes out of the pipes anymore because we plugged them, but there were hidden pipes somewhere. So, we will be again employing the same methods we used in Boracay, wherein we will check along this 1 1/2 kilometer stretch if there are hidden pipes extending to Manila Bay.]

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"So kung merong ganun na nangyayari, titignan naman namin yan and we'll penalize those companies and establishments na naglalabas dito sa Manila Bay," Cimatú warned.

[Translation: So if something like that is happening here, we will check that and we'll penalize those companies and establishments who are excreting their wastes into Manila Bay.]

Cruise ships throwing garbage in Manila Bay?

Cimatú also alleged that cruise ships are dumping their waste into the water.

A number of cruise ships are currently anchored in Manila Bay to send their Filipino crews home.

"I have given them warning already, several weeks pa, nag-inspect ako dito may nakita akong garbage diyan eh," Cimatú said. "Eh sabi ko bakít sarado na lahat dito bakít may garbage pa? So ang speculations nila, galing sa mga ships, the cruise ships and other foreign ships na nandiyan na hindi pa nakakapag-dock. So these are the possible culprit."

[Translation: I have given them warning already, several weeks ago, I saw garbage when I inspected there. I was curious why there are still garbage visible with all establishments around are closed? So the speculation is they came from the ships, the cruise ships, and other foreign ships that are about to dock. So these are the possible culprits.]

Cimatú said he spoke to the Philippine Ports Authority (PPA) to look into this.

Solar-powered sewage treatment plant targets Manila Bay pollution

Jonathan Cellona, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Jul 30 2020 01:40 PM



A man bikes past the newly inaugurated solar-powered Sewage Treatment Plant adjacent to the Manila Yacht Club along Roxas Boulevard in Manila on Thursday. The solar-powered sewage treatment plant, which aims to address pollution in Manila Bay, is capable of treating 500,000 liters of waste water per day according to the Environment Department.



Inauguration ng solar-powered sewage treatment plant. Ite-treat nito ang wastewater mula sa mga gusali malapit sa Manila Bay.
Bago ang construction ng naturang planta, direktang napupunta sa Manila Bay ang wastewater mula sa tatlong drainage outfalls. | via Shyla Francisco



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Bida Bill a boon for Boracay – Cimatu

Published July 30, 2020, 11:50 AM
by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu is optimistic gains from the rehabilitation of Boracay will be sustained with the creation of the Boracay Island Development Authority (BIDA).



Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, chief coronavirus disease (COVID-19) response implementor in the Viayas (NTF AGAINST COVID-19 / MANILA BULLETIN)

Cimatu thanked President Rodrigo Duterte for endorsing the bill, saying it would help ensure the timely and full passage of the measure being pushed by the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) as chaired by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

“This is the opportune time to pass a law creating a permanent agency to sustain the gains achieved by the BIATF, which term has been extended for only one year or until April 2021,” Cimatu said, adding, “It is the tacit duty of the task force to ensure that Boracay does not backslide and slip to a state of environmental degradation especially with all the hard work, cooperation and concern shown by all stakeholders.”

During his 5th State of the Nation Address, President Duterte called on Congress to pass the BIDA measure in his desire to sustain what he called the “remarkable emergence of the island back to its former glory.”

Last June 11, the BIATF issued a resolution approving the draft BIDA bill and endorsing it to Congress.

The BIATF, in its resolution, said the creation of BIDA aims to promote and accelerate the sustainable development and balanced growth of Boracay Island, “consistent with the necessity of maintaining a sound ecological balance on protecting and enhancing the quality of the environment.”

Under the draft bill prepared by BIATF, BIDA is mandated to formulate policies, plans, programs and projects for the rehabilitation, preservation and enhancement of Boracay Island as a self-sustaining commercial, financial, investment and tourism center to generate employment opportunities, attract local and foreign tourists and promote productive investments.

“The BIATF version of the bill envisions the BIDA as a regulatory body to ensure the environmental sustainability of the island and where the local government unit will retain its taxing authority,” DENR Director and Boracay Inter-Agency Rehabilitation Management Group general manager Natividad Bernardino explained.

She clarified that BIDA will not be a government-owned and controlled corporation akin to the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority.



The 11-member BIDA Board will be chaired by the DENR Secretary, while the secretaries of the Department of the Interior and Local Government and the Department of Tourism will serve as vice-chairs.

The members include the secretaries of the Department of Public Works and Highways, the Department of Health and the Department of Justice; the governor of Aklan province; the mayor of the municipality of Malay; two private sector representatives from Malay town; and the BIDA general manager to be appointed by the President.

Cimatu lauds call for Boracay Authority

By [The Manila Times](#)

July 31, 2020

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Roy Cimatu has lauded President Rodrigo Duterte for calling Congress to pass a measure creating the Boracay Island Development Authority (BIDA) to sustain gains from the rehabilitation of the world-famous resort island.



Secretary Roy Cimatu

In a statement on Thursday, Cimatu thanked the President for endorsing the BIDA bill, saying it would help ensure the timely and full passage of the measure being pushed by the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF), chaired by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

“We express our sincerest gratitude to the President for his endorsement of the BIDA bill.

This is the opportune time to pass a law creating a permanent agency to sustain the gains achieved by the BIATF, which term has been extended for only one year or until April 2021,” Cimatu said.

Duterte recently issued Executive Order (EO) 115 extending the term of the BIATF by one year. The task force was originally set to end on May 8, 2020, or two years after it was created in 2018 under EO 53.

“It is the tacit duty of the task force to ensure that Boracay does not backslide and slip to a state of environmental degradation especially with all the hard work, cooperation and concern shown by all stakeholders,” Cimatu said.

DENR chief lauds Duterte's endorsement of BIDA bill

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

July 31, 2020

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu hailed President Duterte's endorsement to Congress of a bill creating the Boracay Island Development Authority (BIDA).

Cimatu, also the designated chairman of the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF), said BIDA which will be headed by the DENR, will help sustain the gains from the rehabilitation of Boracay Island and that the endorsement of the bill would help ensure the timely and full passage of the measure.

"We express our sincerest gratitude to the President for his endorsement of the BIDA bill," Cimatu said in a news statement.

"This is the opportune time to pass a law creating a permanent agency to sustain the gains achieved by the BIATF, which term has been extended for only one year, or until April 2021," the DENR chief said.

President Duterte recently issued Executive Order (EO) 115 extending the term of the BIATF by one year. The task force was originally set to end on May 8, 2020, or two years after it was created in 2018 under EO 53.

"It is the tacit duty of the task force to ensure that Boracay does not backslide and slip to a state of environmental degradation especially with all the hard work, cooperation and concern shown by all stakeholders," Cimatu said.

In his 5th State of the Nation Address last Monday, President Duterte called on Congress to pass the BIDA measure in his desire to sustain what he called "remarkable emergence of the island back to its former glory."

"For the rest of my term, I hope to see concerted efforts in protecting the environment. The rehabilitation of Boracay Island showcased our resolve to safeguard the environment," Duterte was quoted as saying.

The BIDA bill is being pushed by the BIATF. Last June 11, the BIATF issued a resolution approving the draft of BIDA bill and endorsing it to Congress.

The BIATF, in its resolution, said the creation of BIDA aims to promote and accelerate the sustainable development and balanced growth of Boracay Island, "consistent with the necessity of maintaining a sound ecological balance on protecting and enhancing the quality of the environment."

Under the draft bill prepared by BIATF, BIDA is mandated to formulate policies, plans, programs and projects for the rehabilitation, preservation and enhancement of Boracay Island.

The proposed framework is focused on developing Boracay as a self-sustaining commercial, financial, investment and tourism center to generate employment opportunities, attract local and foreign tourists and promote productive investments.

In doing so, BIDA has to take into account the protection and preservation of the natural resources and biodiversity of the island-paradise.

“The BIATF version of the bill envisions the BIDA as a regulatory body to ensure the environmental sustainability of the island and where the local government unit will retain its taxing authority,” said DENR Director and Boracay Inter-Agency Rehabilitation Management Group general manager Natividad Bernardino.

Bernardino, however, clarified that BIDA will not be a government-owned and controlled corporation akin to the Subic Bay Metropolitan Authority (SBMA). The members include the secretaries of the Department of Public Works and Highways, the Department of Health and the Department of Justice; governor of Aklan province; mayor of the municipality of Malay; two private sector representatives from Malay town; and the BIDA general manager to be appointed by the President.

DENR SHUT DOWN SANITARY LANDFILL IN CALAMBA



July 30, 2020 @ 11:49 AM 18 hours ago

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has shut down a sanitary landfill in Calamba City in Laguna province for failure of its operator to comply with the terms and conditions of its environmental compliance certificate.

DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny D. Antiporda said the cease and desist order was issued against the 6.6-hectare landfill operated by S.B. Hain Enterprises and General Services in Barangay Kay-anlog due to “numerous violations of the terms and conditions of its ECC granted by the agency’s Environmental Management Bureau.

“We cannot allow the landfill and its operator to continuously harm the environment. The Calamba SLF will remain closed until violations are corrected,” Usec. Antiporda said.

EMB inspectors found the SLF to have violated nine out of 26 conditions in its ECC following an inspection of the facility last July 13 including its failure to install a working drainage and leachate treatment facility, among others.

The EMB likewise noted the absence of monitoring report of the SLF’s treated liquid waste to ensure its compliance with DENR effluent standards.

Navotas lockdown violators reach more than 6, 000

More than 6, 000 violators were arrested by authorities during the two-week city-wide lockdown in Navotas due to the rising COVID-19 cases.

“We just have a number of hardheaded individuals who violated quarantine measures especially when we placed the entire city under total lockdown due to the accelerating COVID-19 cases,” Mayor Tiangco said.

“Many of our constituents thought that because of eased restrictions during the general community quarantine, they can be lax about practicing safety measures. We need to remind them that the deadly virus is still here and it continues to endanger our lives and those of our loved ones.”

The Navotas mayor stressed that the city government was not after the money that would be generated from the lockdown violations but the safety of the residents amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Rep. JRT’s help continues

During the 14-day total lockdown, former mayor and now Navotas Rep. John Rey Tiangco gave out some 800 sacks of rice to the city’s 18 barangay chairmen for distribution to the residents.

“Ito po’y pangalawang pamimigay na natin at patuloy po nating pagsusumikapang makatulong pa. Pakiusap ko po’y pahalagahan natin ang mga pag-iingat na ipinapayo ng ating health experts at ng pamahalaang lokal at pangalagaan po natin ang bawat isa nang pare-pareho po tayong makaahon sa pandemya,” the Navotas lawmaker said.

Alert Maritime cops apprehend 4 Chinese seafarers

No one can escape from the alert members of the Regional Maritime Unit-National Capital Region led by its chief, Col. Ricardo Villanueva, and just recently, they apprehended four Chinese seafarers after they were spotted while dropping off from their vessel at the Navotas Fish Port Complex.

“Our men had noticed the Chinese nationals dropping off from their vessel so they quickly approached and held them after they failed to show pertinent papers of their identity and purpose,” Col. Villanueva said.

The RMU-NCR chief explained that they’ve been doubling their monitoring capability amid the COVID-19 pandemic so that they could check every individual, local or foreigner, that passes through Philippine waters.

He said the team of Maj. Rommel Sobrido and Capt. Randy Ludovice were conducting foot patrol and police visibility at Pier 2 inside the complex when they spotted the four foreigners who failed to present pertinent papers for their identity and purpose.

They’re issued ordinance violation receipt on quarantine pass before they’re turned over to the Philippine Coast Guard.

DENR taps PCEx for long-term Manila Bay cleanup

By [The Manila Times](#)

July 31, 2020



MOU signing between DENR-NCR represented by Jacqueline Caancan and PCEx Chairman Nanette Medved-Po.

IN response to the government’s call-to-action on rehabilitating Manila Bay, Plastic Credit Exchange (PCEx) and The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), with the support of the PepsiCo Foundation, partnered to roll out a long-term “Aling Tindera” coastal cleanup program.

PCEx Chairman Nanette Medved-Po and DENR Regional Executive Director Jacqueline Caancan announced the strategic partnership at the DENR headquarters in Quezon City on July 28.

PCEx incentivizes fisherfolk and their families to ‘catch’ plastic waste in and around Manila Bay and sell these in exchange for cash at Aling Tindera collection points stationed along coastal areas. The Aling Tinderas (women sari-sari store owners) aggregate the plastic, and then turn a profit by selling these to sustainability-conscious companies through PCEx.

“The conservation of Manila Bay should not come to a halt while we address the global pandemic. We need to collaborate to create long-term solutions for the health of our oceans and waterways because it is very much tied to our own health,” Medved-Po said.

DENR data has shown that five days of coastal cleanup on the Manila Bay island could yield 16,000 kg of trash, the bulk of it plastic sachets. With increasing concern about safety and cross-contamination due to Covid-19, there has been a heightened demand for single-use plastics, which means that hard-won environmental measures to rehabilitate Manila Bay have once more been undone.

“PepsiCo realizes no single organization or industry can solve the plastic waste challenge on their own. That is why we’re working with PCEx and communities in Manila through the Aling Tindera program to accelerate systemic change and meaningful progress through collaborative, holistic and sustainable solutions in the Philippines,” PepsiCo Corporate Affairs Head for the Philippines and Asia Anne Marie Corominas emphasized.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/07/31/public-square/denr-taps-pcex-for-long-term-manila-bay-cleanup/748128/>

25 Mimaropa MRFs ready for turnover to LGUs by year-end, DENR exec says

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

July 31, 2020

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Environmental Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) in the Region 4B (Mimaropa region) is stepping up construction activities to finish within the year 25 Materials Recovery Facilities (MRF) in four provinces in the region.

In a news statement, EMB Mimaropa Regional Director Atty. Michael Drake Matias said he has ordered the completion of the construction phase of MRFs in Victoria and Bulalacao in Oriental Mindoro; Abra de Ilog, Calintaan, Mamburao, Paluan, Rizal, Sablayan, and San Jose in Occidental Mindoro; Corcuera, Sta. Fe, and San Jose in Romblon; and Araceli, Balabac, Bataraza, Brooke's Point, Coron, Cuyo, Dumarán, Magsaysay, Narra, Quezon, Roxas, and Taytay in Palawan.

Mimaropa stands for Mindoro (Occidental and Oriental), Marinduque, Romblon, and Palawan.

Meanwhile, the official said 14 newly constructed MRFs in the region are set for turnover to recipient municipalities. These local government units (LGUs) include Bansud, Gloria, Pinamalayan, Puerto Galera, Roxas, and San Teodoro in Oriental Mindoro; Buenavista, Gasan, Mogpog, and Sta. Cruz in Marinduque; and Odiongan (with 2 MRFs constructed), San Agustin, and Sta. Maria in Romblon.

Upon finishing the construction, these MRFs will be turned over to the respective LGUs for their use.


This was done to assist LGUs in expediting the construction of such, as former recipient LGUs of funding assistance for MRF construction faced difficulties in looking for successful bidders for their projects, thus delaying the establishment of MRF in their area, Matias said.

In the past two years, EMB Mimaropa reported a total of 19 closed dumpsites in the region, along with four operational sanitary landfills built, and two more sets for construction.

“We highlight the importance of our successful collaboration with the LGUs in the construction of MRFs as a solution to address the improper waste management in the region and divert other wastes into something that we may still be able to utilize,” Matias said.

Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu mentioned in his report during the Pre-State of the Nation Address forum held last July 22 underscored the importance of MRF construction in the effective implementation of the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/07/31/25-mimaropa-mrfs-ready-for-turnover-to-lgus-by-year-end-dnr-exec-says/>

 Masungi Georeserve is 😊 feeling happy at Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape. 10h · Antipolo · 🌐

GOOD NEWS!

Today, Rizal PENRO Mercado, upon the instruction of DENR Secretary Cimatu & with guidance from Usec Sampulna and National Enforcement Task Force Dir. Tamera, led the demolition of illegal structures erected by a fraternity called "19th Quarters Guardians International" inside the Upper Marikina Watershed and Masungi Wildlife Sanctuary.

The DENR teams were joined by the Municipality of Baras, Rizal & 80th Infantry "Steadfast" Battalion who have supported this outcome, as well as the Police.

The "19th Quarters" also started self-demolishing and packing up their construction materials yesterday.

We commend the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and Baras under Secretary Cimatu and Mayor Robles for ultimately upholding their duty to protect Masungi and the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape.

This is a win for our threatened landscapes and should serve as a warning sign for those attempting similar rackets.

We hope that there will be NO compromises in this victory and that perpetrators and their cohorts will be filed charges and penalized accordingly. We must END the culture of impunity when it comes to forest crimes. Let us continue to be vigilant.

What can be learned from this? First, forest protection must be proactive and preventive to ensure illegal and unscrupulous occupations like this don't happen. Second, that relief from these criminal acts need to be fast and decisive to avert irreversible damage. Third, it is clear that the pandemic has given rise to opportunists who want to take advantage of nature at this difficult time. If they are not stopped, more outbreaks, landslides, flash floods, water crises, and biodiversity loss are bound to happen.

Finally, thanks to all of YOU who helped call attention to this situation from your own homes and in your own different ways. It is through your compassion and care that we are able to #SaveMasungi once again.

Much more needs to be done — here and in other forest areas in the country — but these steps in the right direction give us much-needed hope and inspiration.

Photos from Penro Rizal FB Page and Masungi Georeserve officers.
DENR CALABARZON
DENR Environmental Protection and Enforcement Task Force - EPETF
2nd Infantry Jungle Fighter Division



DENR North Samar donates confiscated forest products

By Ailene N. Diaz Published on July 30, 2020

CATARMAN, Northern Samar, July 28 (PIA) --- The Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Northern Samar Provincial Office donates confiscated forest products to the provincial government for COVID-19 purposes and for LGU's replacement of government structures devastated by Typhoon Ambo.

This was done last Saturday during the signing of Deed of Donation between the DENR represented by Assistant Regional Director for Technical Services Jose Elmer Bascos and PENRO Angelito Villanueva with Governor Edwin Marino Ongchuan and First District Representative Paul Daza represented by Police Col. Reynaldo C. Cabahug at the Provincial Motorpool, Cawayan, Catarman, Northern Samar.

The donated forest products consists of 1,410 pieces of Lauan, measuring 27,038 board feet with a market value of P1, 329,220 and 51 pieces boat keel, of 23,149,145 board feet with market value of P 1,152,820.24 were all confiscated during the operation conducted in Brgy. Happy Valley, San Isidro, Northern Samar sometime in June 2020.

"That was the biggest apprehension ever done in the whole province. Happy Valley is the hottest barangay among the hot spots in Northern Samar on timber poaching, and that was the result of intensified forest protection and strong partnership with the community, law enforcers particularly, Armed Forces of the Philippines, Philippine National Police and the provincial government of Northern Samar," said PENRO Angelito Villanueva.

In his message, Governor Edwin Marino Ongchuan commended the men and women of DENR, AFP, PNP and PGNS for a job well done and that substantial seizure is an outcome of a teamwork, "kayang-kaya, kung sama-sama."

Likewise, DENR ARD Bascos relayed the office's commendation to the efforts done by DENR Northern Samar with all partner enforcement agencies and PGNS which resulted to the successful apprehension, seizure and confiscation of that enormous forest products.

The signing was done in the presence of the DENR personnel, PIA and other law enforcement agencies. (ADiaz/PIA-N. Samar)

Endangered sea turtle released back to the ocean

Published July 30, 2020, 10:05 AM

by [Ivy Tejano](#)

DAVAO CITY – A female green sea turtle was released back to the ocean after it was accidentally caught in a fishing hook by a fisherman in Barangay Central in Mati City, Davao Oriental.



Photo from Mati CENRO/ MANILA BULLETIN

Based on the report of the Mati City Environment and Natural Resources (CENRO), the female green turtle was turned over to the City Fishery Law Enforcement Office (CFLEO) before it was referred to their office.

A group of marine conservationists from the field office, composed mainly of protected area staff under the CENRO promptly worked with the Local Government Unit (LGU), to determine the health of the turtle.

Mati CENRO said that the examination revealed the turtle is healthy and responsive. Thus, the office assisted the release of the turtle back to the oceans of the Pujada Bay Protected Landscape and Seascape on July 21.

Republic Act 9147, The Conservation and Protection of Wildlife Resources and their Habitats Law, ensures the protection and conservation of marine turtles and other wildlife in the country.

Green sea turtles are one of the five species of marine turtle that can be found in the Philippines. However, it is the only herbivore among its counterparts.

The green sea turtles are deemed endangered here in the country due to accidental bycatch, overharvesting of eggs, and habitat loss.

A green sea turtle was also rescued earlier in Santa Cruz town in Davao del Sur province, after it was found to have ingested plastic trash. The health of the turtle is still being monitored.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Davao Region (DENR-Davao) earlier appealed to the public to be observant in their surroundings.

“One of the most vulnerable are the sea turtles which, if not getting entangled or injured, dies from ingesting plastics,” the DENR-Davao said.

Apart from the environmental crisis that waste and plastic pollution cause, the agency said the lives of the marine species – whales, fishes, seabirds and turtles – are at stake.

“The DENR would like to appeal to everyone to please [be mindful and] dispose of your wastes properly. Better yet, reuse or recycle your plastic wastes. Behavioral changes go a long way,” the DENR-Davao said.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/07/30/endangered-sea-turtle-released-back-to-the-ocean/>

MGB 13, mining group lead 2020 Environment Month Celebration

By Susil D. Ragas Published on July 30, 2020

SURIGAO CITY, Surigao del Norte, July 23 (PIA) --The Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) Regional Office 13 in partnership with the Caraga Mine Environmental Management Council, Inc (CMEMCI) spearheaded the 2020 Environment Month held recently at the MGB-13 Training Center this city.

Amidst the fight against the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the Caraga mineral industry joined the celebration with this year's theme, "Protect Nature, Sustain Our Future."

The celebration was aimed to heighten public environmental consciousness and encourage the mining companies to intensify their efforts in the conservation of natural resources through the environmental video and succulent dish gardening competitions.

The entries for the said competitions were submitted to the Mine Safety, Environment and Social Development Division on July 6, exactly 12 days after the notice of competitions was communicated to the mining companies. Only a few participants from the Caraga mining companies were able to take part in the event due to the current health protocol of social distancing.

In his message, MGB-13 Regional Director Engr. Glenn Marcelo C. Noble hoped that the mineral industry will continue its work in protecting the environment and providing development in host and neighboring communities and to the country as a whole.

After the short program, the ribbon-cutting ceremony of the succulent dish garden exhibit followed. Similarly, the viewing and judging of the entries for the succulent dish gardening and environmental video competitions simultaneously took place.

The succulent dish gardening competition aimed to encourage and tap the potentials of emerging gardeners as they campaign for environmental preservation through dish gardening.

The board of judges for the said competition were Roselyn Armida Merlin from the Surigao City Tourism Office; Joel Sembrano, professional landscaper and flower arranger; and Wilmar Dubria, professional florist.

While, the environmental video competition was aimed at tapping the creative potentials of individuals to campaign for environmental preservation by capturing their vision and expressing their message through videography and can be used as their info materials.

The board of judges for the said competition were Susil Ragas from the Philippine Information Agency Surigao del Norte Information Center; Richie Reynan Tan, professional Photographer and Proprietor of Wedding and Events Digital Studio; and Guilbert Mantala, vice president for Student Services of St. Paul University Surigao.

The winners of the video making contest are: Agata Mining Ventures, Inc. for the 1st place, Mindanao Mineral Processing and Refining Corporation- 2nd place; and Hinatuan Mining Corporation for 3rd place.

MGB 13, mining group lead 2020 Environment

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Winners for the succulent dish gardening competition are: CTP Construction and Mining Corporation for the 1st place; Taganito Mining Corporation for the 2nd place; and Mindanao Mineral Processing and Refining Corporation for the 3rd place.

The winners of the said competitions were recognized during the awarding ceremony. (Lizlit C. Cabag, MGB-13/PIA-Surigao del Norte)

Tagalog News: Agilang na-rescue sa Makilala, Cotabato pinakawalan na

By PIA Cotabato City Published on July 30, 2020

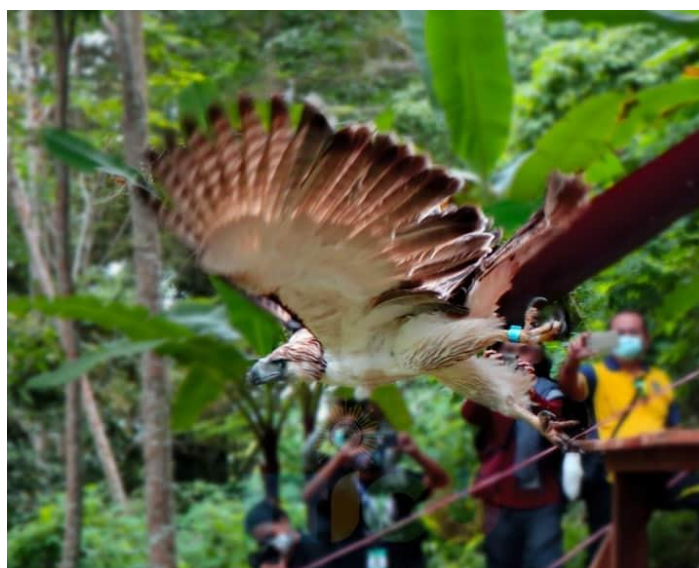


Photo from LGU Makilala

MAKILALA, Lalawigan ng Cotabato, Hulyo 30 (PIA)--- Pinakawalan na kamakalawa ang agilang na-rescue ng mga residente sa Barangay Kisante noong nakaraang buwan.

Ang agilang pinangalanang si Makilala Hiraya ay pinalipad sa kagubatan ng Barangay Batasan. Ito ay matapos manatili sa pangangalaga ng Philippine Eagle Center (PEC) sa loob ng higit isang buwan.

Naging makasaysayan naman ang pagpapakawala sa ibon dahil ito ay itinaon din sa pagdiriwang ng World Nature Conservation Day sa bayan. Ito ay pinangunahan ng mga kawani ng Philippine Eagle Foundation, lokal na pamahalaan ng Makilala, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) XII, Energy Development Corporation, at lokal na pamahalaan ng Barangay Batasan.

Si Makilala Hiraya ay na-rescue matapos pagtulungan ng mga uwak hanggang sa nahulog ito sa lupa. Agad itong itinurn-over sa PEC para sa checkup at monitoring.

Ang pinakawalang agila ay patunay na mayaman pa rin ang kagubatan ng Makilala. Para naman sa mga nais tumulong upang mapangalagaan ang mga Philippine eagle, maaaring bisitahin ang website na, www.philippineaglefoundation.org/donate. (With reports from MICO-Makilala)

Villages pour P3.5M into sanitary landfill

posted July 30, 2020 at 07:30 pm

by [Ben Moses Ebreo](#)

Quezon, Nueva Vizcaya—Village officials of the 12 barangays in this town recently poured in P3.5 million for their sanitary landfill (SLF) project.

John Babliing, barangay captain of Runruno, said setting aside funds for the landfill was the decision of the majority of barangay officials here to support the Republic Act 9003 or the Solid Waste Management Act (SWMA).

“This was our agreement so that we can already go on with our SLF project that will benefit our barangays and constituents in general,” he said.

The fund was sourced from the 2018 Annual Social Development and Management Program of the barangays funded yearly by FCF Minerals Corp.

FCF Minerals operates the gold-molybdenum project in barangay Runruno.

Babliing said the SLF will be constructed based on the national standards set by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

The landfill will address the environmental issues and concerns in the municipality, as it will also serve as a major dumping site for the growing waste among the villagers, including the mining company’s waste.

DA-led task force reactivated to deal with new avian flu cases

By [Samuel P. Medenilla](#)

July 31, 2020



THE Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases on Thursday reactivated the inter-agency task force led by the Department of Agriculture (DA) to monitor possible new cases of Avian Influenza A (H5N6) nationwide.

In its Resolution 60, series of 2020, the IATF approved the recommendation of DA for the National Avian Influenza Task Force (NAITF) to reconvene “to manage the outbreaks using multi-agency coordination and collaboration.”

“The DA is directed to strengthen coordination with the DOH [Department of Health], DENR [Department of Environment and Natural Resources], and DILG [Department of the Interior and Local Government] with LGUs [local government units] concerned to do sustained monitoring and surveillance of the Avian Influenza A (H5N6) and its possible effects to humans,” the IATF said in its two-page issuance.

It came out with the decision after the DA detected a new bird flu outbreak in a quail farm in Jaen, Nueva Ecija, in March.

The outbreak was promptly addressed by the DA, allowing it to declare last week that there is no longer any H5N6 cases in the area for the last 90 days.

The DA is still determining the cause of the latest incident of H5N6 in the country.

The last H5N6 outbreak in the country happened in 2017 in Central Luzon, which led to the culling of over 200,000 chicken layers and quails.

The strain of H5N6 which spread in the country in both times is considered “non-fatal” and not known to be transmissible to humans, according to government veterinarians.

With this in mind, the IATF ordered the DA to intensify its information campaign to assure people that chicken meat and eggs are safe for human consumption.

It also mandated the agency to strictly enforce Good Animal Husbandry Practices and enjoin the public to immediately report poultry mortalities in their respective LGUs and to the DA Regional Field Offices or the DA Bureau of Animal Industries.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/07/31/da-led-task-force-reactivated-to-deal-with-new-avian-flu-cases/>

Youth climate activism takes center stage in latest

July 31, 2020

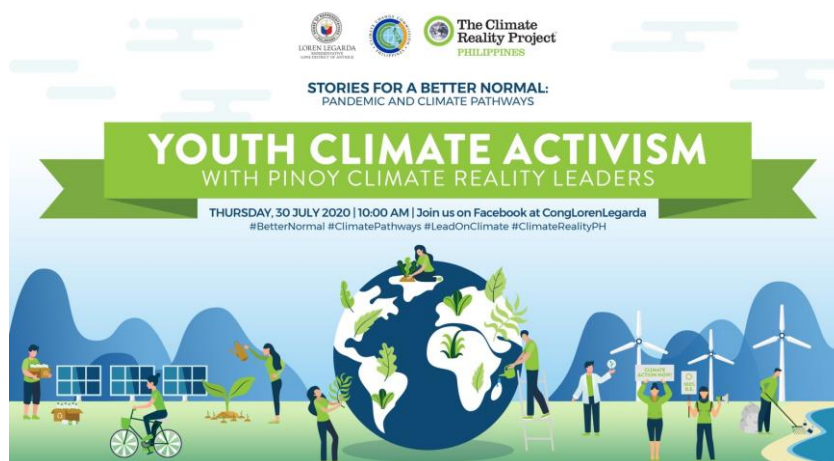
TITLE: episode of 'Stories for a Better Normal'

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Youth climate activism takes center stage in latest episode of 'Stories for a Better Normal'

By Jerome Carlo R. Paunan Published on July 30, 2020



MANILA, 29 July 2020 -- Filipino climate reality leaders including House Deputy Speaker and Antique Congresswoman Loren Legarda will gather today to highlight "Youth Climate Activism" and discuss how youth leaders are driving and sustaining their climate initiatives amid the pandemic, during the 11th episode of "Stories for a Better Normal: Pandemic and Climate Pathways."

The episode will air at 10:00 a.m. this morning, via Facebook at www.facebook.com/conglorenlegarda and www.facebook.com/CCCPh/.

Climate reality leaders are individuals from diverse backgrounds and fields of discipline who have undergone the training of The Climate Reality Project (TCRP), which is founded by former US Vice President Al Gore, a climate activist himself who was awarded the Nobel Prize for the film "An Inconvenient Truth".

Legarda recalled her visit with Al Gore in Tacloban in 2016 to talk to the families affected by Typhoon Yolanda, as well as the training of more than 800 aspiring Climate Reality Leaders, including herself, also in 2016.

In this upcoming episode, Legarda will be joined by youth Climate Reality Leaders Ms. Christine Paula Bernasor, Project Manager and Experience Designer from Talisay, Cebu; Mr. Johnny Altomonte, CEO and Founder of Verne Energy Solutions; Dr. Renzo Guinto, Chief Planetary Doctor of PH Lab; Ms. Ruzzel Morales, Committee Chairperson for Environment of the 12th National Youth Parliament; Ms. Jessica Wu, Co-founder of Lesstics; Mr. Carl Alonsagay, Project Liaison Officer of the ClimatEducate Project; and Ms. Hilary Hao, Business Development Associate of AC Infrastructure Holdings Corporation.

Mr. Ethan Spaner, Director of TCRP's International Program and Ms. Nazrin Castro, Manager of the Philippine branch of TCRP Philippines, will also join the discussion.

Legarda, author of the Climate Change Act, noted that the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) recognizes the role of youth as key actors in raising awareness, running educational programs, promoting sustainable lifestyles, conserving nature, supporting renewable energy, adopting environmentally-friendly practices, and implementing adaptation and mitigation projects.

Youth climate activism takes center stage in latest

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TITLE: episode of 'Stories for a Better Normal'

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She also noted that, according to the UN Joint Framework Initiative on Children, Youth, and Climate Change, the youth constitutes the majority of the population in many countries and have an increasingly strong social and environmental awareness. She added that youth aged 15 to 24 years represent 16% of the world population and will reach 1.3 billion people by 2030.

This upcoming episode will provide a platform for young Climate Reality Leaders to present insights and experience in helping solve the climate crisis and to call for urgent actions from the country's leaders.

As an online discussion to promote health, environmental consciousness, and climate-adaptive practices, Stories for a Better Normal aims to change the mindset of individuals, families, and communities by demonstrating ways in which a 'better normal' can be realized within our communities.

This online discussion is organized in partnership between the Office of Deputy Speaker Legarda and the Climate Change Commission, with support from the Institute for Climate and Sustainable Cities, The Climate Reality Project-Philippines, and the Mother Earth Foundation. (PIA NCR)

Advocates need to 'push hard' for rule of law amid

TITLE: deaths of environmental defenders - campaigner

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Advocates need to 'push hard' for rule of law amid deaths of environmental defenders — campaigner

Published July 30, 2020 5:17pm

By NICOLE-ANNE C. LAGRIMAS, GMA News

A lawyer and environmental activist on Thursday said advocates need to "push hard" for rule of law after the Philippines was reported to be [the second most dangerous country in the world for environmental defenders](#).

Watchdog group Global Witness has reported that 43 environmental campaigners in the Philippines were murdered in 2019. Nearly half of the killings recorded during President Rodrigo Duterte's term [have been linked to the military or paramilitary groups](#), the NGO said.

"Our Constitution is quite strong, but as advocates we need to push hard for the rule of law to be a reality in the country," Oceana Philippines' Gloria Ramos said at a webinar on the 27th anniversary of the landmark Supreme Court ruling in the case of Oposa vs. Factoran.

She said the killings are a challenge not only to environmental defenders but to human rights advocates as well. Ramos said advocates, including young leaders, need to strengthen their collaboration.

For her part, Grizelda Mayo-Anda of the Environmental Legal Assistance Center said advocates need to "build champions within government" so they can understand their opposition to mining and infrastructure projects that have harmed forests and displaced communities.

"Government officials, local officials and the security sector do not have a good sense of what environmental justice is on the ground and what environmental defenders are doing to help the government," Mayo-Anda told GMA News Online.

"Environmental problems/issues are intertwined with politics, socio-economic and cultural issues," she said.

Both Ramos and Mayo-Anda cited the new anti-terrorism law as a threat to environmental defenders.

"Many environmental defenders are opposing the Anti-Terrorism Act because some provisions contradict the Constitution and can put at risk the environmental advocacy and enforcement efforts of environmental defenders," Mayo-Anda said.

Their statements come as environmental advocates looked back on the case of the 43 children who had sought the cancellation of all timber license agreements in the Philippines, invoking their right to a balanced and healthful ecology.

Advocates need to 'push hard' for rule of law amid

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TITLE: deaths of environmental defenders - campaigner

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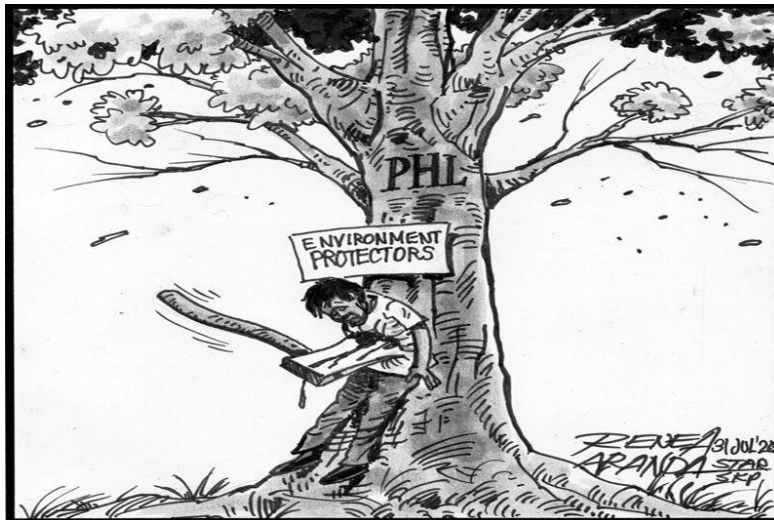
In 1993, the SC ruled that the children petitioners, represented by lawyer Antonio Oposa, Jr., had legal standing to initiate the case on their behalf and that of "generations yet unborn" based on the concept of "intergenerational responsibility."

The case reached the SC after a trial court dismissed Oposa's suit.

The SC set aside the trial court's ruling and granted the children's petition, allowing them to amend their complaint to name as defendants the holders of the questioned timber license agreements.

Through then-justice Hilario Davide, Jr., the highest Philippine court said the right to a balanced and healthful ecology "carries with it the correlative duty to refrain from impairing the environment."

On Thursday, Davide said he had "no difficulty" writing the decision, calling it "one of the noblest and glorious victories of all generations." — **BM, GMA News**



EDITORIAL - Deadliest in Asia

(The Philippine Star) - July 31, 2020 - 12:00am

Here's another dubious distinction no country wants: the Philippines is now the deadliest country in Asia, and the second in the world, for environmental defenders.

This is according to UK-based international watchdog Global Witness, which reported that worldwide, 212 land and environmental activists were murdered in 2019, with 43 of them slain in the Philippines.

The 43 is a jump from the 30 killings reported in the country in 2018, Global Witness noted. Only Colombia topped the Philippines, with 64 murders. The mining sector recorded the highest number of deaths, with 50 activists killed around the world in connection with their advocacies against the destructive impact of mineral extraction on the environment, people's land and livelihoods. Of the 50, the Philippines accounted for the highest number of deaths, with 16 fatalities. Among them was Manobo tribal leader Datu Kaylo Bontolan of Talaingod town in Davao del Norte.

Concerns have been raised over increased violence as the government reverses the mining moratorium imposed by the late Gina Lopez when she was environment secretary. President Duterte had said he shared her concerns on the destructive impact of mining on the environment, but today the government reportedly needs mining revenues to respond to the coronavirus pandemic. Industry players themselves should help see to it that no violence will mar the resumption of their operations.

Apart from destructive mining, the environmental warriors have battled agribusiness, oil and gas operations and other activities that aggravate climate change. Their concerns are best addressed through careful studies on balancing the needs of sustainable development and environmental protection. And they are best protected through the arrest and punishment of those responsible for harassment and murder.

Waste-to-Cash program launched in Manila

(The Philippine Star) - July 31, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — In a move to address the mounting plastic waste crisis, the Plastic Credit Exchange (PCEX), the country's first homegrown global non-profit plastic offset organization, together with the City of Manila, and with support of the PepsiCo Foundation recently introduced the Aling Tindera Waste-to-Cash program.

Along with their teams, 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. Among the many benefits of this project are: increased income opportunities for women micro-entrepreneurs and city residents; a more organized informal sector of waste collectors; cleaner environments and improved health.

"We couldn't be happier to work with the mayor and his team who have passionately demonstrated their commitment to the improvement of Manila. We hope that our program will have a positive impact on the city's citizens and on the environment that we all share," Medved-Po said.

Domagoso said he chose to partner with PCEX because the Aling Tindera Program is "applicable, doable, and sustainable."

"We are very grateful to [PCEX] as it will also generate some income for the community and encourage more sensible and responsible citizens to participate."

'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.

Plastic waste: Beyond 'lack of discipline'

By: [Sherma E. Benosa](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:15 AM July 31, 2020

Waste and the act of littering are very visible in the country. Plastic waste is everywhere, and people discarding their garbage in public spaces is a usual sight.

This visibility makes it challenging to bring the discourse of plastic waste beyond the issue of littering. Many are convinced we simply lack discipline.

But if it were just an issue of discipline, then why do other countries also struggle with waste? Richer countries have even illegally sent plastic waste to the country—proof that the issue is beyond us littering the streets and lacking discipline.

Fortunately, this visibility that makes it difficult for many to look beyond the obvious also exposes the type of waste that's causing the problem—single-use plastics that can't be sustainably managed, not even by their very producers. This allows us to see the real culprits: The corporations that are wantonly producing them.

Multinational corporations have long been flooding the Philippine market with single-use plastics, among them sachets. A 2019 study by the Global Alliance for Incinerator Alternatives (GAIA) showed that we generate massive amounts of single-use plastics, of which 52 percent are branded sachets. But unlike other single-use plastics, sachets have so far escaped legislation.

The good news is that a 2020 GAIA report showed that 70 percent of Filipinos are willing to regulate single-use plastics, and 52 percent are in favor of banning sachets.

The convenience and accessibility sachets offer to consumers have been overshadowing an increasingly effective, and conversely extremely harmful, marketing tactic: They serve as perpetual advertisements. Long after you consume the product you bought, the packaging it came in, marked with the product's brand and the name of the manufacturer, lingers and pollutes the environment for many years.

Worse, we're paying for the packaging of the products we purchase. Sometime last year, I compared the same product—a bread spread—that came in different packaging. Everything else was the same: brand, variety, quantity. The one in a bottle was more expensive than the one in a plastic pouch by a whopping P13. This means we're paying for the glass bottle. And the pouch? That, too—with our taxes.

How so? Single-use plastic packaging is destined for the landfill. The costs of collection, transportation, and tipping fee (the fee paid to dump a truckload of waste in a landfill) are paid for with our taxes. If the waste leaks into the environment, we also pay for the inconvenience it will cause and the hazards it will pose.

In short, the choice is either we pay for the packaging upfront (if we buy the bottled product), or we pay by shouldering the cost of its disposal (if we buy the one in pouch). Either way, it's not right.

It's time to tell corporations "enough!" and demand that they make their product delivery systems sustainable. We can't keep paying for the packaging we don't need. They need to stop producing products they themselves can't sustainably manage, and then pass the buck to the government, and ultimately to us. If small businesses can innovate, corporations should be able to follow suit—and do better—with their huge R&D budgets.

If we want to solve the plastic waste crisis, we need to identify its root causes. To do that, it's essential to go beyond what's visible or obvious.

The true reasons we're in this deep plastic crisis have been disguised strategically by peddling the false narrative about overconsumption and the lack of discipline of consumers. Unless we realize this, we will continue taking the blame for plastic pollution and feeling frustrated with everyone for their supposed lack of discipline. Meanwhile, left off the hook, the real culprits will continue flooding us with their problematic products, raking in billions in profits while also appearing as though they're the good guys.

Unfair? Then let's do something about it.

Sherma E. Benosa is the knowledge management officer of GAIA Asia Pacific.

Pia Wurtzbach takes on new role as environment ambassador

Published July 30, 2020, 7:02 AM

by [Johannes Chua](#)

Environment organization World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Philippines welcomes its newest ambassador – Miss Universe 2015 **Pia Wurtzbach**.

The third Filipina to bring home the Miss Universe crown, Pia joins the WWF family as an ally and advocate for the conservation of the Philippines' natural resources.



As an environment ambassador, Pia looks forward to learning more about sustainability and sharing messages of conservation with the rest of the country

"I've been thinking of getting involved for a while now. Especially with the Covid-19 pandemic, it made me think about my priorities and where I've been investing my time and efforts in. With what's happening in the world now, I decided it's time that I do my part. If you're thinking about getting involved, the time is now. It's not too late to #ChangeTheEnding," said Pia.

Recently, she launched her own fundraising effort amid the pandemic, with the goal of procuring and distributing 25,000 face masks to hospitals across the country. Pia has been known to use her international platform to highlight relevant issues. Named Goodwill Ambassador for Asia and the Pacific for the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV / AIDS in 2017, she has used her platform to share information on combating the virus.

Although new to the WWF-Philippines roster, she has already lent her support to a number of the organization's fundraising efforts, including a Digital Fundraising Hour held with now-fellow WWF Ambassador Jeremy Jauncey.

The fundraising hour, held on the night of July 15, saw hundreds of attendees from across the globe join the couple as they shared their experiences with conservation, as well as the sustainability practices they themselves follow. Through WWF-Philippines, Pia looks forward to learning more about sustainability and sharing messages of conservation with the rest of the country.

"Buksan natin ang mga isip at puso natin, tumingin tayo sa ating kapaligiran, ang lahat ng ito, ang lahat ng meron tayo ay may hangganan. Pero hindi pa huli ang lahat. Kung lahat po tayo ay gumagawa ng kanya kanyang paraan sa pagtulong, malayo ang mararating nito, (Let us open our minds and hearts, look at our surrounding. All of these, all of the resources we have, are finite. But it's not yet late. If we all work together to help the planet, we could go a long way)," she said.

"*Huwag po nating pabayaang ang kalikasan. Ako, ikaw, tayo po ang inaasahan niya.* (Let us not forget about the environment. It is counting on each one of us to help)."

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/07/30/pia-wurtzbach-takes-on-new-role-as-environment-ambassador/>

Mga dolphin na napadpad sa baybayin ng Antique, sinagip ng mga residente

Hulyo 30, 2020 11:12pm GMT+08:00

Apat na malalaking dolphin ang napadpad sa baybayin ng Barangay Asluman sa Hamtic, Antique nitong Huwebes ng hapon. Ang mga residente, nagtulong-tulong para maibalik sila sa malalim na bahagi ng dagat.

Ang pagsagip sa mga dolphin ay nahunan ng video ni Lyka Hermosa at ini-upload sa Facebook.

Ayon kay Hermosa, dakong 4:00 pm nang biglang magkagulo ang mga tao sa kanilang barangay nang mapansin ang paglapit sa baybay ng mga dolphin.

Sa video, makikita na malakas ang alon at kapansin-pansin na rin ang mga palikpik at buntot ng dolphin na indikasyon na nasa mababaw na bahagi na sila ng baybayin.

Kaagad na lumapit ang mga tao at itinutulak nila ang mga dolphin pabalik sa malalim na bahagi ng dagat.

Dalawa sa mga dolphin ang nakabalik sa malalim na bahagi ng dagat habang nanghihina naman at may sugat umano ang dalawa kaya ipinagbigay alam nila ito sa Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources.

Wala pang paliwanag kung bakit napadpad sa lugar ang mga dolphin, na unang pagkakataon daw na nangyari sa kanilang lugar, ayon kay Hermosa.

Batid daw nila sa barangay na dapat protektahan ang mga dolphin kaya hindi nila sinaktan o hinuli ang mga ito.--**Peewee C. Bacuño/FRJ, GMA News**

MMC recommends extension of GCQ in NCR



Metro Manila Mayors have recommended the extension of the General Community Quarantine in the National Capital Region (NCR) to the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID).

According to Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) Chairperson Danilo Lim, the Metro Manila Council (MMC) had an emergency meeting Wednesday night and came up with the decision. Various aspects were considered such as the number of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) cases and restarting the economy.

“Tiningnan natin ‘yung mga data, mga epidemiological data and ‘yung mga analysis. Sa tingin ng members ng IATF [ay] okay lang na i-maintain’yung ating present status na GCQ but emphasis sa lockdowns ng severely affected areas. (We reviewed the data, the epidemiological data and analysis. The members of the IATF think that it is okay to maintain the present status (GCQ) but there should be an emphasis in lockdowns on severely affected areas).”

Meanwhile, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu has recommended placing Cebu City under General Community Quarantine since the situation is getting better in the city.

Report from Patrick De Jesus

House hastens passing of Bayanihan II measures

Published 12 hours ago on July 30, 2020 05:48 PM

By **TDT**



President Rodrigo Duterte delivers his fifth State of the Nation Address at the House of Representatives Complex on Monday. (Photo: PCOO)

The House of Representatives is set to pass a set of vital bills under its Bayanihan II Act package aimed to save the economy from further damage due to recessions triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mentioned as priority measures by President Rodrigo Duterte during his fifth State of the Nation Address (SoNA) on Monday were the Financial Institutions Strategy Transfer (FIST), Government Financial Institutions Unified Initiatives to Distressed Enterprises for Economic Recovery (GUIDE) and MSME regularization program.

Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, chair of the House Ways and Means Committee, said the Lower House hopes to pass the three bills in one package, within this week if possible.

The FIST bill aims to help financial institutions in their bad debt resolution and management of non-performing assets (NPAs) to cushion the adverse impact of the pandemic.

NPAs consist of non-performing loans (NPLs), real estate properties, and other assets acquired in settlement of loans and receivables.

The GUIDE measure seeks to strengthen the capacity of government financial institutions, including the Philippine Guarantee Corp., Land Bank of the Philippines and the Development Bank of the Philippines, to provide needed assistance to micro, small and medium enterprise and other strategically important business ventures.

President Duterte included some of Salceda's bills as priority measures, topped by House Bill 0030 or the Department of Disaster Resilience Act (DDRA), which recently passed the House committee level as HB 5989.

Another bill was the recalibrated tax reform package, now called the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises Act or CREATE (HB 4157), that is seen to produce some 1.1 million jobs in five years.

"We in the economic team of the House of Representatives take the President's requests for the quick passage of a second stimulus package and of the Create bill as clear and unambiguous directions for where we should go," Salceda said.

"The President's request is a recognition of the many months of work of the Economic Stimulus Recovery Cluster and the Ways and Means Committee. Rest assured that we will continue to work to get them enacted as soon as possible, by this week if my colleagues and the Senate agree."

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/07/30/house-hastens-passing-of-bayanihan-ii-measures/>



Seven senators have filed Resolution No. 479 seeking a special audit of all state spending under the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act, a law that provided President Duterte emergency powers to fight the pandemic.

The STAR/Felicer Santos, file

Palace welcomes audit of COVID-19 expenses

[Alexis Romero](#) (The Philippine Star) - July 31, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Malacañang is open to a special audit of the expenses, loans and donations related to the government's pandemic response, saying all funds were spent for programs designed to contain the coronavirus disease.

Seven senators have filed Resolution No. 479 seeking a special audit of all state spending under the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act, a law that provided President Duterte emergency powers to fight the pandemic.

The resolution, signed by Sens. Risa Hontiveros, Ralph Recto, Sonny Angara, Panfilo Lacson, Franklin Drilon, Francis Pangilinan and Leila de Lima, cited purchases "marred by allegations of overpricing," including the procurement of automated nucleic acid extractors, personal protective equipment (PPE) sets and the importation of RT-PCR test kits from China and South Korea.

Senators also asked the Commission on Audit (COA) to present its findings before the 2021 budget deliberations.

"The President and Malacañang are not hiding anything," presidential spokesman Harry Roque said at a press briefing yesterday.

"All the funds spent for COVID-19 went to the government's COVID-19 response," he added.

Roque said the administration had regularly submitted to Congress reports on how the funds had been spent while the Bayanihan To Heal As One Act was still in effect.

"Nonetheless, since we are not hiding anything, we welcome the special audit, noting that it would be audited anyway by COA because COA conducts post-audits," the Palace spokesman said.

Roque said he would present on Monday data on the government's expenditures for pandemic-related programs and items.

Carlito Galvez Jr., chief implementer of the COVID-19 national policy, said efforts were made to buy cheaper but quality medical supplies. He said the government buys directly from manufacturers to lower costs.

“You can be assured that all funds intended for COVID-19 were used to buy our needs. The President has given us a personal instruction to ensure that the money should go to hospitals, testing and other intended recipients,” Galvez said.

Galvez said the government also coordinated with foreign embassies to lower the prices of equipment to be purchased.

“Our President talks to leaders so we can have what we call a direct procurement, so we won’t need to deal with suppliers,” he added.

Meanwhile, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) will continue to tap the military and the police for its “muscle” in the distribution of the second tranche of the P5,000 to P8,000 emergency cash subsidy under the Social Amelioration Program (SAP).

The arrangement was stipulated in Joint Memorandum Circular No. 2 the DSWD signed with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the Department of National Defense (DND).

The DILG has supervision over the Philippine National Police while the Armed Forces of the Philippines is under the DND. – **Rainier Allan Ronda**

PH COVID-19 cases breach 89,000 mark

Published 8 hours ago on July 30, 2020 10:24 PM

By [Gabbie Parlade](#)



A driver of ride-hailing app Grab is swabbed as part of a COVID-19 test at the Quezon City Memorail Circle. (Photo by Analy Labor)

Cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in the Philippines breached the 89,000 mark on Thursday surpassing China as the country with the highest tally of infections in the West Pacific Region.

With 3,954 new cases on Thursday which is considered the highest single-day increase recorded by the Department of Health (DoH) since the first tabulation of data, there are now 89,374 COVID-19 cases in the country.

The number of recoveries from COVID-19 also increased to 65,078 after 38,075 additional survivors were recorded Thursday.



However, there was a decline in the number of active cases from more than 56,000 to only 22,327.

In a statement, the DoH said the large increases were attributed to the COVID-19 Surveillance and Quick Action Unit that was established earlier this month in the focus of data validation.

“These massive data reconciliation efforts have resulted in faster and more accurate tagging of health statuses-particularly on deaths and recoveries. Data on recovery reconciliations will be reported every 15 days,” DoH said.

With this, over 3,000 unreported recoveries were identified which happened from 12 to 14 July.

In addition to that, 5,000 more individuals from mild and asymptomatic cases have also been re-tagged as recovered with validated results from the regional offices of DoH.

This in relation to the earlier DoH memorandum released where mild and asymptomatic cases can be tagged as recovered if no symptoms have surfaced after 14 days of their mandated quarantine period.

DoH said it is due to the current findings that COVID-19 patients lose their infectiousness on the 10th day of their illness.

“This clinical recovery protocol is followed by the US CDC [Centers for Disease Control Prevention], European CDC, and India,” they said.

However, the health department reiterated that only after the 14 days isolation period and with assessment by a licensed physician can an individual be fully considered as a recovered patient.

Worldwide over 17 million individuals have contracted the virus with the global tally of deaths at 667,693, according to Johns Hopkins University.

p: wjg



This was according to Carlito Galvez Jr., chief implementer of the COVID-19 policy, who also stressed the need for government to strike a balance between ensuring public health and reopening the economy.

Michael Varcas

Government pandemic plan now in 'critical' phase

[Alexis Romero](#) (The Philippine Star) - July 31, 2020 - 12:00am

LGUs, private sector get COVID-19 response burden

MANILA, Philippines — The government's pandemic action plan is now in its "critical" phase, requiring "aggressive" testing and isolation of infected persons as well as greater involvement of local officials, especially in the enforcement of localized lockdowns.

This was according to Carlito Galvez Jr., chief implementer of the COVID-19 policy, who also stressed the need for government to strike a balance between ensuring public health and reopening the economy.

"In the second phase of our operational design, the challenge is to contain and manage the emerging new cases (while) at the same time, how we can continue our capacity building, particularly the expansion of our ICU (intensive care unit) beds and the resiliency of our vulnerable community," Galvez said at a press briefing yesterday.

"What we will do in the second phase is we will shift the role to the LGUs (local government units), just like what (Quezon City) Mayor Joy (Belmonte) is doing, localized lockdown," he said. "The implementation of different strategies on prevention, detection, isolation, treatment and reintegration will be given to the LGUs."

Galvez explained that the first phase of the action plan was implemented from March to June, while the second phase would be enforced from July to September. The third phase, meanwhile, will start in October and last until December.

"If we look at the data, there is an increase in new cases because we have loosened our restrictions, at the same time we have what we call the opening of the economy... So, in order to effectively manage COVID cases, the responsibility now shifts to the LGU and to the private companies and to the individual citizen," he said.

"We are enjoining all the LGUs, the private companies and the individual citizens to share the responsibility by having what we call the localized lockdown in barangay and street, building and massive education info campaign for the strict enforcement and discipline on the minimum health standard," he pointed out.

In a separate interview, Galvez also thumbed down the proposal for total lockdown in cities and provinces across the country, saying a better option is "targeted and surgical" lockdowns. Negros Occidental Gov. Eugenio Jose Lacson, for one, emphasized that the province cannot afford to go back to the strictest enhanced community quarantine (ECQ).

"Just to feed our constituents is impossible, no Bayanihan grant part 2 is forthcoming," Lacson said.

Sen. Sonny Angara also cited the dangers of Metro Manila reverting to modified ECQ.

"The economy will probably collapse if we go back to MECQ and we're just postponing the inevitable, because that type of approach, it's not really the model approach," Angara said in an interview over ANC. "The model approach is trying to live with COVID, not trying to avoid COVID. At some point in time, you have to face it and you have to learn how to live with the virus, you have to increase your testing," Angara added.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque Jr. said some of the new initiatives to combat the disease – including pooled testing – will start in Metro Manila.

"So it's not completely an experiment. Perhaps the right term is 'pilot' and 'modeling.' Perhaps 'experiment' is not the right word. But we have not done pooled testing in the Philippines, although it was conducted in Wuhan, in South Korea, Vietnam, South Korea, Germany, Israel, places that were able to control the spread of COVID-19," Roque said.

Roque previously said the government would adopt an "invigorated" response to COVID-19 to address the spike in infections.

In a television interview last Wednesday, Roque said there would be "major changes" in the way the government handles the crisis, including building more isolation facilities and expanding testing efforts.

The Palace spokesman has also declared that Metro Manila would be a "living experiment" that the government would be successful at.

Galvez admitted that the spike in cases in Cebu City was caused by "inefficiency" in contact tracing.

"We will focus on prevention, detection, tracing and testing and efficient isolation... We also have to remind our people that they have to implement minimum health standards," the chief implementer of the government's pandemic policy said.

"On how to immediately address the current surge, we will conduct what we call aggressive testing, especially during the lockdowns, and effective contact tracing," he added.

Roque had also said about 60,000 Grab drivers would undergo PCR testing as part of the "invigorated" COVID-19 response.

Keep GCQ for Metro

In a radio interview aired over dzMM, Metro Manila Council chairman and Parañaque City Mayor Edwin Olivarez said the consensus among metro mayors is the extension of general community quarantine (GCQ).

He said it's a position they already relayed to the regional director of the Department of the Interior and Local Government on Wednesday.

"Most mayors want an extended GCQ," Olivarez said in Filipino.

In reaching the consensus, he said the mayors acknowledged the importance of opening the economy while stopping the spread of COVID-19 at the same time.

"We know how hard it is for the public, but we could not prejudice the health protocols to fight off COVID-19," the mayor stressed.

Olivarez, in the same interview, said local chief executives are also pushing for more localized lockdowns, already enforced in some cities. He said though that President Duterte would have the final say.

The Philippines, as of Wednesday, logged 85,486 COVID-19 cases, with 26,996 recoveries and 1,962 deaths.

Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) chairman Danilo Lim, for his part, said there was "no clamor" from Metro Manila mayors to revert to the stricter MECQ status next month.

He said the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) will also recommend to the President an extension of GCQ in Metro Manila in August.

"It is not true that Metro Manila mayors recommended going back to MECQ. The recommendation of the IATF is to maintain the GCQ over Metro Manila. But that is not final, it still depends on the President's approval," Lim said.

"There is no clamor to go back to MECQ. That is false news," Lim added.

But Navotas Mayor Toby Tiangco said there was no discussion about the community quarantine status during the meeting, and that the meeting focused on curfew.

Caloocan administrator Oliver Hernandez, meanwhile, urged barangay officials to hold off issuing quarantine passes in preparation for a more stringent quarantine protocol in the city.

Without disclosing the city government's plan, Hernandez pleaded for residents to wait for city hall's announcement on a new system for quarantine passes.

"We will let you know about the effectivity of the new quarantine pass soon," Hernandez said.

Meanwhile, Philippine National Police (PNP) deputy chief for operations Lt. Gen. Guillermo Eleazar ordered police commanders to coordinate with barangay officials in enforcing health rules like the mandatory wearing of face masks and physical distancing.

Eleazar said tanods or village watchmen would enforce health protocols with guidance from policemen acting as quarantine control supervisors.

"The designation of QCS, or the PNP's COVID Focal Persons, in every barangay in the country will help strengthen our fight to prevent the spread and further transmission of the coronavirus by making sure that the minimum health standard protocols would be properly and strictly enforced down to the barangay level," he said in a statement.

"With the PNP and the local government units down to the barangay level now working together, we are confident that this will contribute a lot (to stop) the spread of the virus," he said. – **Ralph Villanueva, Cecille Suerte Felipe, Marc Jayson Cayabyab, Gilbert Bayoran, Emmanuel Tupas**

PUBLIC SCHOOLS KARAMBOLA SA PAG-SOLICIT; BLENDED LEARNING PAPALPAK



July 30, 2020 @ 9:45 AM 22 hours ago

Todo-karambola sa pag-solicit ngayon ang public schools para sa Brigada Eskwela kung tawagin at nakaugnay ito sa tinatawag na blended learning.

Gaya ng alam na ng lahat, bunga ang blended learning program ng Department of Education ng pagsalakay at paglaganap ng nakamamatay at wala pang lunas na coronavirus disease-19.

Sa karanasan ng ating Uzi na nahingan ng tulong ng mga public school, may mahabang listahan ang mga titser at kitang-kita ang doble o tripleng bigat ng pasanin para sa blended learning kumpara sa pangangailangan sa ordinaryo at umiiral na Brigada Eskwela na walang blended learning.

Pakiramdam ng ating Uzi, talagang napakabigat na ang kalagayan sa edukasyon ngayon dahil sa kawalan ng maayos na trabaho at pagkakitaan ng higit na nakararami dahil sa COVID-19.

Sa partikular, nakikiagaw umano ang blended learning sa kakarampot na kita ng mga magulang para sa pangangailangan ng mga pamilya, lalo na sa hanay ng mga ordinaryong empleyado ng pamahalaan at pribadong kompanya, obrero, tsuper, vendor, mangingisda, magsasaka at iba pang biglang nagbago at naging mahirap ang kalagayan sa trabaho at kita.

BAGSAK ANG ENROLLMENT

Ayon sa ulat mismo ng DepEd, nasa 20 milyon pa lang ang nakapag-enroll mula sa inaasahang 27 milyong estudyante para sa kinder, elementarya, high school at senior high school.

Nagsisilipatan naman ang maraming estudyante mula sa mga pribadong eskwela sa mga pampublikong eskwela at may nakarekord nang mahigit sa 300,000 lumipat.

Malaking usapin ang pitong milyong mawawala sa listahan ng mga estudyante.

Mabuti kung ganito lang ang larawan ng edukasyon.

Ito'y dahil iba ang pagpapa-enroll sa aktwal na pagpapaaral.

Madali lang ang pagpapa-enroll dahil halos walang gastos ang mga magulang o working student.

Pero pagpasok mismo ng mga estudyante sa oras ng pag-aaral, dito na ramdam ang bigat ng programang blended learning.

ANG BRIGADA ESKWELA

Kaya mismo ng DepEd ang magtayo ng mga sistema para sa online classes na hawak ng mga titser sa programang blended learning bilang bahagi ng Brigada Eskwela.

Sa napataas nang sahod ng mga titser, kaya nilang sumabay sa mga gastos sa pagsusulong ng online classes pero tinatamaan pa rin sila sa karambola sa gastos na hindi na lang nila sinasabi sa DepEd.

Sa parte naman ng mga magulang, lumalabas na kinailangang gumastos ang mga ito ng tamang gadget gaya ng mga computer at laptop at hindi lang cellphone at nagkakahalaga ang mga ito ng P15,000 para sa pinakamababang uri.

Iba pa ang buwanang load o bayarin sa wifi at kuryenteng likha ng paggamit ng mga gadget at mantinansya kung nagloko ang mga ito.

Para naman sa mga gagamit ng papel sa hindi face-to-face classes, nagkakarambola rin ang mga titser sa panghihingi ng tulong.

Marami palang iskul ang walang sariling copying o printing machine at napakagastos sa papel ang pagpaparami ng tinatawag nilang printed module na dapat nilang ipamahagi sa daan-daan o libo-libong estudyante.

Kaya naman, animo'y namamalimos na ang mga titser ng pambili ng papel at kung may printer naman sila, ng pambili naman ng ink.

Kasama rin sa mga hinihingi ng mga guro ang alcohol, disinfectant, face mask, face shield at maraming iba pa.

Taliwas na taliwas ang kalagayang ito sa pangako ng pamahalaan na libreng pag-aaral sa lahat ng antas ng edukasyon sa ilalim ng DepEd at pahirap ang blended learning sa lahat ng biktima ng COVID-19.

Sa mga nakasasakop ng mga kinder at elementarya, mas madali ang transaksyon sa blended learning sa Brigada Eskwela dahil malapitan lang ang pisikal na ugnayan ng mga titser at estudyante.

Subalit para sa mga nakasasakop sa high at senior high schools na nanggagaling sa iba't iba at malalayong barangay o bayan ang mga estudyante, malaking gastos ito na may kasamang pagod sa parte ng mga titser sa pakikipag-ugnayan nang pisikal sa mga ito.

KALAGAYAN NG MGA MAGULANG

Lumalabas na tanging ang mga may permanenteng posisyon sa gobyerno, gaya ng mga titser, ang kayang kumapit sa napakabigat na blended learning at Brigada Eskwela.

Sa bahagi ng pribadong sektor, tanging ang malalaking kompanya ang nagkaroon ng kakayahan na mantinihin ang mga permanente nilang empleyado o obrero.

Pero higit na nakararami, pinaiiiral na ang no work, no pay at sinibak na nila ang mga permanente nilang empleyado at obrero at tanging pakiusap na lang ng Department of Labor and Employment, bigyan ang mga ito ng maayos na separation pay.

Subalit, maging ang pamimigay ng maayos na separation pay ay hindi basta maibibigay ng mga nasa pribadong sektor dahil sa pagsasara o paghihingalo ng kanilang mga kompanya o negosyo.

Pero hindi basta ganito ang larawan sa pribadong industriya.

Maliban sa no work, no pay, salit-salitan na rin ang pagpasok gaya ng 2-3 beses lamang sa isang Linggo.

Bumagsak din ang mga magulang na nabubuhay sa paglalako ng pawis sa ibang bansa o overseas Filipino workers kung tawagin.

Dati-rati, sila ang suki ng mga ordinaryong private school subalit ngayon, sila ang naglilipat ng kanilang mga anak sa mga pampublikong paaralan.

MALAKING TANONG

Kung may pitong milyon ang hindi nakapag-enroll para sa school year 2020-2021, hindi kaya milyon-milyon din ang mag-dropout habang pumapasok sa iskul sa blended learning?

Ito'y dahil sa hirap sa buhay na dinaranas ngayon ng mga magulang o sinomang nagpapaaral sa mga bata?

MAKINIG SA PANGULO

Sa kanyang State of the Nation Address, sinabi ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na pupwedeng mabawi ang anomang mawawala sa edukasyon kung walang pasok ngunit ang buhay na mawawala sa COVID-19, hindi na muling mababawi.

Sa blended learning na gustong pairalin at simulan ng DepEd sa Agosto 24, 2020, maghahalo-halo ang face-to-face classes, online at study-at-home na istayl sa pag-aaral.

Ang sistemang face-to-face, malaki ang posibilidad ito na pagmulan ng paglaganap ng COVID-19 kahit pa paiiralin ang social distancing at pagsusuot ng face mask sa mga classroom.

Ang study-at-home naman ay nangangailangan din ng face-to-face na maaaring minsan isang Linggo o dalawang Linggo at para sa mga nasa high at senior high school, dahil sa layo ng marami sa eskwela, kailangan nilang bumiyahe at mae-expose rin sa COVID-19 sa pamamagitan ng mga pampublikong transportasyon at mismo sa loob ng mga iskul.

Maging ang mga may online classes ay hindi maaaring walang pisikal na kontak sa pagitan ng mga titser at estudyante, lalo na't walang maayos na koneksyon sa internet at kung meron man, napakabagal naman na sumisira sa oras ng pag-aaral.

Ngayon, ipinahiwatig ng Pangulo ang hirap ng pagkakaroon ng klase, lalo't wala pang malinaw na gamot laban sa COVID-19.

Ipipilit ba ng DepEd ang pagbubukas ng klase sa lahat ng pampublikong paaralan sa Agosto sa gitna ng halo-halong problema sa blended learning at Brigada Eskwela?

Dapat makinig ang may pandinig!

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/public-schools-karambola-sa-pag-solicit-blended-learning-papalpak/>



In a statement, Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi hailed the signing of EO 116 which, he said, is a “major step towards the realization of a Philippine nuclear energy program.”

Philstar.com/File Photo

Duterte backs study on revival of nuclear energy

[Danessa Rivera](#) (The Philippine Star - July 31, 2020 - 12:00am)

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Energy (DOE) said it would continue working with global experts in nuclear energy after President Duterte signed an executive order (EO) supporting the Philippine nuclear energy program.

In a statement, Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi hailed the signing of EO 116 which, he said, is a “major step towards the realization of a Philippine nuclear energy program.”

EO 116 provides for the creation of the Nuclear Energy Program Inter-Agency Committee (NEP-IAC) to be chaired by the DOE, with the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) as vice chair.

The inter-agency body is mandated to primarily conduct a study for the adoption of a National Position on a Nuclear Energy Program (NEP).

EO 116 requires the NEP-IAC to submit an initial report to the Office of the President within six months or by January 2021.

Funding for the body’s operational expenses will be charged against the DOE budget, and other funding sources that may be identified by the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

“The Department of Energy welcomes EO116 as a major step towards the realization of a Philippine nuclear energy program – one which would benefit our people by enhancing our energy supply levels and help shield our consumers from traditional power price volatilities,” Cusi said.

The DOE has been pushing for the development of nuclear power, which is seen as a reliable alternative to attain energy sufficiency and meet future power demands.

With the signing of the EO, Cusi said the government will continue to work closely with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and other experts to realize the inclusion of nuclear power in the country’s existing energy mix in the future.

The Philippines—through NEPIO—has been working on completing the country’s nuclear assessment based on the 19 issues laid down by the IAEA.

The Philippines—through NEPIO—has been working on completing the country’s nuclear assessment based on the 19 issues laid down by the IAEA.

The list includes forming a national position; a wide stakeholder participation; laying down the policy of legal framework; consultation of all related industries to nuclear; creating a regulatory framework; compliance with safety requirement; ensuring security; proper waste disposal; radiation protection; emergency planning; environmental protection; financing; considerations; source of fuel; human resources; grid capability; procurement; and management of the plant.

“I believe that once we have successfully addressed infrastructure gaps as identified by the IAEA, and we have fulfilled all other necessary national requirements, our people and future generations will reap the economic benefits a nuclear energy program brings,” Cusi said.

The DOE chief submitted in 2018 a proposed national policy on nuclear energy to President Duterte for approval.

The proposed national position not only covers the use of the mothballed Bataan Nuclear Power Plant (BNPP) but also the development of modular nuclear power plants across the country.

In the issuance of the EO, the President cited the imperative need to revisit the country’s policy on nuclear energy and to determine its feasibility as a long term option for power generation.

Aside from the DOE and the DOST, the inter-agency body will include Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Finance (DOF), Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA), National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA), National Power Corp. (NPC), National Transmission Corp. (Transco), Philippine Nuclear Research Institute (PNRI) and Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs).

Specifically, EO 116 tasked the NEP-IAC to conduct a prefeasibility study to evaluate and assess the need for and viability of introducing nuclear power into the state’s energy mix, taking into consideration economic, security and environmental implications, and engagement of the public and relevant stakeholders.

The inter-agency committee would also evaluate and formulate a national strategy to include a roadmap and timeline in the preparation of a NEP, as well as measures to address infrastructure gaps and issues, and make appropriate recommendations.

It would also review the existing legal framework, study the viability of nuclear energy, and recommend the necessary steps in the utilization of nuclear energy, as well as existing facilities such as but not limited to the BNPP.

The NEP-IAC should also facilitate decision-making on various issues that may arise in the course of study through the creation of sub-committees, as well as promulgate guidelines and rules for the effective implementation of EO 116.

DFA chief asserts PH Sabah claim; summons Malaysian envoy

By Joyce Ann L. Rocamora July 30, 2020, 12:32 pm



Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin, Jr. (DFA photo)

MANILA – Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr. on Thursday said he would summon the Malaysian Ambassador to the Philippines following a Twitter spat with Foreign Minister Hishammuddin Hussein over Sabah.

In a series of tweets, the Filipino top diplomat stressed that Manila would never abandon its claim over the territory.

"No country can tell another what it can and cannot say about what the latter regards as rightfully its own. I don't insist China say only what we want to hear about the Arbitral Award. It is free to say what it wants while we say and do what needs doing. That holds for Sabah," he said.

The Twitter spat was sparked by a July 27 tweet posted at the United States Embassy in Manila page, which tagged Sabah as part of Malaysia.

Locsin berated the embassy and quote-retweeted the content, saying: "Sabah is not in Malaysia if you want to have anything to do with the Philippines."

On Wednesday night, Hussein responded by calling Locsin's remarks as "irresponsible" while underscoring that "Sabah is, and will always be, part of Malaysia" and that Philippine Ambassador to Kuala Lumpur Charles Jose will be summoned on Monday over the issue.

In a prior tweet, Locsin said Manila continues to assert its claims on Sabah as it does with its rights in the West Philippine Sea. "There have been repeated attempts to sell that claim but to no Philippine president has succumbed."

With the Philippines' firm position on Sabah, the top diplomat noted that Manila's envoy being summoned "was bound to happen".

"They are always trying to sneak in an attempt to implicitly abandon our claim. But I warned our diplomats. Never," he said. **(PNA)**

Water concessionaires offer reprieve to residential customers until September

Published 15 hours ago on July 30, 2020 03:05 PM

By [Maria Romero](#)



All Manila Water Company, Inc. (Manila Water) and Maynilad Water Services, Inc. (Maynilad) residential customers are given a reprieve until the end of September to settle their “quarantine” bills.

In an advisory on Thursday, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) Board of Trustees (BOT) directed the water concessionaires to extend the grace period of bills settlement to help customers cope with the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic.

During the period, the concessionaires are also mandated to suspend water service disconnection activities, resolve billing inquiries and complaints, and provide customers ample time to update payments for accumulated water bills.

MWSS issued the directive based on “humanitarian and public health considerations” and to provide further economic relief to customers in addition to the staggered and installment payment schemes for water bills.

On Wednesday, the MWSS Regulatory Office (RO) also issued a show-cause order to Manila Water and Maynilad over the reported spikes in utility bills issued to customers during lockdown.

The RO order was prompted by over 400 billing complaints from customers. The complaints were similar to issues raised against power distributor Meralco for overstated charges after resorting to average billing.

MWSS pointed out that the firms were unable to verify the consumption patterns of customers, check for irregularities, and automatically withhold billing statements that have observed significant deviation and will need adjustments.

The MWSS previously said a spike in water consumption is expected in Metro Manila as people are advised to observe proper hygiene against COVID-19.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/07/30/water-concessionaires-offer-reprieve-to-residential-customers-until-september/>

Landslides reported in Romblon, S. Cotabato due to continuous rains

Published July 30, 2020 10:03pm

Several incidents of landslides were reported in the country due to continuous rains, according to Nathaniel “Mang Tani” Cruz’s report on “24 Oras.”

In Calatrava, Romblon, soil and big rocks blocked the roads. Authorities had to use a backhoe to remove the rocks.

Landslides also caused trouble for several motorcycle riders in Koronadal, South Cotabato.

Despite the danger, some drivers attempted to cross the muddy and rock-filled path. One of the riders could be seen almost sliding down from a slope as he attempted to cross.

The southwest monsoon [is expected to bring monsoon rains](#) over Batanes, Cagayan including the Babuyan group of Islands, Isabela, Pangasinan, Zambales, Bataan, Aurora, Palawan, and the Mindoro Provinces. — **Joahna Lei Casilao/BM, GMA News**

Trade barriers are slowing action on plastic pollution.

July 31, 2020

TITLE: Here's how to fix that.

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Trade barriers are slowing action on plastic pollution. Here's how to fix that.

With cross-border frictions preventing economies of scale in tackling plastic pollution, facilitating trade can help the world reduce, re-use and recycle. This calls for better collaboration between governments and firms.



From 2021, plastic waste that is sorted, clean, uncontaminated and effectively designed for recycling can be traded freely. This could help improve plastic waste management and reduce leakage into the environment. Image: Pikist

By [Kristin Hughes](#) and [Kimberley Botwright](#)

July 30, 2020

Plastic pollution action has been slowed down considerably by the Covid-19 pandemic – but there's a new emerging angle that could help rebuild momentum behind our transition to a greener and more circular society. Governments at the World Trade Organization (WTO) are showing [increased interest](#) in tackling plastic pollution.

In a world of global value chains and integrated markets, there is an important cross-border component, both existing and potential, to ramping up efforts on plastic action. Until recently, limited plastics recycling efforts often involved exports, the overwhelming majority of which flowed to China. These flows have become a source of controversy due to waste dumping and inadequate infrastructure for proper disposal.

In 2018, China introduced a ban on certain plastic waste imports, a move followed by several other countries. Subsequently, in May 2019, the 187 parties to the Basel Convention—a treaty on the transboundary movement and disposal of hazardous and other wastes—added most types of plastic waste to the list of controlled wastes. From 2021, plastic waste that is sorted, clean, uncontaminated and effectively designed for recycling can be traded freely, while other types will require the consent of importing and transit countries.

These changes could prove positive to improve plastic waste management and reduce leakage into the environment. Yet, without additional implementation efforts, a risk of increased trade frictions develops that could stymie global plastics recycling markets. Such frictions have not developed to date, but trade facilitation measures to aid reduction and re-use have also not been enough in focus.

The World Economic Forum recently gathered a group of experts from consumer goods brands, industries, governments and civil society to discuss the role that trade could play in advancing action on plastic pollution. The result of that initial cross-sector discussion—as well as the many that followed—have led to a new community paper that outlines trade barriers to accelerating action on plastic pollution.

We hope that trade policymakers and environment practitioners alike will find this paper a helpful resource to aid their discussions and promote new supportive actions for the 3Rs—reduce, re-use and recycle.

Trade barriers are slowing action on plastic pollution.

July 31, 2020

TITLE: Here's how to fix that.

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1. Domestic bans and slow approvals curb recycled plastic use

Countries' regulations determine which items can be brought into a market. In addition to bans on plastic waste imports, several countries have implemented more complex rules on high-quality recycling plastic imports, which limits the use of recycled plastic packaging. Further, in other cases, manufacturers have had to switch to virgin plastic inputs for certain consumer goods, as the same quality of recycled plastic could not be sourced in the domestic market. Some markets have slow regulatory approval processes regarding the use of recycled plastic products.

2. Diverse standards and limited data are complicating circular supply chains

In a world of value chains, differences in standards create challenges – whether on recycled plastic production, use or labelling. Varying grades of plastic by producers require recyclers to create different recycled plastic grades that add to costs. Missing information on materials' properties complicates recycling processes since certain additives can pose risks to human or ecological health during the mechanical recycling process.

The absence of traceability and data shortages, meanwhile, creates uncertainty on what materials are where in the market—especially for recycled content.

3. More efforts are needed to facilitate circular plastics investments worldwide

Part of the challenge in building a circular plastics economy lies in insufficient investment upstream and downstream in emerging and advanced economies alike. There is a need to incubate and scale innovations and new ventures – including new material design and new businesses models – and to close the operational financing gap for city-level waste collection and recycling systems while mobilising capital investments for circular options and waste management more broadly.

Circular plastics investments can be slowed down or sped up based on several factors, not least the regulatory environment, local infrastructure and skills, incentives, government procurement policies and overall investment assistance. Facilitating and attracting investment in sustainable plastic solutions by matching solution providers with public and private funding opportunities will also help to close this gap.

4. Processes

From 2021, most plastic waste trade will be subject to the Basel Convention prior informed consent ([PIC](#)) [procedure](#) as controlled waste. Interviews with companies highlighted that to date some countries lack the capacity to efficiently review and process PIC notifications. In many cases, documents are still in paper format causing long delays in shipments.

So, what role can trade policy and capacity building play in tackling these challenges? Our community put forward ideas for further exploration in three areas, complemented by regulatory cooperation:

1. Border measures

Efforts can be made to refine the Harmonized System (HS) classifications, an international classification for traded goods, which does not yet distinguish between hard- and easy-to-recycle plastic waste, nor between virgin and recycled plastics. Doing so could help ensure traded waste for circular economy objectives is more easily identified and policies adapted. The Basel Convention secretariat is drafting proposed amendments in this [space](#).

For example, trade in easy-to-recycle plastics could be encouraged by placing lower tariffs on these specific kinds of plastics. Countries could equally ban exports of plastic types that are restricted domestically to avoid the dumping of lower-quality materials in foreign markets.

Links could be made between capacity building around the WTO Trade Facilitation Agreement (TFA) and digitising the PIC procedure. Countries have shown some appetite to move to electronic and automated notification for PIC requirements, but it is important to avoid running electronic and paper systems simultaneously.

Trade barriers are slowing action on plastic pollution.

July 31, 2020

TITLE: Here's how to fix that.

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Work could also be undertaken between countries and companies to pinpoint the weak points in the system that are driving illegal trade for plastic waste dumping. The [Global Plastic Action Partnership](#) (GPAP) will be taking a close look at how we can facilitate this type of collaboration as a platform for key industry leaders and decision-makers.

2. Internal measures

Some policies operate away from the border but nonetheless have an impact on trade flows and investment decisions. Trade commitments can be used to enable foreign services providers to offer recycling services within a market and grant them the same treatment as national players to create competition. Work could be done on facilitating investment, including financial or regulatory incentives for production and consumption of recycled plastics.

The agreement of international standards in related areas can be promoted through trade policy as a guide for domestic regulatory initiatives to avoid arbitrary discrimination and promote convergence.

3. Transparency

Transparency on domestic measures is critical for businesses to engage in trade and develop cross-border markets. Countries could agree, whether at a global level through the WTO or elsewhere, to share information on trade-related measures and sustainability standards relevant to plastic production, waste and recycling.

Data sharing on recycling rates as well as monitoring and analysis of trends in global recycled plastic production would also be helpful. Similarly, there is a need for improved trade and cross-border flows of plastics and plastic waste at a sufficiently disaggregated level (facilitated by a refined HS classification system).

Internal measures such as investment facilitation could stimulate advancements in the circular plastics economy. Creating a regulatory environment that increases transparency, consistency, and lowers risk will encourage investments in both developing and advanced economies and will support the procurement of resources for more robust internal waste management facilities.

Increased transparency by means of data collection and monitoring is key—an area of focus for GPAP. Creating publicly accessible digital systems on cross-border plastics flows will allow governments to better tackle illicit activity and provide more accurate statistics on plastics recovery and recycling rates.

Governments can use a range of different trade instruments to advance these ideas. At a global level, some WTO members have shown interest in launching a new initiative, while free trade agreements (FTAs) are another option. Regulatory cooperation—whether on standards, rules on materials treatment or on chemical governance—will also be critical. Trade policy can support a scale-up of the circular economy for plastics both upstream and downstream. These opportunities should be seized to reset the global economy for sustainable development.

Kristin Hughes is director of Global Plastic Action Partnership and member of the Executive Committee of the World Economic Forum Geneva.

Kimberley Botwright is the Community Lead, Global Trade and Investment at the World Economic Forum.

Source: <https://www.eco-business.com/opinion/trade-barriers-are-slowing-action-on-plastic-pollution-heres-how-to-fix-that/>

Rising global temperature shows ‘enormous challenge’

Published 3 hours ago on July 31, 2020 04:17 AM

By [TDI](#)



An 11-year-old boy finds relief from the summer heat by playing in a fountain in a historic part of the city of Samarkand, Uzbekistan. / PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY OF UN

Annual global temperature is likely to be at least 1°C warmer than pre-industrial levels in each of the coming five years, putting globally agreed climate change targets in jeopardy, new data from the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) revealed.

The prediction is among the findings in the United Nations (UN) agency’s latest Global Annual to Decadal Climate Update, released in Geneva, which also shows that temperature could exceed 1.5°C in at least one year between now and 2024.

The Earth’s average temperature has already risen beyond 1°C above the pre-industrial period, which spans 1850-1900, while the last five years have been the warmest on record.

“This study shows — with a high level of scientific skill — the enormous challenge ahead in meeting the Paris Agreement on Climate Change target of keeping a global temperature rise this century well below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius,” said WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas.

The latest predictions take into account natural variations and human influences on climate but exclude changes in greenhouse gas emissions and aerosols resulting from lockdowns during the coronavirus pandemic.

WMO explained that the slowdown in industrial and economic activity due to the pandemic is not a substitute for sustained and coordinated climate action.

“Due to the very long lifetime of CO₂ in the atmosphere, the impact of the drop in emissions this year is not expected to lead to a reduction of CO₂ atmospheric concentrations which are driving global temperature increases,” Taalas said.

“Whilst COVID-19 has caused a severe international health and economic crisis, failure to tackle climate change may threaten human well-being, ecosystems and economies for centuries, Governments should use the opportunity to embrace climate action as part of recovery programs and ensure that we grow back better.”

The Global Annual to Decadal Climate Update is led by the United Kingdom’s Met Office.

It harnesses the expertise of internationally acclaimed climate scientists and the best computer models from leading climate centers around the world.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/07/31/rising-global-temperature-shows-enormous-challenge/>

Habitat loss sparks cascade of ecosystem damage:

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Habitat loss sparks cascade of ecosystem damage: study

Kelly Macnamara, Agence France-Presse

Posted at Jul 30 2020 05:05 AM



Zebra dove spotted inside the Arroceros forest park in this photo taken on August 18, 2018. *Gigie Cruz, ABS-CBN News/File*

PARIS - The effects of shrinking habitats on wildlife are more profound and wide-ranging than often assumed, a study published Wednesday found, as researchers warned that many forecasts underestimate how many species are lost in fragmented environments.

Human activity is devouring ever more of the natural world, destroying forests, splintering habitats into isolated areas, while polluting land and sea.

This is driving the sixth mass extinction event in the last half-billion years -- the last one wiped out land-based dinosaurs around 66 million years ago.

While the link between habitat loss and the sharp decline in life on Earth are well established, German researchers set out to try to quantify the dynamics of species loss using data from dozens of studies on environments across the world.

They found that smaller habitats piled significant extra pressures on species that are often not included in estimates of biodiversity loss, causing more extinctions than would normally be predicted.

Forecasting models currently used were "highly simplistic" and tended to draw on land size and the number of species found in an area to estimate the immediate effects of habitat loss, author Jonathan Chase, of the German Centre for Integrative Biodiversity Research, told AFP.

"When we make these 'guesses', we're often quite wrong. And it's these sorts of guesses that we suggest underestimate how many species are lost when habitat is lost (and how many are saved when habitat is saved or restored)," he said.

The study, published in *Nature*, looked at a dataset of 123 studies from habitats across the world, comparing large, intact areas -- mainly forests -- with smaller areas.

These covered "tropical rainforests surrounded by oil palm to Israeli scrub habitats surrounded by crops to islands in lakes that were created by reservoirs when dams were built", Chase said.

The studies looked at plants, birds, mammals, lizards, frogs and insects.

FRAGMENTED LANDSCAPES

Researchers sought to assess the risks that species face in reduced habitats that are not included in models normally used to predict biodiversity loss.

These include restrictions to the movement and dispersal of wildlife populations, inbreeding and difficulty finding mates.

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The balance of species may also change, with some able to adapt better than others in fragmented areas.

Across the world, the study found that the impact of habitat loss was often more acute in places where it has happened more recently, like in the Americas.

Areas fragmented more than a hundred years ago -- for example in Europe -- were found to have less biodiversity loss, but the report said this could be due to the arrival of species that are more tolerant to these environments to compensate for the loss of other wildlife.

Chase said that while the extra effects of living in smaller habitats were usually assumed to be small, the study found they were in fact "pretty large".

"We need to do a better job of incorporating this sort of biological reality into our model forecasts," he said, adding this could help better assess the potential impact both of habitat loss and of conservation efforts.

World tiger population grows but SE Asia threats

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World tiger population grows but SE Asia threats 'critical' — WWF

Agence France-Presse / 04:54 PM July 30, 2020



India now has around 3,000 tigers in the wild, compared to 1,411 in 2006 when a nationwide survey was first conducted. Image: STR-AFP

Tiger populations in five countries are making a comeback but the endangered species still faces major threats such as poaching, conservation group World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) and the Indian government said.

India, home to 70% of the big cat's global population, is among 13 countries that pledged a decade ago to boost feline numbers.

“From a historic population low in 2010, tigers are finally making a remarkable comeback in much of South Asia, Russia and China,” WWF Tigers Alive Initiative head Stuart Chapman said in a statement to mark World Tiger Day on Wednesday.

Chapman said population increases in Bhutan, China, India, Nepal and Russia were “great news” for other threatened species in their habitat, as well as for millions of people dependent on such ecosystems.

But tigers were still under threat from poaching and habitat destruction, while the wild animal populations had fragmented, which increases the risk of inbreeding, the WWF said.

“This has reached critical levels in much of Southeast Asia, where a snaring crisis is decimating wildlife, including tigers and their prey,” the group said.

In a report released earlier this month, the WWF found that there were more than 12 million snares threatening wildlife in the protected areas in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam.

India released its status report on tigers Tuesday, which detailed the steps taken to conserve the big cats.

The report warned that although the population had grown, many of India's tiger reserves and protected areas were within larger regions used for “ecologically unsustainable” purposes such as mining.

“Many tiger populations are confined within small protected areas and some have habitat corridors that permit tiger movement between them,” the report added.

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But many of the corridor habitats were not protected areas and also at risk due to human activity and development, it said.

The census, carried out between 2018-19, was also included in the Guinness World Records earlier this month for being the largest-ever camera-trap wildlife survey.

Camera traps were deployed at more than 28,000 locations across 381,400 square kilometers (147,000 square miles) — about the size of Japan — of forested habitats in 20 Indian states.

The government's survey results, released last year, found that India had 2,967 tigers in the wild, compared to 1,411 when the first nationwide survey was conducted in 2006.

It showed the population had grown six percent a year between 2006 and 2018. **IB**

Study finds dangerous mercury levels in Amazon fish

Published July 30, 2020, 12:16 PM

by [Agence France-Presse](#)

Nearly one-third of the fish in the Brazilian Amazon state of Amapa have such high levels of mercury caused by illegal mining that they are dangerous for human consumption, according to a new study.



The high levels of mercury in the Brazilian Amapa region are being caused by illegal gold mining, according to a researcher from the country's World Wildlife Fund office (AFP/ MANILA BULLETIN)

Scientists from the World Wildlife Fund's (WWF) Brazil office and three Brazilian research institutes found startling levels of mercury in more than 400 fish collected in five regions of Amapa, on the border with French Guyana.

The research included fish from included river systems near environmentally protected areas. "The level surpassed safety limits in 77.6 percent of carnivorous fish, 20 percent of omnivores and 2.4 percent of herbivores," they said in the study, published in the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health.

"Four of the species with the highest concentrations of mercury are among those most widely consumed" by humans in the region, it added.

Eating more than 200 grams (seven ounces) of those species could be harmful to a person's health, it said.

The high levels of mercury in the region are being caused by illegal gold mining, said conservationist Marcelo Oliveira of WWF-Brazil.

"This study brings to light damning data on the level of destruction being caused by illegal gold mining in the Amazon," he said.

"We already knew it was destroying the forest. Now we know how it is destroying the health of those who live there, too."

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro faces criticism for pushing to open up protected lands in the Amazon to mining and agricultural activity.

Activists say that will only accelerate the destruction of the world's biggest rainforest.