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# DENR

## IN THE NEWS

Strategic Communication and Initiative Service



## DENR: COVID-19 cancels 'Love Boracay' events

THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources on Friday announced the cancellation of all "LoveBoracay" events in April to May due to threat of the COVID-19 disease.

According to Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, the decision to cancel Aklan's Boracay Island's most important event was arrived at during the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force's March 12 meeting.

"Since the COVID-19 situation has not improved, and with the health of attendees, organizers and stakeholders, a primary consideration, the BIATF has decided to cancel this event," he said.

The task force, chaired by Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu, took into consideration the recent developments on COVID-19, particularly the declaration of President Rodrigo Duterte of a state of public health emergency.

"LoveBoracay" has replaced the infamous "Laboracay," a week-long series of events celebrating the rehabilitation of the world-famous resort island slated for April 26 to May 2.

"Should the island be contaminated, tourists will avoid the island, businesses will incur losses and workers may be laid off," Antiporda said.

He warned of possible consequences should "LoveBoracay" push through since it could increase the risk of the virus entering the island.

Boracay remains COVID-19-free to date, he assured.

Meanwhile, Antiporda described the improvement on the island as "overwhelming" two years after it was closed to tourists for six months to pave the way for much-needed rehabilitation.

"The President's order to BIATF, led by the DENR, DILG and DOT, was to restore the water quality of the island, which he described as a cesspool," Antiporda pointed out. "The task force has already done this. It's 'mission accomplished' for the task force," he said. **Rio N. Araja**



# LoveBoracay 2020 postponed

A weeklong series of events celebrating the rehabilitation of Boracay has been postponed due to the threat COVID-19, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said Friday.

Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda

said the decision to reschedule "LoveBoracay," which was initially slated on 26 April until 2 May, was made during the meeting of Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF).

"Since the COVID-19 situation has not improved, and with the health of attendees, organizers and stakeholders, a primary consideration, the BIATF has decided to cancel this event," Antiporda said.

The task force has taken into consideration the recent developments on COVID-19, particularly the declaration of

President Rodrigo Duterte of a state of public health emergency on 9 March.

As of Thursday night, the Philippines has a total of 52 confirmed cases and five fatalities of COVID-19, which the World Health Organization has already declared a pandemic as the virus has so far infected more than 130,000 people and killed over 4,500 in 114 countries.

First held in 2018, "LoveBoracay" features activities such as street party, variety show, Ati-Atihan parade, and an Arts and Music night.

"Should the island be contaminated, tourists will avoid the island, businesses will incur losses and workers may be laid off," Antiporda said, as he warned of possible consequences should LoveBoracay push through.

He said that large gatherings might increase the risk of the virus entering the prime destination as it will bring in a huge number of people from all over the country.

To date, Boracay remains COVID-19-free.

Meanwhile, Antiporda described the improvements on the island as "overwhelming" two years after it was closed to tourists

for six months to pave the way for much-needed rehabilitation.

He said the DENR, together with the Department of Tourism, the Department of the Interior and Local Government and all other agencies involved in the rehabilitation, was successful in turning Boracay from "cesspool" to a more sustainable ecotourism destination.

He added the remaining works, such as compliance to the 25+5 easement rule, road infrastructure, and sewage system are "already 80 percent finished."

MARIA J. ROMERO @tribunephil\_mbr





## LoveBoracay, kanselado

**KINANSELA** ng Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force ang lahat ng okasyon ng "LoveBoracay" ngayong taon dahil sa banta ng coronavirus disease.

Ang LoveBoracay, na ipinalit sa sikat na "Laboracay," ay isang linggong kasiyahan para gunitain ang isinasagawang rehabilitasyon ng world-famous resort island. Ito ay naka-iskedyul simula Abril 26 hanggang Mayo 2.

Ayon kay Department of Environment and Natural Resources Undersecretary Benny D. Antiporda, ang desisyon na kanselahin ang importanteng pagdiriwang sa Boracay ay nabuo sa ginanap na pagpulong ng BIATF nitong Marso 12.

Dagdag pa ni Antiporda, kinonsidera sa naging desisyon ng BIATF, na pinamumunuan ni DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, ang mga kaganapan sa COVID-19 partikular na ang deklarasyon ni Pangulong Rodrigo Roa Duterte na state of public health emergency noong Marso 9.

Nitong Huwebes ng gabi ay umabot na sa 52 komprimadong kaso ng COVID-19 sa Pilipinas kung saan lima na sa mga ito ang namatay. Idineklara na rin ng World Health Organization na pandemic ang naturang virus na nakaipinsala na sa 120,000 katao at kumitil sa 4,500 nabuhay sa 114 bansa.

Ang LoveBoracay, na unang ginanap noong 2016, ay kinabibilangan ng mga aktibidad tulad ng street party, variety show, Ati-Atihan parade, at Arts and Music night.

Aniya, ang malalaking pagtitipon tulad ng LoveBoracay ay posibleng maging dahilan upang makapasok ang virus sa tinaguriang prime destination dahil maraming mga turista ang magtutungo dito. Ayon kay Antiporda, sa kasalukuyan ay COVID-19-free pa rin ang Boracay.

Samantala, inilarawan naman ni Antiporda ang mga pagbabago sa Boracay na "overwhelming" makaraan ang dalawang taon nang ito ay pansamantalang isara ng anim na buwan para dumaan sa rehabilitasyon.

Aniya, sa pagtutulongan ng DENR, Department of Tourism, Department of the Interior and Local Government at lahat ng ahensiya na tumulong sa rehabilitasyon ay muling riribalik ang ganda at linis ng Boracay mula sa dating tinaguriang "cesspool".

Umabot na rin aniya sa "80% finished" ang nalalabing trabaho sa isla tulad ng 25+5 easement rule, road infrastructure, at sewage system.

JAY REYES



## Love Boracay 2020 kinansela

HINDI na tinuloy ng Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) ang lahat ng okasyon ng 'Love Boracay' ngayong taon dahil sa banta ng coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Ang Love Boracay, na ipinalit sa sikat na Laboracay, ay isang linggong kasiyahan para gunitain ang isinasagawang rehabilitasyon ng world-famous resort island. Ito ay gaganapin sana simula Abril 26 hanggang Mayo 2.

Ayon kay Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary Benny D. Antiporda, ang desisyon na kanselahin ang importanteng pagdiriwang sa Boracay ay nabuo sa ginanap na pagpupulong ng BIATF nitong Marso 12.

"Since the COVID-19 situation has not improved, and with the health of attendees, organizers and stakeholders, a primary consideration,

the BIATF has decided to cancel this event," ayon kay Antiporda.

Binanggit din ni Antiporda, kinonsidera sa naging desisyon ng BIATF na pinamunuan ni DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, ang mga kaganapan sa COVID-19 partikular na ang deklarasyon ni Pangulong Rodrigo Roa Duterte na state of public health emergency noong Marso 9. **(Riz Dominguez)**



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## TARLAC OKAYS 10-YEAR ECOLOGICAL SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT PLAN

**TARLAC CITY:** The Sangguniang Panlungsod (SP) here has approved the 10-Year Ecological Solid Waste Management Plan (2017-2027) of Tarlac City to promote and attain an ecologically-sound and cost-efficient waste collection and disposal system. The SP approval was contained in Resolution VIII-10-116, authored by Councilor Diosdado Briones, chairman of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, who said the urgent measure is in compliance with Republic Act 9003 or the "Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000". Earlier, Mayor Cristy Angeles requested the SP through Vice Mayor and Presiding Officer Genaro Mendoza to enact a resolution adopting the 10-year plan of Tarlac City.

**JERRY HERNANDEZ**



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Chinese egrets rest in a mangrove forest in Cordova, Cebu in this photo taken on March 1.

ALDO BANAYNA/THE FREEMAN

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## What climate change can teach us about fighting the coronavirus

By SOMINI SENGUPTA  
*The New York Times*

"Alarming levels of inaction." That is what the World Health Organization said Wednesday about the global response to coronavirus.

It is a familiar refrain to anyone who works on climate change, and it is why global efforts to slow down warming offer a cautionary tale for the effort to slow down the pandemic.

"Both demand early, aggressive action to minimize loss," said Kim Cobb, a climate scientist at the Georgia Institute of Technology who was teaching classes remotely this week. "Only in hindsight will we really understand what we gambled on and what we lost by not acting early enough."

Scientists like Cobb have, for years, urged world leaders to bend the curve of planet-warming emissions. Instead, emissions have raced upward. Now the consequences are being felt: a three-month-long flood in the Florida Keys, wildfires across a record hot and dry Australia, deadly heat waves in Europe.

Gernot Wagner, a climate economist at New York University, called the virus "climate change on warp speed."

Why have we not taken climate risks to heart? Politics and psychology play a role.

Change is hard when there's a powerful industry blocking it. The fossil fuel industry has pushed climate science denial into the public consciousness. It has lobbied against policies that could rein in the emissions of planet-warming gases. And it has succeeded: The United States, history's biggest emitter of greenhouse gases, is the only country in the world to have withdrawn from the Paris accord, designed to stave off the most catastrophic effects of climate change.

On display this week was some of that same disregard for scientific evidence with respect to the coronavirus, which prompted an unusually blunt editorial in *Science* magazine. It called out President Donald Trump for demanding a coronavirus vaccine at a time when his administration had gutted funding for scientific research and repeatedly questioned the fundamentals of science, saying, "You can't insult science when you don't like it and then suddenly insist on something that science can't give on demand."

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### What Climate Change... From page 7

Then, there's human psychology. As with climate change, our collective ability to confront the pandemic is shaped by our brains. We are bad at thinking about tomorrow.

Elke Weber, a behavioral scientist at Princeton University, said that makes climate science, which deals in future probabilities, "hard to process and hard for us to be afraid of."

"We are evolutionarily wired for taking care of the here and now," Weber said. "We are bad at these decisions that require planning for the future."

That appears to be true even if the future isn't so far away. The Arctic is on track to be ice-free in summers in 20 years, researchers say, while the Amazon rainforest could turn into a savanna in 50 years.

Here, too, are lessons for our ability to confront the virus. Precisely because we are bad as individuals at thinking about tomorrow, economists and psychologists say it's all the more important to have leaders enact policies that enable us to protect ourselves against future risk.

For the coronavirus, those may be costly now, Wagner pointed out in a telephone interview, but they yield huge benefits in the not-too-distant future.

"It's costs today, and benefits within days and weeks," Wagner said of the needed coronavirus measures. "Even though the time scale is compressed, we still apparently can't figure out what to do."

Scientists have repeatedly said that global emissions must be reduced by half over the next decade in order to keep average temperatures from rising to below 1.5 degrees Celsius, or 2.7 degrees Fahrenheit, from preindustrial levels. A failure to do so is likely to usher in catastrophes as early as 2040, including the inundation of coastlines, worsening wildfires and droughts.

Those warnings don't spark much policy change. We are not told to do the climate equivalent of coughing into our elbows. We are not discouraged from flying. Instead, sales of SUVs soar. The Amazon burns so more soy and cattle can be produced.

The dangers to human life, though, are already being felt. Climate change was linked to a crippling drought around Cape Town, South Africa, in 2018. Heat waves in Western Europe last summer resulted in hundreds of additional deaths, according to government agencies. In England alone, over the course of two months, there were an additional 892 deaths, mostly older people, while in France that number was 1,435.

A study by University of Chicago researchers projected that, by 2100, climate change would kill roughly as many people as the





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*What climate change can teach us about fighting the coronavirus*

number who die of cancer and infectious disease today. As with the European heat waves, the most vulnerable in society will bear the brunt. "Today's poor bear a disproportionately high share of the global mortality risks of climate change," the paper concluded.

But here's the big unknown: Will the effort to revive the global economy after the pandemic accelerate the emissions of planet-warming gases rather than avert climate change? That depends on whether the world's big economies, like China and the United States, use this moment to enact green growth policies or continue to prop up fossil fuel industries.

This was to be a crucial year for global climate goals, with presidents and prime ministers under pressure to get more ambitious about reining in greenhouse gas emissions when they gather for United Nations-led climate talks in Glasgow, Scotland, in November. The UN secretary-general, António Guterres, has leaned on world leaders to announce more ambitious targets and to end what he called "vast and wasteful subsidies for fossil fuels."

In a speech this week, Guterres hinted at another deficit faced by both the health and climate crises.

"In the months ahead, we need to rebuild trust," he said. "We need to demonstrate that international cooperation is the only way to deliver meaningful results."



# Nestlé signs European Plastics Pact

**N**ESTLÉ has signed the European Plastics Pact that will help the company achieve 100-percent recyclable or reusable packaging and reduce the use of virgin plastics by one-third by 2025.

The pact, initiated by France and The Netherlands, has a goal to accelerate the transition toward a circular plastics economy. It will stop dependence on virgin plastics or plastics made from non-renewable fossil fuel.

It brings together leading companies, as well as non-government organizations and governments who commit to realizing common goals by 2025 and go beyond current legislation. These European targets include reducing virgin

plastic products and packaging by at least 20 percent; raising collection and recycling capacity in Europe for plastic packaging by at least 25 percent; and boosting the use of recycled plastics in packaging to an average of at least 30 percent.

"We are pleased to sign the European Pact. One of our joint objectives is to create a circular economy by improving collection, sorting and recycling schemes across Europe. Already today a new Vit-

tel plastic bottle is manufactured out of used ones. Tomorrow, we want to make sure that also other packaging, such as our wrappers and pouches, can be recycled into new food packaging," said Marco Settembri, Nestlé chief executive officer for Europe, Middle East and North Africa.

This will not be easy, as Nestlé's top priority is the safety of its products. So, any plastic used for food packaging must be "food grade," which means it cannot

contain any substances harmful to humans. In order to achieve food grade recycled plastics, recycling processes will have to evolve.

The challenge for Nestlé and the food industry at large, is that it is currently cheaper to produce packaging from virgin plastics than to use recycled food grade plastics. To overcome this, Nestlé recently announced an investment of more than 1.5 billion Swiss francs in recycled food grade plastics. This aims at giving a clear signal to

recycling companies to focus on recycled food grade material and help create a new market.

To further reduce the use of virgin plastics, Nestlé is reinventing the methods it delivers its products. It is currently conducting trials on a packaging-free system for dispensing Purina PetCare pet food and Nestlé soluble coffee. Nestlé has also partnered with LOOP, a home-delivery service providing reusable packaging. First products will soon become available in France. **THE TIMES**



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# Climate change dangerously accelerating

A wide-ranging United Nations (UN) climate report recently showed that climate change is having a major effect on all aspects of the environment, as well as on the health and wellbeing of the global population.

The report, The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) Statement on the State of the Global Climate in 2019, which is led by the UN weather agency, contains data from an extensive network of partners.

It documents physical signs of climate change – such as increasing land and ocean heat, accelerating sea level rise and melting ice – and the knock-on effects on socio-economic development, human health, migration and displacement, food security, and land and marine ecosystems.

Writing in the foreword to the report, UN chief António Guterres warned that the world is currently “way off track meeting either the 1.5°C or 2°C targets that the Paris Agreement calls for,” referring to the commitment made by the international community in 2015, to keep global average

temperatures well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels.

**There’s clearly a need for higher ambition levels if we’re serious about climate mitigation.**

Several heat records have been broken in recent years and decades: the report confirms that 2019 was the second warmest year on record, and 2010-2019 was the warmest decade on record. Since the 1980s, each successive decade has been warmer than any preceding decade since 1850.

The warmest year so far was 2016, but that could be topped soon, said WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas. “Given that greenhouse gas levels continue to increase, the warming will continue. A recent decadal forecast indicates that a new annual global temperature record is likely in the next five years. It is a matter of time,” added the WMO Secretary-General.

In an interview with *UN News*, Taalas said that, there is a growing understanding across society, from the finance sector to young people that climate change is the number one problem mankind is facing today, “so there are plenty of good signs that we have started moving in the right direction.”

“Last year emissions dropped in developed countries, despite the growing economy, so we have been to show that you can detach economic growth from emission growth. The bad news is that, in the rest of the world, emissions grew last year. So, if we want to solve this problem we have to



UNITED NATIONS

THE UN World Food Programme launched its biggest rapid food response following heavy rains and flash flooding in the Cox’s Bazar refugee camps and host communities.



# Climate change dangerously accelerating



UNITED NATIONS

ICE is floating on the waters of Prince Gustav Channel in Antarctica, where an ice shelf (Prince Gustav Ice Shelf) of more than 28km used to exist. The ice shelf has since retreated and collapsed.

have all the countries on board.”

Taalas added that countries still aren't fulfilling commitments they made at the UN Paris climate conference in 2015, leaving the world currently on course for a four to five degree temperature increase by the end of this century – “there's clearly a need for higher ambition levels if we're serious about climate mitigation.”

He also noted that 2020 has seen the warmest January recorded so far, and that winter has been “unseasonably mild” in many parts of the northern hemisphere.

Ongoing warming in Antarctica saw large-scale ice melt and the fracturing of a glacier, with repercussions for sea level rise, and carbon dioxide emissions spiked following the devastating Australian

bushfires, which spread smoke and pollutants around the world.

Greenhouse gas emissions continued to grow in 2019, leading to increased ocean heat, and such phenomena as rising sea levels, the altering of ocean currents, melting floating ice shelves, and dramatic changes in marine ecosystems.

The ocean has seen increased acidification and deoxygenation, with negative impacts on marine life, and the wellbeing of people who depend on ocean ecosystems. At the poles, sea ice continues to decline, and glaciers shrunk yet again, for the 32nd consecutive year.

Between 2002 and 2016, the Greenland ice sheet lost some 260 gigatons of ice per year, with a peak loss of 458 gigatons in 2011/12. The 2019 loss of 329 gigatons, was well above average.