



NEWS ROUNDUP

17 APRIL 2024 [08:00 am]

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REUTERS

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PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

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Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

Philippine divers regrow coral to help heal damaged reefs

It was around 19 years ago when scuba diving instructor Carmela Sevilla found the perfect spot for a resort in the coastal town of Bauan.

The town itself is synonymous with its beautiful reefs and diving in the Philippines. Although her resort drew in good business over the years, Sevilla also wanted to help preserve one of the main draws--its bountiful population of coral reefs.

Bauan's diverse coral population has frequently suffered from natural calamities like typhoons and man-made obstructions like plastic waste and dynamite fishing--factors that could not only affect the local ecosystem, but also the tourism industry.

Hoping to boost coral numbers in the face of these environmental threats, Sevilla devised a plan to begin planting coral nurseries for damaged coral across the coast. She enlisted the help of an expert and invited interested divers to learn about coral conservation and begin work on her pet project--making a coral nursery for damaged and detached pieces of coral.

But Sevilla says the project isn't just about finding a home for orphaned coral. She also plans to store the collected coral nurseries for the future just in case there's a need to replenish the area's coral population, in the face of certain environmental threats brought by climate change, such as a mass bleaching event. In 2020, parts of surrounding Batangas province suffered a mass coral bleaching event, with about 72 kilometers of its coastline affected, according to the conservationist group Reef Watch Philippines. Sevilla fears that her beautiful home of Bauan may one day suffer the same fate. She knows the nursery won't stave off climate change, but hopes to save at least a small portion of the coral.

"I think the goal is not to make such a huge difference, to be able to stop climate change or be able to really create a huge impact on conservation. Everything that creates influence has always started small," said Sevilla.

So far Sevilla and her team have only collected 64 pieces of damaged coral for the nursery, and plan to expand upon that number. Although the project stills exists in experimental form, and the actual growth rate of the saved coral is very slow (only one or two cm per year), Sevilla and her team hope to replant the rescued coral back in the wild once they have made a significant recovery, a process that could take years. They also plan to teach other conservationists to build their own coral nurseries once the project has matured.

Sam Shu Qin, a marine scientist and co-founder of a non-profit marine conservationist group Our Singapore Reefs, said establishing nurseries have several benefits, including finding out which coral species are more resilient to climate change.

"If we select those that are actually more tolerant to climate change, to higher temperature, that can survive higher temperature, then you can actually propagate more, so next time you are actually like building a reef of the future," she said.

The Philippines sits at the coral triangle and home of over 600 types of corals and 2,000 species of fish, according to the International Union for the Conservation of Nature.

According to the US National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, parts of the Philippines may experience some coral bleaching event in the next three months--part of what is likely to be declared a fourth mass global bleaching event.

Scientists find bleached coral deeper in the Great Barrier Reef and Coral Sea

The world so far has warmed by 1.2 degrees Celsius above preindustrial levels, and scientific evidence suggests the world has already reached a disastrous tipping point at which 70 to 90 percent of the world's coral reefs are predicted to die under such warming.

ASIA NEWS NETWORK

[Can tech giants solve climate change and social inequality?](#)

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The Kennedy-era guru on capitalism, John Kenneth Galbraith, presciently proclaimed in *The New Industrial State* (1967), “The imperatives of technology and organisation, not the images of ideology, are what determine the shape of (an) economic society.”

The cacophony of ideology, including religious fervour, is what is killing people in Ukraine, Gaza and other warring states. In the meantime, investors worldwide are chasing tech stocks like Nvidia while the rest of the world swelters in what are the hottest years on record. As the *World Inequality Report 2022* stated, “some 10 percent of the world’s population owns 76 percent of the wealth, takes in 52 percent of income, and accounts for 48 percent of global carbon emissions.” At the same time, the work force fears the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and robotisation, which will have an unknown impact on job destruction. Those who are lowly skilled will lose jobs, where there is a skewed demand for those with high knowledge and creativity-intensity.

What we see today is a winner-take-all competitive space across technology, geopolitics and education, with marginalisation of those who cannot adjust as fast. The American Magnificent Seven tech stocks represent the cutting edge of raw capitalist drive for value, speculation and state intervention in what venture capitalist William Janeway called the Three-Player Game of financial capitalism (*Doing Capitalism in the Innovation Economy*, 2018).

Last year, the Seven helped create \$10.2 trillion in US stock market capitalisation value, and so far this year, five (Nvidia, Microsoft, Facebook/Meta, Google/Alphabet, and Amazon) are still creating value, whereas Apple and Tesla are facing new headwinds. Nvidia rose from \$300 billion in market cap in September 2022, when it announced its new Hopper graphics processing unit (GPU), to currently \$2.27 trillion, which is bigger than the Canadian economy (\$2.15 trillion).

So far, the US is happy to accept high tech company price-earnings ratios way above historical average levels, so that innovators can “monetise their technology.” While the rest of the world focuses on fintech (applying technology to finance), the US has financialised technology so that innovative companies can use the (price-dream) value of their stocks to take commanding heights over their competitors. For example, even though China has AI and robotics companies, their market values cannot even match those of their American competitors. The gap between the two will widen as American giants use their financial muscle to attract even more talent and engage in R&D, widening the gap with the rest.

Essentially, the 2000 Nasdaq tech boom gave American policymakers the experience not to fear tech bubble bursts, since that episode did not lead to any systemic consequences for the economy. Banking crises, on the other hand, like the 2008 subprime crisis have widespread impact, which is why banks are regulated more tightly.

As Janeway stated succinctly, “Two overlapping sets of institutions—markets and the political process—compete in the allocation of resources and the distribution of income and wealth generated by their application.” If the bulk of the population loses in the tech and markets game, populism may rise to shackle the tech and the rich. The Chinese government’s regulation of their tech platforms reflects some of these populist sentiments.

As reminded by Janeway, the Three-Party Game fragility showed up in the 1930s, when the state failed to intervene in the economy to prevent the collapse of banks and companies that led to the Great Depression worldwide. Eventually, the great economist John Maynard Keynes convinced governments that the state should intervene through fiscal spending to lift the world out of that depression.

But one factor today is fundamentally different from that era: the arrival of climate change. Until recently, mainstream economic models did not incorporate climate factors into their GDP calculations. Today, governments are faced with the complex nexus of slow GDP growth, planetary injustice (carbon emissions, biodiversity loss, pollution and natural disasters), social injustice (widening social, income, wealth and security levels) as well as the speed of tech disruption.

In an important study of “Climate Change, Capitalism and Corporations,” the University of Sydney professors Christopher Wright and Daniel Nyberg identify that “despite the need for dramatic economic and political change, corporate capitalism continues to rely on the maintenance of ‘business as usual.’” This implies that if the corporate sector cannot solve climate change and social inequalities, the two existential issues of our time, the state must step in.

Alas, US-China tensions are such that governments are more preoccupied with geopolitical rivalry and industrial policies than supporting mutual cooperation and competitive free markets. Big tech companies are seen almost as adding another legion to the armed forces. This implies that non-tech companies, other than big oil and gas and natural monopolies, will continue to struggle to cope with decoupling supply chains and tougher regulations, tariffs and sanctions, as well as natural and conflict calamities.

The Great Tech story implies that the world will see a smaller group of winners who have financial, technology, data and political clout relative to the rest who have less and less confidence in governments to solve their daily problems. No game can continue if

all the chips end up with only a handful of winners and the majority feeling that the game is loaded against them.

In the new tech rentier game, the tech giants will have captive customers who subscribe to their AI software and data centres that allow them to algorithmically influence their spending behaviour. But if such algorithmic biases disturb the delicate balance between man and nature, the system is neither politically sustainable nor ecologically viable. If everyone can spend like the average American, we would need 5.1 earths. The Magnificent Seven do not have such a mission to change that trajectory.

Enjoy the tech bubble while it lasts. Just as night follows day, nightmares follow beautiful dreams.

BBC

[Climate change: El Niño ends with uncertainty over cooler future](#)

By: Matt McGrath

The powerful El Niño weather event which along with climate change has helped push global temperatures to new highs, has ended, say scientists.

The Australian Bureau of Meteorology says the Pacific Ocean has "cooled substantially" in the past week.

This naturally occurring episode that began last June brought warmer waters to the surface of the Pacific, adding extra heat to the atmosphere.

But what happens next is uncertain, say researchers.

A string of recent global monthly high temperature records has led some scientists to fear that the world could be tipping into a new phase of even faster climate change.

Scientists say that the months after the end of El Niño will give a strong indication as to whether the recent high temperatures are due to accelerated climate change or not.

Every few years, the onset of El Niño brings dramatic change to weather in many parts of the world.

The surge of warmer water that comes to the surface off the coast of Peru in South America is linked to increased droughts and floods in different parts of the world.

The full name of the pattern is the El Niño-Southern Oscillation or ENSO.

It's marked by three different phases, the hot El Niño, neutral conditions or a cooler period called La Niña.

This current El Niño was declared last June, and reached a peak in December.

The resulting warmer water in the Pacific has helped push global average temperatures to new highs, with March making it ten months in a row to break the record for that period.

But now, perhaps quicker than expected, El Niño is gone.

The critical question is what happens next and on this scientists are divided.

US researchers recently said there was 60% chance of a La Niña developing between June-August, and an 85% chance of this happening by Autumn.

But the Australian Bureau say such statements such be treated with caution. They expect neutral conditions to last until at least July.

"As the current global ocean conditions have not been observed before, inferences as to how ENSO may develop in 2024 that are based on past events may not be reliable," they said in a statement.

Whether or not a La Niña forms really matters, say researchers.

It can have a significant impact on storms and hurricanes, with some experts predicting that if La Niña does arrive, it would herald a highly active hurricane season in the Atlantic.

La Niña's cooling effect may also slightly slow the rate of global heating.

That might indicate that the record temperatures experienced over the past year were something of a mystery, and not evidence that the world has moved into a more rapid phase of warming.

CNN

[How climate change could be driving 'killer' cold outbreaks in oceans](#)

By: Rachel Ramirez

It's not just ocean heat that's affecting marine life – new research shows extremely cold events are welling up and causing mass mortalities. And the same planet-warming pollution that's driving the climate crisis is likely to blame for these “killer events” on the other end of the temperature spectrum.

The world's oceans have been plagued by unprecedented heat over the past year, fueling concerns for marine life. Billions of crabs disappeared in the northern Pacific; sea lions and dolphins are washing up sick; iconic coral reefs are undergoing mass bleaching.

But even as ocean temperatures climb, extremely cold upwelling events — when strong winds and ocean currents bring pockets of cold water up to the surface, replacing the warm water that was there — are also becoming more frequent and intense, threatening sea life, according to the study published Monday in the journal *Nature Climate Change*.

“Climate change is actually really complex,” said Nicolas Lubitz, lead author of the study and a researcher at James Cook University in Queensland, Australia. “It's not just warming of the globe, but it's really changing the way our oceans function.”

When Lubitz heard reports of marine animals like sharks, manta rays and squids washing up dead in the southeast coast of South Africa in March 2021, he started investigating. More than 260 marine animals from 81 different species died in that one extreme event.

He said seasonal upwelling events are common in that area, with water temperature dropping quickly. But Lubitz said the March 2021 die-off was “quite an extreme event, because we had rather warm water before it happened.”

“And then the winds changed, and the currents started changing slightly, which is a seasonal thing,” he added. “Then all of a sudden, the temperature within 24 hours dropped by 11 degrees.”

The researchers analyzed killer upwelling events in the Indian Ocean's Agulhas Current and the East Australian Current, using 41 years of sea surface temperature data and 33 years of wind records to see how deadly cold ocean extremes can be.

“We’re seeing changes in how often the upwelling occurs, how intense it is, which might impact the fishing communities in these areas,” he said. “It’s really an economic thing as well as the biodiversity thing.”

According to the study, the lethality of a cold event is likely linked to how fast the temperature drops. If the cold event lasts for multiple days, which has been occurring more frequently, research shows that marine animals including turtles and many fish species could suffer from hypothermia and physiological malfunction or ultimately die.

For a different study, Lubitz already had bull sharks electronically tagged with a transmitting locator device, which also recorded the depth and temperature of the part of the ocean they swim to.

“That was really the key in this study in that we could see when the sharks migrate,” he said. “We could see how the temperature profiles change, and how the sharks were swimming shallower when they were in upwelling areas because they were trying to avoid the colder water from the depths.”

The findings provide a “very reasonable explanation” to the many unexpected marine mortality events people have been seeing around the world, said Ajit Subramaniam, research professor with Columbia University’s Climate School’s Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory.

“It’s one of those unexpected findings and it’s not something we talk about a lot,” Subramaniam, who was not involved with the study, told CNN. “And therefore, this is a timely thing to remind us that the climate crisis works in both ways.”

REUTERS

[Debt-for-nature swaps could give \\$100 billion boost to climate fight, says report](#)

By: Marc Jones

Debt-for-nature swaps, where poorer countries have debt written off in return for protecting ecosystems such as barrier reefs or rainforests, could provide \$100 billion for the fight against climate change, a new report has calculated.

The UK-based, non-profit International Institute for Environment and Development (IIED) based the estimate on the possibility of debt swaps in many of the 49 less developed countries seen as most at risk of debt crises.

Belize, Ecuador, Barbados, Gabon and Cabo Verde have all done such swaps in recent years and Laura Kelly, the director of IIED's sustainable markets research group, said many of those in debt distress and also often most threatened by global warming, were looking at them.

The IMF and World Bank, whose figures the analysis is based on, estimate the countries focused on collectively owe \$431 billion, mostly to wealthier governments, the IMF itself and pension and hedge funds.

At the same time, these countries received less than \$14 billion in climate finance according to OECD figures from 2021, which is significantly less than they need to limit climate change or at least adapt to it.

The aim of IIED's report is to encourage a drive for more debt swaps at the upcoming IMF and World Bank Spring meetings which start later this week.

Kelly said countries that could benefit included Pakistan, Sri Lanka and The Gambia in West Africa, which is at "huge risk" of sea level rise she stressed and needs to invest heavily in flood prevention and wetland preservation.

Ghana too, which like Sri Lanka is now restructuring its debt, is another obvious candidate. One of its key exports, cocoa beans used for chocolate, could thrive if more is done to protect its vital rainforests.

"For governments (that do debt swaps) it creates some fiscal space, but also it helps to achieve outcomes in terms of climate and nature that have global impact," Kelly said, adding that many countries were interested in potentially doing them.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Philippines urged to tighten emission standards to protect public health](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

The government should tighten “outdated” emission standards for sources of air pollution, including coal-fired power plants, to safeguard public health and the environment, a group said on Tuesday.

While the Philippine Clean Air Act is an important piece of legislation, the 24-year-old law “fails to fully address the continuing threat posed by coal-fired plants,” Clean Air Asia said.

Coal plants emit pollutants such as sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxide, particulate matter and mercury, which have been linked to respiratory diseases and cardiovascular problems.

According to the Health Effects Institute and the Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation, air pollution accounts for more than one in nine deaths globally, and is the fourth leading risk factor for premature death.

Clean Air Asia said it is “alarming” that the Philippines maintains some of the most lenient sulfur oxide and nitrogen oxide emission standards in the region.

The power generation in the Philippines heavily relies on coal, which is also a significant contributor to planet-warming emissions.

“Stringent emission standards means lesser air pollutants released by coal-fired power plants and other industrial facilities,” said Glynda Bathan-Baterina, deputy executive director of Clean Air Asia.

A draft of the proposed environment department’s order updating the emission standards for stationary sources of air pollution cuts the current allowable emissions of particulate matter, sulfur oxide, and nitrogen oxide for coal plants by 50%.

While the move is a step in the right direction, the allowable emissions must be reduced further to align with international best practices in Asia, Clean Air Asia said.

The group stressed that lowering allowable emissions further would result in higher health benefits for communities near coal facilities.

A 2021 study of Clean Air Asia in Bataan showed that implementing emission limits aligned with international standards could result in up to around 83% reduction in acute respiratory infections.

Under tighter emission standards, coal-fired power plants may need to install pollution control devices or adopt processes to keep air emissions within standards.

Clean Air Asia said that coal-fired power plants releasing high levels of pollution and those whose operations would no longer be economically feasible could be prioritized for retirement.

An analysis of climate data organization TransitionZero said retiring coal-fired plants early could prevent around 290 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions, almost double the country's emissions.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

IBC 13

[SLL for CDRR Scholarship Program](#)

SLL-CDRR scholarship program, bukas para sa nais matuto sa usapin ng Disaster Risk and Management.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?
Interested applicants to the SLL-CDRR shall possess the following eligibility requirements:

- Must have strong background in climate change adaptation and mitigation (CCAM) and disaster risk reduction and management (DRRM);
- Must come from any of the target sectors;
 - Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Officers in local government units;
 - Women leaders in climate emergency;
 - Leaders from indigenous groups; and
 - Sustainability champions in national government agencies
- Must be a government employee holding permanent status with at least five (5) years of continuous service in the public sector,

TUTOK 13
APRIL 12, 2024

SLL-CDRR-SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM, BUKAS PARA SA NAIS MATUTO SA USAPIN NG DISASTER RISK AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT

IBC LIVE STREAMING

PAGEONE

[Philippines, Germany Bolster Climate Action Thru EUR36.8 Million TRANSCEND Project](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC), in partnership with the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH or German Development Cooperation, on Monday announced the soft launch of the Transformative Actions for Climate and Ecological Protection and Development (TRANSCEND) project.

The foreign-assisted project aims at enhancing the country's capacity to implement its climate change and biodiversity policies.

The EUR36.8 million (PHP2.35 billion) TRANSCEND project ensures the transparent, integrated and accountable implementation of climate projects across all levels of society in the Philippines, soliciting and mediating coordination between government agencies, civil society organizations, and the private sector.

"Climate change poses many challenges and has differentiated impacts on sectors and disproportionate effects on others," CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje said in his welcome remarks during the recent soft launch.

"Working with Germany on the TRANSCEND project, we can focus on maximizing and optimizing collaboration and cooperation between and among government agencies, civil society organizations, and the private sector in pushing for a climate-smart and climate-resilient Philippines. This is the call of our time: a truly whole of society and whole of world approach to address climate change and its impacts," he added.

Outlined to support the Philippines in achieving its National Adaptation Plan (NAP) and Nationally Distributed Contributions Implementation Plan (NDCIP), TRANSCEND is calibrated to work and assist in key climate intervention areas as identified in the two framework documents.

This includes the protection, conservation and rehabilitation of biodiversity and natural carbon sinks, securing of investments to leverage private sector funds and jumpstart transition to a low-carbon economy and create green jobs, synergizing of adaptation and mitigation strategies for effective carbon reduction, avoidance and sequestration of carbon emissions, and establishing multi-stakeholder decision support systems at all levels of government to enhance transparency and accelerate transformative evidence-based policies.

“This project allows us to coherently synergize our efforts towards a low-carbon and biodiversity friendly future through improved coordination, fortified partnerships, and maximum impact of our resources. TRANSCEND will catalyze positive change, promoting ‘integrated, transparent, and accountable’ efforts to safeguard the environment for present and future generations,” said Department of Environmental and Natural Resources Secretary Ma. Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga as represented by Assistant Secretary Noralene Uy.

According to GIZ’s indicative project timeline, the main launch of TRANSCEND project is set in August this year, following the signing of the project’s Implementation Agreement.

The project holds much significance to both the Philippine and German governments as it marks another chapter of the Philippine-German diplomatic relationship, since its inception 70 years ago.

“Germany and the Philippines are partners who share the same values and work hand in hand to strengthen the rule base of the national order in Europe, in Southeast Asia, and everywhere in the world where it is in danger. We have a lot in common and we are reliable partners, and today’s [soft] launching event is again another milestone in our partnership,” H.E. Dr. Andreas Pfaffernoschke, German ambassador to the Philippines, said.

Borje said the Philippine government must continue to work and collaborate with partners, particularly with Germany.

“While the work ahead of us is still long and still requires a lot of hard work, there is a sense of hope and there is a sense of renewal. And pondered upon, it’s going to power the partnership that we currently have from 70 years to beyond,” he added.

The CCC continues to actively seek effective and robust local and international partnerships as part of its commitment to enhance the country’s capacity to mitigate and adapt to the changing climate and to usher in a new era of climate resiliency in the Philippines.

The TRANSCEND project is deeply aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 13 (Climate Action), SDG 15 (Life on Land), and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals) by focusing on enhancing climate resilience, biodiversity conservation, and fostering partnerships for effective implementation.

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According to GIZ’s indicative project timeline, TRANSCEND is set to have its hard launch in August this year, following the signing of the project’s Implementation Agreement.

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“Germany and the Philippines are partners who share the same values and work hand in hand to strengthen the rule base of the national order in Europe, in Southeast Asia, and everywhere in the world where it is in danger. We have a lot in common and we are reliable partners, and today’s [soft] launching event is again another milestone in our partnership,” said H.E. Dr. Andreas Pfaffernoschke, German Ambassador to the Philippines.

Borje added, “It’s important that the Philippine government continues to work and collaborate with partners, particularly with Germany. While the work ahead of us is still long and still requires a lot of hard work, there is a sense of hope and there is a sense of renewal. And pondered upon, it’s going to power the partnership that we currently have from 70 years to beyond.”

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For more information on the CCC’s climate mainstreaming activities, visit www.climate.gov.ph and www.facebook.com/CCCPhl. (CCC)

[CCC, SGV to strengthen collaboration towards transformative climate action through stronger public-private partnership pathways](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) and SyCip Gorres Velayo & Co. (SGV & Co.) are poised to further strengthen their collaboration for transformative climate action by identifying areas of cooperation and leveraging public-partner partnerships pathways.

CCC and SGV underscored the important role of the private sector in further efforts to bolster adaptive capacities at the local government level and stressed the value of science based and data-driven assessments..

“Adopting a whole-of-society and whole-of-nation approach is critical for success. One of the priority areas that we have is strengthening further the cooperation and partnership with the private sector to drive investment-led, transformative climate actions,” said CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje.

SGV & Co. meantime emphasized building capacities for data driven decisions and linking private sector and local government units to support sustainable development and climate initiatives.

The SGV & Co. cited the value of integrating private sector decisions that contribute to climate resilience, particularly for local communities..

“We also have to emphasize and highlight the climate resilience of our LGUs. That's one of our goals now, to see how we can help the LGUs be more climate resilient,” said SGV & Co. Chair Wilson P. Tan.

The SGV & Co. is a multidisciplinary professional services company that provides advisory services to both public and private sector entities, engaging in policy-making initiatives, climate resilience assessments, carbon market exploration, transition risk analysis, among other crucial areas.

The CCC and SGV & Co. are aligning their efforts with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG 13 (Climate Action) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals). By mobilizing private sector investments towards low-carbon initiatives, this partnership contributes to sustainable development, in line with the broader SDG agenda.

As the lead policymaking body of the government on climate change, the CCC is actively engaging with the private sector to foster partnerships aimed at addressing the climate crisis.

For more information on the CCC's climate mainstreaming activities, visit www.climate.gov.ph and www.facebook.com/CCCPhl. (CCC)

PTV

[Climate Change Commission says Chinese activities have already damaged 12K hectares of WPS](#)

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=END=