

Smuggler arrested with 2,000 endangered turtles

Jayapura, Indonesia

An Indonesian man has been arrested for trying to smuggle 2,000 endangered pig-nosed turtles, police said, marking the latest wildlife-trafficking arrest as the Southeast Asian nation battles the vast trade.

Authorities in Papua province said they seized 2,227 of the palm-sized turtles which were stuffed into boxes on a boat docked in the remote town of Agats.

"Officers saw a port worker carrying three big boxes and got suspicious," Papua police spokesman Ahmad Musthofa Kamal said late Thursday.

"This is protected species and they are not for sale."

Following the discovery, police arrested another man believed to be involved in the trafficking bid. The port worker was not detained.

If convicted, the arrested man could face up to five years in prison and a 100 million rupiah (\$7,000) fine, police said.

It was not clear where the turtle shipment was headed.

The pig-nosed turtle -- which has a distinctive snout-like nose and webbed feet -- is only found in Australia and New Guinea, an island shared between Papua New Guinea and Indonesia, and is protected under Indonesian conservation laws.



An Indonesian police inspects boxes full of endangered pig-nosed turtles in Merauke, Papua province, they seized from a smuggler.

Plane crash probe has begun in Paris: Ethiopia

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

An investigation has begun in Paris into the cause of last week's crash of a Nairobi-bound Boeing jet which killed all 157 passengers and crew, Ethiopian Airlines said yesterday.

"The Ethiopian delegation led by the chief investigator of (the) Accident Investigation Bureau has arrived in the French Safety Investigation (BEA)



A flight recorder

facilities and the investigation process has started in Paris," the airline wrote on Twitter.

The two black boxes from the plane that came down just six minutes after takeoff from Addis Ababa on Sunday, were taken to Paris. BEA investigators will try to retrieve information from the cockpit voice and flight data recorders, which were damaged in the crash.

'Cannot go back'

Malawi floods leave thousands homeless

AFP | Bangula, Malawi

"We just sleep on the floor in the tents," said 28-year-old mother-of-five Mary Amidu who like thousands of other Malawians fled her flood-ravaged home.

"It's a camp, so the situation is dire. You just find a small space in the tent with your family and make it home."

Her village is just 10 kilometres (six miles) away on the Mozambique border, beside the west bank of the Shire river which has burst its banks following days of torrential rain.

Across Malawi, at least 56 people have been killed following flash floods while the government estimates almost 83,000 people have been displaced.

The waters last week invaded her home so swiftly that the young widow had to scramble to get her family to safety.

"The floods came very quickly and we had no time to rescue anything, most of my property went with the floods," she said. "What was important was to save lives."

They are now at the emergency camp, located in Bangula, southern Malawi -- close to the border with Mozambique which was hit by tropical cyclone Idai late Thursday, cutting off the coastal city of Berea.

"Although we have food, we have no cooking utensils to prepare the food because everything was lost," said Amidu who said she fears a long stay at the camp as waters begin to subside.

'No other choice'

"We cannot go back soon because the water has not receded and so the house has been destroyed. So we will hang around the camp until the situation normalises. We have no other choice."



A displaced woman cooks maize received from a relief delivery at the Agricultural Development and Marketing Corporation (ADMARC) camp for people displaced by flash floods from recent heavy rains

Pilirani Andulu, walked 15 kms to the camp after her home collapsed and has been forced to sleep in the open with her two-year-old girl because the tents are full.

A lack of blankets and mosquito nets means her child is exposed to mosquitoes, malaria and cold.

Relief official Humphrey Magalasi has been battling to ensure the 21 camps opened to handle the crisis can keep up.

"We have huge gaps in terms of resources such as food and non-food items," he told AFP. "What we desperately need right now is food, tents, medication and mosquito nets."

As many as 1,700 households had settled at the Bangula camp as of Thursday.

So far, the Department of Disaster Management Affairs has received just 5,000 bags of rice, supplied by China.

At Bangula airfield, Magalasi has also been dispatching food and

emergency supplies to areas cut off by flooding including Makhanga, 65 kms from Bangula.

'Accessible by boat or by air'

"We are airlifting supplies to Makhanga where about 2,000 households have been affected," he said.

"Due to the flooding, the area is only accessible by boat or by air. We intend to airlift 600 bags of rice and other non-food items to Makhanga."

At least 56 people have died in flood-hit areas as of Wednesday, according to the government, while 577 had been injured and three are missing.

"Most of the displaced families are living in camps. So far, a total of 187 camps have been established in the affected districts," said the government in a statement.

"Assessments to establish the extent of damage in all the 14 affected districts (of Malawi's 28) are still underway."

Millions hit in Manila's 'worst' water shortage

Manila, Philippines

Manila has been hit by its worst water shortage in years, leaving bucket-bearing families to wait hours to fill up from tanker trucks and some hospitals to turn away less urgent cases.

Taps are dry from four to 20 hours per day in the homes of about half of the Philippine capital's roughly 12 million people due to rolling outages driven by a dearth of rain and inadequate infrastructure.

"I have learned to take a bath using only seven pitchers of water," Ricardo Bergado said as he lined up with his buckets. "I even save the bath water to flush our toilet."

The shortages started hitting late last week, with some areas in eastern Manila seeing the supplies of water into their homes being completely cut off.

However, Manila Water Company, one of the capital's two suppliers, said it will now use rolling cut offs spread across the city to share the pain more evenly.

Jerry cans and buckets were flying off store shelves and landing in lines where families were spending hours waiting for deliveries by truck.

"Instead of doing important things, our time is consumed

now by making sure we have enough water," Bergado, a 57-year-old audio-technician said.

At least five public hospitals in the capital have started getting supplemental supplies from water tankers, as shortages had led at least one to limit admissions.

"This is the worst (water shortage) we have experienced. It almost happened last year but we were saved by heavy rains brought by storms," Dittie Galang, Manila Water communications manager, said.

The disruption could last until July when monsoon rains are typically in full swing and would replenish regional reservoirs, one of which is at a two-decade low.

Better known for flooding from its frequent typhoons, the Philippines is experiencing a dry spell that led to reserves being severely depleted.

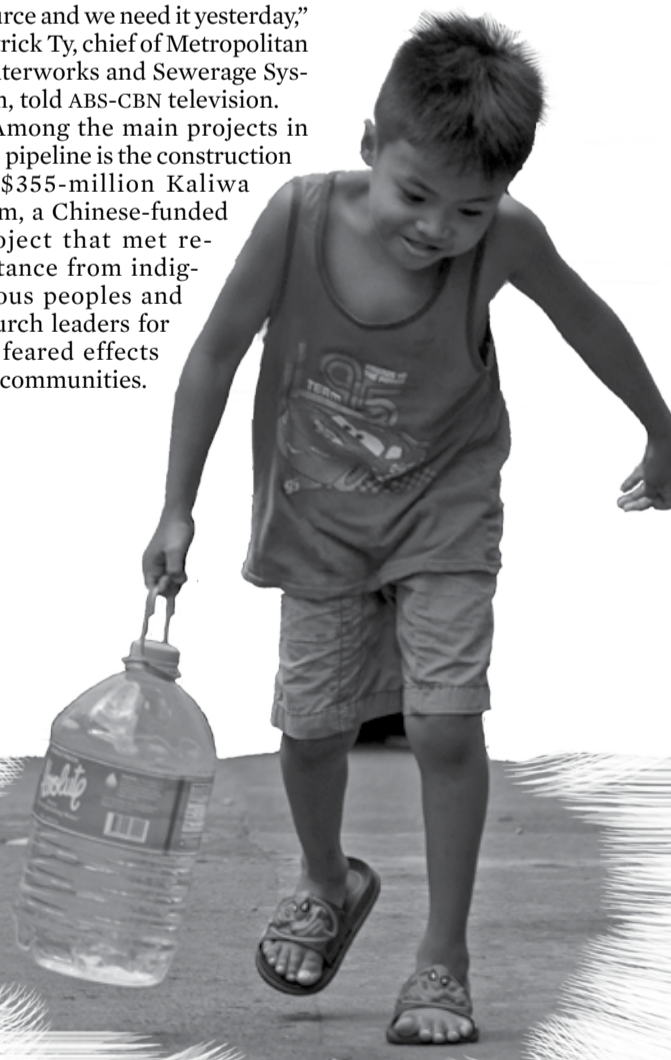
At the same time, the ageing pipelines and dams that provide Manila's water have not kept pace with the growth of the mega-city, which has roughly doubled its population since 1985.

The government has admitted that the problem of growing demand for water has long been forecast but they failed to address it due to delays in projects that would expand

capacity.

"We need an alternative water source and we need it yesterday," Patrick Ty, chief of Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, told ABS-CBN television.

Among the main projects in the pipeline is the construction of \$355-million Kaliwa Dam, a Chinese-funded project that met resistance from indigenous peoples and church leaders for its feared effects on communities.



Residents of Addition Hills in Madaluyong City, Manila, queue to receive water distributed on water tank truck and fire trucks