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DENR

NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Republic Cement recognized for environmental preservation

By [The Manila Times](#)

April 1, 2021



Republic Cement wins big at the prestigious Presidential Mineral Industry Environmental Awards (PMIEA) held recently at the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Social Hall in Quezon City. For its achievements in environmental preservation and safety excellence, Republic Cement was awarded with the Presidential Mineral Industry Environmental Awards for Quarry Operations for its Bulacan and Batangas Plants, the highest honor for these respective categories. Republic Cement & Building Materials Inc. President Lloyd Vicente (center) is flanked by DENR Undersecretary Jim Sampulna (left) and Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) Chairman Gerald Brimo (right). Republic Cement was also recognized for having the Safest Quarry at its Batangas plant, the Best Mining Forest Program–Non-metallic Category for its Bulacan plant, and a Platinum Achievement Award for Quarry Operations for its Iligan plant.



SC drops case vs 3 mining firms



By JOMAR CANLAS, TMT

April 1, 2021

THE Supreme Court (SC) has junked a plea filed by a group in connection with its environmental case against three mining companies and a government agency in Surigao City.

In a full court ruling dated Feb. 16, 2021 but was released just recently, the SC dismissed the petition for certiorari filed by Anislagan Bantay Kalikasan Task Force, Inc. (ABAKATAF) led by its chairperson, Lourdes Dapar; Lower Anislagan Farmers Irrigators Association (LAFIA), Inc., represented by its president, Daniel Gonzales.

Impleaded in the petition were Presiding Judge Evangeline S. Yuipco-Bayana, Branch 30, Regional Trial Court (RTC), Surigao City; Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR); Mines and Geosciences Bureau-Region 13 (Caraga); Manila Mining Corporation; Kalayaan Copper Gold Resources, Inc.; Silangan Mindanao Mining Co., Inc.

The group assailed the May 20, 2011 order of the RTC of Surigao City, Branch 30, requiring them to comply with a set of directives involving the authority of Dapar and Gonzales to represent their respective groups.

It stemmed from a complaint for injunction with moral damages and with urgent ex parte application for temporary environmental protection order and environmental protection order filed by petitioners against the firms and DENR before the lower court on June 22, 2010.

In resolving the motion for reconsideration, the trial court rendered the assailed order, requiring petitioners (1) to submit a board resolution showing authority of petitioners Dapar and Gonzales to represent petitioners ABAKATAF and LAFIA, Inc., respectively; (2) to comply with Section 17, Rule 3 of the Rules of Court on substitution of parties; (3) to amend the complaint with respect to petitioner minor Jonathan Badillo; and (4) to submit proof of written authority of petitioners' counsel, Atty. Mary Grace Ellen Villanueva, to represent them.

They believed that Yuipco-Bayana's order had been rendered with grave abuse of discretion because it allegedly ran afoul with the objective of the rules of procedure for environmental cases to provide a simplified, speedy, inexpensive procedure in suits for the protection of the right to a balanced and healthful ecology.

They likewise informed the court in their petition that the RTC already dismissed the complaint through its Aug. 15, 2011 order.

The order stated that the dismissal was due to Atty. Villanueva's failure to appear during the pre-trial and trial hearing scheduled on June 13, 2011, as well as petitioners' failure to comply with the assailed order.

However, they manifested that after they moved to reconsider the order of dismissal, they filed a notice of appeal before the Court of Appeals (CA).



The appellate court denied their appeal and affirmed RTC's order dismissing the complaint.

The CA found unjustifiable Villanueva's absence during the pre-trial and trial hearing, as well as her failure to comply with the assailed order.

Due to the developments in the case, the tribunal denied the petition.

The SC cited the case of *Flores v. Gonzales* as the court "explained that where no practical relief may be granted to a party in view of a supervening event, this court will refrain from making a declaration."

"Where a declaration on an issue would have no practical use or value, this court will refrain from expressing its opinion in a case where no practical relief may be granted in view of a supervening event. Thus, it is unnecessary to indulge in academic discussion of a case presenting a moot question, as a judgment thereon cannot have any practical legal effect or, in the nature of things, cannot be enforced," the ruling, promulgated by Clerk of Court Edgardo Aricheta, stated.

"Here, petitioners pray that the assailed order be nullified and that petitioners' omnibus motion to present evidence *ex parte* or to declare respondents in default, and to set the case for trial, be granted."

However, considering that the complaint has already been dismissed, and that petitioners no longer appeal the dismissal to this court — leading to the order of dismissal attaining finality — there would no more be any practical relief to petitioners. Setting the case for trial is clearly no longer possible at this point," it added.



QUICK FACTS | Digging for profits: Who owns PH mines?

Ten of the 28 mining companies ordered closed or suspended by the late Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Regina 'Gina' Lopez posted net gains based on their latest available financial statements. Sixteen suffered net losses, while two others have no available information.

BY KAROL ILAGAN March 31, 2021 | 07:00:00 PM

Platinum Group Metals Corp (PGMC), which extracts nickel ore in Surigao Del Norte in Mindanao, recorded P6.1 billion in revenue from contracts with Chinese customers in 2019 and posted a net income of P1.03 billion that year, its latest financial statements showed.

It also recorded nickel production of over 2.5 million dry metric tons in 2020, which was valued at about P5 billion, although the financial statements for last year were not yet available.

PGMC was the biggest earner among the mining companies ordered closed or suspended by the late Environment Secretary Regina "Gina" Lopez in February 2017. Many of them were able to continue operations while their permits went under review.

Ten of out of the total 28 mining companies in Lopez's order posted net gains, based on their latest available financial statements. Sixteen posted net losses, while two others didn't have information available from corporate regulators..

The Philippine Center for Investigative Journalism mapped the mining firms in Lopez's order. Click the map to see profiles of the mining companies. It shows information from their incorporation documents, financial statements, details about their host communities, and links to latest news stories. (*Editor's Note: The arrows point to the municipality where the mining companies operate, not the exact location of the operations.*)

The 23 mining companies closed by Lopez are the following: [Benguet Corp.](#) | [Ore Asia Mining and Development Corp.](#) | [BenguetCorp Nickel Mines Inc.](#) | [Eramen Mineral Inc.](#) | [Zambales Diversified Metals Corp.](#) | [LNL Archipelago Minerals Inc.](#) | [Mt. Sinai Mining Exploration and Development Corp.](#) | [Emir Mineral Resources Corp.](#) | [Techiron Resources Inc.](#) | [AAM-Phil Natural Resources and Development Corp.](#) | [Kromico Inc. \(Krominco Inc.\)](#) | [SinoSteel Philippines HY Mining Corp.](#) | [Oriental Synergy Mining Corp.](#) | [Wellex Mining Corp.](#) | [Libjo Mining Corp.](#) | [Oriental Vision Mining Philippines Corp.](#) | [ADNAMA Mining Resources Inc.](#) | [Claver Mineral Development Corp.](#) | [Platinum Group Metals Corp.](#) | [CTP Construction and Mining Corp.](#) | [Carrascal Nickel Corp.](#) | [Marcventures Mining and Development Corp.](#) | [Hinatuan Mining Corp.](#)

Five other companies were ordered suspended: [Berong Nickel Corp.](#) | [OceanaGold Phils Inc.](#) | [Lepanto Consolidated Mining Co. Inc.](#) | [Citinickel Mines and Development Corp.](#) | [Strong Built Mining Dev. Corp.](#)

The map shows PGMC operating a mining area of 4,376 hectares in Claver, a small coastal town in northeastern Mindanao with a population of less than 40,000. Documents from the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) also showed that among its major stockholders are Global Ferronickel Holdings Inc. and businessman Joseph Sy, the board chairperson.

Twenty-one out of the 28 companies in Lopez's order are involved in extracting nickel, which is in high demand globally. Based on available data, 14 firms mined a total of 11.85 million dry metric tons of nickel worth P15.22 billion in 2020. The country is the biggest supplier of nickel ores to China, a top metals consumer.



MICC review

Malacañang ordered the Mining Industry Coordinating Council (MICC) to review the audit conducted by Lopez. Since her crackdown on the industry four years ago, the MICC review remains pending and the results unknown.

PCIJ's January 2021 request for information on the status of the review with Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea yielded no results as his office refused to disclose information on specific cases.

PCIJ's second attempt to seek updates on the MICC review, on March 23, has yet to be answered by Medialdea's office.

In an e-mail interview early this year, the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) said it was also waiting for Malacañang to resolve Lopez's orders to "move mining forward." COMP Vice President for Communications Rocky Dimaculangan said the MICC scheduled a second round of audits in early 2020. But he said he was unaware if this was completed.

Dimaculangan, also COMP's national coordinator for sustainable mining, said two other policies that had stifled minerals development needed resolving. These are the moratorium on new mineral agreements (Executive Order 79, s. 2012) and the ban on open-pit mining (DENR Department Order 2017-10).

Duterte, who has kept the Aquino administration's open-pit mining ban, has repeatedly singled out miners for degrading the environment, threatening them with tighter environmental rules.

The president's pronouncements ran parallel with Lopez's 2016 order for an industry-wide audit of large-scale mining, which has had a long history of negative impact on land and water resources, biodiversity, public health, indigenous communities and environmental defenders.

PCIJ requested a copy of the full audit from the DENR, but the office referred PCIJ to MGB. The DENR did not respond to PCIJ's queries regarding the MICC review. Various reports have cited violations of environmental laws and environmental compliance certificates as reasons for the closure and suspension of the 28 mines.

As of writing, only two companies from the DENR's list of 28 erring mines were reported to have permanently closed. Five have suspended mining permits or operations. Another firm's mining permit application was denied. One was renegotiating the renewal of its permit. Five others were officially allowed to resume operations, while the remaining 14 appeared to have ongoing operations and have pending appeals with the Office of the President. Seventeen of the 28 firms reported mineral production with the MGB in 2020.

Closures, suspensions

On Nov. 12, 2018, the DENR under Secretary Roy Cimatu issued a resolution ordering the closure of Oriental Synergy Mining Corp., Claver Mineral Development Council and Ore Asia Mining and Development Corp.

The order stemmed from motions for reconsideration filed by 13 mining firms on the order issued by the DENR under Lopez. Motions filed by the three companies were denied. The DENR directed them to pay all fines and penalties. The agency also barred the transport of ore until full rehabilitation is undertaken by these mining companies.

In the same resolution, nine of the 13 mining companies that were previously ordered closed were suspended instead. Four of these firms would be allowed to resume operations later on.

These developments would be reflected in the Mines and Geosciences Bureau's list of mineral production sharing agreement (MPSAs) as of Feb. 28, 2021. According to MGB, three of 23 mining firms ordered closed were listed as having suspended MPSAs: Wellex Mining operating in Libjo and Tubajon, Dinagat Islands; Eramen Minerals Inc. in Sta. Cruz and Candelaria, Zambales; and BenguetCorp Nickel Mines, Inc. in Sta. Cruz, Zambales.

MGB also listed Krominco Inc. and Mt. Sinai Mining Exploration and Development Corp. as having MPSAs "under care and maintenance," but their commercial operations were "suspended."

Details of DENR closure orders were included in some of the companies' latest audited financial statements.

On Feb. 13, 2017, BenguetCorp Nickel Mines Inc. received an order from the DENR, cancelling its MPSA for its Sta. Cruz Nickel project. The order alleged that the company's operations had overlapped a watershed in the area. Prior to this order, the DENR, in a separate report dated Oct. 3, 2016, found that the company had violated several conditions of its Environmental Compliance Certificate and other legal provisions.



On Feb. 22, 2017, the company filed an appeal before the Office of the President to revise the DENR cancellation order. The company claimed that it was operating within the Zambales chromite mineral reservation, which had been excluded from government-declared watersheds.

In its 2019 financial statement, the company noted that the Office of the President, as of March 20, 2019, had yet to respond to the appeal.

As for Eramen Minerals Inc., DENR cancelled the company's permit for supposedly violating provisions of the following laws and regulations:

- Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004 and its implementing rules and regulations;
- Philippine Clean Air Act of 1999 and its amending Rule IX;
- Philippine Mining Act of 1995 and its implementing rules and regulations; and
- Revised Forestry Code of the Philippines.

In its appeal with the Office of the President, Eramen addressed the issues raised by DENR, claiming, among others, that the "non-issuance of the tree-cutting permit is the fault of the DENR as they failed to act on the various permits applied by the company" and that its mining operation "has not adversely impaired the functions of the watershed in the area based on a one-year scientific study conducted by UP NIGS (the University of the Philippines's National Institute of Geological Sciences)."

The company also argued that the DENR violated the terms and conditions of the MPSA when it did not resort to arbitration before cancelling the agreement. Prior to the 2017 closure order, the DENR in 2014 directed the company to suspend hauling operations until conditions were met.

In 2016, concerned citizens of Sta. Cruz, Zambales filed a petition for a Writ of Kalikasan, an injunction, to be issued against five mining firms including BenguetCorp. and Eramen. The Supreme Court granted the petition. But after petitions made before the Court of Appeals, the provisional Writ of Kalikasan issued by the high court was lifted.

Wellex Mining Corp. also received an order from the DENR cancelling its MPSA. On Nov. 12, 2018, the department issued a resolution (1) partially granting Wellex's motion for reconsideration on the 2017 cancellation order; (2) suspending the operation of the firm; and (3) directing it to do the following:

- correct all violations and deficiencies and conduct replacement planting in accordance with DENR Memorandum Order No. 2012-02 prescribing a uniform replacement ratio for cut or relocated trees; and
- pay all fines and penalties immediately upon receipt of the resolution.

Resuming operations

In July 2020, Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda was quoted in a news report as saying that five firms were "granted approval by the Office of the President (OP) after complying with mining laws."

The firms that were allowed to resume operations were:

1. Berong Nickel Corp. in Palawan;
2. Emir Mineral Resources Corp. in Eastern Samar;
3. Zambales Diversified Metals Corp. in Zambales;
4. Carrascal Nickel Corp. in Surigao del Sur; and
5. Strong Built Mining Development Corp. in Leyte.

Nickel miner Emir, Zambales Diversified and Carrascal were ordered closed by Lopez in 2017. Berong, also a nickel miner, and Strong Built, which mines for magnetite sand, were supposed to be suspended.

According to MGB records, OceanaGold's Financial or Technical Assistance Agreement (FTAA) expired on June 20, 2019. It filed a renewal application on Oct. 1, 2018. The MGB forwarded the application to the DENR on April 30, 2019. The DENR endorsed the application to the Office of the President.

On June 19, 2019, the Office of the President returned the application because it lacked the consent of the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples.

On June 20, 2019, the MGB issued a letter to the DENR permitting OceanaGold to continue its mining operations pending the confirmation of its FTAA.



On the same day of the FTAA expiry, the provincial government of Nueva Vizcaya issued a directive calling on local officials to “restrain any operations” by OceanaGold in Didipio. This prompted OceanaGold to file legal cases against the provincial government, including an injunction against the barricade.

Mongabay, a nonprofit conservation and environmental science news platform, reported that the regional court rejected OceanaGold’s request for an injunction. This prompted the mining giant to take the ruling to the Court of Appeals.

In July 2020, the Court of Appeals dismissed OceanaGold's appeal to allow it to continue operating after its permit expired in June 2019.

In February 2021, the Philippine government and OceanaGold were reported to be finalizing the terms of the FTAA renewal. The renewal was expected to be endorsed to the Office of the President for approval.

PCIJ did not find details on the rest of the mines but they were included in the MGB list as having “existing” MPSAs. They are also listed as conducting commercial operations in MGB’s “directory of metallic operating mines as of January 2021.” These mines reported metallic mineral production and filed reports with the Securities and Exchange Commission in the last two years. – **with research assistance from Stanley Gajete Buenafe and Angelica Carballo-Pago**

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— **PCIJ, March 2021**



'Progressive rehabilitation' underway in Leyte mining site



(Contributed photo)

[RONALD O. REYES](#)

March 31, 2021

A MINING company in MacArthur, Leyte has started its rehabilitation program amid anti-mining sentiments in the town.

Januar Ong, community relations officer of MacArthur Iron Sand Project Corp. (MIPC), said they were already done with the first phase of the rehabilitation, which involved the backfilling of the topsoil and pure sand with no iron ore content in the one-hectare mining field in Barangay Maya.

“We are true to our commitment. We are going for progressive mining and rehabilitation. We are going to show that progressive rehabilitation is doable. This is part of our commitment to the landowner, to ensure that the land is productive at the minimum when we started the mining operation,” Ong told reporters in Tacloban City.

According to Ong, they have already plowed the land and put organic fertilizer while waiting for the right weather condition for the planting of vegetables.

“The planting won’t coincide with the rice planting season. We opted for ampalaya, monggo, and watermelon,” said Ong.

“We hope to harvest in three to four months. We will try if we can get an optimum production or we need soil improvement. We will also infuse agricultural technology,” he said.

According to the mining official, they have involved the landowner and coordinated with the Department of Agriculture.

The management also constructed drainage and irrigation canals in the rehabilitated area.

In MacArthur town alone, the MIPC has mining claims of about 300 hectares for three years.

At present, the mining company has leased the seven-hectare rice land owned by Maya village chief Pepito Guimalan for their black sand extraction.

The management leased the private land in the amount of P270,000 per hectare for two years.

Amid criticisms from anti-mining groups, the MIPC management maintained they complied with the national government’s necessary permits and tax payments.



According to the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, the MIPC has mining claims of 2,300 hectares in Leyte, covering the towns of MacArthur, Javier, and Abuyog.

The mining company, which reportedly invested P500 million in their black sand operation, hired around 300 workers in MacArthur.

The minerals will be shipped to China, according to the MIPC management.

Black sand is a valuable component in the making of steel, concrete, jewelry, cosmetics, and other industrial products. **(SunStar Philippines)**



DENR Negros Oriental PENRO Moreno Tagra (far right) reiterates the call for the public to conserve the province's water resources during a Kapihan sa PIA forum held to mark Philippine Water Week on March 24, 2021 at Bethel Guest House, Dumaguete City. Photo also shows PIA Negros Oriental Information Center Manager Jenny Tilos (far left) and Metro Dumaguete Water Chief Operating Officer David Berba (center). (KAT/PIA7-NegOr)

DENR NegOr reiterates call to conserve province's water resources

By Roi LomotanPublished on March 31, 2021

DUMAGUETE CITY, March 31 (PIA) -- In line with the local observance of National Water Week, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Negros Oriental reiterated the call for the public to conserve the province's water resources.

"The efforts in relation to conserving our water resource, which must not only be delegated to the government but to everyone. *Kitay hitungdan na tawo* we have a minimum requirement of water *na gikahinanglan nato* (As human beings, we have a minimum requirement of water that we need)," Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer Moreno Tagra explained in a recent Kapihan sa PIA forum.



DENR Negros Oriental PENRO Moreno Tagra discussing the benefits of conserving water resources of the province during a Kapihan sa PIA forum to mark Philippine Water Week on March 24, 2021 at Bethel Guest House, Dumaguete City. (KAT/PIA7-NegOr)

"Water is very important to every one of us. If *atong tan-awon sa* Negros Oriental *maihap na lang sa atong mga tudlo ang mga buhi na kasapaan ug* rivers. Although water is not lost but the amount of potable water available *nagkagamay na* (If we look at Negros Oriental, we can see that the number of active rivers and springs have decreased. Although water is not lost but the amount of potable water have reduced)," he said.

Tagra said certain land use practices have contributed to increased water utilization and encroachment to bodies of water, or disregarding easement laws have affected water resources in the province.



The DENR official reminded the public that taking care of the province's water resources would also benefit other industries like tourism, with the presence of waterfalls in the province which could provide more livelihood opportunities for other people.

In a related development, Metro Dumaguete Water (MDW), the company that now oversees the day-to-day operations of Dumaguete City's water service system, gave its commitment to preserve the province's water resource by planting trees in the watershed areas.

"Our business is heavily dependent on these water sources that is why we have to protect these water sources by planting trees. With that we would like to commit 7,000 trees," MDW Chief Operating Officer David Berba said.

"We have to take care of our water bodies. We are extracting from aquifers. Aquifers would need a high recharge rate coming from rain and if there are industries hindering the water from going to the aquifers then the recharge rate will be lower," he added.

Berba added that ensuring water reliable water security and reliability is part of the key performance indicators stipulated in their contract with the Dumaguete City Water District (DCWD) which they commit to achieve.

This year's observance of Philippine Water Week aims to raise awareness on the importance of water and discuss actions on how to conserve all water resources through its theme: "Valuing water." (ral/PIA7-Negros Oriental)



TINGNAN: Isang brahminy kite ang nasagip sa Holy Cross Community sa Barangay Tetuan, Zamboanga City Lunes.

Nang mamataan ng mga residente, agad sinagip ng mga awtoridad ang ibon, ayon sa barangay.

Nasa pangangalaga na ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources ang ibon. (📷: Chairman Walmart Atilano) | via Leizle Lacastesantos

BASAHIN DITO ang buong ulat: <https://bit.ly/3m7fB0h>



DILG: Make cleaning ‘a way of life’ for Manila Bay rehab

By Jag Lyra D. CostameroPublished on March 31, 2021

CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga, March 31 (PIA) -- The 2020 Manila BAYani Awards and Incentives ceremony is a call to communities to make it ‘a way of life’ to clean the surroundings and nearby bodies of water.

Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Regional Director Julie Daquioag underscored that though the ceremony is conducted for years, it is still lacking in terms of the institutionalization of the program.

“It is actually not needed that we will have an assessment, and awarding just to wake up people to clean the Manila Bay. When people are awake and they understand the program, our communities will be awake also. When the communities are awake, the whole Central Luzon and the whole nation will be awake, too,” she said.

She pressed that communities should innovate and initiate further in maintaining and preserving the bay as the fact that it helps in everyday means of livelihood is an enough reason why this natural resource that surrounds Region 3 should be protected.

In addition, DILG Central Luzon recognized that this year’s awards is the first virtual ceremony, and adjustments have been made in the implementation of the assessment in compliance to the minimum health standards and safety protocols.

“What’s so unique for the 2020 Manila BAYani Awards and Incentives is that we were able to implement the different provisions and guidelines for the clean-up, rehabilitation, and preservation of the Manila Bay despite the pandemic that has happened and is still happening,” Daquioag stated.

The official claimed that the awards displayed which among the local government units are always and have always been making different initiatives and strategies, and doing regular things in very unique ways pertaining to Manila Bay clean up and rehabilitation.



Department of the Interior and Local Government Regional Director Julie Daquioag calls on the local government officials and partner agencies to continue doing best for people and for the Manila bay as it leads to a beautiful environment and a beautiful way of life. (Jag Lyra Costamero/PIA 3)



For the awardees, Dinalupihan, Balanga City, Samal, Orani are the high compliant local government units of Bataan; Baliwag, Plaridel, City of San Jose Del Monte and Santa Maria for Bulacan; Palayan City for Nueva Ecija; and the City of San Fernando and Mabalacat City for Pampanga.

Recognized as the Provincial Top Performers Municipal Category are Dinalupihan in Bataan, Baliwag in Bulacan, Candaba in Pampanga, Santa Rosa in Nueva Ecija, and Bamban in Tarlac; while Provincial Top Performers in City Category are Balanga City in Bataan, City of San Jose del Monte in Bulacan, City of San Fernando in Pampanga, Palayan City in Nueva Ecija, and Tarlac City.

Acknowledged as the Regional Top Performer for Municipal Category is Baliwag in Bulacan, followed by Dinalupihan in Bataan, and Santa Maria in Bulacan; while Balanga Bataan was awarded as the Regional Top Performer City Category with City of San Jose Del Monte in Bulacan and City of San Fernando in Pampanga winning second and third places, respectively.

In its efforts of hailing programs, projects, and activities connected to the Manila Bay rehabilitation project, Municipality of Baliwag in Bulacan attained the High Compliant for Three Consecutive Years award.

With this, DILG Central Luzon said that local government unit awardees should serve as inspirations to others to take the challenge of taking care of the environment which remains a priority of the national government.

"It is a sort of inspiration and encouragement to everyone. Aside from the plaque and small financial considerations we could give, we show our recognition and appreciation to the winners in their compliance. We want that aside from all these awards, the most important is we can inculcate the value of this program, of cleaning up the surroundings, of doing our part as residents, leading towards cleaning up Manila Bay," Daquioag mentioned.

The agency emphasized that the significant role of LGUs and local officials is to be at the forefront in sustaining a conducive environment, and resolving environmental issues and challenges especially in the Manila Bay, and its watershed areas.

The ceremony is in line with the Manila Bay Clean Up Program which aims to restore the water quality of the bay in accordance with the Supreme Court mandamus in 2016. (CLJD/JLDC-PIA 3)



'Scubasurero' cops lead Gingoog sea cleanup to save corals

By Jigger Jerusalem [March 31, 2021, 2:08 pm](#)



SEA BED CLEANUP. Policemen led by Lt. Col. Mardy Hortillosa, spokesperson of the Police Regional Office-10, prepare to dive during a cleanup activity on Tuesday (March 30, 2021) to remove fishing nets stuck on the sea bed at Puntod Shoal, Barangay San Juan, Gingoog City. The cleanup drive dubbed as "Scubasurero" is ongoing as police officers and civilian divers are working hand in hand to clear the area of fishing nets and trash. (PNA photo by Jigger J. Jerusalem)

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY – A team of divers, led by police officers, on Tuesday began removing fishing nets that have been stuck at the bottom of the sea for years, causing destruction to corals in Puntod Shoal, Barangay San Juan, Gingoog City.

Lt. Col. Ariel Pontillas, Gingoog City police chief, who led the initiative dubbed as "Scubasurero", said the cleanup of the sea bed will continue as they will be holding diving sessions in the coming days.

"This is an ongoing activity. We still have a lot of ground to cover," Pontillas said in a phone interview Tuesday afternoon.

He said the shoal is about three hectares wide and most parts of the area are now covered in fishing nets as a result of years of illegal practice by fishermen.

In the three diving sessions that were conducted, he said they were able to remove more than 10 kilos of entangled fishing nets.

"We want to clear the area of nets to revive the corals in the shoal," Pontillas said.

One of the sea creatures that was retrieved during the cleanup was a crab that was covered with corals.

Brig. Gen. Rolando Anduyan, Police Regional Office-10 director, said the crab species has probably mutated due to the length of time that it was trapped in the colony or group of corals.

Anduyan, who is also a diving enthusiast, has emphasized the police's role in ensuring that illegal fishing practices will be stopped in the region's coastal areas.

"We are training police officers in scuba diving so they could help in guarding the seas from unlawful fishing methods," he said.

City councilor Judeline Bernaldez, chair of the Gingoog city tourism committee, said a local ordinance that would protect Puntod Shoal from destruction and to make it a diving spot is nearing approval at the local legislature.

Elvin Restituto, Gingoog City administrative officer, said the cleaning of the shoal is one way of promoting tourism as well as attracting divers.



“Scuba diving is a hobby, but it can also contribute to environmental protection,” Restituto said.

Pontillas said they will also get in touch with other diver groups in the region to help them in the cleanup campaign. (PNA)



‘Scubasurero’ cops lead Gingoog sea cleanup to save corals

March 31, 2021 3 min read

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CDC and Clark Water launch wastewater project for new environmental standards

By [BUSINESSMIRROR](#)

APRIL 1, 2021

Clark Development Corp. (CDC), together with Clark Water Corp., has initiated efforts to upgrade its wastewater treatment processes to prepare the sewage treatment facility serving the Clark Freeport Zone to comply with the new more stringent standards of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources Administrative Order (DAO) 2016-08 on Biological Nutrient Removal (BNR).

The project focuses on improving the efficiency of the facility, which has the capacity to treat as much as 27 million liters of wastewater per day. The wastewater treatment facility will undergo a series of preparatory works including removal of sludge to maximize the processing capacity and improve the flow of water within the facility. These activities will increase its overall treatment efficiency, as well as prepare the facility for the installation of upgrades required by DAO 2016-08.

The parties stressed that this collaboration is a testament of their dedication to adhere with the new government-mandated environmental regulations while serving the current and future needs of the locators of the free port.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2021/04/01/cdc-and-clark-water-launch-wastewater-project-for-new-environmental-standards/>



Caritas Philippines and EcoWaste Coalition to the faithful: Give Mother Earth a breather from garbage this Holy Week

By EcoWaste Coalition Published on March 31, 2021

QUEZON CITY, Mar. 31 -- Two pro-environment organizations prodded the faithful to give Mother Earth a breather from garbage as the Holy Week is commemorated for the second time amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Caritas Philippines, together with the EcoWaste Coalition, invited Catholic Filipinos to mark the Holy Week with acts that will prevent environmental pollution, especially through the reduced use of single-use plastics. Caritas Philippines, the humanitarian, development and advocacy arm of the Catholic Church, is a member of the EcoWaste Coalition.

"As stewards of God's Creation, let us celebrate the Paschal Mystery of the Holy Week with a deeper reflection on what is happening to our environment and the climate and the need for us to speak and act as one to defend our Mother Earth from being further degraded and harmed," said Father Antonio Labiao, Jr., Executive Secretary of Caritas Philippines and board member of the EcoWaste Coalition.

"As we again commemorate the Holy Week at a time of a global public health crisis due to COVID-19, let us reflect on the insidious throw-away culture that is turning our lands and oceans into dumping grounds for chemical and waste pollutants. Let us listen to the cries of Mother Earth who is choking from tons upon tons of single-use plastic waste, and act with compassion and urgency to save her from this sorry plight," he said.

Jove Benosa, Zero Waste Campaigner of the EcoWaste Coalition, invited the faithful to explore and embrace practices that will help in reducing the generation of trash in our households and communities during the week-long enhanced community quarantine in the "NCR plus" area.

"As we adopt stricter COVID-19 curbs during the Holy Week, let us pay closer attention to practical ways of reducing garbage and beating the plastic pollution crisis in our midst," he said.

Caritas Philippines and the EcoWaste Coalition jointly urged the faithful to embrace a Zero Waste lifestyle and consider the following eco-tips for the Holy Week and beyond:

1. Abstain from or better still quit polluting habits such as the arbitrary use and disposal of single-use plastics, the mixing of discards, and the open dumping or burning of garbage.
2. Segregate waste materials at its source in order to reuse, repair and recycle inorganic or non-biodegradable discards, and compost organic or biodegradable materials.
3. Turn food waste and other organics into compost, which can be used to fertilize the soil for home or neighborhood gardens.
4. Opt for reusable cloth or fabric face masks – especially for non-medical frontliners -- instead of single-use non-biodegradable and non-recyclable face masks.
5. Safely dispose of soiled face masks, worn-out face shields and used gloves, tissues, wipes and other potentially infectious waste.



6. Gather old and used items in good condition and donate them to charitable causes such as the "Segunda Mana," the special donations-in-kind program of Caritas Manila.

The groups likewise reiterated the need for all citizens to abide by the minimum public health protocols to stem the spread of COVID-19, including regularly washing hands with soap and water, observing good respiratory hygiene, maintaining safe physical distancing, and practicing proper disposal of used face masks and other COVID-related waste. (Ecowaste Coalition)

Gender matters in achieving biodiversity goals

By Jimmy E. Guzman Published on March 31, 2021



Screengrab of the online launch of regional training materials on gender and biodiversity

PASIG CITY, March 31 (PIA) -- With the ongoing global pandemic exacting a heavier toll on women, training key actors to integrate gender perspectives into efforts to achieve biodiversity and environmental goals is crucial.

This was the core message at the online launch of the gender and biodiversity training materials for South East Asia and the Pacific, which were designed to promote greater gender-responsiveness in biodiversity policy and programming.

In celebration of International Women's Day on 8 March, the launch titled Gender Matters in Biodiversity Conservation: Launch of regional training materials held on 25 March 2021 via Zoom and Facebook live was organised by the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), in partnership with the Secretariat of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) and Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.

In his speech, Alexander Shestakov, Director of the Science, Society and Sustainable Futures Division of the Secretariat of the CBD, said the gender and biodiversity training materials are critical to achieving all the objectives of the CBD.

"The preparation of these training materials is a recognition that there is a real need to build an understanding of and capacity to address gender inequalities in respect to biodiversity," Shestakov said, emphasising the timeliness of the training materials given the "disproportionate impacts" of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"It has been found that women are carrying a higher burden of care and facing more job insecurities and job loss, as well as an increased rate of gender-based violence", he said.

He said the ACB is well-placed to serve as a coordinating body for the entire ASEAN region to promote the use of the training materials among key individuals and organisations across the member states.

ACB Executive Director Theresa Mundita Lim, in opening the online event, expressed commitment to mainstreaming gender in alignment with developing biodiversity synergies across sectors and subregions. The ACB has recently re-instituted its Gender and Biodiversity Committee to reach out to the ASEAN Member States and support their national efforts on gender and biodiversity.



“We welcome collaborations with the regional mechanisms for gender equality and women’s empowerment to strengthen our biodiversity and gender mainstreaming initiatives in the Region”, Lim said, citing the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Women, the ASEAN Committee on Women, the ASEAN Commission on the Promotion and Protection of the Rights of Women and Children, and the ASEAN Women Entrepreneurs Network.

Apart from Shestakov and Lim, resource persons in the panel, such as Tanya McGregor, Gender Programme Officer of the Secretariat of the CBD; Maricel Aguilar, Gender Specialist in Philippines; Dr. Mary Kristerie Baleva, ACB External Relations and Policy Specialist; and Katherine Viñegas, Senior Advisor of Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH, shared their insights on the training materials and how best to disseminate them among a wider audience.

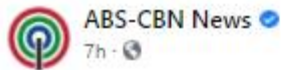
McGregor explained that the three modules of the materials aim to support behavioural change through discussion and sharing of different perspectives related to gender issues.

“It is desired to foster good regional practices for gender-responsive biodiversity conservation and sustainable use. These materials provide a flexible and adaptive learning approach, guided by facilitator nodes and participants’ handouts,” she said.

McGregor pointed out that steps to synergise gender and biodiversity concerns, including support to the gender-responsive implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans (NBSAPs), and assessment of possible gender-specific indicators, have been undertaken in the region.

Sharing good practices on the ground, Viñegas said efforts to mainstream gender into the NBSAPs of Lao PDR and Myanmar, and into the General Management Plan of Lampi Marine National Park, an ASEAN Heritage Park, improved capacities and led to greater recognition of women empowerment and gender equality.

The initiative to develop regional training materials on gender and biodiversity stemmed from the consultative regional expert workshop in Bangkok, Thailand, in 2017, organised by the Secretariat of the CBD, with support from the Government of Sweden, United Nations Environment Programme’s Asia Pacific Office, and GIZ Philippines. (PIA NCR)



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TINGNAN: Dalawang dolphin ang napadpad sa dalampasigan ng Nabas, Aklan Miyerkoles.

Nagtulong-tulong ang mga residente at mga awtoridad ng Barangay Nagustan na mailigtas ang dalawang dolphin.

Tagumpay na naibalik sa laot ang isa ngunit nasawi naman ang isa pa. Ayon sa mga residente, ilang beses nang may naliligaw na dolphin sa kanilang lugar. (📷: DeoAlfred Bandiola Venus) | via Rolen Escaniel

BASAHIN DITO ang kaugnay na ulat: <https://bit.ly/3fqWddu>



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41 Comments 42 Shares



Commuters wait for any available public transportation while others ride their bikes along seemingly empty major thoroughfares in Manila as the 6 p.m. early curfew takes effect on the first day of the enhanced community quarantine on Monday, March 29, 2021.

The STAR/Miguel de Guzman

With 6,128 new infections, COVID-19 cases in the Philippines climb to 747,288

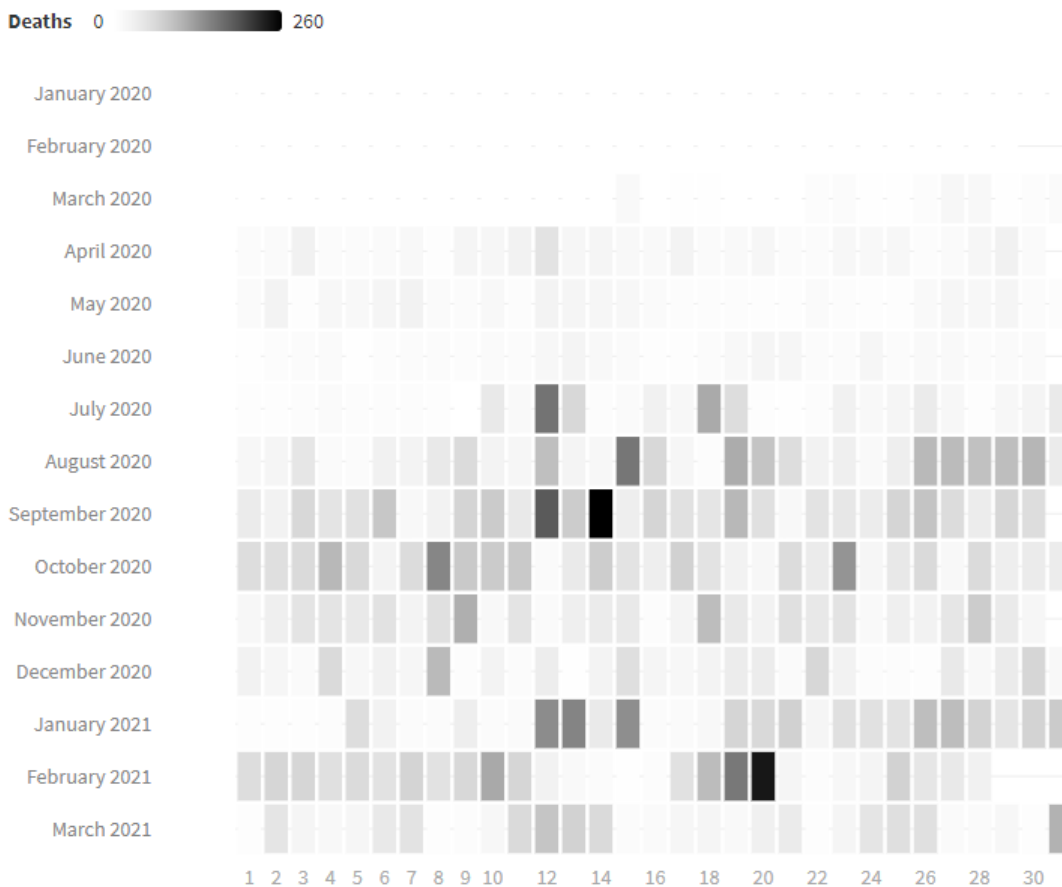
(Philstar.com) - March 31, 2021 - 4:36pm

MANILA, Philippines (Updated 4:53 p.m.) — The Philippines on Wednesday recorded 6,128 additional COVID-19 cases, bringing the total number of infections to 747,288.

- Active cases: 130,245 or 17.4% of the total
- Recoveries: 491, pushing total to 603,746
- Deaths: 106, bringing total to 13,297

COVID-19 deaths in the Philippines

The Philippines recorded the most number of COVID-19 deaths in a single day on September 14, 2020.



Source: Department of Health • As of March 31, 2021, 4 p.m.



What's new today?

- Fatalities recorded today are the highest seen since Feb. 20, when health authorities logged 239 new deaths.
- Active cases continue to top records. The positivity rate is at 19.9%, slightly lower than the 20.4% reported on Tuesday.
- New cases today are the lowest seen since March 23, when the health department logged 5,867 additional infections.
- Biology expert and priest Nicanor Austriaco of OCTA Research Team [joined](#) the growing body of calls to extend the ongoing enhanced community quarantine in order to see a substantial arrest of the spread of the coronavirus within the so-called NCR+ bubble.
- The Department of Health [appealed](#) to coronavirus testing laboratories to continue their operations during the Holy Week.
- DOH also [clarified](#) that Filipinos are not required to have an identification number issued by the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. to receive COVID-19 shots.
- The Department of the Interior and Local Government has so far [asked](#) 13 local executives to explain why they were inoculated with coronavirus vaccines despite not being on the priority list.
- The Philippine General Hospital [advised](#) the public against calls for monetary donations for its patients.

— **Bella Perez-Rubio**



IATF to decide on Saturday whether to extend ECQ in NCR+ bubble

March 31, 2021 3:14 PM by [Kristan Carag](#)



Food is handed over a makeshift barrier near a concrete wall built in the middle of a road for security and safety concerns from a nearby prison amid the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, in Muntinlupa, Metro Manila, Philippines, March 22, 2021. REUTERS/Eloisa Lopez

The Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Disease (IATF) will meet on Saturday, April 3, to decide whether to recommend extending the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) in Metro Manila, and its nearby provinces covered by the NCR plus bubble.

Department of Health (DOH) Sec. Francisco Duque III said on Tuesday, March 31, that the decision of the IATF will depend on the number of new 2019 Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) logged in the following days.

“By Saturday, *gagawa tayo ng reassessment ng situation*,” Duque, the chairperson of the IATF, told reporters when he visited the vaccination of health workers, senior citizens, and people with comorbidities in San Juan City.

“*If kailangan i-extend, i-extend natin*,” he added.

Duque expects that the Philippines will observe the effects of the ECQ after two to three weeks following the imposition of the most stringent community quarantine status in the country.

President Rodrigo Duterte approved the recommendation of the IATF to revert Metro Manila, Cavite, Laguna, Rizal, and Bulacan under ECQ from March 29 to April 4 due to a recent surge in new COVID-19 infections.

On Monday, March 29, DOH recorded 10,016 new COVID-19 cases, the highest number of new infections recorded by the Philippines in a single day since the start of the pandemic.

Source: <https://dzhnews.com.ph/iatf-to-decide-on-saturday-whether-to-extend-ecq-in-ncr-bubble/>



Gov't inks concession deal with Manila Water

By Benjamin Pulta March 31, 2021, 6:00 pm



Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra (File photo)

MANILA – Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra said Wednesday the government's revised agreement with water concessionaire Manila Water Company, Inc. (MWCI) has been signed, while a new deal with Maynilad Water Services, Inc. would be taken up after the Holy Week.

"The new concession agreement with Manila Water has been signed by the parties. The panel will start discussions with Maynilad after the Holy Week," Guevarra said, adding that the Manila Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) signed for the government.

The review panel included representatives of the Office of the President, Department of Finance, Office of the Solicitor General, Office of the Government Corporate Counsel, and Vince Dizon of the Bases Conversion and Development Authority.

The revised deals came after President Rodrigo Duterte threatened to revoke the contracts with the two water concessionaires and fire MWSS officials when water service interruptions hit Metro Manila and nearby areas in 2019.

The President subsequently ordered the Department of Justice (DOJ) to review and remove onerous provisions in the deals and discuss proposed revisions to the existing contracts.

The MWCI and Maynilad get water supply from the Angat Dam for delivery to customers in their service areas that include Metro Manila and parts of Cavite and Rizal provinces.

The MWCI is a joint venture led by the Ayala Corp. Its franchise area covers Mandaluyong, Marikina, Pasig, Pateros, San Juan, Taguig, Makati, and parts of Quezon City and Manila.

It also services Antipolo City and the Rizal towns of Angono, Baras, Binagunan, Cainta, Cardona, Jala-Jala, Morong, Pililla, Rodriguez, Tanay, Taytay, and San Mateo.

Maynilad, on the other hand, was originally a partnership between Benpres and Lyonnaise des Eaux of France.

In 2006, they pre-terminated their contract.

DM Consunji, Inc. and Metro Pacific Investments Corp. then won the bid for 84 percent of Maynilad shares and the unexpired term of the Lopez group.

Maynilad manages and operates water and waste-water services in the cities of Manila, Pasay, Parañaque, Caloocan, Muntinlupa, Las Piñas, Valenzuela, and parts of Makati and Quezon City, as well as Navotas and Malabon.

Its franchise area also covers parts of Cavite, including Cavite City and the municipalities of Bacoor, Imus, Kawit, Noveleta, and Rosario. (PNA)

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1135471>



Mas maraming Chinese vessels naispatan sa WPS

By [Gemma Garcia](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon) - April 1, 2021 - 12:00am



Sa ginawang routine aerial at maritime patrol ng National Task Force for the West Philippine Sea noong Marso 29, nakita nila na mas marami pa ang sinasabing Chinese vessels kabilang ang 44 "Chinese maritime militia" vessels na nakahimpil sa Julian Felipe Reef na nasa exclusive economic zone (EEZ) ng bansa.

STAR/ File

MANILA, Philippines — Sa kabila ng inihaing diplomatic protest ng Pilipinas, may 250 Chinese vessels ang nananatili sa West Philippine Sea.

Sa ginawang routine aerial at maritime patrol ng National Task Force for the West Philippine Sea noong Marso 29, nakita nila na mas marami pa ang sinasabing Chinese vessels kabilang ang 44 "Chinese maritime militia" vessels na nakahimpil sa Julian Felipe Reef na nasa exclusive economic zone (EEZ) ng bansa.

Ayon pa sa task force, 115 na umano'y militia vessels ang namataan naman sa Kenan Reef, 45 sa Pag-asa Islands at 50 sa Panganiban, Kagitingan at Zamora reefs na pawang nasa Kalayaan Island Group (KIG) sa West Philippine Sea.

Mayroon din umanong 4 na People's Liberation Army Navy (PLAN) vesels ang nakita sa Panganiban reef na bahagi din ng EEZ at continental shelf ng Pilipinas.

Nauna nang pinabulaanan ng Beijing ang sinasabing mga Chinese militia vessels sa Julian Felipe reef at iginiit naman ng Chinese Embassy na ang mga ito ay pawang fishing vessels na nagkukubli dahil sa masamang panahon.

Nanindigan naman ang task force na ang sinasabing fishing vessels ay maritime militia.

Iginiit din ng TF na ang pag-iipon at massive formation sa Julian Felipe Reef at iba pang lugar sa KIG ay panganib sa navigation at safety sa buhay at karagatan.

Ito ay dahil posibleng mayroong illegal na aktibidad umanong ginagawa ang mga ito sa gabi na maaaring magdulot ng pinsala sa maritime environment dulot ng maritime pollution at pagkasira ng coral reefs at ang pagkukunyari nila ay maaaring maging banta sa katahimikan at soberenya ng Pilipinas sa EEZ.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/bansa/2021/04/01/2088446/mas-maraming-chinese-vessels-naispatan-sa-wps/amp/>



This file photo taken on August 1, 2020 shows an aerial view of large scale forest fires in Pocone, Pantanal region (the largest tropical wetlands in the world), Mato Grosso State, Brazil. An area of pristine rainforest the size of the Netherlands was burned or hacked down last year, as the destruction of the planet's tropical forests accelerated despite a global economic slowdown, according to research on March 31, 2021.

AFP/Rogério Florentino

Sharp increase in destruction of virgin forest in 2020

[Kelly Macnamara](#) (Agence France-Presse) - March 31, 2021 - 6:34pm

PARIS, France — An area of pristine rainforest the size of the Netherlands was burned or hacked down last year, as the destruction of the planet's tropical forests accelerated despite a global economic slowdown, according to research Wednesday.

The worst losses were in Brazil, three times higher than the next highest country, the Democratic Republic of Congo, according to a report from Global Forest Watch based on satellite data.

Across the tropics, the study registered the destruction in 2020 of 4.2 million hectares (10.4 million acres) of primary forest—12% higher than the year before.

Ecosystems straddling the equator shelter abundant biodiversity and store vast amounts of carbon.

In total, the tropics lost 12.2 million hectares of tree cover—including forests and plantations—last year, driven largely by agriculture.

But researchers said extreme heat and drought also stoked huge fires that consumed swathes of forest across Australia, Siberia and deep into the Amazon.

These losses are a "climate emergency. They're a biodiversity crisis, a humanitarian disaster, and a loss of economic opportunity," said Frances Seymour of the World Resources Institute, which is behind the report.

The study found some evidence that COVID-19 restrictions may have had an effect around the world— with an increase in illegal harvesting because forests were left less protected, or the return of large numbers of people to rural areas.

But researchers said there was little sign that the pandemic had changed the trajectory of forest destruction and warned that the worst could be still to come if countries slash protections in an attempt to ramp up economic growth.

But Seymour said the most "ominous signal" from the 2020 data is the instances of forests themselves falling victim to climate change.

"I mean, wetlands are burning," she said in a press briefing.

"Nature has been whispering this risk to us for a long time. But now she is shouting."



Plants—especially in the tropics—and soil comprise an enormous carbon sink, sucking up roughly a third of all the carbon pollution humans produce annually.

Yet tropical forests continue to disappear rapidly, threatening irreparable losses to Earth's crucial biodiversity.

Researchers said the destruction of tropical primary forests in 2020 released 2.64 billion tonnes of CO₂ in 2020, equal to the annual emissions of India or 570 million cars, more than double the number on the road in the United States.

"The longer we wait to stop deforestation, and get other sectors on to net zero trajectories, the more likely it is that our natural carbon sinks will go up in smoke," Seymour said.

'Heartbreaking'

Brazil, where far-right President Jair Bolsonaro has cut funding for environmental programs and pushed to open protected Amazon lands to agribusiness and mining, lost 1.7 million hectares of primary forest in 2020, an increase of 25 percent from 2019, the report said.

"Brazil, having achieved a huge reduction in deforestation in the Amazon, is now seeing an unravelling of that success, and it's heartbreaking," said Seymour.

Much of the loss was in the Amazon, including new areas that were deliberately cleared.

But dry conditions also meant fires lit on previously deforested land spread to once humid forests, burning out of control.

Fires also devastated the Pantanal wetlands, a paradise of biodiversity that extend from Brazil into Bolivia —the country with the third highest level of forest loss in 2020.

Almost a third of the Pantanal was scorched, including indigenous lands and jaguar habitats, and researchers said it could be decades before the region recovers.

Appetite for destruction

One bright area was in Indonesia, which reduced its rate of forest loss by 17 percent from 2019 and dropped out of the global top three for the first time in the 20 years of Global Forest Watch monitoring.

Forest destruction has slowed for four years in a row in Indonesia and researchers said government policies—helped last year by wetter weather—appeared to be having "a long-term effect on reducing primary forest loss".

Forests cover more than 30% of Earth's land surface, and tropical forests are home to between 50 and 90% of all terrestrial species.

Recent research has shown that, beyond a certain threshold, deforestation in the Amazon basin could tip the region into a new climate regime, turning tropical forests into savannah.

In January, two top Brazilian indigenous leaders asked the International Criminal Court (ICC) to investigate Bolsonaro for "crimes against humanity," accusing him of unprecedented environmental damage, killings and persecution.

On Monday, a study published in Nature Ecology & Evolution estimated that rising demand in wealthy countries for commodities ranging from coffee to soybeans was accelerating deforestation in the tropics.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/business/science-and-environment/2021/03/31/2088364/sharp-increase-destruction-virgin-forest-2020>

Plastic pollution disproportionately hitting marginalized groups, UN environment report finds

Vulnerable communities disproportionately bear the brunt of environmental degradation caused by plastics pollution, and action is urgently needed to address the issue and restore access to human rights, health and well-being, according to a new UN report published on Tuesday.



Aleya Akter works in a recycle plastic factory. There are six members in her family. She works to support her family financially. Women, in particular, suffer from plastic-related toxicity risk, due to higher aggregate exposure to plastics at home and even in feminine care products. Image: [UN Women Asia and the Pacific, via Flickr. CC BY NC-ND 2.0.](#)

[UN News Centre](#) March 31, 2021

The report, entitled, *Neglected: Environmental Justice Impacts of Plastic Pollution*, was produced by the UN Environment Programme ([UNEP](#)) together with the grassroots environmental group, Azul.

The findings aim to empower communities affected by plastic waste and advocate for their inclusion in local decision making.

Environmental injustice

“Environmental justice means educating those on the frontlines of plastic pollution about its risks, including them in decisions about its production, use, and disposal, and ensuring their access to a credible judicial system”, said Inger Andersen, [UNEP](#) Executive Director.

The report showcases how environmental injustices are linked to plastic production, in areas such as deforestation for road building, the displacement of indigenous peoples to conduct oil drilling, as well as contamination of potable water by fracking operations to extract natural gas, in countries such as the United States and Sudan.

Moreover, the report warns of health problems among African-American communities living near oil refineries in the Gulf of Mexico, and the occupational risks faced by some two million waste pickers in India.

Disproportionate impacts

The impacts of plastics on marginalised populations are severe, and exist at all stages of the production cycle, from extracting raw materials and manufacturing, through to consumption and disposal, according to the report.

Plastic waste not only endangers the livelihoods of those relying on marine resources, it also causes a raft of health issues for people who consume seafood infested with toxic micro and nano plastics



Women, in particular, suffer from plastic-related toxicity risk, due to higher aggregate exposure to plastics at home and even in feminine care products.

Differences in gender, social roles, and political power in regulating plastic use and health standards place women at high risk of miscarriages and cancer, further exacerbating gender-related disparities overall.

Aggravated by the [Covid-19](#) pandemic, plastic waste has become a major part of the global pollution crisis, along with biodiversity loss and climate change, representing a triple emergency that must be tackled by strong and effective action plans, says UNEP.

Action points

The report calls for governments to prioritise the needs of those disproportionately affected by plastic pollution, underscoring that action must be taken at multiple levels.

It calls for an expansion in plastic waste monitoring, better studies into its health impacts, and more investment in waste management. Governments should further enforce bans on single-use plastics and encourage their reduction, recycling and reuse.

Other actors such as business and industry leaders, non-governmental actors, and consumers should also make efforts to reverse the situations for those who are socially, economically, politically marginalised.

This story was published with permission from [UN News Centre](#).

Climate change will deepen rich-poor global divide, top economists warn

The most severe climate impacts will be felt in developing nations, due to factors like high dependence on agriculture and vulnerability to extreme heat, survey shows.



Solar panels are seen during the inauguration of world's first-ever "island" of solar panels in a tailings pond of the Los Bronces copper mine of Anglo American, on the outskirts of Santiago, Chile. Image: Reuters/ Rodrigo Garrido

[Thomson Reuters Foundation](#) March 31, 2021

Nearly nine in 10 leading global climate economists think climate change will deepen income inequality between rich and poor countries, with most calling for urgent action to cut planet-warming emissions, a survey showed on Tuesday.

The impacts of rising temperatures could create “enormous difficulties” for nations already burdened by economic challenges and high rates of poverty, said the research by New York University’s Institute for Policy Integrity.

In the largest ever global expert survey published on the economics of climate change, nearly three-quarters of the more than 730 respondents said “immediate and drastic action” was needed to cut emissions.

The findings come as nations update their plans to reduce emissions ahead of November’s UN COP26 summit, to meet the [2015 Paris accord](#) goal of limiting the rise in average temperatures to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial times.

With the costs of clean technologies falling all the time, ambitious climate action is not just the right thing to do for the planet, it’s the right move for the economy, too.

Sam Hall, director, Conservative Environment Network

Economists think governments may be underestimating the potential costs of climate change, such as the impact of extreme weather and economic disruption, as they weigh up the costs of policies to reduce emissions, the authors said.

“There seems to be extremely high concern about the risks of climate change,” said Derek Sylvan, the institute’s strategy director and co-author of the survey, which interviewed economists published on climate issues in top-ranking journals.

According to a consensus in the survey, projected economic damage from climate change is estimated to reach \$1.7 trillion per year by 2025 and about \$30 trillion annually by 2075, if the current warming trend continues.

The most severe impacts will be felt in developing countries, due to factors such as higher dependence on agriculture and vulnerability to extreme heat, Sylvan told the Thomson Reuters Foundation



He said the costs would be felt worldwide, due to spillover effects such as the disruption of trade routes and supply chains, and refugee crises caused by climate impacts.

In the survey, 70 per cent of respondents also anticipated that climate change would increase inequality within countries, widening the gap between the poorest and richest thirds of national populations.

The authors added that the cost of reducing emissions is dropping quickly as the price of solar and wind generation plummets, with 65 per cent of economists expecting similar cost-reduction patterns for other clean technologies.

“With the costs of clean technologies falling all the time, ambitious climate action is not just the right thing to do for the planet, it’s the right move for the economy, too,” said Sam Hall, director of the UK-based Conservative Environment Network, in a statement.

This story was published with permission from [Thomson Reuters Foundation](http://www.thomsonreuters.com), the charitable arm of Thomson Reuters, that covers humanitarian news, climate change, resilience, women’s rights, trafficking and property rights. Visit <http://news.trust.org/climate>.



Google, BMW, Volvo, Samsung sign up to WWF call for temporary ban on deep-sea mining

Reuters

Posted at Mar 31 2021 03:53 PM



New Black Coral species *Antipathes sylospongia* is seen in this handout photo from 2015 obtained by Reuters on October 28, 2020. *NOAA Office of Ocean Exploration/Handout via Reuters*

Google, BMW, Volvo and Samsung SDI are the first global companies to have signed up to a World Wildlife Fund (WWF) call for a moratorium on deep-sea mining, the WWF said on Wednesday.

In backing the call, the companies commit not to source any minerals from the seabed, to exclude such minerals from their supply chains, and not to finance deep seabed mining activities, the WWF said in a statement.

Deep-sea mining would extract cobalt, copper, nickel, and manganese - key materials commonly used to make batteries - from potato-sized nodules which pepper the sea floor at depths of 4-6 kilometers and are particularly abundant in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone in the North Pacific Ocean, a vast area spanning millions of kilometers between Hawaii and Mexico.

"With much of the deep sea ecosystem yet to be explored and understood, such activity would be recklessly short-sighted," WWF said in a statement.

The moratorium calls for a ban on deep seabed mining activities until the risks are fully understood and all alternatives are exhausted.

BMW said raw materials from deep-sea mining are "not an option" for the company at present because there are insufficient scientific findings to be able to assess the environmental risks. Google and Volvo did not immediately respond to emailed requests for comment.

South Korea's Samsung SDI said it was the first battery maker to participate in WWF's initiative.

In the meantime, deep-sea mining companies are pushing ahead with preparatory work and research on seabed license areas.

Companies that hold exploration licenses for swathes of the sea floor, including DeepGreen, GSR and UK Seabed Resources - a subsidiary of Lockheed Martin's UK-based arm - hope to eventually sell minerals from the seabed to carmakers and battery companies.

DeepGreen, which recently announced plans to go public in a merger with a special purpose acquisition company (SPAC), has previously said seabed mining would be more sustainable than mining on land because it creates less waste and the nodules containing minerals have higher concentrations of metals than deposits found on land.

Meanwhile Norway has said it could license companies for deep-sea mining as early as 2023, potentially placing it among the first countries to harvest seabed metals.

Source: https://news.abs-cbn.com/business/03/31/21/google-bmw-volvo-samsung-sign-up-to-wwf-call-for-temporary-ban-on-deep-sea-mining?fbclid=IwAR1PD_AWo54UIXNXjWD5dOmEz4MIV_fTjDK_zxFtf4orNXCKupQjG-9gzTc

01 APRIL 2021, THURSDAY



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