

15 APRIL 2021, THURSDAY



NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



This photo taken in July last year shows San Lazaro Hospitals employing a color coding system to distinguish different types of waste.

Philstar.com/Efigenio Christopher Toledo

Medical waste in pandemic-hit Philippines: As much as 2 million sacks of rice

[Gaea Katreena Cabico](#) (Philstar.com) - April 14, 2021 - 5:51pm

MANILA, Philippines — As COVID-19 cases continued to rise a year into the pandemic, the Philippines also saw a surge in the volume of medical waste, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources said Wednesday.

“There’s a surge in hospital waste and solid waste,” DENR Undersecretary for Climate Change Analiza Teh said in an interview with CNN Philippines Wednesday.

According to the DENR’s Hazardous Waste Management Section, the country generated 52,237.606 tons of medical waste from April 2020 to March 31, 2021. The figure was based on the special or online permits to transport issued by the department.

“That’s about two million sacks of rice already generated,” Teh said.

Of the figure, only around 27% or 14,000 metric tons has been treated, she added.

Infectious healthcare waste, according to the Department of Health, includes all medical waste generated in the management of suspect, probable and confirmed COVID-19 patients. These include protective gear, gloves, swabs, test tubes and syringes.

Proper disposal of medical waste

The DENR official stressed the importance of proper disposal of medical waste.

Infectious waste must be discarded in an appropriate waste receptacle. The waste bins must be properly sealed prior to their transport to the hospital’s temporary facility. Some facilities disinfect their waste at source.

Medical waste may be stored temporarily in designated locations, away from patients and public spaces before it is picked up for treatment.

As typically practiced, medical waste in the country is disinfected through steam sterilization. Once treated, medical waste is then transported to a licensed sanitary landfill for final disposal.



Teh also called on local government units to be “more conscientious” in addressing the problem with hazardous waste.

The DENR urged households to dispose of used face masks, gloves and other protective gear in a separate container and to inform garbage collectors of its potentially infectious content.

Republic Act 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, already requires the mandatory segregation of solid waste at source into containers labeled as “compostable,” “non-recyclable,” “recyclable,” or “special waste.”



DENR nababahala sa mga basurang galing ospital

By Abante Tonite — Last updated Apr 14, 2021

NEWS



Habang patuloy pa ang pagsirit ng mga kaso ng COVID-19 sa bansa ay natatambakan naman tayo ng mga medical waste, ayon sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

“There is a surge in hospital waste and solid waste,” pahayag ni DENR Undersecretary Analiza Teh sa isang panayam sa telebisyon nitong Miyerkoles.

Nabatid na nasa 52 tonelada na ngayon ng mga basurang galing sa ospital ang naiipon sa bansa batay aniya sa datos na hawak nila.

Kasabay nito ay umapela si Teh sa publiko na maging maayos sa pagtatapon ng mga medical waste na maaaring magdulot ng panganib sa kalusugan ng mga tao at sa kapaligiran.

Payo nito sa publiko na ihiwalay ng garbage bag ang mga face mask at iba pang basura na delikado sa kalusugan.

Manila Bay rehab project, target tapusin sa ikatlong bahagi ng taon — DENR

Robie de Guzman • April 14, 2021 • 33

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MANILA, Philippines — Muling naglalagay ng crushed dolomite sa dalampasigan ng Manila Bay ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) bilang bahagi ng isinasagawa nitong nourishment o rehabilitation project sa lugar.

Ayon sa DENR, bahagi ito ng P28 milyon sa P389 milyong kabuuang halaga ng proyekto na layong pagandahin at pangalagaan ang lugar upang maiwasan ang coastal flooding at erosion.

Ayon kay DENR Undersecretary Jonas Leones, ang pondong ginamit sa proyektong ito ay bahagi pa rin ng 2019 national budget.

Ang kontrata nito ay naaprubahan bago pa man nagsimula ang coronavirus pandemic at nabinbin lang ang pagpapatupad dahil sa kinakaharap na krisis.

Sinabi ni Leones na target nilang matapos ang Manila Bay nourishment project sa ikatlong bahagi ng 2021.

Sinisilip ng mga kritiko ang timing ng proyekto lalo't nahaharap pa sa pandemiya ang Pilipinas at marami ang nangangailangan ng ayuda.

Ngunit giit ng DENR, hindi maaaring basta na lamang suspindihin ang isang government project sa ilalim ng contractual obligation.

Ayon naman kay Attorney George Erwin Garcia, ang College of Law Dean ng Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila, maaaring i-justify ng gobyerno ang pagpapahinto sa isang proyekto lalo na at nasa ilalim ng krisis sa kalusugan ang bansa.

“Because we are in a national emergency, pandemiya ito, madaling i-justify at pwedeng ma-justify yung pagpapatigil ng isang proyekto at para yan ay maging tinatawag na savings,” ang pahayag ni Garcia.

“Lahat ng kontrata, nakadepende sa mga pangyayari especially kung may tinatawag na supervening events na hindi naman na-predict ng mga partido sa kontrata,” dagdag pa niya.

Tumanggi namang magbigay ng pahayag ang Malakanyang kaugnay ng pagpapatuloy ng proyekto. — **RRD (mula sa ulat ni Correspondent Rosalie Coz)**



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Ipinaliwanag ng DENR na walang dagdag na budget ang itinatayong rock formations sa Manila Bay at kinuha lang umano ang mga ito ng contactor sa mga 'di nagagamit at pakalat-kalat na bato sa bahagi ng CALABARZON. | via Shyla Francisco

FULL REPORT: youtu.be/ZJ8uRsgvw7c



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Manila Bay sand phase 2



April 14, 2021 @ 2:19 PM 17 hours ago

MANILA, Philippines – Muling pinatag ng dolomite sand ang parte ng Manila Bay sa pagpasok ng phase 2 ng proyekto sa rehabilitasyon ng sikat na baybayin.



Mapapansin na bukod sa pagpapaganda rito sa mata ay maging ang hangin at amoy nito ay bumuti na rin. **Kuha ni Crismon Heramis**

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/manila-bay-sand-phase-2/>



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ONE MORE TRY

Heavy vehicles work on a fresh coat of dolomite sand near the United States Embassy along Roxas Boulevard, Manila on April 14, 2021.

📷 MIKE ALQUINTO



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LOOK: Latest images of the artificial white sand beach in Manila Bay



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Manila Bay gets fresh load of dolomite sand

posted April 15, 2021 at 12:30 am

by [Manila Standard](#)

A fresh pile of dolomite sand was piled on Manila Bay's controversial White Beach project on Wednesday, despite the coronavirus pandemic gripping the country.



MORE DOLOMITE. Backhoe operators dump crushed dolomite sand along the shoreline of Manila Bay on Wednesday, as part of the P389 million project of the government to rehabilitate the baywalk. Malacañang said funds for the beautification project could no longer be realigned for other purposes, such as to aid the country's COVID-19 response. Norman Cruz

Several backhoe operators were seen at work in the area, pouring and levelling crushed dolomite rocks. Trucks dumped large amounts of the pulverized rocks to replace the sands washed away from areas underneath and fill the 500-meter stretch of the baywalk.

About 500 tons of crushed dolomite rocks were placed last year by the government to spruce up the baywalk, which was opened to the public in September 2020.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) earlier said the P389-million project will discourage people from littering.

The health department has declared that the rocks are not a health hazard.

"Dolomite in its bulk state is not a known health hazard and dolomite in dust form, like any other dust particle, can lead to symptoms such as chest discomfort, shortness of breath, and coughing for this is our body's normal reaction to irritants," the Department of Health said in a statement.

The white sand beach is part of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program that started in January 2017.

The project has been criticized by environmentalists and fisherfolk, saying that the project is not the answer to pollution control in the area.

Citing information from the DENR, Greenpeace Southeast Asia campaigner Sonny Batungbacal said that only 15 percent (2.4 million out of 16.3 million) of the water-served population in Metro Manila are connected to a sewerage system.



New coat of dolomite sand poured over a portion of Manila Bay

Published April 14, 2021 6:22am



A fresh coat of dolomite sand has been placed in Manila Bay early Wednesday morning, Luisito Santos reported for Super Radyo's DZBB.

Several backhoe operators are currently at work in the area pouring and levelling crushed dolomite rocks.

About 500 tons of crushed dolomite rocks were placed last year by the government to spruce up a portion of the Baywalk area in Manila Bay and was opened to the public by [September 2020](#).

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) earlier said that the [P389-million project](#) will discourage people from littering.

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Citing information from the DENR, Greenpeace Southeast Asia campaigner Sonny Batungbacal said that only 15 percent (2.4 million out of 16.3 million) of the water-served population in Metro Manila are connected to a sewerage system. -- BAP, GMA News

Source: https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/metro/783640/new-coat-of-dolomite-sand-poured-over-at-manila-bay/story/?fbclid=IwAR0X4uRTMsRV6PBHnLA1JM94c3saYirVnRdk1ilRcq-ju_t-6RWkEelhWrY



LOOK: Fresh batch of dolomite dumped along Manila Bay coast

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published Apr 14, 2021 1:47:15 PM

3



Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, April 14) — A fresh batch of crushed dolomite has been dumped along the Manila Baywalk, as part of the government's ₱389-million "white sand" project to rehabilitate the area.

Photos taken by CNN Philippines on Wednesday showed heavy equipment dumping dolomite along Roxas Boulevard, with the new haul covering darker-colored sand.



The Department of Environment and Natural Resources has yet to provide the latest details on the project which was slammed as a waste of taxpayers' money. Critics claim the agency focused on "mere aesthetics" instead of the environmental concerns of Manila Bay.

In September 2020, the agency said measures are in place to ensure that the "white sand" will not be washed away by storms and high tide.

Vice President Leni Robredo previously said the ₱389-million project could have instead gone to the over 80,000 poor families who were left hungry due to the pandemic.

Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2021/4/14/Fresh-dolomite-Manila-Bay.html>



Fresh crushed dolomite poured over Manila Bay anew

April 14, 2021 1:30 PM by [Christhel Cuazon](#)



Fresh dolomite sands have been poured at Manila Bay's white beach early Wednesday morning, April 14. (Photo courtesy: RH Boy Gonzales)

A fresh dose of dolomite sand has been poured at Manila Bay's attempt for a white beach early Wednesday morning amid the continuous battle of the country against COVID-19, with more than 15,000 fatalities.

Photos taken by RH Boy Gonzales, several backhoe operators along with heavy vehicles and equipment were seen pouring and crushing the dolomite rocks at the bay's coastline.



(Photo courtesy: RH Boy Gonzales)

The so-called Manila Bay white sand beach was part of the PHP 389-M rehabilitation program launched by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) last year.

The project was criticized by several fisherfolk groups and environmentalist, citing that the white beach sand is not the answer to control pollution in the area.

Malacanang earlier said the white sand used to cover the baywalk in the area can actually improve one's mental health as it will distract them from the COVID-19 pandemic.

DENR has yet to issue details on the new coat of dolomite sand poured in Manila Bay.

Source: <https://dzhnews.com.ph/fresh-dolomite-sands-poured-over-manila-bay/>



WHAT'S THE PRIORITY? | Groups press government to allocate budget on dolomite project to pandemic response

April 14, 2021 , 08:53 PM

(April 14, 2021) – President Rodrigo Duterte's administration should set its priorities straight in the face of a public health crisis, environmental groups said on Wednesday, as it urged government to immediately stop the fresh dumping of dolomite sand along the Manila Bay.

Gloria Estenzo-Ramos of Oceana called on the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to immediately put an end to what they believed was a "flawed" beautification project that costs about P389 million. She said the project was a mere band-aid solution which the public does not really need amid the surge in coronavirus disease (COVID-19) infections.

"What is happening now is appalling," Estenzo-Ramos, the organization's vice president, said in a statement. "People need to be protected from this alarming fast transmission of COVID-19 and rising number of deaths from the virus. The poor need subsidy because of loss of income and worried that their family will die not only from COVID but from hunger."

Environment officials ordered the fresh dumping of the dolomite sand this week after the new supply from Cebu arrived recently. To recall, a dolomite supplier based in the central Philippines was barred from transporting the sand piling after violating a number of environmental laws.

Undersecretary Jonas Leones, in a phone interview with News5, insisted the DENR's recent actions were justified to keep the beautification project going, adding they only allocated P28 million for the dolomite itself. New artificial rock formations have likewise been spotted, but Leones said it did not entail additional cost.

The DENR is also confident the new sand piling will not be washed away anymore since it will be at least one meter thick this time.

"Kaya nagkakaroon ng mga wash-in dahil mababaw pa yun, kulang pa yung dolomite na nilagay doon. Kinukumpleto lang natin," Leones said.

But Estenzo-Ramos stressed the project could actually harm the waters, citing a statement issued by the University of the Philippines Marine Science Institute last September. It warned the dolomite sand will only erode, citing the "hydrodynamic conditions of the bay".

Instead of pushing through with this project, Estenzo-Ramos said the government should solve the poor water quality, which she pointed to as the root cause of the environmental problem in Manila Bay. She also sought an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) on the project.

"What the project contractors are doing is reclaiming parts of Manila Bay. Any kind of land reclamation would result in the large displacement of the marine sediments and the development of mud-waves beneath the reclamation fill," Estenzo-Ramos said.

Fisherfolk group Pamalakaya echoed Oceana's position on the issue, urging the government to focus on what the people need at present.

"What's with the priority?" the group asked. "The country still endures a public health crisis which is far from over. The people urgently need an anti-COVID vaccines and an adequate health care, not a continuous beach nourishment project that is highly irrelevant and an explicit waste of funds."

(Beatrice Puente/AGD with reports from Shyla Francisco, News5)

Source: https://news.tv5.com.ph/top-stories/read/whats-the-priority-groups-press-government-to-allocate-budget-on-dolomite-project-to-pandemic-response?fbclid=IwAR2mb6Gjvo9pa10mqcffXAb617xqD9JGKt0317jnEVzo_RFuRkjukWVwZ9Q



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'YOU CANNOT FIGHT NATURE'

Naniniwala ang grupong Oceana Philippines na puwede namang itigil ang proyekto sa pagtatambak ng dolomite sand sa bahagi ng Manila Bay kahit may nakalaan nang budget para rito. | via Shyla Francisco



“

Hindi mo mapipigilan 'yung ano ng waves na kung may storm surges, no amount of infrastructure at rocks na inilagay nila ay hindi maaanod.

You cannot fight nature and yet they're spending public taxpayers' money to refurbish para talagang determined at all costs, but apart from the uproar about it they don't listen to nature.

”

ATTY. GLORIA RAMOS
VICE PRESIDENT, OCEANA PHILIPPINES
APRIL 14, 2021

News5Everywhere @news5ph News5.com.ph

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‘We need vaccine, not white sand’: Fisherfolk group scores dolomite refill

Published April 14, 2021, 1:02 PM

by [Gabriela Baron](#)

Fisherfolk group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (PAMALAKAYA) scored on Wednesday, April 14, the “highly irrelevant” beach nourishment project, a day after a fresh dose of crush dolomite was again poured at the Manila Bay.



(Photo from PTV)

The white sand initially dumped in the bay was sourced from Cebu.

“Ang kailangan ngayon ng mga tao ay kumpletong doses ng vaccine, bakit tayo bibigyan ng [second] dose ng buhangin? (What we need right now are complete doses of vaccines, so why would you give us a second dose of white sand?)” PAMALAKAYA national chairman Fernando Hicap said.

“What’s with the priority? The country still endures a public health crisis which is far from over. The people urgently need anti-COVID vaccines and adequate health care, not a continuous beach nourishment project that is highly irrelevant and an explicit waste of funds,” Hicap lamented.

He reiterated that the white sand filling is “not rehabilitation,” rather than a “whitewashing of the government’s failure to restore the biodiversity of Manila Bay.”

About 500 tons of crushed dolomite rocks were dumped over a portion of the Baywalk in Manila Bay in September 2020.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said the 389-million project will discourage people to litter in Manila Bay.

Vaccine over sand: Fresh dose of dolomite in Manila Bay draws renewed criticisms

By [Catalina Ricci S. Madarang](#) - April 14, 2021 - 1:00 PM



Workers dump crushed dolomite along the shoreline of Manila Bay on Wednesday, as part of the P389 million project of the government to rehabilitate the bay. (The STAR/Edd Gumban)

The national government's controversial white sand beach project in Manila Bay was revived amid the worsening pandemic situation in the country.

Photos of fresh coat of dolomite being dumped along a portion of Roxas Boulevard were reported on social media on Tuesday, April 13, which immediately drew some renewed criticisms online.

In the photos, large trucks dumped large amounts of pulverized rocks to replace the sands washed away from areas underneath and fill the 500 meters stretch of the bay walk.



The white sand beach is part of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Manila Bay Rehabilitation Program that [started](#) in January 2017.

This white-sand beach project which construction started in September 2020 [reportedly costs a hefty P349 million.](#)



During that time, Vice President Leni Robredo joined other Filipinos in criticizing such allocation and stated that it could have been better used to provide for the much-needed medical supplies and equipment for health workers in the country.

Renewed criticisms

Filipinos slammed the dumping of the fresh dose of dolomite, saying the funds could have been used to resolve the shortage of vaccine supply in the country.

"Bakuna hindi graba," creative director Thysz Estrada [wrote](#).

"In case you were tamad to do the math. P389,000,000 = 637,704 full doses of AstraZeneca," sports anchor Aaron Atayde [commented](#).

Some Twitter users also pointed out that the large budget could have been allocated for financial support to the poor affected by the pandemic.

"97,250 families (at 4K each) could have been assisted by the P389M spent for this useless dolomite," the user [wrote](#).

The Department of Interior and Local Government previously [assured](#) the public that the distribution of P22.9 billion aid for the poor will continue as the NCR Plus Bubble (the National Capital Region, Bulacan, Rizal, Laguna, Cavite) shifts to the modified enhanced community quarantine.

Environmentalist Mitzi Jonelle Tan, meanwhile, raised the environmental impact of the dolomite rocks to the bay, which was the same concern environmental groups voiced out last year.

" Literally throwing money into the ocean for nothing + the environmental repercussions of mining the dolomite! This isn' t how you rehabilitate Manila Bay. You do that by stopping the reclamation projects destroying the ecosystems, corals, mangroves, and displacing fisherfolk!" Tan [said](#).

Environmental groups and other concerned Filipinos had also previously protested against the white sand beach along Roxas Boulevard.

They [denounced](#) the lack of transparency in the studies made for it and the added pollution dolomite rocks had contributed to the environment instead of helping it recover.

Twitter user @IamCharotism, meanwhile, shared an edited video clip of Korean group BTS' performance of their hit " Dynamite" and dubbed it with new lyrics that criticize the Manila Bay situation and the worsening health crisis.

" Dolomite by BTS. Charot!" the caption read.



Writer Juan Miguel Severo also joined similar quips about the beach improving their mental health.

" Nag-retouch for our mental health how thoughtful," Severo [wrote](#).

This was in reference to presidential spokesperson Harry Roque' s remark in a briefing last year when questioned about the realignment of funds from the COVID-19 relief programs to the rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

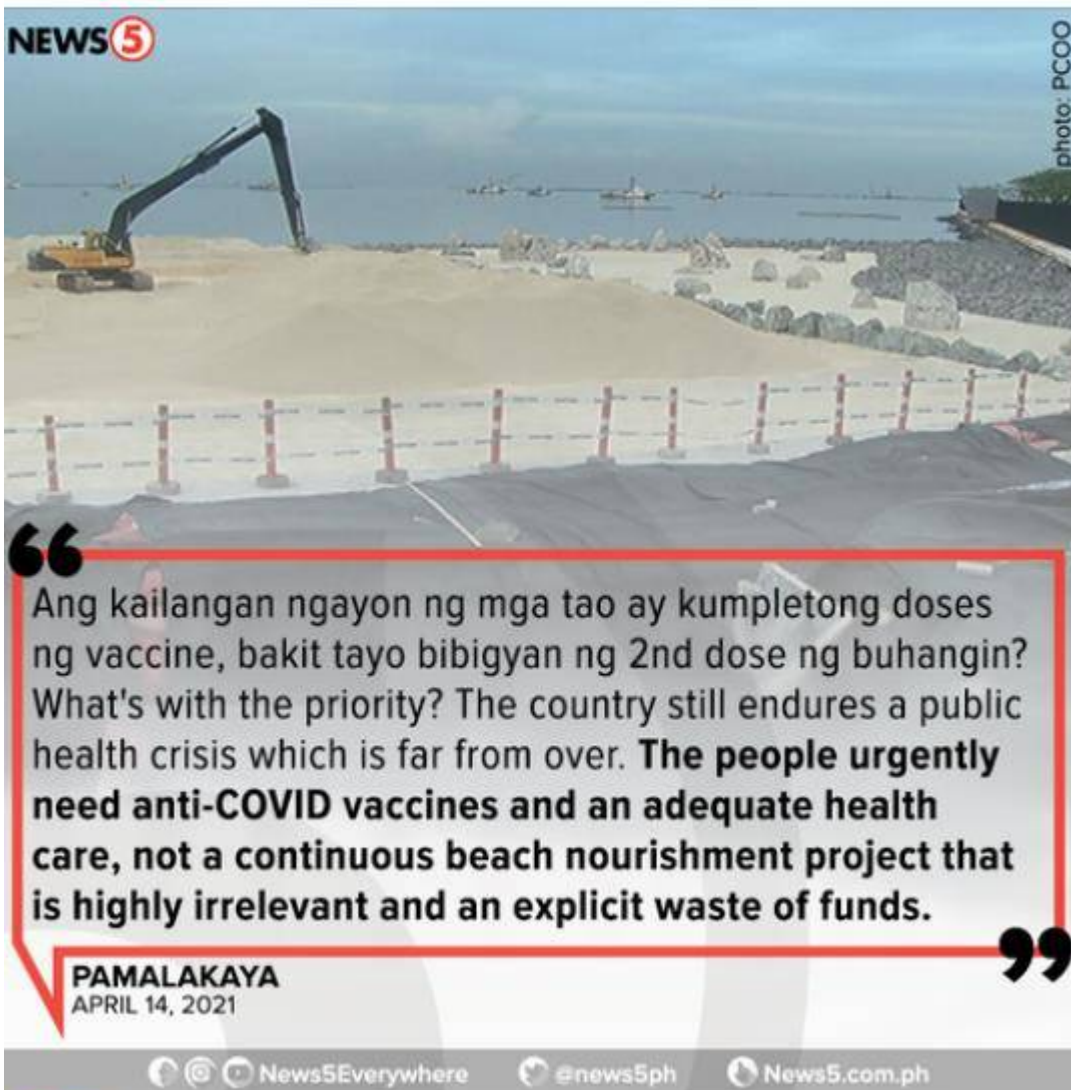
" Kasi alam mo sa gitna ng pandemya. Kelangan din alagaan yung mental health. I think yung pagpapasyal sa mga lugar tulad ng Manila Bay na may white beach, hindi mo maka-quantify ang epekto niyan pagdating po sa mental health," Roque [said](#).

Source: <https://interaksyon.philstar.com/trends-spotlights/2021/04/14/189604/vaccine-over-sand-fresh-dose-of-dolomite-in-manila-bay-draws-renewed-criticisms/>



BAKIT TAYO BIBIGYAN NG 2ND DOSE NG BUHANGIN?

Ito ang reaksyon ng grupong PAMALAKAYA sa pagtatambak ng panibagong supply ng dolomite sa bahagi ng Manila Bay. Iginiiit ng DENR na parte pa rin ito ng budget na P389 milyon para sa beach nourishment project. | via Shyla Francisco



“
 Ang kailangan ngayon ng mga tao ay kumpletong doses ng vaccine, bakit tayo bibigyan ng 2nd dose ng buhangin? What's with the priority? The country still endures a public health crisis which is far from over. **The people urgently need anti-COVID vaccines and an adequate health care, not a continuous beach nourishment project that is highly irrelevant and an explicit waste of funds.**
 ”

PAMALAKAYA
 APRIL 14, 2021

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Bishop Pabillo: Unahin pandemya kesa Manila Bay dolomite

By Abante Tonite — Last updated Apr 14, 2021

FEATURED NEWS



Umapela ang isang opisyal ng Simbahang Katolika na unahin ng gobyerno na tugunan ang mga pangangailangan ng mamamayan ngayong pandemya kaysa sa ginagawa nitong panibagong pagbuhos ng dolomite sa Manila Bay.

Sa isang pahayag, sinabi ni Achdiocese of Manila Apostolic Administrator Bishop Broderick Pabillo na mahalagang bigyang prayoridad ang kasalukuyang suliranin sa kalusugan ng mga tao at ekonomiya.

“Kung talagang ang problema ngayon ay COVID-19 ay talagang dapat ang atensyon natin at ang ating mga finances ay nakalagay diyan; tugunan muna natin ang pangangailangang pangkalusugan at ekonomiya ng mga tao,” ayon pa kay Pabillo.

Samantala, nababahala naman ang grupong Oceana dahil reclamation na umano ang ginagawang pagbuhos ng dolomite sa Manila Bay.

“What the project contractors are doing is reclaiming parts of Manila Bay. Any kind of land reclamation would result in the large displacement of marine sediments and the development of mud-waves beneath the reclamation fill,” sabi ni Oceana vice president Gloria Estenzo-Ramos. (Eileen Mencias)



LOOK: Passersby on Wednesday took pictures at the "dolomite beach" in Manila Bay, which had recently been replenished with white sand.

One new feature of the so-called beach is a rock formation beside the US Embassy that was not part of the budget for the Manila Bay rehab.

The DENR says the contractor collected the rocks from Calabarzon and paid for its transport. Anjo Bagaoisan, ABS-CBN News



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**NANINIWALA BA KAYONG
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2ND DOSE OF DOLOMITE
NA ITINATAMBAK SA MANILA BAY?**

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DENR taps villagers in fight vs Sierra Madre illegal loggers

By **Jonathan L. Mayuga** -April 15, 2021



File photo shows Sierra Madre Mountain range and rice fields

The Cagayan Valley Regional Environmental Law Enforcement Council (RELEC) will mobilize residents in illegal logging hot spots within the Sierra Madre ranges as “bantay bakir,” or forest protection officers.

One of the strategies agreed upon by the council composed of law-enforcement agencies, religious and media sectors during their virtual meeting on April 13, was the plan to organize “Barangay Bantay Kalikasan” in all identified sources of timber poachers in coordination with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG), according to RELEC Enforcement Chief Joel Daquiaoag of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

To encourage community help and support, regular meetings with village chiefs and intensified information, education and communication activities among local communities within the identified recurring hot spots will be conducted.

Daquiaoag identified the recurring hot spots in the municipalities of Pamplona, Sta. Ana, Lal-lo, Baggao and Peñablanca in Cagayan; San Pablo, Tumauni, San Mariano and Palanan in Isabela; and Nagtipunan and Diffun in Quirino.

DENR Regional Executive Director Gwendolyn Bambalan, concurrent chairman of RELEC, has earlier called for an aggressive stance by the council on forest protection.

“We have to cut the route from the source to the market. We need to stop the cutting at source,” Director Bambalan said in a news statement. The highest DENR official in the Cagayan Valley Region underscored Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu’s order to strengthen surveillance operation to prevent the cutting of trees rather than apprehending or confiscating dead trees in the form of cut lumbers.

The regional environment chief also requested the uniformed officials who took part in the virtual meeting to prepare their respective tactical operational plans against destructive environmental activities.

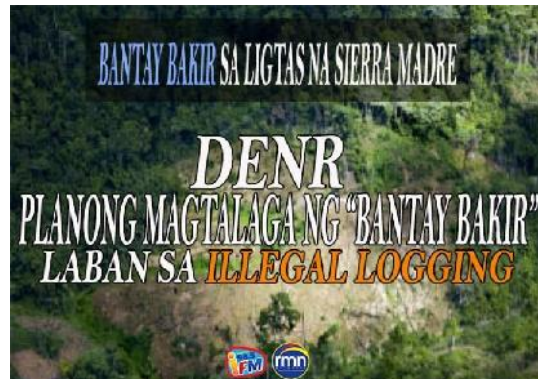


As a strategy, the DENR will closely coordinate with the Philippine Army based in identified sources, routes and outlets of timber poachers. It will also monitor activities of suspected financiers of timber smuggling and conduct counter surveillance with the assistance of the Philippine National Police (PNP).

Regular seaboard patrol along the coastal areas of Region 2 shall also be conducted with the Philippine Coast Guard, Philippine Navy and the PNP Maritime Group.

Pagtatalaga ng 'Bantay Bakir' sa Sierra Madre, Plano ng DENR kontra Illegal Logging

By [geronimo dig](#) -Apr. 14, 2021 at 5:33pm



Cauayan City, Isabela- Target ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) region 2 na magtatalaga ng magsisilbing “Bantay Bakir” o Forest Protection Officer para tutukan ang pagbabantay sa kabundukan ng Sierra Madre laban sa mga illegal activities.

Sa naganap na virtual meeting kahapon, Abril 13 ng mga kinatawan ng Cagayan Valley Regional Environmental Law Enforcement Council (RELEC), pinangunahan ni DENR Enforcement Chief Joel Daquioag ang paglalatag sa bubuing organisasyon at babansagang Barangay Bantay Kalikasan kung saan tutukuyin ang mga naitalang illegal logging activities.

Sa pamamagitan nito, mapalalakas pa ang information, education at communication activities sa bawat komunidad sa tulong ng Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG).

Natukoy naman ng ahensya ang mga itinuturing na illegal logging ‘hotspot’ area na kinabibilangan ng Pamplona, Sta. Ana, Lal-lo, Baggao at Peñablanca sa Cagayan; San Pablo, Tumauini, San Mariano at Palanan sa Isabela; at Nagtipunan at Diffun sa Quirino.

Kaugnay nito, may panawagan si DENR Region 02 Regional Director Gwendolyn Bambalan sa mga kasundaluhan at kapulisan na magsagawa ng tactical operation plan laban sa mga illegal activities sa mga natukoy na lugar.

Samantala, magsasagawa naman ng mahigpit na monitoring ang Philippine Coast Guard, Philippine Navy at PNP Maritime Group bilang suporta sa laban ng ahensya kontra illegal logging.

Source: <https://rmn.ph/pagtatalaga-ng-bantay-bakir-sa-sierra-madre-plano-ng-denr-kontra-illegal-logging/>

11-foot crocodile caught in Surigao del Sur - local official

Ronron Calunsod, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Apr 14 2021 03:11 PM | Updated as of Apr 14 2021 05:27 PM



A saltwater crocodile was caught in Bislig City, Surigao del Sur last April 12, 2021, according to a local official. *Photo Courtesy of Bislig City DENR*

MANILA (UPDATE) - An 11-foot saltwater crocodile was captured by a fishermen last Monday in Bislig City, Surigao del Sur, locals official said Wednesday.

"Actually, there was already a sighting of a crocodile in one of our piers in Bislig City almost two years ago. But this is the first captured crocodile (in the city), as far as I know," Romulo Garay, the city government's administrator, told ABS-CBN News in a text message.

The local government said the crocodile was captured by fisherman Roque Abrahon Cordova at around 10 p.m. of April 12 in Purok 6, Sitio San Juan in the city's Barangay Pamanlinan. Its weight was not immediately known.



A saltwater crocodile was caught in Bislig City, Surigao del Sur last April 12, 2021, according to a local official. *Photo Courtesy of Bislig City DENR*

The said barangay is about 11 kilometers away from the city hall of Bislig, a locality in the eastern coast of Mindanao.

Nathaniel Racho, local officer of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, said the crocodile was easily captured since it got trapped in a net in a fish pond.

"The crocodile is okay. It was not harmed and was not injured," Racho, speaking in the local language, told ABS-CBN News in a phone interview.

He said the captured reptile was transported Wednesday to the Pag-asa Farms Wildlife Resource Center in Kapalong, Davao del Norte.

Surigao del Sur is adjacent to Agusan del Sur province where "Lolong," a giant saltwater crocodile, measuring 6.17 meters or 20.24 feet, was captured in 2011.

Lolong was officially certified by the Guinness Book of World Records as the "world's biggest crocodile in captivity" until his death on Feb. 10, 2013.

Saltwater crocodiles have also been captured or sighted in Palawan province.

The saltwater crocodile (*Crocodylus porosus*) and Philippine crocodile (*Crocodylus mindorensis*) are critically endangered crocodile species, according to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/04/14/21/11-foot-crocodile-caught-in-surigao-del-sur-local-official?fbclid=IwAR0rysGYCU2hRnjIN3ujFzwUeu2Z9AKrJK-17bQSZr4mTrI0JyGx68gupfI>



Endangered giant clam shells worth P57M confiscated in Palawan

Published April 14, 2021, 1:45 PM

by [Aira Magdayao](#)

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY, Palawan – Authorities seized around five tons of giant clam shells during the Counteraction Operation (CAO) on Tuesday, April 13 in Puron Borbon, Barangay Panacan, Narra town.



CLAMPED CLAM. Authorities inspect at least five tons of endangered giant clams which were confiscated Tuesday, April 13 in Narra town in Palawan. (Naal Forces West / MANILA BULLETIN)

According to the report sent to Palawan News, the confiscated shells has an estimated value of P57 million.

The items are now under custody of Bantay Palawan-Task Force South at Brgy Tagpait, Aborlan, Palawan for proper documentation and disposition.

Authorities is also conducting an ongoing intelligence build-up to identify the perpetrators of the said illegal activity which is in violation of RA 9147, otherwise known as the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act.

The CAO was jointly conducted by Bantay Palawan Task Force-South, CGIG-Palawan, 2nd SOU Maritime Group, CGSS Narra and NISGW personnel.



P57M giant clam shell nabawi ng PCG



April 14, 2021 @ 6:20 PM 12 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Nabawi ng Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) ang tinatayang aabot sa P57 milyong halaga ng giant clam shells sa isang residential lot sa Purok Bonbon, Barangay Panacan, Narra, Palawan.

Ayon sa PCG, ikinasa ang joint counter action operations sa lugar kung saag pag-aari ng isang Jonjie Moreño ang nasabing lote.

Kasama ng PCG ang Naval Intelligence Security Group (NISG), Intelligence Operation 2nd Special Operations Unit – Maritime Group (SOU – MG), at Bantay Dagat Palawan Task Force sa operasyon nang marekober ang 16,467 piraso ng giant clam shell na nakatago sa tent sa bahay ng Moreño.

Ayon kay Moreño, caretaker lamang siya ng mga giant clam shells na pag-aari naman ng isang nagmgangalang Rolando Eleazar.

Sa joint counter action operations team ibinyahe ang mga nakumpiskang shell sa Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) para sa tamang sdisposisyon.

Ayon sa PCG, dapat imbestigahan si Eleazar sa kanyang pagkakasangkot sa ilegal na pangongolrka ng giant clam shells na isang paglabag ng Republic Act No. 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act.

Itinuturing na ‘endangered species’ dahil sa massive poaching para sa ibat-ibang layunin gaya ng paggawa ng alahas at ornamental shell trade.(Jocelyn Tabangcura-Domenden)



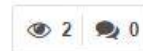
Minahan ng ginto kinandado sa CamSur

By Abante News Online — Last updated Apr 14, 2021

VISMIN



Photo courtesy of Georg Bommeli



Ipinasara ng pinagsanib na puwersa ng mga sundalo at pulis ang isang ilegal na minahan ng ginto sa Lagonoy, Camarines Sur.

Sinabi ng Joint Task Force Bicolandia na may 200 mining shaft, 10 water pump at generator set ang nakumpiska mula sa small-scale mining site sa Sitio Pagsimbugan sa Barangay Mapid.

Nalaman nila ito kasunod ng pagkakasumbong ng concerned citizen dahil nago-operate umano ito nang walang permit.

Sinabi naman ng Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) na bukod sa walang mining license, ang operator ng minahan ay lumabag din sa Section 103 ng Philippine Mining Act of 1995, lalo na ang mineral theft.

Kumuha na ang MGB ng sample sa lugar para alamin kung may ginto rito. Hinala naman ng mga awtoridad, ang mga komunista ang nasa likod ng ilegal na minahan. (Kiko Cueto)



‘Progressive’ rehab underway in Leyte iron sand mine site

April 14, 2021 2 min read

TACLOBAN CITY – The rehabilitation of a pilot mining site in MacArthur, Leyte is underway two months after the first shipment of extracted iron sand, the firm announced on Wednesday.

The MacArthur Iron Sand Project Corp. (MIPC) has started planting high-value crops within the four-hectare rice farm covered in the first phase of mine extraction, said Januar Ong, MIPC’s community relations officer.

“The pilot site has been backfilled with pure sand and topsoil with no iron ore content, applied with organic fertilizer, and started the planting,” Ong told reporters.

The firm will grow ampalaya, monggo, and watermelon in the area. In the next cropping season (starting September), the site will be planted with rice.

The pilot site is part of the seven-hectare rice land owned by Maya village chief Pepito Guimalan. The private land was leased for PHP270,000 per hectare for two years.

The firm announced rehabilitation updates amid speculation that MIPC may abandon its commitment to conduct progressive rehabilitation in some of the town’s farming communities transformed into mining areas.

“We are going to show that progressive rehabilitation is doable. This is part of our agreement with the landowners once we return the property to them after a two-year lease. We have to ensure that land is productive at the minimum when we started,” Ong added.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) granted the MIPC mining claims of 2,300 hectares last September 2020, covering the towns of MacArthur, Javier, and Abuyog.

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

The firm made the first shipment of 39,000 metric tons of iron sand to China from Jan. 17 to 26, 2021. These sands were extracted from a four-hectare pilot site in Maya village.

MIPC expects to ship the same volume of extracted iron sand by the end of the month.

The MGB reported that the MIPC is one of the priority mining projects tapped by the government to help the economy adversely affected by the health crisis.

The firm is reportedly investing PHP500 million and has already hired about 300 workers in MacArthur town since last year. (PNA)

Source: <https://maharlika.tv/2021/04/14/progressive-rehab-underway-in-leyte-iron-sand-mine-site/?fbclid=IwAR2DqFM8sampcECqCzJ7l8S3d-ed9ulviZKx76AGYGuhbj9hY77z5TwYVRY>

Philippine province builds on lessons learned to grow ecotourism industry

by [Jun Aguirre](#) on 14 April 2021



- *Antique province in the central Philippines is looking to boost local revenues through ecotourism, after the COVID-19 pandemic put the brakes on a thriving tourism industry.*
- *The province is home to a rich biodiversity, including the critically endangered writhed-billed hornbill, giant rafflesia “corpse flower,” and rare bowl corals.*
- *Taking a leaf from the experience of nearby Boracay, the resort island where a tourism boom led to severe environmental damage, local officials face the challenge of balancing tourism-driven development and environmental protection.*
- *A prominent lawmaker is pushing for seascapes and coastal zones in the province to be given national protection.*

AKLAN, Philippines — Although it lies less than 20 kilometers (12 miles) from the globally famous resort island of Boracay, the province of Antique in the central Philippines remains primarily an agricultural and fishing province. Today, provincial government leaders are working to lure more tourists to Antique, an endeavor for which Boracay — where the boom in tourism has often come at the expense of the ecosystem — has proved both inspirational and instructive.

Tourism numbers in Antique had started ramping up before COVID-19 hit. In 2017, the local tourism office recorded about 500,000 tourist arrivals. By 2019, that had tripled to 1.3 million. The number, however, dropped in 2020 to just 10,706 due to pandemic-related travel restrictions.

But as tourism promotion efforts grow, officials and conservationists are grappling with the challenge of how to balance tourism development with conservation of the environment.



Panay Island, Antique Province. The province of Antique in the central Philippines remains primarily an agricultural and fishing province. Image by Gary Todd via [Flickr](#).

Antique is known as a haven for flora and fauna, which officials are banking on to draw in the tourists.

Loren Legarda, a congresswoman who represents the province, says Antique offers opportunities to explore and experience marine and terrestrial biodiversity that complements the world-class tourism in Boracay.

These include giant *Rafflesia* “corpse flowers” in Sibalom Natural Park and in the neighboring municipality of San Remigio, as well as critically endangered writhed-billed hornbills (*Rhabdotorrhinus waldeni*) and endangered Visayan tarctic hornbills in Pandan municipality in Antique’s north. Writhed-billed hornbills have been named the provincial bird to raise importance of their conservation.

And as recently as last October, divers exploring the seas off Antique discovered several colonies of bowl corals (*Halomitra pileus*), a rare species whose dome-like structures can reach 60 centimeters (2 feet) in diameter. The group also sighted manta rays at least three times during their explorations, which were supported by the provincial tourism department.



Panay Island, Antique Province. Antique is known as a haven for flora and fauna. Image by Gary Todd via [Flickr](#).

Legarda has sought the help of the national Department of Tourism and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to conduct a full inventory of the biodiversity that she says can lure tourists to Antique.

However, there are already signs of trouble for the province’s biodiversity.

Aldwin Alojipan and Jude Dionela Sanchez, members of the dive team that spotted the bowl coral colonies, said several of the sites already showed signs of damage, suspected to have been caused by illegal fishing in 1980s. “We are now coordinating with the local governments in LIPASECU Council” comprising representatives from the municipalities of Libertad, Pandan, Sebaste and Culasi — “and the DENR including the office of Congresswoman Legarda for the protection of our environment,” they said.

Some of the emerging problems appear to be directly linked to rising tourism numbers.

From January to June 2019, when tourism in Antique reached its pre-pandemic peak, the DENR’s Environmental Management Bureau detected a high presence of fecal coliform in the Pandan River. The river flows down through the Malumpati Cold Spring and Bugang River, a rising tourism destination.

In 2009, the Bugang River was ranked as the cleanest inland body of water in the entire Philippines.

Local and provincial officials say they plan to act to prevent further contamination of the environment.



Divers exploring the seas off Antique discovered several colonies of the rare bowl corals.

After the DENR survey, the Pandan municipal government formed a task force to clean up the Pandan River. “We have learned a lesson and right now we are strict in imposing environmental safety to my town especially in Pandan Bay where the rare bowl corals have been found,” said Pandan Mayor Plaridel Sanchez.

Andre Untalan, chief of the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) in Antique, said the 300-hectare (740-acre) Pandan Bay is being proposed as a protected area under national legislation.

Congresswoman Legarda was the one who proposed the move, citing the area’s “unique physical and biological significance,” Untalan said.

If the bill is approved, the DENR would work with stakeholders like local governments and national government agencies, NGOs, and academics to craft a development framework that aims to balance conservation and livelihood concerns in the face of an anticipated influx of tourism.

Legarda also filed another bill in Congress to create the Northern Antique Protected Seascape and Landscape (NAPSL), which would protect the area as a designated ecotourism zone.



Villar echoes WHO call to ban sale of wild animals

Published April 14, 2021, 4:22 PM

by [Vanne Elaine Terrazola](#)

Senator Cynthia Villar welcomed on Wednesday, April 14, the World Health Organization's (WHO) call to stop the sale of live wild animals in markets.



Senator Cynthia Villar (PNA File Photo)

Villar, chairperson of the Senate Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, said the appeal is a “welcome development” that the Philippine government should heed to avert the emergence of new diseases.

“I hope all concerned government agencies will impose a ban on the catching and sale of wild animals in local markets to avert a recurrence of the COVID-19 pandemic,” she said in a statement.

She said there should be “tough measures for the strict enforcement of this prohibition” to guarantee that wild animals, which could be a source of virus, would no longer find way their way to the markets for human consumption.

“We wanted to protect our people and the world from new viruses in human like this new coronavirus, which has affected and claimed the lives of millions of people worldwide,” Villar said.

The novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19), previously known as 2019-nCov, was believed to have originated from a wholesale traditional market in Wuhan, China, where wild animals were sold as food or medicine.

The WHO, World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) had said that wild animals were the source of most emerging infectious diseases in humans and recommended measures to reduce the potential risk.

“COVID-19 has brought new attention to this threat, given the magnitude of its consequences,” WHO spokeswoman Fadela Chaib said, The agencies said samples from the Wuhan market suggested that it might be the source of the coronavirus outbreak or that it played a role in the initial amplification of the outbreak. While the virus has been linked to wild animals, how it was transmitted from animals to humans is not yet known.

The virus has since spread to over 190 countries, infecting more than 137.4 million and resulting in the deaths of 2,959,675 people worldwide, according to the April 14 record of the Johns Hopkins University.

In the Philippines, a total of 884,783 individuals contracted the disease as of April 13, 15,286 of them died.



Last month, Villar filed Senate Bill No. 2078 or the proposed “Revised Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act,” to amend the 20-year-old RA No. 9147 and strengthen the wildlife conservation and protection mechanisms in the Philippines.



Villar lauds WHO call to ban live animal sale in markets

posted April 14, 2021 at 09:05 pm

by [Macon Ramos-Araneta](#)

Senator Cynthia Villar on Wednesday described as a “welcome development” the World Health Organization’s call to stop the sale of live wild animals in food markets to prevent the emergence of new diseases like Covid-19.

Villar, chair of the Senate committee on agriculture and food, said she had repeatedly warned of chronic disease transmission from wild animals.

She said research indicated that the constant exploitation of wild fauna and their habitats had raised the risk of zoonotic disease transmission or the transmission of disease from animals to humans.

WHO spokeswoman Fadela Chaib said the WHO, the World Organization for Animal Health and the United Nations Environment Program had said that wild animals were the source of most emerging infectious diseases in humans and recommended measures to reduce the potential risk.

“Covid-19 has brought new attention to this threat, given the magnitude of its consequences,” stressed Chaib.

Villar said she hoped the Philippine government would heed the call of the WHO to avert emerging infectious diseases like the new coronavirus.

“I hope all concerned government agencies will impose a ban on the catching and sale of wild animals in local markets to avert a recurrence of the Covid-19 pandemic,” said Villar.

She said there should be tough measures for the strict enforcement of this prohibition to guarantee wild animals, which can be the source of virus, would no longer find their way to the markets for human consumption.

“We wanted to protect our people and the world from new viruses in humans like this new coronavirus, which has affected and claimed the lives of millions of people worldwide,” said Villar.

Last month, Villar filed Senate Bill 2078 or the “Revised Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2021,” amending the 20-year-old RA 9147.

The bill seeks to strengthen the wildlife conservation and protection mechanism in the Philippines as the incidence of wildlife crimes had evolved and grown, violators had become more equipped, organized and syndicated or with international connections.

WHO, OIE and UNEP recalled that some of the earliest known cases of Covid-19 had links to a wholesale traditional food market in Wuhan, China. They noted that the majority of the initial patients were stall owners, market employees or regular visitors to the Wuhan market.

The agencies related that samples from the Wuhan market suggested that it might be the source of the coronavirus pandemic’s outbreak. They also raised the possibility that SARS-CoV-2—the virus that causes Covid-19 disease—originated in wild animals.



Early morning in Sitio San Ysiro in Antipolo, Rizal on Feb. 13, 2021.

A lifeline for the Dumagats

[Deejae Dumlao](#) (Philstar.com) - April 14, 2021 - 9:18am

MANILA, Philippines — At the foot of Sierra Madre, in the remote sitio of San Ysiro in Antipolo, Rizal, lies the settlement of a Dumagat-Remontado community.

The community remains dependent on resources provided by the surrounding land and mountains as it is with their way of life.

Logging and other extractive practices threaten these natural resources but the community now hopes for the rehabilitation and preservation of their ancestral land.



The Dumagat-Remontados community in Barangay San Jose received their Certification of Ancestral Domain title from the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples in 2017. The domain includes Sitio San Ysiro, a part of the South Sierra Madre, including the forests and inland bodies of water in it.

Under the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997, the government is mandated to support and uphold the rights of IP communities over their ancestral domain.



"No matter how difficult our way of life is, we would want to preserve it as it is what we are accustomed to," says Ernesto Dorroteo, chieftain of the Dumagat-Remontados in Sitio San Ysiro. "We're survivors after all."

Dorroteo witnessed how surrounding forests were destroyed in the 1980s and 1990s and said he felt powerless to stop the illegal logging.



"I was so sad to see the illegal logging. So many big trees disappeared so quickly," says Dorroteo. "We saw the soldiers with the illegal loggers, so who could we turn to?"



Through the National Greening Program of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, a large-scale reforestation effort kicked off in San Ysiro in 2012 for the rehabilitation of the upper Marikina watershed that encompasses 26,125 hectares of land.

However, trees planted through the five-year greening program were not taken care of, says Dorroteo. "Even when they planted and planted—they planted for nearly five years—nothing happened. After they planted, they didn't visit the seedlings to check," he says of the DENR.



In 2019, talks with Haribon Foundation began for a five-year reforestation project covering 100 hectares of the Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape.

Along with non-profit organizations and volunteer groups such as the Foundation for the Philippine Environment and RAK PH mountaineers, Ernesto and the Dumagat-Remontados seek to breathe new life to to the forests around San Ysiro.



Globe calls on customers to participate in E-waste recycling

By The Manila Times

April 15, 2021



AS a company at the core of innovation, responsible use of technology is a principle Globe wants to foster in its customers. Even as gadgets come and go, they should not go to waste. E-waste, or electronic waste, will further cause harm to the environment if disposed improperly as it is made up of different materials that are toxic and hazardous. This is why Globe established E-Waste Zero, an environmental program focused on responsible disposal and recycling of electronic wastes.

E-Waste Zero provides a way for people to donate their old, non-working electronic devices via participating Globe Stores, select malls, schools, and offices of partner organizations nationwide which will then be turned over to DENR-accredited Treatment, Storage, and Disposal (TSD) facilities for proper handling and recycling.

More than 100 bins under the Globe E-waste Zero program are now placed in different collection points nationwide such as Globe Stores and malls, which the public can easily access. These bins can accommodate mobile phones, IT accessories such as mouse, earphones, and speakers; Internet and WiFi modems and routers; cable wires, batteries, circuit boards, CDs /DVDs and other small electronic devices. Bigger items such as computer sets, IT servers and electronic network equipment (antennas, transmitters, etc.), and home appliances (washing machine, oven, refrigerator, and the like) may be requested for pick up.

“Being responsible in disposing of e-waste also helps bring additional funds to support the education sector. In 2016, Globe turned over classrooms in Altavas and New Washington, Aklan from the proceeds of the e-waste recycling program alongside other fundraising initiatives. Today, proceeds from e-waste donations will help provide devices and connectivity support to public school teachers and students in areas that need them the most,” said Yoly Crisanto, Globe chief sustainability officer and senior vice president for Corporate Communications.

Visit any of the participating Globe stores nationwide or request for free door-to-door pickup of bulky e-waste items. For the list of drop off areas and free door-to-door bulk hauling requests, check out E-waste Zero on Globe’s sustainability website <https://www.globe.com.ph/about-us/sustainability/environment.html>

For more information, visit <https://www.globe.com.ph/about-us/sustainability.html>

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2021/04/15/public-square/globe-calls-on-customers-to-participate-in-e-waste-recycling/863994/>



Gasataya asks DPWH to explain cutting of trees in Singcang-Airport



BACOLOD. Netizens react on social media to the cutting down of the 26 fully grown mahogany, acacia and rubber trees along Bacolod-Kabankalan highway as part of a sidewalk improvement project yesterday. (Contributed photo)

[MERLINDA A. PEDROSA](#)

April 14, 2021

BACOLOD City Lone District Representative Greg Gasataya has requested the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)-Bacolod to submit an explanation on the cutting of 26 fully grown trees along Bacolod-Kabankalan highway in Barangay Singcang-Airport, Bacolod City.

In his letter dated April 13 and addressed to District Engineer Jaime Javellana, Gasataya said it has been brought to his attention that trees were cut along the Bacolod-Kabankalan highway, allegedly part of a sidewalk improvement project.

He said he appreciates the commitment of the District Engineering Office to infrastructure development, but there should be exertions to ensure that infrastructure projects are sustainable and should maintain a balance between development and preservation of nature.

Gasataya said as much as possible, trees and objects as such should be spared.

“In this light, this representation requests an investigation on the cutting of the trees along the area, an explanation as to why such a course of action was undertaken and to ensure that the remaining trees in the vicinity remain unharmed,” Gasataya said.

The lawmaker also urged Javellana to conduct proper consultation with local officials and stakeholders to guarantee sustainability in cases of natural obstructions in implementation sites.

Some netizens also reacted on social media on Tuesday, April 13, 2021, to the cutting down of the 26 fully grown mahogany, acacia and rubber trees in the said area.

'Permits were secured'

Javellana said they secured permits from the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and Community Environment and Natural Resources (Cenro) for the cutting down of trees in said area.

“We need to cut the trees in said area because it is very important for the safety of our pedestrians and commuters,” he said.

He added the trees' roots already damaged the sidewalk and pose danger to pedestrians, commuters and motorists. The roots also affected the drainage system in the area.

Javellana said they have ongoing projects for the improvement of the sidewalk and installation of streetlights from the Bacolod public plaza towards the Old-Bacolod Airport with a total budget of P32 million.



"We have a remaining of nine trees in said area, but we will not cut it because I received a call from Congressman Gasataya and from the DPWH regional director to stop the cutting of trees," Javellana said.

He said based on their approved permit, they have a total of 35 trees to be cut down, but they already cut down 26 trees.

Mayor Evelio Leonardia also said it was reported to him that the big old trees along the highway at the Old Bacolod-Airport were cut.

"That is unacceptable," he said.

Leonardia also directed the Bacolod City Police Office (BCPO) to inspect the area and to stop the cutting of trees.

"I was told people are shocked that these Bacolod treasures had been ravaged. We've lived with these trees for decades now," the mayor said.



Over 2,000 mangroves propagules planted in Misamis Oriental

Published April 14, 2021, 2:39 PM

by [Richa Noriega](#)

Personnel of the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) have planted over 2,000 mangrove propagules in Misamis Oriental in a move to raise awareness on the importance of a healthy marine environment.

In a statement on Tuesday, April 13, the PCG said the local government officials already made an assurance that they will look after the the status of the mangrove propagules to ensure their successful growth.



“The activity is one of the regular initiatives of the PCG to protect El Salvador City against storm surges and promote a healthy marine environment,” the Coast Guard said.

Through the initiative of the PCG Auxiliary 1001st Squadron, PCG Station Western Misamis Oriental, and the local government unit (LGU) the mangrove propagules were planted in Barangay Sinuloc, El Salvador City, Misamis Oriental on Sunday, April 11.

According to the environmental organization World Wildlife Fund (WWF), mangrove forests are home to a large variety of fish, which is an essential source of food for thousands of coastal communities around the world.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/04/14/over-2000-mangroves-propagules-planted-in-misamis-oriental/>



Residents of Batasan Hills in Quezon City line up to receive their financial assistance from the government on the second day of distribution on April 8, 2021.

The STAR/Michael Varcas, file

COVID-19 fatality rate in Metro Manila rises to 5.4% – OCTA

[Janvic Mateo](#) (The Philippine Star) - April 15, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The number of people dying of the coronavirus disease in Metro Manila has increased three-fold in recent weeks, OCTA Research Group revealed yesterday.

Citing data from the Department of Health (DOH), the group noted that the case fatality rate (CFR) in the National Capital Region (NCR) was at 5.36 percent from March 28 to April 13, up from 1.82 percent recorded since the pandemic started.

CFR refers to the number of people who died out of the total number of COVID-19 cases.

Comparing the data before and after March 28, OCTA said there was a significant increase in the number of people who died in the 65 and up age group (11.8 percent to 28.6 percent), 60 to 64 (5.7 percent to 16.4 percent) and 50 to 59 (2.7 percent to 8.7 percent).

“While the more recent CFR is based on a much smaller sample size of 284 deaths, and the CFR may still decrease as more data come in, the possibility of an increase in CFR should not be ignored,” read OCTA’s report.

“The reasons for the increase in CFR may be due to an overwhelmed hospital system, the presence of SARS-CoV-2 variants which may be more lethal or both,” it added.

OCTA recommended that senior citizens should be given priority to health care access to be assured that they receive timely interventions.

It also urged seniors who have not applied for vaccination to strongly reconsider getting inoculated as soon as possible, stressing the high risk of mortality due to COVID-19.

“Those in the vulnerable sector should strictly adhere to public health guidelines and exercise extreme caution, especially in public areas, to avoid COVID-19 infection,” it added.

OCTA fellow Michael Tee said the government must allocate additional resources to take care of those who are infected. “We cannot afford to wait for them to deteriorate in their houses before bringing them to hospital,” he said.

‘Super spreader’ events

Health authorities raised concern yesterday that the vaccination drive and distribution of cash aid to needy families might turn out to be “super spreader events” for COVID-19.

“This is a possible super spreader event especially if there is crowding and the space is enclosed,” warned Department of Health (DOH) Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire at a press briefing.



A super spreader event pertains to the gathering of people and where a single infection triggers a large outbreak among the attendees and their contacts.

Vergeire emphasized this could happen during vaccination and cash assistance distribution activities if people will not strictly observe physical distancing.

The DOH has coordinated with the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) and the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) to make sure that health protocols are strictly implemented at these events.

“We also reminded our local government units to have ‘scheduling’ to prevent mass gathering during these events,” Vergeire said.

‘Arrest them’ – Diño

Earlier, DILG Undersecretary Martin Diño said beneficiaries of the lockdown assistance who would line up at distribution centers before their scheduled time should be arrested because they are violating quarantine protocols.

Diño said that he has tasked barangay officials to give out coupons with assigned time slots to ensure that proper protocols will be followed at distribution centers.

“Now if they come earlier, arrest them. Why? They’ve violated social distancing. Why would you come before daybreak when you’re schedule is 6 a.m., 7 a.m.,” he said over radio dzBB on Tuesday.

There have been reports of social distancing violations as people flocked to centers for the payout of lockdown assistance.

Clustering prevails

Meanwhile, Vergeire said that clustering of COVID-19 cases is still found in the community and in workplaces and institutions.

She claimed there has also been no decline in cases despite the imposition of enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) and now the modified ECQ in Metro Manila and its adjoining provinces of Bulacan, Laguna, Rizal and Cavite or the so-called National Capital Region (NCR) Plus bubble.

“We are not seeing a reduction in cases. We are still averaging 10,000 to 11,000 cases per day. We foresee that this may still persist in the coming days,” Vergeire said.

But she said a decline in cases is expected to reflect on the daily tally of cases in the next two weeks.

Out of context

Sought for reaction on the pronouncement of vaccine czar Carlito Galvez Jr. on a possible mid-year surge of COVID-19 cases, Vergeire maintained that Galvez was “taken out of context.”

“What he was saying is that we must always be ready for any possible circumstance wherein cases will increase in the coming months,” she said.

Vergeire added that preparations pertain to the extension of facilities, hiring of health care workers and augmenting the capacity of facilities, among others. – **Sheila Crisostomo, Romina Cabrera**

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2021/04/15/2091310/covid-19-fatality-rate-metro-manila-rises-54-octa>



4.9-magnitude quake strikes off Surigao del Norte

Published April 14, 2021, 7:57 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) recorded a magnitude 4.9 earthquake off Surigao del Norte on Wednesday evening, April 14.

It detected the quake at around 7:09 p.m. and traced its epicenter at 56 kilometers northeast of the municipality of Burgos in Surigao del Norte province.

Phivolcs' instruments registered the quake at Intensity I or "scarcely perceptible."

The quake was tectonic in origin, which means the tremor was caused by the movement of an active fault in the area.

Moreover, it was shallow at a depth of 10 kilometers thus the strong shaking.

Phivolcs does not expect damage to property, while aftershocks are unlikely to occur.



PH steps up presence in West Philippine Sea: Palace

By Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos **April 14, 2021, 7:24 pm**



PH PRESENCE AT WPS. A photo taken on April 11, 2021 shows 136 Chinese maritime militia at the vicinity of Burgos (Gaven) Reef in the West Philippine Sea (WPS). Malacañang said on Wednesday (April 14) said the Philippines has stepped up its presence in the WPS amid China's incursions into the country's exclusive economic zone. *(NTF-WPS photo)*

MANILA – The Philippines has stepped up its presence in the West Philippine Sea (WPS) amid China's incursions into the country's exclusive economic zone, Malacañang said on Wednesday.

"The presence of Philippine maritime security and law enforcement forces have been stepped up in the municipality of Kalayaan to protect Filipino fishermen and the marine resources," Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said in a press statement.

Roque issued the statement the same day as the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) once again filed two diplomatic notes against China after 200 Chinese vessels were spotted in the Julian Felipe Reef on April 11.

The first diplomatic protest counts as the daily protest as long as there are Chinese ships in and around Julian Felipe Reef and the second is on the dispersal of Chinese vessels to other parts of Philippine maritime zones.

Apart from the filing of diplomatic protests, the DFA also summoned Chinese Ambassador Huang Xilian over the current situation in Julian Felipe Reef, Roque said.

The Philippines first lodged a note verbale over the incident in Julian Felipe Reef on March 21 after around 200 Chinese vessels were spotted moored in line formation in the area. The number reportedly decreased to 44 ships based on a March 30 patrol by the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP).

Roque likewise reiterated that President Rodrigo Duterte, during the 75th session of the United Nations General Assembly in September last year, stressed the importance of the Permanent Court of Arbitration's (PCA) ruling on the Philippines' petition against China's sweeping claims over the contested South China Sea.

He added that the National Task Force on West Philippine Sea (NTF-WPS) is "consistent" in invoking Philippine sovereignty and sovereign rights over WPS.

On July 12, 2016, the PCA in the Hague, Netherlands ruled in favor of the Philippines after it invalidated China's claim to nearly the entire SCS.

Avoid escalating tensions

During his commentary show "Counterpoint" on Wednesday, Chief Presidential Legal Counsel Salvador Panelo told journalists to avoid going to the WPS, saying any activity in the contested waters could only escalate tensions between the Philippines and China.

Panelo issued the statement after the news team of ABS-CBN reporter Chiara Zambrano earlier received a radio message from a ship of the Chinese Coast Guard (CCG) after trying to make its way to Ayungin Shoal.

Panelo slammed Zambrano for "exaggerating" news about the WPS issue.



“Ito ho, mahilig talaga itong ine-exaggerate nito ang lahat nang nakikita niyang balita. ‘Yung kaniyang pagbabalita, may kasamang pambanat sa gobyerno (She is fond of exaggerating every issue. Her style of reporting is when she delivers news, she criticizes the government),” he said.

Zambrano’s news team was recently aboard a local civilian vessel to cover the situation of Filipino fishermen amid the presence of Chinese vessels in the Julian Felipe Reef.

However, Zambrano’s team was reportedly driven away by CCG while onboard a civilian boat four miles away from Ayungin Shoal.

According to the ABS-CBN report, the Filipino captain decided to steer the boat away from the shoal but the CCG vessel “accelerated its speed and started to chase” the civilian ship and followed “its path home to mainland Palawan for an hour.”

Reminding media to be more prudent, Panelo said journalists could still make a story about Filipino fishermen without visiting WPS.

He said going to the disputed sea could only ignite unwanted hostilities between China and the Philippines.

“Kumbaga, maging maingat na tayó. There are many ways naman para malaman (Let us be careful. There are many ways to know [the situation of the Filipino fishermen],” Panelo said. *“Hindi na kailangan na kayo’y pumunta sa lugar na nagkakairingan. Tensyonado na nga, dadagdagan niyo pa (There’s no need to go to the disputed sea. You would just escalate the tension there).”*

On April 9, the AFP launched a probe into the reported harassment of a Filipino civilian vessel by CCG.

The AFP also asked Filipino journalists to “exercise prudence in the course of their job,” but the National Union of Journalists of the Philippines (NUJP) said Zambrano’s team should not be blamed for being harassed.

Panelo defended the AFP, saying Zambrano and her team should have avoided the contested WPS, considering that there is ongoing tension in the area.

“The point I’m saying is that alam na natin na nagkakaroon na ng tensiyon doon, eh bakit pa natin dadagdagan. Kumbaga we’re creating situation na papa-reactin pa natin. Kaya hinabol (The point I’m saying is we know that there’s already a tension there, so why would we add more tension? We’re just creating situation that would make China react against us. That’s why they went after them),” he said.

Panelo said the government is trying to resolve the issue in WPS without causing hostilities.

“Ayaw na nga natin ng hostilities. Kung puwedeng mapag-usapan iyan sa lamesa ng diplomatikong pamamaraan, yun ang gawin natin (We do not want to create hostilities. If we can address it through diplomatic approach, that’s what we will do),” he said.

The AFP on Wednesday said it will continue the conduct of air and naval patrols off WPS to provide a firm basis for diplomatic protests filed by the Philippines due to continued Chinese incursions in the area. **(PNA)**



Trees of varying ages are pictured in the Planterwald forest on April 13, 2021 in Berlin.
AFP/David Gannon

Noise pollution poses long-term risk to trees: study

[Patrick Galey](#) (Agence France-Presse) - April 14, 2021 - 8:48pm

PARIS, France — Noise pollution poses a long-term risk to tree populations and plant diversity that may persist even after the sources of excess noise are removed, according to research published Wednesday.

Manmade noise from construction, industry and the building of infrastructure such as roads and pipelines has increased dramatically since the middle of last century, and biologists are increasingly concerned about their impact on plants and animals.

While previous research has documented the short-term impact noise has on tree populations as it scares off pollinators such as insects and animals, few studies have investigated the long-term effects.

Researchers in the United States looked at tree populations in New Mexico that had been exposed to a high level of artificial noise for 15 years.

They found 75 percent fewer pinyon pine seedlings in noisy sites than quiet ones.

They then looked at plots where sources of noise had recently been added or removed and examined how populations recovered.

The team hypothesised that populations of the trees -- in this case juniper and pinyon seedlings -- would recover as the jay birds that help disperse them would return to the plots once the noise had disappeared.

Instead, they detected a long-term decline in seedling numbers as the jays refused to revisit the sites.

"The effects of human noise pollution are growing into the structure of these woodland communities," said Clinton Francis, biology professor at California Polytechnic State University and study co-author.

"What we're seeing is that removal of the noise doesn't necessarily immediately result in a recovery of ecological function."

Jennifer Phillips, co-author of the research published in the journal Proceedings of the Royal Society B, said the findings showed how the impact of noise pollution could put pollinating animals off even after the noise is removed.



"Animals like the scrub-jay that are sensitive to noise learn to avoid particular areas," said Phillips.

"It may take time for animals to rediscover these previously noisy areas, and we don't know how long that might take."

As governments continue to be confronted by growing evidence of the damage to nature caused by urbanisation, Phillips told AFP that the impact of noise pollution should also be factored in to planning decisions.

"I definitely think noise pollution, and other sensory pollutants like light, are under-accounted for in mitigation measures," she said.

Phillips said the study could help inform governments about noise pollution can indirectly impact biodiversity due to "mutualisms" or inter-linked effects between species.



Report impact on climate, NZ tells banks



By Agence France-Presse

April 15, 2021

AUCKLAND: New Zealand will force banks to reveal the impact their investments have on climate change under world-first legislation intended to make the financial sector's environmental record transparent, officials said. Commerce Minister David Clark said the law would make climate reporting mandatory for banks, insurance companies and investment firms. "Becoming the first country in the world to introduce a law like this means we have an opportunity to show real leadership and pave the way for other countries to make climate-related disclosures mandatory," he said.



Kerry presses climate in first Biden official's trip to China

posted April 14, 2021 at 10:00 am by **AFP**

US climate envoy John Kerry will visit China this week in the first trip there by the Biden administration, seeking to raise global ambitions despite soaring tensions with Beijing on other fronts.

The former secretary of state will visit Shanghai as well as the South Korean capital Seoul on a trip starting Wednesday, the State Department confirmed.

His trip comes in preparation for President Joe Biden's virtual climate summit next week to which the US leader has invited both Chinese President Xi Jinping and Russian President Vladimir Putin.

"We have big disagreements with China on some key issues, absolutely. But climate has to stand alone," Kerry told CNN.

If refusing to work together on climate, "you're just killing yourself, you're going to be hurting your own people," he said.

Kerry said that Xi had not yet confirmed whether he would take part in the summit.

With global temperatures and natural disasters on the rise, Biden has made climate a top priority, turning the page from his predecessor Donald Trump, who was closely aligned with the fossil fuel industry.

Biden has rejoined the 2015 Paris accord, which Kerry negotiated as secretary of state and committed nations to take action to keep temperature rises at no more than two degrees Celsius (3.6 Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels.

With the world badly off track to meeting the goal, Biden hopes that the summit will result in stronger pledges in advance of UN-led climate talks in Glasgow at the end of the year.

Kerry, who has already traveled on his climate push to European allies, India, Bangladesh and the United Arab Emirates, noted that he worked closely with China on the Paris accord.

"We hope that China will come to the table and lead. President Xi has talked about leadership, about China's role in this. We want to work with China in doing this," Kerry said in an earlier interview with India Today.

No global solution is likely without both the United States and China, the world's top two economies which together account for nearly half of the greenhouse gas emissions responsible for climate change.

China alone produces almost 30 percent of carbon emissions, far more than any country, after decades of rapid industrialization.

But Xi has promised that China's emissions will peak by 2030, part of a major push to clean up the environment.

Biden is also hoping to carry out far-reaching efforts to transform the US economy toward green energy, a key emphasis of his \$2 trillion infrastructure package proposed to Congress.

Biden has identified climate as well as global health as among narrow areas in which the United States will seek to work with China.



Kerry's trip comes despite a testy initial meeting last month in Alaska between two top Biden officials including Secretary of State Antony Blinken with their Chinese counterparts.

The two sides clashed over US accusations that China is rampantly stealing intellectual property, aggressively asserting itself against its neighbors, violating promises of freedoms to Hong Kong and carrying out genocide against Uyghurs and other mostly Muslim minorities in the western Xinjiang region.



Climate and environment updates

LATEST UPDATE: April 14, 2021 - 1:00pm

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New Zealand will force banks to reveal the impact their investments have on climate change under world-first legislation intended to make the financial sector's environmental record transparent, officials say.

Commerce Minister David Clark says the law would make climate reporting mandatory for banks, insurance companies and investment firms.

"Becoming the first country in the world to introduce a law like this means we have an opportunity to show real leadership and pave the way for other countries to make climate-related disclosures mandatory," he says. — **AFP**



New energy vehicles polluting earth

By Xinhua

April 15, 2021

SHENZHEN: As the amount of waste batteries from new-energy vehicles has reached nearly 200,000 tons in China, experts are warning of environmental pollution and safety issues as large numbers of used power batteries are recycled and processed without any regulation.



A visitor looks at a new energy vehicle (NEV) during a promotional activity for NEVs in rural areas held in Kunming, southwest China's Yunnan Province, Dec. 4, 2020. Xinhua/Jiang Wenyao

According to a report by Xinhua, the waste power batteries from new-energy cars in China have reached nearly 200,000 tons as of 2020, and the number is expected to reach 750,000 in 2025.

Zhong Shi, an automotive industry analyst, told the Global Times on Tuesday that after an unregulated battery-recycling workshop buys used batteries, “they tend to carry out a rather simple recycling process, discarding useless materials such as electrolyte at will, which could cause serious soil pollution.”

Zhang Zheming, an associate researcher from the Shenzhen Automotive Research Institute, told Xinhua that due to the lack of supervision and standard operation during the recycling process, there might be risks of explosion when disassembling the batteries.

China Power Battery Recycling and Ladder Utilization Union has put a total of 22 Chinese companies on the white list, meaning they are authorized to recycle and utilize used power batteries as of 2020.

China also requires new-energy vehicle manufacturing industries and companies to build battery-recycling spots for car owners, and to be responsible for the recycling of the used power batteries, according to a notice issued by the government in 2018.

However, the Xinhua report pointed out that many used batteries are traded in an unsupervised market, due to the fact that regulations for the battery recycling lack details. Also, the new-energy car owners still don't realize the importance of recycling the batteries, and would rather sell their batteries to unregulated recyclers.

It is a sellers' market, Jian Yihui, a product manager for a battery trading platform, told Xinhua, where the car owners are more willing to sell their used batteries for a better and higher price without considering whether the buyer is qualified or not.

Zhong said the environmental value of new-energy vehicles is based on two factors. “First, they don't cause air pollution in the same way as petrol cars. And second, unlike the carbon dioxide polluting the air, the waste from the used batteries can be disposed of more easily,” said Zhong.

“That's why it's important to have a regulated recycling system to avoid future soil pollution.”

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2021/04/15/news/world/new-energy-vehicles-polluting-earth/864038/>



WHO: Pagbenta ng wild animals sa palengke, itigil!



April 14, 2021 @ 2:11 PM 17 hours ago

MANILA, Philippines – Pinatitigil ng World Health Organization ang mga bansa sa pagbebenta ng live wild mammals bilang pagkain sa mga palengke para mabawasan ang peligro ng pag-usbong ng mga bagong sakit.

“Traditional markets, where live animals are held, slaughtered and dressed, pose a particular risk for pathogen transmission to workers and customers alike,” ayon sa WHO.

Ayon sa WHO na higit kasi sa 70 percent ng umusbong na nakahahawang sakit sa tao ay nagmula sa mga hayop, particular na sa wild animals.

Para maiwasan ito, nararapat na gumawa ng mga hakbangin ang mga awtoridad para mapagbawalan ang pagbebenta ng mga wild animal sa palengke.

“To mitigate this risk, an immediate emergency measure for regulatory authorities would be to introduce regulations to close these markets or those parts of the markets where live caught wild animals of mammalian species are kept or sold to reduce the potential for transmission of zoonotic pathogens,” ayon sa WHO.

Pinasusuri rin ng WHO sa mga bansa ang kanilang mga food market para makita ang panganib ng pagkalat ng virus mula sa mga nahuling wild animals.

Isang interim guidance naman ang inilabas ng WHO, ang World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) at United Nations Environment Programme para rito.

Bunsod ito ng isinagawang WHO-led mission sa Tsina kung saan nadiskubreng “likely to very likely” n amula nga sa paniki o ibang hayop na nahawa ang naging sanhin ng COVID mtapos mahawa ang tao. *RNT*

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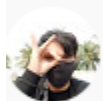
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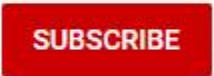


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