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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



100 New Mining Deals Could Net P21B—MGB

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA APRIL 19, 2021 3 MINUTE READ

WITH the lifting of the moratorium on new mining projects following the signing of EO 130 by President Duterte, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) is looking at granting new mining contracts that could generate additional revenues and boost the economy within the next five years.

Mines and Geosciences Bureau Director Wilfredo G. Moncano said at least 100 new mining projects currently in the pipeline can generate additional revenue of P20 billion in the form of excise tax and another P1 billion in annual revenue in the form of royalty tax.

These new mining projects can generate at least 42,000 new jobs in the mining sector which currently employs around 230,000 persons.

While the new mining projects can generate 42,000 new jobs, the employment opportunity from the multiplier effect of 4 persons for every 1 person benefiting direct employment will give mining hosts the much-needed economic boost, officials noted.

“In the memo that we submitted to the office of the President, with the lifting of Section 4 of E.O. 79, we estimate additional taxes of P20 billion and royalty of about P1 billion. Plus there will be about an additional P58 billion worth of export because most of the minerals are exported. We estimate 42,000 new employment,” Moncano said in a radio interview.

Under the Phase 1 Priority Mining Projects, there are at least 35 mining projects that are a step or two steps away from gaining their Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA), he added.

This includes the US\$700-million Silangan Project in Surigao del Norte, the lone big-ticket project likely to get the MPSA this year.

Under the Phase 2 Priority Mining Projects, Moncano said around 65 new mining project applications are in the pipeline.

Moncano said the impact of the new mining project will be strongly felt once the mining operation starts commercial production, explaining that mining’s gestation period is between 1 and 5 years. For a big ticket project like Silangan, he said the gestation period will take at least 5 years.

He said it will take time before mining’s contribution to the national economy could be felt but it will definitely impact on local economic development. Some municipalities, he noted, started as a 5th class municipality but eventually became a first-class municipality or even a city because of mining.

Moreover, Moncano said the lifting of the moratorium on new mining projects will also boost the small-scale mining sector, as he vows to expedite the processing of Minahang Bayan applications, which will boost the processing of small-scale mining permits by the Provincial Mining Regulatory Boards.

Environmental Measures

While conceding that mining has environmental impacts, Moncano assured the public the MGB will strictly implement environmental laws along with the mining law.



Currently, there are 39 Minahang Bayans, mostly in Mindanao. He expects more Minahang Bayan to be established soon.

“We have to admit that mining has an adverse environmental effect but we must also clarify that mining is a temporary activity and mitigation measures can be put in place,” he said.

Some of the measures put in place by the Duterte administration include policies requiring mining companies to secure the topsoil and subsoil which must be brought back as part of rehabilitation.

This ensures that the mined-out area will still be productive as the topsoil and subsoil are needed, particularly in agriculture as well as reforestation.

The topsoil and subsoil, he estimates, is about a 1.5 meter-thick layer of soil on top of an area to be mined. Before, the topsoil and subsoil are simply scraped by a bulldozer, leaving the area's soil barren and unproductive.

“There should be designated topsoil and subsoil stock area. That's part of an administrative order that we want to strictly enforce,” he said.

Also, Moncano said a new policy strictly enforces progressive rehabilitation and limits an area to be disturbed by the mining company during operation. “At any given time, the mining company will have a maximum area to disturb,” he said. He said by next week, a team of DENR experts will start working on the implementing rules and regulation for EO 130.



Palace expects \$4B in mining investments after ban lifted

April 19, 2021 | 12:33 am



TRUCKS load rocks and soil containing nickel-ore minerals onto a barge in Sta. Cruz, Zambales, Feb. 8, 2017. — REUTERS

By **Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza**, Reporter

THE Philippines is expecting about \$4 billion in capital investments from three major mining projects, after President Rodrigo R. Duterte lifted last week the nine-year moratorium on new mineral agreements.

If the projects of Sagittarius Mines, Inc., KingKing Mining Corp., and Silangan Mindanao Mining Co., Inc. "are any indication, we are looking at over \$4 billion in capital expenditure," Presidential Spokesperson Herminio "Harry" L. Roque, Jr. told *BusinessWorld* in a Viber message.

Mr. Duterte on April 14 signed Executive Order (EO) No. 130, which allows the government to enter into new mineral agreements and review existing mining deals for possible renegotiation.

Mr. Roque said new mining projects are also expected to generate P40 billion in local taxes and P20 billion worth of social development projects. Indigenous groups are also expected to benefit with around P15 billion in royalties expected to be collected from the major mining projects.

"These, however, will not come immediately, since this will be spread over the life of the mining project," he said.

Mr. Roque said these mining projects would generate revenues to support the government's key infrastructure programs as well as create more livelihood opportunities in the countryside.

Then-President Benigno S. Aquino III in 2012 prohibited the grant of new mining deals in several protected areas, while awaiting the passage of a law that would increase the government's share in mining revenues.

Mr. Roque said the President lifted the moratorium as Republic Act No. 10963, or the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion Act, has already doubled the excise tax on minerals from 2% to 4%.

The Palace official said the new order was also made after the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) "put in place the necessary rules, regulations, and policies to ensure that mining in the country is safe for the people and the environment."

Mr. Roque said the DENR, which has been criticized by the civil society for supposedly colluding with mining interests, already conducted a thorough review of the regulatory framework for mining.



In February 2017, Regina L. Lopez, who was Environment secretary at that time, ordered the closure of more than 20 metallic mines in the country over alleged violations of local environmental laws. Three months after, her appointment as DENR chief was rejected by the Commission on Appointments.

Mr. Roque last year said illegal mining and logging activities contributed to the massive flooding in Cagayan Valley in the Northern Philippines.

“As per the DENR, there are currently no legal large-scale mining operations happening in Isabela and Cagayan at present and the flooding that happened in those areas, the DENR added, may be attributed to other man-made causes like illegal logging,” Mr. Roque said.

Environmental groups earlier said the new order would only result in more environmental violations and enable mining firms to evade accountability.



Mining boost

[Philequity Corner](#) - [Wilson Sy](#) (The Philippine Star) - April 19, 2021 - 12:00am

In a bold move last week, President Duterte signed Executive Order (EO) 130 to officially lift the moratorium on new mining projects. It is a law that will stimulate investments and create jobs, which are both suffering severely during this pandemic. In his statement, the President said that the mining industry could aid government projects by providing raw materials for the Build Build Build infrastructure drive. This will likewise generate additional tax revenues and increase employment in rural areas in support of the government's Balik-Probinsya Program. A major transformation is unfolding, thereby boosting the performance of mining stocks in the Philippine stock market.

Lifting of nine-year ban on new projects

EO 130 overturns EO 79 which was issued in July 2012. EO 79 imposed a moratorium on new mining permits and mineral sharing agreements until a new revenue-sharing scheme was instituted. This condition was satisfied when excise taxes on mining were doubled to four percent with the passage of the Tax Reform for Acceleration and Inclusion (TRAIN) in 2017. However, due to concerns on environmental impact and safety, the ban on new mining projects was kept in place until recently.

Balancing act

The newly-issued EO 130 tasks the Department of Natural Resources (DENR) to enter into new mining agreements subject to prevailing laws, with strict compliance to safety and environmental policies. It empowers the DENR to review or renegotiate existing contracts that would be acceptable to both the government and the mining contractors. Aside from these, the country can adopt and implement global best practices in countries such as Canada and Australia where mining significantly contributes to economic development. With regulations in place, it is up to the government to police violators while ensuring that the environment and various stakeholders are adequately protected.

Harnessing the country's resources

The Philippines possesses an abundant supply of minerals and is actually the fifth most mineralized country globally. In terms of mineral reserves, we are third highest in the world for gold, fourth for copper, and fifth for nickel. Despite possessing rich natural resources, our country's mining output only accounted for 0.7 percent of 2020 GDP last year. Over the past two decades, mining output on average equated to 1.1 percent of GDP. While the Philippines has done well in nickel mining and is one of the top producers in the world, our gold and copper production have significantly lagged and offer much room for growth.

Riding the world's most significant megatrend

The shift in the government's mining policy comes at an opportune time given recent developments. The massive global transition from fossil fuels to renewable energy is an ongoing megatrend that is driving the movement in industrial metals. The goals of increasing renewable capacity and reducing greenhouse emissions by 2030 under the Paris agreement should continue to push prices of metals, such as copper and nickel, to levels that are even higher than what we are seeing today.



Secular bull market in copper

In a research report entitled “Copper is the new oil,” Goldman stated that in the future, copper could replace oil as the most important commodity in the world. Copper is an important raw material that is utilized for various clean technologies such as wind turbines, electric vehicles, solar panels, charging stations, and batteries. As such, copper is poised to benefit from significant demand growth in the next decade as the whole world embraces renewable energy and green technology. Goldman expects copper prices to rise from \$9,188/t to \$11,000/t in 12 months and \$15,000/t in five years. Incidentally, we wrote about copper, which was up more than 100 percent in the past year and was trading at its highest level in a decade (see Dr. Copper, March 29). We explained that copper appears to be on a long-term secular bull market due to the global shift towards renewable energy and electric vehicles.

A new growth driver

The timely shift in the government’s mining policy has several positive implications for the Philippine economy. It provides a clearer policy framework for long-term projects and addresses a key overhang which hobbled the sector in the past decade. Mining has a multiplier effect because it creates additional jobs in the upstream and downstream industries. This should enable mining to contribute to countryside development while also helping to decongest the National Capital Region (NCR).

If implemented properly, the country could once again become a mining powerhouse like how it was in the 1970s. Presently, we have four large gold/copper mines which will necessitate billions of dollars in foreign direct investments (FDIs) to develop and will require thousands of employees to operate. Upon full operations, these projects can produce export revenues in excess of \$5 billion per year and generate significant additional taxes for the government. In all, we view the revival of the mining industry as a major positive reform. We believe that mining can become a new engine of growth that can support numerous sectors and contribute to long-term economic development.

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Mabaho at maitim na usok mula sa crematorium, inireklamo

On Apr 18, 2021



INIREREKLAMO ng mga residente ng isang barangay sa Sta. Rosa, Laguna ang isang crematorium dahil sa inilalabas nitong masangsang na amoy at maitim na usok.

Ang crematorium ay mismong pag-aari ng lokal na pamahalaan ng Sta. Rosa City. Ipinatayo ito dahil sa dami ng namamatay sa coronavirus sa lungsod.

Ayon sa isang kawani ng city government, maselan ang nasabing crematorium dahil bago pa iyon.

Napag-alaman mula sa Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa Calabarzon Region na wala pang 'permit to operate' ang inirereklamong crematorium ng Sta. Rosa City government.

Sinabi pa ng DENR na may kulang na gamit ang crematorium kaya naglalabas iyon ng maitim na usok.

Dapat ay mayroong ginagamit na pollution control device ang crematorium upang ma-mitigate ang usok, sabi ng DENR.

Nagpadala na ng kinatawan ang DENR Calabarzon upang magsagawa ng inspeksyon sa pasilidad at upang pansamantalang maipasara hangga't hindi nasosolusyunan ang paglalabas ng maitim na usok.

Source: https://www.policefilestonite.net/2021/04/18/mabaho-at-maitim-na-usok-mula-sa-crematorium-inireklamo/?fbclid=IwAR2ke0dUFv7pXDGP-60Gs4qPCoNowOuhkmjml_MiVe5U7IsmMp5KVpp0kQ



‘Stop renewed dolomite dumping on Manila Bay’

By [Letter to the Editor](#)

April 19, 2021

Our civil society organization, Oceana, is urging the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to immediately order its contractor to stop dumping new loads of crushed dolomite on the baywalk area of the Manila Bay.

Our appeal is based on news that fresh coats of dolomite sand were placed on Manila Bay early Wednesday morning, April 14, 2021 by several backhoe operators, pouring and leveling crushed dolomite rocks there.

We pointed out that instead of tending to the flawed beautification project of Manila Bay, the government needs to prioritize addressing adverse effects of the Covid-19 pandemic on its citizens.

What is happening now is appalling: people in need of protection from an alarmingly fast transmission of Covid-19 and its rising number of deaths. Subsidies for the poor due to loss of income and worries of their families dying not only of the disease but also from hunger.

The UP Marine Science Institute, in a statement in September 2020, said the “dolomite sand will only erode, given the hydrodynamic conditions of the bay. Even with the breakwater off the baywalk area, rising level of seas and larger waves during typhoons, especially with climate change, can penetrate and pound that area”

According to the science institute, “continuously replacing the sand will be even more expensive.” Oceana believes the project is just a “band-aid” solution.

Dolomite dumped in the area from September to December 2020 has already been reclaimed by the sea.

From December 2020 to February 2021, this dolomite beach has eroded at least 300 square meters. And yet, those behind this project are refilling the baywalk area again and even extending the area. We demand that an environmental impact assessment be conducted on the project, despite the DENR’s refusal to do so, saying the “beautification project will be beneficial to the environment.”

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

Manila Bay is a key biodiversity area identified by the DENR’s Biodiversity Management Bureau and a sardine spawning ground identified by the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources through the National Fisheries Research Development Institute.

It is the spawning ground of the Fringescale sardinella, *Sardinella fimbriata* with high biomass concentration in the Metro Manila area.

Not only us, but other critics and the public have slammed the project, questioning its necessity and costs as the Philippines continues to struggle against the spread of Covid-19.

Still, the DENR and the Department of Public Works and Highways defend their decision to dump crushed dolomite along the Manila Bay shores, saying it serves as an “enhancer” for the beautification project in the area.



We also believe that this multimillion-peso dolomite dumping on Manila Bay will not help solve the root of the bay's environmental problems, which is poor water quality.

Efforts can be directed to solving the environmental problems, which include: reducing chemical, organic and plastic pollution; installing water treatment facilities; banning the cutting of mangroves and rehabilitating degraded areas; stopping conversion of mangroves and wetlands through reclamation projects; protecting critical habitats such as mangroves and wetlands and declare them as protected areas; improving management of protected areas such as the Las Piñas-Parañaque Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area and establishing formally the Fisheries Management Area for a holistic, science-based decision-making on fisheries management.

Oceana is an international advocacy organization dedicated to protecting the world's oceans.

Since 2014, it has been working closely with national and local government agencies, civil society, fisherfolk and other stakeholders to restore the abundance of Philippine fisheries and marine resources.

ATTY. GLORIA ESTENZO RAMOS
Vice President, Oceana



Green group slams expansion of Manila ‘dolomite beach’

Published April 18, 2021, 2:03 PM by [Ellson Quismorio](#)

An environmental group is up in arms over the alleged expansion of the infamous “dolomite beach” in Manila, which was discovered just days before the celebration of Earth Day on April 22.



(JANSEN ROMERO / FILE PHOTO / MANILA BULLETIN)

“It is alarming that the artificial beach is now near the Manila Yacht Club,” the group Nilad said in a statement Sunday, April 18.

It said that last year, the dolomite beach was only limited to a small portion in front of the Roxas Boulevard baywalk of Manila Bay near the United States (US) embassy. However, photos sent by concerned Manila residents show that the dolomite dumping has continued despite the public outcry. The photos were shared during a webinar organized by Nilad, Earth Island Institute PH, Manila-based volunteers, and residents.

“This year’s Earth Day theme is ‘Restore our Earth’ but ‘Replenish Dolomite’ seems to be the priority of the Duterte government. It is not only a dirty and destructive project, but a waste of money which should have been used in the government’s pandemic response,” Nilad said.

White-colored dolomite sand is being used for the proposed artificial beach in Manila Bay’s Baywalk area under a P389-million rehabilitation program. So controversial was the use of the sand that it triggered an investigation by Congress.

Of the amount, some P28 million was spent to acquire and transport the dolomite from Cebu, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Usec. Jonas Leones told solons during one of the hearings.

The DENR has been mum so far regarding the latest dolomite dumping.

The green groups also expressed worries over the return of the alleged coal stockpile in Tondo, also in Manila.

“We are alarmed that the coal stockpile which was already removed in 2015 after it was opposed by Tondo residents is now back. We ask authorities to look into this issue since the coal dumping is exacerbating the suffering of residents who are already barely surviving the pandemic,” Nilad said. “We ask netizens and environment advocates to join Tondo residents in rejecting the dolomite beach expansion and the return of coal stockpile,” it added.

It further reckoned that Earth Day in Manila would be “rendered meaningless” if projects that end up harming Manila Bay are continued.

“We laud young Baseco (Tondo) volunteers who conducted a clean-up drive which proves that there is a feasible alternative to restore Manila Bay instead of dumping dolomite and coal,” the green group said.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/04/18/green-group-slams-expansion-of-manila-dolomite-beach/>



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Kinondena ng environment groups na Nilad at Earth Island Institute PH ang pagdadagdag ng bagong layer ng dolomite sand sa "White Beach" sa Manila Bay at pagtatambak ng coal stockpile sa Hapilan, Tondo.

“
 This year's Earth Day theme is 'Restore our Earth' but 'Replenish Dolomite' seems to be the priority of the Duterte government. **It is not only a dirty and destructive project, but a waste of money which should have been used in the government's pandemic response.**
 In addition, we are alarmed that the coal stockpile which was already removed in 2015 after it was opposed by Tondo residents is now back.
”

**NILAD
 EARTH ISLAND INSTITUTE PH
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 APRIL 18, 2021**

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Cutting of 26 fully-grown trees draws flak from environmentalists in Bacolod City

Published April 18, 2021, 8:55 AM

by [Glazyl Masculino](#)

BACOLOD CITY – Environmentalists and various sectors recently staged a silent protest to denounce the cutting of 26 fully-grown trees to give way to a P32-million road project.



FOR THE ROAD. Environmentalists place notes atop what was left of one of 26 trees that was cut by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH). The government agency in Bacolod was paving the way for one of their road projects in the city. (Contributed Photo)

Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH)-Bacolod head District Engineer Jaime Javellana said they were able to get an authorization from the Department of Environment of Natural Resources (DENR) to cut 35 trees to give way for ongoing projects which included the improvement of sidewalk and installation of streetlights from the Bacolod public plaza to the Old Bacolod airport.

Twenty six of the 35 trees were already cut by the DPWH which led to the disappointment of residents and environmentalists as well as local government officials.

“I was told people are shocked that these Bacolod treasures had been ravaged. We’ve lived with these trees for decades now,” said Mayor Evelio Leonardia in a statement.

Leonardia instructed Police Col. Manuel Placido, city police director, to stop the cutting of trees instantly, and issued an executive order creating a joint committee to investigate the incident.

“The trees were some of the treasures of Bacolod that people marveled at, and we considered those trees as part and parcel of the city,” Leonardia said.

The 35 trees set to be destroyed are 15 molave, 12 narra, seven mahogany and one eucalyptus.

After some Bacolodnons aired their sentiments, the DPWH stopped the cutting of trees, leaving only nine trees uncut.

“Thanks but no thanks. For the nine remaining trees, thanks for they have been saved. But, have we not learned our lessons,” said educator Rhoderick Samonte.

Javellana, in media interviews, said the cutting of trees was for the safety of pedestrians, commuters, and motorists, considering that the roots have already damaged the sidewalk and posed danger to the public.

Fr. Chris Gonzales, director of the Social Action Center (SAC) of the Diocese of Bacolod, who also joined the protest, considered it as a sad event that had awoken not only the residents, but also government leaders.

“I hope this won’t happen again, I hope they will reconsider their plans,” the priest added.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/04/18/cutting-of-26-fully-grown-trees-draws-flak-from-environmentalists-in-bacolod-city/>



New plant, flower species discovered in Davao Oriental

[Rainier Allan Ronda](#) (The Philippine Star) - April 19, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Researchers have discovered new species of flowering plant, orchid and fern on Mount Hamiguitan Range in Davao Oriental, according to the Department of Science and Technology.

DOST Secretary Fortunato dela Peña said the research, conducted by a team from the Central Mindanao University in Bukidnon, was funded by the DOST-Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development.

“The discovery of the new species is significant because we can now systematically study these organisms that were previously unknown to science,” Dela Peña said.

Among the discoveries were a new species of Orchidaceae, a terrestrial orchid called *Dilochia deleoniae*; a flowering plant called *Hypericum perryongii* Galindon, sp. nov. and a grass fern called *Actinostachys minuta* Amoroso & Coritico.

The researchers also discovered a new species of *Metapocyrtus* (*Artapocyrtus*) *bronsi* sp. nov., a type of snoutbeetle.

They also collected a pygmy grasshopper called *Arulenusvalidispinus*, which has not been recorded for more than a century.

This species is commonly known as the four-spined pygmy devil.

The *Dilochia deleoniae* thrives in partly shaded habitat.

The *Hypericum perryongii* Galindon was observed to bear flowers during June until late July and fruits in August.

The *Actinostachys minuta* Amoroso & Coritico was found growing on the trunk of a tree.

The *Metapocyrtus* (*Artapocyrtus*) *bronsi* sp. nov., is named after the Mandaya word *bronsi*, or bronze, the color of the beetle’s scales.

Rare beetle species named after Davao City



DAVAO. The beetle discovered during an expedition under the “Urban Biodiversity Research and Conservation of Davao City” project by UM’s Dr. Anlyn Cabras, Dr. Milton Norman Medina, and their partner researcher, Dr. Maurizio Bollino, is called *Metapocyrtus (Orthocyrtus) davaoensis*. (PR)

April 18, 2021

RESEARCHERS from the University of Mindanao’s (UM’s) Coleoptera Research Center have named a new and “rare” species of beetle after the City of Davao and published its findings in reputable scientific journals.

Labeled as *Metapocyrtus (Orthocyrtus) davaoensis*, the beetle was discovered during an expedition under the “Urban Biodiversity Research and Conservation of Davao City” project by UM’s Dr. Anlyn Cabras, Dr. Milton Norman Medina, and their partner researcher, Dr. Maurizio Bollino.

The project was funded by the Commission on Higher Education’s Dareto program.

The new species is set apart from the rest of its congeners or beetles in its same category by the unique patterns of its body.

Metapocyrtus (Orthocyrtus) davaoensis is considered a rare find as it is a species of beetle that has managed to survive in the rapidly dwindling green spaces of Calinan.

“It is often not a surprise to find new species in heavily forested areas, but disturbed and farmed areas are often not the best place for discovery of new species,” Dr. Cabras said in a statement regarding their discovery.

The discovery of this new species in the heart of the urban jungle of the city reiterates two

important points, according to the team: first is the lack of scientific studies on insects; especially beetles, even as new species are being discovered in urban areas. Second is the immediate need to conserve the remaining green spaces of Davao city which is one of the main objectives of the Urban Biodiversity Research and Conservation of Davao City project led by Dr. Medina.

Beetles, and all endemic creatures for that matter, are important indicators of the health of an ecosystem.

The researchers hope that through this discovery, it will bring to the attention of local government policymakers that supporting basic research in biodiversity and the conservation of the remaining green spaces of the city are priority matters.

Discovering new species of beetles adding to the country’s rich biodiversity is not new to the Coleoptera Research Center and UM’s Research and Publication Center; which has been publishing their findings of new species of beetles since 2016, including *Metapocyrtus willietorresi*, a new beetle species named after UM’s president Dr. Guillermo P. Torres Jr., as well as the discovery and publishing in scientific journals of *Hoya indaysarae*, a new flower species named after Davao City Mayor “Inday” Sara Duterte-Carpio. (PR)

Source: <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1892066/Davao/Local-News/Rare-beetle-species-named-after-Davao-City>



New animal, plant species discovered in Mindanao

By **Bombo Christian Yosores** -April 18, 2021 | 6:15 AM



IMAGE | *The Metapocyrtus (Artapocyrtus) bronsi sp. nov species/DOST handout*

MANILA – Researchers from Central Mindanao University have discovered new animal species in several mountains in Mindanao.

Their findings were part of the Biodiversity S&T Program of the Department of Science and Technology’s Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development (PCAARRD).

The three-year study, led by botanist and university professor Dr. Victor Amoroso, aims “to update, assess and monitor the biodiversity and evaluate the physico-chemical properties of selected mountain ecosystems in Mindanao for conservation and sustainable development.”

The research was conducted in the mountain ecosystems of Mt. Hamiguitan in Davao Oriental, Mt. Apo in North Cotobato, Mt. Pantaron Range in Bukidnon, and Mt. Tago Range in Bukidnon.

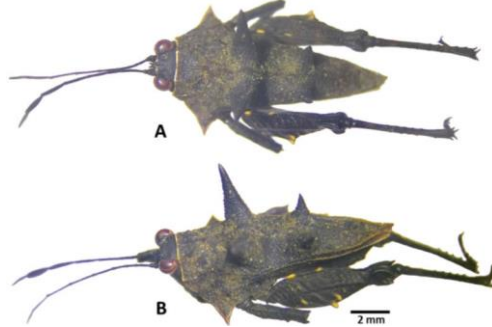


IMAGE | *The Arulenus validispinus species/Journal of Orthoptera Research*

Among the recently-discovered species is the *Metapocyrtus bronsi sp. nov.*, a type of snout beetle.

According to the DOST, this new species was named after the Mandaya (a known ethnic group living in Eastern Mindanao) word “bronsi,” which means bronze, pertaining to the prominent color of the markings on its scales.

Researchers have also found a new species of pygmy grasshopper called *Arulenus validispinus*. It is more commonly known as the “four-spines pygmy devil,” and it had not been recorded for more than a century.

Aside from animal species, four new plant species have been identified.

One of the new discoveries is the terrestrial orchid species *Dilochia deleoniae*, a new species of Orchidaceae or the orchid family.



IMAGE | *The Dilochia deleoniae species/DOST handout*

“This endemic species prefers to open in partly shaded habitat, where it is found in clumps or scattered,” according to a DOST report.



IMAGE | (L-R) *The Gymnosiphon syceorosensis and Hypericum perryongii Galindon species/DOST handout*

Labeled as *Hypericum perryongii* Galindon, a new species of a flowering plant was also discovered in the narrow summit of Mt. Hamiguitan.

The new *Hypericum* species was named after the late Dr. Perry Ong, a known conservation biologist from the University of the Philippines Diliman.

Another newly discovered species of a flowering plant belonging to the family of Burmanniaceae was named *Gymnosiphon syceorosensis*.

It is a type of plant that obtains nutrients from mycorrhizal fungi, also discovered in Mt. Hamiguitan.

“Considered as the second new species for the Philippines, because only one population of *G. syceorosensis* was discovered, no estimation of its abundance or overall distribution can be made,” the Science department said.



IMAGE | *The Actinostachys minuta species/DOST handout*

Researchers were also able to find a new species of grass fern called *Actinostachys minuta* Amoroso & Coritico.



The *A. minuta* is an epiphyte on the trunk of the tree fern with embedded between adventitious roots.

Science Sec. Fortunato de la Peña commended the significant discovery of new species. He said the findings will contribute to better documentation and understanding of Mt. Hamiguitan's high biological diversity.

This will also lead to the mountains conservation and sustainable utilization, he said.

"New species are potential sources of economically important products such as compounds of medical importance, food, and other valuable materials. These could also be sources of important genes that can be used in future breeding and other genomic applications," he told **Bombo Radyo**.

The findings of the studies were published in the Philippine Journal of Systematic Biology and the peer-reviewed journals Phytotaxa, and Journal of Orthoptera Research.

Among the researchers who took part of the study were Romeo Patano Jr., Alma Mohagan, Sheryl Yap, Fulgent Coritico, Mescel Acola, Daniel Amper, John Michael Galindon, Darin Penneys, Noel Lagunday, Danilo Tandang, Peter Fritsch, Rene Alfred Anton Bustamante, and Daniel Nickrent.



Composite photo shows a forest ranger and the Cleopatra's Needle Critical Habitat in Palawan.
Aubrey Padilla and Solomon Calago

Art raffle raises funds for forest rangers in Philippines' biggest critical habitat

[Gaea Katreena Cabico](#) (Philstar.com) - April 18, 2021 - 4:47pm

MANILA, Philippines — The indigenous Batak and Tagbanua communities in Palawan play an important role in managing and preserving the largest critical habitat in the country by defending it from the threats to its survival.

They protect the 41,350-hectare Cleopatra's Needle Critical Habitat (CNCH), one of the oldest and most diverse forests in the Philippines, from the growing threats of deforestation, illegal agricultural expansion, land grabbing, poaching of wildlife and other natural resources, and small-scale mining.

But the COVID-19 pandemic is making it harder for them to defend one of the country's last wild places and the species that inhabit it.

Due to funding woes and other challenges exacerbated by the health crisis, the indigenous rangers have not received any allowances for their efforts to patrol the critical habitat since 2020.

"They work even though they don't have salaries. They have continued to patrol when they have the time after their other livelihood opportunities," KM Reyes, co-executive director and co-founder of the Palawan-based Centre for Sustainability Philippines (CS), told **Philstar.com**.

"They're generously volunteering their time," she added.

To support the work of the indigenous Batak and Tagbanua forest rangers in patrolling their ancestral lands, CS is raffling off art pieces to raise money for their allowances.

Ranger raffle

The raffle aims to raise P942,240 to support 24 indigenous rangers who will patrol CNCH on a rotating basis for a year. The total also aims to cover costs of patrol equipment, quarterly monitoring meetings with government agencies, and community organizing.

"We decided to do the raffle because we wanted a fun and creative way to raise awareness on what is happening with our rangers.... In a fun way that people can get involved and win some really beautiful art," Reyes said.



The public can participate by purchasing raffle tickets to win artworks such as paintings and drawings generously gifted by artists at home and abroad. The art pieces are posted on CS' [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) accounts.

"The generosity has been really overwhelming. It's such a great sign that so many people are interested in contributing and being part of supporting our indigenous communities to be the frontliners in their work," Reyes said.

As of April 14, CS has raised over P130,000, which can cover two months of patrolling.

People can also donate [here](#).

Guardians of the forest

The Philippines is one of the world's megadiverse countries as it is home to two-thirds of the Earth's biodiversity. But it is tagged as a biodiversity hotspot with at least 700 threatened species.

Cleopatra's Needle Critical Habitat is home to countless unique and threatened flora and fauna such as the Palawan pangolin, one of the highly poached species in the world. CS initiated the efforts to secure additional protection for the area through critical habitat designation, which was granted in 2016.

"The importance of protecting this area is not just for the Philippines although it's incredibly important because it's one of the last repositories of our biodiversity, it's one of the last carbon sinks. This is also an area of international importance," Reyes said.

CNCH is also the ancestral domain of the last 200 members of the vanishing indigenous Batak community.

The land management skills of indigenous communities are crucial in combating climate crisis and achieving conservation goals such as protecting biodiversity and maintaining the ecosystems that sustain people.

To protect the critical habitat and defend their ancestral domain, the indigenous Batak and Tagbanua rangers, through the help of CS, have developed skills such as biodiversity data collection, wildlife photography, smartphone patrolling and science communications. The organization is also helping the communities secure land tenure.

"These areas will not exist if not for their guardianship over the area. We must be very thankful that we still have an ecological frontier because of their efforts in sustainable guardianship of the area," Reyes said.



Giant clam shells worth P1.2 billion seized in Philippine raid

[Agence France-Presse](#) / 10:56 AM April 18, 2021



Giant clams flourish on the sea bed off Bolinao in Lingayen Gulf, northwest of Manila on October 18, 2008. Highly prized for its meat and decorative shell the giant clam, scientific name: *Tridacna gigas* had virtually disappeared from the Philippines fished out by local and foreign fishermen. Photo by Romeo GACAD / AFP

MANILA, Philippines — Philippine authorities said Saturday they have seized some 200 tons of illegally harvested giant clam shells worth nearly P1.2 billion (\$25 million) in one of the biggest known operations of its kind in the country.

Conservationists have expressed alarm over the surging illicit trade in the endangered creatures, which are used as a substitute for ivory following a global crackdown in the trade of elephant tusks.

The Philippines is home to most of the world's giant tropical clam species, and Friday's raid took place in the western province of Palawan, considered a poaching hotbed.

The coastguard said four suspects were arrested on the remote Green Island in the Sulu Sea that turned up the largest ever giant clam shell haul by law enforcers in the area.

"Taking the giant clams from their natural habitat is a form of inter-generational crime," Jovic Fabello, spokesman for the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development told AFP.

"It will permanently affect the marine ecosystem and future generations will be deprived of the benefits accruing from it," he added.

He said the seized shells included those of the *Tridacna gigas*, the world's largest clam. Growing up to 1.3 meters (4.5 feet) wide and weighing up to 250 kilograms (550 pounds), these host marine algae which are a basic food source for many of the fish species consumed by humans.

Conservationists say giant clam shells are used as an alternative material for products ranging from earrings to chandeliers as ivory becomes scarce.

Fabello said the illegal trade in giant clams has been growing in Palawan and several other areas of the Philippines in the past three years.

Killing endangered species is punishable by up to 12 years in prison and fines of up to a million pesos under the country's wildlife protection act.



“These people are digging up giant clams and killing them,” Fabello alleged.
The coast guard estimated the value of the latest haul at P 1.2 billion (\$25 million).

It dwarfed the previous Palawan record of [80 tons of giant clam shells worth \\$3.3 million](#) that were seized early last month from Johnson Island, also near the venue of Friday’s raid.



PCG seizes P1.2-B fossilized 'taklobo'

The seizure of the contrabands is considered the biggest giant clam shell haul in the province

Published 1 day ago on April 18, 2021 02:30 AM

By [Raffy Ayeng](#) @tribunephil_raf



The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), together with other government agencies, apprehended the supposed selling of 200 tons of fossilized giant clams, with a market price of around P1.2 billion, resulting in the arrest of four poachers in Roxas, Palawan on Friday.

According to PCG Palawan district commander Commodore Genito Basilio, the seizure of the contrabands is considered the biggest giant clam shell haul in the province to date.

Citing information released by the PCG headquarters in Manila, the haul of giant clams was discovered at the Sitio Green Island, Barangay Tumarbong, in Roxas town.

The PCG identified the arrested poachers as 54-year-old Rey Cuyos, 48-year-old Rodolfo Rabesa, 47-year-old Julius Molejoa and 40-year-old Erwin Miagao.

The suspects are now facing charges for violation of Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act.

They were brought to the Palawan council for sustainable development (PCSD) for inquest proceedings and filing of appropriate cases.

The joint law enforcement operations were conducted by the Coast Guard Intelligence Group Palawan, Coast Guard District Palawan, PCSD, PNP-Maritime Group Palawan, AFP Intelligence Operatives and Bantay Dagat Roxas.



4 arestado sa nasabat na P1.2-B halaga ng taklobo

ni [Ronaldyn Seminiano Reonico](#) | April 18, 2021



Arestado ang apat na kalalakihan matapos masabat ng awtoridad ang tinatayang aabot sa 200 toneladang fossilized giant clam shells o “taklobo” sa Roxas, Palawan noong Biyernes.

Tinatayang aabot sa halagang P1.2 billion ang mga naturang taklobo na nakumpiska sa isinagawang joint law enforcement operations ng Coast Guard Intelligence Group Palawan, Coast Guard District Palawan, PCSD, PNP – Maritime Group Palawan, AFP Intelligence Operatives, at Bantay Dagat Roxas.

Ayon sa PCG, ang apat na suspek na inaresto sa Sitio Green Island, Barangay Tumarbong, Roxas, Palawan na kinilalang sina Rey Cuyos, 54; Rodolfo Rabesa, 48; Julius Molejoa, 47; at Erwin Miagao, 40, ay haharap sa kasong paglabag sa Republic Act No. 9147 o ang Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act, at Republic Act No. 8850 o ang Philippine Fisheries Code.

Saad pa ng PCG, “They were brought to the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD) for inquest proceedings and filing of appropriate cases.”

Nestlé PH supports PCEx and SM Malls' plastic waste collection initiative

By [The Manila Times](#)

April 19, 2021



IN a virtual event held recently, Plastic Credit Exchange (PCEx) and SM Malls formally launched its Plastic Waste Collection Program in partnership with Nestlé Philippines. This program aims not only to educate the public on the benefits of plastic waste management, but also give them a place where they can bring their plastic waste for proper collection and disposal.

Through the Plastic Waste Collection Program, everyone can contribute to a cleaner environment by dropping off their empty, clean and dry plastics from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at the blue container van, located in participating SM malls such as SM Megamall and SM Mall of Asia. The plastics are properly compacted and arranged before being collected for PCEx to transport to various recycling partners.

“At Nestlé Philippines, we are leading with initiatives to tackle plastic waste. By 2025, we aim for our packaging to be recyclable or reusable. To do this, we have been working on packaging innovations, and increasing our efforts to support collection to improve sorting, recovery, and recycling. We are also helping to educate the public about the importance of proper waste management. Recognizing the complexity of the plastic waste issue, we are collaborating with partners to make a bigger impact and accelerate our journey to a waste-free future,” said Nestlé Philippines Chairman and CEO Kais Marzouki.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2021/04/19/public-square/nestle-ph-supports-pcex-and-sm-malls-plastic-waste-collection-initiative/865449/>



Sustainable garbage management

posted April 18, 2021 at 11:22 pm

by [Jess Malabanan](#)



Metro Clark Waste Management Corporation's engineered sanitary landfill in Capas, Tarlac – the only one of its kind in Central Luzon – offers its services in neighboring provinces in Region 3 and in other parts of Luzon, including Metro Manila.



PH sees biggest rise in recoveries with over 72K new survivors

By Ma. Teresa Montemayor April 18, 2021, 5:14 pm



MANILA – The Department of Health (DOH) on Sunday reported 72,607 new recoveries, pushing the total of coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) survivors nationwide to 779,084.

The DOH said the figure is equivalent to an 83.2-percent recovery rate from among those who contracted the infectious disease.

There were also 10,098 new confirmed infections, bringing the total number of active cases to 141,089 and the overall cases to 936,133.

Of the active cases, about 96.7 percent are mild, 1.7 percent are asymptomatic, 0.7 percent are severe, 0.43 are moderate, and 0.5 percent are in critical condition.

The DOH also logged 150 more deaths, pushing the death toll to 15,960 or 1.70 percent of total cases.

"There were 17 duplicates removed from the total case count, and of these, seven are recoveries. Moreover, 48 cases that were previously tagged as recoveries were reclassified as deaths after final validation," it said.

Seven laboratories were not able to submit their data to the Covid-19 Document Repository System on April 17.

The department also reported that 68 percent of 1,900 intensive care unit beds, 49 percent of 13,600 isolation beds, 56 percent of 6,000 ward beds, and 47 percent of 2,000 ventilators for Covid-19 patients are currently in use nationwide.

Meanwhile, 84 percent of 700 intensive care unit beds, 63 percent of 3,800 isolation beds, 72 percent of 2,200 ward beds, and 63 percent of 800 ventilators are being used in the National Capital Region.

The public is reminded to stay home and observe minimum health standards when going out.

Those experiencing Covid-19 symptoms are urged to immediately isolate and contact the Barangay Health Emergency Response Teams. **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1137187>



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 cases nearing 1 million

[Mayen Jaymalin](#) (The Philippine Star) - April 19, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Confirmed COVID-19 cases nationwide rose to 936,133 as the Department of Health (DOH) logged an additional 10,098 cases yesterday.

The DOH also recorded a high of 72,607 recoveries, pushing the number of those who recuperated from the illness to 779,084 or 83.2 percent of the total cases.

Active cases are pegged at 141,089, which account for 15.1 percent of total cases.

An additional 150 deaths brought to 15,960 the number of COVID-related deaths. The figure represents 1.70 percent of the total cases.

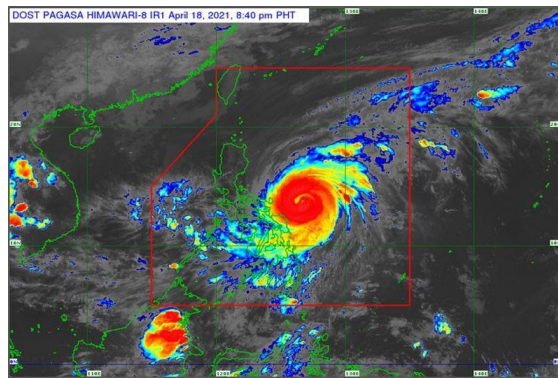
Meanwhile, the DOH reported that a number of healthcare workers (HCWs) are yet to get vaccinated against COVID-19.

At the Laging Handa public briefing on Saturday, Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire gave assurance that there is sufficient vaccine for the 1.8 million HCWs, but some of them appeared undecided to get inoculated.

“For now, some (HCWs) have not registered, maybe because they are still thinking that they do not want to for now. Talking about healthcare workers, we have enough vaccines for them,” Vergeire disclosed in a mix of Filipino and English.

Aside from HCWs, Vergeire said there are other people included in the priority sector for vaccination that backed out at the last minute.

“These are what we call deferrals. So, there are different kinds of deferrals. One of which is refusing on the day of vaccination itself. So, when that happens, we do not force them because this is really purely voluntary,” Vergeire said.



As of 5 p.m., Tropical Cyclone Wind Signal No. 2 remained hoisted over Catanduanes and the Samar provinces, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

Bising dumps heavy rain over Bicol, Eastern Visayas

[Helen Flores](#) (The Philippine Star) - April 19, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Typhoon Bising brought heavy rain, gusty winds and rough seas over the Bicol region and Eastern Visayas as it churned through the Philippine Sea yesterday.

As of 5 p.m., Tropical Cyclone Wind Signal No. 2 remained hoisted over Catanduanes and the Samar provinces, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

PAGASA said Signal No. 1 was raised over the eastern portions of Albay; Biliran; Camarines Norte; Camarines Sur; Leyte and Southern Leyte; Masbate, including Burias and Ticao Islands, and Sorsogon, and over the northern portions of Bucas Grande Islands; Cebu, including Bantayan and Camotes islands; Dinagat and Siargao.

The typhoon's maximum sustained winds slightly weakened from 215 kilometers per hour earlier in the day to 205 kph in the afternoon.

It also slowed down and changed track from northwest at 20 kph to west northwest at 15 kph.

It was expected to bring moderate to heavy to at times intense rain over Eastern Visayas and Bicol yesterday.

PAGASA said moderate to heavy to at times intense rain would prevail over the Bicol region and Northern Samar today.

The eastern sections of Central and Northern Luzon can also experience rain from Bising, according to PAGASA senior weather specialist Chris Perez.

In the next 24 hours, the typhoon will bring "very rough to very high seas" of up to 12 meters over the northern and eastern seaboard of Eastern Visayas, the weather bureau said.

Rough to very high seas will also affect the eastern seaboard of Luzon and Caraga as well as the northern and western seaboard of Northern Luzon.



As of 4 p.m., the eye of Bising was located 290 kilometers east of Virac, Catanduanes, packing winds of 205 kph near the center and gustiness of up to 250 kph.

It was forecast to move west northwest at 15 kph.

PAGASA said Bising was forecast to move slowly northwest over the Philippine Sea, east of Bicol region yesterday until this morning.

It will move generally northward until tomorrow afternoon before turning north northwest while over the Philippine Sea, east of Cagayan Valley.

By Wednesday morning, the typhoon is forecast to turn northeast or east northeast, away from the landmass of Luzon, PAGASA said.

“Considering the uncertainty in the track forecast of the typhoon, a westward shift in the current forecast track may result in potentially significant impacts over the eastern portions of Southern Luzon and the Visayas. The possibility of a close approach scenario is not ruled out,” it said.

As this developed, Malacañang urged the public to be vigilant and monitor the typhoon.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque appealed to Filipinos to cooperate with authorities and observe minimum public health standards.

The Office of Civil Defense (OCD) assessed the situation and advised local government units and disaster teams to prepare for Bising.

“Pre-emptive evacuation has been carried out in Camarines Sur, Catanduanes, Sorsogon, and Northern and Eastern Samar, according to the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council,” Roque said.

Preemptive evacuation

Despite Bising’s slim chance of making landfall in Bicol, the provincial government of Albay ordered residents in areas prone to lahar flow, flood and storm surges evacuated.

The move was intended to ensure the safety of the residents, Cedric Daep, chief of Albay’s public safety and emergency management office, said.

At least 317 families composed of 1,492 people were evacuated in Camarines Sur, and 14 families or 96 people were evacuated in Sorsogon, according to Gremil Alexis Naz, spokesman for the OCD-Bicol.

At least 840 people were stranded at the ports of Matnog and Pilar, both in Sorsogon, while 49 people were stranded along the Maharlika Highway in Putiao and Pilar. – **Alexis Romero, Cet Dematera, Rudy Santos, Evelyn Macairan**



Mga residente lumikas sa E. Visayas, Bicol dahil sa Bagyong Bising

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Apr 18 2021 05:55 PM



Lumikas mula sa kanilang mga tahanan ang mga residente ng Virac, Catanduanes dahil sa banta ng Bagyong Bising. *Retrato mula sa Virac Municipal Disaster and Risk Reduction Management Office*

MAYNILA — Nagdala ng malalakas na ulan at hangin sa ilang lugar sa bansa ang Bagyong Bising, dahilan para lumikas ang maraming residente mula sa kanilang mga bahay.

Sa Tacloban City, nagsilikas na ang ilang residente matapos makaranas ng malalakas na ulan at pabugso-bugsong hangin ang lungsod.

Dahil sa masamang panahon, nawalan din ng supply ng kuryente ang malaking bahagi ng Tacloban.

Sa Northern Samar, inutos ni Governor Edwin Ongchuan ang paglikas ng mga pamilyang nakatira sa coastal areas dahil sa posibleng epekto ng bagyo.

Nagsimula na ring lumakas ang agos ng tubig sa ilog sa Barangay Cagogobngan sa bayan ng Catubig dahil sa hangin at ulan, kaya inabisuhan ang mga residente na magsimula nang lumikas.

Gabi pa lang ng Sabado, lumikas na sa evacuation center ang ilang residente sa mga bayan ng San Roque, Catarman at Mondragon para matiyak ang kanilang kaligtasan.

Nasa higit 30 pamilya naman ang inilikas sa 3 barangay sa bayan ng Mapanas dahil sa baha.

Binigyan na ng mga lokal na pamahalaan ng relief goods ang mga lumikas na pamilya.

Sa Eastern Samar, binaha ang ilang kalsada sa bayan ng Arteche.

Isinara rin nitong umaga ng Linggo ang Camp 5 boundary junction ng bayan ng Taft dahil sa posibilidad ng landslide o pagguho ng lupa.

Sa Guiuan, Eastern Samar, sa kasagsagan ng bagyo, nasunog ang 12 bahay sa Barangay 6.

Sinabayan naman ng high tide ang storm surge na dulot ng bagyo kaya nawasak ang ilang bahay sa baybayin ng Barangay Nato sa bayan ng Sagñay, Camarines Sur.

Apat naman ang nagpositibo sa COVID-19 antigen test sa 280 na driver at pahinanteng nakatigil sa Pan-Philippine Highway sa bayan ng Bato, Camarines Sur.

Pinigil ang mga sasakyan sa Camarines Sur-Albay border para maiwasan ang mahabang pila ng mga sasakyan sa Matnog Port ngayong walang biyahe dahil sa bagyo.

Hanggang nitong umaga ng Linggo, umabot na sa 700 pasahero at higit 200 sasakyan ang stranded sa Matnog Port.

Sa Tiwi, Albay, nagsilikas ang mga residente matapos umabot sa ilang bahay sa Barangay Lourdes ang malakas na alon.



Ramdam na rin ang masamang panahon sa Virac, Catanduanes.

Sa Barangay Santa Cruz, umapaw na ang tubig mula sa dagat, na siyang nagdulot ng mababaw na baha.

Sa Barangay Francia, na isa ring coastal area, naghahanda ang ilang residente ng sandbags at iba pang pananggalang sa bahay kontra sa epekto ng bagyo.

Ang ilang residente'y lumikas sa kapitolyo ng Catanduanes na nagsisilbing evacuation center.

Ayon kay Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque, patuloy na mino-monitor ng Palasyo ang mga apektado ng Bagyong Bising.

Nakahanda na raw ang Office of Civil Defense at Armed Forces of the Philippines para sa ano mang operasyon. May standby funds at food packs ding nakahanda ang Department of Social Welfare and Development.

— **Ulat ni Rod Macenas, ABS-CBN News**



Alert level 2 sa Taal Volcano, nananatili

By [Mer Layson](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon) - April 19, 2021 - 12:00am

51 pagyanig sa loob ng 24-oras

MANILA, Philippines — Nananatili pa rin ang alert level 2 status sa Taal Volcano matapos na makapagtala ang Department of Science and Technology-Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (DOST-Phivolcs) ng kabuuang 51 volcanic earthquakes, sa loob lamang ng nakalipas na 24-oras.

Ayon sa DOST-PHIVOLCS, kabilang sa naitala ang 43 volcanic tremor na tumagal ng isa hanggang 17 minuto, walong low frequency volcanic earthquakes, at low-level background tremor na naitala simula ng pa 9:05 AM noong Abril 8.

Nagkaroon din umani ng mahinang pagsingaw, na may taas na limang metro, mula sa mga fumaroles o gas vents sa Main Crater ng bulkan.

“Ang pagbuga ng sulfur dioxide o SO₂ ay humigit-kumulang 1097 tonelada kada araw noong ika-17 ng Abril, 2021,” anang DOST-Phivolcs.

Huli anilang nasukat sa lawa ng main crater ang mataas na temperatura na 71.8°C noong Marso 4, 2021 at acidity na may pH 1.59 noong Pebrero 12, 2021 naman.

Dahil dito, ipinagbabawal ang pagpasok ng sinuman sa TVI, na siyang Permanent Danger Zone (PDZ) ng Bulkang Taal, lalung-lalo na sa may gawi ng Main Crater at ng Daang Kastila fissure, at ang paninirahan at pamamangka sa lawa ng Taal.



Pangilinan warns of possible fish shortage amid presence of Chinese vessels in WPS

By ERWIN COLCOL, GMA News

Published April 18, 2021 5:23pm



Photo: NTF-WPS

Senator Francis Pangilinan on Sunday warned of a possible fish shortage amid the presence of Chinese vessels in traditional Filipino fishing grounds in the West Philippine Sea.

“May problema na tayo sa pork shortage. ‘Wag naman pati fish shortage dahil sigurado, pag nangyari ito, magmamahal din pati isda,” Pangilinan said in a statement.

(We already have a pork shortage problem. Let’s not allow a fish shortage because for sure it will raise fish prices.)

“Mahirap magmahal ang pagkain, di lang heart-broken aabutin natin, kundi pati sakit ng sikmura,” he added.

(It's difficult that food prices would go high. One will not just be heartbroken, he might also experience hunger.)

Pangilinan cited the report about Zambales fisherfolk who blamed their dwindling catch due to the presence of at least 20 Chinese vessels anchored around 111 kilometers from San Antonio, Zambales.

According to the fishermen, they would normally earn as much as P4,000 per fishing trip, but they go back now empty-handed due to the scarcity in their catch.

Pangilinan, who is among the proponents of the proposed Department of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, urged the government to take immediate action on the threats to the Philippine territory and the possible fish shortage.

“As early as now, we should heed the warning of our fishermen on the issue of their dwindling catch. We are glad that the DFA takes this into account in their diplomatic protests,” he said.

Pangilinan also called on the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources to step up and provide assistance to Filipino fishermen.



“The Department of Agriculture as a whole must prepare for contingency to avoid a fish shortage,” he said.

“Sa ganitong lagay, hindi na lang soberenya natin ang inaagaw ng China, ninanakawan din tayo ng kita at pagkain. Palaging lugi ang ating mga maliit na magsasaka at mangingisda. Sila na nga ang pinakamahirap, sila pa ang palaging agrabyado,” he added.

(In this situation, China is not only violating our sovereignty, it is also robbing us of income and food. Small-scale farmers and fishermen are always on the losing end. They are the poorest and almost always taken advantage of.) — **BM, GMA News**

Source: https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/money/economy/784196/pangilinan-warns-of-possible-fish-shortage-amid-presence-of-chinese-vessels-in-wps/story/?utm_source=GMAnews&utm_medium=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR09cron6j7QqfrM9_aPnyJuAJk2PmHUNi52uKQjbgOwf28f2N-BK0fKMpI

Mid-year UN talks to go ahead virtually in 'crucial year' for climate action

No formal decisions will be made during the online negotiations, with some developing nations fearing poor digital connections could disadvantage them.



Spain's Energy and Environment Minister Teresa Ribera is seen on a screen at a plenary session during climate negotiations in Madrid, Spain, December 15, 2019. Image: Reuters/ Nacho Doce

[Thomson Reuters Foundation](#) April 18, 2021

UN climate negotiations will take place online during three weeks in June, with the aim of pushing ahead on work vital for the success of the COP26 summit planned for November, assuaging fears of further delays in a 'crucial year' for climate action.

A committee of government officials from different regions on Thursday night decided the June talks would proceed virtually, in line with a letter sent this week by COP26 host Britain that said "we cannot afford to put formal work on hold".

Due to the impossibility of bringing delegates together in person because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the May 31-June 17 talks will be held online but formal decisions will not be made.

The UN climate change secretariat (UNFCCC) said in a statement it would provide support to "ensure the full and effective participation, in a fair and inclusive manner" of governments and civil society groups.

That includes helping with logistical and internet connectivity needs for delegates as required, it added.

The interim talks, which usually happen over two weeks in Germany, have been extended for an additional week, as accommodating different time zones will mean shorter work days. In response to concerns raised by some developing countries, including African nations, that the virtual format could disadvantage their participation, the discussions during the June meeting will be classified as "informal".

"Decisions will only be adopted at the next formal meeting in person," the UNFCCC statement said.

It remains unclear when a face-to-face meeting will be possible, but it could take place in September, October or just before the November COP if circumstances allow, a UNFCCC spokesman told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

In a tweet on Friday, the chairman of the group of 46 least-developed countries in the negotiations said the aim must be to "maximize progress and minimize delay" on climate action but the "voices of the vulnerable must be heard".

Rising to the occasion requires urgent action now, including in upcoming negotiations, recognising time is not on our side.

Alok Sharma, COP26 president



‘Time not on our side’

While some, including Swedish teen activist Greta Thunberg, have called for the COP26 summit itself to be postponed due to coronavirus concerns and unequal access to vaccines, this is not on the cards for the time being, UN and UK officials said.

The conference was already delayed for a year by the pandemic.

In this week’s letter, the UK’s COP26 president, Alok Sharma, said 2021 was “a crucial year for people and planet” as the world faces the interrelated challenges of a global health pandemic, accelerating biodiversity loss and escalating global warming and associated impacts.

“Rising to the occasion requires urgent action now, including in upcoming negotiations, recognising time is not on our side,” he wrote to governments.

Both he and U.S. climate envoy John Kerry have referred to Glasgow’s COP26 conference as the “last best chance” of keeping global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius, the lowest goal in the 2015 Paris Agreement.

Scientists say [if that limit is passed](#) the world could see accelerating extreme weather and nature losses, growing hunger and migration, and other serious threats.

The COP26 talks are tasked with working out how much further emissions must be cut to keep 1.5C in sight, finalising global carbon market rules and galvanising more climate finance to help poorer nations adopt clean energy and adapt to a warming planet.

Currently work is ongoing to explore options for conducting the COP26 talks partially or fully online, if it is impossible for some delegates from regions such as Latin America or the Pacific to attend due to travel and vaccination issues, the UNFCCC spokesman said.

A decision on the format of the COP26 talks is unlikely to be made before the late summer or September.

Richard Klein, a senior research fellow with the Stockholm Environment Institute, who is undertaking a [project on how online technology can help make climate negotiations](#) more inclusive, transparent and effective, said the pandemic had forced the issue onto the political agenda.

Even after physical meetings can once again be held easily, there will likely be a move to slim down UN climate conferences, which can attract upwards of 20,000 people, sometimes with little concrete progress to show, he added.

“There is more appetite now to look at alternative options that also don’t have such an environmental footprint,” Klein told the Thomson Reuters Foundation.

“I hope that the event in June will pave the way to a longer-term vision about what will happen to the UNFCCC process.”

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U.S., China commit to climate cooperation

Washington and Beijing 'intend to develop' their respective long-term strategies to achieve carbon neutrality.

Published 5 hours ago on April 19, 2021 02:30 AM

By [Agence France-Presse](#)



WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — The United States and China are “committed to cooperating” on the pressing issue of climate change, the two sides said Saturday, issuing the pledge days ahead of a key summit hosted by President Joe Biden.

The joint statement came after a trip to Shanghai by US climate envoy John Kerry, the first official from Biden’s administration to visit China, signaling hopes the two sides could work together on the global challenge despite sky-high tensions on multiple other fronts.

But to achieve the global climate goal, Kerry said words must be put into action and urged China to reduce its use of coal.

“The United States and China are committed to cooperating with each other and with other countries to tackle the climate crisis, which must be addressed with the seriousness and urgency that it demands,” said the statement from Kerry and China’s special envoy for climate change Xie Zhenhua.

It listed multiple avenues of climate cooperation between the world’s top two economies which together account for nearly half of the greenhouse gas emissions responsible for climate change.

It stressed “enhancing their respective actions and cooperating in multilateral processes, including the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Paris Agreement.”

Both countries also “look forward” to a virtual climate summit of world leaders that Biden will host next week, though the statement did not say if Chinese President Xi Jinping would attend.

“We very much hope he will take part,” Kerry, who is now in South Korea, told reporters on Sunday.

“Of course, every country will make its own decisions,” he said, adding: “We’re not seeking to force anybody. We’re seeking cooperation.”

‘Unequivocal commitment’

According to their statement, both Washington and Beijing “intend to develop” their respective long-term strategies to achieve carbon neutrality by the Glasgow meeting.



Other moves in the near term include boosting “international investment and finance” to support the transition to green energy in developing countries, as well as phasing out production and consumption of hydrofluorocarbons, gases used in refrigeration, air conditioners and aerosols.

Longer-term actions that need to be taken to keep the temperature goals of the Paris accord “within reach” include reducing emissions from industry and power generation while stepping up renewable energy, clean transportation and climate-resistant agriculture.

The United States and China’s pledge to cooperate on climate follows recent acrimony over accusations about China’s policies in Hong Kong and its treatment of Uyghurs in its northwestern Xinjiang region — criticisms Beijing rejects as interference in its domestic affairs.



‘West should step up climate commitment’

By [Agence France-Presse](#)

April 19, 2021

OTTAWA: President Joe Biden must show he is serious and committed about US re-engagement on climate change, Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau said in an interview with Agence France-Presse ahead of a virtual climate summit opening this week.

Highlighting Washington’s return to the front lines of the fight against man-made climate change, the two-day summit starting Thursday will be the first big event on the environment of his presidency, and comes ahead of two other major climate meetings later in the year.

“The commitment that the US has shown after a few years away from the climate table is something that people will be looking to ensure that it is serious, that it is committed,” Trudeau told AFP.

“There’s no question that we need a country of the scale of the United States to be part of the solution, not part of the problem, if we’re going to make it as a planet,” he said.

Another big polluter, China, was invited to the summit, but hasn’t formally accepted yet.

China, now the world’s second-largest economy, and the West have grown increasing at odds over a wide array of issues, from trade and intellectual property to Beijing’s crackdown on Hong Kong and Xinjiang.

On Friday, as Trudeau was speaking to AFP, US climate envoy John Kerry visited China, signaling hopes the two sides could work together on climate.

Trudeau acknowledged that China has shown it is “taking seriously the need to reduce their pollution,” noting its massive investments, for example, in solar power, electric vehicles and battery technologies. The West, he said, must step up or risk falling behind.

“I know that Canada and developed countries like us around the world are very interested in ensuring that we’re competing with China successfully on new technologies,” Trudeau said.

“I’m not going to let China take all the innovations and all the economic growth that’s going to come from going greener,” he said.

“There are lots of areas in which we disagree with China, but if we can all create a similar momentum on an issue that touches every corner of this planet, then I think that’s a good thing.”

A plan for the future

On Monday, Trudeau’s deputy Chrystia Freeland is to deliver his Liberal government’s first budget in two years, with significant funding expected for clean energy projects to anchor Canada’s economic recovery from last year’s pandemic recession.

“Certainly, as we have said for a long time, you can’t have a plan for the future of the economy without having a plan for the environment and for fighting climate change,” Trudeau said.

He said the Covid-19 pandemic has changed how people do business and live their lives, “has led us to think differently about telework or travel.”

It has also shown, he said, “to what point people can change their behavior, adjust (in) a crisis.”

“If we were able to do it for the pandemic crisis, we will obviously have to know that we are able to do it for this environmental crisis,” he suggested.



Trudeau didn't point to specific lessons to be drawn from the pandemic and applied to the climate problem but said "to be ambitious for a better future, everyone agrees these days on that."

It's a message he's shared with other world leaders whom he said have been "very interested in the fact that not only had I brought in a carbon tax, a price on pollution, but I won elections with that at the heart of our campaign."

Trudeau's Liberals, campaigning on strong climate actions, went from third ranked party in parliament to winning a majority in the 2015 general election.

Four years later, his party, tainted by scandals, was returned to office with a minority. But with another election looming in the coming months, Trudeau looks set to regain his majority, according to polls, vowing even stronger climate measures.

Canada pledged under the Paris Agreement to cut its CO2 emission by 30 percent below 2005 levels by 2030.

Last December, Trudeau announced an accelerated incremental hike of his country's carbon tax on fossil fuels from Can\$50 per tonne in 2022 to Can\$170 per tonne by 2030 — enough, according to officials, to increase the price of gasoline by nearly 28 cents a liter.

Each country, 'its own context'

The European Union is considering bringing in a carbon levy while the United States has so far resisted imposing one.

On Friday, Trudeau echoed economists' view that a market-based mechanism such as carbon pricing "is a very effective way to reduce emissions."

"When there will be elections, (Canada's carbon tax) will be part of our ambitious plan," he said, "but obviously it does not take just that, it also takes investments in new technologies, it takes support for households to be able to pay for this transition."

"I think the important thing it is to recognize that each country has its own challenges, has its own context," he said. "For us, the price on pollution was absolutely the right thing to do. For other countries it may be more regulations or more investment."

He said "the important thing is that everyone does their part in an ambitious way, not only to protect the planet but to ensure that they have the benefits of this shift that we are in the process of making as a society, as a civilization."

"I look forward," he concluded, "to continuing to have conversations with President Biden, with European leaders and those around the world to stress that the more ambitious you can be in putting a price on pollution, the better we will be able to generate growth and wealth and jobs for our citizens."



Biden seeks to turbo-charge climate fight, but can US lead?

[Agence France-Presse](#) / 04:40 PM April 18, 2021



In this file photo taken on April 2, 2021, US President Joe Biden speaks about the March jobs report in the State Dining Room of the White House in Washington, DC. President Joe Biden hopes to give a shot of adrenaline to the planet's sluggish fight against climate change with an Earth Day summit but a question lingers — can the United States be trusted to lead? Photo by MANDEL NGAN / AFP

WASHINGTON — President Joe Biden hopes to give a shot of adrenaline to the planet's sluggish fight against climate change with an Earth Day summit but a question lingers — can the United States be trusted to lead?

The two major international accords achieved on climate, the Paris Agreement and the Kyoto Protocol, were both crafted through intense US diplomacy only to be shunned by Washington, with new administrations denouncing them as unfair.

This time around, the United States under Biden is aiming big and going fast.

Biden has invited 40 leaders to participate in the April 22-23 summit, an extraordinary undertaking for a president in place for just three months, even with the gathering taking place virtually.

The administration will set the stage for the summit by unveiling what it has teased will be ambitious new US targets for reducing emissions responsible for climate change, as Congress considers Biden's massive \$2 trillion infrastructure package that heavily focuses on a green transition.

“This is an event President Biden set for himself to do. It wasn't imposed externally. So you can expect that he wants to make it visual to the rest of the world that the United States can and will lead on climate,” said Alice Hill, a senior fellow at the Council on Foreign Relations who advised former president Barack Obama on climate.

“Of course there's this cloud over the entire summit — the question of whether the United States is really back for the long term,” she said.

“That's probably the most frequently asked question I hear — how can we trust the United States?”

Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau, in an interview with AFP, put it this way: “The commitment that the US has shown after a few years away from the climate table is something that people will be looking to ensure that it is serious, that it is committed.”



'Locking in' action

Political momentum has grown as evidence of climate change mounts, with the six years since 2015 all the hottest ever recorded, worst-case scenarios coming true on the melting of polar ice and a growing number of severe storms, droughts and other disasters.

Biden on his first day in office returned the United States to the 2015 Paris Agreement, reversing the decision of his predecessor Donald Trump, an ally of the fossil-fuel industry who mocked the science behind climate change.

“The world is confident that the US is back and is going all out to make up for lost time from the Trump years,” said Alden Meyer, a senior associate at E3G think tank and veteran watcher of climate negotiations.

“Could Trump or someone like Trump come back in 2024? It’s definitely a possibility and that’s on everybody’s mind,” he said.

But he said the Biden administration appeared determined to “lock in” emission reductions — and lead the rest of the world with it.

At Biden’s first in-person summit, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga promised Friday to come up with new 2030 targets for his country, the world’s fifth largest emitter.

Meyer said that major announcements were also possible from a number of other nations including Canada and South Korea.

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro, a Trump ally, ahead of the summit promised Biden he would honor his country’s previous commitment to end illegal deforestation by 2030, although environmentalists are skeptical on his record on preserving the Amazon — which serves a vital role sucking up carbon.

John Kerry, who negotiated the Paris Agreement as Obama’s secretary of state and has joined Biden as US climate envoy, has also reached out to adversaries, arguing that not working with them would be “just killing yourself” on a planetary challenge.

The United States and China issued a joint statement Saturday emphasizing they are “committed to cooperating” on climate change, following Kerry’s visit to the country — by far the world’s largest emitter — in the run-up to the summit.

The statement came despite sky-high tensions between Washington and Beijing on a host of other issues.

Kerry also met briefly on climate with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov when the two found themselves at the same hotel in New Delhi, a US official said.

World off track

In the absence of the United States under Trump, China took an increasingly prominent role alongside the European Union, the longstanding champion of climate agreements, with President Xi Jinping last year pledging to go carbon neutral by 2060.



Chinese foreign ministry spokeswoman Hua Chunying ridiculed the new US tone, tweeting: “Its return is by no means a glorious comeback but rather a truant getting back to class.”

A UN report found in December that the world was heading to warming of three degrees Celsius (5.4 degrees Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels — far higher than the Paris goal of checking the rise at two degrees Celsius and aiming for 1.5.

Biden and Kerry want the summit to provide an early push to secure a strong outcome in November at the UN-led climate conference in Glasgow — setting vigorous action plans by 2030, not just aspirations for mid-century.

The Covid-19 pandemic brought a momentary dip in emissions — and, some hope, may lead to a change in attitudes.

French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire, receiving Kerry in Paris last month, saluted renewed US-European alignment and voiced hope of entering “the decade of climate.”

“After the crisis we have witnessed, we can’t continue on a path of development that hurts the planet,” he said.



France approves 'ecocide' offence to punish environmental damage

posted April 18, 2021 at 07:00 am

by [AFP](#)

The French National Assembly on Saturday approved the creation of an "ecocide" offence as part of a battery of measures aimed at protecting the environment and tackling climate change.

The ecocide measure was passed by 44 votes to 10 in the lower house of parliament and will, if it becomes law, apply to "the most serious cases of environmental damage at national level," said Environment Minister Barbara Pompili.

Transgressors will be liable to up to 10 years in prison and a fine of 4.5 million euros (\$5.4 million).

Pompili stressed that the draft bill is aimed at national events, such as the pollution of a French river.

"When we think of the attacks on the Amazon rainforest, that is not something we can tackle within our own laws," she said.

The aim is to strengthen the sanctions available to deal with "serious and durable" cases of intentional pollution of water, air or soil.

Some right-wing MPs complained about moves towards "punitive ecology. Julien Aubert of the Republicans voiced the "serious concerns" of companies facing "legal insecurity" created by such environmental justice measures.

MPs on the left judged the offence being debated insufficient to tackle the problem, highlighting that it will only apply in cases of intentional pollution and not to problems caused by negligence or recklessness.

Some opposition members complained that the very term "ecocide" was an "abuse of language", preferring a more straightforward offence of "attacking the environment".

The Assembly also gave the green light to an offence of endangering the environment, on the model of endangering life, punishable by three years in prison and a 300,000 euro fine. The amount of a whole series of fines provided for by articles of the Environmental Code may also go up to 100,000 euros.

The entire draft bill will go to the Assembly for a vote next month before heading to the upper house Senate.

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