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# NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



# DENR eyes more sanitary landfills

[Louise Maureen Simeon](#) (The Philippine Star) - January 3, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The government plans to establish at least 300 more sanitary landfills by 2022 as part of efforts to address the worsening garbage problem in the Philippines.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said this initiative would be done through a public-private partnership as the country struggles to improve the management of solid waste.

The DENR recently had a virtual consultation with sanitary landfill operators to ensure their commitment in helping local government units address solid waste management.

Landfills remain the primary long-term method of solid waste disposal allowed under the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

The Philippines produces about 40,000 metric tons of waste daily, 20 percent of which are residual components which need proper treatment. This is projected to balloon to 77,765 MT of garbage collected daily by 2025.

Waste management remains a big problem in the country, with plastic the most visible source due to its lightness, durability and cheap cost.

Currently, there are 189 sanitary landfills in operation servicing 399 LGUs across the country.





# DENR distributes shredder-composters

Published January 2, 2021, 4:35 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has committed to provide each of the 178 local government units (LGUs) within the Manila Bay region with industrial-grade shredder-composter machines this year.

This will allow the LGUs to comply with the Republic Act 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000, DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and LGUs Concerns Benny Antiporda said during the turnover of the first batch of shredder-composter equipment to the city government of San Fernando City and the local governments of Apalit, Candaba, Guagua, and Magalang in Pampanga.

The Manila Bay region is comprised of the National Capital Region and eight provinces from Central Luzon and Calabarzon – Bataan, Bulacan, Pampanga, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, Laguna, Rizal, and Cavite.

During the turnover ceremony held at the DENR Central Office in Quezon City, Antiporda said the agency will continue to provide LGUs the necessary support to ensure their compliance with RA 9003.

“Sad to say, compliance is slow particularly where LGUs lack the means for full and prompt compliance,” Antiporda lamented.

“This is where the DENR steps in, in line with its mandate to provide technical assistance and other capability-building assistance to LGUs,” he added.

A shredder-composter set includes a brand new composter that can process one ton of compost material within 24 hours, and a brand new shredder with the capacity to process two tons of organic waste per day.

Citing statistics from the National Solid Waste Management Commission, Antiporda said around 52 percent of the municipal wastes in the country is biodegradable. Providing LGUs with the equipment, he said, will not only reduce the amount of waste that end up in sanitary landfills but will also transform the diverted wastes into assets as organic fertilizer, which is valuable to agriculture and horticulture.

Antiporda also cited that the provision of the equipment will help increase the collection of recyclable materials, which account for some 28 percent of the country’s municipal wastes.



# DENR: 59% drop in air pollution after New Year's Eve

[Rhodina Villanueva](#) (The Philippine Star) - January 3, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has recorded a 59 percent reduction in air pollution levels in Metro Manila on Jan. 1 compared to the same period last year.

The DENR's Environmental Management Bureau recorded an average concentration of 87 micrograms per normal cubic meter (ug/Ncm) of particulate matter, specifically PM10, from midnight of Dec. 31, 2020 to Jan. 1 from its six air quality monitoring stations in Caloocan, Marikina, Navotas, Pasig, Parañaque and Taguig.

Last year, the six stations recorded an average of 213 ug/Ncm, representing a 59 percent reduction.

"This attests to the correctness of President Duterte's interest in putting a nationwide total ban on firecrackers, which I believe clearly speaks not only for the President's strong policy agenda for health and safety, but for sound environmental governance as well," DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu said.

The station on Naval street in Navotas recorded the largest drop of 99 percent from 209 to 1.34 ug/Ncm; followed by Oranbo in Pasig, 95 percent (130 to 7 ug/Ncm); Bicutan in Taguig, 78 percent (355 to 79 ug/Ncm); Marikina justice hall open compound, 34 percent (189 to 124 ug/Ncm); Caloocan city hall annex, 29 percent (332 to 235 ug/Ncm).

Only the station in Don Bosco barangay hall compound in Parañaque showed a 21 percent increase from 62 to 75 ug/Ncm.

PM10 in firecrackers are mainly residuals of explosive powders wrapped in paper, which consists of a mix of sulfur, carbon and potassium nitrate and other fine minerals that contain heavy metals.

The short-term limit for PM10 is 150 ug/Ncm under the National Ambient Air Quality Guideline Value of Republic Act 8749 or the Clean Air Act.

The EMB also reported that there were significantly lower concentrations of PM2.5 this year, particularly for its station at the New Bilibid Prison open ground in Muntinlupa, which posted a maximum concentration of 12 ug/Ncm between midnight to 2 a.m. on Jan. 1, representing a 43 percent drop from 22 ug/Ncm during the same period last year.

Compared to PM10, PM2.5 pollutants are finer particles usually emitted by vehicles and burning plants. These particles can reach the lungs when inhaled, leading to respiratory and circulatory diseases, including brain damage and cancer, according to the DENR.

The EMB, however, said its Manila station measured a high of 93.5 ug/Ncm of PM2.5 at around 1 a.m. on Jan. 1 from a reading of 40.9 ug/Ncm at 11 p.m. on Dec. 31, 2020.

The short-term limit for PM2.5 is 35 ug/Ncm set by DENR Administrative Order 2020-14 dated Oct. 21, 2020.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/nation/2021/01/03/2067774/denr-59-drop-air-pollution-after-new-years-eve>



# DENR: Metro Manila air pollution drops significantly as it enters 2021

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Jan 02 2021 09:02 PM



The City of Manila welcomes the New year with adazzling fireworks show along Jones Bridge on January 1, 2021. *Jonathan Cellona, ABS-CBN News*

MANILA — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Saturday said air pollution levels in Metro Manila dropped “substantially” by an average of 59 percent on the first day of 2021 despite Filipino revelries in the pandemic.

In a statement, the DENR said Metro Manila mayors’ support for the firecracker ban and limiting its use to community display only was a factor.

The department’s Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) recorded an average concentration of 87 micrograms per normal cubic meter (ug/Ncm) of particulate matter (PM 10) from December 31, 2020 midnight to January 1 from 6 air quality monitoring stations (AQMS) in Caloocan, Marikina, Navotas, Pasig, Parañaque and Taguig.

“Last year, the 6 AQMS yielded an average of 213 ug/Ncm, thereby accounting for a 59-average percent drop compared to its New Year’s Eve (NYE) data in January 1, 2020,” the statement read.

The steepest drop in air pollution levels was recorded in the following stations, according to DENR.

- Naval St., Navotas City (99 percent) from 209 ug/Ncm in 2020 to 1.34 ug/Ncm in 2021
- Oranbo, Pasig City (95 percent) from 130 ug/Ncm in 2020 to 7 ug/Ncm in 2021
- Bicutan, Taguig City (78 percent) from 355 ug/Ncm in 2020 to 79 ug/Ncm in 2021
- Marikina Justice Hall open compound, Marikina City (34 percent) from 189 ug/Ncm in 2020 to 124 ug/Ncm in 2021
- Caloocan City Hall Annex, Caloocan City (29 percent) from 332 ug/Ncm in 2020 to 235 ug/Ncm in 2021

The department emphasized that only the station at Don Bosco barangay hall compound in Parañaque City registered a 21-percent increase from 62 ug/Ncm in 2020 to 75 ug/Ncm in 2021.

The Manila city station, meanwhile, measured a high 93.5 ug/Ncm about 1 a.m. on January 1 from a reading of 40.9 ug/Ncm at 11 p.m. on December 31, 2020, citing the EMB report.

## Lower concentrations of PM2.5

New Year’s Eve has “significantly lower” PM2.5 concentrations compared to in 2020, said the DENR.

“Compared to PM10, PM2.5 pollutants are finer particles usually emitted by vehicles and burning plants,” the report read.

It added that PM2.5 pollutants could reach a person’s lungs once inhaled which could cause respiratory and circulatory diseases, brain damage, and cancer.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/01/02/21/denr-metro-manila-air-pollution-drops-significantly-as-it-enters-2021>



# New Year's Eve air pollution levels down — DENR

By: [Gabriel Pabico Lalu](#) - Reporter / [@GabriellLaluINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 07:42 PM January 02, 2021

MANILA, Philippines — The air pollution levels on New Year's Eve were lower compared to that of 2020.

According to a post-New Year celebration report from the Department on Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), air pollution was cut by as much as 59 percent — which Secretary Roy Cimatu attributed to the effective implementation of existing regulations on firecracker use.

With the ban on firecracker use on orders by President Rodrigo Duterte, Metro Manila mayors have also agreed to ban firecrackers to avoid people from gathering outside and possibly spread the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

The DENR was able to record an average of 87 micrograms per normal cubic meter (ug/Ncm) of particulate matter-10 (PM10), or fine particles and pollutants measuring 10 micrometers or smaller which may be inhaled by humans.

If inhaled, PM10 is believed to be associated with pulmonary diseases and ailments, with some saying it can even cause lung-related cancers.

During the New Year's Eve celebration in 2019, the average was at 213 ug/Ncm, the DENR said.

“An average concentration of 87 micrograms per normal cubic meter (ug/Ncm) of Particulate Matter (PM 10) was obtained by DENR-Environmental Management based on the measured data between 12 midnight of December 31, 2020 to January 1, 2021 from its six air quality monitoring stations (AQMS) in Caloocan, Marikina, Navotas, Pasig, Parañaque and Taguig cities,” the DENR said.

“Last year, the six AQMS yielded an average of 213 ug/Ncm, thereby accounting for a 59-average percent drop compared to its New Year's Eve (NYE) data on January 1, 2020,” it added.

The DENR said the short-term limit for PM10 concentration is at 150 ug/Ncm, under Republic Act No. 8749 or the Clean Air Act.

All but one DENR station — the Don Bosco Barangay Hall station in Parañaque City — recorded a drop in PM10 concentrations:

Naval St., Navotas City (99 percent drop, from 209 to 1.34 ug/Ncm)

Oranbo, Pasig City (95 percent drop, from 130 to 7 ug/Ncm)

Bicutan, Taguig City (78 percent drop, from 355 to 79 ug/Ncm)

Marikina Justice Hall open compound (34 percent drop, from 189 to 124 ug/Ncm)

Caloocan City Hall Annex (29 percent drop, from 332 to 235 ug/Ncm)

Don Bosco Barangay Hall, Paranaque City (21 percent increase, from 62 to 75 ug/Ncm)

The DENR said PM10 in firecrackers comes mainly from the residues of the “explosive powders wrapped in paper which consists of a mixture of sulfur (S), carbon (C), and potassium nitrate (saltpeter, KNO<sub>3</sub>) and other fine minerals which contains heavy metals.”

The DENR added that air pollution based on the concentrations of particulate matter 2.5 (PM2.5) — an even finer particle than PM10 — also went down. However, they were able to record a high of 93.5 ug/Ncm of PM2.5 at the Manila City station around 1:00 a.m. on January 1.





This surpasses the short-term limit for PM2.5, which was set at 35 ug/Ncm as per the DENR's Administrative Order 2020-14 issued last October.

"The NYE 2021 have significantly lower concentrations of PM2.5 compared to the NYE 2020, particularly for its station at the Muntinlupa Bilibid open ground in Muntinlupa City which posted a maximum concentration of 12 ug/Ncm between 12 midnight to 2 AM of January 1, 2021," DENR said.

"The reading accounts for a 43-percent drop from 22 ug/Ncm obtained for the same period in last year. The report however noted its Manila City Station measured a high of 93.5 ug/Ncm around 1 AM of January 1, 2021, from a reading of 40.9 ug/Ncm at 11 pm of December 31, 2020," it added. Cimatu said the improving air conditions prove that the Duterte administration is serious about protecting the environment.

"This attests to the correctness of President Rodrigo Roa Duterte's interest to put a nationwide total ban on firecrackers which I believe clearly speaks not only for the President's strong policy agenda for health and safety but for sound environmental governance as well," Cimatu said.

"These are (also) attributed to 'the strict measures being implemented' by Metro Manila Mayors under Metro Manila Development Authority Resolution No. 20-17 'Prohibiting Individual and Household Use of Firecrackers and Other Pyrotechnic Devices During General Community Quarantine'," the DENR added.

Earlier, the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP) also noted that no fire incidents in Metro Manila were caused by pyrotechnics or fireworks and firecrackers, saying that they owe it to BFP personnel, fire volunteers, police officers, local government units, and communities that strived to prevent firecracker-related fires.

The Department of Health also noted a decrease in firecracker-related injuries as only 55 incidents were recorded around Metro Manila on New Year's Eve.



# Air pollution sa Metro Manila, bumaba kasabay ng pagpasok ng 2021 – DENR

By **Bombo Bam Orpilla**

-January 3, 2021 | 12:07 AM

Ipinagmalaki ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na malaki ang ibinaba ng antas ng polusyon sa hangin sa Metro Manila sa unang araw ng 2021.

Sa isang pahayag, sinabi ng DENR na bumaba ng 59% ang air pollution level sa unang araw ng taon.

Malaki aniya ang naitulong ng suporta ng mga alkalde sa Kamaynilaan para sa pagpapatupad ng ban sa paggamit ng paputok.

Base na rin ito sa anim na air quality monitoring stations ng DENR-Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) sa Caloocan, Marikina, Navotas, Pasig, Parañaque at Taguig.

“Last year, the 6 AQMS yielded an average of 213 ug/Ncm, thereby accounting for a 59-average percent drop compared to its New Year’s Eve (NYE) data in January 1, 2020,” saad sa pahayag.





# Air pollution levels in Metro Manila 59% lower in early hours of New Year's Day

Published January 2, 2021, 6:30 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

New Year celebrations in Metro Manila resulted in lesser pollution in 2021 as compared to the festivities last year, data from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Saturday showed.

The DENR-Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) reported that pollution levels in the early hours of January 1, 2021 were lower by 59 percent than the levels recorded during the same period in 2020.

DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu said the improvement in Metro Manila's air quality could be attributed to the compliance of local government units (LGUs) and the public to Executive Order 28, which limited the use of firecrackers to community fireworks display that has been in effect since 2017.

He also cited the strict measures implemented by local chief executives in Metro Manila through Metro Manila Development Authority Resolution No. 20-17 that prohibited the individual and household use of firecrackers and other pyrotechnic devices while under a general community quarantine.

In the early hours of Jan. 1, 2021, DENR-EMB's six air quality monitoring stations located in Caloocan, Marikina, Navotas, Pasig, Parañaque, and Taguig recorded an average concentration of 87 micrograms per normal cubic meter (ug/Ncm) of particulate matter (PM10), or particles that are less than 10 microns in diameter, such as dust, pollen and mold.

An average of 213 ug/Ncm PM10 concentration was registered by this six air quality monitoring stations during the festivities last year, which translates to a 59-percent decline at present, according to the DENR-EMB report.

The highest New Year's Eve pollution decline was registered in Navotas City from 209 ug/Ncm to 1 ug/Ncm; followed by Pasig City from 130 ug/Ncm to 7 ug/Ncm; Bicutan, Taguig from 355 ug/Ncm to 87 ug/Ncm; Marikina Justice Hall compound, Marikina City from 189 ug/Ncm to 124 ug/Ncm; and Caloocan City Hall Annex, Caloocan City from 332 ug/Ncm to 235 ug/Ncm.

However, the monitoring station located in Don Bosco Barangay Hall Compound in Parañaque City showed a 78-percent increase in pollution from 62 ug/Ncm to 75 ug/Ncm.

The guidelines for PM10 is set at 150 ug/Ncm based on 24-hour averaging.

Likewise, the DENR-EMB reported lower concentrations of finer particulate matter, PM2.5, on New Year's Day.

The monitoring station at the Muntinlupa Bilibid open ground in Muntinlupa City posted a maximum concentration of 12 ug/Ncm during the early hours of Jan. 1, 2021, which accounts for a 43-percent drop from 22 ug/Ncm obtained from the same period last year.

The report, however, noted its Manila City Station measured a high concentration of PM2.5 of 93.5 ug/Ncm around 1 a.m. on Jan. 1, 2021 from 40.9 ug/Ncm at 11 p.m. on Dec. 31, 2020.

The standard limit for PM2.5 for a short period is 35 ug/Ncm.

Chronic exposure to particles contributes to the risk of developing cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, as well as of lung cancer, according to the DENR. (Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz)

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/01/02/air-pollution-levels-in-metro-manila-59-lower-in-early-hours-of-new-years-day/>



# Air quality sa NCR sa Enero 1 gumanda, ayon sa DENR

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Jan 02 2021 07:30 PM



May mga nasiyahan sa paghihigpit sa paggamit at pagbebenta ng paputok sa Metro Manila; mayroon ding nabitin. Pero sa ulat ng DENR, mas gumanda ang antas ng hangin sa Kamaynilaan. **Nagpa-Patrol, Jeffrey Hernaez. TV Patrol, Sabado, 2 Enero 2020**

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/video/news/01/02/21/air-quality-sa-ncr-sa-enero-1-gumanda-ayon-sa-denr>

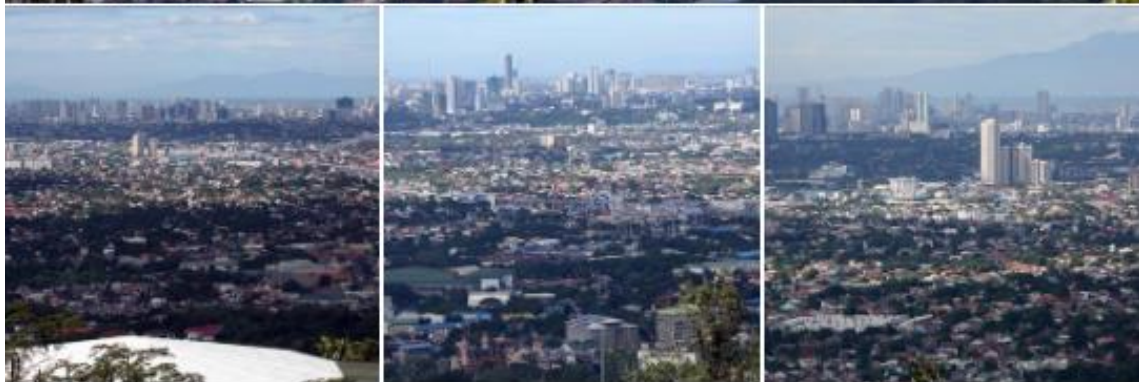


ONE News  
15h · 🌐

LOOK: A smog-free sky of Metro Manila was seen on Saturday through an aerial shot from Antipolo City.

Air pollution shortens lives worldwide by nearly three years on average, and causes 8.8 million premature deaths annually, according to a study in March 2020.

: The Philippine STAR/Boy Santos



836

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# PAs designated, species saved in PH despite COVID

Sunday, December 27, 2020 [Cory Martinez32](#)

**THE** designation of over 200 protected areas (PAs) have been completed and a dozen species have been saved from extinction this year despite the challenges brought by COVID-19 pandemic. Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu attributed these accomplishments to the commitment of the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) in making sure the country's flora and fauna are well protected even during the COVID-19 lockdown when people mobility is limited and environmental crimes are rampant.

The BMB is a staff bureau of the DENR mandated to conserve and sustainably manage the country's rich biological diversity.

*"The effects of the community quarantine did not dampen the spirits of our people at BMB. They made sure that the agency's mandates are still fulfilled in the fullest extent possible,"* Cimatu said.

In his report to Cimatu, BMB Director Ricardo Calderon disclosed that a total of 244 PAs covering more than seven million hectares have been either legislated or proclaimed in 2020, pursuant to Republic Act 11038 or the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas (E-NIPAS) Act of 2018.

Calderon also a DENR Assistant Secretary, said the importance of designating PAs could not be overstated.

*"Without the legislated and proclaimed PAs in the Cagayan and Marikina River Basin, the devastation of Typhoon Ulysses could have been worst for the wildlife and the communities dependent on these natural ecosystems,"* Calderon stressed.

Calderon noted that each PA is guided by a science-based management plan, incorporating biodiversity assessment tools that identify appropriate management and conservation measures for flora and fauna and their habitats.

He also reported that *"12 species are no longer on the edge of extinction"* after the BMB intensified its wildlife protection and enforcement efforts.

Calderon added that the respective conservation status of these species were downlisted from endangered to vulnerable and vulnerable to other threatened species (OTS).

OTS, which is a classification under DENR Administrative Order 2019-09, refers to species or its varieties that is not critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable, but is under threat from adverse factors such as over collection throughout its range.

Calderon said one such species is the Asian Giant Softshell Turtle (*Pelochelys cantorii*), which was downlisted two levels from its previous status of endangered to OTS.

Another species that was downlisted to endangered to vulnerable are the Negros forest frog (*Platymantis negrosensis*), Mount Data forest frog (*Platymantis subterrestris*), Mindanao bleeding-heart (*Gallicolumba criniger*), Luzon water redstart (*Rhyacornis bicolor*).

The Mindanao fanged frog (*Limnonectes magnus*), Basilan island caecilian (*Ichthyophis glandulosus*), Todaya caecilian (*Ichthyophis mindanaoensis*), Yellow-headed water monitor (*Varanus cumingi*), Marbled water monitor (*Varanus marmoratus*), Large-scaled water monitor (*Varanus nuchalis*), and Mount Isarog shrew-mouse (*Archboldomys luzonensis*) also downlisted from vulnerable to OTS.



Calderon stressed that even with this achievement, the BMB should not be complacent since those species under OTS might likely revert to its vulnerable or endangered category if left as it is.

*“One of the vital components as to why this is successful is our aggressive wildlife enforcement. To date, we have conducted eight successful operations despite the challenges brought about by the pandemic,”* Calderon said.

Those operations led to the confiscation of 53 wild fauna and 27.36 kilograms of agarwood or derivatives of *Aquilaria* species with an estimated cost of P5.6 million.

Moreover, seven new cases against wildlife criminals have been filed this year. As of September, the DENR secured 30 convictions out of 32 criminal cases it had previously filed against violators of RA 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2001.



UNTV News and Rescue

January 1 at 6:19 PM · 🌐

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Naging kontrobersyal man ang mga naging hakbang sa pagsasaayos ng Manila Bay, pabibilisin pa rin ng pamahalaan ang rehabilitasyon nito ngayong taon. Pangunahin na dito pagtunton sa pinanggagalingan ng maruming tubig.



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# OccMin Rep. Sato bats for greener PH after Covid-19

By [The Manila Times](#)  
January 3, 2021



*Occidental Mindoro Rep. Josephine Sato*

Protecting the world land and ocean resources outweighs financial costs at least five-to-one. Globally, this can lead to USD 250 billion in increased yearly economic output, plus USD 350 billion in improved ecosystem services annually.

Thus said Occidental Mindoro Lone House Representative Josephine Ramirez Sato.

“By investing in the natural systems that give Filipinos clean water, air and other resources, we can generate jobs and create a more resilient nation. The Covid-19 pandemic revealed the vulnerabilities of many Philippine sectors. Environmental frontliners have been particularly hard-hit,” she added.

In Occidental Mindoro, 35 wardens and 24 rangers from the Mts. Iglit-Baco Natural Park and Tamaraw Conservation Program were affected, she informed.

Through the Biodiversity Finance Initiative (BIOFIN) of UNDP and DENR through the Biodiversity Management Bureau (DENR-BMB) for instance, raised over P1.4 million for Mindoro’s rangers and wardens.

Sato said that safeguarding biodiversity reduces future health risks and makes society more resilient. “With proper environmental considerations, nature-positive solutions can create stable jobs and protect our planet,” she said.

She gives suggestions how the country can build back greener – foremost is to include Protected Areas (PAs) and key biodiversity areas (KBAs) as key elements of nature-based solutions.

“We need to leverage our natural capital, particularly the untapped potential of our PAs, and ensure that protecting nature is central to our green recovery agenda,” she said, adding the importance of investing more in PAs and KBAs.

“We are in the midst of one of the most trying times in our history. But by correcting our past mistakes, we can mend our broken relationship with nature,” she concluded.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2021/01/03/public-square/occmindoro-rep-sato-bats-for-greener-ph-after-covid-19/821672/>



A general view shows a swollen river due to heavy rains brought by Super Typhoon Rolly in Legazpi City, Philippines' Abay province on November 1, 2020.

AFP/Charism Sayat

## Commentary: COVID-19 and climate change, the dual crises of 2020

[Paco Pangalangan](#) (Philstar.com) - January 2, 2021 - 1:22pm

There is no doubt that people will remember 2020 as the year the world was introduced to COVID-19, the virus behind the global pandemic that has led to over 1.8 million deaths, caused economies to crash, and opened doors to corruption around the world.

In the Philippines, COVID-19 cases have been steadily rising and now stand at 473,532 with over 9,000 deaths. The public health crisis and the lockdowns implemented to slow its spread also took an economic toll, with the Philippine economy entering a technical recession mid-year.

The emergency use of public funds to respond to the health crisis has also pushed transparency to the back burner. As noted by Stratbase ADR Institute Trustee Dr. Francisco Magno in his recently published Special Study entitled "Reviving democratic institutions: Strengthening the fight against corruption," ever since the start of the pandemic, state-based responses have been marked by fund movement possessing three key traits.

These are: 1) large, 2) unclear in beneficiaries and usage, and 3) with high discretion. Indeed, this health crisis has created the opportunity for COVID-corruption which cripples our government's capacity to respond to the health crisis adequately.

At the same time, 2020 was also a big year for the global fight against climate change. In line with the Paris Agreement in 2015, signatory countries were due to publish their revised climate action plans, or nationally determined contributions, to coincide with COP26 in Glasgow. It was supposed to be the first real test for the signatory countries but was postponed due to the pandemic.

Meanwhile, the effects of climate change continue to be felt. The Philippines was reminded of these destructive effects late last year when Super Typhoon Rolly and Typhoon Ulysses claimed lives, left thousands homeless, and damaged agriculture and infrastructure.

Truly, the past year was one where we faced the dual crises of COVID-19 and climate change, and while they are two distinct issues, there are lessons that we can take from what these crises have in common.



Allow me to highlight just three.

The first is how both crises are security threats that need more national attention. As recently pointed out by Dr. Renato de Castro, a trustee and program convenor of the Institute, challenges brought about the climate change and public health crises are examples of non-traditional security issues that need to be factored into our security agenda.

In his study entitled "The Challenge of Managing 21st Century Pandemics Amidst the US-China Strategic Competition," De Castro explained that non-traditional security threats are those that challenge the well-being of people and states, but that arise primarily out of non-military and non-strategic sources.

He also pointed out the need to shift how people perceive what threatens our security from strictly military, political and diplomatic conflicts to include non-traditional security threats, such as those that can be brought about by climate change and emerging infectious diseases (EIDs).

The second thing these two crises have in common is how both highlight just how pivotal the whole-of-society approach is to our climate change and pandemic responses.

During a virtual town hall discussion organized in the middle of last year on mitigating the impact of COVID-19 through sustainable health financing, Dr. Liza Martinez of the Philippine Alliance of Persons with Chronic Illness, pointed out that "participation is very key to us... COVID-19 related, as well as non-COVID-19 related health concerns, must be factored into the picture. The weakest link of any national issue will determine the outcome of success."

The private sector and civil society's efforts throughout the pandemic demonstrate their willingness to participate and contribute to the success of the country's response efforts.

From vigilance against COVID-corruption, to raising funds to help frontliners and poor communities, to building-up the country's testing capacity through the public-private initiative taskforce T3 (Test, Trace, Treat), to committing to help the government secure vaccine doses, the private sector and civil society have shown just how vital their role is in Philippine society.

In terms of combating climate change, multi-sectoral collaboration, too, was central to the discussion of our Pilipinas Conference 2020 session on the green economic recovery. The session had speakers from the private sector, such as Coca-Cola, Ayala Corp. and the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines, talking about the importance of the private sector taking initiative to be sustainable and responsible stewards of the environment.

At the same time, Manila Mayor Isko Moreno was there too and emphasized the point on collaboration and climate change and said that if "private corporations will work hand in hand with the government, we will achieve our goals in protecting our environment and creating sustainable programs for the next generation."





The third takeaway from these dual crises is that we now have an opportunity to improve. Coming off of year shaped by COVID-19 and climate change, one of the most significant challenges now is to "build back better."

However, this means doing more than getting the economy back on track. What people build must reduce the likelihood of future shocks and increase society's resilience when they occur.

The "new normal," a term I wished we could leave in 2020, should be a pro-active one. One where climate change and EIDs are seen as serious threats to our country's security and are planned against accordingly.

Given the growing awareness of the relationship between environmental destruction and new diseases, it must also be a collaborative one, where the government, private and civil society sectors work together to generate economic and social value through greener initiatives.

They say that hindsight is 20/20. Hopefully, this means that we have learned a few things from the year that passed and — fully knowing that the risks we faced then in terms of public health, COVID-corruption, and climate change are by no means behind us — march into 2021 armed with hope and lessons learned.

***Paco Pangalangan is the executive director of think tank Stratbase ADR Institute.***



# PH Covid-19 recoveries climb to almost 440K: DOH

By Marita Moaje January 2, 2021, 5:51 pm



(PNA file photo)

MANILA – The number of coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) recoveries in the country has reached 439,942, with 47 new recoveries reported on Saturday.

In its case bulletin, the Department of Health (DOH) also announced 1,097 new Covid-19 cases raising the number of active cases to 27,721.

Davao del Norte reported the highest number of new cases at 65, followed by Davao City with 60 new Covid-19 cases, Laguna with 53, Batangas with 48, and Cavite with 43.

The DOH likewise said 82.3 percent of the total active cases are considered to be mild, 9.8 percent are asymptomatic, 4.9 percent are critical, 2.6 percent are severe, and 0.43 percent are moderate.

Meanwhile, there were five new recorded deaths due to Covid-19, raising the death toll to 9,253.

The total number of Covid-19 cases in the country has reached 476,916.

The DOH assured that there are enough Covid-19 bed capacities in the country with 64 percent availability for Intensive care unit (ICU) beds, 71 percent of isolation beds available, ward beds have 79 percent availability and enough ventilators with 80 percent availability.

The DOH said that 15 laboratories did not submit their test results for January 1 due to the temporary unavailability of the Covid-19 Document Repository System (CDRS).

However, they also gave an assurance that the issue was resolved immediately and that they are now coordinating with the involved laboratories to ensure that all results are uploaded immediately.

Moreover, for January 1, they said that 150 out of 198 laboratories were able to lodge their reports to the DOH while 33 laboratories declared no operation on Friday.

Meanwhile, the DOH clarified that the Philippine Genome Center (PGC) has not detected the Covid-19 variant from the United Kingdom (UK) in the country.

Likewise, it said that all positive RT-PCR or swab test specimens from countries with cases of the UK Covid-19 variant will undergo genome sequencing starting on Jan. 4.

In an earlier social media post, the PGC said it will continue sequencing and the biosurveillance of positive cases that will be brought directly to them for whole-genome sequencing.

The DOH assured that they closely coordinating with relevant agencies to make sure that stricter measures are being implemented to prevent the entry of the new coronavirus variant. (PNA)

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1126174>



“We’ve been meeting with Metro Manila mayors to remind them to strengthen their COVID-19 response. They have to monitor cases closely,” Duque said in a radio interview, citing the slight increase in cases in the past days.

STAR/Edd Gumban, file

## DOH to NCR: Scale up pandemic response

[Sheila Crisostomo](#) (The Philippine Star) - January 3, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Expecting a spike in COVID-19 cases with the end of the holiday season, Health Secretary Francisco Duque III has urged Metro Manila mayors to scale up their response to the pandemic.

“We’ve been meeting with Metro Manila mayors to remind them to strengthen their COVID-19 response. They have to monitor cases closely,” Duque said in a radio interview, citing the slight increase in cases in the past days.

The year 2020 ended with a total of 476,061 COVID-19 cases – 9,244 deaths and 439,796 recoveries – documented by the DOH as of Dec. 31.

The number of cases was projected to go up significantly due to increased mobility during the Yuletide season. Actual figure is expected to reflect in the DOH’s Case Bulletin for COVID-19 by up to the middle of January as it takes 14 days for the disease to manifest symptoms.

Duque noted it is important for the local government units to make sure they are prepared in terms of availability of quarantine or isolation facilities, testing, contact tracing and case finding.

To prevent the health system from being overwhelmed, Duque advised private hospitals to allocate 20 percent of their beds to COVID-19 patients and public hospitals, 30 percent.

In Manila, city health director Dr. Arnold Pangan said residents who leave the city for vacation are required to undergo swab test before they are allowed to return to their respective barangays.

In an order dated Dec. 29 and addressed to 896 barangay chairmen, Pangan said residents would not be allowed to return home and would be placed in a city government quarantine facilities unless cleared of COVID-19. The order took effect yesterday. It was not immediately clear how city authorities would enforce the order.

“The pandemic started in March 2020 and the cases increased drastically. On July 15, 2020 we have recorded 1,520 active cases. As of Dec. 22, we only have 310 active cases recorded in our city,” Pangan said in his memorandum.

Those who test positive would be made to undergo quarantine in any of the 14 city quarantine facilities, while those who test negative would be given certificates.





## No new COVID-19 variant in Phi

Meanwhile, in an advisory, the DOH said there is no trace in the Philippines of the more transmissible new variant of COVID-19 first found in the United Kingdom.

The DOH said that as of Jan. 2, the Philippine Genome Center (PGC) has not documented the UK variant in the country.

“All RT-PCR positive specimens from countries with confirmed UK variant are to undergo genome sequencing beginning Monday, Jan. 4, 2021,” the agency noted, referring to realtime-polymerase chain reaction test.

The DOH has given assurance that it is “working with relevant agencies to ensure that stricter measures of control are being implemented in all ports of the country.”

“Meanwhile, we urge everyone to keep practicing the minimum public health standards – the only universally effective protocol against any mutation, variant or strain,” it added.

To keep the new variant at bay, the Philippine government has banned travelers from 21 countries up to Jan. 15.

Filipino citizens are exempted from the ban but they are required to undergo a 14-day quarantine, even if they test negative for COVID-19.

Duque told The STAR yesterday that a new task force would be created to deal with the UK variant. He said the membership of the task force would be known tomorrow.

“Potential members are PGC, Research Institute for Tropical Medicine, University of the Philippines-National Institute of Health and DOH-Technical Advisory Group representatives,” he added.

The discovery of the new COVID-19 variant has sparked renewed global panic, as it might compromise ongoing developments of vaccines.

So far, two vaccine companies – Pfizer-BioNTech and AstraZeneca – were given emergency authorization use in some countries.

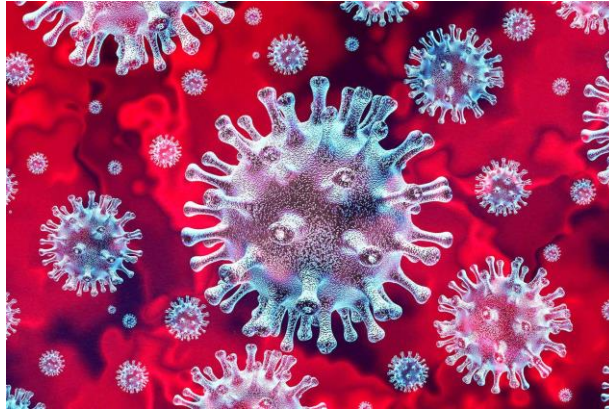
Duque said in a radio interview that PGC is leading the collection of swab samples from infected travelers from countries covered by the ban.

“It costs some P4 million to run 390 specimens or swab isolates through genome sequencing. I told them that maybe they can start doing half of that so we’ll know the situation immediately,” he said.

Duque added while the UK variant is easily transmissible, there is no evidence that it is more virulent or can cause more serious complications. – **Jose Rodel Clapano**



## UK variant ng COVID-19, wala sa Pinas hanggang ngayong Enero 2 – DOH



January 2, 2021 @ 4:40 PM 14 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Nilinaw ng Department of Health (DOH) ang umano'y na-detect na bagong variant ng COVID-19 mula sa UK.

Ayon sa inilabas na anunsyo ng DOH, hanggang ngayong January 2 ay wala pang nakikitang UK variant ang Philippine Genome Center.

Lahat umano ng RT-PCR positive specimen mula sa mga bansang may kumpirmadong UK variant ay sasailalim sa genome sequencing simula sa Lunes, January 4.

Tiniyak naman ng DOH na mahigpit itong nakikipag-ugnayan sa mga ahensya upang masiguro na ang mas mahigpit na measure control ay naipatatupad sa lahat ng ports entry.

Samantala, hinikayat ng DOH ang lahat na sumunod sa minimum public health standards dahil ito lamang ang epektibong panlaban sa anomang variant, mutation o strain. **Jocelyn Tabangcura-Domenden**



# WHO emergency validation sa Pfizer vaccines, magpapabilis ng PH application: Duque

By **Bombo Christian Yosores** -January 1, 2021 | 7:49 PM



IMAGE | Health Sec. Francisco Duque III/Screengrab, CNN Philippines

MANILA – Itinuturing na magandang balita ng Department of Health (DOH) ang paggawad ng emergency use validation ng [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#) ang COVID-19 vaccine na dinevelop ng mga kompanyang Pfizer at BioNTech.

“That’s a welcome development,” ani Health Sec. Francisco Duque III.

Ayon sa kalihim, mas mapapadali ng emergency use grant ng WHO, ang aplikasyon ng mga kompanya para sa hiwalay na emergency use authorization sa Pilipinas.

Isa kasi ang naturang dokumento sa mga ikinokonsidera ng Food and Drug Administration (FDA) para mabigyan ng EUA ang isang vaccine developer.

“That’s a given the process can be abbreviated because there is an approval by a regulatory authority coming from the US, the one’s coming from WHO is a welcome addition to the reg approvals and therefore that should be a lot easier for the local FDA to already review all the docs and assess the risk benefit ratio of the said candidate vaccine,” dagdag ni Duque.

Patuloy pang ine-evaluate ng FDA ang aplikasyon ng Pfizer-BioNTech. Agad naman daw silang maglalabas ng desisyon kapag na-kumpleto na ang lahat ng requirements at proseso.

“Our experts are currently evaluating documents submitted by Pfizer as outlined in our guidelines. I’ll issue a decision on the application as soon as all regulatory requirements & procedures are completed,” ani FDA director general Eric Domingo.

Bago matapos ang 2020, ginawaran ng emergency use validation ng WHO ang COVID-19 vaccine na bunga ng partnership ng US at Germany-based companies.

Sila ang pinaka-unang kompanya na nakatanggap ng naturang approval mula sa WHO, sa gitna ng karera ng iba’t-ibang developers ng bakuna laban sa coronavirus disease.



## EMERGENCY USE LISTING

Ayon sa WHO, matapos mabigyan ng emergency use validation ang bakuna, dadaan naman ito sa proseso ng emergency use listing (EUL).

Sa nasabing proseso sinusuri ng mga eksperto ng WHO at regulatory authorities ng iba't-ibang bansa kung suitable o angkop ang mga bagong gawang health products sa gitna ng public health emergency, tulad ng COVID-19 pandemic.

Layunin ng EUL na mapabilis ang distribusyon ng mga gamot at bakuna na ligtas at epektibo panlaban sa kumakalat na sakit, gayundin kung ang pagkakagawa rito ay may kalidad.

“The assessment weighs the threat posed by the emergency as well as the benefit that would accrue from the use of the product against any potential risks.”

“The EUL pathway involves a rigorous assessment of late phase II and phase III clinical trial data as well as substantial additional data on safety, efficacy, quality and a risk management plan.”

Bahagi din daw ng EUL process ang pagtitiyak na patuloy na mangangalap ng datos ang kompanya hanggang mabigyan ng lisensya at WHO prequalification.

Binigyang diin ng WHO ang kahalagahan ng patas na distribusyon para matiyak na lahat ng populasyon ay matuturukan ng bakuna laban sa COVID-19.

“This is a very positive step towards ensuring global access to COVID-19 vaccines. But I want to emphasize the need for an even greater global effort to achieve enough vaccine supply to meet the needs of priority populations everywhere,” pahayag ni Dr Mariângela Simão, WHO Assistant-Director General for Access to Medicines and Health Products.





# Ilang LGUs naghahanda ng sariling COVID-19 vaccine supply

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Jan 02 2021 06:45 PM



Manila COVID-19 Vaccine

Visits 82 992 Online 253

Ang bakuna laban sa **COVID-19** ay epektibong paraan para maiwasan ang **COVID-19**. Kasabay sa pagbabakuna, ang mga mahalagang hakbang gaya ng tamang paghuhugas ng kamay, pagsusuot ng face mask at pag iwas sa pakikisalamuha sa maraming tao ay dapat pa rin sundin.

Ang bakuna ay binibigay ng **2 dosis** na may **4 na linggong** pagitan. Tipikal na inaabot ng ilang linggo para sa katawan na makapagtatag ng proteksyon sa sakit o immunity pagkatapos ng pag babakuna. Kung ang isang tao ay nahawahan ng virus na nagsasanhi ng **COVID-19** bago pa man o pagkatapos lamang na sila ay mabakunahan, maaari pa rin silang makakuha ng **COVID-19**. Ito ay dahil sa ang bakuna ay hindi nagkaroon ng sapat na oras para makabuo ng proteksyon. May pagkakataon pa rin na kahit nabakunahan na ay nagkakasakit pa rin ngunit hindi ito malala.

May pre-registration ang lokal na pamahalaan ng Maynila para sa libreng pagpapabakuna ng COVID-19 para sa kanilang mga residente. *Screenshot mula sa [manilacovid19vaccine.com](http://manilacovid19vaccine.com).*

MAYNILA - May kani-kaniya nang paghahanda ang lokal na pamahalaan sa pag-procure ng kanilang supply ng coronavirus disease (COVID-19) vaccine sakaling magkaroon nang aprubahan ang gobyerno sa mga susunod na buwan.

Ang Maynila, nagsasagawa na ng pre-registration para sa libreng pagpapabakuna kontra COVID-19 para sa mga residente nila.

Kailangan lang pirmahan ang form sa [manilacovid19vaccine.com](http://manilacovid19vaccine.com) at hintayin ang one-time pin na ipapadala sa inirehistrong mobile number para makumpleto ang proseso.

P200 milyon ang ilalaang pondo para rito.

Ayon kay Manila Mayor Isko Moreno, planado na ang pamamahagi nito.

"Siyempre uunahin po natin ang ating medical frontliners at senior citizens at ang mamamayan pagkayari nang dalawang sektor na ito. Magpa-reserve na po kayo ng inyong slot sapagkat ang pagbabakuna po ay voluntary," ani Moreno.

Abala na rin ang iba't ibang LGU sa pagproseso ng budget para agad makabili ng bakuna kapag available na ito.

Ang bayan ng Cainta, Rizal, target pabakunahan ang nasa 300,000 residente.

Aabot naman sa P150 milyon ang pondong ilalaan ng LGU para rito.

"The moment that the national government extends its subsidy to us it will be a welcome thing but, of course, gagalaw kami base sa kunwari eh kami lang talaga ang gagastos," ani Cainta Mayor Kit Nieto.

Umaasa naman ang LGU ng Parañaque na makakabili na ng mga bakuna sa unang 3 buwan ng taon.

Nasa 100,000 residente kada buwan ang target nilang mabakunahan.

"We are also looking into Novavax vaccine, the Indian vaccine, negotiations empowered by Galvez and guidelines coming from him, Metro Manila council will facilitate. We'll be hiring logistic companies and a company from IT sector to handle storage and handling, plus securing stocks," ani Parañaque Mayor Edwin Olivarez.



Nilinaw naman ng Department of Science and Technology, Department of Health, at Food and Drug Administration na sumulat ang SinoPharm sa DOST at inimungkahing payagan silang mag-clinical trial sa bansa sa gastos ng gobyerno o kaya kilalanin ang Pilipinas ang approval o authorization mula sa China.

Sinabi ng DOST sa SinoPharm na tanging mga kasali lang sa solidarity trial ng World Health Organization ang puwedeng pondohan ng Pilipinas.

“Kasi they also want to try it on different location, different ethnic group, and so it is to their advantage that they do their clinical trial here. Also, to a certain extent it will also speed up the evaluation by the FDA,” ani DOST Sec. Fortunato Dela Peña.

Ayon kay Dela Peña, puwede nang dumiretso sa FDA ang ano mang pharmaceutical company basta’t may available nang supply at natapos na ang phase 3 ng kanilang clinical trials sa bansa.

— **Ulat ni April Raffles, ABS-CBN News**



## GORDON AMINADONG NAHULI ANG BANSA SA COVID-19 VACCINE

written by [Ashley Jose](#) January 2, 2021



Aminado si Senator Richard Gordon na nahuli ang Pilipinas sa pagtitiyak ng bakuna kontra coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Ito ang naging reaksyon ni Gordon sa pag arangkada ng COVID-19 vaccination program sa iba't-ibang panig ng daigdig.

Sinabi ni Gordon, bagamat hindi dapat na mahuli ang Pilipinas sa bakuna, dahil napakahalaga na bigyan ng prayoridad ang kalusugan sa gitna ng pandemya ay ang tanging mabuting dulot lamang nito malalaman ng mga otoridad ang side effects na dapat pag-ingatan at isa-alang-alang.

*Alam mo medyo nahuli tayo ng kaunti diyan pero mabuti na rin minsan mahuli sapagkat makikita mo na may side effects na dapat nating pag-ingatan, pero hindi dapat nahuhuli sa totoo lang," pahayag ni Gordon.*



Michael Ricafort, chief economist at Rizal Commercial Banking Corp., said inflation slowed down to 2.6 percent in December after hitting a 21-month high of 3.3 percent in November.

STAR/File

## Inflation widely seen going down until February

[Lawrence Agcaoili](#) (The Philippine Star) - January 3, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Inflation likely eased in December and is seen to further slow until February as the country continues to rise from the recession caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, bank economists said.

Michael Ricafort, chief economist at Rizal Commercial Banking Corp., said inflation slowed down to 2.6 percent in December after hitting a 21-month high of 3.3 percent in November.

Ruben Carlo Asuncion, chief economist at Union Bank of the Philippines, said inflation eased to 3.1 percent last month as he underscored the transitory nature of the November print of 3.3 percent.

“Note that 3.1 percent is at the mid-point of the government’s inflation target of two to four percent, manageable but the seasonal inflationary pressures, we think, were highly present,” he said.

Security Bank chief economist Robert Dan Roces also expected inflation to ease to 3.1 percent in December.

Ricafort said the temporary spike in inflation in November largely due to higher prices of food and other agricultural products amid the storm damage caused by Typhoons Ulysses and Rolly already started to ease with the normalization of supply chains.

Any price spike due to the damage caused by Tropical Depression Vicky that caused flooding in parts of Mindanao, Visayas and Northern Luzon, especially Cagayan Valley, is seen as transitory in nature until supply conditions/logistics eventually improve in a few weeks.

Ricafort said the relatively higher inflation base from December 2020 to February 2021 would lead to some easing in the year-on-year inflation for the period, as year ago levels are pre-COVID-19 economic and inflation conditions that are much higher. This, he said, would result in slower year-on-year inflation, assuming all other factors are the same.





Latest data showed global crude oil prices recently reached the highest in about 9.5 months, briefly breaching above the \$50 per barrel recently and possibly leading to higher local fuel pump prices.

“Seasonal increase in demand and spending in preparation for the Christmas and New Year holidays could have correspondingly caused some uptick in prices of noche buena products such as meat products and other food products, amid the adverse effects of the African swine fever in terms of reduced supply of pork products,” Ricafort said.

He said the continued strengthening of the peso would help reduce import costs which, in turn, could help ease overall inflation and partly help sustain the relatively low/benign inflation environment, going forward.

“The expected easing of inflation until February could still support any further monetary easing measures until then. However, inflation could start from a lower base starting March onwards, coming from a much lower denominator when the COVID-19 lockdowns started a year ago,” Ricafort said.



# Hope is mostly what keeps Filipinos going

[POSTSCRIPT](#) - [Federico D. Pascual Jr.](#) (The Philippine Star) - January 3, 2021 - 12:00am

Somehow we made it to the new year, staggering up to the finish line where 2021 was waiting for the Filipino, the eternal optimist brimming with hope.

Looking back at the past year's tribulations that President Duterte blames on the pandemic and natural calamities, we wonder at his saying in his yearend message: "We also learned so much...we realized the value of human life and our relationships with each other."

Does Duterte's reference to "the value of human life" include victims of state brutality and human rights violations, as well as the collateral damage wrought by the creeping culture of violence under his watch?

It may be our acquired Christian values, reinforcing our ancestral memory of a benevolent Bathala ready to set things right, that keep us hoping that we will eventually overcome oppression, corruption and misgovernment.

It is uncanny that the element of hope (pag-asa) is a common thread running through the messages of thought leaders at this juncture when the outgoing year segues to the next. Samples:

- President Duterte: Today is a joyful day, a time for new beginnings and a time to be hopeful. We ended the previous year with so much difficulties and trials, but with much gratitude. I am confident all of us will see brighter days ahead because we believe in the indomitable spirit of the Filipino.
- Vice President Leni Robredo: Paalala sa atin ng petsang ito na laging may bagong simula; laging may pagkakataong bumangon; na kaya natin itong gawing mas maginhawa, mas masagana, mas makatao kaysa sa kahapon. Hiling ko ang pag-asang ito para sa bawat pamilyang Pilipino.
- Luis Antonio Cardinal Tagle: I wish that people would have the strength, the hope, the faith and the joy to make the New Year brighter. We cannot wait for outside factors to change. But we can change our outlook and make (things) brighter: our hope, our solidarity, our joy.

A nationwide "Ulat ng Bayan" survey from Nov. 23 to Dec. 2 showed, meanwhile, that 91 percent of a representative polling sample of 2,400 Filipino adults said they welcomed the new year "with hope." Only one percent said they faced 2021 "without hope."

We hark back to the lyrics of the carol, "O little town of Bethlehem, how still we see thee lie...the hopes and fears of all the years are met in thee tonight." But the hopeful message hanging in the stillness grows fainter with every silent night that slips by.

Perhaps some nights should not be silent at all. Some nights must be punctuated by noisy outrage, especially when, as our elders say, "ginagago na tayo" (somebody's making a fool of us).

As of the other day, more than 10.3 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered in 29 countries, but billions more are needed to inoculate some 70 percent of the world's 7.594 billion population to stop the spread of the contagion.



The Philippines has not taken delivery of any vaccine while some of its neighbors have started rolling out their vaccination. The turtle-paced administration failed to place firm early orders, relying on the unreliable assurances of China and Russia to share what they have by December (last month).

Now the administration has resorted to using smuggled Chinese vaccines to inoculate at least the soldiers securing the President. Discovery of the illegal entry of vaccines that have not been approved by the Food and Drug Administration has raised a stink.

The development of several vaccines can help show the way to a new normal. We're hoping that in choosing the right vaccines the administration will be guided by the public good and not by political or personal gain.

The people are watching if Duterte's professed enlightened regard for human lives and human rights – departing from the documented brutality of his police inflicted on defenseless civilians – will become policy and then translated into practice.

The President claims to have an independent foreign policy, yet his infatuation with China has made him vulnerable to Beijing's use of the pandemic and the frantic search for safe and effective vaccines as political weapons and diplomatic levers.

With the coronavirus and its variants expected to continue taking lives despite the mass vaccination and quarantine measures, will Duterte insist on his draconian attitude that the smuggling and use of unauthorized vaccines can be selectively allowed?

The ambivalence of law enforcement (it's OK if it's us doing it) under Duterte must be stopped. The system of compartmentalized justice should have exited with the old year.

Only resolute control from the very top can stop his police and his military from trifling with human lives. Having been coddled by their chief, abusive behavior has developed into a kind of second nature to many of them.

Let's hope we don't wake up later and see the year 2021 as just a remastered rerun, a record of more of the same sloppy and bloody governance that characterized 2020.

In the new year, we would like to see the wiping away of the culture that has made too easy and without qualms of conscience the physical elimination of anybody who happens to stand in the way, and the harassment of critics and perceived enemies.

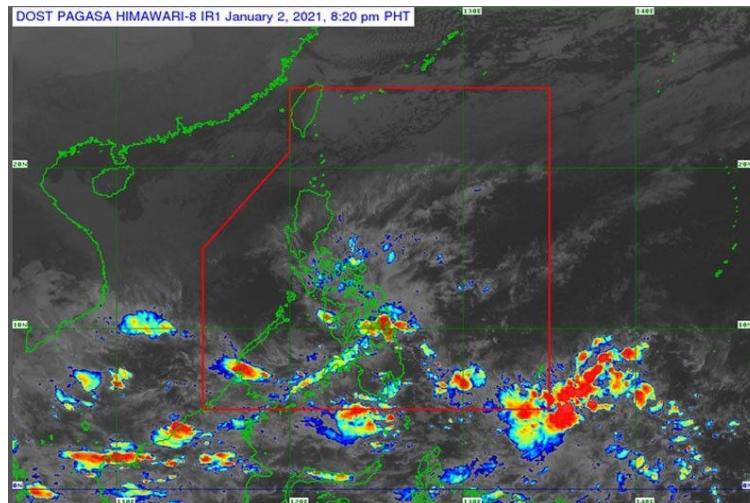
If, as he purports to claim, Duterte has realized "the value of human life" with the advent of "new beginnings," he must ensure that the killers of defenseless citizens in non-combat situations – and their enablers – are meted the appropriate punishments under the law.

If he as the most powerful man in the country cannot do that, the President might as well retract his hypocritical New Year message.

\* \* \*

NB: All Postscripts are also archived at [manilamail.com](http://manilamail.com). Author is on Twitter as [@FDPascual](https://twitter.com/FDPascual). Email: [fdp333@yahoo.com](mailto:fdp333@yahoo.com)

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2021/01/03/2067758/hope-mostly-what-keeps-filipinos-going>



The low-pressure area was spotted 165 kilometers east of Guian, Eastern Samar as of 3 p.m. yesterday.

## Rainy in most parts of Philippines today – PAGASA

[Romina Cabrera](#) (The Philippine Star) - January 3, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — A low-pressure area and two other weather systems are expected to bring rains over most parts of the country today, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).

The low-pressure area was spotted 165 kilometers east of Guian, Eastern Samar as of 3 p.m. yesterday.

PAGASA said the weather system has a small chance of developing into a tropical depression, but would continue to move westward toward the Visayas.

The state weather bureau said the Visayas and Caraga might experience moderate to heavy rains, which may lead to flooding and landslides.

It said the northeast monsoon or amihan and tail-end of a frontal system would affect Bicol, Northern Mindanao, Mindoro and Kalayaan islands.

Amihan will bring rains over the northeastern parts of Luzon, particularly the Cordilleras and Cagayan Valley.

Most parts of Luzon and Metro Manila will have generally fair weather with cloudy skies and isolated rains.

Mindanao will experience isolated rains in the afternoon.

A gale warning remains up over most of the northern and southeastern seaboard of Luzon.





# PAGASA warns of flooding in large swaths of Mindanao due to LPA

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Jan 02 2021 08:05 PM

MANILA — A low-pressure area located east of Guian town, Eastern Samar and the tail end of a frontal system could cause flooding over large areas of Mindanao, the state weather bureau said on Saturday.

According to its 6 p.m. flood advisory, PAGASA said Northern Mindanao, Caraga, and the Davao region would experience light to occasional moderate rains in the next 12 hours.

Here are the watercourses in the said regions likely to be affected because of the weather.

## Northern Mindanao

- Bukidnon - rivers and tributaries particularly upper Tagaloan and Upper/Eastern Cagayan
- Camiguin - all rivers and its tributaries
- Lanao Del Norte - rivers and its tributaries particularly Mandulog, Agus, Liangan and Maranding
- Misamis Occidental - rivers, its tributaries particularly Clarin, Palilan and Aloran
- Misamis Oriental - rivers, its tributaries particularly Odiongan, Gingoog, Balatukan, Cabulig, lower Tagoloan, lower/middle Western Cagayan, Iponan and Alubijid



## Davao region

- Davao del Norte - rivers, tributaries, particularly Tagum-Libuganon, Tuganay, Saug and Lasang
- Davao del Sur - rivers and its tributaries particularly Davao, Talomo, Lipadas, Tagulaya Sibulan, Digos and Padada Mainit
- Davao Occidental - rivers and its tributaries particularly Panglan, Malita, Batanan (Lais, Lawan, Latuan, Calian, Lamita, Lawayon, Culama, Caburan Bi, Maubio, Karabana, Tubayo, Kayapung, Malala, Capisolo, Tanoman Bi, Tanoman Smal, Kalbay, Butua, Nuin, Butula, Baki, Malagupo, Balagona, Batulaki
- Davao de Oro - rivers and its tributaries particularly Matiao and Hijo
- Davao Oriental - rivers and its tributaries particularly Cateel, Dapnan, Baganga, Mahan-Ub, Manorigao, Caraga, Casaunan, Quinonoan, Bagwan, Mayo, Bitanayan, Sumilog, Tangmoan, Dacongbonwa, Kabasagan, Manay, Maya and Sumilao/Cuabo



- Caraga region
- Agusan del Norte - rivers and its tributaries particularly Lake-Mainit-Tubay, Asiga, Agusan, Linugos and Cabadbaran
- Agusan del Sur - rivers and its tributaries, particularly Ojot, Wawa, Libang, Maosam, Kasilan, Gibong, Adgaoan, Simulao, Kayonan and Andanan
- Dinagat Islands - rivers and its tributaries particularly Manilao Inlet and Gaas Lulet
- Surigao del Norte - rivers and its tributaries, particularly Surigao and Magallanes
- Surigao del Sur - rivers and its tributaries particularly Catillan, Toracan, Tandagan, Tago, Hubo-Oteiza, Hinatuan and Bislig

“People living near the mountain slopes and in the low-lying areas of the above-mentioned river systems and the local disaster risk reduction and management councils concerned are advised to take precautionary measures,” the weather agency said.



## Landslide blocks road in CamSur town

By: [Ma. April Mier-Manjares](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Inquirer Southern Luzon](#) / 06:44 PM January 02, 2021

LEGAZPI CITY – Heavy rains that have been pouring since New Year’s Eve over Bicol triggered a landslide that made roads in Sagñay town in Camarines Sur impassable on Saturday.

Sagñay police said soil and rocks loosened by the incessant rain spawned by the tail-end of a frontal system since Thursday, December 31, cascaded down the Sagñay-Tiwi road in Sitio (sub-village) Sitenta y Dos in Barangay (village) Patitinan.

A report said the clearing operations were so interrupted by the continuous falling of rocks and a landslide, that officials decided to temporarily barricade the debris-covered road.

The clearing operations will resume on Sunday.

Sagñay police said there were no houses in the area affected by the landslide.

/MUF



# Phivolcs continues to monitor Taal

Published January 2, 2021, 5:52 PM

by [Alexandria Dennise San Juan](#)

Almost a year since Taal Volcano erupted, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) has continued to monitor its activities as it remains under an “abnormal” state.

In the latest bulletin issued by Phivolcs Saturday, only one volcanic earthquake was recorded along with weak emission of steam-laden plumes from the volcano’s main crater vents.

Ground deformation parameters based on continuous GPS monitoring from March last year to present also indicated a “slow and slight inflation” of the northwestern sector of the Taal Caldera.

Phivolcs said this swelling was also recorded by electronic tilt on northwest Volcano Island since the second week of July 2020.

GPS data from the southwestern sector of the caldera and the Taal Volcano Island yielded no significant change after the huge post-eruption subsidence, the agency added.

Phivolcs has reminded the public that Alert Level 1 is maintained over the volcano which means sudden steam-driven or phreatic explosions, volcanic earthquakes, minor ashfall, and lethal accumulations or expulsions of volcanic gas can occur and threaten areas within the Taal Volcano Island.

With this, the State volcanology bureau emphasized that entry into the volcano island and its permanent danger zone, especially within the vicinity of the main crater and the Daang Kastila fissure, must remain “strictly prohibited.”

“Local government units are advised to continuously assess previously evacuated barangays around Taal Lake for damages and road accessibilities and to strengthen preparedness, contingency, and communication measures in case of renewed unrest,” it added.

The public, particularly residents near the volcano, were also advised to observe precautions due to ground displacement across fissures, possible ashfall, and minor earthquakes.

Aside from Taal, Phivolcs is closely monitoring other active volcanos in the country, including Kanlaon and Mayon, which are also at Alert Level 1 or an abnormal condition.





## Second body found at site of Norway landslide

Published 6 hours ago on January 3, 2021 12:00 AM

By [Agence France-Presse](#)



Rescue workers on Saturday recovered a second body and continued searching for another eight people still missing days after a landslide buried homes in a Norwegian village.

“We still have hope of finding survivors,” rescue operations chief Roy Alkvist told reporters.

A whole hillside collapsed in the village of Ask, 25 kilometers (15 miles) northeast of the capital Oslo, in the early hours of Wednesday morning, injuring 10 people, one of them seriously.

Homes were buried under mud, others cut in two and some houses left teetering over a crater caused by the mudslide, with several subsequently falling over the edge.

The landslide destroyed several houses and shifted others hundreds of meters.

Earlier Saturday, local police chief Ida Melbo Oystese said authorities hoped some people might have survived thanks to pockets of air inside partially intact buildings.

No details have been released about the identity of the second body, which was found by sniffer dogs. There have been no details released on the first body, which was recovered on Friday.

But police have released a list of the names of 10 missing people: eight adults, a two-year-old, and a 13-year-old child.

Police have also said 10 people were injured, including one seriously who was transferred to Oslo for treatment shortly after the disaster.

About a thousand people have had to be evacuated from Ask, which has 5,000 people, because of fears about the safety of their homes. There was more movement of the land there overnight Friday to Saturday.

“We are at a hotel,” two of the evacuees, Olav Gjerdingen and Sissel Meyer Gjerdingen, told AFP. “It is a completely surreal and terrible situation.”

The Norwegian Water Resources and Energy Directorate (NVE) said the disaster was a “quick clay slide” of approximately 300 by 800 meters.

Quick clay is a sort of clay found in Norway and Sweden that can collapse and turn to fluid when overstressed.



The authorities have banned all aircraft from the disaster area until 3:00 pm Monday as they conduct aerial searches.

Norwegian rescue workers are being helped by colleagues from Sweden.

Visiting the site last week, Prime Minister Erna Solberg described it as one of the biggest landslides the country had ever experienced.



03 JANUARY 2021, SUNDAY



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