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DENR

NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

LANDBANK honored as first DENR Gawad Kamagong awardee

By [RadyoMaN Manila](#) -Jan. 7, 2021 at 5:21am



Land Bank of the Philippines (LANDBANK) was conferred with the Gawad Kamagong award by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) for its valuable contributions to the environment and active participation in volunteer projects. LANDBANK Corporate Affairs Specialist Arnold Aldaba received the award on behalf of the Bank from DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda on December 15, 2020.

State-run Land Bank of the Philippines (LANDBANK) was awarded by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) with the first-ever *Gawad Kamagong* award for the Bank's unwavering support to environmental advocacy through long-term volunteer work.

Considered as the highest recognition for volunteer partners, the *Gawad Kamagong* was awarded to LANDBANK for implementing volunteer programs that support the protection and rehabilitation of watersheds and for uplifting the livelihood of its partner community organizations.

"LANDBANK has been a longstanding advocate for environmental preservation and sustainable development. We will continue to support inclusive countryside development by joining government partners in promoting environmental awareness, protection, and conservation," said LANDBANK President and CEO Cecilia C. Borromeo.

LANDBANK was among 49 organizations from government and private institutions, local government units, non-government organizations, academic institutions, cooperatives, and community and civic groups who were recognized for making outstanding contributions in support of the DENR's programs, projects, and activities.

Since 2001, LANDBANK has partnered with the DENR for various Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programs for the environment, which includes the Manila Bay SUNSET Partnership Program, Inc. (MBSPPPI), the Gawad Sibol Program (formerly Adopt-A-Watershed Program), and the "50@50" Program (50,000 trees for LANDBANK's 50th anniversary year).



LANDBANK Corporate Affairs Specialist Arnold Aldaba—who received the award as the Bank’s representative—also became the first recipient of the *Gawad Masigasig*, a special individual award for demonstrating exceptional work in linking the Bank’s environmental programs with the DENR.

DENR Undersecretary Benny D. Antiporda led the awarding ceremonies held at the DENR Central Office on December 15, 2020. The recognition program was in celebration of the National Volunteer Month which promotes volunteerism as a tool for development in both the government and the private sectors.

For more updates, please Follow, Like and Share the official LANDBANK Facebook, Instagram and YouTube accounts (@landbankofficial), Twitter (@LBP_Official), or visit the LANDBANK website (www.landbank.com).



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January 06, 2021

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DENR NAKAPAGTALA NG 59% PAGBABA SA AIR POLLUTION LEVELS SA PAGSALUBONG SA 2021



January 6, 2021 @ 12:25 AM 1 day ago

NAKAPAGTALA ng mas mababang air pollution levels ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa unang araw ng 2021 sa Metro Manila na bumaba ng 59 percent kumpara sa naitala noong nakalipas na taon.

Ayon kay DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, ito ay dahil na rin sa pakikipagtulungan at pagsuporta ng Metro Manila local executives at mga residente sa mahigpit na pagpapatupad ng Executive Order 28 na naglilimita sa paggamit ng paputok na naging epektibo noong 2017.

Umabot sa 87 micrograms per normal cubic meter (ug/Ncm) ng Particulate Matter (PM 10) ang naitala ng DENR-Environmental Management Bureau batay na rin sa nakuhang data sa pagitan ng alas 12 ng hatinggabi noong Disyembre 31, 2020 at Enero 1, 2021 mula sa anim na AQMS sa mga lungsod ng Caloocan, Marikina, Navotas, Pasig, Parañaque at Taguig.

Noong nakalipas na taon ay nakapagtala sa anim na AQMS ng 213 ug/Ncm na may 59-average percent ang ibiniba kumpara sa New Year's Eve (NYE) data noong Enero 1, 2020.

"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," sabi ni Cimatu.

Ang pinakamataas na NYE percentage drop na naitala mula sa mga istasyon ng Naval St., Navotas City na mayroong 99 percent mula sa 209 ay naging 1.34 ug/Ncm; Oranbo, Pasig City, 95 percent (130 ay naging 7 ug/Ncm); Bicutan, Taguig City 78 percent (355 – 79 ug/Ncm); Marikina Justice Hall open compound, Marikina City 34 percent (189 – 124 ug/Ncm); Caloocan City Hall Annex, Caloocan City 29 percent (332 – 235 ug/Ncm).

Tanging sa station sa Don Bosco Barangay Hall Compound sa Parañaque ang nakapagtala ng 21-percent na pagtaas mula sa 62 ay naging 75 ug/Ncm.



Ang PM10 mula sa mga paputok ay karaniwang nanggagaling sa residual ng explosive powders na ibinalot sa papel na binubuo ng sulfur (S) carbon (C) at potassium nitrate (saltpeter, KN03) at iba pang fine materials na mayroong heavy metals. Ang short-term limit ng PM10 ay 150 ug/Ncm base na rin sa nakasaad sa National Ambient Air Quality Guideline Value (NAAQGV) ng Republic Act 8749 o ang Clean Air Act.

Iniulat din ng EMB na ang NYE 2021 ay nakapagtala ng mababang konsentrasyon ng PM2.5 kumpara sa NYE 2020 partikular na sa mga istasyon ng Muntinlupa Bilibid open ground sa Muntinlupa City na mayroong maximum concentration na 12 ug/Ncm sa pagitan ng alas 12 ng hatinggabi hanggang alas 2 ng madaling araw ng Enero 1, 2021. Bumaba ito ng 43-percent mula 22 ug/Ncm noong nakalipas na taon sa parehas ding oras.

Samantala, nakapagtala naman sa Manila City Station ng mataas na 93.5 ug/Ncm ala-una ng madaling araw ng Enero 1, 2021 mula sa 40.9 ug/Ncm ng alas 11 ng gabi ng Disyembre 31, 2020. Ang short-term limit para sa PM2.5 ay 35 ug/Ncm base na rin sa NAAQGV ng DENR Administrative Order 2020-14 na may petsang Oktubre 21, 2020.

Ito ay dahil na rin sa mahigpit na hakbang na ipinatutupad ng Metro Manila Mayors sa ilalim ng Metro Manila Development Authority Resolution No. 20-17 na "Prohibiting Individual and Household Use of Firecrackers and Other Pyrotechnic Devices During General Community Quarantine."

Kumpara sa PM10, ang pollutant sa PM2.5 ay mas pinong particles na kadalasang nagmumula sa sasakyan at sinusunog na halaman.

Ang particles na ito ay kayang umabot sa baga kapag nalanghap na nagiging sanhi ng respiratory at circulatory diseases kabilang na ang brain damage at cancer.



San Juan starts registration for free COVID vaccination

[Tuesday, January 5, 2021](#) [Arlene Rivera](#)²⁷

SAN Juan City started on Monday the registration for free COVID-19 vaccine shots. Mayor Francis Zamora said residents may register online or through the barangay halls or health centers.

The City Government of San Juan is currently in talks with the national government and pharmaceutical companies in procuring the vaccine.

“Kasalukuyang nakikipag-usap ang ating pamahalaang lungsod sa national government at sa mga pharmaceutical companies upang tayo ay makakuha ng bakuna,” Zamora said.

Recently the city council signed an ordinance allocating P50 million as standby funds that will be used for the procurement of vaccines.

“We will be prioritizing health workers and frontliners to receive the vaccine first, then indigent senior citizens will soon follow, as advised by the WHO and IATF. Once done, residents who voluntarily signed up will receive the vaccine,” Zamora said.

Zamora reassured the residents that the vaccine the city will buy is proven safe and has undergone rigorous tests done by medical experts and other governments in the world.

Meanwhile, the local government of Pasig City is preparing for its city-wide vaccination program after it has allocated P300 million for the purchase of vaccines against the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Mayor Vico Sotto said they are coordinating with the Inter-Agency Task Force, Department of Health, and Metro Manila Council as they are preparing for the city-wide vaccination program.

The mayor said medical frontliners and senior citizen residents will be prioritized in the vaccination program of the city.

Around 300 sanitary landfills (SLFs) are being targeted to be established nationwide by 2022 to further improve the country's management of solid waste.

Benny Antiporda, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units (LGUs) Concerns, said that these SLFs will be established through a public-private partnership.

Antiporda made the disclosure during a recent hybrid consultation meeting with SLF operators, which combined face-to-face and teleconferencing.

“Ambitious as it may seem to be as a target, but we shall aim to establish 300 SLFs by the end of 2022,” Antiporda said.

Antiporda explained that SLF remains the primary long-term method of solid waste disposal allowed under Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000.

The consultation was the second of a series of meetings, which Antiporda said was the first time in the history of the DENR that the SLF operators were gathered together to ensure their commitment to helping LGUs and the national government address the challenges of solid waste management.



A total of 21 SLF operators were present during the meeting, either personal or via Zoom. The meeting was aimed at closer collaboration among SLF operators, LGUs and the DENR, through the National Solid Waste Management Commission, where Antiporda sits as alternate of Environment Secretary and NSWMC Chair Roy A. Cimatú.

Among those in attendance were representatives from Phileco, Tamagan SLF of Lepanto Consolidated Company, WasteCon Inc., Urdaneta Solid Waste Management, Cagayan Economic Zone Sanitary Landfill, Metro Clark Waste Management Corporation, Mega Pacific Landfill Resource Services Corp., and IPM Holdings.

Also present were representatives from Integrated Solid Waste Management Inc., Greenleap Sanitary Landfill/New Sanitary Landfill, SB Hain Enterprise/Severino B. Hain, Pilotage Trading and Construction Inc., TAYSAN SLF, Gen Tech SLF, JORMS Trading Corporation, Coral Bay Nickel Corporation, Iwa Besu Solid Waste Processing Facility project/Iwa Besu Corp., Eco's Sanitary Landfill and Waste Management Corp., San Rafael Moreno SLF, ARN Central Waste Management Inc., and Asian Energy Systems Inc.

There are currently 189 SLFs in operation servicing 399 LGUs across the country.

However, Antiporda lamented that the number of SLFs remains small 20 years after RA 9003 took effect.

During the consultation meeting, Antiporda called on the SLF operators to look into the viability of offering their facilities to LGUs with illegal dumpsites in anticipation of an aggressive campaign by the DENR to close these down starting January 2021.

The first meeting was held on Dec. 17, 2020 with seven SLF operators present, namely: International Solid Waste Integrated Management Specialist Inc., Iwa Besu Corp., IPM Holdings, Wastecon Inc., Phil Ecology Systems Corp., S.B. Hain Enterprises and General Services Inc., and Urdaneta Solid Waste Management.

In that meeting, Antiporda urged SLF operators to *"set aside whatever differences they have and close ranks as an association or coalition."*

"This is the first time operators will unite and have a voice when engaging the DENR and the public sector in discussions geared towards resolving challenges faced by the solid waste management sector," Antiporda said.



Great white pelican found injured in Casiguran

Published January 6, 2021, 1:52 PM

by [Ariel Avendaño](#)

CASIGURAN, Aurora – A weak and exhausted migratory bird was found by local residents on a marshy river in Barangay Masgana in the northern town of Dilasag, Aurora, the community office of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) here reported on Wednesday.

A Great White Pelican ((*Pelecanus Onocrotalus*) was rescued by Francisco Calinog, Andy Ortiz and Francia Dasillo in Sitio Mahogany, Barangay Masagana who brought the bird to the DENR community office in Casiguran.

Mercedita Bata, community environment and natural resources officer in northern Aurora, said that the bird could have been left behind by its flock while it was on migration.

The bird, which has a 35-cm bill, 61-cm wingspan, 15-cm tarsus, and 21-cm tail, has a total body length of 87 cms, and stood almost a meter tall, Bata said.

The bird will be turned over to the wildlife rescue center at the Clark Free Port Zone in Pampanga. With an expected life span age of over 50 years, an adult pelican can grow as big as 180 cms in length, and as heavy as 15 kilos. It could also grow bigger with a wingspan of 360 cms, according to Alfredo Collado, DENR chief for Aurora.

Due to its relatively huge body, the bird can readily consume at least a kilo of fish every feeding time which is at least twice a day, Collado also said.

The Great White pelican that lives in the shallow swamps in Africa is one of the largest flying birds in the world.

It is capable of long flights, and could also swim. Its unique characteristic is the “gular pouch” inside its beak. Its legs are short and strong with fully webbed toes that allow it to propel itself in water, and to take off from the surface of the water.

They are powerful fliers and often travel in flocks in a V-formation to reduce drag for the group. This kind of bird species is also known to have the capability to fly, and travel to many continents.



Fisherfolks ask SC: Uphold 2008 writ of mandamus on Manila Bay

Published January 6, 2021, 11:34 AM

by [Raymund Antonio](#)

Fisherfolks on Wednesday said they were not surprised by the Supreme Court's dismissal of the writ of kalikasan petition against the construction of the New Manila International Airport in Bulacan, a project of San Miguel Corporation.



According to the Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya), the SC decision was a “180-degree-turn on its very own writ of continuing mandamus” to clean-up, restore, and rehabilitate Manila Bay.

A writ of kalikasan is a legal remedy protecting the constitutional right to a “balanced and healthful ecology in accord with the rhythm and harmony of nature.”

The petition asked the SC to stop the reclamation of Manila Bay, and save fish, mangroves, and marine ecosystems in the area.

Chief Justice Diosdado Peralta told reporters that it was “not sufficient in form and substance.”

In 2008, the SC came out with a landmark ruling directing 13 government agencies led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to clean, rehabilitate, and preserve the Manila Bay.

Pamalakaya chair Fernando Hicap said the high court should uphold its writ of continuing mandamus to protect the bay from all forms of destructive projects such as reclamation.

Two years after the launch of the government's rehabilitation project, Pamalakaya said the fish catch of fisherfolk in Manila Bay has not improved.

The group previously said that average fish catch in most of the bay's municipal fishing grounds remains at two to five kilos per fishing trip.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/01/06/fisherfolks-ask-sc-uphold-2008-writ-of-mandamus-on-manila-bay/>



Masungi claims harassment in Dumagat lawsuit

Published 4 hours ago on January 7, 2021 02:30 AM

By [TDT](#) [@tribunephil](#)



The Dumagat-Remontados tribe of Antipolo is suing the operators of the Masungi Georeserve in Baras, Rizal and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) for alleged graft and corruption.

My message to Masungi is to continue protecting the forests and not give up. We will continue to fight. We will work together to uplift and protect our forests, biodiversity, and ancestral lands.

A 10-page complaint on 14 December by Rolando A. Vertudez and Leonardo DR Doroteo, both of Barangay San Josep, named Masungi operators Ben S. Dumaliang, Lilian G. Dumaliang, Anne Adeline G. Dumaliang, Billie Crystal G. Dumaliang, Sonia G. Oliveros, and several Jane and John Does from the DENR as respondents for violating some articles of Republic Act 3019 or the Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act.

The complainants said they have been occupying their ancestral lands since the time of their forefathers, the reason why Republic Act 8371 or the Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act (IPRA) of 1997 and the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples, the main implementing agency of the IPRA Law, recognized and certified them.

"But last October 2020, officials from the Masungi Georeserve, together with several armed and uniformed men, intruded into a portion of our ancestral domain and insisted that they are the ones who have the right to our land because of their Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with the DENR," the complaint stated.

They alleged that the MoA "is defective, onerous and grossly disadvantageous to the government" as Masungi Georeserve is not paying for the use of the protected area. Billie Dumaliang, Masungi advocacy officer, sensed "disinformation and harassment" in the lawsuit.

"They're making it appear that the statements are from tribe but it isn't the elders who are talking. They are being used," she told the Daily Tribune in a phone interview.

She referred to private firm Rublou Incorporated, a family-owned and controlled corporation founded in 1984 by couple Gen. Luizo Ticman (ret.) and Ruby. The company is engaged in fresh meat wholesale and retail distribution.

A company statement sent to the Daily Tribune narrated that on 23 October 2020, it was "armed guards claiming to work for the former police general and Green Atom Renewable Energy Corporation" who barricaded large tracts of the watershed and claimed 1,000 hectares of the land as the private property of their principal, without presenting any proof of ownership or permits.



“Brandishing high-powered guns, the guards threatened and stopped Masungi’s park rangers, who were only there to conduct reforestation work. A few days after,

the private property signage became ancestral domain signage.

Hiring disadvantaged and vulnerable people as a front to hide private business interests is a common strategy for illicit encroachments and land grabbing in protected areas and forest lands,” the statement read further.

Cristina Quierre, a Dumagat tribe leader, maintained their support for and collaboration with Masungi.

“My message to Masungi is to continue protecting the forests and not give up. We will continue to fight. We will work together to uplift and protect our forests, biodiversity, and ancestral lands,” she said.

They’re making it appear that the statements are from tribe but it isn’t the elders who are talking.

The Masungi Georeserve is a conservation area found in the southern Sierra Madre range. It was declared a Strict Nature Reserve and Wildlife Sanctuary by the DENR and is frequented by hikers.

“Masungi Geopark Project is not a business or a profit-making enterprise. It is a conservation project meant to restore and rewild the forest, where activities include native tree planting and nurturing, maintenance, community development, and advocacy. It is financed and done by the foundation and its partners from different sectors, at no cost to the government,” the company said.



Illegally cut lumber cargo seized in Lanao Sur

By Noel Punzalan January 6, 2021, 8:47 am



SEIZED. Marine soldiers stop a cargo truck loaded with some 4,000 board feet of illegally cut coco lumber at a checkpoint in Picong, Lanao del Sur on Tuesday (Jan. 5, 2020). The soldiers arrested the truck driver and seven helpers who were all turned over later to the Picong police station, along with the truck, for the filing of appropriate charges. (Photo courtesy of 6ID)

CAMP SIONGCO, Maguindanao – Marine soldiers have seized some 4,000 board feet of illegally cut coco lumber in Picong, Lanao del Sur, the military here said Wednesday.

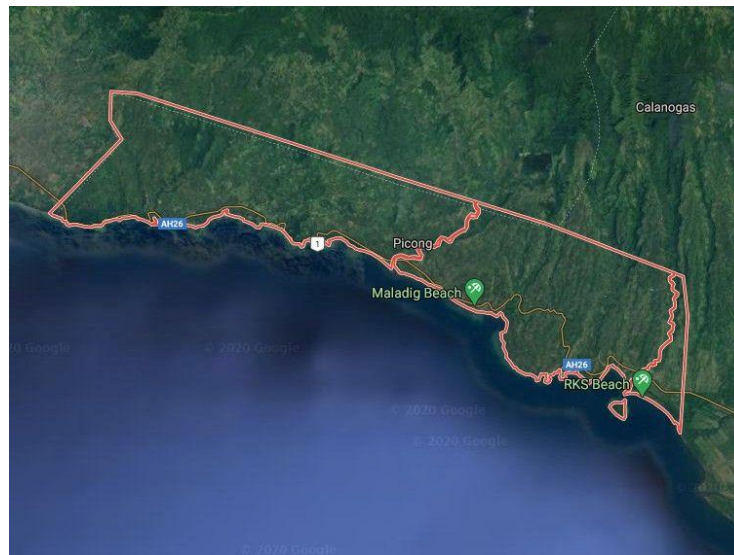
Maj. Gen Juvymax Uy, commander of the Army's 6th Infantry Division, said the illegal wood cargo was intercepted at a checkpoint manned by members of the Marine Battalion Landing Team (MBLT) 5 in Barangay Maladeg, Picong town late Tuesday.

The MBLT 5 is a component unit of the Joint Task Force Central that Uy heads in a concurrent position.

He said the Marines flagged down a red Isuzu forward truck carrying the illegally cut logs while on its way to transport the lumber to Pagadian City, Zamboanga del Sur.

Arrested were Amano Toma, driver, 31; and truck helpers Januden Toma, 24; Zaldy Anto, 25; Aksaram Marohog, 25; Yazir Sentian, 20; Makmod Lauyan, 27; Habin Layan, 40; and Jun Lauyan, 40, all of Barangay Piraka, Sultan Naga Dimapuro, Lanao del Norte.

The confiscated wood cargo and apprehended suspects were turned over to the Picong police for the proper filing of charges. (PNA)



Satellite image of Picong town in Lanao del Sur.
Google Maps

4,000 board feet illegally-cut lumber seized in Lanao del Sur

[John Unson](#) (Philstar.com) - January 6, 2021 - 2:19pm

LANAO DEL SUR, Philippines — Personnel of the Navy's 5th Marine Battalion intercepted Tuesday 4,000 board feet of lumber cut from old coconut trees without permission from the government.

The Isuzu truck carrying the "cocolumber" was promptly stopped and impounded by Marines at a checkpoint in Barangay Maladeg in Picong town in Lanao del Sur, acting on tips from villagers.

It is illegal to cut old, non-productive coconut trees for lumber without corresponding clearances from the agriculture and natural resources department.

The 1st Marine Brigade, in a report to Major Gen. Juvymax Uy of the 6th Infantry Division, said smugglers were to deliver the cocolumber to a buyer in nearby Pagadian City in Zamboanga del Sur province.

The Army's 6th ID under Uy, also head of the anti-terror Joint Task Force Central, has operational control over the Philippine Navy's 1st Marine Brigade and its component-battalions assigned in a number of towns in Lanao del Sur.

Eight persons --- truck driver Amano Toma and companions Januden Toma, Zaldy Anto, Aksaram Marohog, Yazir Sentian, Makmod Lauyan, Habin Layan and Jun Lauyan --- were apprehended for the foiled cocolumber smuggling attempt.

The Marines immediately endorsed them and their truck full of cocolumber to the Picong municipal police, according to the 1st Marine Brigade.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/nation/2021/01/06/2068596/4000-board-feet-illegally-cut-lumber-seized-lanao-del-sur>



6 nabbed in anti-illegal logging campaign

January 06, 2021

SIX people were arrested in an anti-illegal logging campaign in the province of Zamboanga del Norte, the police reported Wednesday, January 6.

Police Captain Edwin Duco, Police Regional Office-Zamboanga Peninsula information officer, said two of the six suspects, namely, Rex Zamoras, 44, and Jinnie Ferolin, 44, were arrested around 4 p.m. Tuesday in Manawan village, Jose Dalman, Zamboanga del Norte.

Duco said the two were caught cutting mahogany trees without the required permits.

Seized from them were some 1,648.51 board feet of lumber with an estimated worth of P72,534.53.

He said the other suspects were Jesus Bustamante, 58, a truck driver, and his three truck men, Sanny Bularon, 32, Jimuel Sumaoy, 20, and Roel Catili, 39. They were arrested around 6:30 p.m. Tuesday in Molos village, Tampilisan, Zamboanga Del Norte.

Duco said the four were caught transporting 18 sacks of wood charcoal and Acacia Mangium Lumber with a total of 412 board feet with an estimated cost of P20,615 without the necessary permit.

He said appropriate charges are set to be filed against the arrested suspects. **(SunStar Zamboanga)**



Botanists discover new flowering plant species in Mt. Hamiguitan sanctuary

Published January 6, 2021, 12:24 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

Botanists from the National Museum of the Philippines, Central Mindanao University, and Botanical Research Institute of Texas have discovered a new flowering plant species in Mt. Hamiguitan Range Wildlife Sanctuary in Davao Oriental, the first of its kind to be found outside Luzon.



(Biotaxa)

The *Hypericum perryongii* was discovered during an expedition in June, 2019, and published in the international scientific journal *Phytotaxa* on January 5, 2021.

A collection was made of the *Hypericum* species as it does not match any other known species during the 2019 expedition, the experts said in the journal.

“The novelty we describe here is the fifth *Hypericum* species occurring natively in the Philippines, and the second endemic,” the group said.

“All currently known species of this genus in the country are restricted to the northern parts of the island of Luzon. Therefore, this discovery is significant in that it is the first *Hypericum* species in the country found outside Luzon,” the botanists said.

Hypericum perryongii is said to closely resemble *H. geminiflorum* and *H. formosanum* but “can be easily distinguished from the former by its larger corolla and calyx lobes and higher number of stamens per fascicle, and from the latter by its terminally 1-flowered inflorescences and the sessile and abaxially glaucous leaves.”

Mt. Hamiguitan Range Wildlife Sanctuary, a declared UNESCO World Heritage Site and ASEAN Heritage Park, provides critical habitat for a range of plant and animal species.

It provides a sanctuary to a host of globally threatened and endemic flora and fauna species, eight of which are found nowhere else except Mount Hamiguitan.

These include critically endangered trees, plants, and the iconic Philippine Eagle and Philippine Cockatoo.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/01/06/botanists-discover-new-flowering-plant-species-in-mt-hamiguitan-sanctuary/>



Bagong uri ng ahas nadiskubre mula sa PH

NADISKUBRE kamakailan ng mga siyentista ang bagong species ng ahas na sa katunayan ay matatagpuan lamang kahit saan ngunit sadyang hindi napapansin dahil sa liit nito.

Pinag-aaralan ng graduate research assistant ng Biodiversity Institute ng University of Kansas na si Jeff Weinell ang tatlong uri ng ahas na kanyang nasagip sa magkakahiwalay na field mission sa pagitan ng 2006

Lumitaw na napapabilang ang mga ito sa bagong snake genus na kung tawagin ay *Levitonius* at bagong snake species din na *Levitonius mirus*.

Tinatawag din ang mga bagong diskubrenang ahas na Waray dwarf burrowing snake at ayon sa pag-aaral at pagsusuri dito, matatagpuan lamang ang mga ahas sa Samar at Leyte sa Filipinas. Ang nasabing mga isla ay tahanan ng

Inilarawan din ang ahas na miniaturized genus at sinabi ni Weinell na umaabot lamang sa maximum na 6.7 pulgada ang haba nito katulad ng isang lapis.

Ngayong taon, natagpuan din ang bagong species ng berdeng pit viper sa kagubatan ng western Arunachal Pradesh. Pinangalanan itong *Trimeresurus salazar*, mula sa karakter sa serye ng *Harry Potter* na si Salazar



Slytherin, ang tagapagtatag ng isa sa pamosong tahanan sa Hogwarts na paaralan ng mga mangkukulam.

Kung matatandaan ng *Harry Potter* fans, ang kulay ng Slytherin

at 2012. Mula noon ay inalagaan ang mga ahas sa unibersidad ngunit kailan lang ay napagtanto ni Weinell na walang species o pamilya ng ahas na kinabibilangan ang tatlo.

mahigit 100 species ng ahas.

Mayroong mahabang bungo ang *Levitonius* at iridescent ang katawan, na indikasyon na ang kinakain nito ay mga uod sa lupa.

house ay berde at ang logo nito ay isang ahas. Si Salazar mismo ay isang salamangkero na marunong makipag-usap sa mga serpent.

(TRACY CABRERA)

Source:

<https://www.facebook.com/hatawtabloiddotcom/photos/a.628783813847949/3767730763286556/?type=3&app=fbl>



Waste and pollution watchdog makes appeal to Nazareno devotees for a COVID-safe, trash-free feast

Published January 6, 2021, 1:56 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

A waste and pollution watchdog on Wednesday urged the devotees of the Black Nazarene to ensure a COVID-safe and trash-free feast on January 9.



(ALI VICOY / MANILA BULLETIN)

EcoWaste Coalition called upon the devotees to respect the cancellation of the “Traslacion” procession and “pahalik” jointly agreed by the local government and church authorities to prevent the mass gathering of people amid the continuing threat of COVID-19 transmission.

“We join Mayor Isko Moreno and Monsignor Ding Coronel in their efforts to ensure the health and safety of the devotees by adopting precautionary measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 in traditional events involving large numbers of worshippers,” EcoWaste zero waste campaigner Jove Benosa said.

“As the Black Nazarene lives in the heart of the believer, we request the devotees to celebrate and renew their devotion to the Black Nazarene by praying at home or by attending masses in their local parishes instead of going to Quiapo to avoid large crowds,” he added.

If devotees cannot resist going to Quiapo Church, EcoWaste requested them to strictly observe essential health protocols, including properly wearing face masks and shields, practicing good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette, and maintaining a safe physical distance with others.

“To avoid crowds of worshippers, devotees also have the option of attending novena masses in nearby Santa Cruz and San Sebastian Churches as the Minor Basilica of the Black Nazarene and vicinity will be more congested,” Benosa said.

EcoWaste further appealed to the devotees visiting these churches not to leave any litter behind.

“Let it not be said that devotees braved crowds and COVID-19 risks to express their undying faith but again left a trail of garbage behind,” Benosa said.

Citing data from the Manila Public Information Office, EcoWaste said 68 truckloads of 330 tons of garbage were collected by the city’s Department of Public Services during the Traslacion in 2020.

After the Traslacion in 2019, some 99 truckloads of garbage or 387 tons were collected.

According to the yearly monitoring by EcoWaste Coalition’s Basura Patrollers, plastic bags, cups, bottles and straws, polystyrene beverage and food containers, bamboo skewers, cigarette filters and lots of food wastes are among the most littered items during the feast of the Black Nazarene.



“This year, we may also find disposable face masks and shields littered in the streets of Quiapo and adjacent places if the public will not mind their trash,” Benosa said.

“We therefore appeal to everyone to opt for reusable or washable fabric masks to avoid creating non-biodegradable and non-recyclable waste that will only exacerbate our nation’s plastic pollution woes,” he added.



Globe sets up over 100 e-waste collection points

By [The Manila Times](#)

January 7, 2021



AS part of its environmental protection advocacy, Globe has set up over 100 collection points nationwide for electronic waste (e-waste) to encourage everyone to practice proper disposal of electronic or battery-operated devices and IT accessories and peripherals which are no longer working or wanted.

For individuals who want to join the cause, they may go to any participating Globe Stores nationwide such as SM North Edsa, Trinoma, UP Town Katipunan, Gateway Mall, SM East Ortigas, Ayala 30th, SM Southmall, Glorietta, Greenbelt 4, Ayala Manila Bay, SM Mall of Asia, SM Sucat, Robinsons Place Manila, SM San Lazaro, Market Market, and SM Aura. The complete list of drop off points may be viewed at <https://www.globe.com.ph/about-us/sustainability/environment/e-waste-zero-bins.html>. For organizations interested in supporting the advocacy or for one-time hauling of bulky e-waste, a request for free door-to-door pickup can be made by emailing bridgecom@globe.com.ph.

Accepted e-waste are computer sets (LCDs, monitors, CPUs, keyboards), IT accessories (mouse, earphones, speakers, etc), printers and fax machines, old TV monitors, mobile phones, home appliances (washing machine, iron, oven, refrigerator, etc), cable wires (except fiber optic), car electronics, circuit boards, CDs and DVDs, and batteries (except for Lead-acid car batteries).

“We are always looking for ways to promote the benefits of responsible e-waste recycling. We plan to expand the collection points to more Globe Stores and partner organizations and establishments in the coming months to make it easier for the public to participate in this advocacy,” said Yoly Crisanto, Globe Chief Sustainability Officer and SVP for Corporate Communications.

Collected e-waste are delivered by Globe to its partner Treatment, Storage, and Disposal (TSD) facilities — Total Environment Solutions — Asset Material Management Philippines (TES-AMM) and Maritrans Recycler, Inc. E-waste is segregated to recover plastic materials, electronic components, and precious metals in the Philippines, with the final recycling process being done in TES-AMM’s facility in Singapore. Proceeds from e-waste processing will be used to provide communication needs of public school teachers and students in collaboration with the Department of Education.

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

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2021/01/07/public-square/globe-sets-up-over-100-e-waste-collection-points/824043/>



PH starts to tiptoe away from coal

By [Ben Kritz](#)

January 7, 2021

One of the few — very few — legitimately praiseworthy policy orientations of the Duterte administration has been its cognizance that the environment is a thing, and that climate-change impact mitigation ought to be actively pursued, so far as the country’s capabilities allow. This has been a refreshing change from the administrations of Gloria Arroyo, who, notwithstanding a couple of positive moves such as the Solid Waste Act and Clean Air Act, was largely ambivalent toward environmental concerns; and Noynoy Aquino, whose policies were, if anything, hostile to the environment.

Not that the Philippines under Duterte has, by any stretch of the imagination, become a model of sustainable management. There is still a long way to go, and for every positive development, it seems there are still five or six appalling problems that are far from being seriously addressed, let alone solved. Even so, the country needs to start somewhere, and the Duterte administration has at least done that, saying the right things and backing some of them up with tangible action. The country’s current leadership may be an utter clown show in other respects (I am exercising a remarkable amount of self-control in not commenting on its disastrous handling of the coronavirus vaccines, for example), but it deserves credit for putting the country on the right track in terms of environmental policy.

Some examples of this better direction, of policy moves that may not be generally known to the public, were highlighted a few days before Christmas with the release of a report by the Withdraw from Coal (WFC) Campaign, which assessed Philippine banks’ exposure to investments in coal. WFC, which is heavily supported by the Catholic Church, used a scoring method similar to that used by the International Finance Corp. to rank 15 Philippine banks, the basic thesis of the exercise being “Philippine banks have significant investments in coal, and they ought to stop.”

According to WFC, the 15 banks put about \$13.42 billion into coal power or related investments between 2009 and 2019. The two worst offenders, as it were, are Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) and BDO Unibank Inc., which account for about 44 percent of that total. BPI is the top lender or underwriter of coal investments, with about \$3.48 billion in exposure, covering a total of 15 coal plant projects and six coal developer projects up to 2030. The banks with the least exposure are the Philippine Bank of Communications, East West Banking Corp., Asia United Bank, and government-run Development Bank of the Philippines, which collectively account for a little less than \$170 million. WFC pointed out, however, that this still represents a considerable part of these banks’ portfolios, given their relatively small size.

These figures might elicit a que horror reaction at first glance, but they should not actually come as a surprise to anyone, because until very recently, coal power development has been the unquestioned standard policy response to the country’s growing energy needs, and of course the banks would be invested in it. What is more interesting about the report is what it noted about recent policy reorientations away from coal on the part of the government and some banks.

Most people may be aware by now that in late October, Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi announced that the Department of Energy (DoE) would no longer approve greenfield coal projects. Granted, there is a bit of a caveat to that, in that the policy won’t affect projects already in the pipeline (there are 23 of them, with a projected future output of 13.81 gigawatts of electricity), and the DoE is yet to spell out the coal moratorium in a formal written policy, but it is a good start. Major energy players San Miguel Corp. and Aboitiz Power Corp. both announced they were scrapping coal plans after Cusi’s pronouncement.



One policy initiative that has not gotten much public attention was a circular issued by the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas in May, which stated, in part, that “climate change and other environmental and social risks could pose financial stability concerns, considering their significant and protracted implications on the bank’s operations and financial interests.” In view of this, the circular added, banks are now mandated to craft and implement a “Sustainable Finance Framework” and transition plans within three years, and to submit these — after approval by the banks’ boards of directors — to the BSP within six months of the circular’s issuance.

The implication of this new regulatory policy, combined with the DoE’s coal moratorium, is a hard stop on any new commercial bank backing of coal investments. If it’s not an actual directive, it is at least a very strong suggestion that banks begin unwinding their current exposure to coal investment.

Coming as it did in the midst of the pandemic, the circular’s six-month deadline was apparently a bit optimistic; most banks, if they responded to queries about the policy at all, would only say that “they’re working on it.” A couple of banks, however, have made some positive first steps toward coal divestment, most notably the Rizal Commercial Banking Corp., which already announced publicly that it will no longer fund coal projects. BPI, the biggest bank investor in coal, has not been nearly as proactive, but has at least leaned toward the right direction by adding a provision to its sustainable financing framework that prohibits gains from existing coal investments from being reinvested or issued to other fossil fuel projects. The DBP has also strengthened its sustainable financing framework by emphasizing an environmental policy that gives preference to clean and renewable energy projects, and setting more stringent requirements for financing for potentially environmentally destructive business activities in general.

Although all of these are relatively minor moves in the grand scheme of things, they are still worthwhile, and a refreshing change of outlook from the previous administration’s policy that aggressively sought to limit clean energy development and expand coal power.

We can only hope that the momentum in the right direction will continue and increase.

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Now is the best time to visit Boracay

Published 6 hours ago on January 7, 2021 12:20 AM

By [Pocholo Concepcion](#) @tribuneph1_poch

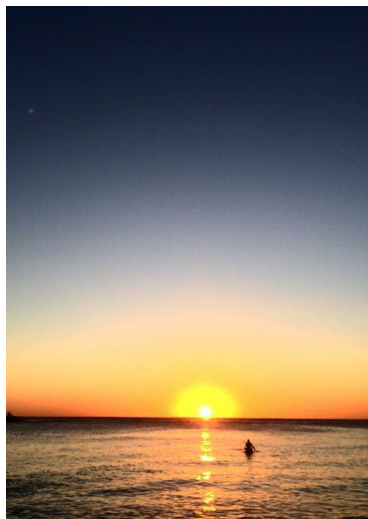


The word is that Boracay, one of the country’s top tourist destinations before Covid-19 struck, is back in its pristine state. This makes it tempting to revisit, if not visit for the first time.

The reason is that Plane fares are at 50-percent off, and most hotels and resorts on the island also have their own discounted offers.

But how to overcome the paranoia of contracting Covid-19, especially now that its new variant has reportedly infected Filipinos? The fear is palpable especially when foreign tourists are around.

Then again, the trick is to overcome that fear because strict health and safety protocols are in place.



Tourists are back, though still few, says Jose Carlos “Bingoy” Remedios, one of Boracay’s pioneering entrepreneurs, whose restaurant, Dos Mestizos, has reopened in a new location. Daily Tribune had an email chat with him.

Daily Tribune (DT): What made you want to open a restaurant in Boracay?

Bingoy Remedios (BR): I was in the United States and came home to the Philippines in 1992 to take over the management of a radio station in Cebu — Y101 FM which I co-founded with my cousin Emilio Tuason (who owned 99.5 RT) and Andre Kahn. The station was up and running and, three years later, I decided to do something new.

I wanted to explore Boracay. I had already seen the island when I was living in Hawaii. I would fly home for vacation, and the thought that one day I will come to Boracay and put up a restaurant was in my mind.



Photographs courtesy of Teddy Montelibano and Josemari Ugarte Sunsets in Boracay are still spectacular.

In 1995, I did it. The original Dos Mestizos opened on a patch of land across Andre Abriam's Beachcomber which, at that time, was the hottest party place on the island.

DT: Has living in Boracay and running a business there been good to you, healthwise and financially?

BR: Healthwise, fortunately, I don't have any major ailments. Financially, let me tell you, my priority, along with most of the pioneer restaurant entrepreneurs in Boracay then was really just to live a lifestyle, not make a lot of money. My goal, when I opened Dos Mestizos with my former business partner, Ramon Nieto, was to make just enough to support that lifestyle. Through the years, as the island progressed, we started to make real money. It took at least a decade of hard work before we could make real money to expand and improve our business.



Dos Mestizos owner Binggoy Remedios reopened his restaurant for his staff to keep their jobs.

DT: How much did you lose in projected income during the rehabilitation period before Boracay reopened?

BR: We lost a gross estimate of maybe some P18 million in the six months that Boracay was closed for rehabilitation. We closed the main restaurant, but I decided to put up a down-to-earth grill place-cum-carinderia, along with a bulalohan, to serve locals and workers stuck on the island. Also to keep my own team working. Out of my staff of 30, half went home and the other half, who came from provinces other than Aklan, decided to stay on. I had to think of something that would give them some income, thus, the carinderia concept was born on a space adjoining Dos Mestizos.

DT: And then Covid-19 happened. Which came first, offering the Dos Mestizos property for sale or finding its new location?

BR: When Covid-19 happened, we couldn't see any light at the end of the tunnel. So I seriously thought of closing Dos Mestizos. There were offers (to buy it), but nothing serious came out of it. So, I held on until the holidays, and when the Department of Tourism announced that Boracay would be opened to (local) tourists, I mustered enough guts to reopen, and this time in a new location, at Station One, along the main road across Seawind Resort.



DT: What's it like in Boracay these days? Are the tourists back?

BR: The problem is that the populace in general still don't have jobs. We've heard reports of widespread depression, particularly among young adults, and we've also heard that there have been a number of suicides both on the island, as well as on mainland Aklan province.



Having fun again in Boracay. (From left): Binggoy Remedios, Josemari Ugarte, Eddy Yrezabal, Teddy Montelibano, Rocky Lopa.

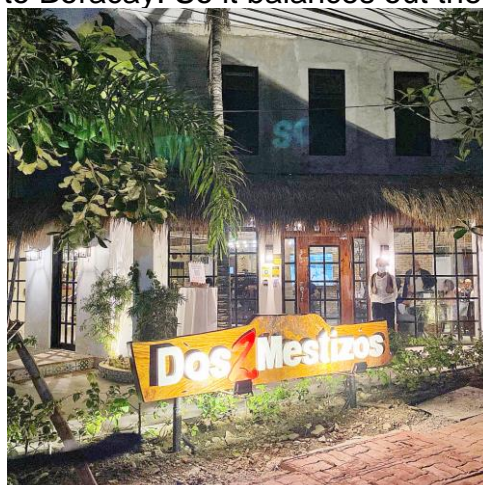
Things have perked up a bit, but only mainly for the upscale hotels and resorts and a few restaurants. Since about mid-December, we've been getting tourists, mainly upscale Filipinos and expats living in Metro Manila.

It's been encouraging for Dos Mestizos in the new location because Station One is where most of the luxury resorts are located and where many of those who flew in from Manila for the holidays were billeted.

The hotels, mainly those with upmarket clientele, have been getting 40 to 50 percent occupancy since mid-December. What I fear is that after the holidays, occupancy rate levels will plummet down to five to 10 percent. And if this happens, our operations in Dos Mestizos will surely be affected as well.

DT: There's a Philippine travel ban covering 21 countries due to the new Covid-19 variant.

BR: Yes, but expats living in the Philippines and Filipinos who have the resources to travel abroad but can't because there are also travel bans in other countries — and that's the market of Dos Mestizos — can still come to Boracay. So it balances out the situation for us.



Dos Mestizos, famous for its Spanish cuisine and wine selection, is now at Station One along the main road across Seawind Resort.



They say that for business in the island to be sustained, we need at least something like a 40-percent hotel and resorts occupancy rate. If that occupancy rate level is maintained beyond the holidays, then we'd be fine. But the trick is to sustain that.

DT: Any suggestions for the Tourism Secretary?

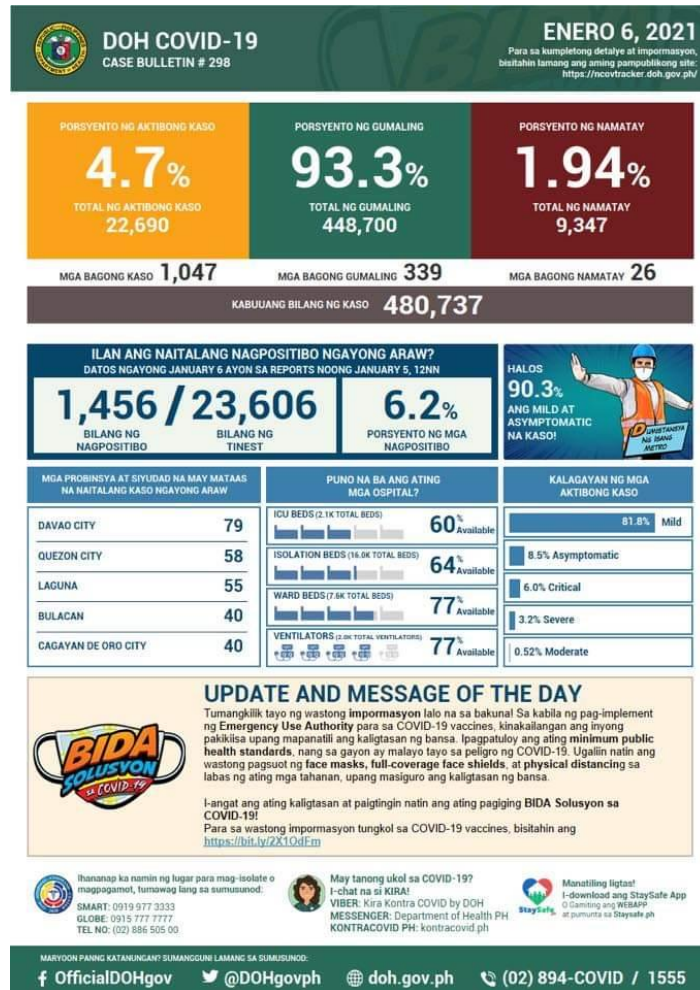
BR: There has to be a balance between economics and safety precautions. The Tourism Secretary has to protect the tourism industry and we would like to see her becoming more assertive to speak up and really protect the interests of entrepreneurs and other stakeholders.

I and many of my fellow entrepreneurs and colleagues in the industry really believe that the right way forward is not to be overwhelmed by fear. We have to be very cautious and mind all the preventive measures against Covid-19, yes, but at the same time we have to also wrack our brains and exhaust all means on how the industry can survive the situation.



BREAKING: Bilang ng COVID-19 cases sa Pilipinas, lagpas 480,000 na

By Angellic Jordan January 06, 2021 - 04:05 PM



Mahigit 1,000 ang panibagong kaso ng Coronavirus Disease o COVID-19 sa Pilipinas.

Sa huling datos ng Department of Health (DOH) bandang araw ng Miyerkules (January 6), umabot na sa 480,737 ang confirmed cases ng nakakahawang sakit sa bansa.

Sa nasabing bilang, 22,690 o 4.7 porsyento ang aktibong kaso.

Sinabi ng kagawaran na 1,047 ang bagong napaulat na kaso ng COVID-19 sa bansa.

81.8 porsyento sa active COVID-19 cases ang mild; 8.5 porsyento ang asymptomatic; 0.52 porsyento ang moderate; 3.2 porsyento ang severe habang 6.0 porsyento ang nasa kritikal na kondisyon.

Nasa 26 naman ang napaulat na nasawi.

Dahil dito, umakyat na sa 9,347 o 1.94 porsyento ang COVID-19 related deaths sa bansa.

Ayon pa sa DOH, 339 naman ang gumaling pa sa COVID-19.

Dahil dito, umakyat na sa 448,700 o 93.3 porsyento ang total recoveries ng COVID-19 sa Pilipinas.

Source: <https://radyo.inquirer.net/282393/breaking-bilang-ng-covid-19-cases-sa-pilipinas-lagpas-480000-na>



Documents released by Malacañang showed that the President signed Republic Act 11519, extending the shelf life of the Bayanihan to Recover as One Act or “Bayanihan 2” appropriations until June 30 this year.

Robinson Ninal Jr/Presidential Photo

Laws extending funds for Bayanihan 2, 2020 economic programs signed

[Alexis Romero](#) (The Philippine Star) - January 7, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Two laws extending the validity of funds allocated for pandemic response and economic recovery programs in 2020 have been signed by President Duterte to fully achieve their purpose this year, it was revealed yesterday.

Documents released by Malacañang showed that the President signed Republic Act 11519, extending the shelf life of the Bayanihan to Recover as One Act or “Bayanihan 2” appropriations until June 30 this year.

Likewise, he signed Republic Act 11520, which extends the availability of appropriations in last year’s P4.1-trillion national budget until Dec. 31, 2021. Both laws were signed on Dec. 29, 2020.

The Bayanihan 2 is an extension of the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act, which granted the President additional powers to strengthen the government’s measures against the coronavirus disease.

A total of P107.96 billion has been released under Bayanihan 2 until the law expired last Dec. 19, but about P36.76 billion more have not yet been released to implementing agencies as of last month.

RA 11519, however, does not extend the President’s authority to exercise powers granted under Bayanihan 2, including the authority to reprogram, reallocate and realign savings on other items in the appropriations of the executive department in the 2020 budget.

That particular authority could only be exercised until the original law’s expiry, the new law said.

What the law allows are fund releases to local governments and government financial institutions for programs, projects and activities under Bayanihan 2 until June 30. Appropriations covered by the standby fund will also be available for release, obligation and disbursement.



However, it does not cover the balances of the fund releases sourced from savings in last year's budget, which shall be governed by the applicable provisions of the 2020 General Appropriations Act.

Meanwhile, RA 11520 extends the availability of the appropriations in the 2020 budget until the end of 2021 to ensure that government programs delayed because of the pandemic will still be implemented.

After the validity period, all undisbursed funds will not be available for release unless Congress passes a new law allowing it.

The balances of fund transfers between agencies, instrumentalities and government-owned or controlled corporations, which, while obligated, remain unused and undisbursed as of Dec. 31, 2021 will return to the unappropriated surplus of the general fund.

Appropriations for infrastructure and capital outlays for fiscal year 2020 will also be valid for obligation until the end of 2021, the law states.



IATF creates technical working group on Covid-19 variants

By Azer Parrocha [January 6, 2021, 12:29 pm](#)



MANILA – In compliance with President Rodrigo Duterte’s directive, the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) established a Technical Working Group (TWG) on Covid-19 Variants.

The TWG, formed through IATF Resolution No. 92, is part of efforts to prevent the entry of a new coronavirus variant that emerged in the United Kingdom and is believed to be more infectious than the original variant.

“This Technical Working Group will monitor and identify the occurrence of new variants of Covid-19 in the country and will provide policy recommendations to the IATF on the appropriate response regarding these variants,” Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said in a statement.

According to the resolution, the TWG will be chaired by Department of Health (DOH) Undersecretary Maria Rosario Singh-Vergeire while Philippine Council for Health Research and Development (PCHRD) Executive Director Jaime Montoya will serve as co-chair.

Other members include Dr. Anna Ong-Lim of the DOH Technical Advisory Group (TAG); Dr. Marissa Alejandria of the DOH TAG; Dr. Edsel Maurice Salvana of the DOH TAG; Dr. Celia Carlos of the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine; Dr. Eva Maria Cutiongco-dela Paz of the University of the Philippines National Institutes of Health; Dr. Cynthia Saloma of the University of the Philippines–Philippine Genome Center; and Dr. John Wong of health research institution Epimetrix Inc.

The DOH, Department of Trade and Industry, Department of Labor and Employment, Department of Tourism, the Department of the Interior and Local Government particularly for local government units, Department of Information and Communications Technology, the Office of the Presidential Spokesperson and the Presidential Communications Operations Office are directed to further strengthen their enforcement, monitoring, and communication efforts or impose such other additional specific measures to mitigate the possible holiday surge of Covid-19 cases.

The resolution stated that all foreign travelers coming from countries/jurisdictions covered by travel restrictions for the new variant of Covid-19, or with a travel history in those areas within the last 14 days before arrival in the Philippines will not be permitted entry to the Philippines.

However, local/accredited foreign diplomats and international organizations such as the World Health Organization and the United Nations will be exempted from quarantine protocols as long as they will undergo reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) test upon arrival at the airport, execute an undertaking, and observe strict 14-day quarantine.

Also exempted are foreign dignitaries who will observe existing testing and quarantine protocols upon arrival and those for medical and emergency cases, including their medical escorts.

Filipino citizens coming from countries/jurisdictions where travel restrictions are in place, or who have been to the said areas within 14 days immediately preceding arrival in the Philippines must strictly observe an absolute 14-day facility-based quarantine period, except for highly exceptional and/or medical reasons, which the Department of Health would determine.



Any individual arriving in the Philippines who may have received vaccination for Covid-19 in other countries/jurisdictions will still be required to observe the mandatory testing and quarantine protocols.

IATF Resolution No. 92 was approved last Jan. 5 via videoconference.

On Tuesday, Hong Kong bared that it has detected the new UK Covid-19 variant from a passenger who arrived from Manila last month.

Hong Kong health authorities found the new variant from a 30-year old female resident who arrived from Manila on Dec. 22, 2020 via a Philippine Airlines flight. (PNA)

WHO: Vaccine readiness criteria 'in place' in PH

January 6, 2021



Some necessary parameters in the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccine in the country have already been established in the Philippines, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

WHO Country Representative Dr. Socorro Escalante enumerated on Wednesday the criteria on vaccine readiness of a country including a national vaccine deployment plan which the Philippines already has, and regulatory readiness in accepting vaccine applications.

"The President has signed the Executive Order authorizing the FDA to grant EUA for vaccines and also to rely or recognize assessment of these vaccines from other stringent regulatory authorities. That is a very important step that makes the country ready," Escalante explained.

Also included in the parameters of country readiness are preparedness concerning cold chain facility and safety monitoring amid the possible adverse effects of a new vaccine.

"In short, there are some aspects that are very important for vaccine readiness which the Philippines has already put in place," she stated.

The WHO emphasized that the public should understand the measures of the government, particularly the distribution of vaccines in case they become available in the country.

Medical frontliners should be prioritized in the distribution to ensure services of the country's healthcare system, followed by the sick and vulnerable.

Meanwhile, the WHO reported that there are already "232 candidate vaccines that are being developed, 172 of which are in the pre-clinical stage, and 60 are already in the phase of clinical trial."

Ten of the vaccines under clinical trial phase have already been granted "conditional approval" or EUA worldwide, while one vaccine has been granted emergency use listing by the WHO. – Report from Kenneth Paciente, PTV News Online

Source: <https://ptvnews.ph/who-vaccine-readiness-criteria-in-place-in-ph/>



'Malaki consequences': Bagong COVID variant dapat tutukan, ayon sa health expert

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Jan 06 2021 08:31 PM

MAYNILA - Nagdudulot ng alarma ang bagong variant ng COVID-19 hindi lamang sa Pilipinas, maging sa ibang bansa.

“Kailangan siyang tutukan kasi alam natin na nakakahawa itong variant na ito,” ayon kay Dr. Anna Lisa Ong-Lim, kasapi ng technical working group ng Department of Health.

Sa panayam sa TeleRadyo Miyerkoles ng umaga, sinabi ni Lim na may mga pag-aaral na nagsasabing higit 70 percent transmissible ang bagong coronavirus variant.

“And merong mga modeling na 'pag ito ang variant na kumalat sa atin sa Pilipinas, dadami nang husto ang mga kaso natin to about 9 or 10 times more,” sabi niya.

Paliwanag ni Lim, likas sa virus ang magbago dahil paraan aniya ito para matiyak na mabuhay ito sa komunidad. Hindi rin aniya ito ang unang pagkakataong nagkaroon ng variant ang virus sa Pilipinas o buong mundo.

“Noong July, August, na medyo talaga dumami kaso natin, nagkaroon tayo ng DG14G variant. And dahil meron tayong sistema, nakikita natin yan,” sabi niya.

Sa tala ng Department of Health ngayong Miyerkoles, umabot na sa 480,737 ang kabuuang bilang ng kaso ng COVID-19 sa bansa kung saan 448,700 ang mga gumaling at 9,347 naman ang namatay.

“Kung ngayong medyo challenged na ang ating health care system, papaano pa kaya kapag ito ang siyang maging malaganap?” sabi ni Lim.

Paalala niya sa publiko na huwag pa rin magpabaya at sundin ang minimum health protocols laban sa pagkalat ng COVID-19.

“Pagkanagkataon na yung nanghawa ay itong variety na ito, malaki ang consequences. Marami ang maaapektuhan. Marami ang maaring mamatay,” sabi niya.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/01/06/21/malaki-consequences-bagong-covid-variant-dapat-tutukan-ayon-sa-health-expert?fbclid=IwAR3Knrtii5g0bFF1uLYAJBAMngtJC0YgaMg4lznkFYSJsXkFjshOXXyCgXg>



In a report, Moody's Analytics chief economist Steven Cochrane said the Philippines and India are expected to struggle due to their deep recession and uncertain fiscal support of their policymakers.

Miguel De Guzman, file

'Philippines last to recover in Asia'

[Lawrence Agcaoili](#) (The Philippine Star) - January 7, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines is likely to be the last country in Asia-Pacific to fully recover from the pandemic-induced recession, with recovery seen only in the fourth quarter of 2022 while other economies are set to regain all of their lost output by the end of this year, according to Moody's Analytics.

In a report, Moody's Analytics chief economist Steven Cochrane said the Philippines and India are expected to struggle due to their deep recession and uncertain fiscal support of their policymakers.

The research arm of Moody's sees the Philippines fully recovering by the fourth quarter of next year and India in the first quarter of next year.

As varied as the impact of the pandemic recession has been this year across the region, so is the pattern of recovery and ultimate economic expansion. China, Taiwan and Vietnam have already recovered their lost output and are expected to enjoy further expansion in the year ahead.

On the other hand, Hong Kong, Korea, Indonesia, Australia and Thailand are expected to complete recovery by the middle of 2021.

"The depth of the COVID-19 recession in 2020 was quite varied across the Asia-Pacific region," Cochrane said.

According to Moody's Analytics, the gross domestic product of the Philippines and Malaysia shrank between 15 and 20 percent in the third quarter, while India was the hardest hit economy, with its GDP contracting nearly 25 percent in the first half of last year.

Moody's Analytics sees the Philippine economy starting to recover with a GDP growth of 4.5 percent this year and 6.2 percent in 2022 after contracting by about 9.9 percent in 2020.

The Philippines booked the biggest GDP contraction in Asia-Pacific last year followed by India with 8.8 percent, Thailand with 6.1 percent, Singapore with six percent, Hong Kong with 5.9 percent, Japan with 5.3 percent, New Zealand with five percent, Malaysia with 4.6 percent, Australia with 2.5 percent, Indonesia with 2.3 percent, and South Korea with one percent.



The only countries in the region that booked GDP growth last year include Vietnam and Taiwan with 2.7 percent as well as China with 2.4 percent.

“The Philippines struggled with the coronavirus but has managed to cut its daily case count in recent months,” Cochrane said.

Cochrane noted the Philippines and India are the least committed to fiscal stimulus despite being the hardest hit economies by the pandemic and the lengthy and strict quarantine policies.

He said the Philippines also lags in the procurement process while major countries in the region have already secured COVID-19 vaccines from manufacturers.

“An important exception is the Philippines, which has made little progress so far,” he said.



AWAY SA BAKUNA SA COVID-19 ITIGIL; MAGPOKUS SA PAGBABAKUNA



January 6, 2021 @ 12:40 AM 1 day ago

KATAKOT-takot ang pag-iingay ng mga kritiko ng administrasyong Duterte ukol sa naunang pagpapabakuna ng mga miyembro ng Presidential Security Group.

Sabi nila iligal ang pagpapabakuna dahil wala pang aprubadong bakuna laban sa coronavirus disease o COVID-19.

Dahil iligal, may pananagutan ang mga nagpabakuna o kaya'y nagpasok ng bakuna o mismo si Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte.

Bakunang gawa sa China ang sinasabing ginamit ng mga taga-PSG.

At may nagkasa pa ng imbestigasyon sa Senado “in aid of legislation” at may gusto pang paabutin ito sa pagpapanagot sa mga nagpabakuna, nagbakuna at nagpasok sa bansa ng bakuna.

SAAN PATUTUNGO ANG AWAY?

Malamang na sa huli, mawawalan ng saysay ang gusto ng mga kritiko na pagmukhaing masama at iligalista ang lahat ng kasali sa pagpapabakuna.

Bakit ‘ika n’yo?

Sa ligal na usapin, kapag inaprubahan ng Food and Drug Administration ang mga bakuna na ginamit ng mga taga-PSG para magamit bilang pang-emergency use o general use, tapos na ang usapan.

Kahit gawang China pa ang mga bakuna gaya ng Sinovac at Sinopharm na sa katunayan ay inaplayan na ng mga kompanyang Tsina ng paggamit sa Pinas para sa gamit-pang-emergency.

Sa pag-aruba ng FDA, magiging ligal na ang mga bakuna kaya naman mawawala na ang pananagutan ng kahit sinong may kaugnayan diyan.

Isa pa, paano ang pagbili ng pambansang pamahalaan o ng mga local government unit at pribadong kompanya ng mga bakuna, kung papayagan na ang mga huli, na hindi dumaan sa clinical trial sa Pinas ngunit ginagamit na ng ibang bansa gaya ng AstraZenica at Pfizer?

Inirarason kasing kapag hindi dumaan sa clinical trial sa Pinas, hindi pupwedeng gamitin dito.



Eh, may negosasyon na ang Pinas at AstraZenica at Pfizer na unang inaprubahan sa United Kingdom at United States at milyones nang dosage ang ginagamit sa UK at maging sa United States.

Uulitin natin, walang clinical trial ang AstraZenica na gawa ng UK at Pfizer na gawa ng US sa mahal kong Pinas.

SINA BINAY AT GATCHALIAN

Maganda ring tingnan ang mga pananaw nina Makati City Mayor Abigail Binay na isang abogado at Valenzuela City Mayor Rex Gatchalian.

Napakahalagang usapin ang punto ni Mayor Binay sa pagsasabi na paano kung ang isang Pinoy ay pupunta sa ibang bansa gaya ng China, US at UK at magpabakuna roon ng bakuna na itinuturing na ilegal sa Pinas ngunit ligal sa ibang bansa, mapananagot ba ito ng ilegal na gawa?

Maganda rin ang sinabi nitong bakit hindi na lang isama ang pagbabakuna ng Chinese vaccine, kung Sinopharm man iyon, sa tinatawag na clinical trial sa Pinas para sa nasabing bakuna at tingnan kung epektibo at ligtas ito?

Isa pang punto ni Mayor Binay na moral duty ng mga taga-PSG na protektahan nila ang kanilang mga sarili mula sa nakamamatay naman talagang COVID-19 at sino ang haharang sa kanila para lang mahawa at mamatay sa virus ng pandemya?

Para naman kay Mayor Gatchalian, isinugal ng mga PSG ang kanilang kalusugan at buhay para maprotektahan lang nila si Mayor Rodrigo Duterte bilang Pangulo ng bansa.

Si Pang. Duterte ay nagsabi namang matutulad sa self-defense ang pagpapabakuna o pagbabakuna ng sarili ng mga miyembro ng PSG at masasabing ligal ang kanilang gawa laban sa nakamamatay hindi lang sa kanila bilang PSG kundi maging sa kanilang mga pamilya.

BINIBILI, GINAGAMIT NA NG IBANG BANSANG

Itong Sinopharm at Sinovac ay ginagamit na ng iba't ibang bansa makaraang mapatunayang epektibo at ligtas laban sa COVID-19.

Ang pangatlong bakunang gawang China na CanSino vaccine ay napatutunayang epektibo na rin habang tine-testing sa bansang Mexico.

Heto ang dahilan ng ibang bansa para bumili at magbakuna ng Sinopharm at Sinovac na nag-aplay na ng para sa Use Emergency Authorization sa Pinas.

Epektibo laban sa COVID-19 ang Sinovac sa Brazil ng 50% – 90% samantalang sa Turkey, 91% ito.

Ang Sinopharm naman, 79.43% epektibo sa China pero 50% hanggang 86% epektibo naman sa United Arab Emirates at Bahrain.

MGA BANSANG BUMIBILI, GUMAGAMIT

Ang Pakistan ang kauna-unahang bumili ng 1.2 milyong dosage ng Sinopharm at ginagamit na rin ito ng Israel.



Ang UAE naman ang kauna-unahang bumili ng Sinovac at sumunod na rito ang Bahrain, Brazil, Indonesia, Turkey, Chile at Singapore.

Sa Indonesia, mismong si President Joko Widodo ang unang magpapabakuna ng Chinese vaccine.

May pag-uusap na rin ang Pinas at Malaysia para sa pagbili ng Sinovac.

Pero sa China, nais nilang mabakunahan ang may 50 milyong mamamayan nila bago dumating ang kanilang Bagong Taon sa Pebrero 12, 2021.

Napaulat na nagbabakuna na ang China simula pa noong Setyembre at pagdating ng winter o taglamig nitong Disyembre, mahigit limang milyon na umano ang nabakunahan ng Sinopharm at Sinovac samantalang ginagamit na rin ang iba pang bakunang Chinese gaya ng CanSinoBio at gawa ng Chinese Academy of Sciences.

Lumalabas na kabilang sa mga kauna-unahang pinagbabakunahan ang People's Liberation Army at iba pang taong pamahalaan at mga healthcare frontliner nila.

ISANG PALIWANAG

Para sa United States Food and Drug Administration, epektibo na ang bakunang nakaaabot ng 50% epekto at pwede nang gamitin.

Sinasabi naman ng World Health Organization na pwede na talaga ang 50% ngunit mas maganda kung aabot ito sa 70% .

Lumalabas talaga na pasado mismo sa USFDA at WHO ang mga Chinese vaccine at kung wala pang naiulat na namatay sa mag-50 milyon nang binabakunahan mismo sa China, lalong masasabing epektibo at ligtas ang mga Chinese vaccine.

Kahit pa may mamatay, halimbawa, gaya ng karanasan sa Pfizer/BioNTech, hindi nangangahulugang masama ang mga nasabing bakuna, rason na ginagamit ngayon para sa huling uri ng bakuna na gawang Amerikano.

Isa pa, sinasabi mismo ng mga siyentista gaya ng inilabas ng online news na The Scientist at WHO na hindi talaga perpekto ang mga bakuna gaya ng flu vaccine o laban sa lagnat na 40-60 epektibo ngunit nakaliligtas ito ng milyon-milyong tao sa kamatayan mula sa lagnat sa buong mundo taon-taon.

DENGVAXIA IS DANGEROUS

Nang magbakuna ng Dengvaxia sina noo'y Secretary of Health Janette Garin, nakatatak sa dilaw na t-shirt ng isang bata ang "DENGUE DANGEROUS."

Pero, anak ng tokwa, makarang masimulang mabakunahan ang halos isang milyong bata sa elementary at high school, lalo na sa mga public school noong 2016, mahigit 600 nang bata ang namamatay.

Ang DENGVAXIA pala ay dangerous o mapanganib o nakamamatay rin katulad mismo ng dengue.

At sa taong ito, 2021, na ikalimang taon ng naturukan ng Dengvaxia noong 2016 at sa 2022 na ikalimang taon ng mga nabakunahan noong 2017, tiyak na may mamatay pa.



2022 na ikalimang taon ng mga nabakunahan noong 2017, tiyak na may mamatay pa.

Alalahaning limang taon ang buong panahon para maobserbahan ang epekto ng Dengvaxia, at kamakailan lang, mismong isang pamangkin ni Public Attorney's Office chief Persida Acosta ang kasama sa mga namatay.

Kaya naman, naririyang na ang nasa 160 kasong nakasampa laban kina Garin at ilang opisyal ni ex-President Noynoy Aquino, kasama ang European company na Sanofi Pasteur na may gawa ng Dengvaxia at Zuelling pharma na tagabenta ng Dengvaxia.

Kabilang sa mga kasong nakasampa ang homicide o pagpatay at paglabag sa Anti-Torture Law.

KAYA AYAW MAGPABAKUNA

Kahit saan ka pupunta, anak ng pitong putakte, ayaw magpabakuna ang marami laban sa COVID-19 dahil sa karanasan nila o sa masasamang balita ukol sa Dengvaxia.

Sa Metro Manila lang, sa isang sarbey ng Octa Research, 25 porsyento lang ang gustong magpabakuna samantalang 29% ang ayaw habang 47% ang hindi pa nakapagdedesisyon.

Kung grupo-grupuhin ang mga sinarbey, 31% porsyento sa hanay ng mga mahihirap at 48% sa mga pinakamahihirap ang ayaw magpabakuna.

Sa mga may gusto naman, 29% mula sa hanay ng mga may kaya sa buhay, 27% sa mahihirap at 24% sa pinakamahihirap.

Ginawa ang sarbey nitong Disyembre 9-13, 2020.

Noon namang Nobyembre 2020, 66% sa mga may tamang edad na Pinoy ang gustong magpabakuna habang 31% ang ayaw, ayon naman sa Social Weather Station.

Sa huling sarbey ng SWS na buong Pilipinas ang saklaw, aba, 31 milyon ang ayaw at nakapanghihinayang ito.

Ngayong lumikha ng malaking pagdududa sa bakuna sa COVID-19 ang mga kritiko, malamang na lalong aayaw ang milyon-milyong mamamayan.

IPOKRITO SA DENG VAXIA AT BAKUNA SA PSG

Ngayong nabubunyag ang maraming kamatayan sa Dengvaxia, nakasiper ang bunganga ng mga kritiko ni Pang. Digong at ng kanyang pamahalaan laban sa Dengvaxia.

Pero kung sino-sino ang nakasiper ang bunganga sa Dengvaxia, sila ngayon ang ngawa nang ngawa laban sa bakuna na ginamit ng PSG.

'Yun bang === kung kikilalanin ninyo ang mga naghihiyaw at nagngangawa laban sa bakuna ng PSG, sila rin ang mga promotor noon ng Dengvaxia at tagapagtanggol ng mga nakademanda ngayon kaugnay ng Dengvaxia.



At dahil sa nalalapit na ang halalang 2022, ang bawat isyu gaya ng bakuna sa COVID-19 ay kanilang pinalalaki at ginagawang panira sa sinomang kalaban nila, lalo na ang mga nasa nalilinya sa bakuran ng administrasyong Duterte.

Panalo sa halalang 2022 ang importante sa kanila kaysa kapakanan ng mamamayan na dapat pinakaimportante sa lahat.

ANO-ANO ANG DAPAT GAWIN?

Ano ngayon ang dapat gawin sa bakuna sa COVID-19 na inaasahan nating magliligtas sa atin sa pandemya na lumikha na ng matinding kahirapan, kagutuman, bagsak na ekonomiya at kaguluhan sa pulitika, may halalan mang darating o wala?

Kung ang ULTIMATUM ang tatanungin, dapat tayong magpokus sa pagkumbinse sa mga mamamayan na magpabakuna laban sa COVID-19.

Dapat magkaroon ng kumpiyansa ang mga mamamayan sa mga hakbang ng pamahalaan sa pagkuha at paggamit ng mga bakuna laban sa pandemya, saanman galing at gawa ang mga ito.

Hangga't milyon-milyon ang ayaw magpabakuna, walang matatawag na herd immunity o sapat na grupo ng tao sa Pinas na magkaroon ng panlaban sa virus sa katawan at lahat ay posibleng manatiling carrier o tagahawa ng COVID-19.

Kung mangyari ito, mga Bro, mananatili ang pagpapairal ng mga lockdown at bagsak na ekonomiya at paghahanapbuhay na nagpapahirap sa higit na nakararami kahit saan.

At mananatili naman tayong nakabaon sa kahirapan, kagutuman at pagkakasakit at pagkahati-hati hanggang sa magkandahetot-hetot ang lahat.



PAGASA: Mababa ang tsansa na magkaroon ng bagyo sa bansa ngayong linggo

By Angellic Jordan January 06, 2021 - 06:24 PM



Umiiral pa rin ang dalawang weather system sa bansa, ayon sa PAGASA.

Sinabi ni PAGASA weather specialist Benison Estareja na nakakaapekto ang Intertropical Convergence Zone o ITCZ sa parteng Mindanao.

Magiging maulap pa rin ang kalangitan at posibleng makaranas ng kalat-kalat na pag-ulan sa halos buong Mindanao.

Bahagya naman aniyang lumalakas ang Northeast Monsoon o Amihan sa Luzon.

Bunsod nito, mararamdaman pa rin ang pag-ulan sa Cagayan Valley at Cordillera.

Sa natitirang bahagi ng Luzon kasama ang Metro Manila, maaaring makaranas ng maulap na papawirin at may tsansa lamang ng pulo-pulong mahihinang pag-ulan sa susunod na 12 oras.

Sa bahagi naman ng MIMAROPA at Bicol, posibleng makaranas ng isolated rainshowers.

Samantala, magiging maulap ang kalangitan sa bahagi ng Visayas na posibleng magkaroon ng isolated thunderstorms.

Ani Estareja, walang namamataang bagyo sa paligid ng Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR).

Mababa rin aniya ang tsansa na magkaroon ng bagyo sa linggong ito.



PHL thanks Japan for quick release of 10-B yen loan to aid typhoon victims

By DOFPublished on January 6, 2021

MANILA, Jan. 6 -- The Philippines has thanked Japan for quickly disbursing another 10-billion yen under the second phase of its Post Disaster Standby Loan 2 (PDSL 2) program that will support ongoing government efforts to rehabilitate areas, and help families affected, by the series of powerful typhoons that devastated parts of Luzon in the last quarter of 2020.

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III said this financial support from Japan (equivalent to approximately P4.67 billion or US\$91.79 million) will help cover the funding needed to help families get back on their feet and rebuild communities following the destruction left by typhoons Quinta, Rolly and Ulysses in October and November last year.

This disbursement on January 5 brings to JPY20 billion yen (about P9.33 billion or US\$183.58 million) the funds released so far by Japan to the Philippines under PDSL 2.

"On behalf of the Philippine government, I express my gratitude to the people and government of Japan for helping our country swiftly mobilize financial resources for the massive rehabilitation efforts in the areas pummeled by typhoons Quinta, Rolly and Ulysses," Secretary Dominguez said.

The government estimates losses of over P10 billion combined in the agriculture sector alone from these three cyclones that struck the country one after the other in two weeks' time beginning October.

"The speedy release of this 10-billion yen loan underscores anew the Japanese government's unwavering support for the Duterte administration's disaster relief and mitigation programs," Secretary Dominguez added. "Such immediate financial support at this time will certainly go a long way in helping our people and communities recover quickly from the devastation wrought by the three super typhoons."

The JPY10-billion disbursement on January 5 is the second fund release under the JPY50-billion (about P23.33 billion or US\$ 458.95 million) PDSL 2, which was formalized between the Philippines and Japan last Sept. 15 through an agreement signed by Secretary Dominguez and Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) Chief Representative Eigo Azukizawa.

"As a friend and trusted partner of the Philippines, JICA stands by Filipinos whose lives were disrupted because of the recent natural disasters. Through the JICA post-disaster assistance, we hope that vulnerable sectors affected will find relief and support to recover their livelihood and income through the spirit of 'bayanihan' in these difficult times," Chief Representative Azukizawa said following the second PDSL 2 disbursement.

Chief Representative Azukizawa also said that "as partners for inclusive development, JICA is supporting the Philippines with available financial resources to mitigate the impact of natural disasters and health crisis. We're making it clear that we're in this together and that JICA will support development partners who need our assistance."



Japan earlier disbursed another JPY10 billion yen to the Philippines to support the government's COVID-19 response measures following President Duterte's extension of the state of calamity on Sept. 16 throughout the Philippines because of the pandemic.

President Duterte later declared a state of calamity in the entire Luzon on Nov. 18 through Proclamation 1051 to "hasten the rescue, relief and rehabilitation efforts of the government and the private sector, including any international humanitarian assistance," in the wake of the devastation wrought by the strong typhoons that struck the country in the last quarter.

Under the agreement for the PDSL2, the disbursement of the standby loan to the Philippines will be triggered by either of the following circumstances: 1) the declaration of a state of calamity; or 2) the declaration of a state of public health emergency.

On top of PDSL 2, JICA has supported the Philippines' pandemic response measures through a JPY50 billion yen COVID-19 Crisis Response Emergency Support Loan (CCRESL).

The Philippines became the first recipient of Japan's emergency support loan for COVID-19 affected economies with the early disbursement last Aug. 14 of the 50-billion CCRESL to the government.

Aside from committing to support the Philippines' disaster response and mitigation programs, Japan has also been a reliable partner of President Duterte's centerpiece "Build Build Build" infrastructure modernization program.

Since the start of the Duterte administration in July 2016, 15 loan agreements totaling JPY679.296 billion (about P313.147 billion or US\$6.443 billion) have been signed by Manila and Tokyo.

About 82 percent of this funding support is for big-ticket infrastructure projects under "Build, Build, Build."

Japan is also the Philippines' no.1 Official Development Assistance (ODA) partner, with loans and grants amounting to around US\$10.10 billion (38.53 percent of total ODA) as of June 2020. (DOF)



Climate change: Alaskan wilderness opens up for oil exploration



GETTY IMAGES

image captionA polar bear cub playing in a snow drift in the area of the proposed oil lease sales

The Trump administration is pushing ahead with the first ever sale of oil leases in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR).

The giant Alaskan wilderness is home to many important species, including polar bears, caribou and wolves.

But after decades of dispute, the rights to drill for oil on about 5% of the refuge will go ahead. Opponents have criticised the rushed nature of the sale, coming just days before President Trump's term ends.

Covering some 19 million acres (78,000 sq km) the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge is often described as America's last great wilderness.

It is a critically important location for many species, including polar bears.

In the winter months, pregnant bears build dens in which to give birth.

As temperatures have risen and sea ice has become thinner, these bears **have started building their dens on land.**



GETTY IMAGES

image captionMany indigenous groups with strong links to the ANWR have opposed oil exploration

The coastal plain of the ANWR now has the highest concentration of these dens in the state.

The refuge is also home to Porcupine caribou, one of the largest herds in the world, numbering around 200,000 animals.

In the spring, the herd moves to the coastal plain region of the ANWR as it is their preferred calving ground.

The same coastal plain is now the subject of the first ever oil lease sale in the refuge.



The push for exploration in the park has been a decades long battle between oil companies supported by the state government and environmental and indigenous opponents.

Many of Alaska's political representatives believe that drilling in the refuge could lead to another major oil find, like the one in Prudhoe Bay, just west of the ANWR.

Prudhoe Bay is the largest oil field in North America and supporters believe the ANWR shares the same geology, and potential reserves of crude oil.

Oil revenues are critical for Alaska, with every resident getting a cheque for around \$1,600 every year from the state's permanent fund.

In 2017, the Trump administration's tax cutting bill contained a provision to open up the ANWR coastal plain for drilling. It was seen as a way of offsetting the costs of the tax cuts.

The US Bureau of Land Management is **now selling the drilling rights** to 22 tracts of land covering about one million acres. These oil and gas leases last for 10 years.



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A last-minute attempt to stop the sale in the courts failed but opponents say it will not be the end of their efforts to protect the refuge from drilling.

"The Trump administration is barrelling forward without doing the careful, legally required analyses of the impacts such activity will have on the environment or the Gwich'in people who have relied on this land for millennia," said Kristen Monsell, a senior attorney at the Center for Biological Diversity, which is headquartered in Tucson, Arizona, who had sought an injunction against the sale.

"That's why we've taken them to court. We can't let Trump turn this amazing landscape into an oil field."

Reports indicate that interest in the lease sales has been low.



REUTERS

image caption Thinning ice has seen more polar bears make their dens on land



While estimates suggest around 11 billion barrels of oil lie under the refuge, it has no roads or other infrastructure, making it a very expensive place to drill for oil.

Several large US banks have said they will not fund oil and gas exploration in the area.

There is also the matter of a change of leadership in the White House. The Biden team have nominated Deb Haaland as Secretary of the Interior. She is on record as being strongly opposed to drilling in the ANWR.

With climate change set to be a central focus for the Biden administration, it's likely that efforts to extract new fossil fuels in Alaska will be subject to review and delay.

This could ultimately limit the interest and opportunity for oil exploration in the refuge.

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China to launch carbon emissions trading scheme next month

Published January 6, 2021, 5:17 PM

by [Agence France-Presse](#)

China's delayed carbon trading system will start operating in February, the environment ministry has said, as the world's biggest polluter takes steps towards decarbonizing its economy by 2060.



China's delayed carbon trading system will start operating in February, the environment ministry has said, as the world's biggest polluter takes steps towards decarbonizing its economy by 2060. (AFP / MANILA BULLETIN)

The ministry issued rules on Tuesday allowing provincial governments to set pollution caps for big power businesses for the first time.

Firms can buy the right to pollute from others who have a lower carbon footprint, but the programme is expected to drive down overall emissions by making it more costly to do so.

"This is one of the most exciting developments for the world's largest carbon market in the recent rollercoaster year," said Zhang Jianyu, vice president of the Environmental Defense Fund China, which has consulted with the government on emissions trading.

However, 60 percent of power in China is still provided by coal despite ambitious renewable energy targets, and experts warn the powerful coal lobby will be pressing hard for favourable carbon caps.

Under the new rules, more than 2,200 firms that emit over 26,000 tonnes of greenhouse gases per year can start trading their emission quotas from February 1.

China's nationwide system is expected to eclipse that of the European Union to become the world's largest emissions trading scheme (ETS).

Beijing has pledged to peak emissions before 2030 and become carbon neutral 30 years later. But it pared back initial plans to curb emissions from seven other industries including aviation, steel and petrochemical manufacturing.

"When Europe started its trading scheme in 2005, there were issues in the first phase where members were kind of caving in to lobbying pressure," said Li Shuo from Greenpeace China. China's greenhouse gas emissions in 2019 were estimated at 13.92 billion tonnes — about 29 percent of the world's total linked to global warming.

Once fully operational, the ETS will cover about a third of China's national emissions, according to the International Carbon Action Partnership.

It is unclear whether China will include businesses outside the power sector in the system.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/01/06/china-to-launch-carbon-emissions-trading-scheme-next-month/>



Indonesian baby sea turtles make a break for freedom

Published January 6, 2021, 5:39 PM

by [Agence France-Presse](#)

Newly hatched, dozens of baby turtles flipped and flopped their way down a beach towards the crashing waves of the Indian Ocean, under the watchful gaze of conservationists at an Indonesian national park.



This picture taken on December 2, 2020 shows a conservation ranger holding a baby sea turtle while explaining its circle of life after being released on a beach in Sukamade, Meru Betiri National Park in East Java. – Six of the world's seven turtle species can be found in Indonesia, an archipelago of more than 17,000 islands and home to a dizzying array of exotic wildlife. (Photo by Agnes Anya / AFP)

Small enough to fit into the palm of a hand, some ended up on their backs, wriggling their tiny flippers helplessly as they tried to get back on track.

But the conservationists did not interfere, as they wanted the creatures to “map” their surroundings and then return to lay eggs decades later.

“Sea turtles mature at 25 years old, so if they’re released today, we’ll probably meet them again 25 years from now,” said Ardhini Estu Wardana, a forest ranger at Meru Betiri National Park on the eastern edge of Java.

Its beaches are nesting grounds for several species of turtle.

The night before, a giant female — over a metre (3.3 feet) long — laid more than 160 eggs on the shore, sweeping mounds of sand over them to protect them from predators.

Turtles, under threat from poaching and habitat destruction, are protected under Indonesian law.

Their eggs are considered a delicacy and they are also slaughtered for their meat, skin and shells.

Six of the world's seven turtle species can be found in Indonesia, an archipelago of more than 17,000 islands and home to a dizzying array of exotic wildlife.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2021/01/06/indonesian-baby-sea-turtles-make-a-break-for-freedom/>



Finger pointed at poachers after rare lynx killed in France

[Agence France-Presse](#) / 06:52 PM January 06, 2021



A female lynx is pictured at the animal park of Sainte-Croix, on June 03, 2020, in Rhodes, eastern France. Image: AFP / JEAN-CHRISTOPHE VERHAEGEN.

A lynx, one of Europe's rarest mammals, has been found shot dead in eastern France in a suspected killing by poachers, local officials said Tuesday, Jan. 5.

The only big cat species to live in the wild in France, the lynx carcass was found on Dec. 31 in the Jura mountains and an autopsy showed it was shot, the local environmental protection agency said in a statement.

The killing of one of the estimated 150 lynx believed to live in France is a "serious blow for the population" coming after two lynx were also killed at the start of 2020.

The lynx is detested by some hunters because of the large amount of prey that it consumes. A criminal investigation has been opened and the culprits risk up to three years in prison and a fine of €150,000 (around \$185,000 or P8.9 million) if caught.

Two-thirds of France's lynx population is in the Jura and the rest is concentrated in the Alps, with a sporadic population in the Vosges mountains also in the east. *CC*

Source: <https://technology.inquirer.net/107019/finger-pointed-at-poachers-after-rare-lynx-killed-in-france>

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