

09 JANUARY 2022, SUNDAY



DENR

NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



DENR notes water quality improvement in Manila Bay, commits to continue rehab in 2022

Published on: January 07, 2022

By Department of Environment and Natural Resources

QUEZON CITY -- The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has reported significant gains in the water quality of the bay in 2021 as it vows to carry on its work this year in compliance with the continuing mandamus of the Supreme Court.

DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu said the rehabilitation had a number of achievements due to its solid waste management strategies, geo-engineering interventions, and compliance monitoring of establishments, among others around the Manila Bay area in the National Capital Region (NCR), Region 3 and Region 4A.

“Amid the persistent COVID-19 pandemic, the DENR along with the Manila Bay Interagency Task Force persevered this year in its task to rehabilitate Manila Bay. We have accomplished so much and we vow to sustain our gains for a cleaner Manila Bay in 2022,” said Cimatu.

Data from the Manila Bay Coordinating Office (MBCO) revealed that the Baywalk area, which is a priority in the rehabilitation, registered a notable decrease in coliform level in all its nine key stations. It recorded an average of 21,100 most probable number per 100 milliliters (mpn/100mL) as of the third quarter of 2021 from 5.75 million mpn/100 mL in 2019.

On the other hand, four key stations in the Baseco beach area registered a decrease in coliform level from an overall geomean of 145,000 mpn/100 mL in 2020 to 21,500 mpn/100 mL in September 2021.

The MBCO reported that in September 2021, the Baywalk Sewage Treatment Plant (STP), which treats wastewater from the Padre Faura, Remedios, and Estero de San Antonio de Abad outfalls, receives an influent of 8.8 million mpn/100mL and releases an effluent of 9.4 mpn/100ml passing the fecal coliform standard of 100 mpn/100mL for Class SB waters.

In the same month, the fecal coliform level in Obando, Talisay, and Pampanga rivers in Region 3 which are aiming for Class C water standard of 200 mpn/100 mL, only ranges in thousands. The Cañas River in Region 4A recorded 106,000 mpn/200 mL from 9.6 million mpn/200 mL last January 2021.

Meanwhile, the coliform level of nine bathing beach areas, which aim to achieve a Class SB level across the NCR, Region 3, and Region 4A, has decreased in thousands as of MBCO's latest data.



The Environmental Management Bureau in NCR, Regions 3 and 4A, and the Laguna Lake Development Authority issued Notices of Violation to 685 establishments, Cease and Desist Orders to five establishments, and Ex-Parte Orders to five establishments out of the 4,576 establishments inspected from January to September 2021 for violation of Republic Act 9275 or the Philippine Clean Water Act of 2004.

In terms of solid waste management, a total 50,618.94 cubic meters of garbage from shorelines, waterways, rivers, and beaches were collected and disposed from 19,088 cleanup activities including collection from trash traps and trash boats, and declogging conducted from January to September 2021 by the DENR involving 82,151 volunteers and estero rangers.

On the other hand, the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) has also collected and disposed 17,946.1 cubic meters of solid waste.

The Task Force Water Hyacinth which was created in 2021 led the collection of a total of 76,224 sacks of water hyacinth in Manila Bay.

“As the rehabilitation continues, I call on my fellow Filipinos to be part of this huge and vital task to restore Manila Bay to its pristine condition through behavioral change. It’s high time that we totally alter our habits on waste disposal as well as our attitude on taking responsibility for one’s actions. Our cleanup efforts will be in vain if these will not be sustained by the public, and especially by the new administration this 2022,” said Cimatu.

The DENR Secretary said the Manila Bay Dolomite Beach, which reopened on December 28, 2021, aims to inspire behavioral change among Filipinos by showing them that a beautiful and clean environment is possible with concerted efforts.

Meanwhile, geo-engineering interventions conducted by the Department of Public Works and Highways and the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority in the Baywalk area such as the installation of HDPE (high density polyethylene) pipes for the Padre Faura, Remedios, and Abad Outfalls, and desilting, among others are nearing completion.

In one of the three sampling stations of the Dolomite Beach, coliform level has significantly gone down to 1,700 mpn/100 mL as of December 22, 2021 from a geomean of 1.6 million last September 2020. Other stations also recorded notable decreases in coliform level.

The DENR-San Miguel Corporation partnership resulted in a total volume dredged of 511,432 cubic meters with effective length of 5,215 meters in the Tullahan-Tinajeros River from June 12, 2020 to October 31, 2021. A total volume of 35,500 cubic meters was dredged for the period July 8 to September 21, 2021 in the Pasig River. (DENR)



How to communicate biodiversity?

BY JONATHAN L. MAYUGA JANUARY 9, 2022

The infographic features logos for USAID, UN Women, gef, and ADB at the top left. It displays five parrot species: Blue-Naped Parrot, Red-vented Cockatoo, Green Racket-Tail, Philippine Hanging Parrot, and Blue-Winged Racket-Tail. The central text reads: "All parrot species are protected under the **Philippine Wildlife Act (RA 9147)**". Below this, it states: "It is **illegal** to collect, possess, buy, sell, import, and export wildlife without proper permits." It encourages readers to "Show your love for wildlife by helping stop the **Illegal Wildlife Trade (IWT)**" and lists the hashtags #StopIllegalWildlifeTrade, #BiodiversityPH, and #StopIWT. A call to action box says: "Please share this post and report what you see to **DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau** or your nearest DENR Office". Contact information includes wrd@bmb.gov.ph and phone numbers (02) 8925-8952 or (02) 8925-8953.

#Stop Illegal Wildlife Trade campaign materials like this were produced as part of the of the DENR-BMB's drive to reduce the demand for wildlife.

How do you communicate biodiversity for the target audience to grasp the importance of saving it?

At the forefront of the campaign to protect and conserve the country's rich biodiversity, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Biodiversity Management Bureau (DENR-BMB) uses different strokes to communicate it.

Through the years, the DENR-BMB has evolved from issuing news releases and statements to using various forms of media to disseminate news and other information, to adopting the latest trend in information technology, including social media.

In the last two years of community quarantines due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the challenge of communicating biodiversity became even harder for the DENR-BMB, but no task is difficult through its Communication, Education and Public Awareness (CEPA) core group.

Pre-Covid IEC

Before the pandemic, the DENR-BMB regularly conducted school and community visits around the country, especially during major biodiversity-related celebrations, such as World Wetlands Day, World Wildlife Day, International Day of Biological Diversity, Philippine Eagle Week, World Migratory Bird Day, World Oceans Day, Coral Triangle Day, Tamaraw Month and Climate Change Consciousness Week.



The DENR-BMB also responded to requests from schools, local government units (LGUs) nongovernment organizations (NGOs) and even the private sector to conduct talks about biodiversity.

The agency likewise facilitated interviews in both television and radio, and held roadshows, such as exhibits in malls, hotels and convention centers.

Platform evolution

Almost a year into the pandemic, the agency started to go digital due to the community quarantines, which led to travel restrictions, closure of schools, malls and convention centers.

Community residents were also prohibited from going to barangay halls or public areas, requiring the DENR-BMB CEPA Core Group to rethink their strategy and adapt to the situation.

“By going digital, we keep our old routines fit the new normal. For the DENR-BMB, now more than ever, social media has become a vital CEPA platform,” DENR-BMB Director Datu Tungko M. Saikol told the BusinessMirror via e-mail on December 27.

Continuing its public awareness program online, the DENR-BMB has been conducting seminars through webinars and even using social media to enhance its existing programs.

“It [CEPA] provides the link between science, society and sound policy-making through a range of instruments from knowledge products to education, social marketing and dialogue,” Saikol said.

The DENR-BMB employs several CEPA strategies to achieve its targets of communicating biodiversity to target audiences, he said.

Dalaw-Turo

One CEPA strategy that contributes to achieving its target is Dalaw-Turo (DT).

It means Teaching Visits through lectures in schools and communities to teach about the importance and status of the country’s biodiversity.

It also promotes its conservation and deepens the understanding of pressing environmental issues.

It is an environmental outreach program initiated in the early 1990s with the aim of raising public awareness on biodiversity conservation and sustainable development through a nontraditional, nonformal participatory approach.

“Through the years, it has employed various forms of folk media such as street theatre, creative workshops and exhibits, including other activities like ecological tours and games, to make learning about biodiversity audience-friendly and effective,” he said.

‘Biodiversity Sentinel’

The official gazette of the DENR-BMB, the Biodiversity Sentinel is published semi-annually. It covers selected topics and information on the DENR-BMB’s conservation efforts, as well as the latest news, and research at the national, Asean and global levels.

It aims to ensure that DENR personnel, partners and other stakeholders are kept up to date with the work in biodiversity conservation, and provide accurate and insightful coverage of the latest news and research on Philippine biodiversity.

Lastly, this knowledge product is effective in communicating scientific knowledge in a language easily understandable by a wider audience while adhering to scientific accuracy.



Electronic copies of the Biodiversity Sentinel can be accessed online via the link: <https://bmb.gov.ph/index.php/e-library/publications/newsletter>.

eLibrary

Launched only last November 17, 2021, as part of the celebration of the International Year of Caves and Karst, the DENR-BMB's digital library, or eLibrary, augments the existing information services from the traditional libraries reinforced by current information technology and knowledge management practices.

It offers a comprehensive collection of information on biodiversity for users that can be browsed in just several computer clicks through the Online Public Access Catalogue, which allows remote 24/7 access for multiple users.

The eLibrary is constituted under the supervision of the DENR-BMB's Caves, Wetlands, and Other Ecosystems Division and in close coordination with the Biodiversity Policy and Knowledge Management Division.

Year of Protected Areas Campaign

The Year of the Protected Areas Campaign aims to increase awareness through an information campaign on the ecological and economic value of protected areas, and to instill appreciation among the new generation of Filipinos on the beauty and heritage of areas set aside for conservation.

As part of the campaign, the DENR-BMB together with the United Nations Development Programme-Biodiversity Finance Project is pushing 2022 to be declared as the Year of Protected Areas in the Philippines.

The campaign will feature six protected areas namely Bongsanglay Natural Park in Bicol, Apo Reef Natural Park in Occidental Mindoro, Samar Island Natural Park on Samar Island, Balinsasayao Twin Lakes Natural Park in Negros Oriental, Mt. Hamiguitan Range Wildlife Sanctuary in Davao Oriental, and the Mt. Timpoong-Hibok-Hibok Natural Monument on Camiguin Island.

#StopIWT CEPA Campaign

A major driver of biodiversity loss, illegal wildlife trade is always a part of the DENR's CEPA campaign.

The campaign aims to reduce the demand for wildlife, their byproducts and derivatives, while raising awareness about the environmental and legal consequences of the illegal wildlife trade.

The campaign highlights the legal penalties of violating Republic Act 9147, or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act, also known as Wildlife Act.

It focuses on the campaign against hunting or poaching wild animals, particularly marine turtles, and parrots, especially the blue-naped parrot.

The campaign ran from February 2020 until July 2021 but the materials produced from this endeavor can still be seen circulating in various social media platforms.

Biodiversity Ambassador program

To build greater public awareness on biodiversity conservation, the DENR-BMB aims to partner with an influencer lending his or her celebrity status in support of the bureau's vision, mission and goals.

The Biodiversity Ambassador will be on the frontline of communicating biodiversity to the general public, inspiring others, especially the youth, to become environmental stewards in their schools and communities.



The Biodiversity Ambassador, who will receive guidance and mentorship, will be invited to participate in various biodiversity conservation efforts and CEPA-related activities.

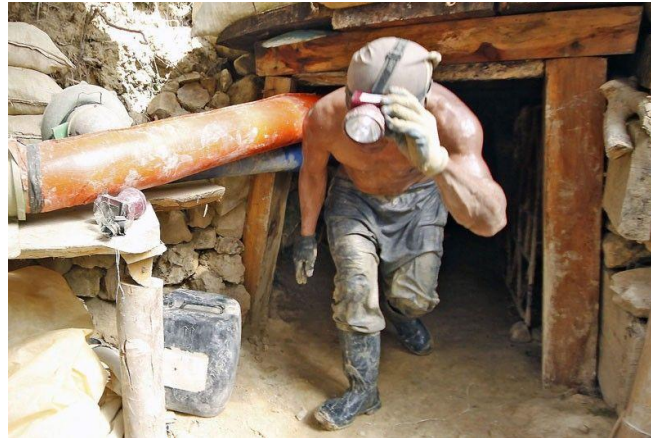
One such Biodiversity Ambassadors of the DENR-BMB is Antoinette Taus, who continues to advocate biodiversity conservation and appears in various CEPA-related activities of the DENR-BMB and its partners.

Image credits: [DENR-BMB photo](#)



Ensuring the promise of open-pit mining

[Paco Pangalangan](#) - Philstar.com January 8, 2022 | 3:35pm



File photo of a miner.
The STAR/Artemio A. Dumlao

A couple of weeks ago, the Philippines lifted a four-year ban on open-pit mining. In doing so, it also re-opened the debate on the mining method's perceived environmental impact and its promising economic benefits. This debate is by no means new and will undoubtedly continue.

Nevertheless, this recent policy change is significant since it has created an opportunity for the proponents of open-pit mining to debunk public misconceptions about the method's environmental impact and deliver tangible economic benefits.

Critics of open-pit mining warn against the environmental damage that it can cause. Over the years, anti-mining groups have raised concerns about the industry's use of hazardous chemicals, the welfare of affected communities, and deforestation concerns that have long been associated with mining operations. However, many of these concerns trace their roots back to pre-Philippine Mining Act of 1995 practices that are no longer being used by modern-day large-scale mining operations.

In actuality, open-pit mining, or open-cast mining, is an internationally accepted mining technique of extracting surface minerals and shallow ore deposits. This mining method is used when deposits are found too near the surface that it is structurally unsuitable for tunneling and underground mining methods. The point here is, the decision to use the open-pit method is scientifically based on technical considerations that rule out underground mining methods.

In addition, this mining method does not use dangerous chemicals like mercury to separate ore from the soil. Mercury is a highly toxic chemical that can contaminate soil and water sources that it comes in contact with.

For this reason, the Philippine government has been working to eliminate the use of mercury in mining. Large-scale open-pit mining operations do not use this toxic chemical, but since mercury acts like a magnet to some minerals, many small-scale miners continue to illicitly use it despite its health risks.

When it comes to the method's environmental impact, according to the Foundation for Economic Freedom, "Any negative effects on the environment can be mitigated with rehabilitation measures and other environmental safeguards that mining companies using the open-pit method must adhere to." The group also pointed out that open-pit mining is used worldwide, even in countries with strict environmental laws like the United States, Australia, and Canada.



In the Philippines, all large-scale mining operations, including open-pit mines, are required by law to rehabilitate the excavated, mined-out, and any disturbed areas covered by their operations. In fact, it is probably compliance with this requirement that has led to this somewhat unexpected factoid: Philippine mining companies are officially recognized as some of the most significant contributors to the country's reforestation initiative—the National Greening Program.

Over the years, the Philippines' large-scale mining industry has also made strides in institutionalizing proper environmental management and social responsibility practices in its operations. For instance, one of the recent initiatives of the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines was the implementation of the Towards Sustainable Mining (TSM) initiative for member companies.

TSM is a Canadian mining model that sets strict environmental, social, health, safety, innovation, and human rights standards for mining operators to follow. The process also involves a yearly self-assessment by mining companies and an external verification process. It incorporates civil-society oversight through a Community of Interest Advisory Panel. This panel oversees the development and implementation of TSM and serves as a venue for the industry and civil society to engage with each other.

Now that the open-pit mining ban has been lifted, its proponents have a real opportunity to clear up public misconceptions surrounding the method and demonstrate that mining can be done responsibly through rehabilitation and environmental safeguards.

At the same time, it must also deliver the foreseen economic benefits to the country. According to Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) Director Wilfredo Moncano, the Philippines is one of the most highly mineralized countries globally, having mineral resources estimated at P68 trillion. Furthermore, according to the MGB, more than a third of the Philippines' total land area of 30 million hectares has been identified as having "high mineral potential," but 95% of mineral deposits still remain untapped.

Because of its economic potential, the lifting of the ban also has the support of the Department of Finance (DOF). According to the DOF, now that the ban has been lifted, data shows that there are at least 11 pending open-pit mining projects that, if pursued, could infuse about P11 billion worth of revenues to state resources. These pending mining projects, the DOF said, could increase annual exports by around P36 billion and create 22,880 jobs for local mining communities.

"More importantly, the lifting of the ban on open-pit mining will help revitalize the economy as we begin to recover from the pandemic by generating additional revenues, royalty fees, export value, and even more jobs in related industries," Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez said.

The economic benefits of a revitalized mining industry are promising. However, for Filipinos to reap the benefits of its high mineral potential, there must be a stable and predictable policy and regulatory environment for the mining sector to operate in.

Keep in mind, unlike the more industrialized United States, Australia, and Canada, the Philippine mining industry has barely had time to build momentum. Since the Philippine Mining Act was passed into law in 1995, key provisions have been questioned in the courts or put on hold by regulators.

We must remember that large-scale mining—done responsibly—is capital and time intensive. If the policy environment is not stable, investors will be wary of coming in. As a result, the expected job creation, government revenue, and economic benefits from the mining industry will not be realized.



Now that the open-pit ban has been lifted, proponents of open-pit mining in both the government and the industry have a new opportunity to work together to pro-actively correct misconceptions, address concerns, and deliver economic benefits. However, the only way to do this is by ensuring that both the government's and industry's policies and practices live up to the promises.

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



4 New Year's resolutions for a healthier environment in 2022

BY JANUARY 9, 2022



The Arroceros Forest Park in Ermita Manila.

When many people think of New Year's resolutions, they brainstorm ways to improve themselves for the year ahead. What if we expanded those aspirations to include resolutions that benefit our communities, society and the planet, too?

It might not be a typical approach, but it can broaden your horizons to show ways you can also be of service to others.

Here are four popular New Year's resolutions with a twist for improving your relationship with nature in 2022 and beyond.

Exercise more consideration for how your actions impact the environment

We each have an environmental ethic reflecting how we value, manage and ultimately relate to nature.

Balancing the scales of reciprocity between us and nature—how much we give and take—can improve this relationship in many ways.

Whether it's our addiction to one-use plastics that pile up in landfills or fossil fuels that warm the planet, a mishandled relationship with nature is not doing us or the Earth any favors.

In 2022, we can all take more responsibility for how our actions exacerbate environmental problems.

We can also encourage governments and businesses to make it easier for people from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds to protect the environment. This includes making recycled goods affordable and reliable public transportation widely accessible.

Check out the US Environmental Protection Agency's resources describing some very simple ways to reduce waste at home, work, in our communities and during the holidays.

Tips from the website include turning off or unplugging lights during the day, reusing packaging materials and using online billing services instead of paper mail.

Lose the weight of social injustice—it harms nature, too

The perils of social injustice stress multiple aspects of society. Racism and inequality can lead to health disparities, and they also have consequences for the natural environment.

A recent study described how practices, such as redlining and residential segregation, led to unequal access to nature, excess pollution and biodiversity loss.

These practices brought in highways and industries that harm environmental quality in marginalized communities. They also left neighborhoods with fewer parks and trees that provide cooling in summer and benefit the planet.



Perpetuating social ills like systemic racism and inequitable resource allocation is detrimental to the environment, marginalized people and society as a whole.

To help turn this around, you can speak out in your community. Join groups that are trying to promote environmental protection and social justice and are bringing nature back to communities.

Call your city, state and Congressional leaders to urge them to take action. Also, refer to the Green 2.0 report's section on making diversity initiatives successful for concrete ways that you can actualize this in your place of work.

Learn something new about nature and how to reduce harm to the environment and yourself

Clean air, water and soil are fundamental for our survival, but research shows many people lack basic environmental and health literacy to know how to protect themselves.

In 2022, get to know your own impact on the environment. Read more and start exploring ways to preserve the integrity of your area's natural resources.

For example, find out where you can stay abreast of local land-use decisions that impact the environment and your overall community.

You can also support local educators and encourage them to bring the environment into lessons.

Environmental issues overlap many other subjects, from history to health. This website includes a framework and materials for educators to help students expand their environmental literacy.

Staying plugged in with media that discuss the latest research can enhance awareness. You can also try tying environmental facts and knowledge into your game night and team-building activities.

Spend more time with family and friends in nature

Studies show that spending time in nature, including urban green spaces, can improve your relationship with nature and with others.

Time in nature can increase social cohesion. Throughout the pandemic, many people discovered the outdoors as a place to decompress and reduce stress.

Spending more time outdoors can encourage social interactions that benefit health, buffer emotional distress and encourage use of these spaces, which can help protect them for the future.

Here are some tools that outline best practices to enhance parks and recreation near you.

Also, here are ways to make outdoor environments more inclusive for families in diverse communities.

Collectively, thinking about our relationship with nature and finding ways to protect the environment can help us be better stewards of the planet.

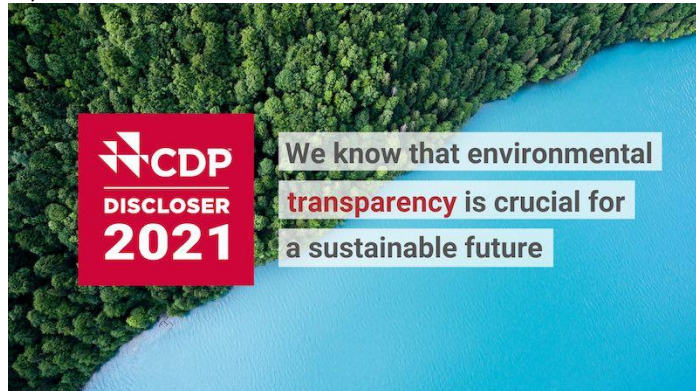
Image credits: [File photo](#)

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2022/01/09/4-new-years-resolutions-for-a-healthier-environment-in-2022-3/>



Globe receives higher B rating for climate action initiatives

BYBMPLUS JANUARY 8, 2022



Globe received a higher B rating in 2021 from the CDP (formerly Carbon Disclosure Project), as it continues to intensify efforts to address climate change. The digital solutions platform discloses its environmental impact through CDP, a global non-profit that runs the world's leading environmental disclosure platform for investors, companies, cities, states, and regions, to show its commitment to environmental transparency.

CDP issues a score from A to F, depending on the organization's environmental performance. Globe's current score was a notch higher than the B- rating it received in 2020. It is also higher than the Asia regional average of B-, and at par with the media, telecommunications, and data center sector average of B. ESG ratings have become a standard assessment tool used by investors to measure a company's sustainability performance, on top of its financial performance.

Disclosures are standard forecasts demanded by capital markets and customers. With its international standing, reporting through CDP brings tangible business benefits, from brand value to risk management and getting ahead of regulation.



"Globe annually discloses its climate action activities, practices, and programs with the CDP to continuously check our progress in creating a more sustainable ecosystem for our customers and stakeholders. We are happy to receive a slightly higher rating for 2021. This means we are on track in our climate change agenda," said Yoly Crisanto, Globe Chief Sustainability Officer and SVP for Corporate Communications.

To qualify for the CDP rating, a company must score over a threshold percentage of the available awareness points, showing that they have assessed a broad range of environmental issues and have determined how these intersect with its business. Management points are awarded for answers that provide evidence of actions associated with good environmental management. Scoring for this relies on companies' disclosure of processes and procedures more than judging the effectiveness of its actions. CDP scores are widely used to drive investment and procurement decisions towards a zero-carbon, sustainable and resilient economy.



CDP is fully aligned with the globally-recognized Task Force on Climate-Related Financial Disclosure (TCFD) and is a founding member of the Science-Based Targets initiative (SBTi).

Globe has also expressed its support to the TCFD to increase transparency on climate-related risks and opportunities within financial markets. It is also the first and only publicly-listed Philippine company listed by SBTi to commit to Business Ambition for 1.5 and officially join Race to Zero.

To operationalize its climate strategy, a total of 13 Globe key facilities, including its headquarters, have transitioned to 100% renewable energy through Power Purchase Agreements (PPA) with Retail Electricity Suppliers (RES). The partner RES provides Globe with Verified Emission Reduction (VER) certificates to document its carbon emission offsets.

Furthermore, Globe has deployed over 7,400 green network solutions. Nationwide, it has deployed 203 fuel cell systems, 6,467 lithium-ion batteries, 212 direct current generators, 60 DC-Hybrid Generators, and 538 free cooling systems. These green solutions require fewer fuel consumption and provide a more energy-efficient cooling system.

Globe strongly supports the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, particularly UN SDG No. 13, which is to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact. Globe is committed to upholding the UN Global Compact principles and contributing to 10 UN SDGs.

To learn more about Globe's sustainability efforts, visit <https://www.globe.com.ph/about-us/sustainability.html>.

09 JANUARY 2022, SUNDAY



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NEWS ALERTS

COVID-19 NEWS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



Bagong kaso ng COVID-19 tumaas pa sa 26,458

[Ludy Bermudo](#) - Pilipino Star Ngayon January 9, 2022 | 12:00am



Health workers attend to patients at the Mandaluyong City Medical Center on Wednesday, Jan. 5, 2022.
The STAR/Walter Bollozos

MANILA, Philippines — Nakapagtala ng 26,458 bagong kaso ng COVID-19 nitong Sabado ang Department of Health (DOH) na mas mataas sa mga nakalipas na araw.

Naungusan din nito ang rekord na naitala noong Setyembre 11, 2021 na 26,303.

Sa case bulletin No. 665, umabot na sa 2,936,875 ang kabuuang bilang ng COVID-19 cases sa Pilipinas.

Sa naturang bilang, 3.5% pa o 102,017 ang aktibong kaso o nagpapagaling pa mula sa karamdaman.

Sa mga aktibong kaso, 94,007 ang mild cases; 3,399 ang asymptomatic; 2,842 moderate; 1,462 severe; at 307 ang kritikal.

Nakapagtala rin ang DOH ng 1,656 bagong gumaling sa sakit, sanhi upang umabot na sa 2,782,723 ang total COVID recoveries o 94.8% ng total cases.

Nasa 265 naman ang bagong nasawi subalit nilinaw na may 15 lamang dito ang namatay sa loob ng Enero 2022, at ang iba ay sa nakalipas na taon.

May death toll na ang bansa na 52,135.

Naniniwala ang DOH na ang napakabilis na pagtaas ng mga kaso ay bunga ng community transmission ng mas nakahahawang Omicron variant.



Experts urge gov't to escalate COVID-19 alert level as infections soar

Philstar.com January 8, 2022 | 2:12pm



Health workers attend to patients at the Mandaluyong City Medical Center on Wednesday, Jan. 5, 2022.

The STAR / Walter Bollozos

MANILA, Philippines — Some medical experts are calling on the government to escalate the alert level in areas with increasing coronavirus infections, particularly Metro Manila which accounted for the majority of new COVID-19 cases.

“With the hospital facilities now, shortage of healthcare workers, and most of those patients with high transmissibility in the community, then I would think, in my opinion, we have a higher level than what we have now,” infectious disease specialist Rontgene Solante said over state-run People’s Television.

In Metro Manila, 51.5% of all hospital beds allotted for COVID-19 patients are already occupied, according to data from the Department of Health.

Data from the DOH also shows that 58.69% of 3,924 COVID-19 ward beds are occupied, 46.52% of 4,837 isolation beds are occupied and 47.76% of 1,206 intensive care unit beds are occupied.

“Alert Level 4 in NCR is indicated,” former National Task Force Against COVID-19 adviser Dr. Tony Leachon said on Twitter. “The NCR is the epicenter of the epidemic now; reducing mobility is absolutely needed to slow down the rampaging virus.”

Presidential adviser for entrepreneurship Joey Concepcion told One News’ “Agenda” that the government’s pandemic task force is not yet considering imposing a sweeping lockdown over Metro Manila.

Concepcion, however, admitted that “there are talks” about placing the capital region under Alert Level 4.

Under Alert Level 4, those aged below 18 and above 65, with immunodeficiencies, comorbidities and other health risks cannot travel except to access essential goods and services, and to work in permitted industries and offices.

Many establishments will also have to operate at just 10% capacity for indoor venues and 30% capacity for outdoor venues under this alert level.

Other activities like contact sports and watching movies at theaters will also be banned.



New coronavirus infections hit an over three-month high on Friday, with the DOH reporting 21,819 new cases, bringing the total number of cases in the country to nearly 3 million.

The government has blamed this latest surge in infections on decreased compliance with minimum health standards and the possibility of local transmission of the highly infectious Omicron variant. — **Xave Gregorio**



IATF approves shortened quarantine for HCWs, updates isolation and quarantine protocols

Published on: January 08, 2022

By OPS

MANILA -- In light of the increasing number of COVID-19 cases and higher healthcare utilization rate (HCUR) in the country, the Inter-Agency Task Force for Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) updated in its January 6, 2022 meeting the isolation and quarantine protocols for healthcare workers and the public, said Acting Presidential Spokesperson and Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles.

In a press briefing on January 7, 2021, Secretary Nograles said the policy shift in the quarantine and isolation protocols of the Department of Health (DOH) will now authorize hospital infection prevention and control committees to implement shortened quarantine protocols of up to five days for fully vaccinated healthcare workers.

“In extreme circumstances and upon weighing the risks and benefits, hospital infection prevention and control committees are also authorized to implement shortened isolation protocols for their COVID-19 confirmed fully vaccinated healthcare workers,” said Sec. Nograles.

The DOH is set to issue more specific protocols on this, added Nograles.

Aside from shortened quarantine protocols for healthcare workers, the IATF also approved home isolation for COVID-19 confirmed individuals who are asymptomatic and for those with mild, or moderate disease.

According to the DOH, isolation of COVID-19 cases shall be 10 days for both vaccinated and unvaccinated who are asymptomatic and those with mild and moderate symptoms, and 21 days for those with severe and critical symptoms, regardless of vaccination status.

“Pinayagan ang home quarantine naman ng close contacts ng suspect, probable, or confirmed COVID-19 cases, subject to the more specific protocols as may be issued by the Department of Health,” said the IATF Co-Chair.

Per the amended DOH protocol, fully vaccinated close contacts may quarantine for seven days or per the advice of a doctor, while incompletely vaccinated or unvaccinated individuals shall quarantine for 14 days or on the advice of a physician.

Meanwhile, DOH Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire, in the same press briefing, reiterated that home quarantine and isolation are allowed as long as patients have their own room and toilet, and can be monitored by the local government unit (LGU) or by a health care provider.



Absent the said home isolation/quarantine requirements, Usec Vergeire recommends that COVID-19 positive individuals should be brought to an accredited isolation facility to prevent transmission.

Vergeire however emphasized that priority for facility quarantine and isolation will be given to those in Priority Groups A2 and A3 with no capacity to home quarantine or isolate, and other population groups without the capacity to do home quarantine and isolation.

The DOH spokesperson likewise underscored the use of telemedicine service providers for individuals who are in isolation and experiencing mild to moderate symptoms, so as not to overburden health care facilities and hospitals. Those who are interested to avail of telemedicine services offered by the DOH are encouraged to visit the website bit.ly/DOHTelemedicine. (OPS)



DILG: Arresting uncooperative unvaccinated people a 'last resort'

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#) Published Jan 8, 2022 7:52:22 PM



(FILE PHOTO)

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, January 8)— Arresting unvaccinated individuals who would refuse to stay home would be a "last resort," according to the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG).

In a statement on Saturday, the DILG said local officials who would implement President Rodrigo Duterte's controversial order would do so "within the bounds of the law."

"The President is merely exercising his authority as chief executive under the public health emergency. He was very clear in his directive that an arrest will only be a last resort," the DILG said.

"Pakiusapan muna na pumirmi sa bahay (They will be requested to stay home first)," the agency added. "Barangay officials may only arrest the unvaccinated individual who refuse to cooperate and who are leaving their homes for non-essential purposes."

In his latest public address, the chief executive ordered local officials to look for the unvaccinated in their communities and request them to "stay put." Those who would refuse and insist on going out can be restrained and arrested.

The pronouncement, however, was met with backlash.

Integrated Bar of the Philippines (IBP) President Atty. Burt Estrada earlier told CNN Philippines that such directive is "[unconstitutional](#)," because there is no law limiting the right to travel.

This was echoed by the Commission on Human Rights (CHR).

"Any arrest made on these grounds may be illegal; thus, violative of the Constitution and our guaranteed human rights," the CHR said in a statement. "At the same time, any arrest without warrant goes against the guarantees of due process in the Constitution."

The CHR also urged the government to ponder on the consequences of the order, citing the congestion in detention facilities and the threat of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"CHR urges the government to employ a human rights-based approach on the matter, wherein education on the importance of vaccinations will continue to be pursued; vaccine hesitancy, access, and supply will be addressed; and alternatives to arrests will be explored, including understanding why others insist on going out despite being unvaccinated and providing a win-win solution," it added.

Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2022/1/8/DILG-arresting-unvaccinated-last-resort.html>



Omicron less severe but still threat to health systems

Agence France-Presse January 8, 2022 | 9:55am



Health workers attend to patients at the Mandaluyong City Medical Center on Wednesday, Jan. 5, 2022.
The STAR / Walter Bollozos

PARIS, France — Omicron is causing record numbers of cases around the world, and though it causes less severe COVID-19 experts warn this wave still threatens to overwhelm health systems.

Nose and throat, not lungs

Six weeks after it was first sequenced in southern Africa Omicron cases are smashing infection records with average new daily cases at nearly two million this week, according to an AFP tally.

At the same time, the illness caused by the Omicron variant of Covid-19 is proving less severe.

On Friday the French public health authority said the risk of hospitalisation was about 70 percent lower for Omicron, citing data from the US, the UK, Canada and Israel.

Experts point out that the lack of severity may be due to widespread immunity thanks to vaccination or previous infection.

But studies on animals point to another peculiarity: rather than affecting the lungs where severe Covid takes root, it seems to proliferate in the nose and throat.

This would not only explain the variant's less-dangerous symptoms but also its ability to spread quickly through coughing and sneezing.

Because of this, some experts are calling for better mask protection and Austria on Thursday made medical grade FFP2 masks mandatory outside.

Hospitals on edge

But even though Omicron is causing less severe illness, the surging caseload overall has scientists urging caution to keep from overwhelming health systems.

"Even if the percentage of cases with severe disease is proportionally lower, when there are record cases, that still means record numbers of people in the hospital," tweeted US virologist Angela Rasmussen on Friday.

Unlike previous variant waves, however, this one seems so far to be affecting regular hospital admissions rather than ICU capacity.



This is the case in Denmark where national health service SSI reported that between December 1 and January 1 new Covid cases rose by about 70 percent across the country.

But hospitalisations only rose by 47 percent and ICU admissions by 20 percent.

Jab immunity weaker

Lab tests show that antibody levels in blood samples from people vaccinated with Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna jabs drop when faced with Omicron.

The drop is even greater in those vaccinated with AstraZeneca or Sinovac, a Chinese jab authorized in about 50 countries.

A booster seems to increase antibodies, with both Pfizer and Moderna announcing positive results from recent tests.

But nobody knows how long the booster will be effective.

This does not mean vaccines are useless against Omicron: the body has a secondary immune defense called T-cell response, which fights the virus by attacking infected cells.

This secondary response is particularly important in preventing severe forms of illness.

A recent study from South Africa showed Pfizer/BioNTech remained effective at preventing severe Covid from Omicron even after just two shots.

Last wave?

Some experts and officials have openly expressed hope that by spreading a less-severe Covid, Omicron could be helping the planet achieve herd immunity along with jabs.

Echoing French and Israeli counterparts, top Danish epidemiologist Tyra Grove Krause tweeted her "cautious optimism about the situation when we have overcome the Omicron wave".

The World Health Organization however is urging caution.

"The more Omicron spreads, the more it transmits and the more it replicates, the more likely it is to throw out a new variant," WHO senior emergencies officer Catherine Smallwood told AFP in an interview Tuesday.

But even if Omicron isn't the last variant, experts think immunity from previous waves might mean the worst will soon be behind us.

"New variants may challenge us," Grove Krause said, "but with vaccines hopefully SARS-CoV-2 will turn into just another airway virus we can live normally with."



Sinopharm protein-based COVID-19 booster stronger vs Omicron than earlier shot -study

Reuters

Posted at Jan 08 2022 10:24 AM

BEIJING - A protein-based COVID-19 vaccine made by Sinopharm, when given as a booster after two doses of an earlier shot from the Chinese firm, elicited a stronger antibody response against the omicron variant than a third dose of the original, a study showed.

The [study](#), which was published on Tuesday and had not been peer reviewed, came amid concerns over the effectiveness of Sinopharm's BBIBP-CorV shot, one of the two leading COVID-19 vaccines exported by China, against the omicron variant.

An earlier study showed a BBIBP-CorV booster had weaker neutralization against omicron than against an older coronavirus strain from the central Chinese city of Wuhan.

Sinopharm's NVSI-06-07 protein-based vaccine, approved for emergency use as a booster in the United Arab Emirates in December, adopts a different technology than the BBIBP-CorV shot that contains an inactivated form of the coronavirus.

Among 192 healthy adults vaccinated with two BBIBP-CorV doses for six months or longer, the neutralizing antibody level against omicron in those later given a NVSI-06-07 booster was "significantly higher" than that in those who received a BBIBP-CorV third dose, researchers said in a paper.

The antibody-based results are different from the efficacy readings about how well the NVSI-06-07 booster after BBIBP-CorV vaccination would protect people from omicron-caused disease.

The authors of the paper, including researchers from Sinopharm's units and Sheikh Khalifa Medical City in Abu Dhabi, cautioned that it remained unclear for how long the NVSI-06-07 booster's effect would last.



EDITORIAL - Huwag magtipun-tipon COVID ay umuusbong

Pilipino Star Ngayon December 30, 2021 | 12:00am



Sabi ng OCTA Research Group kahapon, possible umang tumaas na naman ang arawang kaso ng COVID. Tama ang OCTA sapagkat tumaas nga ang kaso. Una nang sinabi ni OCTA Fellows Dr. Guido David na tumaas ang hawahan sa Metro Manila nitong bago mag-Pasko. Ayon kay David, tumaas ang positivity rate noong Disyembre 22 at maaaring magpatuloy dahil sa selebrasyon ng Pasko at Bagong Taon. Ayon pa kay David, halos ganito rin ang naitalang kaso ng hawahan noong nakaraang taon na tumaas din dahil sa pagdiriwang ng Pasko at Bagong Taon.

May mga senyales na tumataas na naman ang kaso ng COVID at maaaring sa kalagitnaan ng Enero ay makita ang tunay na dami ng mga nahawahan. Hindi na nakapagtataka na maging ganito ang senaryo dahil nga nagluwag sa Metro Manila ng mga restrictions. Isinailalim sa Alert Level 2 ang Metro Manila noong Nobyembre dahil para buksan na ang mga establisimento. Pati mga bata ay pinayagan nang makalabas ng bahay at makapamasyal sa mall at iba pang lugar. Ang Alert Level 2 ay tatagal hanggang Disyembre 31.

Sa ganitong senaryo na tumataas ang kaso ng COVID, hindi pa narapat ilagay sa Alert Level 1 ang Metro Manila. Una nang sinabi na pagsapit ng Enero 2022 ay isasailalim na umano sa Alert Level 1 ang MM. Kapag nasa ganitong level mas marami pang kaluwagan ang ipairal. At nakababahala sapagkat maaaring dumami ang kaso. Mas makabubuti kung panatilihin muna sa Alert Level 2.

Hindi lamang ang Pilipinas ang nakakaranas ng pagtaas ng kaso ng COVID. Maski ang France at England ay tumataas din ang kaso. Sa France, sa loob lamang ng 24-oras ay lumobo ang kaso ng 104,611. Nagpapatupad na ng bagong safety measures ang France para mapigilan ang pagdami ng COVID cases.

Sa England, tumaas ang kaso ng Omicron variant sa mismong araw ng Pasko kaya puspusan ang ginagawang vaccination doon. Pumipila ang mga tao para mabakunahan.

Hindi dapat magrelaks at magkampante sapagkat tumataas na naman ang kaso ng COVID. Huwag munang magtipun-tipon lalo pa nga at apat na ang tinamaan ng Omicron sa bansa. Ipagpatuloy ang health protocols upang maiwasan ang surge. Kapag nagkaroon ng surge, kawawang muli ang mamamayan dahil balik muli sa lockdown. Magtulungan para ang COVID at variant nito ay hindi na maghasik ng lagim.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/opinyon/2021/12/30/2150856/editorial-huwag-magtipun-tipon-covid-ay-umuusbong>



#OneDENR

**Covid-19
Situation and Response**



DOH COVID-19 CASE BULLETIN # 665

ENERO 8, 2022

Para sa kumpletong detalye at impormasyon,
bisitahin lamang ang aming pampublikong site:
<https://ncovtracker.doh.gov.ph/>

PORSYENTO NG AKTIBONG KASO

3.5%

TOTAL NG AKTIBONG KASO
102,017

PORSYENTO NG GUMALING

94.8%

TOTAL NG GUMALING
2,782,723

PORSYENTO NG NAMATAY

1.78%

TOTAL NG NAMATAY
52,135

MGA BAGONG KASO **26,458**

MGA BAGONG GUMALING **1,656**

MGA BAGONG NAMATAY **265**

KABUANG BILANG NG KASO **2,936,875**

MGA NAGPOSITIBO HULING ENERO 6

DATOS NGAYONG ENERO 8
AYON SA REPORTS NOONG ENERO 6

43.7%

PORSYENTO NG MGA
NAGPOSITIBO

77,004

BILANG NG
TINEST

HALOS

95.5%

ANG MILD AT
ASYMPTOMATIC
NA KASO!

D UMISTANSYA NG
ISANG METRO AT LIMITAHAN
ANG PISIKAL NA
INTERAKSYON SA IBA

KABUANG PILIPINAS

PUNO NA BA ANG ATING MGA OSPITAL?

ICU BEDS (3.5K TOTAL BEDS)
 34% Utilized

ISOLATION BEDS (19.5K TOTAL BEDS)
 38% Utilized

WARD BEDS (13.0K TOTAL BEDS)
 34% Utilized

VENTILATORS (3.0K TOTAL VENTILATORS)
 18% Utilized

NATIONAL CAPITAL REGION

PUNO NA BA ANG ATING MGA OSPITAL?

ICU BEDS (1.2K TOTAL BEDS)
 51% Utilized

ISOLATION BEDS (4.6K TOTAL BEDS)
 51% Utilized

WARD BEDS (4.4K TOTAL BEDS)
 62% Utilized

VENTILATORS (1.1K TOTAL VENTILATORS)
 27% Utilized

KALAGAYAN NG MGA AKTIBONG KASO

3,399 Asymptomatic

94,007 Mild

2,842 Moderate

1,462 Severe

307 Critical

DOH HOSPITAL HOTLINES

For health concerns and emergencies, you may access
here the DOH hospital hotlines across the country:

bit.ly/DOHHospitalHotlines

DOH ONE HOSPITAL COMMAND CENTER (OHCC) HOTLINES

• 1555 • 0915-777-7777
• 02-886-505-00 • 0919-977-3333

bit.ly/OHCCHotline

DOH TELEMEDICINE CONTACT DETAILS

bit.ly/DOHTelemedicine

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Manatiling ligtas!

I-download ang StaySafe App
o gamitin ang WEBAPP
at pumunta sa Staysafe.ph



Walang internet or load?
Report via SMS

2158-5779 (for Globe users)
225-655-779 (for other users)



May tanong ukol sa COVID-19?
I-chat na si KIRA!

VIBER: Kira Kontra COVID by DOH
MESSENGER: Department of Health PH
KONTRACOVIDPH: kontracovid.ph

MAYROON PANG KATANUNGAN? SUMANGGUNI LAMANG SA SUMUSUNOD:

[f OfficialDOHgov](https://www.facebook.com/OfficialDOHgov)

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[📞 \(02\) 894-COVID / 1555](tel:(02)894-COVID)

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