

22 DECEMBER 2020, Tuesday



DENR

NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



DENR cites conviction of cave poacher

Published December 21, 2020, 4:15 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu said the recent conviction of illegal wildlife traders show that the law remains stringent for all environmental criminals amid the coronavirus pandemic.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
(MANILA BULLETIN)

The DENR cited Bacoor City Municipal Trial Court conviction of Joselito Laygan last Dec. 10.

In February 2016, Laygan was caught in the act of selling cave resources without the necessary permits during an entrapment operation conducted by the Philippine Operations Group on Ivory and Illegal Wildlife (Task Force POGI), a composite team of wildlife enforcers from various agencies, including the Biodiversity Management Bureau, National Bureau of Investigation, and the Philippine National Police.

He was found guilty of violating Section 7 of Republic Act 9072, or the National Caves and Cave Resources Management and Protection Act.

Such provision states that “gathering, collecting, possessing, consuming, selling, bartering, or exchanging or offering for sale without authority for any cave resource is prohibited.”

As penalty, Lagyan was ordered to pay P300,000.

At the same time, the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office in Cavite was directed to coordinate with the court for the turnover of the cave resources to the DENR for proper disposition.

This new development came just a week after the DENR reported the conviction of a wildlife trader, who was behind the illegal shipment of over 700 live tarantulas intercepted at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in 2019.



DENR cites conviction of cave poacher

Jesse Camaro was found guilty of illegally transporting 757 pieces of tarantula with an estimated value of P310,900 and Customs duties and taxes amounting to P54,752.

He was sentenced to six months imprisonment and fined P20,000 in violation of the provisions of RA 9147, or the Wildlife Conservation and Protection Act.

He was also fined P100,000 for violating RA 10863, or the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act.

Cimatu said the twin victories were “an affirmation of the agency’s commitment to hold illegal wildlife traders accountable for their crimes against the Filipino people and the environment.”

“This decision comes at an opportune time when culprits are taking advantage of the challenges in travel and mobility of our environmental law enforcers,” he added.

“We want to show these environmental criminals how stringent the law is even in the middle of this crisis,” he said.



DENR claims 2nd legal victory, this time in case vs treasure hunter

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

December 22, 2020

A treasure hunter, who was caught gathering and selling cave resources in 2016, was slapped with a P300,000 fine by the Bacoor Municipal Trial Court.

Joselito Laygan was found guilty of violating Section 7 of Republic Act 9072, or the National Caves and Cave Resources Management Protection Act.

Laygan was caught harvesting stalactites and stalagmites in 2016 and failed to present proper documentation or permission from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) during his arrest.

Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, in a news statement said the guilty verdict against Laygan was a legal victory on the part of the DENR.

A week ago, the DENR reported the conviction of a wildlife trader, who was behind the illegal shipment of over 700 pieces of live tarantulas intercepted at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in 2019.

Cimatu said the twin victories were “an affirmation of the agency’s commitment to hold illegal wildlife traders accountable for their crimes against the Filipino people and the environment.”

“This decision comes at an opportune time when culprits are taking advantage of the challenges in travel and mobility of our environmental law enforcers,” he added. “We want to show these environmental criminals how stringent the law is even in the middle of this crisis.”

In a five-page decision penned by Judge Mary Rocelyn Lim-Guillano and promulgated last December 10, the Bacoor City Municipal Trial Court found Laygan guilty of violating Section 7 of Republic Act 9072, or the National Caves and Cave Resources Management and Protection Act.

The provision states that “gathering, collecting, possessing, consuming, selling, bartering or exchanging or offering for sale without authority for any cave resource is prohibited.”

Laygan was caught in an entrapment operation conducted by the Philippine Operations Group on Ivory and Illegal Wildlife, or Task Force POGI, in February 2016.

Task Force POGI is a composite team of wildlife enforcers from various agencies, including the Biodiversity Management Bureau, the National Bureau of Investigation, and the Philippine National Police.

As a penalty, Laygan was ordered to pay P300,000 with an interest rate of 6 percent per annum from the date of the finality of the decision until it is fully paid.

At the same time, the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office in Cavite was directed to coordinate with the court for the turnover of the cave resources to the DENR secretary for proper disposition.



DENR claims 2nd legal victory, this time in case vs treasure hunter

Last week, the DENR announced that the Pasay City Metropolitan Trial Court Branch 48 has convicted Jesse Camaro for illegally transporting 757 pieces of tarantula with an estimated value of P310,900 and customs duties and taxes amounting to P54,752.

Camaro was found guilty of violating RA 9147 or the Wildlife Conservation and Protection Act and sentenced to six months imprisonment and fined P20,000. He was also fined P100,000 for violating RA 10863 or the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act.

DENR nag-abot ng tulong sa IPs sa Pampanga



December 21, 2020 @ 6:59 AM 23 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Sa kabila ng krisis dulot ng pandemya ng COVID-19 nag-abot ng tulong ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa pamamagitan ng kanilang Indigenous People’s Desk sa indigenous peoples (IPs) sa Pampanga upang makapagbigay ng pag-asa ang mga ito sa gitna ng kinakaharap na pagsubok.

Ayon sa DENR sa ginanap na gift-giving activity na may temang “Sa Gitna ng Pandemya, Buhay at Kapaligiran ay Mahalaga” na idinaos sa Hacienda Gracia Resort and Hotel sa Lubao, Pampanga noong Disyembre 10, 150 pamilya ng Aeta na nagmula sa Barangay Camias, Porac, Pampanga ang nabigyan ng regalo.

“As President Rodrigo Roa Duterte said, no one should be left behind. We heal as one,” sabi ni DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny D. Antiporda.

“You deserve these gifts. We are simply giving them back to you,” paliwanag pa nito sa mga Aeta.

Nakatanggap ang IPs ng groceries, vitamins, face masks, face shield at alcohol. Ito ay tinanggap ng kanilang mga barangay leader at elders dahil na rin sa pagsunod sa social distancing protocol at limitasyon sa mass gathering.

“The DENR counts IPs among its valued stakeholders because they are considered stewards of environmental protection,” saad pa ni Antiporda.

Sa kanyang panig, sinabi naman ni Indigenous Peoples Mandatory Representative (IPMR) Edwin Abuque na: “It is important that we protect the forest and trees because these are our first line of defense against floods. They help protect those who reside at the foot of the mountains.”



DENR nag-abot ng tulong sa IPs sa Pampanga

Idinagdag pa nito na ang mga puno at halaman ay kayang manggamot dahilang walang IPs ang tinamaan ng COVID-19.

Hiniling din ni Antiporda sa Aetas na magtanim ng bigas at cacao sa mga bakanteng lupa sa kanilang nasasakupan upang may pagkunan ang mga ito ng kanilang makakain at kabuhayan.

Nakahanda rin si Antiporda na magbigay ng agricultural machineries na makatutulong sa mga ito sa pagtanim.

“Nurture your land. We will not give you fish to eat but we will teach you how to fish,” paliwanag pa nito.

Nagpalasamat naman ang Aetas dahil sila ang napili upang makatanggap ng tulong lalo na ngayong nalalapit na ang Kapaskuhan. **Santi Celario**



Region 2 students accept challenge as environment ambassadors



By [Leander C. Domingo, TMT](#)
December 21, 2020

TUGUEGARAO CITY, Cagayan: Sixty students from the five state universities and colleges in Region 2 (Cagayan Valley) have accepted the challenge to become environment and natural resources (ENR) ambassadors through massive information campaign activities throughout the region. Gwendolyn Bambalan, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Region 2 executive director, has led the signing of a memorandum of agreement with presidents Alfonso Simon of Batanes State College, Urdujah Alvarado of Cagayan State University, Ricmar Aquino of Isabela State University, Andres Taguiam of Nueva Vizcaya State University and Hermenegildo Samoy Jr. of Quirino State University. Bambalan said the ENR ambassador project aims to involve the youth in environmental protection and conservation through information, education and communication activities.



LLDA Backs Unsolicited Proposal to Rehabilitate Laguna Lake

BY [VILLAGE CONNECT](#) ON DECEMBER 21, 2020 [NEWS](#)



The Laguna Lake Development Authority (LLDA), an agency under the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, is backing an unsolicited proposal from a private consortium to rehabilitate and develop Laguna de Bay.

LLDA General Manager Jaime “Joey” Medina disclosed that the agency’s Board of Directors has endorsed the proposed P609-billion Laguna Lake Development and Rehabilitation Project, “after months of review and evaluation.”

The endorsement comes in the aftermath of successive strong tropical cyclones, the latest of which is Typhoon Ulysses that triggered massive flooding in Metro Manila, Rizal province and other areas.

“This is a welcome opportunity as this will truly aid in addressing the Laguna Lake’s continual problems in siltation, industrial pollution, sedimentation, and lakeshore flooding,” Medina said.

Medina said the project proponent has been issued “original proponent status” or OPS and the project is now under review by the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA), through its Public-Private Partnership Center.

Medina said the LLDA endorsement will be eventually evaluated by NEDA’s Investment Coordination Committee to determine the reasonable rate of return and other parameters for negotiation.

He said the NEDA Board will ultimately approve or deny the proposal.

Medina said the consortium, after being granted the OPS, now has the authority to match better offers submitted by other rivals when a Swiss challenge is undertaken for the project.

The rehabilitation project, which will be undertaken in a span of 5 to 10 years, includes the dredging of approximately 800 million cubic meter of silt and mud.



LLDA Backs Unsolicited Proposal to Rehabilitate Laguna Lake

It also involves assistance to affected fisherfolk and other stakeholders, as well as silt transfer and development of pre-identified catchment area to be done in phases while the dredging process progresses.

The said project also includes soil treatment, ground improvement and development, the construction of a water treatment facility and the introduction of a soil improvement technology called the High Vacuum Densification Method (HVDM).

The unsolicited proposal will be under the Build-Own-Operate (BOO) scheme, which means that the proponent will finance, construct, operate, maintain and own facility and can collect fees and charges to recover their investment.

The government, on the other hand, will provide the authorization and assistance in securing the BOO contract and has the option to buy the output or service provided by the operator.

The consortium is led by Taguig Lake City Development Corporation (TLCDC), with two big foreign companies as partners that have the experience, expertise and track record in undertaking such project.

In a related development, sometime December 2019, the LLDA sent a briefer thru a Memorandum to the Office of the President regarding: (1) the urgent need to rehabilitate the waters of Laguna Lake in order to sustain and enhance aquatic life therein; (2) the critical need to increase and improve the holding capacity and water quality of the Laguna Lake in order to viably and effectively access the lake as a domestic water source, and (3) the real potential of Laguna Lake and its outlying areas to significantly enhance water quality and boost socio-economic growth in the region and in the country.

The Memorandum also stated the request of LLDA to seek President Rodrigo Roa Duterte's favorable endorsement and approval of the Project and its Project objectives for purposes of urgent and speedy implementation.

The Laguna de Bay is the largest lake in the Philippines, with around 100 rivers and streams draining into it, making it prone to flooding. The Napindan Channel, through the Pasig River, drains the lake waters to Manila Bay.

During the onslaught of Typhoon Ulysses, the Laguna Lake overflowed causing severe flooding and affecting thousands of residents in several municipalities and cities in Laguna, such as Famy, Sta Cruz, Calamba, and San Pedro.

Due to strong winds and currents, fish pens in Laguna de Bay were wiped out and unleashed some 2.2 million kilograms of bangus or milkfish estimated to cost P115 million in losses to fish operators of Laguna during Typhoon Rolly.



Philex Mining unit gets new 25-year term from DENR

December 22, 2020 | 12:05 am



PHILEXMINING.COM.PH

PHILEX Mining Corp. has announced that its subsidiary in Surigao del Norte has secured the renewal of its mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA) from the government.

In disclosure to the stock exchange on Monday, Philex Mining said the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) had approved a new 25-year term of MPSA-149 under Silangan Mindanao Mining Co., Inc.

The company said the new term will start on Dec. 29, 2024.

“MPSA-149-99 XIII covers the Boyongan deposit in the Province of Surigao del Norte and is part of Silangan Mindanao Mining Co., Inc.’s Silangan Copper-Gold Project,” the company said.

Philex’s Silangan project is touted as one of the big ticket mining projects that can greatly increase the contribution of the local mining industry to the Philippine economy.

However, it has been affected by the ongoing ban on open pit mining imposed by the late former Environment Secretary Regina Paz L. Lopez in April 2017.

Open pit mining is a surface mining method that has been used by the mining industry for the extraction of minerals such as copper and gold.

During the third quarter, Philex Mining posted an attributable net income of P495.04 million, sparked by better revenues. The company’s revenues during the period rose 21.9% to P2.17 billion.

For the January-September period, Philex Mining said its net income more than doubled to P919.59 million, against the P439 million it posted last year.

On Monday, shares in Philex Mining at the stock exchange rose 5.27% or 27 centavos to end at P5.39 per piece.



Philex Mining unit gets new 25-year term from DENR

Philex Mining is one of three Philippine units of Hong Kong-based First Pacific Co. Ltd., the others being Metro Pacific Investments Corp. and PLDT, Inc. Hastings Holdings, Inc., a unit of PLDT Beneficial Trust Fund subsidiary MediaQuest Holdings, Inc., has interest in *BusinessWorld* through the Philippine Star Group, which it controls. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**



Why We Need To Pass The SFM Act Now



By [Featuresdesk \(MD\)](#)
December 21, 2020

The country's forest cover has drastically declined from 70% down to just 22.8%, according to the latest data from the Philippine Forestry Statistics, and it continues to decrease with the rampant deforestation and exploitation of our natural resources.

Most of the Philippines' mountains and forests are protected by law, but the loose implementation of these policies fails to stop mining companies and illegal loggers from chipping away at the country's raw materials.

The continued destruction of our forests has impaired the country's natural defense against calamities, and the aftermath of the recent disasters that hit the nation is a resounding call for a policy that will strengthen the management and sustainability of the Philippine forests.

The Sustainable Forest Management Act (SFMA) aims to ensure that there are enough forest resources for present and future generations. It seeks to fortify the country's forest management strategies by highlighting the protection, conservation, and sustainable use of our natural resources.

Four versions of the bill were filed at the beginning of the 18th Congress and have been approved for a consolidated substitute bill by the House Committee on Natural Resources in November 2019.

A Senate counterpart of the bill was also filed in the first session of the 18th Congress. SFMA will not only promote a more responsible and sustainable use of the country's natural resources, but it will also hold every qualified individual accountable in managing forestlands.

But even with the urgent need for its passage, the bill's progress in both chambers has been incredibly slow.



Why We Need To Pass The SFM Act Now

Its consolidated substitute is still pending in the House Committee on Appropriations while the senate counterpart is also waiting for a public hearing in the Senate Committee on Environment, Natural Resources, and Climate Change.

Moreover, conflicting interests in various sectors make it difficult to fast-track green initiatives that seek to end the degradation of the country's natural resources.

We must show our support for the passage of the SFMA by spreading awareness on the importance of the bill and urging lawmakers to advance the right of the Filipino people to a balanced and healthy ecology.

To learn about how you can support the passage of this bill, go bit.ly/forestbill.



Masungi hits back at claimants

posted December 21, 2020 at 08:40 pm

by [Manila Standard](#)

The Masungi Georeserve Foundation Inc. has strongly condemned the “shameless exploitation of indigenous groups and forest lands for private interests” as it reiterated its full commitment in respecting ancestral rights in reforestation areas.

“Conservation groups and indigenous peoples are natural and key allies in environment protection and restoration, and not adversaries as some interests wish to set up,” the foundation that runs the georeserve in Baras, Rizal said in a statement.

“Masungi vehemently condemns any attempt to sow discord and orchestrate conflicts between conservation and indigenous groups, especially at a time when strong collaborations are needed to prevent dangerous flooding and the loss of clean water and precious biodiversity,” it added.

The foundation was reacting to what it said was “false and malicious statements” made by Rublou Inc. and Green Atom, retired General Luizo Ticman, lawyer Juancho Botor, and certain members of Kaksan Inc. (Indigenous Peoples Organization of the Dumagat-Remontados of Antipolo) last week in a press conference.

“While Masungi is a firm advocate of indigenous people’s rights, these should not and cannot be used to advance exploitative and destructive interests inside the Upper Marikina Watershed,” it said.

The foundation said that hiring marginalized people “as a front for destructive interests is a classic tactic for encroachments into protected areas and wildlife sanctuaries.”

“Poor people are hired as a front to hide business interests,” it said, quoting Marcus Hardtke, an expert on forest issues, in a Mongabay article dated December 1, 2020. “But ultimately the land ends up in the hands of the organizers. Many of these land grabs are then later legalized in ‘compromises.’”

The foundation said: “The fact is that retired Gen. Luizo Ticman and his companies, Rublou Inc. and Green Atom Renewable Energy Corp., occupied, fenced, and installed armed guards inside the declared protected area without any permits from or agreements with the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, which administers the land.”

“Contrary to the press release of Rublou Inc., the tribal organization from Antipolo it is fronting, does not have an approved Ancestral Domain Title (CAD-T) yet,” it added.

On October 23, 2020, Rublou Inc. barricaded some 1,000 hectares of the protected watershed, brandished “private property” signages, installed guards carrying long weapons, and stopped park rangers from conducting reforestation work, the foundation said.

“On video, these armed guards said that former Gen. Ticman ‘owns’ this land inside the Upper Marikina Watershed. When Rublou Inc.’s attempt to seal off the protected area for private interests was thwarted, it suddenly changed its script and said it was merely acting on behalf of the Dumagat-Remontados of Antipolo,” it said in its statement.



Masungi hits back at claimants

“Almost overnight, the ‘private property’ signages of Rublou Inc. became Dumagat ancestral domain signages. This practice of former Gen. Ticman of claiming and fencing large tracts of land and installing armed men, who then intimidate and harass defenders, is well-known in the immediate community of Brgy. Pinugay, Baras, Rizal,” the foundation said.

On October 30, 2020, the Dumagat-Remontados of Antipolo released a statement signed by 24 elders, chieftains, and officers, belying the claims of Rublou Inc. Reflecting tribal consensus, the Dumagat tribe as a whole and without any external influence, denied involvement in the actions of Rublou inside the watershed, the georeserve group said.

The tribe confirmed that the armed guards are not theirs but are those of Rublou and its ‘renewable energy’ subsidiary, Green Atom, the foundation statement said. They also denied that Juancho Botor was the tribe’s legal counsel.

They further denied that they issued a statement dated October 26, 2020 which Rublou released and claimed was from them, the foundation said.

“For certain members of the tribe to make a turnaround after their original consensus statement is highly disturbing and questionable. We strongly condemn any possible manipulation and exploitation of the plight of indigenous persons, which they are particularly vulnerable to because of decades of poverty and marginalization,” it added.

“Fake news and misinformation may have been peddled to influence certain members of the tribe and sow discontent against the conservation project.”

The foundation also said: “Sadly, there have also been reports of corruption, bribery, and political pressures, which are feared to have compromised the integrity of certain individuals at the expense of the entire tribe, in an attempt to exploit their ancestral domain in favor of outside private business interests.”

“The Masungi team hopes and strives for their authentic empowerment which will enable them to avoid exploitation, coercion, and divisions by external interests and powers,” it added.

The foundation stressed that buying and selling of land in protected areas or ancestral domains is prohibited.

“The camp of former Gen. Ticman itself revealed he had ‘bought’ 300 hectares of the protected area for PHP 5 per square meter. If it is true that he is buying land within the protected area or ancestral domain, then he is openly violating the law. Whether under environment laws or the Indigenous People’s Rights Act, commerce of land to non-tribe members is prohibited,” its statement noted.

The Masungi Georeserve is an award-winning conservation project recognized by the United Nations Development Programme, the World Commission on Protected Areas, and the International Union for the Conservation of Nature, among other global organizations, as one of the most innovative and sustainable projects in the world for nature conservation financing and resourcing.



Masungi hits back at claimants

The Masungi Geopark Project, starting in 2017, seeks to restore some 3,000 hectares of degraded and illegally logged land around the Masungi limestone formations within the Upper Marikina Watershed, Kaliwa Watershed, and the Masungi Strict Nature Reserve and Wildlife Sanctuary.

“This work by up to 100 local park rangers and hundreds of like-minded partners helps protect millions of Filipinos from floods and disasters, restore clean and accessible water for surrounding communities, and address climate change,” the foundation said.

The project is not new to incidents of professional squatting, it added.

“The truth about a 2016 incident was that rogue elements of the military, together with a hired security agency and a mob of 40 men attacked park rangers protecting another section of the conservation area from professional land grabbers, not unlike those it continues to face, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic,” the foundation said.

“After the truth was revealed, the next year in 2017, the Masungi Georeserve Foundation and the Army’s Second Infantry Division signed a partnership agreement to work together for the enforcement of environmental laws in the Masungi Geopark Project,” it added.

The foundation said that public records show that Rublou Inc.’s chairman, Mr. Luiz Ticman, is a former police official “who has been implicated in multiple graft and corruption charges, including the overpriced helicopters and rubber boat scams.”

Green Atom is meeting mounting opposition from local communities and clean air and climate advocates for their Waste-to-Energy incineration projects, it added.



Pasig River Coordinating and Management Office - PRCMO

9h · 🌐



TINGNAN: PRCMO IN ACTION SA PAROLA

Tuloy-tuloy ang cleanup operations sa kahabaan ng Ilog Pasig—kabilang na ang bahagi nito sa Parola sa lungsod ng Maynila.

Umabot sa 300 sako ng halong nabubulok at di-nabubulok na basura ang narekober ng River Warriors sa pampang ng ilog na sakop ng Barangay 275, San Nicolas malapit sa Manila Bay.

Walang hanggan po ang ating pasasalamat at pagsaludo sa ating River Warriors, Patrollers at lahat ng [#frontlinersPH](#) sa kanilang walang patid na serbisyo at kabayanihan anuman ang panahon at kahit sa gitna ng maraming hamon.

Ngayong Kapaskuhan, gawin po nating mas makabuluhan ang ating pagdiriwang sa pamamagitan ng ating nagkakaisang puso para sa kalikasan, bayan at kinabukasan.

[#PusoParaSallogPasig](#), mga estero at Manila Bay! ❤️

[#PRCMO](#) [#DENR](#) [#PasigRiver](#)





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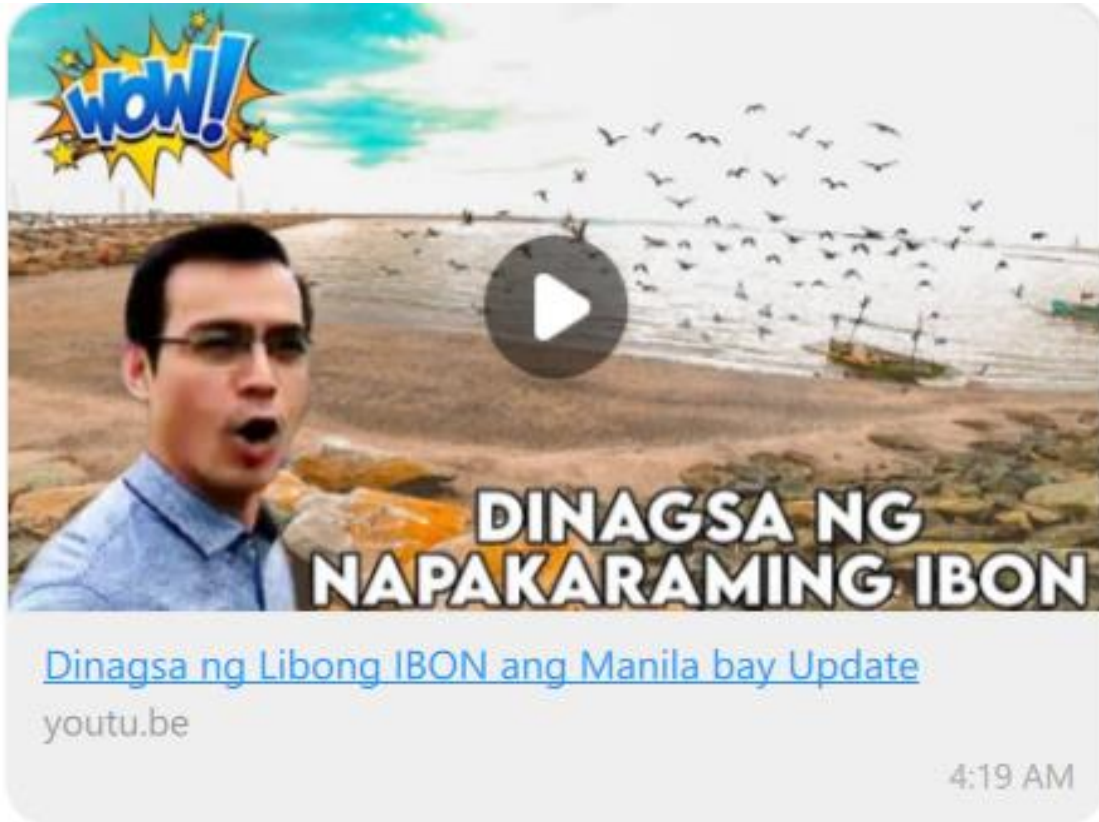


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Experts encourage nature-based solutions to build climate resilience

By ACB Published on December 21, 2020



the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) and the Philippines' Climate Change Commission held the Biodiversity and Building Resilience to the Impacts of Climate Change in the ASEAN webinar on 15 December 2020.

MANILA, Dec. 21 -- The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) and the Philippines' Climate Change Commission held the Biodiversity and Building Resilience to the Impacts of Climate Change in the ASEAN webinar on 15 December, coinciding with the 5th anniversary of the Paris Agreement.

The event sought to highlight the need to incorporate nature-based solutions as part of the approach in addressing climate change. The webinar, supported by Swedbio, a programme from the Stockholm Resilience Centre, gathered a diverse panel of experts who shared their perspectives and insights on biodiversity and nature's role in building resilience against the climate crisis.

"Climate change is one of the main culprits that drive the loss of nature," stated ACB Executive Director Dr. Theresa Mundita Lim, recalling the recent climate-related disasters that hit several ASEAN Member States (AMS). "However, the main paradox here is that biodiversity and its ecosystem services underpin our principal solutions and efforts to tackle climate change and its impacts. Without a healthy biodiversity, our fight against climate change would be an impossible feat," she concluded.

The discourse on nature-based solutions, as well as the ecosystem-based approach to climate change adaptation, has been gaining more ground in light of the current ecological and health crises.

Experts encourage nature-based solutions to build climate resilience

The panelists noted the discussion's relevance as the global community is developing post-2020 biodiversity targets. The upcoming Fifteenth Conference of Parties of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the 26th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change will take place in 2021.

Mr. Tristan Tyrrell, programme officer of SwedBio at the Stockholm Resilience Centre, highlighted that recent reports are showing that “trends are going in the wrong way when it comes to climate change”, as the gaps between commitments and action to achieve the Paris targets of reducing greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions are widening.

“As devastating as the impacts of COVID-19 have been, some scenarios suggest that it will have a positive impact in terms of global GHG emissions,” Tyrrell said. “We could use this opportunity as what has been called, ‘the great reset’, to ramp up positive ecosystem-based actions in climate change adaptation and mitigation.”

On her part, Dr. Isabelle de Lovinfosse, head of Southeast Asia COP26 of the British High Commission Strategy, mentioned that “as the world recovers from the coronavirus pandemic, we owe it to future generations to base our recovery on solid foundations, including a greener, more resilient, and inclusive global economy.”

Appropriate and effective national policies and programs on climate actions are central to building resilience. In a recorded presentation, Dr. Nagulendran Kangayatkarasu, deputy secretary general of Malaysia Ministry of Environment and Water, discussed how Malaysia has prioritised their Nationally Determined Contributions and how they are working towards them through supporting various adaptation measures.

In Indonesia, Krissusandi Gunui, executive director of Institut Dayakologi, shared that the knowledge and wisdom of indigenous peoples and local communities are significant in strengthening climate change adaptation and biodiversity conservation.

Deputy Secretary-General of the Cambodian National Council for Sustainable Development Sum Thy, along with Dr. Robert Mather of the Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in ASEAN, and Executive Director Adelina Kamal of the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on disaster management took part as reactors.

The reactors highlighted the need for collaboration and cooperation across sectors. Deputy Secretary-General Sum Thy urged for closer coordination between the ASEAN Working Groups on Climate Change and Nature Conservation and Biodiversity. Cooperation at such a level might be helpful in addressing the barriers to promoting and implementing nature-based solutions which, noted by Dr. Mather, are interlinked.

ASEAN has since been pushing for more cross-sectoral and cross-pillar cooperation to advance biodiversity as response to climate change and in preventing future pandemics.



Experts encourage nature-based solutions to build climate resilience

“As we recognise our common but differentiated responsibilities, ASEAN, through its sound leadership and structures such as the ASEAN Senior Officials on the Environment, and sectoral bodies, strives to promote robust cooperation and joint actions towards our commitments to biodiversity and in building resilience to climate change,” said Dr. Vong Sok, Head of the Environment Division of the ASEAN Secretariat.

He also called on all biodiversity and climate change actors and partners to create more synergies between biodiversity conservation and climate action so as to build back better for the future.

Chief, Policy Research and Development of the Philippines’ Climate Change Commission Jerome Ilagan moderated the webinar. UK Ambassador to ASEAN Jon Lambe, Philippines’ Department of Environment and Natural Resources Assistant Secretary Ricardo L. Calderon and participants from various AMS and sectors, including students and conservationists, attended the webinar. (ACB)



Climate Justice In An Era Of Emergencies



By [Featuresdesk \(MD\)](#)

December 21, 2020

After the Philippines was battered by five tropical cyclones within three weeks, the concept of climate justice must be highlighted in national consciousness. Climate change is not just an environmental issue; disaster after disaster shows that human rights are being compromised, the poorest sectors are the ones that bear the worst impacts, and local capacities have not been strengthened enough.

Numerous local and global reports have stated the same fact: natural hazards are shifting from their usual tracks and increasing in intensity due to climate change. This means that existing systems and good practices on addressing the impacts of storms, droughts, and other climate-related hazards must evolve to fully adapt to changing threats.

Justice at all levels

The concepts of climate change adaptation (CCA) and disaster risk reduction (DRR) are closely interlinked, as both fields aim to reduce vulnerabilities of communities to natural hazards, the intensity of which can be enhanced by climate change.

The differences between these two fields must serve as opportunities for integrating them to better address climate-related hazards. While DRR has historically focused on addressing short-term risks, evolving hazards and associated challenges and opportunities could allow for its practitioners and policymakers to look towards more long-term risks on which CCA is primarily concerned. Meanwhile, mainstreaming CCA on the local level would take linking its potential effects and actions to those experienced in the past and present by communities, which usually falls under DRR.

However, this only forms half of the climate agenda; the other side involves mitigating or reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This is achieved by preventing more emissions due to burning



Climate Justice In An Era Of Emergencies

fossil fuels such as coal, and removing excess GHG in our environment through natural carbon sinks such as forests.

The Philippines is one of the countries at highest risk to the climate crisis, despite emitting less than one percent of global GHGs. Without the cooperation of high-polluting nations such as the United States and China in reducing their emissions, more extreme climate change in the following decades. In this case, response and recovery-oriented measures will no longer be enough for the Philippines to deal with climate-related disasters.

No nation can address the climate emergency on its own, especially if its leaders continue to dismiss the crisis as a seasonal threat or unsolvable unless the rich nations take charge. The climate debt must be paid in full through climate finance, technology transfer, and capacity-building mechanisms to vulnerable nations like the Philippines that allow them to adequately address the climate crisis. This will not be possible if said countries do not take leadership in pressuring liable countries and corporations to do their respective parts.

It is through this lens that a just transition away from coal-fired power plants as the dominant electricity source in the Philippines must be initiated immediately. The recent moratorium of the Department of Energy on new coal plants must be integrated into a decarbonization pathway that prevents not only greenhouse gas emissions that lead to more extreme climate change, but also air pollution that results in the suffering of nearby communities.

The key to resilience

It is clear that the Philippines experiences injustices related to climate change from the global to the local level. What we must recognize is that climate justice is not a seasonal issue that only gains importance during times of disasters caused by extreme weather events. It is a matter that must constantly be at the center of governance, as it has implications on reducing inequalities, alleviating poverty, and other aspects of sustainable development.

We must avoid putting all the blame on climate change for the disasters that our country has endured and will experience moving forward. This not only prevents negligent government officials from being held accountable for their failures to reduce risks, but also promotes the wrong portrait of resilience as simply waiting for the inevitable and building back better than before.

What we need to see is more public finance being allocated to lowering risks to disasters and strengthening climate action and empowering local governments and communities to address the climate emergency. We also need our leaders to show political will to not only implement measures during times of disasters and long-term climate-related policymaking, but also hold corporations accountable for their role in worsening this crisis.

Disasters only happen when decision-makers fail to lead in lowering physical, economic, social, and environmental risks that lead to severe losses and damages that disrupt the normal day-to-



Climate Justice In An Era Of Emergencies

day living within communities. Similarly, injustices are only prolonged when we ignore the cries of the marginalized, the poor, and the victims of extreme climate change impacts.

Only by strengthening both mitigation and adaptation can we achieve climate justice. And only by achieving climate justice can we reach a true state of resilience that every Filipino, present and future, deserves.

John Leo is a member of the Haribon Foundation. He is the Program Manager of Living Laudato Si' Philippines, and the interim Secretariat of Aksyon Klima Pilipinas. He has been a citizen journalist since 2016.



Angel may panawagan para mapigilan ang climate disasters, kontra sa normal na ang baha

By [Salve Asis](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon)
- December 22, 2020 - 12:00am



Angel

Kinontra ni Angel Locsin ang opinion na normal na ang baha sa bansa kahit hindi super typhoon ang dumarating.

May sinagot siyang isang Twitter user na kayang-kaya naman ng local politicians ang mga ganyang baha. "I think we should listen to environmental experts on how we can prevent climate disasters from happening in the future, to avoid the unnecessary loss of lives & damage to properties :) We should learn from experience & not accept the reasoning na "Normal na ang baha sa bansa" :)"

Binaha na naman kasi ang maraming probinsiya sa Visayas and Mindanao samantalang Tropical Depression lang ito na pinangalanang Vicky.

Marami pang ibang probinsyang hindi nakakabangon sa grabeng pagbaha sa bagyong Rolly noong nakaraang buwan.

May kilala akong veteran actor, na up to now, naglilinis pa rin ng bahay nilang binaha sa Provident Subdivision in Marikina.

Literal na nilubog ng baha ang Marikina at kasama nga ang bahay ni veteran actor.

Almost a year na rin siyang walang work kaya worried na si veteran actor.

Hoping siya na magbibigay ng assistance ang ibang nakatrabaho niya para man lang makatulong sa kanya. Kabilang sa vulnerable sector si veteran actor kaya matumal o totally walang offer sa kanyang trabaho sa kasalukuyan.



Angel may panawagan para mapigilan ang climate disasters, kontra sa normal na ang baha

Sana nga ay maalala siya ng iba niyang nakasama sa trabaho para naman sumaya ang kanyang Pasko.

Anyway, immune na ang maraming Pinoy sa bagyo kaya siguro akala ng karamihan normal na lang ito.

Pero tama si Angel, panahon na para tantanan na ang mining na diumano'y mga maiingay na pulitiko pa ang nag-o-operate na kumakalbo sa ating mga kagubatan kaya mabilis at madalas ang pagbaha.



New solid waste processing plant opens in Mexico

posted December 21, 2020 at 08:30 pm

by [Jess Malabanan](#)

Mexico, Pampanga—A solid waste processing plant that can accommodate five tons of garbage daily was inaugurated Saturday to help address the mounting garbage problem of the different local government units in Pampanga.

PEDECO Integrated Waste Technology is absolutely the solution to the waste management disposal problem in the countryside through thermal fractionation, bio methanation and thermolysis process, an official of the industrial plant said in a statement.

A Japanese technology, PEDECO is a P50 million investment for research and development including the construction of facility. It will help province in solid waste disposal specifically plastic bottles.

“Under the framework of integrated solid waste management, first the facility can generate electricity to energize surrounding communities for a lower price. Second, its byproduct includes organic materials as fertilizers in agricultural farms,” said Agriculture Secretary William Dar.

Dar, who was the guest of honor and speaker during the inauguration of PEDECO situated at Barangay San Pablo in this farming town of Pampanga, said other organic garbage once processed will be decomposed for use of farmers.

“Organic waste once processed will be used as fertilizers,” Dar told reporters on the sideline of the PEDECO ceremonial ribbon cutting.

PEDECO president Bernardo Perrobias said this kind of technology is the first in Central Luzon in terms of solid waste disposal.

While he acknowledged the threat of solid waste and sanitary landfill to the environment, Perrobias said the industrial plant initially accepting non-hazardous wastes but it will eventually accept medical and hazardous materials.

“PEDECO is committed to provide renewable energy. Garbage collected will be converted into energy,” said Perrobias.

He said PEDECO will be negotiating with other LGUs in Central Luzon in establishing similar facility in solving their mounting garbage problem.

In City of San Fernando alone over 120 tons of domestic garbage are being collected and transported to sanitary landfill at the Metro Clark Waste Management in Sitio Kalangitan, Bgy Cutcut II, Capas, Tarlac.

The PEDECO waste processing plant is located adjacent to Amber Trail Resort and densely populated communities.

Topics: [solid waste processing plant](#) , [PEDECO Integrated Waste Technology](#) , [William Dar](#)



Mining pit in Toledo City collapses

By: [Dale G. Israel](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)
[Inquirer Visayas](#) / 08:44 PM December 21, 2020

CEBU CITY—A mining pit in the Carmen Copper Corp. compound in Toledo City has caved in on Monday (Dec. 21).

A local radio station, dyLA, reported that at least six persons went missing.

Toledo's public information office said a rescue operation is ongoing.

In a phone interview, John Roseller Layan, Toledo information officer, said Mayor Marjorie Perales has called for an emergency meeting with city officials.

Layan said more information will be given after the meeting.

The mining company has yet to issue a statement.

TSB



Toledo LGU to start search, rescue in collapsed mining pit

By: [Dale G. Israel](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)
[Inquirer Visayas](#) / 10:41 PM December 21, 2020

CEBU CITY—The Toledo City government is preparing for a search and rescue operation at a collapsed mining site of Carmen Copper Corp. (CCC).

John Roseller Layan, city information officer, said rescue workers would begin early on Tuesday (Dec. 22) the search for workers who are still missing. The site, Layan said, remained “unstable and dangerous.”

Layan, however, could not yet say how many persons were missing.

In a statement, the mining company attributed the landslide to relentless rains.

“The management of CCC is doing all necessary action to assess and address the overall situation,” it said.

“We will continue to inform the concerned agencies as well as the general public of further developments,” the company added.

Local radio station dyLA reported that at least six persons were missing after the landslide.

TSB



Search and rescue operation in CCC's collapsed mining pit to start this Tuesday

By: Doris C. Bongcac - Editor/CDN Digital | December 22, 2020 - 06:22 AM



| Photo courtesy of Toledo City LGU

MANDAUE CITY, Cebu – Search and rescue operation will be launched early this Tuesday morning, December 22, at the collapsed mining site of Carmen Copper Corporation (CCC), an operating mine of Atlas Consolidated Mining Development Corporation (ACMDC) that is based in Toledo City.

But as of this writing, it remains unclear how many miners have gone missing following a landslide at the Carmen Pit, CCC's mine operations site, which happened at around 4:15 p.m. on Monday, December 21.

“The incident was traceable to the incessant rains for the past several months and aggravated by Typhoon Vicky which hit parts of the Visayas, including Toledo City last Friday, December 18, 2020,” CCC said in a statement.

“The Management of CCC is doing all the necessary action to assess and address the overall situation. We will continue to inform the concerned agencies as well the general public of further developments,” it added.

An advisory from the city government said that Mayor Joie Piczon-Perales has already instructed all government agencies in her city to help in the conduct of the search and rescue operation.

Read more: <https://cebudailynews.inquirer.net/356108/search-and-rescue-operation-in-cccs-collapsed-mining-pit-to-start-this-tuesday#ixzz6hlpilRs8>

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Bagong strain ng COVID-19 binabantayan ng DOH

By [Ludy Bermudo](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon)

- December 22, 2020 - 12:00am



Nitong Sabado kinumpirma ng UK government na may bagong strain ang sakit. Tinawag itong “VUI – 202012/01,” na unang natukoy noong Setyembre.

MANILA, Philippines — Binabantayan na ng Department of Health (DOH) ang nai-report na bagong strain ng COVID-19 sa United Kingdom na nagresulta upang magpatupad ang iba pang European countries ng restrictions sa mga biyahe mula sa UK.

“According to Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM), wala pa silang nakikitang bagong strain na mayroon dito sa ating bansa, based on their monitoring,” ani Health Usec. Maria Rosario Vergeire.

Sa kabila nito, tiniyak ni Vergeire na hindi nagpapabaya ang DOH at patuloy nilang tututukan ang development ng coronavirus sa ibang bansa para makapaghanda agad ng aksyon ang pamahalaan.

Siniguro rin ni Vergeire na walang pangangailangan upang magpatupad ng mas istriktong travel restrictions dahil ang pinapayagan lamang sa bansa ay ang pagpasok ng mga diplomats, indibidwal na may negosyo sa Pilipinas at mga Filipino citizen.

Mas pinalakas din naman aniya nila ang mga hakbang na kanilang mga ipinatutupad sa pagsusuri at quarantine sa mga boarders ng bansa.

Nitong Sabado kinumpirma ng UK government na may bagong strain ang sakit. Tinawag itong “VUI – 202012/01,” na unang natukoy noong Setyembre.

Bagama’t wala pang ebidensya na mas nakakamatay ang bagong strain ng coronavirus, pinaniniwalaan namang mas nakakahawa ito ng hanggang 70%.



No new Covid-19 strain in PH: DOH

By Ma. Teresa Montemayor December 21, 2020, 7:11 pm



DOH Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire. (File photo)

MANILA – There is no new strain of coronavirus in the country based on the latest report of the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine (RITM), a health official said Monday.

"According to RITM, *sa ngayon wala pa silang nakikitang bagong strain na mayroon tayo dito sa ating bansa* (they have not seen a new strain in our country) based on their monitoring," Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said during an online media forum.

Vergeire was responding to speculations that the "mutation" of a Covid-19 virus, which caused the second wave of cases in the United Kingdom (UK), is similar to the variant the Philippine Genome Center has detected in August.

"But of course we will be furthering this monitoring *baka nga kung sakali kailangan natin mapag-igting para kung mayroon mang ganyan dito sa ating bansa ma-identify natin* (as there might be a need for stricter monitoring to identify anything like that in the country)," she said.

Based on preliminary data, the variant detected in the UK could be up to 70 percent more infectious and has become a prevalent strain in its capital.

Meanwhile, the World Health Organization said it is analyzing Britain's data to see if the increase of infections there is the result of a more potent strain.

Vergeire noted that the UK has already imposed travel restrictions on its borders.

"*Dito naman po sa ating bansa, ang ating pinapapasok pa lang natin dito sa ngayon ay* (Here in our country, what we're allowing to enter are) diplomats and those with official businesses here in the country," she said.

"So, the restriction, I don't think that would be required at this point, although, of course, we are strengthening our measures to prevent the entrance of infection here that's why the monitoring of ports with the testing with the quarantine of all those coming in are being implemented," she added.



No new Covid-19 strain in PH: DOH

As of 4 p.m. Monday, the Department of Health (DOH) reported that the country's overall Covid-19 case tally has reached 461,505; the recovered cases, 429,207; and deaths at 8,957.

Since last week, the DOH has been warning the public against the possible surge of cases this holiday season as many people engage in celebrations with family and friends outdoors, attend Simbang Gabi, and visit night markets.

The agency continues to encourage the public to have safe holidays by observing the minimum health standards, especially when going outdoors - the proper wearing of face masks and face shields, avoiding cramped places where physical distancing is impossible and avoiding staying outside for a long period. *(PNA)*

Dinapuan ng COVID-19 sa Pilipinas sumipa sa 461,505; patay halos 9,000

By [James Relativo](#)(Philstar.com)
- December 21, 2020 - 4:06pm



Kumpleto sa suot na face shield at face mask ang babaeng ito habang dumadalo sa isang "Simbang Gabi" sa isang simbahan sa Maynila, ika-16 ng Disyembre, 2020
AFP/Ted Aljibe

MANILA, Philippines — Hindi pa rin nagpapaawat sa pagpasok ang mga panibagong kaso ng coronavirus disease (COVID-19) apat na araw bago sumapit ang araw ng Pasko sa Biyernes — panahong pinaghahandaan dahil sa inaasahang pagariba ng mga bagong infections.

Umakyat na kasi sa 461,505 ang nadadali ng karamdaman sa Pilipinas, matapos bumuhos ang bagong 1,721 sariwang kaso, ayon sa datos na inilabas ng Department of Health (DOH) ngayong Lunes.

Malaki-laki pa rin 'yan kung ikukumpara sa halos 1,000 nitong nagdaang buwan.

'Di katulad ng mga nakaraang linggo, lilimang laboratoryo lang ang hindi nakapagbigay ng kanilang mga datos sa COVID-19 Data Repository System (CDRS) nitong Linggo.

Narito ang listahan ng mga may pinakamaraming bagong kaso ng COVID-19 na iireport ng DOH ngayong araw:

- Davao City (151)
- Quezon City (142)
- Rizal (85)
- Laguna (81)
- City of Manila (77)



Dinapuan ng COVID-19 sa Pilipinas sumipa sa 461,505; patay halos 9,000

Tuloy-tuloy pa rin naman ang gamutan at pagpapagaling ng nasa 23,341 aktibong kaso, o yaong mga hindi pa gumagaling o namamatay sa COVID-19.

Nasa 8,957 naman na ang pumapanaw sa naturang karamdaman. Mas marami 'yan ng 10 kaysa sa mga numero na inilabas ng gobyerno kahapon.

Papalapit naman na nang papalapit sa bilang ng total domestic cases ang mga gumagaling sa virus, na kasalukuyan nang nasa 429,207.

Samantala, pinabulaanan naman ni presidential spokesperson Harry Roque ang mga lumalabas na balitang babalik sa mahihigpit na lockdown ang Metro Manila kaugnay na rin ng pandemya.

"Obvious na walang katotohanan ang balita na ang Metro Manila ay mapapasailalim sa modified enhanced community quarantine o MECQ sa gabi ng 19 ng Disyembre hanggang sa katapusan ng [buwan]," wika ng tagapagsalita ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte kanina.

"Isa na namang fake news ang ipinakalat ng mga walang magawang maganda sa buhay."

Aniya, mananatili sa maluwag-luwag na general community quarantine (GCQ) ang Kamaynilaan bagama't may pagtaas sa mga kaso nitong mga nakaraang araw.

Fake lang din daw na magkakaroon ng lockdown mula ika-23 ng Disyembre hanggang ika-3 ng Enero 2021, bagay na ipiakakalat lang daw para "sirain ang Pasko" ng lahat.

Iniiimbestigahan na raw ng National Capital Region Police Office ang pekeng memorandum na ipinakakalat daw ngayon sa madla kaugnay ng balitang 'yan, ayon kay NCRPO chief Brig. Gen. Vicente Danao.

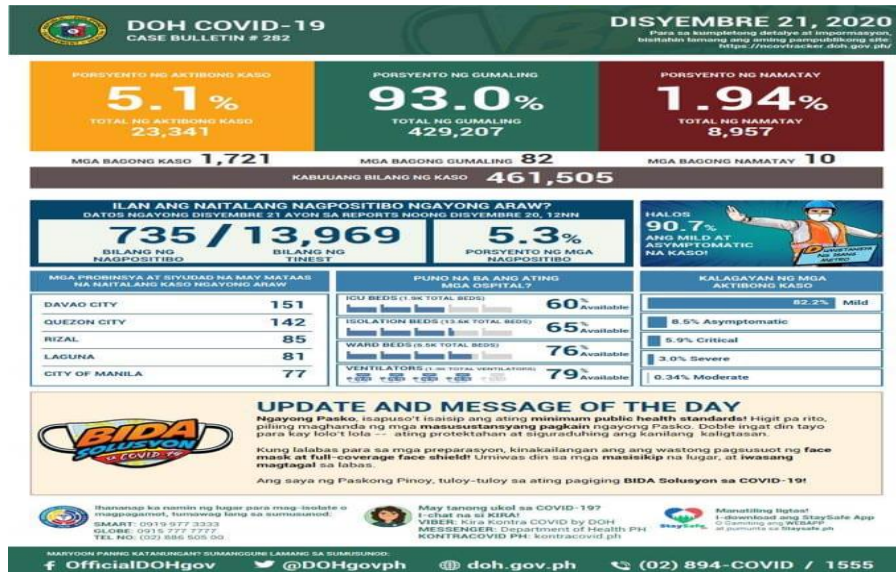
Matatandaang mahigpit na pinagbabawalan ang basta-bastang paglabas-labas ng mga tao sa ilalim ng enhanced community quarantine (EC) at MECQ, maliban na rin sa maraming establisyamento at pampublikong transportasyon ang pinagbabawalang mag-operate kontra COVID-19 transmission.

Ayon sa [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#), 75.11 milyon na ang nahahawaan ng nasabing sakit sa buong daigdig. Sa bilang na 'yan, mahigit 1.7 milyon na ang binabawian ng buhay.



BREAKING: Kaso ng COVID-19 sa Pilipinas, lagpas 461,000 na

By Angellic Jordan December 21, 2020 - 04:11 PM



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

Sa huling datos ng Department of Health (DOH) bandang araw ng Lunes (December 21), umabot na sa 461,505 ang confirmed cases ng nakakahawang sakit sa bansa.

Sa nasabing bilang, 23,341 o 5.1 porsyento ang aktibong kaso.

Sinabi ng kagawaran na 1,721 ang bagong napaulat na kaso ng COVID-19 sa bansa.

82.2 porsyento sa active COVID-19 cases ang mild; 8.5 porsyento ang asymptomatic; 0.34 porsyento ang moderate; 3.0 porsyento ang severe habang 5.9 porsyento ang nasa kritikal na kondisyon.

Nasa 10 naman ang napaulat na nasawi.

Dahil dito, umakyat na sa 8,957 o 1.94 porsyento ang COVID-19 related deaths sa bansa.

Ayon pa sa DOH, 82 naman ang gumaling pa sa COVID-19.

Dahil dito, umakyat na sa 429,207 o 93.0 porsyento ang total recoveries ng COVID-19 sa Pilipinas.

Read more: <https://radio.inquirer.net/280689/breaking-kaso-ng-covid-19-sa-pilipinas-lagpas-461000-na#ixzz6hIL6QA8Y>

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These critical last few days of the year

Published December 21, 2020, 11:43 AM

by [Manila Bulletin](#)



In these last few days of the year, our officials will be closely watching the figures of COVID-19 infections and deaths in the country, to see the effects of the general easing of restrictions for the holiday season, particularly the gathering of people for the Simbang Gabi.

The officials know the figure is bound to go up, but it is hoped that it will not be so much that severe restrictions will have to be imposed again. It all depends now on the people themselves, whether they follow the few basic rules of wearing face masks and face shields, proper distancing, and frequent washing of hands.

The COVID-19 virus is still with us. Some countries like the United States and the United Kingdom have begun administering vaccines which, in due time, will create a “herd immunity” that will stop further spread of the virus. But that will take time, months, as there are hundreds of millions of people that need to be vaccinated.

The earliest we will get our share of the vaccines is in May next year. That is five months from now and even then, the vaccines we expect to have by that time will be good for only 30 million people — out of our total 110 million population.

We simply have to rely on what we now have. Our people must know that their safety lies in their own hands. The only mass gatherings we are now having are the Simbang Gabi and Church officials are doing their best to maintain proper distancing — one meter — in the churchyards.

But, as Bishop Broderick Pabillo, apostolic administrator of the Archdiocese of Manila, said after the first pre-dawn mass last Wednesday, “we can control the people in the church premises, but we do not have the authority to control people in the streets.”

There are three more pre-dawn masses of the nine-day Simbang Gabi left before Christmas Eve. The government has warned against other holiday gatherings, such as family reunions, small parties, people shopping in malls and supermarkets.

Our health officials will be closely watching the figures of COVID-19 infections and deaths in every one of these days, and in the rest of the year. If the figures start sweeping upwards, the officials will have to act and impose restrictions anew.



These critical last few days of the year

We hope it will not come to this. We have come a long way since March when Manila and the rest of Luzon were placed under Enhanced Community Quarantine. We have done much better than some other nations, like the US, India, Brazil, Russia, and France, the nations with the most COVID-19 infections today.

Our government has imposed restrictions but ultimately, it is the people following the restrictions that will keep infections down. We thus join in the appeal to everyone to follow the basic rules that will keep them safe and keep infections in the country down in these critical last few days of the year.

IATF to tackle new Covid-19 strain in UK in next meeting

By Azer Parrocha December 21, 2020, 5:05 pm



Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque. (File photo)

MANILA – The Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) will be discussing efforts to prevent the entry of a new strain of coronavirus emerging in the United Kingdom (UK), Malacañang said Monday.

Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque made this remark after more nations have started imposing travel bans on the UK after it reported a more-infectious coronavirus variant.

“Pag-uusapan pa po ‘yan sa IATF. Pero sa ngayon po in place pa naman yung ating mga protocols para sa lahat ng pumapasok ng Pilipinas, kasama po ang mandatory quarantine habang inaantay po ang resulta ng kanilang [polymerase chain reaction] tests (That will be discussed by the IATF. At present, our protocols for all those entering the Philippines is still in place, including mandatory quarantine while waiting for results of their PCR tests),” he said in a press briefing from Davao City.

Currently, only Filipino citizens, foreigners joining their Filipino spouses and dependents; and foreign diplomats are allowed to enter the country under existing protocols.

Upon arrival, passengers must undergo PCR Covid-19 testing. While waiting for results, passengers must stay either in a government-designated quarantine facility or quarantine hotel.

Payment for the accommodation of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) will be shouldered by the government while other travelers who are non-OFWs will pay for their own accommodation costs.

Travelers whose test positive will be transferred to designated hospitals for treatment, while those with negative results will be allowed to move out and undergo a 14-day quarantine at home or at an appropriate local monitoring facility.

Reports showed that the coronavirus variant first identified in the UK was spreading 70 percent faster than others.



IATF to tackle new Covid-19 strain in UK in next meeting

However, experts said that it is likely that a vaccine would need to be developed to keep up with new strains.

UK researchers discovered the variant after collecting samples from infected people in southeastern England.

Since then, Australia, Denmark, and the Netherlands have identified cases of the variant in their countries.

No holiday MECQ in Metro Manila

Meanwhile, Roque dismissed as fake the news rumors that Metro Manila reverted to a stricter modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) last Dec. 19 until the end of the year or that there would be more stringent lockdowns from Dec. 23 until Jan. 3, 2021.

“Bente uno na po ngayon, [general community quarantine] pa rin po ang buong Kamaynilaan (It’s already Dec. 21 and the whole of Metro Manila is still under GCQ),” he said.

Roque said Duterte is expected to announce the next quarantine classifications on January 2021.

Besides Metro Manila, the provinces of Davao del Norte, Batangas, and Lanao del Sur, and cities of Iloilo, Tacloban, Iligan, and Davao will remain under GCQ until Dec. 31.

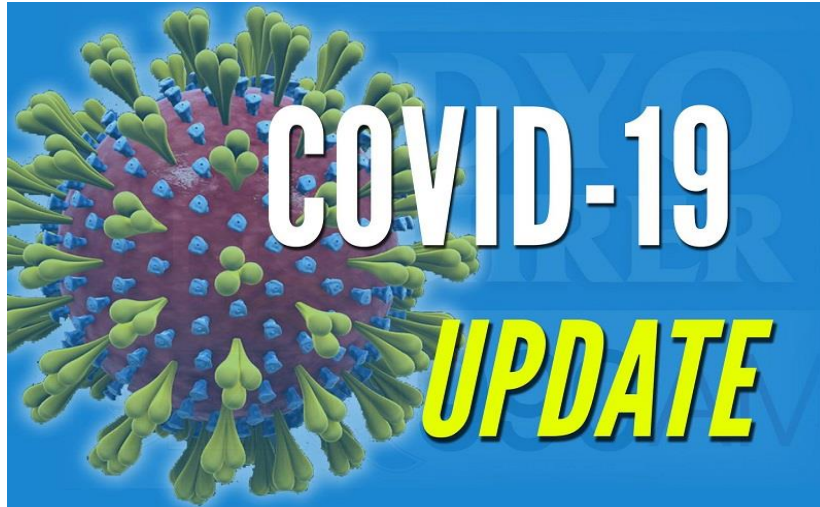
All other places in the country will be under the most relaxed modified general community quarantine (MGCQ).

As of Sunday, confirmed Covid-19 cases in the Philippines are nearing 460,000. Globally, more than 75 million have been infected with the virus. **(PNA)**



Kaso ng COVID-19 sa buong mundo mahigit 77.1 million na

By Dona Dominguez-Cargullo December 21, 2020 - 10:56 AM



Umabot sa mahigit 544,000 pa ang naitalang bagong kaso ng COVID-19 sa buong mundo sa nakalipas na magdamag.

Batay sa pinakahuling datos araw ng Lunes, (Dec. 21) ay 77,156,240 na ang global cases ng COVID-19.

Sa magdamag, mahigit 180,000 ang bagong kaso na naitala sa US.

Sa United Kingdom ay nakapagtala ng mahigit 35,000 na bagong kaso sa magdamag.

Mahigit 28,000 naman ang mga bagong kaso na naitala sa Russia.

Narito ang datos ng COVID-19 sa mga bansang may pinakamaraming kaso:

USA – 18,265,060
India – 10,056,248
Brazil – 7,238,600
Russia – 2,848,377
France – 2,473,354
UK – 2,040,147
Turkey – 2,024,601
Italy – 1,953,185
Spain – 1,817,448
Argentina – 1,541,285

Read more: <https://radio.inquirer.net/280647/kaso-ng-covid-19-sa-buong-mundo-mahigit-77-1-million-na#ixzz6h1LhHFQ7>

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Angat, Ipo Dams release water as levels rise

Published December 21, 2020, 6:04 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

The water levels of Angat and Ipo Dams continue to rise prompting dam operators to release water from reservoirs in Bulacan on Monday afternoon.



(JANSEN ROMERO / FILE PHOTO / MANILA BULLETIN)

Angat Dam's water level has already reached 216.13 meters, more than 4 meters above its 212.0-meter spilling level as of 1 p.m., based on the monitoring of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).

One spillway gate of Angat Dam was initially opened Monday morning, discharging 289 cubic meters of water.

By afternoon, two additional gates were opened, discharging a total of 521 cubic meters per second.

Most of the water discharged from Angat Dam flows into the Ipo Dam, which has a current water level of 100.38 meters. The spilling level is 101.0 meters.

Ipo Dam also opened four gates Monday noon with a total discharge of 320 cubic meters.

PAGASA said some of the discharged water helps to supply domestic water and irrigation requirements, although some of it may affect a number of communities in Bulacan.

PAGASA advised those living in low-lying areas of Norzagaray, Angat, San Rafael, Bustos, Baliuag, Pulilan and Plaridel to take appropriate action in case flooding occurs.

Meanwhile, Magat Dam operators have reduced the number of spillway gates that are releasing water from the reservoir in Isabela Monday morning.

From six gates last Saturday, three gates with a total opening of 6 meters are currently discharging 1,686 cubic meters per second from the Magat reservoir as of 10 a.m.

PAGASA said the level of Magat Dam was at 190.93 meters Monday morning, slightly lower than the 191.32 meters last Sunday and lower than its 193.0-meter normal high water level.



Angat, Ipo dams open gates, nearby towns likely to be affected —PAGASA

Published December 21, 2020 3:46pm

Angat and Ipo dams on Monday opened gates to release water, which may affect nearby towns, according to state weather bureau PAGASA – Hydrometeorology Division.

In its 1 p.m. update on Monday, PAGASA said Angat Dam has three gates open at two meters. The water level in the dam was recorded at 216.13 meters. Its normal high water level is at 212 meters.

Ipo Dam meanwhile opened four gates by two meters to discharge water. As of 12 noon, the water level in Ipo Dam was recorded at 100.38 meters. Its normal high water level is at 101 meters.

Moderate rains are expected over the area in the next 24 hours, according to PAGASA.

Due to this, PAGASA said some areas will likely be affected such as the municipalities of Norzagaray, Angat, San Rafael, Pulilan, and Plaridel in Bulacan.

“Residents and the local disaster risk reduction and management councils concerned are advised to take precautionary action,” PAGASA said. --Joviland Rita/KBK, GMA News



PRRD grants P10-K service recognition incentive to gov't workers

By Azer Parrocha December 21, 2020, 3:20 pm



(File photo)

MANILA – The holiday season just got merrier for qualified state workers as they would get a one-time service recognition incentive (SRI) under a new administrative order signed by President Rodrigo R. Duterte.

Administrative Order (AO) 37, signed by Duterte on December 18, is in line with the implementation of Joint Resolution 4 inked on June 17, 2009, which allows the release of incentives as rewards for a government employee's loyalty and exceptional financial and operational performance.

"Government employees deserve to be rewarded for their collective and unceasing participation in and invaluable contribution to the administration's continuing efforts toward the establishment of streamlined government processes and more responsive delivery of public services, especially in the midst of the public health emergency caused by the Covid-19 pandemic," it stated.

The order provides that a one-time SRI worth PHP10,000 would be given to personnel in national government agencies, including those in state universities and colleges and government-owned or -controlled corporations, occupying regular, contractual, or casual positions.

Military personnel of the Armed Forces of the Philippines, uniformed personnel of the Philippine National Police, Bureau of Fire Protection, Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, Bureau of Corrections, Philippine Coast Guard, and National Mapping and Resource Information Authority will also receive the SRI.

"The payment of the SRI to all qualified government employees shall not be earlier than 21 December 2020," the order read.

AO 37 also grants the SRI to civilian personnel still in government service as of Nov. 30, 2020.

Government workers who have rendered at least four months of satisfactory service as of Nov. 30, 2020, inclusive of services rendered under any of the alternative work arrangements prescribed by the Civil Service Commission, will also be granted the SRI.



PRRD grants P10-K service recognition incentive to gov't workers

Employees who have rendered less than four months will be entitled to a 40-percent pro-rated share of the SRI, while those who have been working in the government in less than three months will get a 30-percent pro-rated share of the incentive.

Those who are hired in the government for less than two months and one month will take home 20 percent and 10 percent, respectively, of the pro-rated share of the cash bonus.

The SRI will also be granted to employees who have not received any additional yearend benefit in fiscal year 2020 over and above the benefit authorized under Republic Act 8441.

AO 37 excludes consultants and experts engaged for a limited period to perform specific activities or services with expected outputs; laborers engaged through job contracts and those paid on a piecework basis; student workers and apprentices; and individuals and groups of people whose services are engaged through job orders, contracts of service or other similar work schemes.

Funding of the SRI for employees in the executive department will be sourced from national government agencies' Personnel Services (PS) allotments of respective agencies.

Employees in the Senate, House of Representatives, Judiciary, Office of the Ombudsman, and Constitutional Offices vested with fiscal autonomy may likewise be granted a one-time SRI by their respective heads of offices not exceeding PHP10,000 each.

Local government employees may also be granted a one-time SRI as determined by their respective "sanggunian" (city or municipal council) depending on their financial capability.

"In determining the amount of the SRI, the sanggunians shall exercise prudence and judicious use of government funds, ensuring that the expenditure is reasonable and will not, in any way, adversely affect the delivery of services to the public," the order read.

The one-time SRI of PHP10,000 may also be granted to employees of local water districts at rates to be determined by their board of directors.

AO 37 directs the Department of Budget and Management (DBM) to issue supplemental guidelines to effectively implement the order.

The DBM earlier recommended updating the policies on and levels of incentives applicable to all government personnel through the grant of a one-time incentive to recognize and further encourage the unwavering commitment and dedication of government employees in the performance of their work.

The order takes effect immediately following its complete publication in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation. (PNA)



Gov't to strictly monitor mining sector's sale and use of explosives

By: [Germelina Lacorte](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)
[Inquirer Mindanao](#) / 03:39 AM December 22, 2020

DAVAO CITY — President Rodrigo Duterte ordered a more stringent rule on the sale and use of dynamites and explosives to the mining sector to prevent the items from getting into the hands of communist rebels who used deadly landmines in attacks against soldiers.

“I’m going to direct the DILG (Department of Interior and Local Government) and Secretary (Eduardo) Año here,” the President said during a December 21 meeting with his Cabinet in Davao City. “Where do you get your explosive powder?” asked the President, addressing the NPA. “Most of it comes from the mines, so, let’s double-check now (before an explosive would be purchased), it must be cleared by the police and supervised very strictly.”

He said mining companies would have to seek clearance from the police to buy dynamites and explosives.

“When you go to the area, (inform the) commanding officer of the military and let him know that you bought these explosives so that when and where you will be using it, they will be able to monitor,” the President said.

“Kami, sa gobyerno, nagdududa kami (We, in the government, we suspect that you are using (these dynamites and explosives to make landmines) against our soldiers,” he said.

“It’s against the Geneva Convention and your argument that it’s a self-detonating device is a hullabaloo.”

This developed as the President renewed his verbal attack against Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate of the Makabayan bloc whom he tagged as a communist and questioned the ongoing study of Zarate’s son Xandro at the John Paul Catholic University of Lublin, Poland.

Read more: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1374601/govt-to-strictly-monitor-mining-sectors-sale-and-use-of-explosives#ixzz6hIU7xCFi>

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Duterte orders strict police, military control on sale and use of explosives in mining

Published December 22, 2020, 1:20 AM
by [Genalyn Kabling](#)

President Duterte has ordered the strict government control of the sale and use of explosives in mining operations to prevent these items from falling into the hands of communist rebels.



President Rodrigo Roa Duterte presides over a meeting with the Inter-Agency Task Force on the Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) core members prior to his talk to the people at the Arcadia Active Lifestyle Center in Matina, Davao City on December 21, 2020. RICHARD MADELO/ PRESIDENTIAL PHOTO

The President said any sale and use of the mining explosives must have the clearance of the police as well as the military assigned in the area. The commander-in-chief sought the tighter supervision on such explosive use after raising concern that communist rebels have used these items in their attacks against government troops.

“I’m going to direct the DILG, nandito si Sec. Año. ‘Yung mga IED ng mga komunista, ipasok ko na lang lahat. ‘Yung IED ninyo san kinukuha yan? Sige nga. Where do you get your explosives, powder? Karamihan diyan galing sa mina (I’m going to direct the Department of the Interior and Local Government, Secretary (Eduardo) Año is here. Where do the rebels get their improvised explosive device? Where do you get your explosives, powder? Most of them come from mining),” he said in a televised public address Monday.

“So that may double check tayo ngayon (So we will have a double check from now on). It must be cleared by the police, supervised strictly. and then when you go to the area, go to the commanding officer of the military there and let them you know that you have bought these explosives para pag ginamit ninyo yan, mabantayan (so when you use them, it can be monitored),” he added.

The President said the government wanted to know how many of the explosives are sold and used by these mining companies. He lamented that many soldiers and policemen have been killed due to the explosives detonated by communist rebels.

“You can buy one. but most of them are ... Nagdududa kami sa gobyerno na ginagamit sa sundalo ko (The government have doubts. These are being used against my soldiers),” he said.



Duterte orders strict police, military control on sale and use of explosives in mining

“Itong pabili ng (The sale of) explosives, dynamites must be controlled. Talagang higitan ni General Año and the commanding office of the area sa military must be informed so that he would know how to check,” he added.

Duterte also resented that the rebels even have the gall to justify the use of explosives against the troops.

“When the communists use it, they justify it. You go into rigmarole... When you use it, it’s okay. You use it to kill military men, government personnel, police, okay,” he said.

Duterte said he would like to use landmine against the rebels but “the government cannot violate the law.” “Kayo? Wala man kayong pakialam sa law (You? You don’t care about the law),” he said.

Back in 2018, the President directed the environment authorities to revoke licenses of mining firms that supply explosives to communist rebel group.

Military and police found violating the country’s laws on explosives would also face expulsion, the Palace said then.



Mga bangko pinatigil pagpondo sa coal plant

By Abante News Online — Last updated Dec 21, 2020

NEWS



Hinimok ng 'Withdrawal from Coal' (WFC) na i-phase out ang pagpopondo ng 'dirty energy' sa mga ulat na naglabas ng \$ 13 billion ang 15 local banks para sa patuloy na pagpapalawak ng 'coal projects' sa bansa.

Sa Coal Divestment Scorecard, base sa criteria na inilunsad ng mga civil society groups, Church leaders, environmentalists, at faith-based groups, lumilitaw na may 15 Philippine banks ang nag-channel ng \$13.42 billion sa mga kompanya ng 'coal developer' at 'coal projects' mula 2009 hanggang 2019.

"Philippine banks and other financiers have caused the expansion of coal in the past decade thanks to their financial services to coal developers and projects. If they will not choose to phase out these activities, our future and that of generations to come are placed in greater peril. With this in mind, Withdraw from Coal continues to urge Philippine banks to have policies and timelines to phase out coal in their work," ayon kay Bishop Gerry Alminaza ng Diocese of San Carlos, at co-convenor ng WFC.



Mga bangko pinatigil pagpondo sa coal plant

By Abante News Online — Last updated Dec 21, 2020

NEWS

Nabatid na ang mga may malaking halaga ng mga pautang at nagkaloob ng underwriting ay ang Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI), Banco De Oro (BDO), at Philippine National Bank (PNB) na nagkakahalaga ng US \$3,480.86 milyon, \$2,518.9 milyon, at \$1,607.28 milyon.

“We, however, appreciate how open the bank has been to engaging with stakeholders in WFC, and believe that its score would improve in future rounds of grading, if only the hopes they shared for a power portfolio dominated by renewables by the end of this decade will be translated into a public

position against coal,” ayon naman kay Gerry Arances, executive director ng Center for Energy, Ecology, and Development (CEED).

Ang proseso ng ‘scoring’ ay na-modelo matapos ang pagsasanay ng international fossil fuel finance research organizations gaya ng Urgewald and Reclaim Finance, ang grupong nasa likuran ng naunang insiyatibo ng ‘Coal Policy Tool and the Global Coal Exit List.’



Biden introduces his climate team, says 'no time to waste'

By [The Associated Press](#)

December 22, 2020



President-elect Joe Biden announces his climate and energy team nominees and appointees at The Queen Theater in Wilmington Del., on December 19.

WILMINGTON, Del.—Just as the United States has needed a unified, national response to Covid-19, it needs one for dealing with climate change, President-elect Joe Biden said Saturday as he rolled out key members of his environmental team.

“We literally have no time to waste,” Biden told reporters as he introduced his choices.

The approach is a shift from Donald Trump’s presidency, which has been marked by efforts to boost oil and gas production while rolling back government efforts intended to safeguard the environment. The incoming Biden team will try to undo or block many of the current administration’s initiatives. There also will be an emphasis on looking out for the low-income, working class and minority communities hit hardest by fossil fuel pollution and climate change.

In his remarks, Biden stressed the diversity of an emerging team that he described as “brilliant, qualified, tested and they are barrier-busting.”

“Already there are more people of color in our Cabinet than any Cabinet ever, more women than ever,” said the former vice president, who has promised to assemble a group of department leaders who reflect the diversity of America.

The nominees Biden introduced Saturday had compelling personal stories that they cited as guiding them if confirmed by the Senate.

New Mexico Rep. Deb Haaland would be the first Native American to lead the Interior Department, which has wielded influence over the nation’s tribes for generations. She said her life has not been easy. She struggled with homelessness and relied on food stamps at one point.



Biden introduces his climate team, says 'no time to waste'

"This moment is profound when we consider the fact that a former secretary of the Interior once proclaimed his goal, was to quote, 'civilize or exterminate' us," Haaland said. "I'm a living testament to the failure of that horrific ideology."

Haaland was referring to Alexander H.H. Stuart, who said that in 1851.

Former two-term Michigan Gov. Jennifer Granholm is in line to be energy secretary. She described arriving in the US at age 4 and brought from Canada by a family "seeking opportunity." She said her father found work as a bank teller and retired as head of the bank.

"It's because of my family's journey and my experience in fighting for hardworking Michigan families that I have become obsessed, obsessed with gaining good-paying jobs in America in a global economy," Granholm said.

North Carolina official Michael Regan would be the first African American man to run the Environmental Protection Agency. Regan, the state environmental head since 2017, has made a name for himself by pursuing cleanups of industrial toxins and helping the low-income and minority communities significantly affected by pollution.

Regan said he grew up in North Carolina hunting and fishing with his father and grandfather and that he has great respect for the outdoors and the country's natural resources, but he also had a respiratory condition that required him to use an inhaler.

"Since the start of my career, my goals have been the same," Regan said. "To safeguard our natural resources, to improve the quality of our air and water, to protect our families and our communities, and to help them see the opportunities of a cleaner, healthier world."

Biden's nominee to oversee the Council on Environmental Quality is Brenda Mallory. The office oversees environmental reviews for virtually all major infrastructure projects and advises the president on major environmental issues. If confirmed, she would be the first African American to hold the position since it was created more than half a century ago.

Two other members of the team introduced Saturday do not need Senate confirmation. They are Gina McCarthy, to serve as national climate adviser, and Ali Zaidi, to serve as her deputy. McCarthy was EPA administrator from 2013 to 2017 during President Barack Obama's second term.

Must we risk destroying the ocean to save the planet?

A new risk to marine ecosystems is looming on the horizon: Commercial deep-seabed mining for minerals, which will potentially affect the largely untouched deep sea at depths of 2,000 to 4,000 meters.



A swimming sea cucumber, *Enypniastes eximia*, seen during the Oceano Profundo 2018: Exploring Deep-sea Habitats off Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands expedition. Scientists are still learning more about deep-sea habitats.

Image: [NOAA Ocean Exploration & Research via Flickr, CC BY-SA 2.0](#)



By [Sabine Christiansen](#) and [Sebastian Unger](#)

Dec. 21, 2020

Today's growing world population and a privileged minority's rapidly rising living standards are driving resource consumption and waste production at a rate requiring the [capacities of 1.7 Earths](#) and fuels alarming levels of global warming. And the ocean is increasingly suffering the consequences – not only the well-known large-scale bleaching of tropical corals caused by rising temperatures, but also the less visible risks of ocean-water acidification and temporal and spatial discrepancies in productivity patterns due to species-specific adaptability.

Earth, and especially the ocean, is thus approaching the tipping point of irreversible degradation. That would be a tragedy, marked by the ocean's increasing inability to provide us and future generations with necessities such as healthy food, the carbon cycle, nutrient regeneration, and mitigation of global warming.

As recent studies and assessments [indicate](#), the world is still able to change course in the face of this threat, if major pressures—including climate change—are mitigated and marine ecosystems restored. But a new risk is looming on the horizon: Commercial deep-seabed mining for in-demand minerals.