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'Pogi points' for task force as DENR chief cites its award-winning efforts

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by [Ellson Quismorio](#)

Talk about earning "pogi points".

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu hailed on Monday, Feb. 22 the inter-agency task force dubbed Philippine Operations Group on Ivory and Illegal Wildlife or POGI for winning the prestigious Asia Environmental Enforcement Awards.



Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu (RTVM / FILE PHOTO / MANILA BULLETIN)

Cimatu described the award as a "testimony of the continuing commitment of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on upholding its mandate of protecting, conserving, and managing the environment and natural resources for the present and future generations."

"This serves as another feather on the cap of the agency on environmental law enforcement," the DENR chief said.

Given by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the award is won by individuals and/or government organizations or teams that demonstrate excellence and outstanding leadership in enforcement of national laws to combat transboundary environmental crime.

During the nomination period from June 2019 to May 2020, Task Force POGI successfully apprehended high-profile traffickers and confiscated valuable contraband.

Its highlight accomplishment came in August 2019 when the task force arrested Sharon Jonjon Lim, a notorious online wildlife trader who had eluded arrest for five years. Seized from him were 13 rare animals worth around \$5,000 or around P250,000.



‘Pogi points’ for task force as DENR chief cites its award-winning efforts

Task force chairman, Usec. Ernesto D. Adobo, Jr. received the award in a virtual ceremony.

“We are humbled and deeply grateful that our collective efforts and initiatives in combating environmental crimes, particularly crimes against wildlife, are recognized by no less than international experts from the United Nations and its partner agencies,” Adobo said.



Gov't task force wins international award

By: [Jhesset O. Enano](#) - Reporter / [@JhessetEnanoINQ](#)
[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:58 AM February 22, 2021

MANILA, Philippines — An interagency government task force focused on curbing wildlife trafficking in the Philippines was recognized by the United Nations for its efforts in halting illegal wildlife trafficking and trade in the country.

The Philippine Operation Group on Ivory and Illegal Wildlife Trade (Pogi) was among the eight winners of the Asia Environmental Enforcement Awards for 2020, given in recognition of achievements in combating transboundary environmental crimes, including those in wildlife and in plastic waste.

It is the first time for Pogi, which operates under the Biodiversity Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR-BMB), to receive the award from the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the International Criminal Police Organization, or Interpol, and the World Customs Organization.

The task force was nominated and won under the category of “impact,” which highlights how law enforcement operations have successfully disrupted criminal networks.

It is composed of wildlife law enforcers from the DENR and the National Bureau of Investigation, as well as representatives from the Philippine National Police, Bureau of Customs (BOC) and the Philippine Coast Guard, and regional and local enforcement personnel.

‘Impact of operations’

“The Pogi team has provided an excellent example of collaboration and coordination between enforcement agencies leading to improved impact of operations against the illegal trade in wildlife,” the citation read in the winners’ announcement last week.

The UNEP highlighted Pogi’s arrest of Sharon Jonjon Lim, a notorious online trafficker of raptors and other wild animals, who had eluded authorities for at least five years. His arrest in Manila in 2019 led to the rescue of 13 animals, including peregrine falcons, eclectus parrots, sulcata tortoises and iguanas.

Organized in 2013, Pogi was initially formed to probe reports of ivory smuggling after the Philippines was tagged among the countries of concern in the illegal ivory trade, particularly in its role as a transit country for elephant tusks.

It has expanded its mandate, leading various enforcement operations against wildlife poaching and trafficking.

Hot spot

Wildlife crime is a lucrative trade, valued at \$10 billion to \$23 billion every year, according to World Bank’s Global Wildlife Program. It is the fourth biggest illegal business on the planet, following narcotics, human trafficking and firearms.

In the Philippines, a country known for its rich and unique biodiversity but also a hot spot for environmental crime, at least P50 billion is lost annually due to the illegal trade. The estimated amount covers market value of wildlife, ecological and ecotourism value and damage to habitats.



Gov't task force wins international award

Data from the DENR-BMB showed that the value of confiscated wildlife from 2013 to 2018 reached nearly P185 million. This is perhaps a conservative figure, based only on the selling price of the confiscated wildlife in that period.

With traffickers quickly adapting to new tools and techniques in their trade, such as operating in the underbelly of social networking sites, Pogi and its government and civil society partners have a lot of work ahead of them.

“We are very happy and thankful that our efforts have been recognized,” said Rogelio Demelletes Jr., a BMB wildlife law enforcer and a Pogi member.

“This is just a bonus, of course, since we don’t expect any award,” he said. “What we are doing is just inherent in our function.”

Demelletes said the team had been successful in wildlife protection, as well as in the enforcement and filing of cases, and even in court convictions.

Waste smuggling

The UNEP also recognized John Simon, a port collector with the BOC in Northern Mindanao, for his work against the entry of imported illegal waste in the Philippines.

He was cited for his help in initiating court proceedings against foreign suspects involved in waste smuggling, as well as for spearheading the clearing of dumps of illegal foreign waste.

Other awardees included individuals and environmental law enforcement groups in India, Malaysia and Indonesia.

“In light of the ongoing global crisis, addressing illegal wildlife trade and other environmental crimes will contribute significantly to keeping our forests healthy and securing the lives of more than 650 million people in the Asean (Association of Southeast Asian Nations) that depend on these,” Theresa Mundita Lim, executive director of the Asean Centre for Biodiversity, said in a statement.

While the work of the United Nations and Interpol has improved the governance of transboundary environmental crime, it is nothing without enforcement, said UNEP Asia-Pacific regional director Dechen Tsering.

“That’s why the work of this year’s winners is vital. They are on the front lines of environmental protection,” she said.

Read more: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1398418/govt-task-force-wins-international-award#ixzz6nEZif6u>

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Anti-illegal wildlife trade task force pinapurihan sa pagtanggap ng int'l prize



February 22, 2021 @ 7:30 PM 10 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Pinapurihan ni Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu ang inter-agency task force Philippine Operations Group Ivory and Illegal Wildlife o POGI sa kanilang pagkapanalo sa prestiyosong Asia Environmental Enforcement Awards na ibinigay ng United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP).

Ayon kay Cimatu, ang award ay isang patotoo ng patuloy na pangako ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ng paninindigan nito sa kanyang mandato para protektahan, alagaan, at pangalagaan ang environment and natural resources para sa susunod na henerasyon.

“This serves as another feather on the cap of the agency on environmental law enforcement,” ayon sa DENR chief.

Ang POGI, na pinamumunuan ni Undersecretary Atty. Ernesto D. Adobo Jr., ay binubuo ng grupo ng wildlife enforcers mula sa iba’t ibang ahensya ng pamahalaan kabilang ang DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau, National Bureau of Investigation, Philippine National Police, National Intelligence Coordinating Agency, Bureau of Customs, at DENR-National Capital Region ay kinilala sa katatapos na 5th Asia Environmental Enforcement Awards sa ilalim ng Impact category nitong nakalipas na Pebrero 17, 2021.

Base pa sa DENR, ang award ay ibinibigay sa mga indibwal o government organization o grupo na nagpakita ng katangi tangi at natatanging pamumuno at pagpapatupapd ng national laws para labanan ang transboundary environmental crime.

Ngayon taon ang UNEP ay ginawaran ng pagkilala ang mga nagpakita ng kanilang natatangi at mahusay na pamumuno mula sa isa o higit pang kategorya na kinabibilangan ng collaboration, impact, innovation, integrity at gender leadership.



Anti-illegal wildlife trade task force pinapurihan sa pagtanggap ng int'l prize

Sinabi pa ng DENR na ang Task Force POGI ay kabilang sa nagwagi ng kanilang natatanging collaboration and coordination framework mula sa iba't ibang pagpapatupad ng ahensya para labanan ang epekto ng operation laban sa illegal trade sa wildlife.

Habang sa panahon ng nomination period mula Hunyo 2019 hanggang Mayo 2020 ang task force ay matagumpay na nakahuli ng high profile traffickers at nakakumpiska ng illegal trafficked goods.

Nabatid pa sa DENR na ang highlight ng operasyon ay nitong Agosto 2019 matapos madakip ng task force si Sharon Jonjon Lim isang notorious online wildlife trader ay nagging mailap nitong mga nakalipas na limang taon at narekober mula sa kanya ang may 13 rare animals na nagkakahalaga ng US\$5,000 na may halagang P250,000.

Si Atty. Adobo na DENR Undersecretary for Legal, Administration, Human Resources and Legislative Affairs ay tumanggap ng award sa virtual ceremony.

“We are humbled and deeply grateful that our collective efforts and initiatives in combating environmental crimes, particularly crimes against wildlife, are recognized by no less than international experts from the United Nations and its partner agencies,” ayon kay Adobo. (**Santi Celario**)



DENR's Task Force POGI bags UNEP environmental awards

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

February 23, 2021

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources-led Philippine Operations Group on Ivory and Illegal Wildlife Trade, or Task Force POGI, has been adjudged as a winner in the Asia Environmental Enforcement Awards given by the United Nations Environmental Program (UNEP) recently.

Chaired by Undersecretary Atty. Ernesto D. Adobo, Jr., the interagency Task Force POGI is a composite team of wildlife enforcers from various agencies, including DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau, National Bureau of Investigation, Philippine National Police, National Intelligence Coordinating Agency, Bureau of Customs, and DENR-National Capital Region.

The DENR-led task force won in the 5th Asia Environmental Enforcement Awards under Impact Category on February 17, 2021.

The award is given to individuals and/or government organizations or teams that demonstrate excellence and outstanding leadership in enforcement of national laws to combat transboundary environmental crime.

This year, UNEP gave awards to groups or organizations who have demonstrated excellence and leadership in one or more of the following categories: collaboration; impact; innovation; integrity; and gender leadership.

Task Force POGI was one of the eight winners mainly for its excellent collaboration and coordination framework among different enforcement agencies, thus enhancing the impact of operations against illegal trade in wildlife.

In a news statement, DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu cited the Task Force for bagging the prestigious award as “a testimony of the continuing commitment of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources [DENR] on upholding its mandate of protecting, conserving, and managing the environment and natural resources for the present and future generations.”

“This serves as another feather on the cap of the agency on environmental law enforcement,” the DENR chief said.

During the nomination period from June 2019 to May 2020, the task force has successfully apprehended high profile traffickers and confiscated illegally trafficked goods.

The key highlight was in August 2019 when the task force arrested Sharon Jonjon Lim, a notorious online wildlife trader who had eluded authorities for about five years, and recovered from him 13 rare animals worth around \$5,000, or around P250,000.

Adobo, who is also the DENR Undersecretary for Legal, Administration, Human Resources and Legislative Affairs, received the award in a virtual ceremony.

“We are humbled and deeply grateful that our collective efforts and initiatives in combating environmental crimes, particularly crimes against wildlife, are recognized by no less than international experts from the United Nations and its partner agencies,” Adobo said in his acceptance message.



DENR's Task Force POGI bags UNEP environmental awards

This year's Asia Environmental Enforcement Awards, with the theme "Fighting transboundary environmental crime," was also in partnership with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, Secretariat of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, International Criminal Police Organization, and World Customs Organization.



DENR records further decrease in Manila Bay coliform level

By Ma. Alaine P. Allanigue Published on February 23, 2021



Historic Manila Bay (Philippine News Agency file photo)

QUEZON CITY, Feb. 23 (PIA) -- Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu on Monday vowed to continue the government's "gainful campaign" to clean the waters of Manila Bay following the significant decline in the level of fecal coliform in the historic bay.

Cimatu said water samples taken last Feb. 8 from 21 stations surrounding the Manila Bay have shown significantly lower fecal coliform from the annual average of 7.16 million most probable number per 100 milliliters (mpn/100ml) in 2020 to only 4.87 million mpn/100ml at present.

Moreover, he noted that fecal coliform level in the waters near the beach nourishment project has dropped from 2.2 million mpn/100ml last Jan. 4 to 523,000 mpn/100 ml on Feb. 8, based on the average count from three monitoring stations.

Despite time constraints due to other pressing commitments and the coronavirus 2019 pandemic, Cimatu said the agency still persevered to address the issues in Manila Bay, particularly its water quality.

"Amidst the other tasks that we are also seriously taking on and the restrictions brought about by the pandemic, we assure the Filipino people that our focus to clean Manila Bay is crystal clear," Cimatu said.

"We have doubled, if not tripled, our efforts to rehabilitate Manila Bay, especially in bringing down the water's fecal coliform," he emphasized.

The DENR chief reiterated his commitment to lowering down the fecal coliform of the Manila Bay to Class SB in order to be safe for recreational activities and fishing.

"We will make sure that we continue to clean the waters of Manila Bay until it becomes safe again for contact activities," he said.



DENR records further decrease in Manila Bay coliform level

Cimatu, who is also the chair of the Manila Bay Task Force, said they will continue to implement necessary interventions to address the water quality of Manila Bay.

He pointed out that additional water quality monitoring stations have been installed along the Manila Baywalk on Roxas Boulevard, apart from the regular stations used in 2019 and 2020, to monitor the fecal coliform level of the waters within the major outfalls.

The DENR chief also cited that the sewage treatment plant constructed along the Manila Yacht Club has sustained its operation, which also notably contributed in lowering down fecal coliform in the outfall that drains into the Manila Bay. (PIA NCR)



NATION | B15

DENR greening program includes Bataan Natural Park

BY JONAS REYES

MORONG, Bataan – A total of 350 hectares of land under the National Greening Program (NGP) will soon be adopted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and Star 8 Green Technology Corporation (GTC) for further development.

DENR Central Luzon executive director Paquito Moreno Jr. said their “New Tomorrow” project is inside the Bataan Natural Park here.

The program aims to boost the development and protection of the established plantations

under agroforestry, which involves management and integration of trees, crops and livestock on the same plot of land.

To make sure the trees will survive, more manpower and resources are needed, Moreno added, but said the DENR cannot provide all those.

“This is where the private sector comes in, like the Star 8 GTC adopting established NGP plantations. The company commits to continue the fight for a better tomorrow and creating opportunities for the community to improve themselves in the battle against Covid-19,” he said. [PHOTO: DENR](#)

DENR, private firm boost dev't of NGP plantations

By Zorayda Tecson February 22, 2021, 9:04 pm



CITY OF SAN FERNANDO, Pampanga – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Regional Office here has partnered with the Star 8 Green Technology Corporation (GTC) to boost the development and protection of established plantations in Bataan under the National Greening Program (NGP).

Paquito Moreno, Jr., executive director of the DENR in Central Luzon, on Monday said Star 8 GTC will adopt an estimated 350 hectares of NGP-established plantations inside the multiple-use zone of the Bataan Natural Park in Morong town under the “New Tomorrow” program to strengthen its protection and enhance the development of agroforestry.

“Admittedly, the task of ensuring the survival of planted trees needs more manpower and resources that the DENR cannot provide and despite NGP’s significant gains, it also has its shortcomings that need utmost attention,” Moreno said in official social media post.

He cited Star 8 GTC for its commitment to intensify protection and development of agroforestry through the adoption of the established NGP plantations.

“The major challenge besetting the forestry sector is how to provide sustainable financing for sustainable forest management to mobilize green investment from international, national, and regional sources especially those coming from the private sector,” Moreno said.

He said the “New Tomorrow” program is indeed suitable as it involves all stakeholders to proactively integrate forestry programs into the wider context of development and instead of viewing forestry as a corporate sector.

“We see more jobs being provided to local communities including our indigenous people, especially at a time like this, when the economy is still reeling from the effects of the pandemic,” he said.

Engineer Ronald Laurel, managing director of Star 8 GTC, said they will plant one million coconuts, cashew nut, and coffee within the 350-hectare adopted NGP plantation.



DENR, private firm boost dev't of NGP plantations

Laurel said the fruit crops will be inter-cropped with already growing forest trees and seedlings in the area to augment forest cover and at the same time, provide livelihood opportunities to local communities in the area coming from the harvest in the planted crops.

NGP, which was launched in 2011, aims to reforest 1.5 million hectares of denuded forestlands and watersheds in the country, reduce poverty, provide food security, conserve biodiversity and address global warming and climate change.

The program was expanded until 2028 under Executive Order No. 193 to reforest the remaining degraded forestlands and remains one of the banner programs of the government.

In Central Luzon, the DENR-Region 3 has established more than 122,000 hectares of forest plantation since 2011.

Star 8 GTC is an innovative technology company engaged in introducing new green technology products and applications and a global leader in solar lights and electric vehicles. (*PNA*)



Pagbaha sa kagubatan maiiwasan sa reforestation

[Malou Escudero](#) (Pang-masa) - February 23, 2021 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Nanawagan si Senador Grace Poe para sa pagsusuri ng National Greening Program (NGP) ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) para sa kabiguang pigilan nito ang pag-urong ng takip ng kagubatan ng mga bundok ng Sierra Madre at Cordillera na naging sanhi ng matinding pagbaha sa mga lalawigan. ng Cagayan at Isabela.

Sinabi ni Senador Poe na kinakailangan ng agarang reforestation ng Sierra Madre at mga bundok ng Cordillera upang mabuo at hindi na maranasan ang puwersa ng kalikasan.

Anyang, ang reforestation ay isang aplikasyon ng prinsipyong “Build Back Better” - ang proseso ng pagbuo ng mga matatag na pamayanan na dapat na gawing mas malakas kaysa dati sa pamamagitan ng pagtugon sa mga dati nang kahinaan na naging madali sa mga sakuna.

Noong Disyembre 2019, lumubog ang anim na mga barangay sa bayan ng Alcala sa Cagayan na nakakaapekto sa 10,000 pamilya.

Idinagdag pa ni Poe, na ang pag-reforestate ng mga nabubulok at hindi mabungang lupa ay nakasalalay sa mabisang pagpapatupad ng NGP.



DENR warns of possible closure of Mt. Apo due to trekking violations

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Feb 23 2021 03:29 AM

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Davao region on Monday said that temporary closure of the country's highest mountain is possible, following violations committed by some trekkers and mountaineers.

DENR officials initially found out during their trail and camp assessment last February 11 to 14 on Mount Apo's Kapatagan trail that littering and vandalism were present along the trail, campsite, and in its environment.

- [Littering, vandalism, observed in DENR officials' ascent to Mt. Apo](#)

Many violations were also observed, including the non-observance of the IATF guidelines in terms of social distancing, unregulated noise along the trails and camps, and the presence of an alarming cultivation beyond the strict protection zone.

Since its reopening last November 2020 after the closure due to the pandemic, DENR has limited the number of trekkers from 50, which is the regular capacity, to 25 climbers per climb per day, which is a 50% reduction of trekkers in compliance to SUB-PAMB Resolution No.27, Series of 2020 and IATF Omnibus Guidelines.

The assessment report also revealed that there is possible use of prohibited substances on Mount Apo due to presence of marijuana found at the 87 degree trail going to the crater and peak.

DENR XI Regional Director Bagani Evasco has ordered anew its officials to further intensify the enforcement of environmental laws.

"If left unabated, the closure of Mt. Apo might be possible in the coming days, when necessary, in order to pave the way for the immediate rehabilitation of the Natural Park's Trails and Campsites," the DENR XI said in a statement.

- report from Hernel Tocmo



Pamitinan Protected Landscape now open to public

By: [Cathrine Gonzales](#) - Reporter / [@cgonzalesINO](#)
[INQUIRER.net](#) / 10:15 AM February 22, 2021

MANILA, Philippines — The Pamitinan Protected Landscape in Rodriguez, Rizal is now open to the public.

“Today, February 22, 2021, we officially announce that we are now opening Pamitinan Protected Landscape that covers Mt. Pamitinan, Mt. Binicayan and Mt. Hapunang Banoy (Banoi) that will only accept guests ages 15 to 65 years old,” read a post on Monday from the Facebook page of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) dedicated to the 608-hectare nature reserve.

Online reservations for hiking are now available, according to the post.

“We will not accept late and rush reservations, single hike or twin-hike is accepted but no trilogy,” the post added.

The DENR has also laid down guidelines in visiting the protected landscape in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to DENR, children who are below 15, senior citizens aged 66 years old and above, those with immunodeficiency and comorbidities, and pregnant women will not be allowed to enter.

“The number of hiking/trekking and rock/wall climbing activities and other activities/side-trips such as swimming, camping/overnight stay, group recreation, photography/pictorial are minimized in number and should follow physical distancing,” the department also said.

Only hiking and wall climbing activities will be accommodated for the online reservation, according to the agency.

“In accordance with the IATF (Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases), carrying capacity for trekking activity will follow but in the meantime, it will be minimized to 30% per mountain, limited to 115 persons per mountain,” the DENR added.

The department also said wearing of face mask and face shield should be observed in registration areas, but it can be removed during hiking and wall climbing. Visitors should likewise practice physical distancing and bring their own sanitizers and food utensils.

The DENR said visitors should not bring alcoholic beverages while staying in the area to minimize mingling with the locals and prevent the spread of the SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes Covid-19.

The DENR Protected Area Superintendent-Office Registration Area for hiking and wall climbing activities will be open at 4 a.m. from Monday to Sunday including holidays and will not entertain visitors beyond 12 noon.

Walk-ins will not be allowed, according to the department.

Read more: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1398502/pamitinan-protected-landscape-now-open-to-public#ixzz6nEcQRiAc>

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Green sea turtle dies shortly after rescue



ZAMBOANGA. Environment personnel examine the female green sea turtle they rescue along with the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources last week in Kabatan village, Vincenzo Sagun, Zamboanga del Norte. The turtle, however, dies shortly after it was rescued due to ingestion of plastic wastes. (SunStar Zamboanga)

February 22, 2021

A FEMALE Green Sea Turtle that was found trapped last week inside a fish pen died shortly after it was rescued in Kabatan village, Vincenzo Sagun, Zamboanga del Sur, an environment official said Monday, February 22.

Rosevirico Tan, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) information officer, said the turtle was found trapped inside the fish pen by Alberto Gratol, a fisherman from Kabatan village, who reported his find to the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (Cenro)-Guipos and Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR).

Tan said a team of Cenro-Guipos and BFAR personnel immediately rescued the turtle, but it was weak and covered in barnacles around its plastron, flippers, carapace and neck.

Tan said the turtle died shortly after it was rescued.

He said that in a necropsy examination conducted by Cenro-Guipos and BFAR, the turtle was found to have ingested plastic straw and nylon, which is suspected to be its cause of its death.

He said the turtle was immediately buried to avoid contamination after the necropsy examination.

"This is just one of many incidents of marine species dying due to ingestion of plastic wastes," he added.

In a report made by United Nations (UN) during the 2016 UN Biodiversity Conference, it was found that the number of marine species affected by marine wastes has increased from 633 species to 817 since 2012 and it is also noted that most of these wastes are made from plastics.



Green sea turtle dies shortly after rescue

Meanwhile, the DENR regional office urged and reminded everyone to help on the conservation and protection of our environment and natural resources.

The DENR also continued its Information Education and Communication campaign efforts in order to spread more awareness and knowledge on solid waste management and the harmful effects of marine litter to organisms in our oceans. (**SunStar Zamboanga**)



Selling of giant clams prohibited: BFAR-7

By Carlo Lorenciana February 22, 2021, 5:22 pm



GIANT CLAMS. The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources in Central Visayas reported on Monday (Feb. 22, 2021) that tons of giant clams worth P255 million were confiscated in Negros Oriental last week. The agency said the sale of these marine species is banned by law. *(Photo courtesy of BFAR-7)*

CEBU CITY – The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources in Central Visayas (BFAR-7) on Monday warned that collecting and selling giant clams (*Tridacna gigas*) locally known as "taklobo" are prohibited.

The agency issued the warning after tons of giant clams worth PHP255 million were confiscated by the Criminal Investigation and Detection Group in Negros Oriental last week.

Florencia Mepaña, head of BFAR-Negros Oriental fishery office (PFO), reiterated that the law prohibits the sale and collection of giant clams.

The violation is stipulated under Section 102 (Paragraph B), which states the prohibition on "fishing or taking of rare, threatened or endangered species," of Republic Act 10654 or "An Act to Prevent, Deter and Eliminate Illegal, Unreported and Unregulated Fishing" that amended RA 8550 or "The Philippine Fisheries Code of 1998."

Mepaña said it is unlawful to fish, take, catch, gather, sell, purchase, possess, transport, export, forward or ship out aquatic species listed in Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES), a global trade agreement to protect wildlife, if scientific assessments show that the population of the species in the wild cannot remain viable under pressure of collection and trade.

She said with the recent apprehension, people should be more aware of this prohibited act and hopefully would be discouraged from collecting or selling giant clams that are supposed to be conserved.

Mepaña added that BFAR is closely coordinating with the local government unit in the neighboring island of Negros Oriental to further strengthen the information drive so as to avoid another incident to happen.



Selling of giant clams prohibited: BFAR-7

According to the Endangered Species International, giant clams fill a valuable role as filter feeders, cleaning the water of pollutants as they ingest algae or plankton.

They can reach around 1.2 meters (3.9 feet) long in size and weigh up to 200 kilograms (440 lbs). It has been estimated that giant clams can live up to 100 years. (*PNA*)



NV informal settlers near foreign mine face eviction



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

February 22, 2021

QUEZON, Nueva Vizcaya: Illegal settlers near London-based FCF Minerals Corp. here have been warned that they will face eviction if they continue to defy government orders to abandon declared geohazard areas.

The warning came after the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said it is ready to file charges against illegal settlers for having ignored the orders.

Edgar Martin, Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office chief, said these geohazard areas are prone to landslides, endangering peoples' lives, especially during heavy downpour.

Last year, at least 10 illegal settlers refused to leave the areas despite local government-led evacuation activities during the onslaught of Typhoon "Ulysses" (international name: "Vamco") when 10 people perished in a landslide.

The illegal settlers are from the provinces of Quirino, Isabela and Ifugao.

Local government officials said some of these settlers set up camp in mineral-rich areas, expecting to be offered a large sum of money in case FCF Minerals Corp. needed to operate there.

The London-based mining firm runs the Runruno gold-molybdenum project under a financial and technical assistance agreement with the national government.

The local officials said of the 411 illegal settlers, 28 families still refuse to leave the geohazard areas in the sitios of Bit-ang 1 and 2, Balcony and Compound in Runruno village here.

Martin said most of these illegal settlers have already been compensated by FCF Minerals Corp. in previous years.

Meanwhile, the municipal government of Quezon has been going through the process of acquiring a 21-hectare relocation area in Barangay Buliwao for the illegal settlers.

In addition to this, the National Housing Authority has pledged some P50 million for the development of the relocation area for at least 37 families.

"The move to relocate the illegal settlers from the geohazard areas in Barangay Runruno is part of the government's Build Back Better Program after Typhoon 'Ulysses' severely flooded most of the Cagayan Valley region's provinces and cities," Martin said.

He added that they have been continuously reminding the illegal settlers about the risks and the penalties for settling in the geohazard and forest zone areas.



NV informal settlers near foreign mine face eviction

Many have complied, but some insisted on staying in the areas, Martin said.

He added that there have been a series of dialogues and information campaign activities that were conducted by the DENR, the Mines and Geo-sciences Bureau, the Philippine National Police and other agencies to convince the illegal settlers to leave, but to no avail.



Quarrying banned in Misamis Oriental



By [Cris Diaz](#)

February 23, 2021

TAGOLOAN, Misamis Oriental: Five quarry operators were barred from entering and operating in the government-owned industrial estate here effective Monday.

Phividec Industrial Authority Administrator Jose Gabriel La Viña issued the directive after signing a cease-and-desist order to stop all quarry operations in the 3,000-hectare area under Phividec, particularly along the Tagoloan River.

La Viña emphasized that all quarrying operations in the Phividec area are now illegal. He also said Phividec has not issued any quarrying permit within its area.

La Viña stressed the need to protect the environment and ensure the safety of the people living in the Phividec Industrial Authority area.

He said Phividec has already lost 70 hectares because of the encroachment of illegal quarrying since the 1990s.

La Viña said Phividec is ready to defend in court its decision to bar all quarry operators from entering the Phividec area.

“For the sake of the safety of the people and the protection of the environment, I am exhorting the LGUs (local government units) to be with me in this advocacy,” La Viña said.

Presidential Decree No. 538 created the Phividec Industrial Authority and its charter as an autonomous industrial estate, primarily for the benefits of the veterans, for creating employment opportunities and for perking up the local economy.

The Phividec industrial estate straddles the municipal towns of Villanueva and Tagolo-an in Misamis Oriental.



Bioethanol plant in north Negros shut down due to pollution

[February 22, 2021](#) 2 min read

BACOLOD CITY – The San Carlos Bioenergy Inc. (SCBI) based in San Carlos City, Negros Occidental has suspended its operation upon the order of Mayor Renato Gustilo amid the recurring pollution issues faced by the bioethanol producer.

In a statement posted on Facebook on Monday, Gustilo said the plant ceased operation on Friday afternoon after he sent a letter to its management dated Feb. 18 informing the company on reports of its environmental violations.

He said the series of incidents of water discoloration along the coastal waters of Sitio Maloloy-on in Barangay Punao are caused by wastewater discharges of the plant.

Gustilo also cited as evidence the footages and reports from the City Planning and Development Coordinator's Office, Bantay Katunggan of the Coastal Resource Management of the City Environment Management Office (CRM-CEMO), Eco-Zone Multi-Partite Monitoring Team, and City Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office.

Although specific mitigating measures were undertaken by the SCBI, such initiatives were not enough to cushion the negative impact of the water pollution to the people of San Carlos, he added.

Gustilo thus strongly advised the SCBI management to temporarily cease operation until they are able to settle the recurring pollution issues.

Otherwise, the city government will recommend to the Environmental Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources the issuance of a cease-and-desist order for the plant, Gustilo said.

Arthur Batomalaque, the city's senior environment management specialist, said they have referred the recurring incidents of water discoloration, foul smell, and other environment issues committed by the SCBI to the Pollution Adjudication Board for a possible case as the firm was already penalized for such violations.

Although local groundwater wells remain unsullied, coastal waters have been greatly affected by the effluent from the plant, he added.

Melvin Maglayon of the CEMO's Coastal Resource Management said any industrial waste that reaches the sea is harmful because pollutants can lower dissolved oxygen levels causing fishkill.

SCBI is a subsidiary of integrated sugar company Roxas Holdings Inc. (PNA)



DRRMO to conduct dredging in Mandalagan river



BACOLOD. The Bacolod City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office collects more than eight truckloads of garbage at Mambuloc Creek Monday, February 22, 2021. (DRRMO photo)

[MERLINDA A. PEDROSA](#)

February 22, 2021

AFTER the dredging and excavation activities at Mambuloc Creek in Bacolod City, the Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (DRRMO) is planning to continue its operation in Mandalagan River in Barangay Mandalagan to ease flooding in some areas in the city.

Executive Assistant Joemarie Vargas, cluster head of DRRMO, on Monday, February 23, 2021, said they will find a way to penetrate along Purok Carvic to ease flooding, especially near a mall in the area.

“We are hopeful to start our dredging activity in Mandalagan River in March,” he said.

DRRMO earlier conducted dredging and excavation activities in Mambuloc Creek and collected more than eight truckloads of garbage.

Vargas said they will also ask the assistance of barangay officials to ensure that their constituents will not dump their garbage in Mambuloc Creek.

“We want to sustain the cleanliness and we will also place a barrier in the area,” he said.

Meanwhile, as tropical storm Auring slows down, Vargas said Tropical Cyclone Wind Signal No.1 in Bacolod had been lifted around 11 a.m. Monday.

He said Bacolod experienced heavy rains since Saturday, but no flooding incidents were reported in the city.

“Since Auring is still in the Philippines, we are still on 'blue alert' status and are monitoring the situation in the city,” he added.

Source: <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1886794/Bacolod/Local-News/DRRMO-to-conduct-dredging-in-Mandalagan-river>



PH records 2,288 new COVID-19 cases, highest daily rise in over three months

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published Feb 22, 2021 4:00:31 PM



Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, February 22) — The country recorded on Monday 2,288 new coronavirus cases, its biggest single-day increase since November 8.

The new infections pushed the nationwide tally to 563,456, of which 28,488 or 5.1% are active cases, the Department of Health said. Of the currently ill patients, 88.1% exhibited mild symptoms, 5.7% have no symptoms, 2.7% are critical cases, 2.6% are severe cases, and 0.85% are moderate cases.

Thirty-three new survivors also brought the recoveries to 522,874, the DOH said. Meanwhile, the death toll is now at 12,094 after six more died, including two previously tagged as having recovered.

The department said the latest figures have yet to include data from six testing laboratories which failed to submit on time. It added that it removed a duplicate entry from the total count after final validation.

Meanwhile, the Department of Foreign Affairs also announced that 11 more Filipinos abroad tested positive for COVID-19, while eight more have recovered from the illness. The case tally in that sector now stands at 14,812, while the number of survivors reached 9,309. Deaths remained at 1,014.

Worldwide, cases have hit over 111.3 million, with more than 2.4 million deaths and 62.8 million recoveries, according to the Johns Hopkins University.

Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2021/2/22/PH-covid-cases-563k.html>

ANYARE SA US, UK COVID-19 VACCINES? BUMILI NA TAYO SA IBA



February 22, 2021 @ 12:45 AM 1 day ago

ISA sa pinakahuling balita ukol sa bakuna laban sa coronavirus disease 2019 o COVID-19 ang balak ng National Task Force sa pangunguna ni Secretary Carlito Galvez na magpunta sa India upang direkta silang makipag-usap ukol sa suplay ng bakuna.

May dalawang bakuna na sariling gawa ng India at ito ang Covishield at Covaxin, bukod pa ang AstraZeneca na pinagsosyohan ng India at AstraZeneca na kompanyang United Kingdom.

Gagawin ang pakikipag-usap na tumbok ang pagbili natin ng bakuna sa gitna ng sobrang bagal na pagkilos ng World Health Organization sa pagdedeliber ng mga bakunang ipinangako nito para sa mahihirap na bansa.

Kasali ang mahal kong Pinas sa 130 bansa sa kasalukuyan na wala pa ni isang piraso ng bakuna.

SUMANDIG MASYADO SA WHO

Maganda naman talaga ang programa ng WHO na bumuo ng Covax Facility para sa pagkakaroon ng bakuna ng mga may perang bansa at Advance Market Commitment para naman sa mga mahihirap.

Hindi kasi basta makakuha ng bakuna kahit may pera ang isang bansa dahil kinokopo ng mga bansang doon nakatayo ang mga pabrika ng bakuna.

Halimbawa ang United States na, ayon kay German Chancellor Angela Merkel, ay binibili lahat ang gawa ng Pfizer/BioNTech sa US at Moderna habang kinorner naman ng United Kingdom ang AstraZeneca dahil sa UK naman nakatayo ang pinakamalaki sa mga pabrika nito.

Sa pamamagitan ng Covax Facility at AMC, makatitiyak ang lahat ng bansa ng patas, mabilis at murang bakuna, ayon sa WHO.

Bumibili ang WHO ng bultuhan kaya mura ang bakuna sa halagang \$3 bawat dose.



ANYARE SA US, UK COVID-19 VACCINES? BUMILI NA TAYO SA IBA

Gayunman, nababalaho ang organisasyong ito dahil nasa 2 bilyong dolyar pa lang ang pera nito at kinakailangan pa nitong magkaroon ng mahigit 5B dolyar para maisagawa ang programa nito.

Dalawang bilyong dose ang dapat nitong bilhin at hahatiin ito ng tig-isang bilyon para sa mga may pera at walang pera, gaya ng Pinas.

Pero dahil kapos nga at mas pinili ng katulad ng US at UK na pairalin ang “sarili muna bago ang iba” walang magagawa ang WHO kundi magkamot ng ulo at magreklamo.

Ang UK nagbuhos ng 84 milyong pound o \$117.7B para sa paggawa ng bakunang AstraZeneca habang nagpakawala naman ang US ng mahigit \$10B.

Kasama sa pinondohan ng US ang AstraZeneca sa halagang \$1.2B; Moderna – \$430M; Johnson and Johnson – \$456M; Novavax – \$60M; Merck -\$38M at Sanofi – \$30M.

Sisiw ang pondo ng WHO sa pagbili at sinamantala naman ng mga kompanya ng gamot ang pagbenta muna sa mga mayayamang bansa kaysa magbenta sa WHO.

Ang mayayamang bansa, handang magpakawala ng salapi kahit overpriced pa ang bakuna maturukan lang nila ang sariling mamamayan at kahit magkandehetot-hetot sa COVID-19 ang iba.

Ito ang isang malaking paliwanag kung bakit hanggang ngayon ay walang maideliber ang WHO na bakuna sa Pinas.

MABIBIGAT NA KONDISYON

Ayon mismo sa WHO, may tatlong kondisyon ang mga kompanya ng bakuna upang magdeliber sila ng bakuna sa ibang bansa na mahihirap at pati na rin sa mga may pera.

Lumalabas na kauna-unahan at pinakaimportante ang pagbibigay ng lahat ng bansa sa kanila ng indemnification agreement.

‘Yun bang === kailangang libre sila sa anomang pananagutan gaya ng pagkamatay ng mga mababakunahan, maospital at magkakasakit at ang mga bansa o kanilang pamahalaan at sasagot sa lahat ng ito.

Rason ng mga kompanya, bago lang ang bakuna at hindi nila alam ang mangyayari sa mga susunod na panahon gaya ng nangyari sa Dengvaxia na gawa ng Sanofi Pasteur na naging dahilan ng pagkamatay ng mahigit 600, karamihan bata, sa Pilipinas.

Ayaw ng mga kompanya na matulad sila sa Sanofi Pasteur na ngayo’y nakademanda sa Pilipinas.

“Wa indemnification, wa bakuna” ang patakaran.

Ang isa pang kondisyon ay dapat may emergency use authorization o general use authorization at hindi rin sila magdedeliber kung wala nito.



ANYARE SA US, UK COVID-19 VACCINES? BUMILI NA TAYO SA IBA

Isa pa ang kondisyon din mismo ng WHO na dapat may programang malinaw at aprubado naman mismo ng WHO.

Meron na tayo ng lahat ng ito.

Pero sa huli, sinabi mismo ng WHO na dapat magbayad ang mga bansa at hindi na libre gaya ng naunang plano nito.

Kaya “no money, no bakuna” rin.

Pero bakit hanggang ngayon, walang ibinibiyaheng bakuna para sa Pinas?

Kasi naman, inuubos ng mayayamang bansa gaya ng US, UK ang bakuna upang matapos na sila sa pagbabakuna sa darating na Hulyo.

At dahil tila hanggang 6 buwan lang ang bisa ng mga bakuna, kasama sa ginagawa ng mayayamang bansa ang pag-iimbak ng bakuna na pupwedeng gamitin nila sa mga susunod na buwan habang may pandemya pa.

Paano ngayon makabibili ng bakuna ang mahihirap na bansa, maging ang WHO ng 2 bilyong bakuna?

AGAWAN NG KAKAMPI SA KAPANGYARIHAN

Ngayon ay tarantang-taranta ang G7 o bansang binubuo ng US, UK, France, Canada, Italy, Japan at Germany sa pagdeliber ng Russia at China ng kanilang mga bakuna sa iba’t ibang bansa.

May 50 bansa nang bumibili at nakikipagkaibigan sa Russia para makabili ng Sputnik V sa halip na mga gawang US at UK.

Marami na ring bansa sa Asya, Latin America at mismo sa Europa ang nakikipagkaibigan at bumibili rin ng bakuna na gawang China gaya ng Sinovac at Sinopharm sa halip din na mga bakunang US at UK.

Sabi ni Emmanuel Macron, Pangulo ng France, kailangan nang mamigay ng kahit 4-5 porsyento ng pondo ng US at European Union para sa bakuna sa ibang bansa para mapigilan ang Russia at China na maging kaibigan at ka-partner ng ibang bansa, hindi lang sa negosyo kundi maging sa kapangyarihang pulitikal sa mundo.

Anak ng tokwa, pandemya na nga at halos 2.5 milyon na ang namamatay, ‘yan pang agawan sa kapangyarihan sa mundo ang inuunang atupagin ng mayayamang bansang ito.

Kung hindi pa umarangkada ang Russia at China sa pamamahagi ng bakuna sa iba, hindi pa sila kikilos para sa iba.

Pero teka, 4-5 porsyento lang ng pondo nila para sa bakuna ang pakakawalan nila para sa iba?



ANYARE SA US, UK COVID-19 VACCINES? BUMILI NA TAYO SA IBA

Walang pagkakaiba ryan sa sinasabi ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na bubusugin ka lang nila ng amoy ng pan o tinapay pero hawak nila ang tali sa leeg mo para hindi ka rin makakagat at makakain ng tinapay.

TAMANG HAKBANG ANG BABALING SA IBA

Sinusuportahan natin ang balakin ng mga awtoridad natin sa NTF na bumiyahe at makipag-usap sa iba para makabili na tayo ng bakuna.

Ke gawa ang bakuna ng Russia, ng China o ng India.

Mapamamahala lang tayo pero kung mananatili, halimbawa, ang presyo ng Sputnik V ng Russia na nasa \$10 lang kada dose at \$3-4 rin ang Covishield at Covaxin ng India, \$14 ang Sinovac ng China, bakit hindi tayo kukuha ng mga ito?

May presyong \$32-\$37 ang Moderna samantalang \$19.50 naman ang Pfizer/BioNTech at tanging ang AstraZeneca ang \$4 bawat dose.

Para magkaroon na tayo ng tiyak na bakunang kailangan natin, hindi lang tayo dapat umasa sa WHO at higit na hindi umasa sa mga pinakamayayamang bansa sa Amerika at Europa.

Dahil may pera rin lang naman tayo, dapat na talagang makipag-usap at bumili na tayo sa iba.



WHO official says pandemic to end early 2022

February 22, 2021, 2:10 pm



World Health Organization regional director for Europe Hans Kluge (*Anadolu photo*)

DENMARK, COPENHAGEN – The World Health Organization (WHO) regional director for Europe on Sunday said he believes the coronavirus outbreak will end in early 2022.

Hans Kluge told Danish state broadcaster DR that Covid-19 will still be prevalent in 2021, but it will be more manageable than in 2020.

Stating that the worst scenarios are now over, Kluge said there is more information concerning the virus compared to 2020, when it first began spreading.

He cautioned, however, that no one can know the future of the Covid-19 pandemic in advance.

“There will continue to be a virus, but I don't think restrictions will be needed. This is an optimistic message,” he said.

Kluge said mutations are normal and the virus is trying to adapt to the person infected, but the rapid spread of the mutations is a concern for them.

Adding that the WHO is closely monitoring the effectiveness of vaccines developed against Covid-19 due to the fast-spreading types of the virus, he said vaccines can be altered based on the new mutations if necessary and there is no need to produce them from the ground up.

He said mutations will not make the virus out of control but noted that countries whose health care systems are already under pressure could come under even more pressure, which makes it necessary to take the mutations very seriously.

Kluge indicated that the biggest problem will emerge when those who are vaccinated are in the same environment with those who are not, so scheduling is a very important factor. (*Anadolu*)



Sabay-sabay na pag-aalburuto ng Bulkang Kanlaon, Mayon, Taal 'coincidence' lang – Phivolcs



February 22, 2021 @ 5:21 PM 12 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Nilinaw ng Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology na walang koneksyon ang volcanic activities sa Mt. Kanlaon sa Negros island, Mayon Volcano sa Albay province at Taal Volcano sa Batangas province.

“Walang koneksyon. Masyado po silang malayo at nagkataon naman dahil pareho silang active volcanoes,” saad ni Phivolcs chief Renato Solidum sa Teleradyo.

Maaalalang iniulat na pare-pareho itong naka-alert level 1 na nangangahulugang nasa abnormal condition.

Naitala na rin ang 14 volcanic earthquakes sa Kanlaon sa nakalipas na magdamag.

“Kompara sa normal na bilang ng volcanic earthquakes, mataas-taas pa rin,” lahad ni Solidum.

Naiulat naman ang rockfall event sa nagdaang magdamag sa Bulkang Mayon.

Habang anim na pagyanig na may tagal na isa hanggang apat na minuto ang naitala sa Bulkang Taal.

“Kumpara sa nakaraang Linggo, mas mababa ito pero dahil nasusukat pa rin natin ang mga paglindol, patuloy pa rin ‘yong kanyang pagka-abnormal,” paliwanag pa ni Solidum. **RNT/FGDC**

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/sabay-sabay-na-pag-aalburuto-ng-bulkang-kanlaon-mayon-taal-coincidence-lang-phivolcs/>



After VFA, gov't should demand payment from China for ruins in West Philippine Sea —analyst

Published February 22, 2021 5:21pm
By VIRGIL LOPEZ, GMA News

The Philippines should also consider demanding payment from China for the destruction of marine resources in the West Philippine Sea, a defense analyst said Monday.

Chester Cabalza, a senior lecturer at the University of the Philippines' anthropology department, issued the call after President Rodrigo Duterte recently asked the United States to pay in exchange for the continued presence of American troops in the Philippines.

"If we will ask for payment from the US for their security activities in our country and in the region, then we should also ask the same thing from China [for] destroying our maritime resources. It should not be a double standard," Cabalza said during the Tapatan sa Aristocrat virtual forum.

China has turned several former reefs into artificial islands with military facilities, runways, and surface to air missiles over the years to assert its claim to nearly the entire South China Sea, including areas within the Philippines' exclusive economic zone.

Last week, opposition Senator Risa Hontiveros said China now [owes](#) the Philippines more than P800 billion for the destruction of resources in the areas occupied by Beijing in the West Philippine Sea.

She said other countries like Japan and the US had paid for damages during World War II and the destruction caused by a US Navy ship when it ran aground on Tubbataha Reef, respectively.

Cabalza said he sees nothing wrong with Duterte's position to ask for [payment](#) from the US for the continued implementation of the Visiting Forces Agreement (VFA).

"It's no longer about cash register diplomacy but it's about pragmatism because all of us need economic support right now because of the current pandemic," Cabalza said.

"Bakit naman tayo mahihiyang humingi ng bayad kung talagang kailangan natin? And we will also support them. That's why we will test our alliance now with the US vis-a-vis China. Magbayad din kayo sa mga sinira ninyo na mga resources namin," he added.

He said negotiations for compensation should be transparent and should have the concurrence of Congress.

"There must be concurrence from the Congress and the President will only execute it," Cabalza said.

Ratified by the Senate in 1999, the VFA allows American forces to hold joint military exercises, counter intelligence training and engage in humanitarian aid missions with their Filipino counterparts but prohibits US troops from engaging in combat operations.—LDF, GMA News

Tags: [China](#), [West Philippine sea](#), [marine resources](#), [visiting forces agreement](#), [Chester Cabalza](#)

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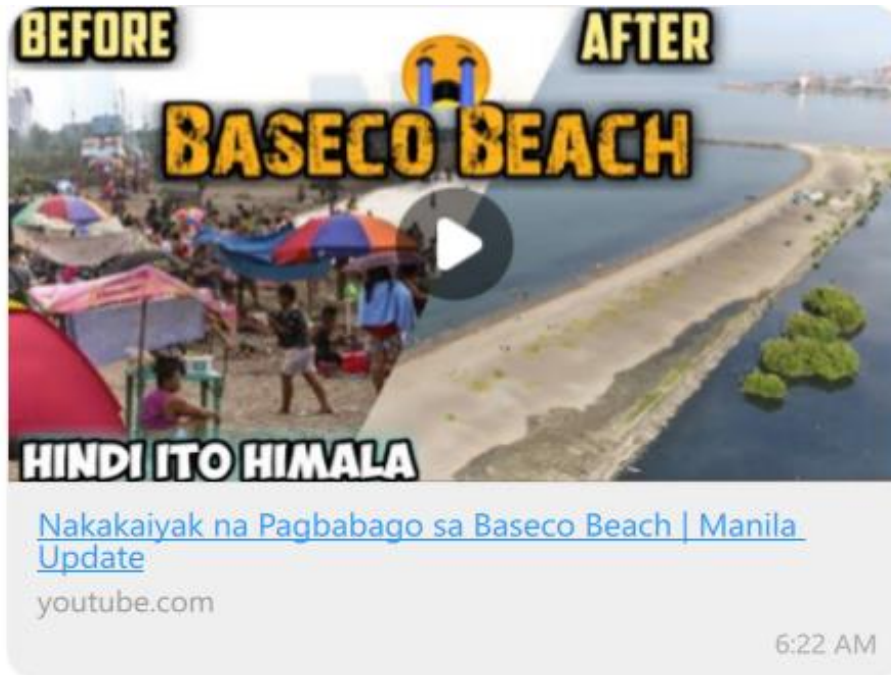
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