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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



DENR leads tree planting for Manila Bay, Baseco rehabilitation

Published December 23, 2020, 2:25 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

Mangroves, nipa, and nilad were planted in Baseco, Tondo, Manila on Tuesday as part of the government program to rehabilitate Baseco and the Manila Bay.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
(MANILA BULLETIN)

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu was joined in the tree planting activity by Metro Manila Development Authority (MMDA) General Manager Danilo Lim, Baseco/Barangay 649 Captain Diana Espinosa, representing Manila Mayor Francisco Domagoso, and officials and employees of the DENR-National Capital Region (DENR-NCR) led by Regional Executive Director Jacqueline Caancan.

Caancan said the DENR-NCR has adopted bio/phytoremediation or nature-based approach in enhancing the habitat and ecosystems of Baseco.

Since 2019, DENR-NCR reported that it has planted a total of 8,597 seedlings comprising of various species of mangrove and beach-type trees, with a survival rate of 87 percent.

Aside from habitat restoration through tree planting, the agency has also initiated the construction of a boardwalk in Baseco's lagoon area.

The boardwalk, designed like a leaf of a mangrove, has a total length of 270 meters, with two view decks.

About 110 meters was completed during the first phase of the boardwalk construction, while the construction of the remaining 160 meters is expected to be completed before the end of this month.

Caancan noted that regular clean-up activities in Baseco are also being conducted by its personnel in the DENR-NCR and West Field Office.

"In compliance with the health guidelines, we have refrained from enjoining our regular partners in our cleanup activities in Baseco. Instead we relied on our personnel to do scheduled cleanup to ensure the observance of social distancing," she said.

She also cited that "estero rangers" are deployed to conduct daily cleanup activities along the Aplaya-side of the Baseco beach and at the lagoon.

Caancan, however, stressed that while the Baseco beach has been cleared of floating garbage, the water remains polluted, urging residents to refrain from swimming in the beach. The DENR-NCR, in partnership with the MMDA, is the lead agency in the rehabilitation of Baseco.

"The MMDA is our strong partner not only in the cleanup of Baseco lagoon and its vicinity but also in tree-planting," Caancan said.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/12/23/denr-leads-tree-planting-for-manila-bay-baseco-rehabilitation/>



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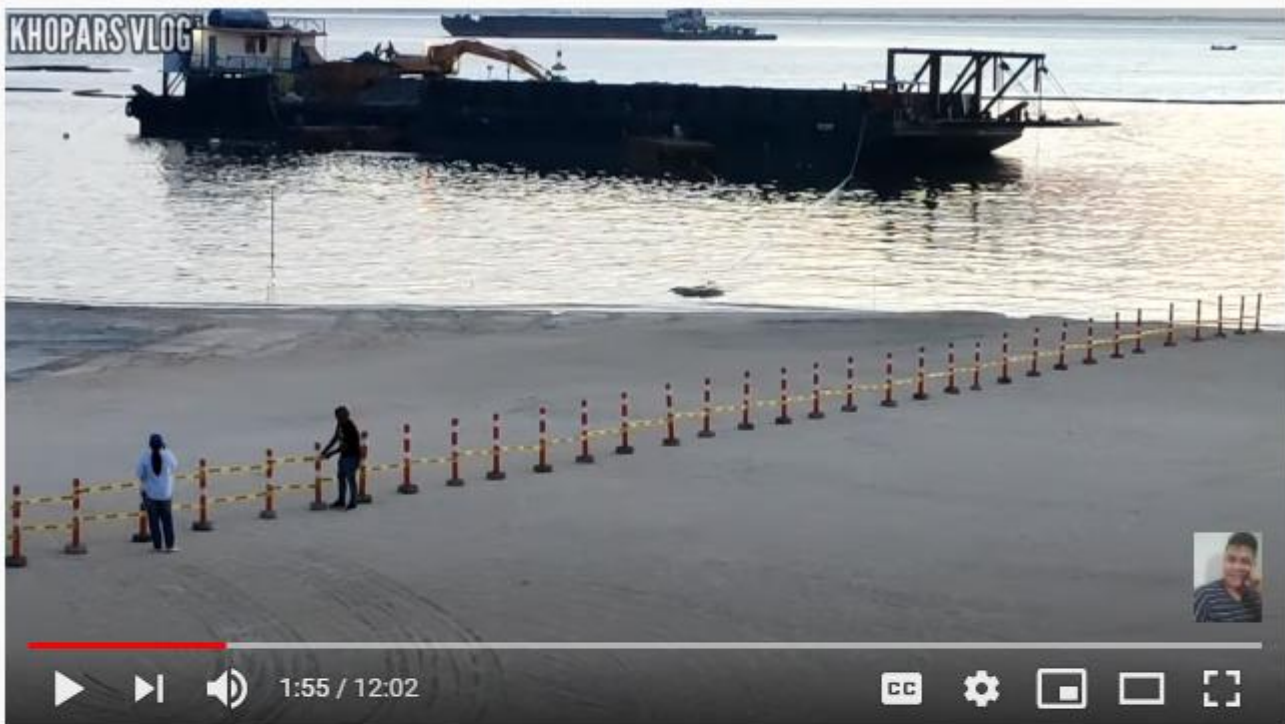
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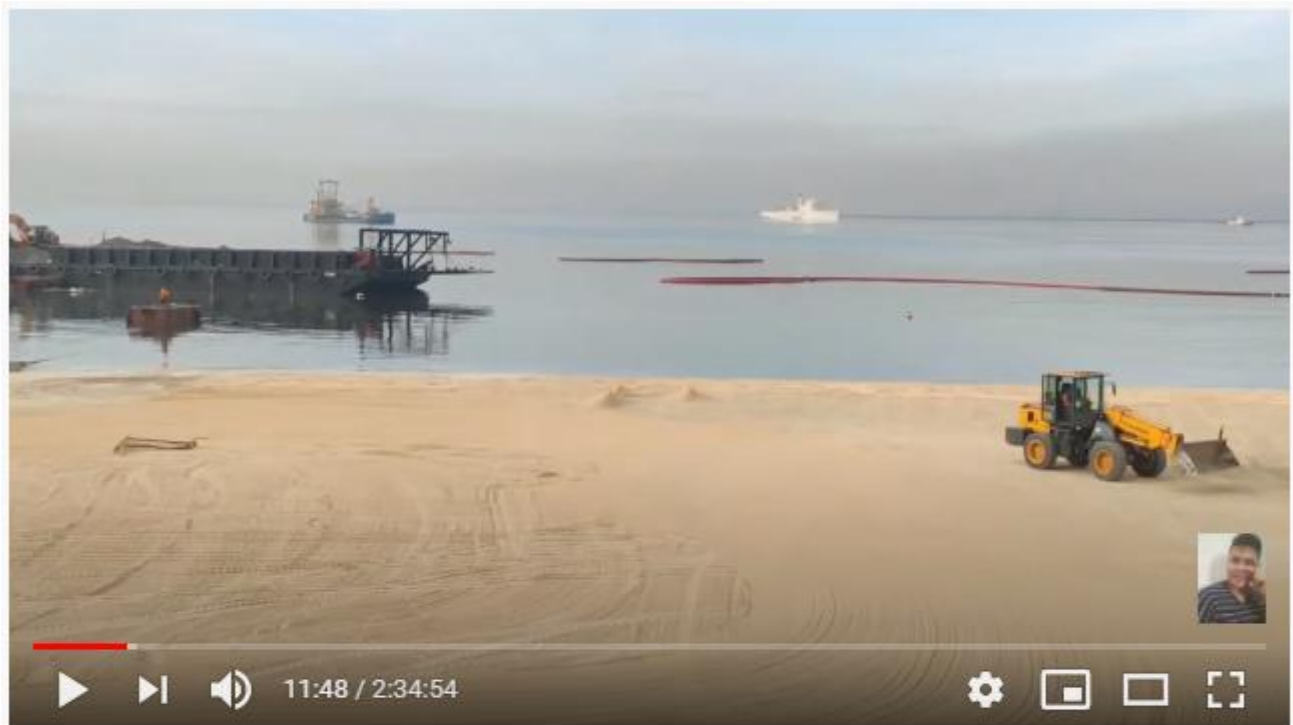
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Solid waste management plans of 57 LGUs get approval

Published December 23, 2020, 11:54 AM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

The solid waste management (SWM) plans of 57 local government units (LGUs) nationwide have been approved in December, bringing the total of approved SWM proposals to 114 in 2020, the National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) reported.

Of the 57 approved SWM plans, 32 are from the cities/municipalities of Luzon, 18 from Mindanao, and seven from Visayas.

Ilocos Region and Central Luzon had the highest number of approvals at 10 each.

According to Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny Antiporda, this latest development is a “huge feat” in addressing the solid waste problems in the country.

“The approval of this new batch of 10-year SWM plans proves that we are on track in instilling responsibility and accountability among LGUs in managing solid waste,” Antiporda said.

“This will be a huge boost in our campaign to urge them to address the solid waste problem in their localities and to fully implement Republic Act 9003 or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act of 2000,” he added.

RA 9003 mandates all LGUs—province, city or municipality—to prepare and submit their 10-year SWM plans, anchored on the national SWM framework, subject to approval by the NSWMC. The plan shall include their strategies to address SWM, information campaigns and incentive programs.

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, Antiporda said the DENR’s Environmental Management Bureau (EMB) has implemented the online submission and approval of SWM plans.

“The Commission was in consensus of the adjustment I suggested, which is to do the approval online,” he said.

He added that the EMB regional offices conduct the screening of applications for validation by the EMB central office, and approval by the NSWMC.

“Due to the pandemic, we cannot do face-to-face deliberations and approvals. We do it through teleconferencing,” Antiporda said.

He explained that the NSWMC requires the mayor or governor to present the plan live to assure that the officials are involved in its crafting.

Otherwise, he said, it will not be endorsed.

“We want our local chief executives to be really involved in creating their SWM plan. When they are involved, they will identify the needs of their respective LGUs, what could be improved, and what could be done to help the community in terms of SWM,” he pointed out.

Antiporda also noted that while some SWM plans are still in the validation process, the LGU applicants could already start implementing them.

He also encouraged those who have not submitted their plans to comply with the law.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/12/23/solid-waste-management-plans-of-57-lgus-get-approval/>



Partners ink MOA for Aklan town communal bamboo plantation

By Jaime S. CabagPublished on December 23, 2020

ILOILO CITY, Dec. 23 (PIA) -- The collaboration of the government, private sector and civil society took form after all the partners signed the memorandum of agreement (MOA) for the establishment of a 50-hectare communal bamboo plantation in Ibabay, Aklan.

The MOA spelled out the roles and responsibilities of each collaborating office and organization.

The signatories to the MOA are the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) through the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) Aklan, Mines and Geosciences Bureau Regional Office VI, Aklan Sand and Gravel (SAG) Operators Association, Inc., the provincial government of Aklan and Peace Agreement Interbarangay Project Organization (PAIPO), a people's organization, said in an MGB 6 press release.

It will be recalled that one of the major campaigns enunciated by DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu is the establishment of more bamboo plantations in the country because of the environmental benefits they provide while tapping the potential of the bamboo industry as a source of investment and income for Filipinos.

This year, Cimatu mandated mining companies and permit holders to allocate 20% of their final mining area for bamboo plantation as per memorandum orders he issued in June and July.

In Region 6, the Mine Rehabilitation Fund Committees (MRFCs) of the six provinces tackled the DENR mandate. The MRFC is composed of the DENR (PENRO), the provincial government, mining companies and non-government organizations in the respective provinces.

PENRO Aklan proposed two sites, Ibabay and Libacao, for the bamboo plantation of 50-hectare each.

According to MGB VI Officer-In-Charge of the office of the regional director Raul A. Laput, "the proposal of PENRO Aklan on the two plantation sites was very timely as the mines sector is looking for areas where they could establish a bamboo plantation in response to the DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu's order."

The 50-hectare site in Ibabay, Aklan was adopted by the Aklan SAG Quarry Operators Association, Inc. representing the mines sector in collaboration with the DENR, MGB, provincial government of Aklan and civil society represented by the Peace Agreement Interbarangay Project Organization (PAIPO).

DENR, PENRO Aklan will provide 10,200 seedlings of giant bamboo, while the Aklan SAG Quarry Operators Association, Inc. will provide the budgetary requirement for the establishment and maintenance of the communal bamboo plantation for three years.

The government under the mining law requires permit holders in the mining sector to put up an environmental guarantee fund to implement environmental projects outlined in their environmental compliance certificate (ECC) and annual environmental and enhancement program (EPEP).



The Mine Rehabilitation Fund Committee (MRFC) manages the use of this environmental guarantee fund. This will now be used to fund the communal bamboo plantation to ensure that the bamboo trees will grow in the next three years.

The people's organization (PAIPO), a long-time partner of the DENR in its reforestation projects, will take charge of planting, maintaining and protecting the communal bamboo plantation.

The project is expected to provide livelihood assistance as well to PAIPO who will equally share the benefits derived from the project.

The SAG and quarry permit holders association of Aklan allocated a total of P965, 000.00 for the project term of three years. (MGBVI-DENR/Laralournie Artajo/PIA6 Photo by MGB-6)



Borongan City requires couples applying for marriage license to plant 5 'barok' trees first

Published December 23, 2020, 10:40 AM

by [Marie Tonette Marticio](#)

TACLOBAN CITY – Couples applying for a marriage license are now required to plant five “Barok” (scientific name: *Ceriops Tagal*) trees in Borongan City.



Couples applying for a marriage license are now required to plant five “Barok” (scientific name: *Ceriops Tagal*) trees in Borongan City. (Photo courtesy of Borongan City Information Office / MANILA BULLETIN)

Mayor Jose Ivan Dayan Agda directed the City Population Office to require the couples to plant the trees in designated areas identified by the City Environment and Natural Resources Office.

This aims to help create greener public spaces in the city in support of the Department of Budget and Management’s “Green, Green, Green” program, a unique assistance program that aims to make the country’s 145 cities more livable and sustainable through the development of public open spaces. “Green, Green, Green” is a component of the Duterte administration’s massive national infrastructure development program, “Build, Build, Build”.

The first two couples to participate planted their trees at Baybay Boulevard earlier this week.

“We were happy when we learned about this project. This initiative is really good. We are believers that we should take care of our environment,” Jay-Ar Tavera who was joined by soon-to-be wife, Creightania Coles, told the city information office.

“We may not see it now because the trees are still small, but I’m pretty sure 5 to 10 years from now, we would see the effect of what the project has done,” he added.

For Estephine Joy Ecle and her partner Jaime Basilga, Jr., they found the activity worthwhile. “We enjoyed planting trees and it is also a form of bonding before we get married,” Ecle shared.

The two couples were set to tie the knot before Mayor Dayan Agda on December 23. “Green, Green, Green” will help city governments create forest parks, arboretum, and botanical gardens; improve livability of urban areas through various activities and methods such as landscaping, turfing, and tree planting; and transform streetscapes through installation of eco-friendly street furniture, fixtures, and shading.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/12/23/borongan-city-requires-couples-applying-for-marriage-license-to-plant-5-barok-trees-first/>



‘To avoid floods, cut soil erosion’

posted December 23, 2020 at 10:10 pm

by [Abe Almirol](#)

SOLANO, Nueva Vizcaya—Echoing massive calls for action against flooding in Cagayan Valley, Regional Executive Director Gwendolyn C. Bambalan of DENR Region 02 pointed out that soil erosion needs to be checked.

“Refrain from using glyphosates, it kills all weeds, but it has destructive affect to the soil and vegetation,” Bambalan warned upland farmers.

While acknowledging that upland communities need support to sustainably manage their occupancy inside watershed areas, Bambalan cited the 8-year-old Forestland Management Project (FMP) as a direct action to address the problem.

“I saw newly opened clearings in the mountainsides along the way here. Please look at the activities of kaingineros. File charges [for forestry law violations] if necessary,” Bambalan asked PENRO Edgar Martin of Nueva Vizcaya.

As a leading support component to community-based forest management, FMP is DENR’s strategy that is supported by official development assistance from the Japan International Cooperation Agency through a loan package.

“We only have one Earth to live. As all of us saw during Typhoon Ulysses, population in Cagayan and Isabela were heavily affected floods came.

Before you cut trees, please think of the people affected in the lowlands,” the DENR executive told members of people’s organizations and LGUs attending a workshop for the operation and maintenance of completed Agro-Forestry Support Project. Abe Almirol

The DENR executive gave emphasis to the inter-connectedness of activities in the uplands to lowlands from “ridge to reef.”



MGB execs say odds of finding alive 6 missing in Toledo mining landslide are slim

By: [Dale G. Israel](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Inquirer Visayas](#) / 12:15 AM December 24, 2020

CEBU CITY—Authorities expressed pessimism about finding survivors in a landslide last Dec. 21 in a mining pit in Toledo City after two days of searching.

Armando Malicse, officer-in-charge of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) Central Visayas office, said experts who checked the Carmen Pit, where the landslide occurred, had expressed belief that the six persons who had gone missing could now be under water.

He said the water in the pit was also filled with slits which made the search for the missing more difficult.

“We are praying for the best but doubts that there would still be survivors from the landslide,” said Malicse after inspecting the site with other MGB regional officials.

He said anytime on Wednesday, “we will shift operations from search and rescue to search and retrieval.”

Malicse served an order for Carmen Copper Corp. (CCC), the operator of the mining site, to suspend operations following the landslide.

The order, according to Malicse, stays “until such time that the hazards are removed.”

Malicse said the four bodies that had been retrieved earlier may have either died of drowning or hit by debris or rocks when the landslide struck.

In an earlier statement, CCC said it had suspended operations while the search for the missing went on.

“As of this time, we are in close coordination and communication with the affected immediate families and will continue to extend the needed support and assistance,” CCC said in a report by INQUIRER.net on Wednesday.

“We humbly ask the general public to exercise caution and responsibility in distributing information out of respect for the affected families,” it said.

“We would like to extend our utmost gratitude to private groups and the Toledo City government emergency response team for extending valuable assistance in our search and rescue operations,” said the mining firm.

TSB

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1375336/mgb-execs-say-odds-of-finding-alive-6-missing-in-toledo-mining-landslide-are-slim>



Retrieval ops for six missing in mining landslide temporarily halted

December 23, 2020

The search and retrieval operation has been temporarily suspended in the landslide at a mining site in Toledo City in Cebu.

Biga Barangay Captain Pedro Sepada Jr. explained that it would be better to temporarily call off the operations as the soil in the area is unstable.

Four individuals were killed in the landslide while six remain missing as of Wednesday afternoon.

“Maraming beses na akong sumulat sa kanila... Grabe na yung mga bitak-bitak sa naturang portion (I’ve written a number of times... The cracks have been severe in the said portion),” Sepada revealed.

“Wala naman silang klaro at konkretong sagot sa aming mga sentimiyento (They do not have any clear and concrete answer to our sentiments),” he added.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau admitted that there were really cracks in the area but insisted that these were due to declining material from the midsection of a foundation’s portion.

“Ang bitak nasa surface. Ang landslide happened in midsection sa ibaba (The cracks were at the surface. The landslide happened midsection below). The surface indication could have been caused by loosening or the weakening of the material at the midsection of the wall, but incidentally the landslide that happened last 21st just originated from the midsection of the wall,” MGB7 Dir. Armando Malicse explained.

The concerned company has assured that it will provide assistance to the families of the victims. – *Report from John Aroa/PTV Cebu*



Toledo tragedy: Names of victims released

By: Futch Anthony Inso - CDN Digital | December 23, 2020 - 10:49 AM



A view of the accident site in Toledo City. | Contributed Photo

CEBU CITY, Philippines—The Toledo Police Station has released the names of the victims of the landslide incident in a mining site of Carmen Copper Corp. (CCC) in Barangay Biga, Toledo City.

In a spot report released by the Toledo Police Station, the casualties were identified as Junil S. Lagola, 44 years old, married, a resident of Barangay Don Andres Soriano, Toledo City, and a Mine Open Pit leadman; Ernesto G. Caspe, 54 years old, single, a resident of Dasmamac, Lutopan, Toledo City, and a Mine Open Pit Checker; Juan M. Tapang, 44 years old, married, a resident of Don Andres Soriano Village, Toledo City, and a Mine Open Pit Heavy Equipment Operator; and Dionisio Labang, legal age, a backhoe operator from Anseca Contractor and resident of Barangay Uling, Naga City.

The bodies of the four fatalities were brought to the CCC hospital after the landslide, but were pronounced dead by attending physicians.

Meanwhile, search and rescue operations are still being conducted to locate the following missing individuals: Jose B. Carpentero, 31 years old, married, a resident of Barangay Biga, Toledo City, and a Heavy Equipment Operator; Jonwel S. Herediano, 33 years old, married, a resident of Barangay Don Andres Soriano, Toledo City, and a Pump Operator; Simeon B. Laconas, 33 years old, single, a resident of Barangay Biga, Toledo City, and a Leadman; John Paul L. Resuelo, 27 years old, married, a resident of Barangay Biga, Toledo City, and a Heavy Equipment Operator; Renante F. Sepada, 35 years old, single, a resident of Barangay Bagakay, Toledo City, and a Pump Operator; and Alfred C. Tautho, 33 years old, single, a resident of Barangay Maingit, Toledo City; and a welder.

The report said that as of Tuesday, December 22, 2020, search and rescue operations is being conducted in coordination with the Toledo City Government, City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (CDRRMO), Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), Bureau of Jail Management and Penology (BJMP), among others.

/bmjo

Source: https://cebudailynews.inquirer.net/356271/toledo-tragedy-names-of-victims-released?fbclid=IwAR29TqVQILmNqyyNfJbe3p6gHdfDlnqrPzth2rCyr5jFxf6x_jtqaFaH44



Ilang residente malapit sa gumuhong minahan sa Toledo City, Cebu, pinalikas

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Dec 23 2020 06:34 PM



Ipinag-utos na ni Toledo City Mayor Joie Pizon-Perales ang pag-evacuate sa mga residente na nakatira sa critical zone ng landslide area. *Photo courtesy: Toledo City Public Information Office*

MAYNILA – Patuloy ang rescue operations para sa 6 pang nawawalang minero na natabunan ng landslide sa mining site ng Carmen Copper Corporation (CCC) sa Toledo City, Cebu.

Nangyari ang pagguho noong Lunes ng hapon. Hanggang Martes ng hapon, 4 na bangkay na ng mga minero ang narekober.

Inamin naman ng Philippine Coast Guard na nahihirapan sila sa paghahanap dahil malambot pa rin ang lupa ng landslide area.

Ikinakatakot naman ngayon ng mga residente sa Barangay Biga, na nakakasakop sa minahan, na baka madamay ang mga bahay nila sakaling magkaroon muli ng landslide.

Dahil dito, ipinag-utos na ni Toledo City Mayor Joie Pizon-Perales ang pag-evacuate sa mga residente na nakatira sa critical zone ng landslide area.

Sinuspinde na ng Mines and Geosciences Bureau-Central Visayas ang buong operasyon ng CCC dahil sa landslide.

–Mula sa ulat ni **DX Lapid**

Source: https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/12/23/20/ilang-residente-malapit-sa-gumuhong-minahan-sa-toledo-city-cebu-pinalikas?fbclid=IwAR1rXDRNo_KQE_BKhKDGhc8Z2VywBTVRL2K0jAF5Ui3omosVugKdJduEj10



Coast Guard deploys K9 team to help in rescue ops in Toledo City mining pit collapse

Published December 22, 2020, 4:20 PM

by [Bethena Unite](#)

A K-9 team that specializes in search and rescue operations was deployed to Toledo City in Cebu Tuesday following a landslide at a mining pit, the Philippine Coast Guard said.



(PCG FACEBOOK / MANILA BULLETIN)

Commodore Nelson Torre, commander of the Coast Guard K9 Force, said they initially dispatched one K9 team composed of four personnel and two working dogs to assist the City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (CDRRMO) in responding to the incident.

According to Commodore Armand Balilo, Coast Guard spokesman, the initial deployment will assess the situation whether an additional K-9 team is needed or not.

“We have several SAR (search and rescue) K9 teams on standby in Manila for further deployment, if necessary. We are already coordinating the issuance of their health clearances so they may safely and swiftly travel to Cebu right after augmentation request from the CDRRMO,” Torre said.

“Upon coordination by the Coast Guard Station Cebu, additional K9 teams from the Coast Guard District Eastern Visayas are expected to arrive in Toledo City tonight,” Torre added.

If the agency decided to deploy teams from Manila, Balilo said they will need to comply with health protocols enforced by the local government of Cebu “but it will be easy to deploy them onboard the Coast Guard’s islander from Manila.”

The Coast Guard SAR K9 is one of the recent additions in the Coast Guard K9 Detection Specialties. The first deployment of the K9 teams for search and rescue was in September 2018 to aid with operations after a landslide at a quarry site in Naga City, Cebu that reported 15 casualties and dozens of trapped workers and residents.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/12/22/coast-guard-deploys-k9-team-to-help-in-rescue-ops-in-toledo-city-mining-pit-collapse/>



Mining needs policy lift as nickel boom seen in focus on RE, e-vehicles

By [BusinessMirror](#)

December 24, 2020



Salceda: "Nickel will be very big, and as one of the world's largest producers of nickel, we will be very important, if we will be wise."

THE chairman of the House Committee on Ways and Means has called for clarity in the country's mining policies and laws that encourage domestic value-added as nickel is poised to create 1.3 million jobs—a key driver of economic recovery post-Covid pandemic.

In a policy outline titled, "The Future in Nickel," Albay Rep. Joey Sarte Salceda underscored the country's prospects as a top base and source for renewable energy and electric vehicle manufacturing.

According to Salceda, the Philippines could become a "world power" in renewable energy and electric cars.

"The Philippines is a top producer of nickel. The future of electric vehicles and renewable is nickel, because it is the missing link to one long-standing problem: How do you stabilize batteries so that they last long enough and can store large amounts of energy?" Salceda said.

"In the past, renewable energy was not always relied upon because of fluctuations in supply. When there's no wind, there is little wind-powered energy supply. Solar energy requires consistent sunlight, and so on," he added.

With powerful battery technology, driven by nickel and cobalt—another Philippine product—renewable energy can be stored better, so that fluctuations are managed, the lawmaker said.

"In other words, we now have the power and the prospects to create millions of jobs in renewable energy, battery manufacturing, sustainable mining, and related sectors. This will be a key driver of economic recovery post-Covid, but we have to be very wise with our policies," Salceda said.

Over the next 10 years, the House leader added, some 1.3 million jobs await the country in nickel-related industries.

"The world appears to see that this is the future. Top nickel buyer and electric vehicle manufacturer Tesla is already larger in market cap than all other major car manufacturers combined. Chinese electric vehicle manufacturers are also rising. Nickel will be very big, and as one of the world's largest producers of nickel, we will be very important, if we will be wise," he said.

Moreover, Salceda said that the country "can become a global power in renewable energy and in the electric vehicle supply chain, but only if it makes the right policy moves."



“The Philippines remains among the world’s largest producers of nickel. Despite taking a small production dip between 2017 and 2018, when nickel production fell from 366,000 MT to 340,000 MT, the nation increased its output to 420,000 MT in 2019.”

5 requirements

Salceda, meanwhile, listed five key policy requirements needed to induce a boom in the country’s nickel sector.

First, Salceda said, “Clarity in its mining policies will be of the utmost importance.”

He explained: “By enacting a fiscal regime on mining, the country will be able to negotiate new, more responsible mining agreements that can keep its nickel supply sustainable. Passing HB 6135, or the Fiscal Regime for the Mining Industry, should be a national priority.”

Salceda added that the House is likely to pass its version of the fiscal regime on mining, which will then open the door to new mineral agreements, when session resumes early next year.

Also, he said sustainable public finance policies should be in place with the setting up of the Mineral Resources Trust Fund in HB 6135.

Salceda said the bill will also ensure that the country generates savings from booms in the prices of mineral commodities such as nickel.

“Reliability of its natural gas supply will be key. Nickel mining requires natural gas and oil in its extraction processes. The enactment of favorable policies for the maximization of the country’s natural gas resources in the West Philippine Sea will be key,” Salceda added.

Salceda also highlighted the need for domestic value added.

“To maximize the benefits of its extractive industry, the Philippines should promote domestic value-added. The launching of the Leyte Ecological Industrial Zone (LEIZ) roadmap, accompanied by the Copper Industry Development Roadmap, is a welcome development in this direction. The country should make a push to occupy significant portions of the electric vehicle and battery manufacturing space.

In this regard, the lawmaker said the urgent enactment of the country’s main instrument of industrial policy, the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises (CREATE) Act, is also extremely important.

“Domestic research is key to domestic value-added. The Philippines must, itself, encourage an environment conducive to renewable energy and electric vehicles. Continued investments in research and development, coupled with labor training, will be key to building up the Philippines as a manufacturing base for electric vehicles and renewable industry energy components,” the solon added.

Salceda, meanwhile, said he will work closely with the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to ensure that policies are in place to promote a sustainable nickel industry in the country.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/12/24/mining-needs-policy-lift-as-nickel-boom-seen-in-focus-on-re-e-vehicles/>



Cloud over mining taxes holding back nickel jobs creation, legislator says

December 22, 2020 | 7:25 pm



THE uncertainty over how the mining industry is taxed must be removed in order to unleash the nickel sector's potential for creating jobs, including in industries that depend on the metal like renewable energy and electric vehicles, a senior legislator said.

In a policy paper, "The Future in Nickel," House Ways and Means Chair Representative Jose Maria Clemente S. Salceda, who chairs the House Ways and Means Committee, estimated the job-creating potential of the industry at 1.3 million over the next 10 years.

The Philippines remains a major producer of nickel with output of 420,000 metric tons in 2019, Mr. Salceda noted.

"Top nickel-buyer and electric vehicle manufacturer Tesla is already larger in market cap than all other major car manufacturers combined. Chinese electric vehicle manufacturers are also rising. Nickel will be very big, and as one of the world's largest producers of nickel, we will be very important, if we are wise," he said.

Mr. Salceda said the Philippines is unable to open new mines for nickel and copper due to delays in legislating a new fiscal regime for the industry.

Executive Order No. 79, issued in 2012, bars the signing of new mineral agreements "until legislation rationalizing existing revenue-sharing schemes and mechanisms" takes effect.

"By enacting a fiscal regime on mining, the country will be able to negotiate new, more responsible mining agreements that can keep its nickel supply sustainable," Mr. Salceda said, adding that he expects House Bill (HB) No. 6135, or the proposed Fiscal Regime for the Mining Industry Act, to hurdle the chamber next year.

The measure proposes to increase the mining excise tax to 5% from the current 4%. It also establishes a sovereign wealth fund to be built up over six years.

"The setting up of the Mineral Resources Trust Fund in HB 6135 will also ensure that the country is able to generate savings from booms in the prices of mineral commodities such as nickel," Mr. Salceda said.

Mr. Salceda also called for more domestic value-added to maximize the benefits from the extractive industry.



“In this regard, the urgent enactment of the country’s main instrument of industrial policy, the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises Act, is also extremely important,” he said.

Mr. Salceda said he will work closely with the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources to ensure the industry’s sustainability.

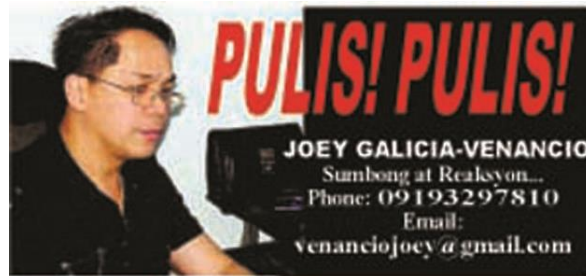
— **Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza**

Source: https://www.bworldonline.com/cloud-over-mining-taxes-holding-back-nickel-job-creation-legislator-says/?fbclid=IwAR3BA2cw6pcJFcsuTiKd3b7H_iL_bHN4JmmHdQ6XxDduiO344BwaQERZ
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Projects ng Sunwest sa Romblon dapat imbestigahan

On Dec 23, 2020



KINAKATAY ng Sunwest Construction na pag-aari ni 'Ako Bicol Partylist' Representative Zaldy Co ang mga kabukiran at beaches sa Romblon province, partikular sa isla ng Tablas.

Halos hiniwa-hiwa na nito ang kabundukan sa paglalagay ng mga kalsada na karamihan ay hindi madaanan dahil sa sobrang taas at ang iba ay putol, deadend.

Naging dahilan din ito ng pagkasira ng mga sapa. Dahil ang lupa na dinaanan ng bulldozer ay inanod ng tubig pababa at tumambak sa mga sapa. Kaya pag umulan ng malakas naghahanap ng madaanan ang baha. Resulta: Lubog ang kabayanan. Mismo!

Ngayon, ang winawasak naman ng Sunwest ay ang beaches sa Carabao Island o San Jose town na kilala sa dating tawag na "Hambil" sa Tablas island.

Ang Carabao island ay kalahating oras ng motorbanca mula sa bayan ng Sta. Fe, at higit isang oras patungong Boracay island sa Malay, Aklan.

Ang Carabao island na kulang 5,000 ang voting population, ay tinuturing na little Boracay ngayon. Paboritong destinasyon na ito ng mga turista dahil sa mapino at puting buhangin at maraming diving sites tulad ng sa Boracay.

Inirereklamo ngayon ng mga residente ng Carabao island ang pagsulpot sa kanilang lugar ng heavy equipments ng Sunwest at paglagay ng mga ito ng barrier na bakal sa baybayin, lalagyan daw ng beach wall.

Ang project ay nagkakahalaga raw ng halos P100 million.

Dinenay ito ng Department of Tourism. Wala raw silang inapubahang ganung proyekto. Tutol sila sa beach wall. Makasisira kasi ito sa natural beauty ng beach na siyang dinadayo ng mga turista, lokal man o banyaga.

Maging ang Dept. of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ay umalma sa pagwasak ng Sunwest sa beaches na ito ng Carabao island.

Ang District Engineer ng Romblon ay hindi naman mahagilap para makunan ng komento.

Pero ayon sa alkalde ng Carabao island na si Samson, ang proyekto ay sa DoT. Nanggaling narin aniya dito ang DENR. Mga anti-Samson lang aniya ang kontra sa naturang proyekto, mga ayaw sa progreso na kontra sa kanyang mga programa.

Sa post sa Facebook ni Wilson Fortaleza, isang aktibista na tagapagtanggol ng mga manggagawa at tubong Odiongan, Romblon: "Amoypaskorakot ang dalampasigan ng aming carabao island. Ang sabi ni Guyito ay galit ang Pangulo sa korapsyon at si Mark Villar, ayon sa Pangulo, ay hindi naman magnanakaw. Ang tanong ay may magaganap bang imbestigasyon sa aming lalawigan dahil bukod dito ay marami pang proyektong dapat matingnan. At bakit kaya naging favorite place ng Sunwest ang aming lalawigan?"



Ang Sunwest Construction ay nakarating sa Romblon dahil kay yumaong District Engineer “Didoy” Perez, ang bespren na sa huli ay naging mortal na kagalit ng trapo na si Cong. “Budoy” Madrona, ang hari ng mga “tiwaling” politiko sa Romblon.

Si Perez ang nagpakilala ng Sunwest kay Madrona. Dati silang partner sa shipping business, MVRs, na nakarma. Bumagsak!

Sinasabing ang Sunwest ang “financier” ni Madrona tuwing eleksyon. Kaya lahat ng road projects pati beach wall at flood control sa buong lalawigan ay inia-award sa Sunwest.

Muntik rin nga nilang sinira ang Mt. Guiting Guiting sa Sibu-yan. Umalma lang ang mga enviromentalist at mga residente.

Sabi ng netizens, sana mapaimbestigahan ni Pangulong Duterte kay Sec. Villar ang mga depektibong proyekto sa Romblon at ma-lifestyle check ang District Engineer ng lalawigan. Mismo!

Ang problema: Kapartido ng mga magulang ni Sec. Villar si Madrona sa Nationalista.

Pero kilalang political butterfly si Madrona. Lumilipat ito ng partido kung sino ang nasa poder. Trapo nga!



Vietnamese national nabbed over agarwood in Northern Samar

[RONALD O. REYES](#)

December 24, 2020

POLICE arrested on Wednesday, December 23, 2020, a Vietnamese national for alleged illegal possession of agarwood during an entrapment operation in Barangay Jubasan, Allen, Northern Samar.

The suspect was identified as 39-year-old female Hong Dinh Thi Bich.

Joint police operatives confiscated from the suspect 10.9 kilos agarwood with an estimated value of P763,000; half a kilo of bird's nest with an estimated worth of P750; accessories of making agar beads; and marked money.

Another unidentified male person, believed to be the live-in partner of the suspect, was able to evade arrest.

The operating units were from Criminal Investigation and Detection Group-Northern Samar Provincial Field Unit (CIDG-NSPFU) led by Captain Deogracias Diaz III and Regional Special Operations Group of the Police Regional Office in Eastern Visayas, together with Northern Samar SOG, 1st Northern Samar Provincial Mobile Force Company, 803rd Coy, Regional Mobile Force Battalion-Eastern Visayas, and Allen Municipal Police Station.

The suspect will be facing charges for violation of section 77 of President Decree 705, or the Forestry Reform Code of the Philippines and violation of Republic Act 9147, otherwise known as the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act, police said in the report.

The arrested suspect was brought to CIDG-NSPFU together with the seized pieces of evidence for documentation and proper disposition. **(SunStar Philippines)**

Source: <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1881059/Tacloban/Local-News/Vietnamese-national-nabbed-over-agarwood-in-Northern-Samar>



Solon to public: Avoid food waste during holidays

By Filane Mikee Cervantes December 23, 2020, 8:04 pm

MANILA – A party-list lawmaker on Wednesday urged the public to be mindful of food consumption and avoid waste during the holidays.

AAMBIS-OWA Rep. Sharon Garin said with the coronavirus pandemic still choking supply chains, the food and nutrition security of the country remains to be under threat.

She said it is incumbent upon every Filipino to ensure that no food goes to waste.

Citing the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations, Garin said food wastage accounts for 8 percent of global greenhouse gas emissions.



Party-list AAMBIS-OWA Rep. Sharon Garin (Photo from Rep. Sharon Garin's Facebook account)

Garin added that on top of this, hunger and undernutrition continue to plague around 690 million people in the last five years.

She highlighted the need to address the country's lack of a system when it comes to addressing food waste.

She said for instance, food items continue to end up in dumpsites instead of being repurposed as livestock feed which can help Filipino farmers.

House Bill 7956, otherwise known as the Food Surplus Reduction Act, was approved on third and final reading last week.

The bill prescribes specific steps on edible food surplus distribution, as well as the formulation of a food-related business surplus reduction strategy to properly manage the redistribution and inspection of food still fit for human consumption.

Local government units shall also be required to enter into a contract with waste management and recycling enterprises to recycle inedible food waste into fertilizer or compost, livestock feed, or sources of biofuel and facilitate the distribution of fertilizer or compost to farms and community gardening associations.

It seeks to establish the linkages between food businesses, food banks, and local government units to create a community-based food distribution system for the food-insecure.

Guidelines and standards shall be provided for the collection, storage, and distribution of edible food donated to food banks.

A self-sufficiency program shall be created that will provide skills training in managing food banks and livelihood programs to avoid the dependence on donations solely. **(PNA)**



Solon reminds Filipinos to avoid food wastage during holiday season

Published December 23, 2020 12:45pm

By ERWIN COLCOL, GMA News

AAMBIS-OWA party-list Representative Sharon Garin on Wednesday reminded Filipinos to be mindful of their food consumption and avoid wastage as they celebrate Christmas and the New Year.

Garin made the remark following the recent approval of House Bill 7956, or the proposed Food Surplus Reduction Act, which seeks the reduction of wastage by donating and recycling edible excess food.

In a statement, Garin stressed that since the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic is still choking supply chains, putting the food and nutrition security of the country under threat, it is necessary for Filipinos to do their part in ensuring that no food goes to waste.

She also pointed out that food waste has much to do with global warming, accounting for 8% of global greenhouse gas emissions, according to the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations.

Around 690 million people around the world have continued to suffer from hunger and malnutrition in the last five years, Garin added, giving all the more reason not to waste food.

In filing House Bill 7956, Garin stressed the need to address the country's lack of system in addressing food waste. In fact, food items still end up in dumpsites instead of being repurposed as livestock feed which could help farmers.

Thus, her bill prescribes specific steps on edible food surplus distribution and the formulation of a food-related business surplus reduction strategy for the proper management of the redistribution and inspection of food still fit for human consumption.

The measure also requires local government units (LGUs) to enter into contract with waste management and recycling firms to recycle inedible food waste into fertilizer or compost, livestock feed, or sources of biofuel, and likewise facilitate the distribution of fertilizer or compost to farms and community gardening organizations.

A National Zero-Food Waste Campaign will also be created under the bill to encourage Filipinos to lessen food waste and raise public awareness on the impact of food surplus and on strategies to minimize food wastage at the household level.

The said campaign will be spearheaded by the National Nutrition Council in coordination with other concerned agencies and LGUs.

A P500,000 penalty is prescribed under the bill for any individual, private or public entity, who makes edible food surplus unfit for human consumption. —**KG, GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/lifestyle/food/769120/solon-reminds-filipinos-to-avoid-food-wastage-during-holiday-season/story/>



Mind food waste over holidays—solon

posted December 23, 2020 at 10:50 pm

by [Maricel Cruz](#)

A party-list legislator on Wednesday reminded the public to be mindful of their food consumption and avoid waste over the holidays.

AAMBIS-OWA Rep. Sharon Garin, principal author of House Bill 7956, otherwise known as the Food Surplus Reduction Act, said with the COVID-19 pandemic still choking supply chains, the food and nutrition security of the country remained under threat. It was incumbent on every Filipino to ensure that no food went to waste.

Citing Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) data, Garin said food waste accounted for eight percent of global greenhouse gas emissions. On top of this, hunger and undernutrition continued to plague around 690 million people in the last five years.

As principal author of the measure, Garin highlighted the need to address the country's lack of system when it came to addressing food waste. For instance, she said, food items continued to end up in dumpsites instead of being repurposed as livestock feed to help Filipino farmers.

The bill prescribes specific steps on edible food surplus distribution, as well as the formulation of a food-related business surplus reduction strategy to manage the redistribution and inspection of food still fit for human consumption. Local government units would also be required to sign deals with waste management and recycling enterprises to recycle inedible food waste into fertilizers or compost, livestock feed or sources of biofuels, and facilitate the distribution of fertilizers or compost to farms and community gardening associations.

To reinforce the importance of lessening food waste among the public and raise awareness on the impact of a food surplus and strategies to decrease wasted food starting at the household level, a National Zero-Food Waste Campaign to be spearheaded by the National Nutrition Council, in close coordination with other concerned agencies and LGUs, would be promoted.

The bill also prescribes a penalty of P500,000 on any individual, private or public entity, who makes edible food surplus unfit for human consumption.

Celebrities, advocates champion Climate Action

By Ma. Alaine P. Allanigue Published on December 23, 2020



QUEZON CITY, Dec. 23 (PIA) -- Filipino celebrities and climate change advocates gathered recently to raise awareness on climate change and pushed for meaningful actions to address the worsening effects of the climate crisis.

At the "Now What? Climate Action #NowPH" dialogue, moderated by award-winning Journalist Atom Araullo and former Climate Change Commission (CCC) Secretary Lucille Sering, celebrity climate advocates, such as Angel Locsin, Kim Atienza, Antoinette Taus, Jasmine Curtis-Smith, Ria Atayde, and Jun Sabayton, as well as Climate Change Commissioner Rachel Herrera, Mayor Tin Antonio of Alcala, Cagayan, Dr. Selva Ramachandran of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), and Typhoon Ulysses survivor Danie Nacena joining the discussion.

"Meron tayong nakikitang trend. Kahit na hindi sya nakikita on an event-to-event basis, talagang merong trend na it's getting more extreme, it's getting more frequent, and it's getting more devastating itong mga extreme weather events na ito," said Araullo, who, for the past years, has made documentaries that shed light on critical environmental and climate change issues.

Former CCC Secretary Sering shared how the Climate Change Act, which created the Commission, was passed in response to the severe flooding caused by Ondoy in 2009.

"Ang nangyari during my time, nag-start kami gawin ang batas at na-create ang Climate Change Commission dahil sa Bagyong Ondoy. Na-create 'yong batas in a matter of two months dahil tumama ang Ondoy sa Metro Manila at ang mga politicians, congressmen, at senador, lahat sila na-experience kung gaano kahirap ang Ondoy," said Sering.

"Doon kasi sa lugar ng Cagayan lalo na po sa lugar ni Mayor Tin Antonio sa Alcala, dahil na rin sa pag-create ng Climate Change Commission at saka 'yong DRR Act, gumawa po kami ng intensive geo-hazard mapping. We also came up with a project that actually involve a lot of experts na prinoject ng mangyayari 'yong nangyayari sa kanila ngayon," added Sering.

The online dialogue discussed how Filipinos have increasingly become vulnerable to climate change in this pandemic. The panelists also shared their personal climate stories, as well as actions to bring relief and support the resilience of many vulnerable Filipinos.

"Ipinaliwanag po sa amin na ang pagbaha sa Cagayan ay may maraming factors. Una, ang Alcala ay bottleneck. Mula sa 400-meter wide na channel ng Cagayan River, kumikipot ito ng 150 meters sa aming bayan. Isa pang dahilan ay 'yung pagputol ng mga punong-kahoy, hindi lang dahil sa illegal logging, kundi dahil rin sa agrikultura, partikular 'yung yellow corn farming na ginagamitan ng herbicide or spray. Pinapatay po nun lahat ng punong-kahoy. It weakens the soil kaya kapag nandyan na 'yung baha, humahalo po 'yung sediment sa tubig-baha at pumupunta sa mga streams, sa mga rivers. Nakita po 'yun mismo ng mga tao nitong nagdaang pagbaha sa Alcala nitong Nobyembre dahil yung tubig baha, nung nawala na, ang naiwan po ay napakataas na putik," said Mayor Tinio.



"The way forward is clear. For Alcala, we rely on our scientists for a study to be done and we have a plan in place. Climate change is not just disaster risk reduction, it's really mitigation and adaptation. We have the support of our constituents because this a matter of survival already," added Mayor Antonio whose town in Alcala was among the areas submerged in floodwaters when Typhoon Ulysses hit the country in mid-November.

"Hindi madali na mabaha ng ilang beses, hindi madali na hindi namin alam kung kailan ang susunod na mararanasan namin ulit ang bagyo. Pero sana hindi lang kami ang tutugon sa ganitong klaseng problema. Kasi kung kami lang dito sa Marikina, sinusubukan namin e, pero kung yung mga ibang lugar ay patuloy pa rin sa ways na makakasira sa kalikasan, walang mangyayari," said Danie Naceno.

Kuya Kim meanwhile shared how he, as a weather anchor, reported on storms and typhoons becoming more extreme throughout the years.

"Napakalugi nating mga Pilipino, kasi we contribute so little to the warming of the environment and to worsening of the climate, and yet, we are at the receiving end. And I experienced it personally as a weather man. Noong 2014, ang mga bagyo noon ay hindi ganito kalakas, at nakita ko through the years na palakas nang palakas ang mga bagyo at pa-extreme nang pa-extreme. Dati hanggang signal number 3 lang tayo, ngayon meron nang super typhoon na. Dati rati, ang bagyo pagdating ng December mahina na 'yan, pero ngayon baliktad. Nakita ko through the years na ang mga report ko ay pabigat na nang pabigat," said Atienza, as he recalled his 15 years of service as a resident weather anchor of ABS-CBN.

Angel Locsin also shared her relief efforts and encounters with typhoon-displaced communities, particularly of one resident whom she met in several instances due to being recurrently displaced and affected by these extreme weather events.

"Mayroon kaming organization ng mga actors, at ang tawag po dito ay "Aktor." We recently held a relief mission sa Marikina, at may isang rare moment doon na may nakausap akong isang evacuee na parang magkababata kami kung makipag-usap siya sa akin. Ayun pala, nagkita na kami ten years ago nung bagyong Ondoy sa Rizal, then bagyo sa Quezon City, at ngayon sa Marikina nung Ulysses. Mapapaisip ka talaga na paulit-ulit 'yung nangyayari. Relief, rescue, and evacuation protocol is a thing na kailangan talaga nila if they need help, pero kung may magagawa naman tayo na long-term solution para maiwasang mangyari ito, bakit hindi natin gawin?" said Locsin.

"I think kailangan natin ng isang unified, concrete and scientific approach na magiging fully implemented to prevent unnecessary loss of lives and damage to properties. Kaya I'm here because gusto ko ring matutunan kung ano ba talaga yung mga tamang paraan, hakbang and I think panahon na para pag-usapan natin at bigyan natin ng tamang atensyon ang climate change katulad ng mga ibang issues na pinag-uusapan natin ngayon," added Locsin.

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During the second panel discussion, Commissioner Herrera shared the existing policies and initiatives of the government to amplify climate action, including the efforts to finalize and submit the Philippine Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC).



"Noong 2017 na naging parte ang Pilipinas ng Paris Agreement, tuloy-tuloy ang pag-uusap among stakeholders sa gobyerno, sa private sector, kasama ang mga local governments, ang academe para bumuo ng NDC o commitment ng bansa natin para mag-decarbonize. Ito ang goal natin bilang isang bansa, hindi lang ng gobyerno, kundi tinatawag na whole-of-nation approach, para makita natin kung saan tayo pwedeng mag-avoid ng tuloy-tuloy na pagtaas ng ating carbon emissions," said Herrera.

Taus, founder of the Communities Organized for Resource Allocation (CORA), and National Goodwill Ambassador for the Philippines by the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) shared three major actions needed to drive climate action.

"Kapag sinabing what can we truly do right now, we really need three major actions. So nag-uumpisa po 'yan sa systemic change, policy change, and of course we need to declare climate emergency. Declaring climate emergency across the world, which is what our youth is asking for, is so vital kasi once mag-declare ng climate emergency lahat ng actions na kasunod nito ay dikit-dikit at tuloy-tuloy na po 'yan," said Taus.

"Kapag pinag-usapan natin ang coal plant hindi lang environment ang naapektuhan niyan kundi pati ang mga community themselves. So speak out and say that we do not want another coal plant. Kailangan na nating itigil ang business-as-usual kasi hindi na natin pwedeng ipagkaila na nagbabago na ang mundo, nagbabago ang mga laws internationally, nagbabago na rin po ang mga policies totally," added Taus.

On the last panel, celebrity advocates highlighted the importance of using their own platforms to stir interest and conversation on most critical issues like climate change and spark individual and collective contributions from your market audience and followers.

"Given the platform that we have, and since we have people who are here to listen to us, why not use it for educating and enlightening others than just using it for entertainment? We are influencers no matter how small that circle is. Basta pag-usapan natin 'yong mga kailangang pag-usapan. Again, kapag napag-uusapan, these issues come to light, and when things come to light nahahanapan ng solusyon," said Atayde.

"If you can do it amongst your friends, and those who know you, and when they start asking questions about it, give answers and spread stories with good factual research background. Let's spread the factual information na dapat marinig ng mga tao. It doesn't have to be big, and doesn't have to be a government level, it doesn't have to be your whole barangay, it could be just you and your friends, gathering together talking about it and discussing the issue at hand or the concern that needs to be known in these times. Then sila, they'll do it in their own time and baka they will spread the word also. It's also a good thing that we will do our part as a community member and as a citizen of this country," said Curtis-Smith, a Sustainable Development Goals' advocate and World Vision Ambassador.

"Sa simula ay kakaunti pa lang 'yung nagbibigay talaga ng boses kasi syempre pag ganito yung topic, medyo nakakakaba rin at saka laging sinasabi na 'hindi ka mabibigyan ng project, ng ibang mga produkto, kasi may mga produkto na minsan ini-endorse mo ay nakakasira pala sa kalikasan. So parang ang hirap din bilang aktor, bilang isang nag-a-advocate kung paano mo iba-balance iyon," said Jun Sabayton, who is part of 'Coal-Free Philippines', an environmental campaign dedicated to raise awareness on the detrimental continued use of coal to generate electricity and advocates for the use of renewable energy in the country.



"While we are facing a pandemic, last month alone, we experienced the strongest typhoon recorded in the world this year—that is Typhoon Rolly, leaving thousands of Filipinos homeless. The damage brought about by typhoon Rolly added by destruction caused by Typhoon Ulysses was over 20 billion peso worth of damage - 12.9 billion for infrastructure and 7.3 billion in the agriculture sector. These figures continues to soar as a result of assessment of both public and private sectors that are still coming in," said Dr. Selva Ramachandran.

"As we recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, we now have the opportunity to push the hard reset button on our relationship with the environment, root cause of this pandemic, by pursuing a green recovery and aligning with our development plans and the NDC. We can do so in a way that does not only protect the environment, but on which also brings other concrete benefits, including the creation of new green jobs and reduction of inequalities, while fostering more resilient communities," added Dr. Ramachandran.

The "Now What? Climate Action #NowPH" was made in collaboration with FYT, YesPinoy Foundation, and MediSure Plus as part of #NowPH (Not On Our Watch Philippines) campaign, a youth-led climate movement, which aims to inspire climate action and promote sustainable solutions in the communities to help save the planet and attain climate justice for all.

Watch the replay of the online discussion through this link: <https://web.facebook.com/watchparty/389657182094917>. (PIA NCR)



Can the Philippine deliver on its climate pledges to the Paris Agreement?

By [Rene E. Ofreneo](#)

December 24, 2020



Rene E. Ofreneo

LABOREM EXERCENS

Aside from looking for vaccines to inoculate their citizens against the Covid-19 pandemic, governments around the world are busy updating their “Nationally-Determined Contributions” or NDCs under the Paris Agreement of 2015. Roughly, the NDCs are pledges of the UN Member States to help combat global warming by reducing their respective national GHG emissions and preparing their countries against climate change risks through a combination of mitigation, adaptation and related adjustment policies. The Paris Agreement requires the UN Member States to submit progress reports on the NDCs every five years. The ultimate goal of the Paris Agreement is to keep the rise in global temperature below 2.0 degree Celsius above the pre-industrial period; the ideal target: 1.5 degrees Celsius maximum.

The Philippines’s Climate Change Commission (CCC) is now undertaking what it calls as a series of consultations with various stakeholders—government agencies, civil society organizations, private and business sectors and academe—on the country’s “sustainable development ambitions.” The CCC lists these as follows: sustainable industrial development, eradication of poverty and provision of basic needs, social and climate justice, energy security, and gender and women’s empowerment.

The importance of having an ambitious but doable Philippine program of climate mitigation, adaptation and adjustment policies as the country’s instrument for survival as well as its contribution to the global fight against global warming and varied climate change risks cannot be overemphasized. As it is, the country is facing severe sustainability challenge on three inter-related fronts: economic (flattened economy, weak industry and agriculture, and uncertain future for the nation’s life savers: overseas employment and call center/BPO sector); social (extreme social and economic inequality, weak job-health-social protection for the majority); and environmental (climate change risks and degraded environment).

In a draft NDC paper for 2020, the CCC asserts that the government seeks the “transformation” of the country’s socioeconomic sectors and the building of “a climate-resilient and low-carbon economy.” We agree.

The problem is we do not see any clear “transformation program” in place. What we see instead are endless rhetorics on sustainable development and disaster readiness.

Is this the reason why the Berlin-based Climate Action Tracker rated the original NDC submission of the Philippines as equivalent to “2.0 C compatible” instead of the ideal “1.5 C compatible”? The CAT explained (November 27, 2020 release):

“The ‘2.0 C compatible’ rating indicates that the Philippines’s climate commitment in 2030 is within the range of what is considered to be a fair share of global effort but is not consistent with the Paris Agreement. This approach requires other countries to make deeper reductions and comparably greater effort to limit warming to 1.5 C. If all the countries were to follow the Philippines’s approach, warming could be held below—but not well below—2.0 C, and hence would still be too high to be consistent with the Paris Agreement’s 1.5 C temperature limit, a threshold the Philippines strongly fought for in 2015 during the Paris negotiations.



“Our rating of the Philippines is based on its conditional NDC of reducing GHG emissions by 70 percent below business-as-usual levels by 2030. The Philippines’s BAU scenario, against which the NDC is to be measured, has not yet been published as of November 2020. For the quantification of the conditional NDC target, we thus apply the reduction target to the BAU as estimated by CAT...”

In short, the government, the CCC in particular, has not been truly transparent on the country’s NDC and the supporting programs that should help the country meet its GHG targets under the Paris Agreement. What, in the first place, is this “conditional NDC”? Why has the CCC failed to come up with a full-blown public discussion and media dissemination on the country’s NDC submission? Since global warming threatens our collective existence as a people, why are Malacanang and the CCC, together with DENR and other agencies, not mobilizing the citizenry in this life-and-death battle to contain the CC risks (e.g., typhoons, sea rise, etc.) and re-organize the economy to become resilient and sustainable?

A major area where the Philippines is clearly failing in relation to the Paris Agreement is the country’s handling of its energy program. Instead of a shift to the cleaner non-renewables, the DOE has allowed the deepening of Philippine reliance on fossil fuel, particularly coal and gas. The recent DOE announcement of a “moratorium” on new coal plants does not stop development work on coal projects that are on the pipeline and the continued operations of existing coal plants, old as well as a score of new ones that were established in the last 10 or so years. CSO researchers have thus rightly raised the alarm: these coal projects will chain the country to coal in the next 20 years or so, or way beyond the 2030 initial timeline of the Paris Agreement and the 2040 Ambisyon 2040 of Neda.

Thus, instead of GHG reduction, the emerging scenario is that the Philippines will become a major GHG emitter, a supreme irony given the observation by CAT that it was the Philippines that fought hard in 2015 for the Paris Agreement goal of 1.5 C to 2.0 C maximum rise in global temperature. Incidentally, the DOE has a “coal roadmap 2017-2040,” which shows the DOE’s all-out support for coal production by coal miners, big and small, with “delineated coal reserves” projected from 478 MMT to 766 MMT between 2023 and 2040.

Given the foregoing and the absence of a comprehensive program of transformation for various sectors of the economy, it is doubtful if the Philippines can deliver on its pledges to the Paris Agreement.



Research papers on agriculture, aquatic and natural resources and environment bag awards

Published December 23, 2020, 10:18 AM

by [Dhel Nazario](#)

Three published research and development papers on agriculture, aquatic, and natural resources and environment topics were recognized through the Dr. Elvira O. Tan Awards, during the virtual S&T Awards and Recognition of the Philippine Council for Agriculture, Aquatic and Natural Resources Research and Development of the Department of Science and Technology (DOST-PCAARRD) on Tuesday.

“De novo genome sequence assembly of dwarf coconut (*Cocos nucifera* L. ‘Catigan Green Dwarf’) provides insights into genomic variation between coconut types and related palm species,” bagged the Outstanding Published Paper in Agriculture.

Authored by Mr. Darlon V. Lantican of the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), it was implemented by UPLB-Institute of Plant Breeding and the Boyce Thompson Institute.

DOST-PCAARRD said that the research work reported the first high-quality sequence assembly and annotation of the whole-genome sequence (WGS) of a dwarf coconut variety, ‘Catigan Green Dwarf’ (CATD). This sequence information provides the most basic and information needed to conduct more precise and directed research to address productivity and income concerns of farmers and the supply and quality demand imposed by local and international markets/consumers.

Under the Aquatic Sciences Category, the award was bestowed to the project, “Reproductive development of the threatened giant grouper (*Epinephelus lanceolatus*)” by Mr. Peter A. Palma of the Aquaculture Department, Southeast Asian Fisheries Development Center (SEAFDEC).

The project was implemented by SEAFDEC, University of Ryukyus, University of the Sunshine Coast, and Research Institute for Aquaculture.

The research work describes the reproductive development of the threatened giant grouper, providing a foundation for ongoing research activities on the development of the giant grouper broodstock and hatchery management. Additionally, the research data can be used for the formulation of management policies for the threatened giant grouper species.

Lastly, the project, “Mapping Fishing Activities and Suitable Fishing Grounds Using Nighttime Satellite Images and Maximum Entropy Modelling” by Mr. Rollan C. Geronimo of the Department of Geography, University of Hawaii, was the Outstanding Published Paper awardee under Natural Resources and Environment Category. It is implemented by the University of Hawaii, U.S. National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Earth Observation Group, and National Fisheries Research and Development Institute.

The study highlights the use of nighttime satellite images in obtaining information on the spatial fishing effort of fisheries, especially in Southeast Asia. Using maximum entropy modeling, the study identified bathymetry and chlorophyll as the main environmental predictors of spatial occurrence of the core fishing areas. Data from the study can be used to inform various fisheries management interventions in the country.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/12/23/research-papers-on-agriculture-aquatic-and-natural-resources-and-environment-bag-awards/>



The project of the Tan Yan Kee Foundation Inc. to restore degraded forests and protect existing ones has covered over 1,000 hectares in the three provinces since its launch in 2014.

[Philstar.com/File Photo](https://philstar.com/File Photo)

TYKFI's Legacy Forest Project ensures biodiversity, watershed protection

(The Philippine Star) - December 24, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Biodiversity has improved significantly in three forested areas in Nueva Ecija, Laguna and Quezon, where the Lucio C. Tan Legacy Forest Project started to plant trees six years ago, environmental experts revealed yesterday.

The project of the Tan Yan Kee Foundation Inc. (TYKFI) to restore degraded forests and protect existing ones has covered over 1,000 hectares in the three provinces since its launch in 2014.

TYKFI's flagship reforestation project is a protected area in Nueva Ecija, which had been planted with seedlings of suitable species like alibangbang, acacia mangium, ipil-ipil, narra, agoho, molave, Benguet pine and batino.

Over a million seedlings of these various species now cover 930 hectares of the natural reserve.

As a result, an assessment survey of various flora and fauna by the Nueva Vizcaya State University (NVSU) reflected an improved biodiversity index of the existing patches of natural forest in the area.

Likewise, experts commissioned by the TYKFI in 2017 estimated the carbon stock and sequestration potential of the reserve at a carbon average of 77.80 metric tons/hectare or .59 ton/tree.

This means that a hectare of the reforested area in Nueva Ecija would have sequestered at least 283.63 metric tons of carbon dioxide from the air at the time of study.

Meanwhile, another 600 hectares at the UP Land Grant in Quezon and Laguna have been covered by the reforestation project, as well as five hectares of mangroves in Las-Ud, Ilocos Sur and in Boracay Island. A majority of the species planted are native trees.

Today, most of the seedlings grown in the rain-rich UP Laguna-Quezon Land Grant areas are full grown and forest gaps fully reforested.

Dr. Lucio C. Tan started to plant trees in these areas with the goal of mitigating the effects of climate change and providing livelihood opportunities to many unemployed residents in the selected reforestation sites.

Six years on, reinvigorated flora and fauna, clean watersheds and protected wildlife have been the priceless gifts of these efforts.



“With millions of new trees, plants and other vegetation added to the thousands of species endemic to the project areas, pure clean water has since then continued to flow freely through rivers and streams, allowing for renewed forests and protection of the endangered wildlife. The forests then produce more clean and quality water that sustains life of the trees that prevent soil erosion and floods in the lowlands,” Tan said in a statement.

He noted that both the recent massive flooding and water supply disruption in Metro Manila could have been prevented with proper watershed management.

“Water is essential to all life forms so we have to help manage and care for it. Roots of trees help break up compacted soil and open up space so that water can be absorbed deep into the soil through ground storage and in large quantities. The groundwater becomes available for pumping to the surface and slowly flows to the rivers via sub-surface manner which improves water supply, especially during the dry season when it is most needed,” Tan explained.

Pleased by the gains of the Legacy Forest Project, Tan announced that the TYKF would soon start to plant another million trees in the vast mountain area of Tanay overlooking the Sierra Madre Mountains.

This would not only protect the lowlands of Rizal and Metro Manila, but produce much needed timber, fuelwood, charcoal, food and paper products for the next generations.

Meanwhile, the foundation also supported marginalized farmers in another town within the Protected Landscape through its Small Water Impounding Project (SWIP), which ensures water supply for the nurseries and helps prevent forest fires.

“Amidst the recent calamities that destroyed lives and multibillion-peso worth of produce and properties, we must jointly address climate change now. The fate of our fellow Filipinos tomorrow lies with our ability to nurture and protect the environment today,” Tan said.



Coastal waters in 11 provinces still positive for 'red tide' toxin

By Jonathan L. Mayuga

December 24, 2020

The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) on Wednesday said several coastal areas in 11 provinces remains positive of the “red tide” toxin.

As such shellfishes collected in these areas are not safe for human consumption, the Information and Fisherfolk Coordination Unit of BFAR said in its Shellfish Bulletin 29 issued on December 22, 2020.

According to BFAR, based on the latest results conducted together with concerned local government units (LGUs), shellfishes collected at Honda and Puerto Princesa Bays in Puerto Princesa City in Palawan; coastal waters of Milagros in Masbate; Sorsogon Bay in Sorsogon; coastal waters of Daius and Tagbilaran City in Bohol; Tambobo Bay, Siaton in Negros Oriental, coastal waters of Zumarraga in Western Samar; coastal waters of Calubian, Leyte, and Cancabato Bay, Tacloban City in Leyte; coastal waters of Biliran Islands; coastal waters of Guiuan in Eastern Samar; Balite Bay, Mati City in Davao Oriental; Lianga Bay and coastal waters of Hinatuan in Surigao del Sur; and Dumanquillas Bay in Zamboanga del Sur are still positive for paralytic shellfish poison that is beyond the regulatory limit.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/12/24/coastal-waters-in-11-provinces-still-positive-for-red-tide-toxin/>



BFAR disperses 1,100 abalones, 282 sea cucumber juveniles in Pangasinan marine protected area

Published December 23, 2020, 9:48 AM

by [Liezle Basa Iñigo](#)

ANDA, Pangasinan — The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Regional Mariculture Technology Demonstration Center has dispersed around 1,100 abalones and 282 sea cucumber juveniles at the Marine Protected Area of Anda, Pangasinan on Tuesday.



The Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) Regional Mariculture Technology Demonstration Center has dispersed around 1,100 abalones and 282 sea cucumber juveniles at the Marine Protected Area of Anda, Pangasinan on Tuesday, December 22, 2020. (Photos from BFAR Regional Mariculture Technology Demonstration Center / MANILA BULLETIN)

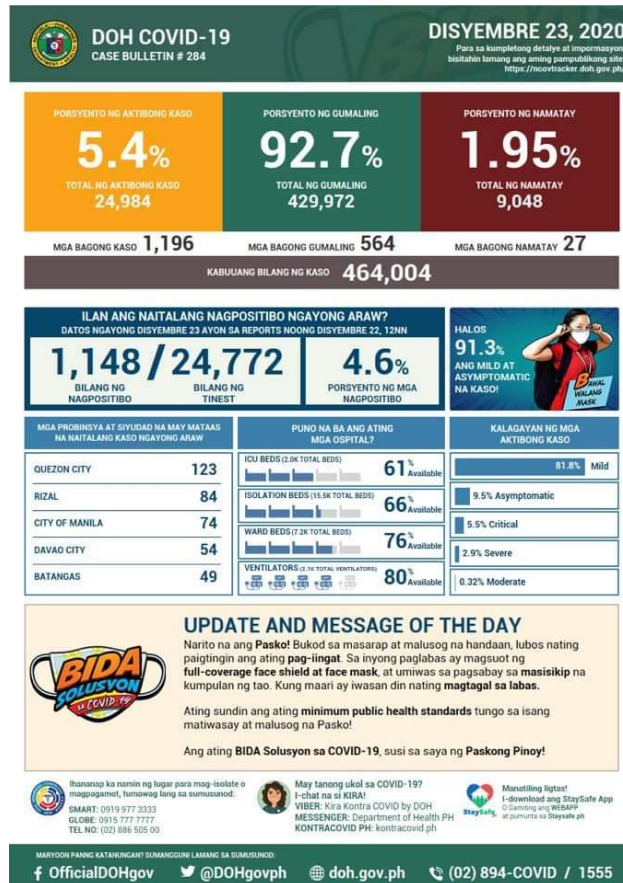
Report said the activity was led by Ed Ronquillo, Jr, Abalone hatchery in-charge, and Precy Galiling, sea cucumber hatchery in-charge and witnessed by Anda local authorities, Bantay Dagat, and village officials of Cabungan of the said municipality.

The Marine Olive Ridley Turtle rescued in Sual, Pangasinan last December 2 was also released after one week of restoring it back to good health in the waters of Hundred Island National Park in Alaminos, Pangasinan.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/12/23/bfar-disperses-1100-abalones-282-sea-cucumber-juveniles-in-pangasinan-marine-protected-area/>

BREAKING: Mga nagpositibo sa COVID-19 sa Pilipinas, higit 464,000 na

By Angellic Jordan December 23, 2020 - 04:20 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 Miyerkules (December 23), umabot na sa 464,0004 ang confirmed cases ng nakakahawang sakit sa bansa.

Sa nasabing bilang, 24,984 o 5.4 porsyento ang aktibong kaso.

Sinabi ng kagawaran na 1,196 ang bagong napaulat na kaso ng COVID-19 sa bansa.

81.8 porsyento sa active COVID-19 cases ang mild; 9.5 porsyento ang asymptomatic; 0.32 porsyento ang moderate; 2.9 porsyento ang severe habang 5.5 porsyento ang nasa kritikal na kondisyon.

Nasa 27 naman ang napaulat na nasawi.

Dahil dito, umakyat na sa 9,048 o 1.95 porsyento ang COVID-19 related deaths sa bansa.

Ayon pa sa DOH, 564 naman ang gumaling pa sa COVID-19.

Dahil dito, umakyat na sa 429,972 o 92.7 porsyento ang total recoveries ng COVID-19 sa Pilipinas.

Source: <https://radio.inquirer.net/281082/breaking-mga-nagpositibo-sa-covid-19-sa-pilipinas-higit-464000-na>

Palace: No more quarantine changes for December

December 23, 2020



Malacañang emphasized that there will no longer be changes in the quarantine classification of the country for the month of December.

Presidential and IATF-EID Spokesperson Harry Roque said the next quarantine classification which will soon be announced will be for the month of January 2021.

The government assured that it will strictly monitor the situation and there are places which are being given attention due to their current status concerning the spread of COVID-19.

“Ang mga lugar na titingnan natin ay iyong CAR, iyong IV-A at saka ang Region XI. Iyan po ang mga candidates na baka mabago pa ang classification (We are looking at CAR, IV-A, and Region XI. These are candidates that might have changes in quarantine classification),” Roque stated. – *Report from Mela Lesmoras*



PH govt, AstraZeneca set to sign 20M COVID vaccine contract as early as Dec. 28 -Galvez

By Joedie Mae BoliverPublished on December 23, 2020

CALOOCAN CITY, Dec. 23 (PIA) -- The Philippine Government and British pharmaceutical company AstraZeneca are set to sign a contract for 20 million COVID-19 vaccine doses as early as December 28.

This was confirmed by National Policy Against COVID-19 chief Implementer and vaccine czar, Secretary Carlito Galvez Jr. during President Rodrigo Roa Duterte's weekly address on Monday.

Galvez said they are only waiting for the United Kingdom's Ministry of Health Regulatory Authorization to finalize the said contract.

"Hinihintay lang namin 'yung Ministry of Health Regulatory Authorization ng UK at pwede na po naming pirmahan ang kontrata. Ito naman ay 20 million doses, at 10 million doses for LGU at saka po sa ating private sector," the vaccine czar said.

"Magkakaroon ng pirmahan this coming month, mayroon po tayong 60 million for the 2nd quarter and 3rd quarter," he added.

AstraZeneca has set its price at only US\$5, or about P500 for two shots of the vaccine.

The vaccine, known as AZD1222, was co-developed with the Oxford University's Jenner Institute and Oxford Vaccine Group. Administered by intramuscular injection, the vaccine uses as a vector a modified chimpanzee adenovirus.

AstraZeneca is a British Swedish multinational and biopharmaceutical company.

Meanwhile, Galvez also assured that the Philippines will receive at least 30 million vaccine doses from the American brand made in India Novavax. (PIA NCR)



Beware of the new COVID-19 strain

[EYES WIDE OPEN](#) - [Iris Gonzales](#) (The Philippine Star) - December 24, 2020 - 12:00am

As the clock ticks today, many of us will be busy preparing for our own Christmas gatherings, from muted to grand, from virtual to in-person parties, from big Noche Buenas to simple dinner tables.

There is, indeed, no stopping Christmas festivities, at least not in this part of the world.

But as we find the perfect reason to be with our loved ones today, let us not forget that, the tiny, tiny killer virus that has changed our world is still very much out there.

New strain

Let us not put our guard down. I am particularly anxious about the new COVID-19 strain reported in the United Kingdom.

British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said the new variant was 70 percent more transmissible and that it could lead to a new spike in COVID-19 cases in London and Southern England.

England's medical authorities said the new variant is responsible for 60 percent of infections in London, which have nearly doubled in the last week as reported by CNN.

"A series of stricter coronavirus restrictions are being imposed over the holiday season in UK as the cases get 'out of control' as described by health officials. The ensuing wave of travel bans has cut off UK travelers from much of Europe and other parts of the world. Canada, Saudi Arabia, and Ireland, among others, have temporarily banned flights from Britain," CNN said.

Soon after the news broke, Germany, Italy, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Romania and Ireland have banned all passenger flights from the UK.

The Department of Health on Monday said the new variant has not been detected in the Philippines, citing data from the Research Institute on Tropical Medicine.

But we can't afford to be complacent – again.

Fortunately, as I write this, the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases has suspended flights from the UK effective Dec. 24 to Dec. 31.

Travelers from the UK who are already in transit, meanwhile, will face stricter quarantine and health protocols, the IATF said.

I believe the travel ban should be longer, but this is already a welcome move. We can't make the same mistake again when we wasted so much time before we closed our borders to flights from Wuhan, China early this year.

We cannot be complacent, not at the rate that we're responding to the original COVID-19 strain. The number of cases continues to rise and we're also lagging behind in the vaccine acquisition race, no thanks to our health authorities' delayed response.

Surge

Let's be ready to see a spike in new cases. Days before Christmas, experts have already confirmed that Metro Manila is now experiencing the early stages of another surge in COVID-19 cases.



“Based on the available data, the period of the declining trend in cases observed in Metro Manila in the past few months has now ended,” the OCTA Research Group said in its monitoring report released this week.

“The trend has been reversed with significant positive growth in new cases observed in the region,” it said.

OCTA said from Dec. 13 to 19, Metro Manila recorded an average of 428 new cases per day, up from the 370 recorded during the preceding week. Nine local government units recorded increases in average daily cases in the past week: Makati, Malabon, Marikina, Quezon City, San Juan, Taguig, Navotas, Valenzuela and Caloocan, The STAR reported.

In Metro Manila, the reproduction number, which indicates how many people a positive individual can infect, increased to 1.15 from 1.06 previously.

This highlights the increasing trend in the spread of cases.

“It is in this light that we believe, based on our analysis of the data and of the past trends in Metro Manila, that a surge in its early stages has already started in the region. This is a serious cause for concern,” said OCTA.

“Be that as it may, it should be noted that the surge is still in its nascent stage in the NCR and it can still be mitigated or even reversed. But to achieve this, we need to act now and act as one collectively,” it added.

Christmas 2020

In our own homes and offices, let’s continue practicing proper health protocols as we gather with loved ones during the holiday season.

It’s definitely been a difficult year, but our sacrifices will be all for nothing if we do not heed the lessons well as we move into the new year.

Perhaps, there’ll be no Christmas carols from the neighborhood kids tonight; no aroma of roasted suckling pig or the trademark lechon; there’ll be less gifts, too, and smaller celebrations. But amidst the festivities – muted as they may be – let us remember what truly matters to us: the gift of life and love, and the safe spaces we create with and for our loved ones.

I wish each and every one a more meaningful, peaceful and blessed Christmas and a happier healthier and safer 2021.

Iris Gonzales’ email address is eyesgonzales@gmail.com. Follow her on Twitter [@eyesgonzales](https://twitter.com/eyesgonzales). Column archives at [eyesgonzales.com](https://www.philstar.com/business/2020/12/24/2065885/beware-new-covid-19-strain)



PATAYAN SA KAPASKUHAN KAPUPULUTAN NG MAHAHALAGANG ARAL



December 23, 2020 @ 2:24 PM 17 hours ago

NAPAKABIGAT na ang pandemyang gawa ng coronavirus disease o COVID-19, dinaragdagan pa ng mga balita sa patayan.

Kabilang sa mga patayan ang nauugnay sa engkwentro ng mga pulis at drug trader sa Taguig City, pagpatay sa dating Court of Appeals justice at itong pulis at mag-ina sa Tarlac.

Hindi pa kabilang dito ang patayan din sa pagitan ng mga sundalo at New People's Army, Abu Sayyaf Group at iba pa.

Magkagayunman, sana'y magkaroon tayo ng mahahalagang aral sa mga pangyayaring ito at tingnan kung ano-ano ang ating magagawa.

4 PATAY SA DROGA

Apat ang namatay sa engkwentro ng mga pulis at nagpapakalat ng droga sa Taguig City nitong nagdaang araw.

Nagsimulang mangyari ang engkwentro makaraan ang buy-bust nang kumasa ang mga may baril na armalite na suspek sa mga pulis sa C-6 na sakop ng nasabing lungsod.

Matapos ang putukan, apat sa mga suspek na sakay ng Pajero ang bumulagta at P272 milyong shabu na nakasilid sa tea bag ang bumulaga sa harapan ng mga awtoridad at mamamayan nakasaksi sa krimen.

Walang nasugatan sa mga pulis na miyembro ng Philippine National Police Drug Enforcement.

May napansin lang tayo, mga Bro!

Wala pang umaangal hanggang sa tinitipa natin ito.

Subalit marami ang hindi nanghinayang sa buhay ng mga drug trader.

CA JUSTICE, PINUTULAN NG BRASO, DALIRI

Nawala si Justice Normandie Pizarro noong Oktubre 23 makaraan itong lumabas sa isang hotel sa Clark, Pampanga at natagpuan ang sasakyan nitong may dugo sa San Simon, Pampanga noong Oktubre 28.



Pagdating ng Oktubre 30, 2020, natagpuan ang kanyang bangkay sa Brgy. Lawas sa Capas, Tarlac.

Matagal na prinoseso ang pagkakilanlan kay Pizarro dahil pinutol ang kanyang mga daliri at isang braso para sana sa fingerprint.

Nakilala na lamang siya nang dumaan ito sa DNA test at dental test.

Tatlong dahilan ang sinisilip ng mga imbestigador: trabaho niya bilang CA justice, personal at casino subalit sinasabing may isang saksi na maaaring makapagbigay ng linaw sa mga dahilan.

Nakilala si Pizarro sa pagpapalaya kay ex-Palawan Gov. Joel Reyes na itinurong mastermind sa pagpatay kay broadcaster Gerry Ortega, pagpabor kay pork barrel queen Janet Napoles kontra kay Benhur Luy sa illegal detention at pagkontra sa \$2 bilyong kompensasyon sa Martial Law victims ng administrasyong Marcos.

Kung ano ang mga personal at casino na dahilan, inaalam pa ng National Bureau of Investigation.

Brutal ang pagpaslang at kumikilos nang husto ang mga awtoridad para panagutin ang mga pumatay kay Justice Pizarro na isa sa pinakahuling napaslang na mga abogado at hukom.

LANTARANG PAGPATAY

Naging lantaran naman ang pagpatay ni Police Senior Master Sergeant Jonel Nuezca sa mag-inang Sonya Gregorio at Frank Anthony sa Paniqui, Tarlac nitong nakaraang Linggo.

Kung anoman ang dahilan ng away, ang katotohanan ay naganap ang krimen at malinaw na nakilala ang salarin.

Araw lang ang pagitan nang sumabog ang balita sa pagpatay kay Justice Pizarro at kaso ni Nuezca.

Ang masakit, parehong nakita ang pag-murder ni Nuezca at pagka-murder ng hukom sa iisang lalawigan, ang Tarlac.

Pareho ang krimeng Nuezca at Pizarro na umani ng atensyon ng buong bayan at isinisigaw ang katarungan.

MAHAHALAGANG ARAW NAMNAMIN

Nalalapit na ang Pasko na karaniwang nagdadala ng magandang balita, buhay at kapayapaan mula kay Jesus subalit ang patayan pa ang isa sa sumasabog na balita na nagpalabnaw sa dala-dala ni Jesus sa ating lahat.

Gayunman, itinulak naman tayong taimtim na magmuni-muni sa buhay at manalanging.

Ang patayang kinasangkutan nina Nuezca at mag-inang Gregorio at kay Justice Pizarro ay mahalagang pagkunan natin ng mahalagang leksyon na hindi lang para sa mga araw ng Paskong ito kundi sa buong Bagong Taon na darating.



Maging ang pagkalagas ng buhay ng mga nagpapakalat ng droga ay mahalaga ring pag-isipan at sa katunayan, magpapatuloy ang ganitong eksena, gusto man natin o hindi, dahil sa malalim nang nakaugat na droga sa ating lipunan.

Ukol sa droga, masasabi nating malinaw na panghahamon sa pamahalaan at pagbabalewala sa karapatan ng mga mamamayan na maging malaya sa nakamamatay na buhay-droga ang ginagawa ng drug traders.

At kung pansinin pa ninyo, tila may halong droga ang buhay ni Nuezca, batay sa mga rekord nito sa serbisyo.

Dapat may talagang hustisya para sa mga biktima ng droga, gayundin sa mga biktimang katulad ng mag-inang Gregorio at ni Justice Pizarro.

Walang magandang balita, buhay at kapayapaan hangga't walang hustisya sa mga nagaganap na patayang ganito.



People are seen buying Christmas decorations in this October 3, 2020 photo.

The STAR/Walter Bollozos

PAGASA: Fair weather seen on Christmas Eve

(Philstar.com) - December 23, 2020 - 7:11pm

MANILA, Philippines — Christmas Eve in the country will have a generally fair weather condition with no weather disturbances in sight, PAGASA said Wednesday.

The agency in its 5 p.m. forecast said only the extreme northern Luzon would experience cloudy skies and slight rains due to the effects of the northeast monsoon or the Amihan prevailing in the area.

Metro Manila and the rest of Luzon will see fair weather apart from isolated rains by afternoon or night.

Visayas and Mindanao will also experience the same along with chances of better weather condition with Tropical Depression "Vicky" already outside the country.

In the next three days, which includes Christmas Day, fair weather is expected to prevail over NCR, but cloudy skies and rains may be seen by Sunday, December 27.

December 25 for Legazpi City in Albay could also be rainy, due to the effects of the Amihan, with cloudy skies, rains and thunderstorms by Saturday and Sunday.

Cebu and Davao will also see the same weather condition in the next three days of scattered rains and thunderstorms.

PAGASA has said that it is expecting one to two more storms this December, with the first already being Vicky which left eight people dead and over P200 million in cost of damage.

The Philippines has seen 22 storms this 2020, with the onset of the La Niña being declared in October that is seen to persist until March 2021.

Gale warning is also raised in the following areas, as the weather bureau warns that wave height could reach between 2.8 to 5.5 meters:

- Batanes
- Northern coast of Cagayan including Babuyan Islands
- Ilocos Norte

— Christian Deiparine

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/12/23/2065890/pagasa-fair-weather-seen-christmas-eve>



Nat'l gov't handang umayuda sa mga nasalanta ni Vicky — DBM



December 23, 2020 @ 4:28 PM 15 hours ago

Manila, Philippines — Sinabi ng Department of Budget and Management (DBM) na nakahandang umayuda ang national government sa local government units (LGUs) na tinamaan ng bagyong Vicky.

Ayon kay Budget Secretary Wendel Avisado, maaaring galawin ang local calamity funds ng LGUs para sa kanilang rescue, relief at rehabilitation efforts.

Iginiit din ni Avisado na ang karagdagang financial assistance ay ipamamahagi ng LGUs sa mga susunod na araw. **RNT/FGDC**



A man in Lapu-Lapu City in Cebu is seen picking up what remains from his possessions in this December 19, 2020 photo after the onslaught of Tropical Depression Vicky
AFP/Allan Tangkawan

'Vicky' damage to infra reaches P122 million, agri at P111 million

[Christian Deiparine](#) (Philstar.com) - December 23, 2020 - 2:44pm

MANILA, Philippines — Tropical Depression Vicky has left a combined cost of damage at over P200 million as of Wednesday, official figures showed.

Disaster officials in a December 23 situation report said damage in the aftermath of the weather disturbance is now at P122.2 million in four regions.

Among them, Caraga appeared to have been the worst hit as it accounted for P105.4 million in damage to roads and flood control.

Zamboanga Peninsula followed with P6.8 million, while Central Visayas and Bicol — a region still reeling from the consecutive typhoons in the recent months, took a beating with each at P5 million.

Vicky has claimed the lives of eight people to date, with two injured and another still missing. It has also affected 31,408 families or 130,855 individuals.

Of the figures, 289 families or 1,228 persons will likely spend Christmas and the rest of the holidays in evacuation sites.

While the Philippines is visited by 20 storms a year on average, its disaster response has been affected as the country grapples with the coronavirus pandemic.

Damage to crops, meanwhile, have reached P111 million per the latest report from the agriculture department.

Figures showed 15,933 farmers and fisherfolk affected by December 22, along with nearly 20,000 hectares of agricultural areas.

The volume of production loss has also stood at 942 metric tons.

The social welfare department has reported too that P4.1 million worth of assistance had been provided to the victims, with P3.1 million coming from the agency and P904 million from local governments.

Vicky is the first in at least two storms that weather bureau PAGASA is still expecting to enter the country and is the 22nd storm to hit the Philippines this year.



In October, PAGASA also announced the onset of the La Niña, with above normal rainfall conditions seen to persist until March 2021.

The consecutive typhoons in the recent months — "Quinta," Super Typhoon "Rolly" and "Ulysses," have left extensive damage, sending the entire Luzon under a [state of calamity](#). Ulysses in its over 100 casualties and P20 billion in damage is considered as the [deadliest](#) for the country.



Crop damage from storm Vicky now at P129.76 million

December 23, 2020 | 7:31 pm



RAMBB

CROP damage from tropical storm Krovanh, known in the Philippines as Vicky, was estimated at P129.76 million as of early Wednesday, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said. The DA said the storm damaged 1,202 metric tons (MT) of crops across 21,008 hectares of farmland. More than 16,761 farmers and fisherfolk were affected.

Losses were reported in the Cagayan Valley, Davao, and Caraga regions. The latest damage reports were swelled by additional reporting from Davao and Caraga.

The affected commodities include rice, corn, high-value crops, fisheries, livestock, and poultry.

Rice accounted for the majority of the damage at 83%, followed by corn at 16%, and other sub sectors at 1%.

Damage to rice amounted to P107.3 million, across 19,969 hectares. Losses to the corn crop were valued at P20.8 million, on volume of around 520 metric tons across 910 hectares.

Damage to high-value crops was P1.34 million; livestock and poultry were P148,850; and fisheries were at P163,000.

The DA said that affected farmers and fisherfolk are in line for government aid in the form of rice, corn, and vegetable seeds; drugs and biologics for livestock and poultry; fingerlings and fisheries equipment; access to the Survival and Recovery (SURE) Loan Program; and indemnification from the Philippine Crop Insurance Corp.

Vicky, the 22nd storm to transit the Philippines this year, made landfall in the Philippines twice, bringing moderate to heavy rains over the Bicol region, Isabela, Aurora, Laguna, Rizal, Quezon, Marinduque, and Palawan, including Calamian, Cuyo and Cagayancillo Islands, according to the government weather service.

Meanwhile, light to moderate rains were experienced in Metro Manila, the Visayas, Apayao, Kalinga, Mountain Province, Ifugao, and the rest of mainland Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Mimaropa, and the Cordillera Administrative Region. — **Angelica Y. Yang**

Source: <https://www.bworldonline.com/crop-damage-from-storm-vicky-now-at-p129-76-million/>



Angat, Magat dam patuloy ang pagpapakawala ng tubig



December 23, 2020 @ 11:11 AM 20 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Patuloy na nagpapakawala ng tubig ang Angat dam at Magat dam ayon sa Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).

Ayon sa ulat ng ahensya dakong 6:00 ng umaga, bukas pa rin ang tatlong gate ng Angat dam kung saan naitala ang 214.37 metro lebel ng tubig mula sa 212 metro normal high level nito.

Sa Magat dam naman, isa na lamang ang bukas na gate na isang metro ang awang.

Nasa 190.76 metro na ang lebel ng tubig sa naturang dam mula sa 193 metro normal high level nito.

Sa Ambuklao dam at Binga dam naman ay isinara na ang mga gate dakong 5:30 ng umaga, Miyerkoles.

Habang tumaas naman ang tubig sa Pantabangan dam ng 206.92 metro mula sa 206.82 metro kahapon.

Tumaas din ang lebel ng tubig sa Ipo dam ng 100.63 metro mula sa 101 metro minimum high water level nito.

Narito ang lebel ng tubig sa iba pang dam:

- La Mesa dam – 79.50 meters (minimum high water level: 80.15 meters)
- Ambuklao dam – 751.45 meters (minimum high water level: 752 meters)
- Binga – 574.23 meters (minimum high water level: 575 meters)
- San Roque – 279.62 meters (minimum high water level: 280 meters)

RNT/ELM

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/angat-magat-dam-patuloy-ang-pagpapakawala-ng-tubig/>



Metro Manila at Central Luzon niyanig ng lindol

By [Angie dela Cruz](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon) - December 23, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Niyanig ng malakas na lindol ang ilang lugar sa Metro Manila at Central Luzon kahapon ng madaling araw.

Ayon sa PHIVOLCS, naitala ang 4.9 magnitude na lindol may 9 kilometro sa kanlurang bahagi ng General Nakar Quezon province.

Ang lindol na naganap alas- 2:14 kahapon ng madaling araw ay may lalim na 13 kilometro na ang ugat nang pagyanig ay tectonic.

Bunga nito, naramdaman ang lakas ng lindol sa intensity 4 sa General Nakar, Quezon, Malolos City at San Jose Del Monte City sa Bulacan, Lumban Laguna, Quezon City, Kalookan City, Navotas City, Makati City at Rodriguez Rizal.

Intensity 3 naman sa Lucban, Dolores sa Quezon, Gabaldon Nueva Ecija, Plaridel, Malolos City at Calumpit sa Bulacan, Guaga sa Pampanga, Marikina City, Pasig city, Mandaluyong City, San Juan City, ilang lugar sa Kalookan City, Malabon City, Talim Island at Binangonan Rizal.

Intensity 2 naman ang naramdaman sa Sta Cruz Laguna, San Mateo, Antipolo City at Tanay Rizal, Marikina City, Navotas City at Plaridel Bulacan.

Naramdaman din ang intensity 2 sa Palayan city, Nueva Ecija, Baler Aurora, Gumaca sa Quezon, Tagaytay City, Cavite, Las Piñas City at San Idefonso sa Bulacan.

Intensity 1 sa Guinayangan Quezon, Cabanatuan City, Nueva Ecija, Muntinlupa City, Guinayangan, Lucena City at Lucban sa Quezon, Daet sa Camarines Norte, Carmona at Bacoor City sa Cavite.

Sabi pa ng Phivolcs wala namang dalang pinsala ang lindol pero asahan ang pagkakaroon ng mga aftershocks sa naganap na lindol.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/metro/2020/12/23/2065714/metro-manila-central-luzon-niyanig-ng-lindol/amp/>



Air pollution the cause of 1.67 million deaths in India in 2019

[AFP Relaxnews](#) / 04:45 PM December 23, 2020



1.67 million deaths in India in 2019 were attributable to air pollution. Image: Getty Images/yoska87 via AFP Relaxnews.

Globally, India is the country where air pollution kills the most people per year, reveals a new report by American and Indian researchers. As many as 1.67 million deaths in 2019 were attributable to air pollution — 17.8% of all deaths in the country.

Air pollution takes a heavy human and economic toll in India, a country of about 1.35 billion people. That's what an alarming report on the subject unveiled today by researchers from the Global Observatory on Pollution and Health at Boston College, the Indian Council of Medical Research, and the Public Health Foundation of India, indicates.

The study, [published](#) in the Lancet Planetary Health journal on Dec. 21, shows that globally, in 2019, air pollution was the most deadly in India. In addition, it is the cause of colossal economic losses, estimated by researchers at about \$36.8 billion (P1.8 trillion), or 1.36% of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

“Successful reduction of air pollution in India would lead to substantial benefits for both the health of the population and the economy,” the authors of the study said. They also pointed out that the consequences of air pollution will be long-lasting if no effort is made to reduce it throughout the country.

“[Air pollution] is also having a profound effect on the next generation of Indians,” said lead researcher Philip J. Landrigan, M.D., Boston College Professor of Biology and director of the Global Observatory on Pollution and Health. “It increases future risk for heart disease, diabetes, and respiratory disease for today's children when they become adults. It is reducing children's IQ. It will be very difficult for India to move forward socially or economically if they don't do something about the problem.”

However, some of the report's conclusions are also positive. The study shows that the mortality rate due to indoor air pollution, usually related to the use of poorly ventilated domestic stoves, has declined by 64.2% since 1990. Conversely, mortality rates due to ambient particulate matter and ozone pollution have soared.

“One of our challenges is to provide the poor with greater access to devices and clean fuels that can be sustainably used in a variety of real-world conditions,” concluded the authors of the study, who now want to work on new strategies that would take into account not only energy needs, but also poverty. *CC*

Source: <https://technology.inquirer.net/106743/air-pollution-the-cause-of-1-67-million-deaths-in-india-in-2019>



Climate change ravages Kashmir's 'red gold' saffron crop

[Agence France-Presse](#) / 07:18 PM December 23, 2020



In Kashmir, dry conditions blamed on climate change have seen yields of saffron halved in the last two decades. Image: AFP/TAUSEEF MUSTAFA.

On sweeping fields once blanketed in lush purple, a thin and bedraggled crop of flowers is all farmers in Indian-administered Kashmir's saffron-growing region Pampore have to show for this year's harvest.

Dry conditions blamed on climate change have seen yields of the world's most expensive spice halved in the past two decades, threatening the future of a cash crop that has brought wealth to the region for 2,500 years.

"These fields used to be like goldmines," said Abdul Ahad Mir in Pampore, just south of Indian-administered Kashmir's main city Srinagar.

Saffron has long thrived there and Mir's family was reared in the delicate work of plucking the lucrative but tiny crimson threads from purple crocus flowers.

"In my childhood we needed 80 men over a week to pick the flowers," Mir told AFP. "Today our family of six finish it in a day."

Warming temperatures caused by climate change have made rainfall erratic, depleting the thirsty saffron fields of water. Shrinking glaciers across the Himalayan region have also cut water flows to the foothills downstream.

It takes around 160,000 flowers to yield one kilogram of the precious spice, which will sell for around \$1,350 (around P65,000) in local markets.

But official figures show that harvests of the so-called "red gold" were just 1.4 kilograms per hectare in 2018, half the figure recorded in 1998.

Mohammad Ramzan Rather says his acreage in Pampore only produced around 30 grams of the crop this year, down from two kilograms 12 years ago.

The harvest season, which lasts for just two weeks at the end of autumn, has also been devastated by the coronavirus pandemic, as well as recent security lockdowns in response to a long-running insurgency in the disputed territory, claimed by both India and Pakistan.



Ancient pride

Historians say saffron has been cultivated in Kashmir since at least 500 BC.

Locally the spice is added to traditional dishes and used as an ingredient in Kehwa, a sweet drink served during special occasions such as marriages.

Elsewhere in the world, it is prized for its use in cooking and cosmetics and can fetch prices of more than \$10,000 per kilogram (around P480,000) on the international market.

Nearly 90% of the world's saffron is grown in Iran, but experts consider Kashmir's crop to be superior for its deep red color and distinct aroma.

In 2010, Indian authorities sought to halt the impact of climate change by launching a \$54 million fund (around P2.6 billion) to introduce modern agricultural technology to farmers.

Authorities have touted it as a success, claiming it has rejuvenated Kashmir's 3,700 acres of saffron fields.

But farmers disagree. They have ripped up plastic irrigation pipes that are now strewn across fields, saying they bring little water and make it harder to till the land.

Others say high-yield seed varieties introduced under the scheme have ruined their crops.

Jalal-ud-Din Wani said some farmers were turning their land into orchards because apples need less water.

Though he said the government's intervention had failed, Wani believes that the luck of some farmers may improve.

If they stick to traditional methods of farming the crop, he said, "there is still a sliver of chance to revive it." *CC*



Healthy biodiversity ensures businesses' long-term success

By Jerome Carlo R. Paunan Published on December 23, 2020

CALOOCAN CITY, Dec. 23 (PIA) -- The loss of biodiversity and its dire economic consequences has prompted the private sector to urgently consider nature into their business practices and models.

This became evident after over a hundred representatives from the government, enterprises, academia, and non-government agencies participated in the fourth and last virtual session of the Third ASEAN Conference on Biodiversity (ACB 2020).

The event, which took place on Zoom and livestreamed via Facebook, was organized by the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) and the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources of Malaysia.

In his remarks, Malaysia's Minister of Energy and Natural Resources Dato Shamsul Anuar bin Hj Nasarah said that "ensuring projects' minimal impacts on existing ecosystems require carrying capacity assessment on biodiversity-based business ventures."

"If in the past, most businesses had contributed to environmental degradation, today, let us shift our horizons to support our environment through sustainable and environmentally friendly businesses," the Malaysian minister said. He also urged the business community in the ASEAN region to support biodiversity conservation efforts and ensure fair and equitable sharing of its benefits.

ACB Executive Director Theresa Mundita Lim underscored the dependence of businesses on biological resources for raw materials, stressing that the sustainable use and management of resources, including investing in conservation projects and programmes, make good long-term business sense.

"The business sector is an important ally. Mainstreaming biodiversity not only into the strategies and programmes but in the way businesses operate and utilise natural capital, can help reduce and prevent severe impacts on the environment and on the people," she said.

On his part, Deputy Secretary-General for ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community Kung Phoak called for increased business accountability for nature and encouraged all stakeholders of conservation to connect more businesses with the post-2020 global biodiversity framework; reconfigure the business roles and responsibilities; as well as their investment to reverse the biodiversity loss and future risks in the region.

The unprecedented rate at which nature is destroyed puts economies at risk. Approximately US\$ 44 trillion, or more than half of the world's combined gross domestic product is dependent on ecosystem services, said Bianca Brasil, Programme Manager of the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) citing data from the World Economic Forum.

Representatives from the business sector shared their best practices and business models that put premium on biodiversity and nature.



Allan Barcena, Assistant Vice President and Head of Corporate Social Responsibility and Public Relations of the Philippines' Energy Development Corporation, said biodiversity conservation is not just part of their corporate social responsibility, but it is also strategic to the corporation's business operations.

Juthamard Jitchuen, Consultant of Thailand's Siam Cement Group Holdings (SCG), said the company practices biodiversity mitigation hierarchy, which limits projects' impacts on biodiversity.

Dr. Teguh Triono, Chairman of the Board of Indonesia's Jentera Garda Futura (JGF) shared how community-based innovation can positively contribute to environmental protection. A start-up microbusiness in South Sumatra in Indonesia, JGF incorporates design, technology, social, and environmental aspects by producing biodegradable food containers made of betel nut leaves, which are previously considered an agricultural waste.

Dr. Khairul Naim Adham, Undersecretary of the Biodiversity Management Division, Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources Malaysia said during his intervention that business should go beyond profit. Malaysia, in its various initiatives, supports the Malaysian Platform for Business and Biodiversity for a stronger collaboration between private sectors at the national and global levels.

The two-hour webinar was moderated by Tania Golingi, Head of the Ecology and Environment Department at DHI Water & Environment Malaysia.

It can be accessed at <https://bit.ly/3oFbY1M>. An announcement about the physical ACB 2020 in 2021 will be made soon, the ACB said. (PIA NCR)