

29 DECEMBER 2020, TUESDAY



DENR

NEWS ALERTS

STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE



DENR: COVID-19 'di naging hadlang sa Manila Bay rehab



December 28, 2020 @ 8:06 PM 9 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Tiniyak ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na hindi nagawang pahinain ng COVID-19 pandemic ang pagnanais ng pamahalaan para isakatuparan ang paglilinis sa Manila Bay matapos ang matagumpay na nakamit ng inter-agencet task force na pinamumunuan ng DENR.

“Our work continues despite the limitations in mobilizing people, especially for our clean-up, monitoring and enforcement activities,” ayon kay DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, na siyang chairs ng Manila Bay Task Force na in-charge para muling ibalik ang ganda ng historic water body.

Batay kay Cimatu, ang solar-powered sewage treatment plant (STP) na pinasinayaan ng task force nitong nakalipas na Hulyo ay kabilang sa makasaysayang tagumpay na nakamit ng rehabilitasyon ng Manila Bay.

Sinabi pa ng kalihim ang STP ay may kakayahang mag-linis ng 500,000 litro ng wastewater per day mula sa tatlong drainage outfalls na kinabibilangan ng Padre Faura, Remedios at Estero de San Antonio Abad.

Nabatid pa kay Cimatu na kabilang sa prioridad areas ng rehabilitasyon ay ang mapababa ang fecal coliform na naitala sa tatlong sites na kinabibilangan ng Baywalk area, Estero de San Antonio Abad at Baseco Beach.

Ayon pa sa DENR sa Baywalk lamang ang fecal coliform na ay bumaba ng 2,211,833 na may most probable number per 100 milliliters (MPN/100ml), kumpara sa 5,666,213 MPN/100ml noong 2019.

Habang ang coliform level naman sa Estero de San Antonio Abad ay bumaba rin mula sa 43,881,048 MPN/100ml sa 19,066,767 MPN/100ml, at sa Baseco Beach mula sa 1,700,000 MPN/100ml noong 2019 ito’y naging 341,225 MPN/100ml.

Kaugnay nito bukod sa priority areas, ang cleanup activities ay regular na isinasagawa sa mga creeks, esteros at river systems. Na may average 60 metric tons ng garbage ang nakukuha araw araw na may kabuuang 24,471.30 metric tons noong 2019.

SA pakikipagtulngan ng Department of Public Works and Highways, ang dredging at desilting operations ay isinasagawa rin sa Baywalk area, na may kabuuang 210,549 cubic meters (m³) ng silts at submerged garbage ang nalinis. (Santi Celario)

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/denr-covid-19-di-naging-hadlang-sa-manila-bay-rehab/>



Manila Bay rehab 'unhampered' by pandemic, DENR chief says

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)
December 29, 2020



Garbage litter Manila Bay near the Manila Yacht Club, even as rehabilitation continues on a part of the coast to give the area a "white-sand" beach look. The project has drawn criticism, with concerns over possible health hazards that the crushed dolomite might cause, and the use of millions in public funds on a beautification project as the country faces a pandemic.

Despite threats posed by the Covid-19 pandemic and community quarantines put in place by the government since March this year, government's efforts to rehabilitate Manila Bay remain unhampered, according to Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy A. Cimatu.

Cimatu, also the designated chairman of the Manila Bay Inter-Agency Task Force (MBIATF), reported that the solar-powered sewage treatment plant (STP) inaugurated in July highlighted the year's accomplishments.

"Our work continues despite the limitations in mobilizing people, especially for our cleanup, monitoring and enforcement activities," Cimatu said in a news statement.

The STP, which is capable of treating 500,000 liters of wastewater per day from three drainage outfalls, namely, Padre Faura, Remedios and Estero de San Antonio Abad, is able to significantly reduce water pollution in the historic bay.

Despite being unsafe for swimming and bathing, the water quality in Manila Bay is improving.

A significant decrease in fecal coliform was recorded in three sites, namely, the Baywalk area, Estero de San Antonio Abad and Baseco Beach. These are priority areas considered by the MBIATF when it launched the Battle for Manila Bay on January 27, 2019.

In the Baywalk, fecal coliform is now down to 2,211,833 most probable number per 100 milliliters (MPN/100ml), compared to 5,666,213 MPN/100ml in 2019.

The coliform level in Estero de San Antonio Abad also went down from 43,881,048 MPN/100ml to 19,066,767 MPN/100ml, and Baseco Beach from 1,700,000 MPN/100ml in 2019 to 341,225 MPN/100ml. According to the DENR, aside from these priority areas, cleanup activities were also regularly conducted in creeks, esteros, and river systems. An average of 60 metric tons of garbage is being collected daily for a total of 24,471.30 metric tons from 2019.

In partnership with the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), dredging and desilting operations were also conducted. In the Baywalk area, a total of 210,549 cubic meters of silt and submerged garbage were dredged.



Meanwhile, a total of 551,768.72 cubic meter of dredged materials were collected from the esteros, creeks and rivers. These include esteros in eight priority river systems: San Juan River, Pasig River, Tullahan-Tinajeros River, Navotas-Malabon River, Parañaque River, Las Piñas-Zapote River, Taguig-Pateros River, and Marikina River.

Cimatu said the task force also introduced geoenvironmental interventions in the bay, such as the installation of trash booms and silt curtains.

“We are optimistic that these measures will really help clean the waters of Manila Bay. However, as I repeatedly stressed, this is an effort not only of the government but of every Filipino. We must work hand in hand,” Cimatu stressed.

In Baseco, a circumferential sewerage interceptor was constructed and communal septic tanks were installed to minimize the direct discharge of untreated wastewater to the bay.

Just recently, Project Kubeta Ko was launched at Parola Compound in Tondo, Manila by the city government of Manila, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Maynilad Water Services Inc., Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, and the DENR.

The project aims to minimize open defecation in Manila Bay by informal settler families (ISFs) in Manila. It adopted a portable, container-based toilet solution to provide dignified temporary sanitation facilities for squatter dwellers prior to relocation.

In September, the DENR also embarked on the beach nourishment project with the use of dolomite to rehabilitate and protect the coastal resources in the area, as well as to prevent coastal flooding, erosion, and pollution. The estimated cost of the entire project is P389 million, around P28 million of which is allotted for the dolomite overlay.

The cleanup and rehabilitation of Manila Bay is guided by the Operational Plan for the Manila Bay Coastal Strategy which covers the period 2017-2022, and by Administrative Order No. 11.

The DENR also embarked on the beach nourishment project with the use of dolomite to rehabilitate and protect coastal resources in the area, as well as to prevent coastal flooding, erosion, and pollution. The estimated cost of the entire project is P389 million, around P28 million of which is allotted for the dolomite overlay.

Image credits: [Nonie Reyes](#)



Manila Bay records significant decrease in fecal coliform

Published December 28, 2020, 11:15 AM
by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

A significant decrease in fecal coliform was recorded in Manila Bay, particularly in the Baywalk area, Estero de San Antonio Abad, and Baseco Beach, according to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)



(MANILA BULLETIN FILE PHOTO)

In the Baywalk, fecal coliform is now down to 2,211,833 most probable number per 100 milliliters (MPN/100ml), compared to 5,666,213 MPN/100ml in 2019, the DENR reported.

The coliform level in Estero de San Antonio Abad also went down from 43,881,048 MPN/100ml to 19,066,767 MPN/100ml, and Baseco Beach from 1,700,000 MPN/100ml in 2019 to 341,225 MPN/100ml, it said.

There is still a long way to go as the standard coliform level for coastal waters which is safe for swimming and other similar recreational activities is at 100 MPN/100ml.

Despite the pandemic, government efforts to clean up Manila Bay still showed sizeable gains, according to DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu, who chairs the Manila Bay Task Force that is in charge of restoring the historic water body.

Cimatu said the solar-powered sewage treatment plant (STP) inaugurated by the task force in July was among its significant accomplishments for the rehabilitation of Manila Bay.

The STP is capable of treating 500,000 liters of wastewater per day from three drainage outfalls—Padre Faura, Remedios and Estero de San Antonio Abad.

Cleanup activities were also regularly conducted in creeks, esteros and river systems. An average 60 metric tons of garbage were collected daily for a total of 24,471.30 metric tons from 2019.

In partnership with the Department of Public Works and Highways, dredging and desilting operations were also conducted.

In the Baywalk area, a total of 210,549 cubic meters (m³) of silts and submerged garbage were dredged.

Meanwhile, a total of 551,768.72 m³ of dredged materials were collected from the esteros, creeks and rivers.



These include esteros in eight priority river systems: San Juan River, Pasig River, Tullahan-Tinajeros River, Navotas-Malabon River, Parañaque River, Las Piñas-Zapote River, Taguig-Pateros River, and Marikina River.

Cimatu said the task force also introduced geo-engineering interventions in the bay, such as the installation of trash booms and silt curtains.

“We are optimistic that these measures will really help clean the waters of Manila Bay,” Cimatu said but noted that “this is an effort not only of the government but of every Filipino.”

“We must work hand in hand.”

In Baseco, a circumferential sewerage interceptor was constructed and communal septic tanks were installed to minimize the direct discharge of untreated wastewater to the bay.

In December, Project Kubeta Ko was launched at Parola Compound in Tondo, Manila by the city government of Manila, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, Maynilad Water Services, Inc., Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System, and the DENR.

The project aims to minimize open defecation in Manila Bay by informal settler families (ISFs) in Manila. It adopted a portable, container-based toilet solution to provide dignified temporary sanitation facilities for ISFs prior to relocation.

In September, the DENR also embarked on the beach nourishment project with the use of dolomite to rehabilitate and protect the coastal resources in the area, as well as to prevent coastal flooding, erosion, and pollution.

The estimated cost of the entire project is P389 million, around P28 million of which is allotted for the dolomite overlay.

The cleanup and rehabilitation of Manila Bay is guided by the Operational Plan for the Manila Bay Coastal Strategy which covers the period 2017-2022, and by Administrative Order No. 16 issued by President Rodrigo Duterte in 2019.



Chairman ng Baseco Gusto ipadala sa Parola Tondo ni Sec. Roy Cimatu / Manila Update Today

885 views • Dec 28, 2020

LIKE DISLIKE SHARE SAVE ...

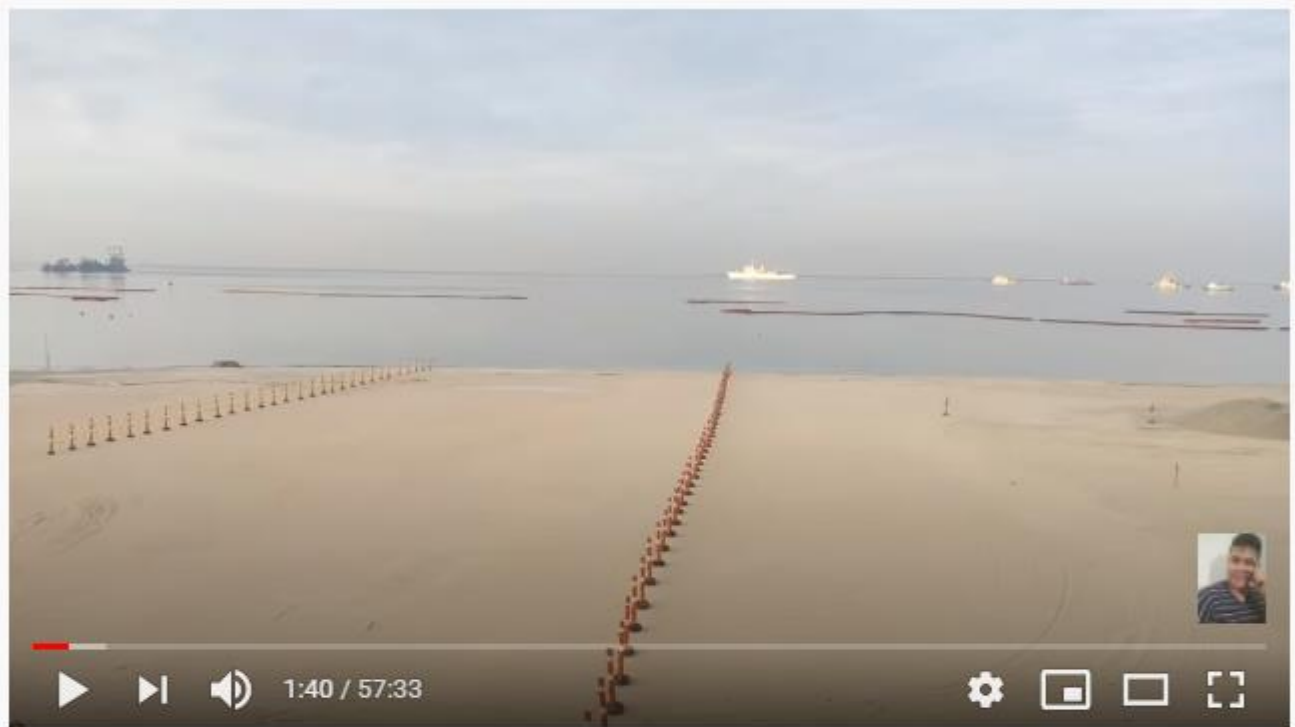


SAMARITANO
48.2K subscribers

SUBSCRIBE

manila update today,
manila update today 2020,
manila bay update today,

SHOW MORE



MANILA BAYWALK

LIVE NOW: MANILA BAY MATAPOS ANG LPA

5,065 views • Streamed live 23 hours ago

212

5

SHARE

SAVE



KHOPARS VLOG
93.8K subscribers

JOIN

SUBSCRIBE



MANILA BAYWALK

MANILA BAY IBAABANGAN TALAGA ANG MGA ISDA! Miz July

460 views • Streamed live 36 minutes ago

46

0

SHARE

SAVE



Miz July

46.1K subscribers

SUBSCRIBE

Source:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BWjvCLLFBY8&feature=youtu.be&ab_channel=MizJuly



BORACAY FOREST, WETLAND ENCROACHERS CHARGED

By **Panay News** -Monday, December 28, 2020



SPIC AND SPAN BORACAY. In April 2018, the government began Boracay Island's six-month closure so rehabilitation work could start without much interference. It reopened Boracay in October that year, drawing the public's praise for rehabilitation work done so far.

BORACAY – The anti-encroachment crackdown as part of this island resort's rehabilitation has resulted to the recovery of illegally occupied forestland, easements, and wetlands, said Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) secretary Roy Cimatu.

"The rule of law is paramount and law enforcement is crucial and non-negotiable," he said in a virtual presser.

The operations against nine establishments illegally occupying protected forestland in Boracay resulted in the filing of cases against the encroachers for violating Presidential Decree 705 (Revised Forestry Code of the Philippines) and Presidential Decree 1067 (The Water Code of the Philippines).

About 73 percent of 339 structures in Boracay complied with easement regulations, said Cimatu.

"Of the nine wetlands in Boracay, we have so far recovered five. These are wetland numbers 2, 3, 4, 6, and 8," he said.

Recovering and restoring the wetlands are part of activities in addressing Boracay's environmental degradation, said Cimatu.

"Wetlands are important to the island because these help reduce soil erosion and store water to minimize impacts of flooding," he explained.

In April 2018, the government began Boracay Island's six-month closure so rehabilitation work could start without much interference.

The government re-opened Boracay in October that year, drawing the public's praise for rehabilitation work done there so far.



According to DENR, the government targets to finish Boracay Island's rehabilitation by May 2021.

Rehabilitation remains on track despite Boracay's temporary closure again as a precaution against coronavirus disease 2019, said Cimatu./**PN**



DENR plants 35.6-M seedlings, covers 95 percent of 2020 target

Published December 28, 2020, 2:49 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has planted 35.6 million seedlings covering around 45,000 hectares of denuded and open forestland across the country, completing 95 percent of its target as early as October this year.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources
(MANILA BULLETIN)

This is a 95-percent accomplishment of its 2020 target of 47,166 hectares under the Enhanced National Greening Program (ENGP), the government's flagship reforestation initiative.

"We are on track to reach or even exceed the 100-percent mark as we are now gradually increasing targets for plantation establishments," DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu said.

"We are also doubling our efforts in protection and maintenance to increase the survival rates in plantation sites established in prior years," he said.

From 2017 to 2019, protection and maintenance efforts have been undertaken in some 369,371 ENGP plantations.

These were accomplished with the involvement of some 5,876 peoples' organizations (POs) as partners.

In 2020, 807 more POs were enlisted as partners for the ENGP bringing to 6,683 the POs engaged by the DENR from 2017 to 2020. In 2019, only 19,617 hectares were targeted for planting or only 14 percent of the 2018 target of 136,466.

In total, around 2 million hectares have been planted with 1.7 billion seedlings since 2011 when the ENGP was launched.

The program has also generated at least five million jobs, benefitting some 700,000 upland dwelling individuals hired in seedling production, site preparation of planting sites, and maintenance and plantation protection activities.

From 2019 to June 2020, around 62,366 individuals have benefited from the 345,551 jobs created during the period.

Another 2,740 were employed as forest extension workers tasked primarily to give technical assistance to all NGP partners and beneficiaries on proper tree plantation management.



Forest extension workers also assist POs in sourcing affordable farming tools and post-harvest facilities, and in identifying opportunities to market their produce.

In 2015, Malacañang issued Executive Order 193 extending the NGP's implementation period from 2016 to 2028 to cover the country's estimated 7.1 million hectares of remaining unproductive, denuded, and degraded forestland.

In its proposed 2021 budget, the ENGP targets to plant in 82,349 hectares and to produce 72.9 million seedlings.



Toledo City gov't relocates families living near mining pit's collapsed area



STILL SEARCHING. Emergency responders led by the Philippine Coast Guard conduct on Monday, Dec. 28, 2020, search and retrieval operations in the collapsed portion of Carmen Pit, an open mining pit of Carmen Copper Corp., to retrieve the six miners who remain missing after a landslide hit the pit on Dec. 21. / TOLEDO CITY PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

December 29, 2020

THE Toledo City Government in southwestern Cebu has evacuated 400 families, composed of 2,000 individuals, living near the collapsed portion of an open mining pit owned by Carmen Copper Corp.

John Roseller Layan, Toledo City public information officer, said the evacuation of the families living in Barangay Biga began on Sunday, Dec. 27, 2020.

Layan said the residents living within the danger zone were transferred to a multipurpose court in Biga's sitio of Hag-it, which has been declared safe for habitation.

A landslide occurred in the afternoon of Dec. 21, killing miners Junil Lagola, Ernesto Caspe, Juan Tapang and Dionisio Labang.

Six miners remain missing, and the search for them continues.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) 7 has suspended Carmen Copper's mining operations.

Two camps

As the multipurpose court cannot accommodate all the evacuees at the same time, the Toledo City Government organized two camps in the same area so the minimum health and safety protocols are met, including the observance of social distancing.

Mayor Marjorie Perales also plans to acquire additional tents for the evacuees, Layan said.

It took four days before the city government could initiate the evacuation as Perales wanted to ensure that all logistics at the transfer site were complete.

The mayor had also sought additional logistics from the Department of Social Welfare and Development 7 before she pushed for the evacuation, Layan said.

Meeting resistance

Layan said one challenge they had encountered in evacuating the residents was that some resisted the efforts of the City to relocate them to safer ground.



“Even though we cannot give them the similar convenience of staying in their houses, we have to make them understand that this is for their own safety,” Layan said in Cebuano.

Search

In a related development, Layan said search and retrieval efforts at the collapsed Carmen Pit continue. Emergency responders have started using sonar devices and dogs trained in rescue operations to help in finding the missing miners.

Despite the bad weather caused by two low pressure areas that entered the Philippine Area of Responsibility, the search and retrieval operations for the six missing persons continued.

As of 7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 28, Layan said the emergency responders had started excavating a part of the collapsed site where K9 dogs had been able to sniff a scent of a decomposing body.

The Coast Guard personnel and other rescuers have been also working overtime to find the missing persons.

“Recent indications and developments include that there was already a stench in the area. That’s why K9 units have been deployed onsite,” Layan said.

Emergency rescuers are in the process of retrieving the bodies of Jose Carpentero, Jonwel Herediano, Simeon Laconas, John Paul Resuelo, Renante Sepada and Alfred Tautho.

Layan said they are monitoring the weather as well since the safety of the rescuers is a must.

“We are hoping that the weather will not get worse. But we can assure the public that we will not also gamble the lives of our rescuers,” he said.

Layan said rescuers have continued the operations without stopping since Christmas Day. They are also aided by the sonar devices from Carmen Copper Corp. to detect any movement underground.

“Even though we are already in search and retrieval, our mayor is still hoping that some survived because it’s not easy to lose a loved one, especially since the New Year is just a few days away,” Layan said. **(JOB, ANV / JKV)**



6 minero pinaghahanap pa rin ng PCG



December 28, 2020 @ 7:42 PM 10 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Nagpapatuloy ang search and retrieval operation ng Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) sa anim pang nawawalang minero sa Toledo Cebu City.

Ayon sa PCG, gamit sa operasyon ang K9 SAR dogs bukod pa sa sonar equipment para saliksikin ang hukay sa paanan ng lawa para sa anumang senyales ng mga nawawalang minero.

Kaugnay sa insidente, tumulong na rin ang PCG sa lokal na pamahalaan ng Toledo na ilikas ang mga residente na binubuo ng 400 pamilya na nakatira malapit sa gumuhong bahagi ng 'open-mining pit' ng Carmen Copper Corporation (CCC) sa Barangay Biga.

Ang mga residente na malapit sa danger zone ay dinala sa Sitio Hapit.

Nabatid na nakitaan ng bitak malapit sa lugar ng landslide kaya agad na isinagawa ang paglilikas sa mga residente upang maiwasan ang anumang hindi magandang pangyayari.

Matatandaan na nitong December 21, apat na minero ang nasawi habang anim na iba pa ang patuloy na pinaghahanap matapos gumuho ang bahagi ng Carmet Pit na pag-aari at inooperate ng CCC.(Jocelyn Tabangcura-Domenden)

Mining, gold processing firm assist 2,000 Albay islanders

posted December 28, 2020 at 10:40 pm

by [Manila Standard](#)

Working in tandem, a mining and a gold processing firm recently capped their P21.8 million Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Social Development and Management Program (SDMP) activities for the year with a special treat for families affected by Typhoons “Rolly” and “Ulysses.”

Filiminera Resources Corp. (Filiminera) and PhilGold Processing and Refining Corp. (PhilGold) came to the aid of close to 2,000 residents (or around 400 families) in San Pablo Baracay, Albay, especially for 47 families whose homes were completely damaged by the storms.



RELIEF ARRIVAL. Filiminera and PhilGold crew members unload relief goods for thousands of residents in Baracay, Albay, as residents from a nearby island fill the boat that brought them to Filiminera’s gift-giving operations.



More than one fourth of these families belong to the indigenous people in the island.

Just before the close of year 2020, Filiminera and PhilGold workers distributed food packs for a media noche meal, relief goods, and one bag of high-quality rice and kitchen ware worth close to a million pesos as its first phase of donations.

The second phase of donations are set to be released to schools in San Pablo and another community, in partnership with Global Medic.

Since the start of this year, Filiminera and PhilGold have donated financial assistance to communities, frontliners, and government agencies, drawn from their CSR and SDMP funds.

This is aside from their P5.2 million donation that helped rebuild damaged houses and distribute relief goods following the 6.6-magnitude earthquake in Masbate.

The two firms, which operate the Masbate Gold Project in Aroroy, Masbate, have helped develop the town.



Filminera holds the mining tenements, surface rights and the mineral production sharing agreement (MPSA), while PhilGold holds a mineral processing permit, and owns as well as operates the processing plant.

The former 4th class town has been reclassified as a first-class municipality since the two firms commenced mining development in 2007.



Customs foils P62-M Agarwood export at Davao port

Published December 28, 2020, 3:52 PM

by [Bethena Kae Unite](#)

Another illegal exportation of Agarwood worth P62-million was prevented at the Port of Davao, the Bureau of Customs said Monday.



(Photo via BOC)

Six boxes containing Agarwood, which is listed as one of the most expensive natural raw materials in the world, were found in the shipment that was not covered with proper documents for export.

According to the Customs bureau, the shipment was initially declared to contain “woodcraft” bound for Vietnam via the Port of NAIA.

However, after x-ray scanning and physical inspection on December 24, the shipment was found to contain 73 kilograms of Agarwood chips.

Customs said it was intended for illegal exportation without the necessary permits from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

This type of wood is included in the National List of Threatened Philippine Plants under the DENR Administrative Order No. 2007-01.

The seized shipment will be subjected to seizure and forfeiture proceedings for violation of Section 117 (Regulated Shipments), Section 1400 (Misdeclaration) and Section 1113 (Property Subject to Seizure and Forfeiture), all of Republic Act No. 10863 or the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act in relation to Section 27 (i) [Illegal Transport] of Republic Act No. 9147 (Wild Life Act).

It will also be turned over to the DENR.

Last December 15, a shipment of Agarwood worth P1.72 million was also intercepted at the Port of Davao. It was also intended for export to Vietnam and was seized due to misdeclaration and absence of permit.

Port of Davao District Collector Erastus Sandino Austria vowed to continue coordinating with the Port of NAIA “to ensure that our borders are efficiently protected from potential illegal exports of endangered trees.”

Prior to the December 15 incident, about 28 kilos outbound package of Agarwood worth P2.4 million was also prevented to be shipped last December 2 at the Port of NAIA.

Source: <https://mb.com.ph/2020/12/28/customs-foils-p62-m-agarwood-export-at-davao-port/>



Bagong uri ng ahas natagpuan sa Visayas



December 28, 2020 @ 10:45 AM 19 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Natuklasan ang bagong uri ng ahas na umano’y laganap sa Pilipinas ng isang grupo ng eksperto.

Base sa isang pag-aaral nina Jeffrey Weinell, Daniel Paluh, Cameon Siler at Rafe Brown ng University of Kansas, natuklasan ang “Waray Dwarf Burrowing Snake” sa Samar at Leyte islands.

Anila, ang naturang ahas ay nabibilang sa bagong ‘genus Levitonius’ o Levitonius mirus species na mayroong maraming skeletal characteristics na katulad ng Myersophis at Oxyrhabdium.

Naiiba lamang ito sa laki kung saan maaaring humaba ito hanggang 172 millimeters kaya’t ito na ang pinakamaliit na uri ng Elapoidea family.

Dahil sa maliit ito, kumakain lamang ito ng mga earthworm.

“Molecular data support Levitonius, new genus, to be most closely related to Myersophis and Oxyrhabdium, and it shares multiple skeletal characteristics with these genera; Levitonius, new genus, differs from all of these taxa in body size, scalation, and other characters,” ayon sa pag-aaral na inilathala nitong Disyembre 23.

“Skeletal and other phenotypic data suggest that Levitonius, new genus, is fossorial and likely has a diet that is specialized on earthworms. Levitonius mirus, new genus, and species has a maximum total length of 172 mm and is at present the smallest known species in Elapoidea,” base sa pananaliksik.

Anila, ang pagkakatuklas ng Waray Dwarf Burrowing Snake ay kinakailangan pa ng karagdagang pag-aaral sa biodiversity ng Samar at Leyte.

“Our results highlight the need for future work on Samar and Leyte Islands, which have received relatively little attention from systematists, in part because of a prevailing biogeographic paradigm that predicted (not necessarily correctly) that these islands would simply have a nested faunal subset of the Mindanao faunal region land vertebrates,” saad ng grupo.

“The discovery of a strikingly distinct and phylogenetically divergent snake lineage on these landmasses joins numerous related studies calling for a wholesale reconsideration of the Pleistocene Aggregate Island Complex model (the PAIC paradigm of diversification) biogeographic framework,” dagdag pa nila.

Sa isang Twitter post, ibinahagi ng grupo ang larawan ng bagong tuklas na ahas. **RNT/ELM**

Source: <https://www.remate.ph/bagong-uri-ng-ahas-natagpuan-sa-visayas/>



MWSS advances Kaliwa Dam with IPs agreement

Published December 28, 2020, 5:00 AM

by [Madelaine B. Miraflor](#)

Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) said it has “advanced” to the next step of the Certification Precondition (CP) process for the Free Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) for the P12-billion Kaliwa Dam.

This was after the conduct of memorandum of agreement (MOA) negotiations with the Indigenous Peoples (IPs) of Quezon Province, which was conducted from October 13 to 15, 2020, and with the IPs of Rizal Province, which was conducted from November 3 to 5, 2020.



(MWSS / MANILA BULLETIN)

The negotiations were done through the facilitation by the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP).

During the negotiation, MWSS said authorized elders and tribal leaders, including their alternates, outlined the cooperation, collaboration, and obligations by the MWSS and the parties involved in implementing the Kaliwa Dam project in respect to the benefits, and livelihood projects of the indigenous peoples.

The Kaliwa Dam project, a joint venture of MWSS and China Energy Engineering Corporation (CEEC), involves the construction of a massive dam in Quezon and Rizal province that will have a capacity to treat as much as 600 million liters of water per day (mld).

The project will be constructed by CEEC through the Philippine government’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) deal with China.

Last year, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) issued the project its Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) but with many conditions.

Among the ECC conditions is the issuance of CP after the FPIC was obtained.

CP is an NCIP certification that declares that a project does not overlap with any ancestral domain area of any indigenous cultural community or indigenous peoples. That, or if the project already obtained an FPIC.

FPIC, on the other hand, is the consensus of all members of the IP communities in a particular project within their ancestral lands.

This is issued in accordance with IP’s respective customary laws and practices that is supposedly free from any external manipulation, interference, and coercion and obtained after fully disclosing the intent and scope of the project in a language and process understandable to the community.

The FPIC application process for Kaliwa Dam project started in 2018 followed by public hearings and community assemblies.



“The MWSS worked tirelessly to prepare and guide the IPs in making choices that include, but go beyond, choosing between saying yes or no to the project but also collectively choose the possible negotiated options that will be protective of their health, culture, religion, way of life,” MWSS said.

The agency said the negotiations for the agreement would have started right after the official consensus and decision-making process documentation by the NCIP, but the stay at home and travel restrictions due to the pandemic meant that physical meetings, which is inherent in community formal exchange of views were no longer possible.

“In this respect, the Kaliwa Dam Project team ensured that information is accessible so that the nature of the negotiation will be oriented towards mutually acceptable measures to which the IPs will have weighed their decisions on matters like compensation, land access, agreement making, and community development initiatives,” MWSS further said.

The last step to the FPIC process is the validation and signing of the MOA and the action from the NCIP.

In November, Center for Energy, Ecology, and Development (CEED) Executive Director Gerry Arances raised environmental concerns against the Kaliwa Dam, which is being pushed for by the Duterte Administration as the top solution to Metro Manila’s water woes.

According to him, the project will only “destroy ecosystems [especially along Sierra Madre] while displacing local communities”.

“The impacts Typhoon Ulysses left in its wake is catastrophic, yet it would have been worse if not for the protective barrier provided by the Sierra Madre which slightly weakened it,” Arances said.

“The onslaught of successive typhoons we experienced recently is a stark reminder of the dire state of our climate, and this must be noted above all in considering any project proposal,” he added.

Kaliwa Dam is considered as the government’s long-term solution to the water woes in Metro Manila, which has long been dependent on the 53-year old Angat Dam.

Located in Bulacan, Angat Dam supplies 97 percent of Metro Manila’s water needs.



2020 taught us to treat nature better

By Dr. Theresa Mundita S. Lim- ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity Published on December 28, 2020

LAGUNA, Dec. 28 -- As 2020 draws to a close, I would like to express my sincere and heartfelt gratitude to all those, who in one way or another, supported the work of the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) and served as our partners and allies for the conservation of biodiversity in the Region. Truly, this year has been extraordinary for all of us. While 2020 was initially called a "super year for biodiversity" because of the international gatherings and landmark agreements for biodiversity slated to usher in the coming of the new decade, the COVID-19 pandemic has altered not just our hard-set schedules, but our way of living. The uncertainties and doubts that the health crisis brought cast a pall over our otherwise festive and sanguine mood.

The global pandemic had deep impacts on the health and socioeconomic well-being of the peoples in the ASEAN, to which governments have been swiftly addressing. The economic contraction in the ASEAN at a rate unprecedented in the past 22 years posed challenges to the region's shared sustainable development goals. The physical distancing measures and mobility restrictions dramatically changed landscapes, particularly in industries, such as tourism. Most of the ASEAN Heritage Parks, the region's cream of the crop of protected areas, are still recovering from tourism losses incurred as a result of the slump in the number of tourist arrivals. Conservation activities, including patrol and law enforcement, which depend on ecotourism revenues were likewise affected. The region was also beset by severe climate-related hazards in the last quarter of the year, leaving scores dead and millions worth of properties destroyed.

The ongoing pandemic and calamities brought by climate change are unveiling before our eyes the hard truth: what harms the environment harms us. This health crisis, climate change, and nature loss, are all interconnected.

Against these pressing issues and the larger concerns, the work of the ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity in the Region becomes even more crucial and urgent.

In the course of the year, the ASEAN Member States and the ACB have carried on and hurdled challenges posed by the pandemic to forge unity and renew commitments.

Digital events

The COVID-19 may have hampered most of our planned activities, but the ACB took the opportunity to maximise online platforms to raise awareness on the interlinkages of biodiversity and outbreaks of infectious diseases.

We celebrated the 15th founding anniversary of the ACB with the launch of the fifth staging of the Zooming in on Biodiversity, an ASEAN-wide photo competition that garnered the participation of amateur and professional photographers in the 10 ASEAN Member States.

Under the theme Healing with Biodiversity: Building a Better Normal, the captivating photos from the contest illustrate powerful messages on the importance of keeping our biodiversity healthy and intact amid the pandemic.

Throughout this year, the ACB has organised at least 15 webinars and virtual meetings in partnership with different organisations and networks such as the World Health Organization, World Organisation for Animal Health, Global Ocean Alliance, and the High Ambition Coalition, and key government agencies in ASEAN.



With the postponement of the Third ASEAN Conference of Biodiversity or ACB 2020, the ACB and the Ministry of Energy and Natural Resources or KeTSA Malaysia launched four virtual sessions that were held monthly from September to December in the run-up to the 15th meeting of the Conference of Parties to the CBD next year. The virtual sessions facilitated discussions that aimed to amplify the voice of ASEAN in the global negotiations for this ambitious strategy for biodiversity conservation, which covered biodiversity mainstreaming, transformative change, and business and biodiversity.

During one of the sessions, it was emphasised that in the face of pressing global challenges such as the ongoing health crisis, the task of conserving biodiversity is a responsibility of the whole of society and not just the government alone. There is an urgent need to scale up existing tools and increase opportunities in integrating biodiversity into various development processes, apart from the prohibition of incentives that harm the environment.

As part of our thrust to mainstream biodiversity, the ACB has been ramping up efforts to lay the groundwork so that biodiversity considerations are factored into the plans, strategies, and actions of all key sectors. This preconditions the rest of what we do. Throughout the year, the ASEAN Member States, the ASEAN Secretariat, and the ACB conducted a series of discussions highlighting the relationship of biodiversity with key government agencies under strategic thematic sectors such as climate change, infrastructure, health, agriculture, and business, to name a few.

Among these key events was a four-part interactive webinar series highlighting the significant role of the youth. The series was co-organised by the ACB with the ASEAN Secretariat, the ASEAN Foundation, and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to explore the ways by which the Region's 213 million-strong youth can be empowered further to achieve a cohesive and responsive ASEAN.

Support for the ASEAN Heritage Parks

The ASEAN Member States, together with the ACB, continue to expand the ASEAN Heritage Parks (AHP) Programme and work on the development of the new AHP Regional Action Plan that will harmonise objectives and actions of all AHPs. Since 2018, nine protected areas have been designated as AHPs, closing in at 49 at the end of the year. A national park in Thailand has been nominated and awaiting the approval of the ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on the Environment. Other ASEAN Member States are finalising the requirements for new nominations. By next year, we are expecting the declaration of at least four new AHPs.

We continue to provide maximum support to protected areas personnel who are frontline workers themselves. Under the Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in ASEAN project, the ACB, in collaboration with the European Union, supported site level activities in the ASEAN Heritage Parks and other protected areas of Lao PDR, Malaysia, Philippines, and Thailand, helping improve law enforcement activities amid the limitations posed by the pandemic. Rangers and protected area personnel were provided anti-poacher camera traps and other Global Positioning System or GPS-equipped devices that detect poachers and assist in the data management, analysis, mapping, monitoring and evaluation, and reporting. We have also provided our assistance to the protected area management planning in Lao PDR and Thailand, which are essential in the effective management of sites and the region's wildlife conservation efforts.



Site level implementation of projects under the Small Grants Programme, in partnership with the German Development Bank or KfW, was likewise affected by the pandemic. Grantees had to innovate and adapt to changes. One notable grant project is the development of guidelines for project implementation during COVID-19, a microgrant awarded in Indonesia. The guidelines, while it is still at finalisation stage, is seen as an important contribution of the programme that may be applied to the other grant projects in Myanmar and Viet Nam, and other on-the-ground projects, as well.

I would also like to commend the efforts of civil society groups that tapped community guardians in Alaungdaw Kathapa and Natmataung National Park in Myanmar to help in the monitoring and law enforcement in the areas.

Science-policy interface

As the ACB promotes the interface between science and policy, including knowledge-driven policymaking, we continue to develop and improve our Clearing-House Mechanism and develop the ASEAN Biodiversity Dashboard.

The ACB has partnered with NatureServe to create the dashboard, which aims to provide the Region access to reliable and up-to-date biodiversity information. This, along with the upcoming release of the third edition of the ASEAN Biodiversity Outlook (ABO 3), a comprehensive report on the state of biodiversity and key strategic policy recommendations in the Region, forms part of our initiative to boost sharing and exchange of biodiversity information and knowledge among ASEAN Member States.

2021 Outlook

While the rollout of the COVID-19 vaccines may speed up recovery and jumpstart economies, immunisation is just part of the solutions for us to sail through this "era of pandemics." According to the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services, the emergence of pandemics would be averted if human activities resulting in biodiversity loss are significantly reduced.

The challenges of 2020 taught us the urgency of looking at the COVID-19 pandemic not as a single event but part of bigger challenges that we are facing. These require medium- and long-term actions, of which biodiversity is a key part.

Given the current situation, we are seeing the perseverance of the ASEAN Member States and development partners alike in sustaining the projects on site and adapting to ever-changing contexts. In responding to the call of the times, the region has put in place the ASEAN Comprehensive Recovery Framework, which underscores the importance of continued regional cooperation and integration. The ACB continues to be guided by the ASEAN leaders in our facilitative work to elevate the importance of biodiversity in building back better.

The new year offers us many opportunities to reexamine and repair our relationship with nature. For one, it is anticipated that the 15th meeting of the Conference of Parties to the CBD will adopt the post-2020 global biodiversity framework, which sets new goals and targets for biodiversity conservation. It is our hope that this landmark deal will serve the best interests of the ASEAN region and its peoples and create new pathways for humanity to live in harmony with nature.

I wish you a promising and bountiful New Year!

Source: <https://pia.gov.ph/press-releases/releases/1062577>



An aerial view shows destroyed and flooded houses after super Typhoon Goni hit the town of Malinao, Albay province, south of Manila on November 1, 2020.

AFP/Charism Sayat

Philippines' scaled-down climate commitment called 'underwhelming, shameful'

[Gaea Katreena Cabico](#) (Philstar.com) - December 28, 2020 - 9:48am

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines is proposing to lower its commitment in cutting carbon emissions by 2040, a move criticized by climate and environmental groups as “underwhelming” and “inadequate.”

A draft text of the country’s first Nationally Determined Contributions, provided by Aksyon Klima over the weekend, states that the Philippines aims to reduce greenhouse gas (GHG) emission by 30% by 2040, with at least 2% of these reductions to be done unconditionally.

An NDC is how governments plan to reduce carbon emissions and adapt to the impacts of climate change. Parties to the Paris Agreement are requested to submit the NDCs by 2020 and every five years thereafter.

“The Philippines commits to a projected GHG emission reduction and avoidance of 30% by 2040 from its business-as-usual scenario for the agriculture, waste, industry, transport, forestry and energy sectors,” read the draft text prepared by the Climate Change Commission.

The pledge, expected to be submitted to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change by yearend, includes a projected net GHG emission reduction of 185.5 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent through measures implemented unconditionally with domestic resources.

Lower than 2015 commitment

The target, presented to government agencies and civil society groups last December 23, was lower than the Intended NDC in 2015 of cutting carbon emission by 70% by 2030. The initial emission reduction target was conditional on assistance from the international community.

The draft NDC also sets an aspirational target of at least 15,000 megawatts of additional renewable energy capacity by 2030. At least 10,000 megawatts of additional renewable energy capacity would be added by 2030.

CCC Vice Chairperson Emmanuel De Guzman said the NDC “advances our national interest.”

“It supports the country’s national development objectives and priorities of sustainable industrial development, poverty eradication, energy security, social and climate justice, and transformation of our social economic sector into a climate resilient and low carbon economy,” De Guzman said during the December 23 consultation.

‘Embarrassing’ climate commitments

The Philippines is identified as among the most vulnerable countries to the catastrophic impacts on climate change.



For it to lower its climate pledge from a previous 70% conditional commitment in its Intended NDC five years ago “will embarrass the country before the international community,” seven organizations said in a joint statement over the weekend.

These include Aksyon Klima Pilipinas, Youth Strike for Climate Philippines, Green Thumb Coalition, Alyansa Tigil Mina, Philippine Movement for Climate Justice, Green Convergence for Safe Food, Healthy Environment and Sustainable Economy and Global Catholic Climate Movement Pilipinas.

"We express our extreme concern, disappointment and collective scorn with the latest draft NDC text as it does not indicate sufficiently high ambition for the Philippines' climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies and undermines the 'whole-of-government-and-society' approach that the Philippine government itself has been implementing in pursuit of sustainable development," the groups said.

Gerry Arances, executive director of the Center for Energy, Ecology and Development, said the emission reduction target was a “let down” from the 70% goal and “simply forgoes the 1.5°C Paris goal which the Philippines and nations similarly vulnerable to climate impacts painstakingly negotiated for.”

"The future of Filipinos will be inevitably impacted by climate mitigation and adaptation efforts and demands in the NDC," he added.

Paris Accord

Under the 2015 Paris Climate Agreement, global warming must be limited well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels while pursuing efforts for a tougher ceiling of 1.5°C.

The organizations also said the peaking year for the country's GHG emissions must be set way before 2030. Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, UN's climate science advisory panel, said carbon dioxide pouring into the atmosphere must be halved by 2030 and reach “net zero” by mid-century if the goal of 1.5°C is to be met.

"The draft NDC text falls short by setting 2030 as the peaking year and only as an aspirational target, with no indication that an ambitious strategy toward attaining this goal will be pursued," they said.

De Guzman said that enhancement on the NDC would be pursued in the coming years to reflect increasing ambitions and include specific policies and measures for climate change adaptation and mitigation.

“In the next iteration of the first NDC, the 'enhanced' version, or any other version, we expect that more details on climate-related investments, promoting sustainable finance, and divestment from environmentally-destructive ventures will be included and shown to the Filipino public,” the organizations said.

In March 2017, President Rodrigo Duterte signed the historic Paris Accord after previously threatening that he would not honor the pact believing it would hurt the country's effort to industrialize.

The Senate unanimously voted to ratify the agreement two weeks later.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/12/28/2066721/philippines-scaled-down-climate-commitment-called-underwhelming-shameful>



CCC urges public to ditch plastic products

Published December 28, 2020, 5:40 PM

by [Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz](#)

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) appealed to the public to become part of the climate crisis solution by supporting locally-made and sustainable products over plastics.

This will help reduce solid waste and the accumulation of unnecessary plastic packaging and excessive purchase of plastic products by buying only those made of sustainable materials, including the ones created by our indigenous peoples (IP) and local communities, the CCC pointed out.

It also stressed that purchasing these products not only boosts the local economy but also increase appreciation of our culture, heritage, and identity which have been passed down through generations.

Moreover, buying IP products ensures quality and promotes sustainability as most of these are made by hand with the absence of harmful chemicals that may pollute our lands and waters, if inappropriately disposed, the CCC said.

Citing the United Nations Environment Programme report, CCC said 8.3 billion metric tons of plastics have been produced over the decades, and 6.3 billion metric tons has become plastic wastes.

Furthermore, only nine percent of this has been recycled, while about 12 percent has been incinerated, while the remaining 79 percent are accumulating in landfills, dumps, or the natural environment, particularly the oceans.

If the current trend continues, oceans are projected to carry more trash than fish by 2050, the CCC noted.

It also cited a study by the Center for International Environmental Law stating that the current greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions from plastic lifecycle threaten the ability of the global community to keep global temperature rise below 1.5°C.

By 2050, the GHG emissions from plastic could reach over 56 gigatons –

10 to 13 percent of the entire remaining carbon budget, it added.

The CCC emphasized that purchasing the products of IPs contribute to strengthening their resilience to future shocks, and preserve their cultural wealth and indigenous knowledge, systems, and practices that Filipinos can be proud of.



OBO: No. of structures obstructing waterways up

December 29, 2020

THE Office of the Building Official (OBO) has found more structures in Cebu City that obstruct waterways.

As of Monday, Dec. 28, 2020, it identified 281 violators of the three-meter easement along creeks and rivers, up from 207 structures it identified last month, said OBO head Florante Catalan.

On top of that, Catalan said Barangays Hipodromo and Sambag 2 submitted a list of potential violators in their respective barangays.

Barangay Hipodromo found six structures obstructing the waterway, while Barangay Sambag 2 found 165 structures.

Catalan said they've forwarded the list to the task force led by the Department of Engineering and Public Works to deal with the matter.

He said owners of the structures will be informed about their violation and will be given time to remove the obstructions.

If they refuse to heed the order, the City will be forced to demolish their structures, he said.

Catalan said they had to suspend the inspection of establishments and residential structures near or along waterways due to the lack of manpower and poor weather condition.

Catalan said some members of the technical team had also been assigned to help distribute financial assistance to senior citizens.

"Because of intermittent weather condition, our office is constrained to cancel creek inspection at this time," he said.

Catalan hopes to resume inspection in the first week of January 2021. **(JIL)**



NCR, 9 pang lugar, tuloy sa GCQ hanggang katapusan ng Enero 2021

By [James Relativo](#) (Philstar.com) - December 28, 2020 - 11:01pm



Litrato ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte habang nakikipagpulong sa mga miyembro ng Inter-Agency Task Force on the Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID), ika-28 ng Disyembre, 2020
Presidential Photos/King Rodriguez

MANILA, Philippines — Hindi pa rin matatapos hanggang sa unang buwan ng 2021 ang community quarantine kontra-coronavirus disease (COVID-19) sa Pilipinas, bagay na unang ibinaba ng gobyerno noong Marso ngayong taon.

Ito ang kinumpirma ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte matapos ang kanyang [talumpati](#) kasama ang Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) ngayong Lunes ng gabi.

"The general community quarantine (GCQ), hanggang ngayon, is [National Capital Region], Isabela, Santiago City, Batangas, Iloilo (City), Tacloban City, Lanao del Sur, Iligan City, Davao City [and] Davao del Norte," saad ng presidente.

"[The most lenient] modified general community quarantine (MGCQ) [is declared] for the rest of the country."

Ipatutupad ang nasabing mga restriction sa paglabas-labas, ekonomiya at aktibidad sa buong Pilipinas simula ika-1 hanggang ika-31 ng Enero para sa taong 2021.

Sa kabila nito, maaari pa naman daw magbago ang mga naturang paghihigpit sa bansa depende sa apela ng mga lokal na pamahalaan bilang tugon sa COVID-19 situation.

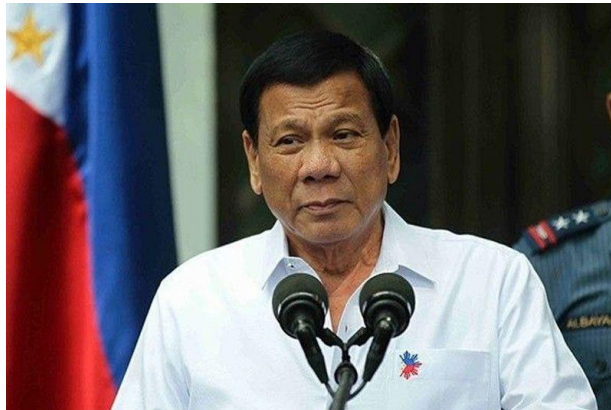
Matatandaang unang ibinaba ang pinakamahigpit na enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) para sa Metro Manila noong Marso 2020, bagay na naglagay sa punong rehiyon sa lockdown na gumapang hanggang sa iba pang bahagi ng bansa.



Agosto naman nang tuluyang luwagan sa GCQ ang Kamaynilaan, bagay na kumakatawan sa halos 1/3 ng gross domestic product ng Pilipinas.

Kanina lang nang sabihin ng Department of Health (DOH) na [umabot na sa 470,650 ang tinatamaa ng COVID-19 sa Pilipinas](#). Sa bilang na 'yan, pumalo na sa 89,124 ang binabawian ng buhay.

Nangyayari ito ilang araw [matapos magbaba ng travel ban ang Pilipinas sa bansang United Kingdom \(UK\)](#) magmula pa noong ika-24 ng Enero dahil na rin sa panibagong stran ng COVID-19, na sinasabing mas nakahahawa kaysa sa karaniwan.



President Duterte has approved an extension of the ban on flights from the United Kingdom where the new virus variant was first detected for two more weeks after Dec. 31.

Simeon Celi Jr./Presidential Photo, File

Philippines to remain safe from COVID-19 variant if...

[Alexis Romero](#) (The Philippine Star) - December 29, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Malacañang yesterday expressed optimism that the Philippines would remain safe from the new coronavirus strain as long as quarantine protocols are strictly implemented.

President Duterte has approved an extension of the ban on flights from the United Kingdom where the new virus variant was first detected for two more weeks after Dec. 31.

He has also approved the implementation of a strict mandatory 14-day quarantine for travelers from countries or areas that reported the new strain, including Hong Kong, Singapore and Australia, regardless of polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test results.

Some lawmakers, however, are urging the Duterte administration to expand the travel ban to include arrivals from other countries that have reported the new strain.

“Whether (it be) a new strain or the old strain, our weapons are the 14-day quarantine, frequent hand washing, wearing of face masks and physical distancing,” presidential spokesman Harry Roque said at a press briefing.

“For now, the decision is to approve a two-week extension that will end on Jan. 14 and the travel ban on arrivals from the UK,” he added.

Roque clarified that the approval of precautionary measures was without prejudice to a possible ban on passengers from other countries that reported the new variant.

“We are imposing a 14-day quarantine. It’s mandatory regardless of the results of the PCR test. That means even if there is a new strain from the area of origin, it won’t spread because they are (required) to be quarantined in New Clark City,” the Palace spokesman said.

Duterte has also proposed the creation of a new task force that would look into the new virus strain that should be considered a “deadly disease that would be entering the Philippines.”

With new travel restrictions and as more countries suspend commercial flights, thousands of nurses and other highly skilled overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) will again not be able to leave for their jobs abroad.

“Thousands of OFWs are to get affected by the ban of Saudi Arabia on all international flights aside from those bound for UK,” recruitment consultant Manny Geslani said.



In separate advisories, the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration (POEA) notified OFWs on the suspension of international flights to and from the UK, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

POEA said Saudi Arabia temporarily suspended all inbound international passenger flights as well as entry through land and seaports since Dec. 21.

According to POEA, Kuwait also suspended international flights until Jan. 1 amid mounting concerns over the new strain of coronavirus.

OFWs were advised to wait until the different governments lift the suspension.

Those OFWs set to return home for vacation or renewal of contracts are advised to just stay in their jobsites for now.

Geslani said the travel suspension in UK and Saudi will affect mostly nurses. Based on news reports, Saudi Arabia is considering extending the flight suspension for another week depending on the nature of the virus spread.

Sen. Bong Go, chairman of the Senate committee on health, said the government should implement strictest border control measures and necessary travel restrictions to avoid the further spread of COVID-19.

“We should be prepared. Let’s not wait for this disease to spread further especially in our country. If there are reports of new strain elsewhere, we don’t want it here – lessons learned,” Go said in Filipino in a radio interview yesterday.

“We must consider imposing a strict travel ban for those whose country of origin is considered high-risk,” he added. “If there’s a report of a new variant in their place, it means red flag.”

“Our continued efforts must not falter,” Go said as he appealed to the public for greater cooperation. “Every decision that the government makes must be based on good science and must uphold the welfare and well-being of Filipinos wherever they may be in the world,” he pointed out.

He also said the country must be ready to help OFWs in distress over loss of jobs or failure to return to their homes. — **Mayen Jaymalin, Cecille Suerte Felipe**



Duterte to US: Deliver COVID-19 vaccine to PH or forget about VFA

Dennis Gasgonia, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Dec 27 2020 01:45 AM | Updated as of Dec 27 2020 09:57 AM



US Marines from the 3rd Marine Expeditionary Brigade and their Philippine counterpart fold their respective flags at the closing ceremony of the 33rd joint US-Philippines amphibious landing exercises dubbed PHIBLEX at the marines corps in suburban Taguig city. *Bullit Marquez, AP/file*

MANILA (UPDATE) - President Rodrigo Duterte on Saturday said he would end the country's military pact with the United States if it fails to deliver COVID-19 vaccines.

"Yung Visiting Forces Agreement matatapos na. Ngayon 'pag hindi ako pumayag, aalis talaga sila. 'Pag di sila naka-deliver maski minimum ng 20 million vaccines, better get out. No vaccine, no stay here," Duterte said in a meeting attended by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) on COVID-19 mitigation.

(The VFA nears its end. If I don't approve, they will be booted out. If they fail to deliver a minimum of 20 million vaccines, they better get out.)

Duterte also lashed at Washington for being critical of his administration, particularly on the issue of human rights.

The President had ordered the termination of the VFA earlier this year, after Washington invoked the American Magnitsky Act and denied the issuance of a US visa to Sen. Ronald "Bato" Dela Rosa.

In June, Duterte [shelved](#) the abrogation of the VFA.

The issue resurfaced when the Philippines joined other countries in the race to secure the sought-after vaccines.

"Do not believe in that sh*t, na America delivering kaagad. Hindi nga nila ma-deliver agad sa kanilang lugar, dito pa? Itong mga Amerikano . . . Maniwala kayo," Duterte said.

(Do not believe in that sh*t that America will deliver immediately. They can't even deliver it right away in their area, what more here? These Americans . . . Don't believe them.)

"Naging cynic ako sa kanila. Kung ibigay, eh di ibigay. If you want to help, you deliver (and) stop talking. What we need is the vaccine, not your verbose speeches."

(I've become cynic to them. If they give it, then good.)

The President is only demanding fair treatment from the US, his spokesman Harry Roque said Sunday.

"Kinakailangan patas ang relasyon natin. At kung 'di mabibigay ang vaccine sa'tin ay goodbye VFA ang sinasabi ni Presidente," Roque told ABS-CBN's TeleRadyo.

(We must have an equal relationship. And if they can't give vaccine to us, then it's goodbye VFA. That's what the President is saying.)



"Ang mensahe ng Presidente, meron tayong kailangan sa isa't isa, kailangan magdeliver, 'di pupuwede na pangako lamang."

(The message of the President is we need something from each other, they need to deliver, they can't just make promises.)

The Philippines was supposed to get at least 10 million doses of Pfizer vaccines, to be financed by the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank, said Foreign Affairs Secretary Teodoro Locsin Jr.

The deal, however, fell through, with Locsin alleging that someone "[dropped the ball](#)".

At Saturday's IATF meeting, Duterte said in jest that if the Philippines fails to get a vaccine against COVID-19, Sec. Carlito Galvez of the government's Peace Process, Defense Sec. Delfin Lorenzana, and Interior Secretary Eduardo Año may "face the firing squad".

Duterte recalled designating Galvez as vaccine czar aside from being the chief implementer of the government's response against the COVID-19 pandemic, while Lorenzana and Año are chair and vice-chair, respectively, of the COVID-19 task force.

All three are retired military officers.

"Ito pang vaccine, at what price, what is the brand, kay Galvez 'yan lahat. So, binigay ko 'yan sa kanya. It means to say that I trust him to get a good bargain for government. Pero sa ngayon, lahat ng vaccine naman talagang nagmamadali," said Duterte.

(On the vaccine, at what price, what is the brand, it's all on Galvez. I entrusted this to him... Although today, everyone is rushing to get the vaccine.)

"I placed it in the hands of Gen. Galvez. Iyo lahat 'yan. Pagka nagkabulilyaso 'yan, ikaw ang titirahin namin. Iyo 'yan. Well, of course, the policies would be made by General Lorenzana and General Año. Itong ano, sila 'yan," he added.

(It's all yours. If a problem comes up, we will go after you. That's yours... It's all on them.)

"If it fails, then you have three generals to face the firing squad. [laughter] P***, ayusin ninyo 'yan."

(B***h, do it right.)

Source: https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/12/27/20/duterte-to-us-deliver-covid-19-vaccine-to-ph-or-forget-about-vfa?fbclid=IwAR0vzz4Em571FQHAglmCS825sVj4yOgF6wAPBjB416IrnI60yPHnuZ_5jl



Marco Reyes, president of VCO Philippines and vice chairman of the United Coconut Associations of the Philippines, said VCO is an anti-viral food that is not limited to fighting COVID-19 alone but a “broad spectrum of viruses infecting people.”

STAR/File

Promote VCO vs COVID-19, government urged

[Rainier Allan Ronda](#) (The Philippine Star) - December 29, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Manufacturers of virgin coconut oil have underscored the importance of promoting locally available VCO, which has been proven as an effective therapy against COVID-19 in clinical studies by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Food and Nutrition Institute.

Marco Reyes, president of VCO Philippines and vice chairman of the United Coconut Associations of the Philippines, said VCO is an anti-viral food that is not limited to fighting COVID-19 alone but a “broad spectrum of viruses infecting people.”

“Vaccines are specific to the virus. When the virus mutates, the vaccine becomes ineffective so new ones need to be developed,” Reyes said in an online interview.

He said the reported mutation of coronavirus in the United Kingdom raised the need for the Philippines to explore other options in fighting COVID-19 aside from mass vaccination.

Ed Lalusis, patented inventor of VCO in capsule form Growrich VCO capsules approved by the Food and Drug Administration, said the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases should include VCO as a preventive therapy against the viral disease.

“We’re asking the government to include VCO as an additional regimen to prevent the spread of the virus,” Lalusis said. “Anyway, this is supported by DOST clinical studies. We have medical evidence on its safety and efficacy.”

Reyes said tapping the therapeutic benefits of VCO could help limit the spread of COVID-19 cases, especially with the long wait for foreign-manufactured vaccines.

“Mass vaccination in the Philippines is too near and yet too far. The government plans to prioritize frontliners, senior citizens and the poor. How about the majority of Filipinos?” Reyes asked.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/nation/2020/12/29/2066802/promote-vco-vs-covid-19-government-urged>



82M MAYSAKIT, 1.8M PATAY SA COVID-19 PALALAIN NG 2 BAGONG VIRUS



December 28, 2020 @ 10:43 AM 19 hours ago

BAGO matapos ang taong ito, malamang na 82 milyon na ang biktima ng coronavirus disease o COVID-19 mula sa 80.7 ngayong araw.

Base ito sa paglundag ng bilang ng mga biktima sa pagitan ng mahigit 500,000 at mahigit 700,000 araw-araw simula noong mga huling araw ng Oktubre 2020.

Sa ngayon, naglalaro naman ang patay sa pagitan ng 10,000 at 14,000 araw-araw simula noong unang Linggo ng Nobyembre at maaaring aabot na ang patay sa 1.8M mula sa 1.7 sa araw na ito.

Inaasahan ding lalong lalala ang pagdami ng biktima sa pagsulpot at nagsimula nang pananalasa ng dalawang anak o variant ng COVID-19.

Nagsimula ang isang variant sa United Kingdom at tinawag itong VUI (variant under investigation) 2020/01 at sa South Africa, 501.V2.

Mas mabilis na manghawa sa orihinal na COVID-19 ang dalawang variant ng 50% hanggang 70 porsyento.

At malamang na kabilang na rin ang nasabing dalawang variant na dahilan ng pagkakasakit ng libo-libo at pagkamatay ng daan-daan sa UK, SA at iba pa araw-araw.

Nadiskubre ang mga variant simula sa buwan ng Setyembre at nakumpirma lang ang mga ito sa mga araw na ito.

Ang nakababahala, gaya ng COVID-19, kumakalat na rin sa iba't ibang bansa ang dalawang variant at sinasabing nakapasok na sa Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong, Malaysia at Singapore ang isa o silang dalawa.

MGA TANONG

Isang malaking tanong: nakapuslit na rin ba ang mga ito papasok sa mahal kong Pinas?

Mahalaga ang nasabing katanungan sapagkat nito lang Disyembre 24 pinahinto ng ating pamahalaan ang mga biyaheng Pilipinas-UK samantalang Setyembre pa nagsimulang kumalat, partikular ang variant sa UK at marami nang biyahe ang naganap sa pagitan ng ating bansa at UK.

Mahalaga rin ang tanong na siyang dahilan ng pagpapatawag ng emergency meeting ng Inter-Agency Task Force on Infectious Diseases ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte para sa kaukulang aksyon.

UMAAKSYON NA

Ang maganda sa ginagawa ni Pang. Duterte, umaaksyon na ito kahit wala pang patunay na nakapasok na ang dalawang anak ng COVID-19 sa Pinas.



Una ang pag-uutos nitong patigilin ang biyaheng internasyunal ng Pinas-UK gaya ng nasabi na sa itaas upang mapigilan ang pagpasok ng dalawang variant.

Binawi na rin nito ang nagsisimula nang preparasyon at pagsasanay para sana sa face-to-face na klase sa mga eskwelahan simula sa susunod na taon na makaaapekto sa nasa 27 milyong kabataan.

At nakaamba na rin ang umano'y modified enhanced community quarantine sa Metro Manila o nauukol na kwarantina simula sa Enero 1, 2021 sakaling aabot sa 4,000 ang magkakasakit sa coronavirus araw-araw, may halo mang variants o wala ang pagkakasakit.

Sa kabuuan, sa araw na ito ilalabas mismo ni Pang. Digong ang mga balakin at iba pang aksyon ng pamahalaan laban sa masasabi na nating tatlong salot na nabanggit.

Sa UK, nanawagan na ang ilang health expert para magdeklara ang pamahalaan nila ng pambansang lockdown habang nagbabala na rin ang bansang China at Thailand ng mga malawakan ding lockdown.

Maaaring maganap din ito sa Japan at sa South Korea na napakabilis na umano ang pagdami ng mga biktima ng orihinal at mga variant.

Hindi naman imposibleng magkaroon ng mga lockdown ang Pilipinas lalo't wala pang pagbabakuna sa bansa laban sa COVID-19.

Ngayon pa lang din pinag-aaralan ng mga gumagawa ng bakuna ang dalawang variant at tinitingnan kung epektibo o hindi laban dito ang kanilang nagawa nang bakuna sa orihinal na virus.

MECQ PAIRALIN?

Habang tinitipa natin ito, mga Bro, pumapailanlang nga ang mga balita na maaaring ideklara ng pamahalaan ang MECQ partikular sa Metro Manila.

Kabilang sa mga dahilan ang pagiging sentro ng Metro Manila ng mga pandaigdigang paliparan at pier na nilalapagan at dinaraungan ng mga pasahero at tauhan ng mga eroplano at barko.

'Yun bang === ang Metro Manila ang mauunang madale ng tatlong uri ng virus dahil sa pagdating ng mga Pinoy at dayuhan sakay ng mga eroplano at barko.

Sagot na rin ang MECQ sa posibleng pagdagsa ng mga magkakasakit ng COVID-19 dahil sa Kapaskuhan na nababalewala ang mga minimum na health protocol gaya ng social distancing sa mga pamilihan, mall at iba pa.

Binalawala o minaliit o kinalimutan ng marami sa atin ang nasabing mga health protocol gaya ng mga nag-shopping sa Divisoria, Manila na tinatayang umabot sa 700,000 araw-araw bago mag-Disyembre 25.

Sa katulad na mga okasyon naganap ang mga surge o pagdagsa ng biktima ng virus sa Amerika, Canada, India at iba pa.

Kung umabot umano sa 4,000 araw-araw ang biktima, MECQ ang isasagot o kaukulang paghihigpit?

At sa ilalim ng MECQ o iba, muling paiiralin ang bawal na dine-in sa mga restoran, pagliit ng bilang ng mga papasok sa mga pagawaan at opisina, paghinto ng ilang pampublikong sasakyan o 50 porsyentong pagbaba ng pasahero sa mga ito, istriktong pagbabawal sa mga senior citizen at kabataang edad 21 pababa na lumabas ng bahay at marami pang paghihigpit.

Maaaring madamay ang iba pang lugar sa paligid ng Metro Manila at iba pang malalayong lugar sapagkat maghihigpit din ang mga kontrol sa mga boundary ng mga lalawigan, lungsod at bayan, kasama na ang mga transportasyong pribado at pampubliko.



Maaaring tanging ang mga may dalang essential goods and services ang magiging malaya sa mga paglalakbay at paglabas-labas ng mga tahanan.

MAKIPAGTULUNGAN TAYO LAHAT

Anomang uri ng kwarantina ang paiiralin, dapat tayong makipagtulungan lahat at huwag pairalin ang katigasan ng ulo at pagbabalewala sa mga hakbangin ng pamahalaan laban sa pandemya.

Alalahaning buhay ang pinakamahalaga at kung maghirap man tayo, napatunayan naman natin sa nakalipas na halos isang taon na kaya nating tiisin ito.

Tatandaan nating hindi lang naman tayo ang nagigipit kundi ang buong mundo.

Tingnan na lang natin na lahat ay ginagawa ng pamahalaan upang maligtas ang ating buhay sa pandemya.

Katunayan dito ang pagdausdos ng ranggo natin sa mga bansang may pinakamaraming nagkakasakit ng COVID-19 mula sa pang-18 sa pang-29 na lang ngayon.

‘Yun bang === sa tamang paghihigpit ng pamahalaan, kahit papaano, hindi tayo natutulad sa ibang mga bansa na grabe ang kalagayan ngayon na bukod sa rami ng nagkakasakit at namamatay, bagsak na bagsak din ang kanilang ekonomiya na dahilan ng grabeng paghihirap ng kanilang mga mamamayan.

Marahil, kambalan natin ang pagtitiis ng dasal upang maligtasan natin ang kamatayan at malalang pagkakasakit.

Alalahanin ang mga tinamaan ng COVID-19 na karamiha’y nanghihina pa kahit idineklara na silang magaling dahil may pinsala na sila sa katawan gaya ng pagkakabutas ng kanilang mga бага o puso o iba pang parte ng katawan na gawa ng virus.

Marahil, magtutulungan ang mga magkakapitbahay.

‘Yun bang === kung sino ang mayroon, kusang magbahagi ng meron siya para sa pamilyang labis na napipinsala ang pamumuhay.

Magandang obligahin din natin ating mga sarili na magtulungan sa lahat ng oras at pahigpitan na rin ang pakikipagkaisa sa pamahalaan na walang humpay na gumagawa ng paraan para sa kaligtasan at kapakanan ng lahat.

Ang pamumulitika at pag-uudyok ng pagkawatak-watak at away ay isantabi sana nating lahat.



Our lives are in our own hands

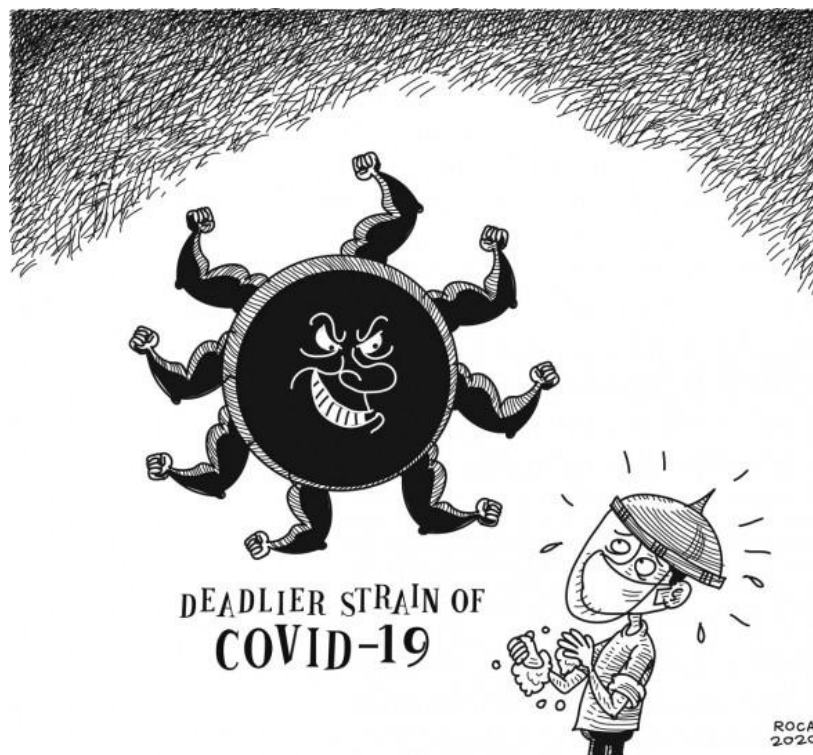
December 28, 2020 | Filed under: Editorial, Opinion | Posted by: Tempo Desk

IT helps people to remember simple basic rules when they are expressed in simple, direct statements like “Mask. Hugas. Iwas.”

When the government began the gradual process of reviving the economy early in October, it was joined by the private sector with an “Ingat Angat Tayong Lahat Campaign” featuring competing brands side by side in commercials to encourage people to start eating out and shop around, but always observing minimum health and safety protocols.

Several government officials joined in the launching of the campaign, including presidential spokesman Harry Roque who noted that the government had already launched its “Ingat Buhay para sa Hanapbuhay” with similar goals. He added that President Duterte had just appeared in a commercial to promote the message “Mask. Hugas. Iwas.”

This week, the Health Professionals Alliance against COVID-19 (HPAAC) launched its “APAT Dapat” campaign – with APAT standing for good Air circulation in meeting rooms, Physical distancing, Always wear a face mask, and Time for meetings limited to 30 minutes or less during the holiday season.



“We hope to see our civil servants welcoming the new year reinvigorated and with a healthy body and mind so we can serve the Filipino public at our best,” Civil Service Commission Chairperson Alicia de la Rosa Bala said as she echoed HPAAC’s call to observe the “APAT Dapat” if gatherings cannot be avoided.

These last few days of the year have been marked by traditional gatherings of the season – the Simbang Gabi and the Christmas Eve mass, families sharing Christmas Eve meals. The government allowed these, but with limitations, thus saving this season for this largely Christian nation.

But through all these gatherings, we must never forget that the COVID-19 pandemic is still with us and our only answer to it at this time is personal protection with face masks and face shields, keeping one’s distance from another person, and constant washing of one’s hands.



There is a new and more deadly strain of the virus that has emerged in England, causing many countries to close their borders to travelers from that country. The strain has now reached Singapore and we hope we can keep it out. We also hope we will soon have the vaccines we need to develop immunity from COVID-19 among our people.

Thus, “Mask, Hugas, Iwas.” and “APAT Dapat.” In these last few days of the year and in the next few months of the new year, we will be holding our health and our lives in our own hands.



President Duterte signs the P4.5-trillion national budget for 2021 at Malacañang yesterday. Also in photo are Senate President Tito Sotto, Speaker Lord Allan Velasco and Senators Francis Tolentino, Bong Go, Sonny Angara and Migz Zubiri.

STAR/File

Duterte signs P4.5 trillion budget for 2021

[Alexis Romero](#), [Paolo Romero](#) (The Philippine Star) - December 29, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — President Duterte yesterday signed the P4.5-trillion national budget for 2021, which included sizeable allocations for the purchase, storage and distribution of vaccines for COVID-19.

Select members of the Senate and the House of Representatives attended the signing ceremony at Malacañang, as shown in a pre-recorded video of the event aired over state-run PTV.

Photos provided by the office of Sen. Bong Go showed about 10 lawmakers wearing face masks and face shields.

The budget signing was held before the meeting of the government's pandemic task force. Presidential spokesman Harry Roque previously said Duterte would veto some items in the spending bill but details were not yet available as of press time.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I stand before you today happy and proud to sign the 2021 General Appropriations Act," Duterte said in a pre-recorded speech.

"This important piece of legislation attests to the importance of active and fruitful collaboration between the executive and the legislative branches of the government, especially this time when the health and welfare of the people are at stake," he said.

The budget for 2021 includes P72.5 billion for a nationwide vaccination program against COVID-19.

"Let me stress that one of the most important items in the 2021 budget is the allocation of P72.5 billion for the purchase, storage, transportation and distribution of COVID-19 vaccines," Duterte said.

"Every centavo of this budget must be spent to ensure the nation's recovery, resilience and sustainability. Let me, therefore, serve an assurance to the Filipino people – this coming year, we intend to recover as one nation," he declared.

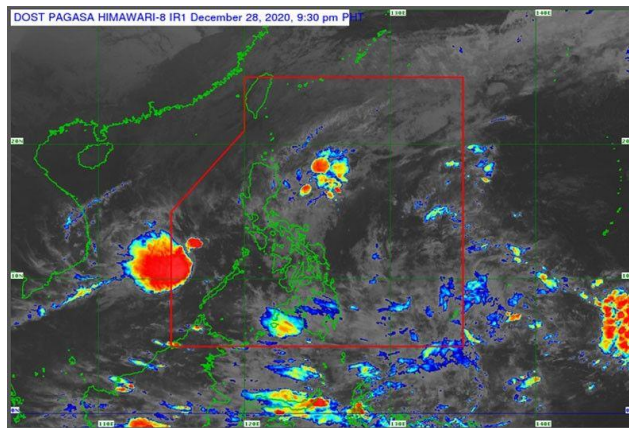
The largest portion of the budget – at P708 billion – goes to the Department of Education, state universities and colleges, the Commission on Higher Education and the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority.



With its allocation of P694 billion, the Department of Public Works and Highways came next, followed by the health sector with P694 billion.

“There is too much at stake in the 2021 budget. The economy is set to bounce back after a historic slump this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic and any delay in the passage of the budget would be akin to throwing a monkey wrench in the recovery process,” Sen. Sonny Angara, who chairs the Senate finance committee, said.

“We are now assured that the government will be operating on a new budget on Jan. 1, 2021. This will pave the way for implementation of several key programs, particularly those that pertain to COVID-response,” he said.



As of 4 p.m. yesterday, the weather disturbance was spotted 1,490 kilometers east of Mindanao, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration said.

PAGASA

New LPA to bring rains – PAGASA

[Helen Flores](#) (The Philippine Star) - December 29, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — A new low-pressure area outside the Philippine area of responsibility is expected to bring more rains over some parts of the country in the next few days.

As of 4 p.m. yesterday, the weather disturbance was spotted 1,490 kilometers east of Mindanao, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said.

PAGASA senior weather forecaster Chris Perez said the low-pressure area was not expected to develop into a tropical depression, but that this will bring rains over parts of Mindanao.

Meanwhile, the low-pressure area off Casiguran, Aurora dissipated yesterday afternoon. The other low-pressure area off Palawan was expected to exit the Philippine area of responsibility last night.

Perez said the northeast monsoon and the low-pressure area outside the Philippine area of responsibility would bring rains over some parts of the country until New Year's Day.

“At the moment we don't expect the low-pressure area to enter the country but it will affect parts of Mindanao,” Perez said.

He said the northeast monsoon was expected to bring light rains over Batanes and Babuyan Islands last night.

The trough of the low-pressure area off Mindanao and the tail-end of a cold front were expected to dump rains over the rest of Cagayan Valley region, Aurora, Bicol, Kalayaan Island, Visayas, Caraga, Davao region and northern Mindanao last night.

Today, the tail-end of a cold front and the northeast monsoon will bring scattered rains over Northern Luzon and Aurora province, Perez said.

He added that a surge of the northeast monsoon is expected starting tomorrow. This will bring colder mornings in Northern Luzon as well as parts of Central and Southern Luzon, including Metro Manila, until Friday.

From Wednesday to Friday, generally fair weather is expected over Metro Manila apart from light rains due to the northeast monsoon.

In Baguio City, cloudy skies with light rains will prevail until Friday.



The combined effects of the northeast monsoon and the tail-end of a cold front will bring scattered rains and thunderstorms over the Bicol region.

Cloudy skies with scattered rains will also prevail over the Visayas until Friday.

In Mindanao, cloudy skies with scattered rains are expected tomorrow. PAGASA expects an improvement in weather conditions over the region by Thursday and Friday.

In an interview earlier in the day, Perez said PAGASA is not expecting any tropical cyclones until the end of the year.

“For the next three days until the end of the year we are not expecting any cyclones but a surge of the northeast monsoon will initially affect the northern Luzon area beginning Wednesday,” he said in an interview with TeleRadyo.



50 katao nasagip sa flash flood sa Quezon

On Dec 28, 2020



HINDI bababa sa 50 tao kabilang ang mga bata ang nasagip ng Bureau of Fire Protection-Atimonan at Philippine Coast Guard-Atimonan sa flash flood sa Purok Sampaguita, Barangay Caridad Ilaya, Atimonan, Quezon nitong Linggo.

Ayon sa BFP-Atimonan, 3:25 ng hapon ng Linggo nang makatanggap sila ng tawag mula sa mga residente ng Barangay Caridad Ilaya na nagpapasaklolo.

Bigla ang pagbaha sa nasabing lugar dulot ng malakas na ulan dahil sa low pressure area.

Naninirahan malapit sa ilog ang mga residente. Dalawang bahay ang winasak at tinangay ng baha. Mabilis naman na nagtungo sa lugar ang Municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office-Atimonan, BFP at PCG at nagsagawa ng rescue operation.

Naging pahirapan ang ginawang pag-rescue dahil sa rumaragasang baha. Mabilis at maingat ang mga rescuer sa pagsagip sa mga residente.

Ang isang sanggol ay isinakay sa malaking batya at isinabit sa tali upang maitawid sa ilog.

Walang nasawi isa man sa mga residente.

Source: <https://www.policefilestonite.net/2020/12/28/50-katao-nasagip-sa-flash-flood-sa-quezon/?fbclid=IwAR1Q1AxwY1IXk1jkmNm96PBCOUj-7kGwXUjU7Z2t07Yb79fGiQJTnNICo>



Phivolcs: Posibilidad ng tsunami sa Pilipinas dahil sa malakas na lindol sa Chile, 'wag ikabahala

By **Bombo Sol Marquez** - December 28, 2020 | 12:27 PM

Siniguro ng Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) na walang banta ng tsunami sa Pilipinas kasunod ng naranasang magnitude 6.8 na lindol sa Chile.

Batay sa Tsunami Information No.1 na inilabas ng ahensya kaninang alas-5:50 ng umaga, niyanig ng magnitude 6.8 ang Central Chile ngayong araw na may lalim na 10km o 6.21 miles.

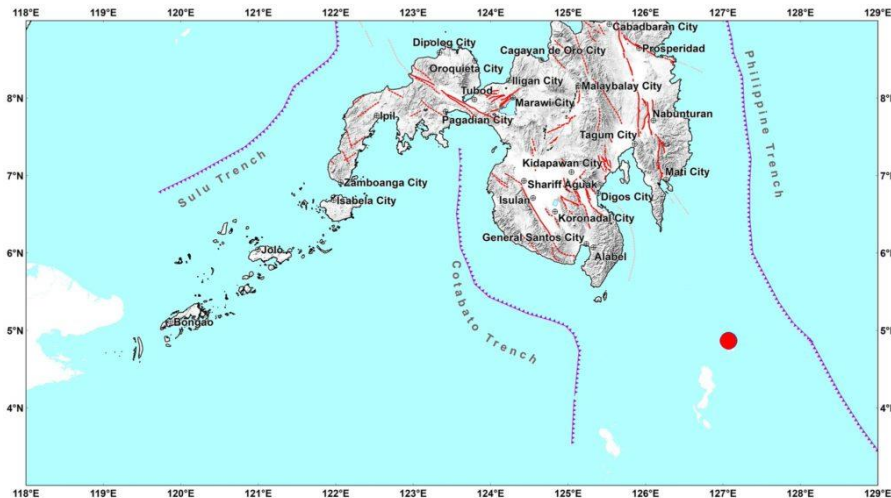
Ayon pa sa ahensya wala itong nakikita na posibleng makaranas ng tsunami ang mga kalapit na bansa.

Samantala, patuloy pa ring pinag-iingat ng Phivolcs ang lahat sa mga lindol at sumunod palagi iaanunsyo ng kani-kanilang mga local government units (LGUs).



Magnitude 4.4 na lindol, yumanig sa Davao Occidental

By Angellic Jordan December 28, 2020 - 02:02 PM



Tumama ang magnitude 4.4 na lindol sa Davao Occidental, Lunes ng tanghali.

Sa datos ng Phivolcs, naitala ang sentro ng lindol sa layong 193 kilometers Southeast ng Sarangani.

Tumama ang pagyanig dakong 12:46 ng tanghali.

May lalim itong 12 kilometers at tectonic ang origin.

Gayunman, walang napaulat na pinsala sa mga ari-arian sa Sarangani at mga karatig-bayan.

<span;>Ayon pa sa Phivolcs, wala ring inaasahang aftershocks matapos ang pagyanig.

Australia is the last Western holdout on the climate crisis. But some states and businesses are calling for change

By Helen Regan, CNN

Published Dec 28, 2020 1:25:28 PM



(CNN) — Deep in northeast Australia's outback, underneath grassy eucalypt woodlands and vast grazing lands scattered with cattle stations, lies one of the world's largest known untapped coal reserves.

Queensland's Galilee Basin, an area roughly the size of Britain, is set to produce its first coal in 2021, to be moved by rail 300 kilometers to the coast, where it will be loaded onto cargo ships that will sail through the Great Barrier Reef to ship it to Asia.

The controversial Carmichael mine has become a symbol of the environmental split that has emerged in 21st century Australia.

As the country experiences devastating bush fires and record temperatures, public opinion is in favor of greater action on the climate crisis, protecting the country's precious natural heritage, and investments in renewable energy, surveys show, but Prime Minister Scott Morrison and his government remain entwined with the powerful fossil fuel industry.

That's made Australia an outlier among the big global economies. Earlier this year, US President-elect Joe Biden pledged to reach net zero emissions by 2050. China, South Korea, and Japan all made similar pledges this year, as did the UK and the EU in 2019.

Australia has made no such pledge. It hasn't yet updated its Paris Agreement targets -- already considered weak -- of cutting planet-heating emissions by 26% to 28% from 2005 levels by mid-century. And Australia's emissions per capita are nearly three times higher than the G20 average. Recently, Morrison said Australia was aiming to reach zero emissions as soon as possible, but wouldn't give a timeline.

But outside Canberra it's a different picture.

Every Australian state and territory has pledged to reach net zero emissions by 2050.

In the private sector, businesses are investing in innovative renewable mega-energy projects, taking advantage of Australia's world-class wind and solar resources. One project is set to power a large chunk of Singapore's electricity needs via an undersea cable, and another aims to build a huge renewable power station that could be a game changer for Australia in becoming a leading exporter of green hydrogen.

With states and industry forging ahead on climate solutions, the country's most impactful climate action might not come from the man leading the nation.



Australian states forging ahead

In November, New South Wales announced a plan to support 12 gigawatts of wind and solar and 2 gigawatts of energy storage through the construction of renewable energy zone to replace its aging coal plants. The state government estimates the plan would drive \$32 billion in investment to the region, lower electricity prices and create more than 6,000 more jobs in the next 10 years. These zones are like traditional power stations but transmit, store and generate electricity from renewable sources like solar, wind and pumped hydro.

Speaking to Sky News, NSW Minister for Energy and Environment Matt Kean said: "The reality is 70% of our two-way trade are now with countries committed to achieve net zero emissions," adding that the new projects will "set us up to not only be an energy superpower but an economic superpower."

Neighboring Queensland is investing \$145 million to establish its own renewable energy zones and Victoria, which has had success in installing thousands of rooftop solar panels on homes and businesses across the state, is supporting a further 600 megawatts of renewable energy. The state government claims this would be enough to power every hospital and school in the state.

"There's a push also to put batteries on both of those pieces of public infrastructure so that they would essentially be able to sell their electricity to the grid too, which would offset some of their costs -- providing more opportunity for them to spend their resources on vital, services like education and health," said Amanda McKenzie, CEO of the Climate Council.

Victoria will also be home to the world's largest battery to ensure grid security. The Tesla battery will generate 300 megawatts and will help the state meet its renewable energy targets of 50% by 2030.

"There's a growing enthusiasm for the economic opportunities associated with renewable energy," said McKenzie. "I think that states are starting to see the scale of economic opportunity that can come with the transition."

Exporting Australian sunshine

The private sector in Australia is also seeking to capitalize on the abundance of sunshine and wind in the country. Some of these projects are breathtaking in their scale.

In the red desert of the remote Northern Territory, two of Australia's richest people are backing a \$20 billion plan to build the world's biggest solar farm and battery storage facility, which will span 12,000 hectares (29,600 acres) and, they claim, be visible from space.

When completed, it will export enough electricity through a 3,711 kilometer-long undersea cable to power a fifth of Singapore's energy needs. The Sun Cable initiative has been given major project status -- meaning the government has formally recognized the significance of the project to the Australian economy.

Sun Cable aims to provide renewable energy to the Northern Territory by the end of 2027, with solar exports worth around \$2 billion every year. It eventually aims to link up to Indonesia, too.

"If it comes off, it would be really a ground-breaking system," said Bill Hare, CEO of climate science and policy institute Climate Analytics.

In Western Australia's Pilbara region, the sun shines hot and strong winds blow throughout the day and night: ideal conditions to build the world's biggest power station.

The Asian Renewable Energy Hub will cover a 6,600 square kilometer area space -- about six-and-a-half times the size of Hong Kong. Funded through a consortium of backers, the \$36 billion project is expected to have a capacity of 26 gigawatts -- the equivalent of 40% of Australia's electricity consumption.

A vast swathe of solar panels will soak up the sun's rays and, together with 1,743 wind turbines, generate round the clock renewable energy. That will mostly power electrolyzers that split water into green hydrogen. The hub said it plans to turn this hydrogen into ammonia so, as a liquid, it's easier to transport.



Hydrogen is already used in a vast array of industries, from rocket fuel, to fertilizing crops, to making plastics and pharmaceuticals. But extracting hydrogen is traditionally done with fossil fuels, causing planet-warming emissions.

Green hydrogen is manufactured with renewable energy -- such as solar or wind -- so it would eliminate those polluting emissions. While the technology has been around for decades, rapidly falling prices of solar and wind means the electrolyzing process is now financially viable, though still expensive.

Alex Tancock, founder and managing director of Intercontinental Energy, a partner in the hub, said the project "has shown the world what is possible."

"It has leapfrogged this whole discussion of scaling up pilot stage projects. And it has shown that oil and gas-scale projects are possible that are green," he said.

Green hydrogen is gaining traction among governments and businesses pledging to slash their emissions completely by 2050, and has the potential to clean up energy-intensive industries such as transport and construction that are more difficult to electrify.

Hare notes that currently 75% to 80% of Australia's fossil fuels go to Japan, Korea and China. "We know each of those countries is looking at hydrogen for the future," Hare said. "As an Australian, we just cannot afford to wait to develop these markets."

McKenzie of the Climate Council adds that "a lot of Australian businesses now, are committing to 100% renewable energy," and calling on the federal government to do more.

Coal country and a tense transition

Recently, the Australian government has made some good noises on green energy.

In September, the government announced a technology-focused roadmap and a \$1.4 billion energy investment package, which including driving down the price of hydrogen to under \$2 a kilogram, battery storage and carbon capture and storage. It planned to invest \$18 billion in low emissions tech over the next ten years.

"Australia has a plan to put the technology in place to reduce emissions and ensure we achieve the Kyoto commitments, as we already have demonstrated, and, importantly, the Paris commitments before us. What matters is what you get done, and Australia is getting it done on emissions reduction," Morrison told parliament on December 10.

But there are still parts of Australia's energy policy that trouble climate experts.

For example, within the series of recent announcements was support for a gas-fired economic recovery from the pandemic fallout, which included unlocking five gas basins. "Gas is a critical enabler of Australia's economy," Morrison said.

But investing in natural gas -- a fossil fuel -- is not in line with the government's own commitments to reduce emissions.

A recent report from the Grattan Institute, found that natural gas use is in decline, prices -- especially on the east coast -- will become expensive, and its benefits to manufacturing were "overstated."

"If the government tries to swim against this tide by directly intervening in the market, taxpayers will pay the price via big subsidies," the report said.

CNN has reached out to the Prime Minister's office for comment.

Australia has another abundant natural resource: coal.



The country is the world's second largest exporter of coal and in states such as Queensland and New South Wales mining is a big industry -- and employer -- in rural communities.

Climate scientists say it will be necessary to phase out coal power in developed countries by 2030, and in the rest of the world by 2040, if the world wants to avoid catastrophic climate change.

But according to the Climate Action Tracker, Australia's coal production is set to increase by 4% from 2020 to 2030.

Despite that in Queensland's Galilee basin, mining giant Adani's new Carmichael thermal coal mine would produce 10 million metric tons of coal every year over its 60 year lifetime. Much of that will be supplied to India, which still depends on coal to meet most of its energy needs.

The project, which has been in the works for several years, was given the green light by the government last year, in part, to create jobs in a high unemployment area.

But it has enraged environmental campaigners, who say it will be a "death sentence" for the Great Barrier Reef because of the high levels of carbon pollution that coal produces. Large parts of the reef have already been destroyed by rising ocean temperatures linked to global warming.

Climate activists and scientists also say the mine and rail link could open the way for five other mines in the basin to go ahead, and coal produced from this mine could directly impact global emissions.

Adani, which renamed its Australian operations last month to Bravus Mining and Resources, said the mine and rail project has already created 2,000 jobs.

When asked for comment about the emissions it will produce, the company directed CNN to a statement disputing that emissions from its coal will have an impact on the reef.

"The process of mining 10 million tonnes of coal per annum at the Carmichael mine will produce 240,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide emissions," the company said in a statement.

"Adani's Carmichael mine is a much smaller mine than many others in Queensland and when the coal is used overseas the amount of carbon dioxide that will be produced will represent less than 0.04% of Australia's emissions and less than 0.0006% of global emissions, which is not enough to have an impact on the Great Barrier Reef."

At the heart of Australia's potential green energy transition is this tension between the nation's history as a fossil fuel powerhouse and its obligation reduce emissions to stop catastrophic climate change.

Pressure to commit to stronger climate action is increasing from the states, from business, from communities, Pacific Island nations, and western countries. And there does appear to be some softening.

Morrison, who was left out of a major virtual climate summit this month hosted by the UN, UK and France because of his lack of climate ambition, has said he won't use controversial Kyoto carryover credits to achieve Australia's emissions targets. Carryover credits are a carbon accounting measure and Australia had argued that because it did well in reducing emissions in the Kyoto period (2008 to 2012), it can offset that amount to meet its Paris Agreement commitments. No country has taken these seriously, however.

While states and business are making strong moves, if Australia is going to become a leader in the renewable revolution, experts say the federal government has to step up, too.

For the electrification of transport -- especially heavy trucks or buses -- or to make efficiency improvements in industry, experts say federal incentives are needed, as well as a carbon tax. Hare said that while some energy-intensive industries -- such as mining -- are moving to renewables for some of their operations, "it isn't at scale yet, and it won't happen at scale until governments all get on the game with the right type sort incentives."



With a strong renewable energy and emissions target, the federal government could capitalize on the economic opportunities that Australia's natural advantages offer -- and protect the country from an onslaught of climate damage such as worsening bushfires and droughts, rising sea levels, and more extreme weather.

The government "needs to accelerate and coordinate all the efforts that are going on, to make sure that it can be ratcheted up very quickly, so that Australia's very high emissions can plummet, if we're going to protect our national interest," said McKenzie.

"If we can demonstrate how to make transition happen quickly in a coal-dependent economy," she said. "Australia could be the testing ground and a model in this new world."

This story was first published on CNN.com, "[Australia is the last Western holdout on the climate crisis. But some states and businesses are calling for change.](https://www.cnn.com/2020/12/28/australian-states-climate-change-renewable-energy.html)"



Residents bathe, wash, and pump water on Friday, Nov. 20, 2020 in their destroyed village in Rodriguez, Rizal following the damage caused by flooding from Typhoon Ulysses (Vamco). REUTERS/Eloisa Lopez

2020 weather disasters boosted by climate change —report

Published December 28, 2020 7:12pm

By MARLOWE HOOD, Agence France-Presse

PARIS — The ten costliest weather disasters worldwide this year saw insured damages worth \$150 billion, topping the figure for 2019 and reflecting a long-term impact of global warming, according to a report Monday.

The same disasters claimed at least 3,500 lives and displaced more than 13.5 million people.

From Australia's out-of-control wildfires in January to a record number of Atlantic hurricanes through November, the true cost of the year's climate-enhanced calamities was in fact far higher because most losses were uninsured.

Not surprisingly, the burden fell disproportionately on poor nations, according to the annual tally from global NGO Christian Aid, entitled "Count the cost of 2020: a year of climate breakdown."

Only four percent of economic losses from climate-impacted extreme events in low-income countries were insured, compared with 60 percent in high-income economies, the report said, citing a study last month in *The Lancet*.

"Whether floods in Asia, locusts in Africa, or storms in Europe and the Americas, climate change has continued to rage in 2020," said Christian Aid's climate policy lead, Kat Kramer.

Damage from two typhoons that hit the Philippines late in the year, Rolly and Ulysses, made it to number 14 [on the list](#).

Extreme weather disasters, of course, have plagued humanity long before manmade global warming began to mess with the planet's climate system.

But more than a century of temperature and precipitation data, along with decades of satellite data on hurricanes and sea level rise, have left no doubt that Earth's warming surface temperature is amplifying their impact.



Massive tropical storms—variously known as hurricanes, typhoons and cyclones—are now more likely, for example, to be stronger, last longer, carry more water and wander beyond their historical range.

2020's record-breaking 30 named Atlantic hurricanes—with at least 400 fatalities and \$41 billion in damages—suggest the world could see more such storms as well.

The World Meteorological Organization (WMO) had to use Greek symbols after running out of letters in the Latin alphabet.

Extremes, not averages

Intense summer flooding in China and India, where the monsoon season brought abnormal amounts of rainfall for the second year running, are also consistent with projections on how climate will impact precipitation.

Five of the most costly extreme weather events in 2020 were related to Asia's unusually rainy monsoon.

"The 2020 flood was one of the worst in the history of Bangladesh, more than a quarter of the country was under water," said Shahjahan Mondal, director of the Institute of Flood and Water Management at the Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology.

Wildfires that scorched record areas in California, Australia and even Russia's Siberian hinterland, much of it within the Arctic Circle, are also consistent with a warmer world, and are predicted to get worse as temperatures climb.

The planet's average surface temperature has gone up at least 1.1 degrees Celsius on average compared to the late 19th-century, with much of that warming occurring in the last half-century.

The 2015 Paris Agreement enjoins the world's nations to collectively cap global warming at "well below" 2°C, and even 1.5°C if feasible.

A landmark report in 2018 from the UN's IPCC climate science advisory panel showed that 1.5°C is a safer threshold, but the likelihood of staying below it have grown vanishingly small, according to many experts.

"Ultimately, the impacts of climate change will be felt via the extremes, and not average changes," noted Sarah Perkins-Kilpatrick, a senior lecturer at the University of New South Wales' Climate Change Research Centre.

If the growing frequency and intensity of natural weather disasters is consistent with modelling projections, the new field of attribution science is now able to put a number on how much more likely such an event is due to global warming.



The unprecedented wildfires that destroyed 20 percent of Australia's forests and killed tens of millions of wild animals in late 2019 and early 2020, for example, were made at least 30 percent more likely, according to research led by Friederike Otto at the University of Oxford's Environmental Change Institute.

In Europe, meanwhile, the chance of deadly heatwaves occurring has risen nearly 100 fold compared to a century ago, according to recent research.

"Heatwaves and floods which used to be 'once in a century' events are becoming more regular occurrences," noted WMO Secretary-General Petteri Taalas. — **AFP**

Atlantic discovery: 12 new species 'hiding in the deep'

By Victoria Gill Science correspondent, BBC News

Published 8 hours ago



ATLAS

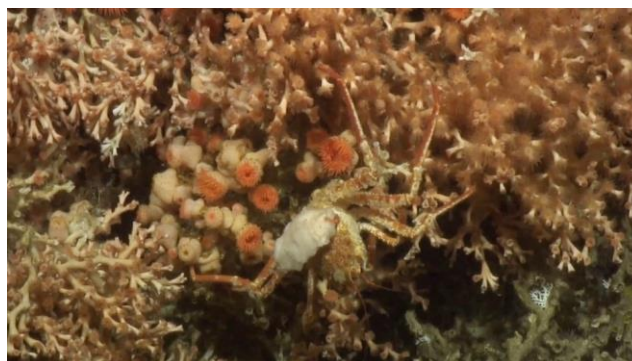
image caption Epizoanthus martinsae lives on black corals at depths of almost 400m

Almost five years of studying the deep Atlantic in unprecedented detail has revealed 12 species new to science.

The sea mosses, molluscs and corals had eluded discovery because the sea floor is so unexplored, scientists say.

Researchers warn that the newly discovered animals could already be under threat from climate change.

Carbon dioxide absorbed by the ocean is making it more acidic, causing coral skeletons in particular to corrode.



Corals are the foundations of the cities of the deep, providing shelter and food for many species

The scientists involved stressed it was "not too late to protect these special species" and the important habitats they occupied.

Some key Atlantic discoveries from the mission:

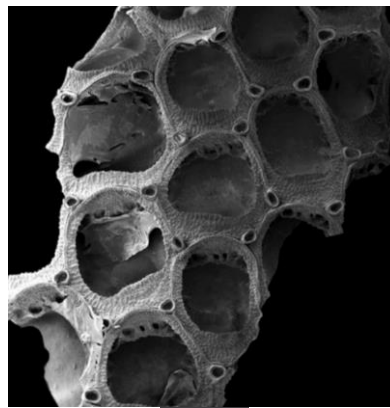
- New species: "At least" 12 new deep-sea species. The team also found approximately 35 new records of species in areas where they were previously unknown
- Climate change: Ocean warming, acidification, and decreasing food availability will combine to significantly shift and reduce the availability of suitable habitats for deep-sea species by 2100



- Hydrothermal vents: Scientists discovered a field of these sea-floor hot springs in the Azores. Hydrothermal fields are important areas of relatively high biological productivity that host complex communities in the midst of the vast deep ocean

Cities of the deep

As Prof George Wolff, an ocean chemist from the University of Liverpool who was involved in the project pointed out: "We can still say we have better maps of the surface of the Moon and Mars than of the sea floor."



ATLAS

image captionAntropora gemarita feeds on particles of food suspended in the water

"So whenever you go to the deep ocean, you find something new - not just individual species but entire ecosystems."

Prof Murray Roberts from the University of Edinburgh led [the Atlas project](#), as it is called. He told BBC News that nearly five years of exploration and investigation had revealed some "special places" in the ocean and worked out "how they tick".



ATLAS

image captionUnderwater robotics allowed exploration at depths that would crush human divers

"We found whole communities formed by sponges or deep ocean corals that form the cities of the deep sea," he explained. "They support life. So really important fish use these places as spawning grounds.

"If those cities are damaged by destructive human uses, those fish have nowhere to spawn and the function of those whole ecosystems is lost for future generations.

"It's like understanding that the rainforest is an important place for biodiversity on the land; the same is true of the deep sea - there are important places that need to be protected and, crucially, they are all connected."

Slowing ocean currents

The project involved researchers from 13 countries around the Atlantic - combining ocean chemistry and physics, as well as biological discovery, to work out how the ocean environment is changing as the world warms and as humans exploit more of the deep sea for fishing and mineral extraction.

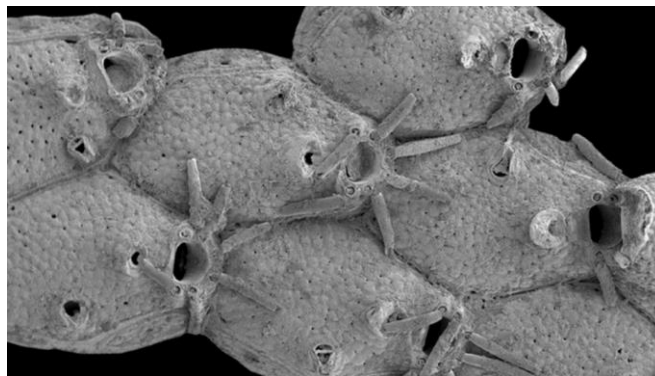


ATLAS

image caption Researchers carried out more than 40 Atlantic expeditions to explore the deep ocean in detail. Studying ocean currents and depositions of fossils on the seabed revealed that the major currents in the North Atlantic have slowed dramatically in response to climate change.

"The implications of that are complicated, but potentially the connections between ecosystems are being reduced," Prof Roberts explained, because ocean currents are the highways that link different habitats together in the vastness of the deep ocean.

Out of sight



ATLAS

image caption A bryozoan named *Microporella funbio* was discovered in an undersea mud volcano off the Spanish coast

"The value of all this knowledge is that it enables us to understand what we might risk losing," said Prof Claire Armstrong, a natural resource economist from the University of Tromsø.

"The deep ocean can be so out of sight and out of mind that we're not really aware of what we're doing to its environments and the consequences of what we do."

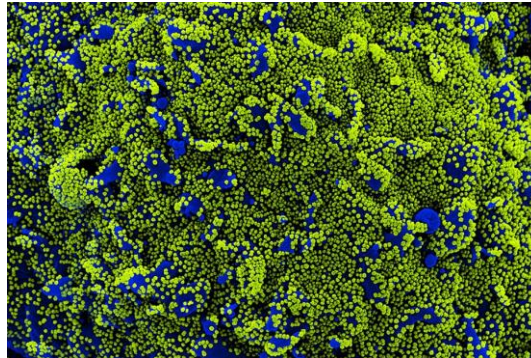
With a growing global population, increasing pollution and emerging areas of commercial activity in the deep sea, including prospecting for medically and industrially useful products, marine scientists say it is vital to fill the gaps in our ocean knowledge.

The ocean is not an endless resource, Prof Armstrong added. "Conserving and knowing what we might need in the future is really, really difficult."

COVID-19 variants: What the world knows so far

Davinci Maru, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Dec 28 2020 04:58 PM



Colorized scanning electron micrograph of a cell (blue) heavily infected with SARS-CoV-2 virus particles (green), isolated from a patient sample. Image captured at the NIAID Integrated Research Facility (IRF) in Fort Detrick, Maryland. *Credit: NIAID*

MANILA - Health authorities have identified variants of the coronavirus, believed to be driving the current surge in infections in parts of the world.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has said that viruses, including SARS-CoV-2, change over time and mutate constantly.

"But most of these mutations or changes do not have a direct benefit to the virus or may even be detrimental to its propagation," [it said](#).

However, the UN health agency cautioned that more investigation was needed to fully understand the impact of specific mutation on viral properties and the effectiveness of diagnostics, therapeutics, and vaccines.

Due to the threat of coronavirus mutations, which experts fear are more transmissible, countries have imposed travel restrictions, including the Philippines, to rein its spread.

Since the pandemic began, the SARS-CoV-2, which causes the disease, has infected more than 80 million people, of which over 1.7 million have died, according to a running tally from US-based Johns Hopkins University.

Here's what's known about the coronavirus variants:

United Kingdom

This variant is referred to as SARS-CoV-2 VUI 202012/01 (Variant Under Investigation, year 2020, month 12, variant 01), the WHO said. It is also called B.1.1.7.

Initial analysis indicates that the variant may spread more readily between people, with an estimated increase of between 40 percent and 70 percent in transmissibility, [it added](#).

Investigations are ongoing to determine if this variant is associated with any changes in the severity of symptoms, antibody response or vaccine efficacy.

The WHO said retrospective analysis traced the first identified variant to Kent, South East England on Sept. 20 2020, which was followed by a rapid increase of the same variant identified later in November.

Most COVID-19 cases from whom this variant have occurred in people under 60 years of age, the agency added.

This variant has already reached several countries, including Japan, South Korea, Hong Kong and Australia.

South Africa

The new variant, referred to as 501.V2, was discovered by a network of scientists around South Africa who had been tracking the genetics of the SARS-COV-2 virus.



The variant appears to be focused in the south and southeast regions of the country and has been dominating findings from samples collected since October, they said.

First identified in Nelson Mandela Bay, along South Africa's east coast, it spread rapidly to other districts in the Eastern Cape, and to the Western Cape and KwaZulu Natal (KZN) provinces.

Scientists said the variant was different from others circulating in South Africa because it has multiple mutations in the important "spike" protein that the virus uses to infect human cells.

It has also been associated with a higher viral load, meaning a higher concentration of virus particles in patients' bodies, possibly contributing to higher levels of transmission.

Between 80 percent and 90 percent of new cases in the country are carrying the mutant variant, according to health authorities.

The variants reported by South Africa and the UK share a common change in the spike protein that may make them more infectious.

But they are different variants, and sequence analysis revealed that they originated separately, the WHO had said.

Nigeria

Another coronavirus variant also emerged in Nigeria, the head of Africa's disease control body had revealed.

"It's a separate lineage from the UK and the South African lineages," John Nkengasong, director of the Africa Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) had said.

Researchers are conducting further investigations on this new N501Y variant to determine if it is more infectious, more transmissible, or has the potential to cause more severe illness, the [Africa CDC said on its website](#).

"Research is also being conducted to assess the impact of the mutations on the performance of existing molecular diagnostics, serological assays, therapeutics, and vaccines," it added.

The news comes as Africa is experiencing a second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Denmark

In November, Danish health authorities reported coronavirus mutation referred to as Cluster 5 stemming from mink farms in the northern part of the country.

In response to possible contagion, the government decided to cull all farmed mink in Denmark. This decision was made following information that it had not been possible to prevent the spread of infection from farm to farm, or from animals to humans.

Over 300 COVID-19 cases were reported among people associated with mink farming in November, [the WHO said](#).

As Nov. 20, no new human cases of the Cluster 5 mutation have been detected by genetic sequencing, and authorities assessed that the Cluster 5 variant is no longer circulating in humans.

The WHO said minks appear to be susceptible to the new virus and "good reservoirs" for the virus. Outbreaks have occurred on mink farms in Denmark, the Netherlands, Spain and the United States.

Source: https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/12/28/20/covid-19-variants-what-the-world-knows-so-far?fbclid=IwAR3_igDMvab2j_g9tqeIjg_OjAVU5ZI6lcIfHVnVKMcUhuQcibbC-zwysAI