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**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**

# DENR partners with Rotary Club, Brgy. Quirino 2-A to install trash trap for cleaner esteros

By DENR Published on December 30, 2020

QUEZON CITY, Dec. 30 -- The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) thru its Task Force Tayo ang Kalikasan, has partnered with the Rotary Club to install a trash trap in Quezon City for cleaner esteros.

DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns and Supervising Undersecretary for Task Force Tayo Ang Kalikasan Benny D. Antiporda said that the trash trap will serve as "defense trap" for garbage that comes from other barangays.

"We cannot solve the problem in Manila Bay if we cannot solve the problem in your barangay," Antiporda said during the program held on December 23, 2020 at the Multi-Purpose Court of Barangay Quirino 2-A.



DENR photo

The 19-foot trash trap, made of fish net and recycled plastic bottles, was installed in Buaya Creek in Barangay Quirino 2-A.

According to Antiporda, Rotary Club districts have greatly contributed in environment protection through the distribution of trash traps for creeks in different areas, some of which are included in the DENR's Enhanced Adopt-An-Estero Waterbody Project.

Antiporda encouraged the community led by its chair Noel Agdeppa to participate not only in tree planting activities but also in caring for the trees to ensure their growth.

More than 80 trash traps will be installed in identified creeks in Quezon City. One was installed in Barangay Novaliches Proper on September 21, 2019.

Officials who joined the activity were Task Force Tayo ang Kalikasan Executive Director and Strategic Communication and Initiatives Service Assistant Director Maria Matilda A. Gaddi; Rene Madarang of Rotary District International 3780, former EMB Regional Director Engineer Roberto Sheen and of Rotary Club of Diliman Silangan, and Chi Armenta of Rotary Club of Cubao.



Barangay Novaliches Proper Kagawad Enrique Añonuevo, Kagawad Elena Quinto, barangay officials from Barangay Quirino 2-A, and estero rangers also attended the event.

"Ikaw, Ako, Tayo ang Kalikasan," said Antiporda "that's why we need to take care of our environment."  
(DENR)

# DENR: COVID-19 fails to dampen Manila Bay rehab efforts

By DENR Published on December 30, 2020

QUEZON CITY, Dec. 30 -- The COVID-19 pandemic has not dampened government efforts to clean up Manila Bay as shown by the sizable gains achieved this year by the inter-agency task force led by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

"Our work continues despite the limitations in mobilizing people, especially for our clean-up, monitoring and enforcement activities," said DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, who chairs the Manila Bay Task Force 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.

Cimatu said that among the priority areas for rehabilitation, a significant decrease in fecal coliform was recorded in three sites, namely, the Baywalk area, Estero de San Antonio Abad and Baseco Beach.



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.



Aside from these priority areas, 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 (m<sup>3</sup>) of silts and submerged garbage were dredged.

Meanwhile, a total of 551,768.72 m<sup>3</sup> 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.

He added: "However, as I repeatedly stressed, 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.

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 ISFs prior to relocation.

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 Roa Duterte in 2019.

Both outline the specific actions, programs and projects to comply with the continuing mandamus of the Supreme Court to restore Manila Bay waters to Class SB, or intended for recreational activities like swimming and bathing.

The implementation of the plan and the President's directive include the monitoring of establishments for pollution and compliance to effluent standards, and the monitoring of water quality in key river mouths, outfalls, and bathing beaches in the Manila Bay region.

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. (DENR)

Source: <https://pia.gov.ph/press-releases/releases/1062728>



# DENR on track to surpass 2020 reforestation target

By DENR Published on December 29, 2020

QUEZON CITY, Dec. 29 -- Around 45,000 hectares of denuded and open forestland have been planted with 35.6 million seedlings by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) as of October this year, posting a 95-percent accomplishment of its 2020 target of 47,166 hectares.

DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu expressed confidence of hitting the 2020 target 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," 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 added.

From 2017 to 2019, protection and maintenance efforts have been undertaken in some 369,371 ENGP plantations. These were established involving 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. (DENR)

Source: <https://pia.gov.ph/press-releases/releases/1062719>



## DENR eyes farming of ‘wood of the gods’ to avert possible extinction of local species

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

December 30, 2020

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is eyeing to promote backyard farming of agarwood, also known as the “wood of the gods,” as a conservation measure and to save the species from rampant harvesting in the wild.

To help save the species from extinction, DENR Assistant Secretary Ricardo Calderon, concurrent director of the DENR’s Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) told the BusinessMirror they are looking at allowing its propagation through backyard farming.

“We are looking at promoting farming of agarwood to save the species,” Calderon said.

The strategy is used in saving wild plant species with high commercial value, like orchids. This is the same principle behind the wildlife farming now being promoted for critically endangered species.

In the Philippines, the DENR promotes crocodile farming for their skin, meat and other byproducts, to help save the saltwater reptile species from extinction.

“Just like crocodile farming, we are looking at farming agarwood. [DENR] Secretary [Roy A.] Cimatu is open to this idea,” Calderon said, adding that a draft administrative order will allow interested parties to venture into agarwood farming in the future once the policy is put in place.

Calderon, a forestry expert said, science and technology will be a big factor in making agarwood farming work.

He said friendly bacteria and virus applied to a fissure or wound it obtains in the wild can be imitated, hence, producing the same aromatic scent it exudes that make it very much in demand.

“We are waiting for the secretary’s approval for this,” he said.

Authorities have been successful in intercepting shipments of agarwood in the past several months. However, this does not effectively prevent the species’ possible extinction.

By allowing agarwood farming, Calderon said there will be a legal source of the wood, hence, buyers, as well as sellers, would not have to risk being caught for involvement in the illegal wildlife trade.

Until the supply for agarwood becomes readily available and accessible from backyard agarwood farms, or even plantation, Calderon said there will always be enterprising middlemen who will look for supply and there will be enterprising Filipinos who will go to the forest to harvest agarwood hoping to cash in from the venture.

Just recently, the Bureau of Customs confiscated 73 kilos of agarwood, with an estimated total value of P62 million at the Port of Davao on December 24.

The seized agarwood is scheduled to be flown to Vietnam via the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Manila.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/12/30/denr-eyes-farming-of-wood-of-the-gods-to-avert-possible-extinction-of-local-species/>



# P62-M shipment of agarwood seized in Davao

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:08 AM December 29, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — The Bureau of Customs (BOC) has seized P62 million worth of agarwood for shipment to Vietnam via Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Manila.

The 73 kilograms of agarwood chips in six boxes were confiscated at Port of Davao on Dec. 24.

Agarwood is on the National List of Threatened Philippine Plants. Agarwood, aloeswood, or gharuwood is a fragrant dark resinous wood used in making incense and perfume. It forms in the heartwood of aquilaria trees when they become infected with a type of mold.

Agarwood is sought primarily for its warming qualities and for its soothing effects when burned as incense. The powdered form of the species is also used to treat diarrhea, dysentery, vomiting and anorexia.

The BOC said the shipment was initially declared as “woodcraft.”

—*Tina G. Santos*



# BMB designates over 200 protected areas

By DENR Published on December 29, 2020

QUEON CITY, Dec. 29 -- Despite the obvious challenges caused by COVID-19, 2020 was a productive year for the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) after having successfully completed the designation of over 200 protected areas (PAs) and saved a dozen species from extinction this year.

The BMB is a staff bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) mandated to conserve and sustainably manage the country's rich biological diversity.

DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu attributed BMB's success to its unwavering commitment to making sure the country's flora and fauna are well protected even during the COVID-19 lockdown when people mobility is limited and environmental crimes are rampant.

"The effects of the community quarantine did not dampen the spirits of our people at BMB. They made sure that the agency's mandates are still fulfilled in the fullest extent possible," Cimatu said.

Cimatu made the statement after the BMB reported that a total of 244 PAs covering more than 7 million hectares have been either legislated or proclaimed in 2020, pursuant to Republic Act 11038 or the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas (E-NIPAS) Act of 2018.



DENR Assistant Secretary and concurrent BMB Director Ricardo Calderon said the importance of designating PAs could not be overstated.

"Without the legislated and proclaimed PAs in the Cagayan and Marikina River Basin, the devastation of Typhoon Ulysses could have been worst for the wildlife and the communities dependent on these natural ecosystems," he pointed out.

Calderon noted that each PA is guided by a science-based management plan, incorporating biodiversity assessment tools that identify appropriate management and conservation measures for flora and fauna and their habitats.



Calderon also reported "12 species are no longer on the edge of extinction" after the BMB intensified its wildlife protection and enforcement efforts.

He said the respective conservation status of these species were downlisted from endangered to vulnerable and vulnerable to other threatened species (OTS).

OTS, which is a classification under DENR Administrative Order 2019-09, refers to species or its varieties that is not critically endangered, endangered or vulnerable, but is under threat from adverse factors such as over collection throughout its range.

Calderon said one such species is the Asian Giant Softshell Turtle (*Pelochelys cantorii*), which was downlisted two levels from its previous status of endangered to OTS.

Another species that was downlisted to endangered to vulnerable are the Negros forest frog (*Platymantis negrosensis*), Mount Data forest frog (*Platymantis subterrestris*), Mindanao bleeding-heart (*Gallicolumba crinigera*), Luzon water redstart (*Rhyacornis bicolor*).

The Mindanao fanged frog (*Limnonectes magnus*), Basilan island caecilian (*Ichthyophis glandulosus*), Todaya caecilian (*Ichthyophis mindanaoensis*), Yellow-headed water monitor (*Varanus cumingi*), Marbled water monitor (*Varanus marmoratus*), Large-scaled water monitor (*Varanus nuchalis*), and Mount Isarog shrew-mouse (*Archboldomys luzonensis*) also downlisted from vulnerable to OTS.

Calderon said that even with this achievement, the BMB should not be complacent since those species under OTS might likely revert to its vulnerable or endangered category if left as it is.

"One of the vital components as to why this is successful is our aggressive wildlife enforcement. To date, we have conducted eight successful operations despite the challenges brought about by the pandemic," Calderon said.

Those operations led to the confiscation of 53 wild fauna and 27.36 kilograms of agarwood or derivatives of *Aquilaria* species with an estimated cost of P5.6 million.

Moreover, seven new cases against wildlife criminals have been filed this year. As of September, the DENR secured 30 convictions out of 32 criminal cases it had previously filed against violators of RA 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2001. (DENR)



## Amid Covid-19, government issues agricultural free patents covering 20,144.98 hectares

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

December 30, 2020

Amid community lockdowns due to Covid-19, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), through its Land Management Bureau (LMB), was able to issue a total of 30,456 agricultural free patents covering around 20,144.98 hectares in various parts of the country in 2020.

Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu said considering the travel restriction and work limitation challenges posed by Covid-19, the agency was able to score major accomplishments.

This accomplishment slightly topped its own target by 4.25 percent.

LMB Director Emelyne V. Talabis said the increase was due to December 31, 2020 deadline on the filing of applications pursuant to Republic Act 9176, as well as the increased use of the Land Administration Management System Philippines (LAMS), which fast-tracked the approval of land surveys.

At the same time, the regions also issued 56,265 residential free patents covering around 1,408.46 hectares across 16 regions in the country.

Such issuances of free patents, which include beneficiaries of the Handog Titulo Program, was in support of President Duterte's socioeconomic agenda of ensuring security of land tenure to encourage investments and to address bottlenecks in land management and titling agencies.

Modernization initiatives of LAMS, such as the migration of land records in the LAMS database, pilot testing of the submission of e-survey returns and online access to survey records, digital cadastral database cleansing, and projection of Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title or Certificate of Ancestral Land Title have been implemented in several cities and regions across the country.

Meanwhile, in partnership with the Land Registration Authority (LRA), a joint memorandum circular has also been crafted to implement information sharing between LMB's LAMS and LRA's Philippine Land Registration and Information System, or PHILARIS. This will link the land information database managed by both agencies and significantly reduce turnaround time in the processing of land transactions.

This year, the regional offices have also formulated the Foreshore Management and Development Plans for the provinces of La Union, Camarines Sur, Leyte, Eastern Samar, Camiguin and Davao Oriental, and the city of Iloilo.

Each plan contains a broad analysis of the conditions and issues covering foreshore lands, as well as recommendations on the appropriate foreshore management scheme to be adopted for each of the said provinces and city.

Upon the recommendation of LMB and DENR-Region 13, Secretary Cimatu, through the Undersecretary for Field Operations, Enforcement and Muslim Affairs Jim Sampulna lifted the titling suspension in Siargao on November 18, 2019. This year, the suspension was lifted in South Cotabato and Sarangani on January 29, Panglao, Bohol on February 28, and Palawan on March 2.

Rapid Land Tenure Assessment (RLTA) was also conducted by the regional offices in support of a planned nationwide acceleration of titling. RLTA is a barangay profiling activity designed to determine how much titling work is still needed to be done in a local government unit.



The LMB also intensified public awareness on Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) Mechanism through the conduct of “ADR on Wheels” in selected cities, as well as its online talk show “Talakayang Panlupa” to encourage parties to settle disputes amicably.

“The resilience that we have developed because of the pandemic all the more drives us to continue to work on our commitment to provide policy direction and technical support on land management and administration for 2021,” said Talabis.



# Manila LGU launches 'Nilad' plant repopulation project

Published December 29, 2020, 9:06 PM

by [Minka Klaudia Tiangco](#)

The Manila City government has started planting "Nilad" along the Baseco Esplanade in Port Area on Tuesday.



(photo from Manila PIO)

This is in line with its plans to bring back the population of the said plants in the capital city.

Manila Vice Mayor Honey Lacuna-Pangan scored the importance of reviving the Nilad plant's population as it is said to be where the city got its name.

The name "Maynila" was said to be coined from the "Nilad" plant, a stalky-rice plant that has white and yellow flowers.

"Lahat po ng proyektong ilulunsad natin dito ay para sa pagpapaganda at pagpapaunlad ng inyong komunidad (All the projects that we will launch here are for the beautification and progress of your community)," the vice mayor said in her speech.

The Manila Department of Public Services and Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau has identified at least four potential sites to place Nilad plants.

These include Baseco Beach, a vacant lot near H2O Hotel, the back of STP building adjacent to Manila Yacht Club, and plant boxes or islands along the Manila Baywalk.



News5  
16h · 🌐

Inilunsad na ng Manila LGU kasama ang DENR-ERDB ang "Nilad for Maynila" project sa Baseco Esplanade ngayong araw. Re-greening effort ito sa bahagi ng Manila Bay sa pamamagitan ng pagbabalik ng populasyon ng Nilad.

📍: Christian Turingan/MPIO, Manila DPS



👍❤️👎 453

91 Comments 16 Shares

# TESDA opens online course on waste management

Jaehwa Bernardo, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Dec 29 2020 07:17 PM



Garbage collectors collect trash at the Blumentritt public market in Manila on October 21, 2020. *Jonathan Cellona, ABS-CBN News*

MANILA – The Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) said Tuesday it launched an online course on waste management to educate more Filipinos on the proper disposal and segregation of garbage.

TESDA said it developed the online course, which is open to the public, in cooperation with the National Solid Waste Management Commission of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

“The free, self-paced course is composed of two units covering the concepts and practices of ecological solid waste management,” TESDA said in a statement.

“It intends to enhance the knowledge, skills and attitudes of the learners on the proper classification, segregation, minimization and disposal of solid wastes,” it said.

The TESDA added that the course would also tackle salient features of Philippine environmental laws.

A certificate and completion can be downloaded for those who will get at least 80 percent in a summative test at the end of the course, TESDA said.

In mid-March, TESDA strengthened its online course program to accommodate a larger number of enrollees after parts of the country were placed on lockdown to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

Those interested may register on the [e-TESDA website](#) or TESDA app.



# Hot logs seized in Cagayan

Published December 29, 2020, 12:27 PM

by [Liezle Basa Iñigo](#)

**TUGUEGARAO CITY** — The Sta. Teresita Police here has intensified its campaign against illegal loggers following the seizure of several illegal timber reportedly owned by a farmer-turned-illegal logger.

Capt. Ranolfo Gabatin of the Sta. Teresita Police, Arsenio Arellano of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, and Task Force Cagayan, with the support of Gov. Manuel Mamba, conducted an anti-illegal logging operation on Tuesday that resulted in the confiscation of 30 pieces of 2x2x8 sawn lumbers of common hard wood with estimated volume of more or less 80 board feet at Sitio Sulbek, Barangay Dungeg, Sta. Teresita, Cagayan.

The suspect was identified as Rommel Pascual, 39, a farmer and resident of Barangay Mission, Sta. Teresita, Cagayan. Pascual was able to escape.

In a related development, the Penablanca police arrested an illegal logger on Tuesday while patrolling Barangay Sisim, Peñablanca, Cagayan . The operatives saw a van loaded with estimated more or less 300 pieces of bundled firewood .

Arrested was Apolinario Dassil, 60, farmer/driver and a resident of Barangay Sisim, Peñablanca, Cagayan after he failed to present any supporting documents and permit to transport the firewood.





## Biga chief claims pleas ignored before landslide



**SIGNS IGNORED?** Residents of Barangay Biga, Toledo City claim they warned officials of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau Central Visayas and Carmen Copper Corp. of large cracks in the village prior to the landslide. (Alan Tangcawan)

[WENILYN SABALO](#)

December 30, 2020

BARELY a month before a deadly landslide hit a mining pit in Barangay Biga, Toledo City last Dec. 21, 2020, residents sought the help of the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) to temporarily halt the mining operations of Carmen Copper Corp. (CCC) after large cracks were discovered in their village.

But the appeal reportedly fell on deaf ears.

Biga Barangay Captain Pedro Sepada Jr. told SunStar Cebu on Tuesday, Dec. 29, that prior to the landslide, barangay officials called for an emergency consultative meeting on Nov. 26 with representatives of the CCC, MGB 7 and Biga residents to discuss possible measures to be undertaken after the cracks were sighted.

He said among those who attended were MGB 7 Director Armando Malicse and CCC vice president for safety and community Ignas Alburo.

Sepada said they also sent an invitation to the Toledo City government but no representative came.

During the meeting, Sepada said they were not given a concrete response or alternative solution by both the MGB and the CCC to ensure the residents' safety while the mining operations continued.

Sepada said they were instead simply told by MGB 7 and CCC officials that their place remained safe.

Residents now believe the huge cracks caused the landslide that claimed the lives of four miners. Six others remain missing.

"It was only after the landslide last Dec. 24, that they declared our area to be unsafe within a radius of 600-meter distance from the pipeline of Carmen Copper. They now say it's unsafe. Now whatever happened to their guarantee of safety before?" he asked in Cebuano.

SunStar Cebu tried to get the side of MGB 7 but calls to Malicse remained unanswered as of this writing.

SunStar Cebu also sought the comment of CCC, but the mining firm's representatives had yet to respond to the queries as of press time.

### **Needed presence 'unclear'**

John Roseller Layan, Toledo City public information officer, said the office of Mayor Marjorie Perales was furnished a copy of the barangay's invitation for a meeting addressed to the MGB 7.



But Layan said they were unable to send a representative as it was not clear if their presence was necessary since the letter was not addressed to Perales.

“But it’s true they copy furnished the Office of the Mayor, but the letter was not addressed to the Mayor. Only copy furnished,” Layan said in Cebuano.

Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia said the Provincial Government will not conduct its own investigation and will, instead, wait for the MGB probe to end before implementing a course of action.

Garcia also said she will leave it up to the MGB 7 to decide whether or not the CCC has any liability.

“The investigation, that is not our expertise nor is that our mandate. MGB has already issued a suspension of operations and MGB is going to undertake the investigation. So let’s put things in proper perspective. While the investigation is ongoing, perhaps it is best to wait for the results,” Garcia said.

Garcia also warned those reportedly using the landslide incident to push their own agenda to tread lightly.

“I am not taking any sides. I want to be as objective as possible. However, there are some personalities that are not as objective because they have their own interest in Carmen Copper. They want to control so that they can do business with Carmen Copper. So this is a warning to those who want to make it difficult,” Garcia said in a mix of Cebuano and English.

Garcia said the CCC mining operations have given jobs and helped develop Toledo City.

Garcia said there is a need to thoroughly investigate the matter as she does not want those with their own “personal interest” in the mining operations of CCC to ruin the lives of so many people working there.

She assured the Province will provide help to the families of miners who have died and those who remain missing after the landslide.

### **Search and retrieval**

Meanwhile, Layan said the search and retrieval operations continue for the six remaining missing workers.

Both water and land retrieval operations have been launched using sonar technology.

Food packs, evacuation tents, and stress debriefing have also been given to 400 families living near the collapsed portion of the open pit who were evacuated to a multipurpose court in Biga’s sitio of Hag-it.

Mayor Perales also directed the City’s Housing Board to look for a permanent housing relocation site should the MGB 7 recommend the permanent relocation of affected residents.

Sought for comment, Sepada said he is against the permanent relocation of residents and would rather the CCC just restore the area with cracks and stop its mining operations.

Sepada lamented that he was somehow confused because ever since the landslide, the City has still not called for a meeting between barangay officials, the CCC and the MGB 7. **(JOB, ANV / JKV)**

Source: <https://www.sunstar.com.ph/article/1881418/Cebu/Local-News/Biga-chief-claims-pleas-ignored-before-landslide>

# Group to govt: Review management of natural resources amid collapse of Toledo City pit

By: Delta Dyrecka Letigio - CDN Digital Correspondent | December 29, 2020 - 05:25 PM



Search and retrieval operations continue at the collapsed mine site for the six missing miners.

| Photo courtesy of the Toledo City PIO

CEBU CITY, Philippines — The collapse of an open mining pit in Toledo City, Cebu, should be a wake-up call for the government to manage Cebu's natural resources better.

The Sectoral Transparency Alliance for Natural Resource Governance (STANCE) Cebu has released a statement urging the government to look into the collapse of the pit operated by Carmen Copper Corporation (CCC) leading to the death of four miners and six others missing.

The STANCE Cebu urge the government to provide restitution to the families of the deceased miners through a proper, diligent, and transparent fact-finding process to identify who are liable for the incident.

“So that accountability can be exacted from those who are liable to answer to this disaster,” said STANCE Cebu.

The group also calls on the government agencies mandated to lead the management of natural resources to update standards of monitoring, intensify efforts in environmental management, provide timely disclosure of information, and expand spaces of oversight of extractive industries.

They urge for multidisciplinary approaches and multistakeholder engagements in the governance of natural resources.

The alliance is reminded of the Naga landslide in 2018, which killed more than 70 individuals and which was reportedly caused by rampant quarrying in the area.

“After the similar unfortunate event in 2018, the Cebuano people deserve deliberate approach for a better world, a sustainable future. The time to put our acts together is now,” said STANCE Cebu. /rcg

Source: <https://cebudailynews.inquirer.net/357062/group-to-govt-review-management-of-natural-resources-amid-collapse-of-toledo-city-pit>



# Mining transforms sleepy farming village in Leyte

By Sarwell Meniano [December 29, 2020, 1:33 pm](#)

MACARTHUR, Leyte – From a sleepy farming community, a village here has become a busy mining site with half of the residents now engaged in well-compensated jobs.

Gone are the days when Maya village chief Pepito Guimalan had to worry about the plight of hungry and sick residents who had no cash to buy their daily needs.

At least 150 of the 300 villagers have been hired by MacArthur Iron Sand Project Corp. (MIPC), earning a minimum of PHP325 daily, way higher than the PHP200 average daily earnings from day-long work in rice farms.

The firm has been hiring workers since the middle of this year.

“While the economy in other areas has been affected by (the) coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic, life has improved here in Maya after mining started their operations,” Guimalan said in an interview on Monday.



**BLACK SAND MINING.** A portion of the pilot area of MacArthur Iron Sand Project Corp. in Maya village. While the economy in other areas has been affected by the pandemic, life has improved in Maya after the company’s mining operations began, village chief Pepito Guimalan said in an interview on Monday (Dec. 28, 2020). (PNA photo by Sarwell Meniano)

The firm has been hiring workers since the middle of this year.

“While the economy in other areas has been affected by (the) coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic, life has improved here in Maya after mining started their operations,” Guimalan said in an interview on Monday.

Villagers have been hired as laborers, skilled workers, foremen, and timekeepers, among others.

Those who were not hired have opened their store business to supply the needs of workers, just like Guimalan’s family.

Despite opposition from MacArthur town parish priest Amadeo Alvero and some groups, Guimalan said they supported the business since they have an agreement that the firm would conduct progressive rehabilitation in every three hectares of the mined area.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) reported that the MIPC is one of the priority mining projects tapped by the government to help the economy adversely affected by the health crisis.

The firm is reportedly investing PHP500 million and has already hired nearly 300 workers in MacArthur town this year.

The MGB granted the MIPC mining claims of 2,300 hectares last September, covering the towns of MacArthur, Javier, and Abuyog.

In MacArthur alone, the MIPC has mining claims of about 300 hectares for three years.



The first property with actual black sand extraction is Guimalan's seven-hectare rice land leased by the mining firm for two years at PHP270,000 per hectare.

"It's been three years that my rice land has been losing yield due to flooding and pest infestation. When they presented their proposal to us, I offered my farm as a pilot site. I managed to pay all my debts and set up a small store business here," he added.

Januar Ong, MIPC community relations officer, assured landowners that they are committed to restoring all areas covered by their mining operations and even introduce more suitable high-value crops.

"In our seven-hectare pilot area, rehabilitation is ongoing. We will not leave any hole unfilled. We will also place the topsoil back to its original place to make the farm productive again," Ong told reporters.

MGB 8 (Eastern Visayas) Director Leo Van Juguan said the firm is compliant with all laws governing mining operations based on their regular inspections.

"We welcome any apprehensions about this project. We have to take a look at whether it is valid or not," Juguan said.

The MIPC, which holds an operating agreement with Strong Built Mining Development Corp. (SBMDC), has so far extracted 25,000 tons of black sand from its pilot site in Maya during its debugging stage.

It is now on a transition to commercial operations.

The SBMDC holds a 25-year Mineral Production Sharing Agreement (MPSA) with the government for the Leyte Iron Sand project.

Signed in July 2007, the MPSA covers 7,411.55 hectares of land spanning the towns of Dulag, Mayorga, MacArthur, Abuyog, and Javier.

Its products are up for shipment to China.

Black sand is a highly valuable mineral used in making concrete, steel, cosmetics, jewelry, and other industrial products. (PNA)



Anievas  
STAR/File

## 'Responsible miner' gets PRC accolade

(The Philippine Star) - December 30, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Regulation Commission (PRC), virtually honors their picks for the "2020 Outstanding Professionals."

This year's honorees include a 'responsible miner' in the name of Engr. Jose Bermudez Anievas, the pride of Nickel Asia Corp. (NAC).

Jobby or JBA, as he is known in the mining industry, is the '2020 Outstanding Professional of the Year in the Field of Mining Engineering' – the highest award by the PRC given to a professional as recommended by peers for demonstrating competence in the highest degree and integrity in the exercise of his profession.



# Puffer fish kills 3 in Leyte town

By: [Joey Gabieta](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Inquirer Visayas](#) / 09:24 PM December 29, 2020

TACLOBAN CITY—Three persons died after eating puffer fish in Tabango town, Leyte on Monday (Dec. 28).

Restituto Sumalinog, 63; Lucricia Anislagon, 49; and Ramil Catam-isan, 40—all residents of the village of Tabling—were brought to the Tabango District Hospital but died there.

Four others who ate puffer fish were confined at the Leyte Provincial Hospital based in Palo town.

Puffer fish carries the toxin tetrodotoxin which, according to an article in National Geographic, was 1,200 times more poisonous than cyanide. The NatGeo article said there's enough toxin in one puffer fish to kill 30 adults and there is no known antidote.

In Japan, puffer fish is served raw but only after careful preparation by trained sushi chefs.

Reports reaching the regional headquarter of the Philippine National Police said Sumalinog bought puffer fish, locally known as butete, from a certain Corazon Yanon and brought them to his barbeque stand and offered it to others at a drinking spree.

Around 10:30 p.m. on Monday, Sumalinog, Anislagon and Catam-isan suffered from severe vomiting then went unconscious.

Edited by TSB



# Travel ban sa 20 bansa ikinasa ng Pinas

By [Malou Escudero](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon) - December 30, 2020 - 12:00am



Sa ipinalabas na pahayag ni Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque, ang travel ban ay ipatutupad ngayong araw, Disyembre 30 sa ganap na alas-12:01 ng umaga hanggang Enero 15, 2021.

MANILA, Philippines — Pinalawak pa ni Pa-ngulong Rodrigo Duterte sa 20 na bansa ang travel ban upang mapigilan ang pagpasok sa Pilipinas ng bagong strain ng COVID-19.

Sa ipinalabas na pahayag ni Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque, ang travel ban ay ipatutupad ngayong araw, Disyembre 30 sa ganap na alas-12:01 ng umaga hanggang Enero 15, 2021.

Bukod sa United Kingdom hindi na rin muna papayagang makapasok o dumaan sa Pilipinas ang lahat ng "foreign travelers" mula sa Denmark, Ireland, Japan, Australia, Israel, The Netherlands, Hong Kong, SAR, Switzerland, France, Germany, Iceland, Italy, Lebanon, Singapore, Sweden, South Korea, South Africa, Canada at Spain.

Ang mga pasahero na nasa biyahe na at dara-ting sa bansa ngayon, Disyembre 30 mula sa 20 nabanggit na bansa ay papayagang makapasok pero kinakailangang sumailalim sa facility-based 14-day quarantine period kahit pa negatibo ang resulta ng RT-PCR test.

Hindi naman kasama sa travel ban ang mga Filipino na manggaga-ling sa nasabing bansa pero kinakailangan nilang manatili sa mga quarantine facilities ng gobyerno sa loob ng 14 na araw kahit pa hindi sila positibo sa COVID-19.

Maaari ring magpatupad ng restrictions ang Office of the President sa iba pang bansa base sa rekomendasyon ng Department of Health at Department of Foreign Affairs.

Inatasan din ng Pa-ngulo ang Bureau of Quarantine at Overseas Workers Welfare Administration na tiyaking istriktong nasusunod ang quarantine at testing protocols sa mga Filipino at OFW na bumabalik sa bansa.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/bansa/2020/12/30/2067104/travel-ban-sa-20-bansa-ikinasa-ng-pin-as/amp/>





DBM data showed that P103.24 billion of the amount was charged against the P140 billion stimulus package under the law, leaving P36.76 billion in funds yet to be deployed to key implementing agencies.

Philstar.com/File

## Bayanihan 2 fund releases reach P108 billion

[Mary Grace Padin](#) (The Philippine Star) - December 30, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Total funds released under the Bayanihan to Recover as One Act reached P107.96 billion until the law's expiration on Dec. 19, according to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM).

DBM data showed that P103.24 billion of the amount was charged against the P140 billion stimulus package under the law, leaving P36.76 billion in funds yet to be deployed to key implementing agencies.

The remaining P4.73 billion came from regular funds under the 2020 General Appropriations Act.

Earlier, DBM Assistant Secretary Rolando Toledo said the agency had temporarily stopped the release of funds pending the President's signing of a law, which will extend the validity of the stimulus funds under Bayanihan 2. The Bayanihan 2 Law set aside a P140 billion stimulus package to help the country rebound from the debilitating effects of the pandemic, plus another P25.5 billion in standby funds.

Including releases during and after the implementation of the first stimulus under the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act, the government already released a total of P500.7 billion for its COVID-19 response since March.

Broken down, the DBM said P23.29 billion of the total Bayanihan 2 releases went to the Department of Agriculture (DA), the highest among all agencies so far. The amount was used for the implementation of projects under the Agriculture Stimulus Package.

The DA was followed by the Department of Health (DOH), which cornered P22.47 billion of the total allocation. The allocation was used for programs that aim to strengthen the country's health system, and for the payment of salaries and allowances to medical personnel.

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) acquired P16.4 billion to support Filipino workers who have been negatively impacted by the coronavirus pandemic and mobility restrictions.

About P12.03 billion in allotments was issued to the Department of Finance (DOF), which was mostly transmitted to government financial institutions, including Small Business Corp., Land Bank of the Philippines and Development Bank of the Philippines for their lending activities.



Some funds were also given as support to local government units.

The Department of Transportation (DOTr) received a total of P10.31 billion, while the Department of Social and Welfare Development (DSWD) got P6 billion.

Other agencies which received funding are the Departments of Education (P4.3 billion), Interior and Local Government (P3.56 billion), Commission on Higher Education (P3.3 billion), Public Works and Highways (P2.84 billion), National Defense (P1.32 billion), Trade and Industry (P1.1 billion), Foreign Affairs (P820 million) as well as the Philippine Sports Commission (P180 million), Office of the Presidential Adviser on the Peace Process (P28.37 million) and University of the Philippines (P15 million).



# Unconstitutional items in 2021 nat'l budget vetoed: Palace

By Azer Parrocha [December 29, 2020, 3:16 pm](#)

MANILA – President Rodrigo Duterte vetoed some provisions of the 2021 General Appropriations Act (GAA), Malacañang said Tuesday.

In a virtual presser, Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said Duterte exercised his power to veto certain unconstitutional items before signing the PHP4.5-trillion national budget for next year on Monday.

*“Bilang bahagi ng kaniyang Constitutional mandate na lahat ng batas ay tapat na maipatupad, pinag-aralan ng punong ehekutibo ang mga probisyon ng ating pambansang budget at sinubject sa direct veto ang mga probisyon kontra sa mga nakasaad sa ating Saligang Batas (As part of his Constitutional mandate that all laws be lawfully enforced, the Chief Executive studied the provisions of our national budget and subject to direct veto the provisions against those stated in our Constitution),”* Roque said.



**VETOED PROVISIONS.** President Rodrigo Roa Duterte leads the ceremonial signing of the 2021 General Appropriations Act (GAA) at the Malacañan Palace on Dec. 28, 2020. Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque on Tuesday (Dec. 29) said Duterte vetoed some of the PHP4.5-trillion national budget's provisions that are against the Constitution. (Presidential photo by King Rodriguez)

Roque said Duterte vetoed the provision allowing agencies to directly use their income.

*“Ilan sa dinirect veto ni Presidente ang may kinalaman sa may use of income ng ilang department at ahensiya (Among the provisions he vetoed is the provision on the use of income of some departments and agencies),”* he added.

He said as a general rule, all income of agencies shall accrue to the General Fund of the National Government, unless otherwise authorized by a separate substantive law.

*“Ibig sabihin lang po nito, dapat lahat ng kinita ng mga ahensiya ay pumasok sa National Treasury at kinakailangan ang paggastos dito ay sang-ayon sa national budget (This simply means that all the revenue of the agencies must go to the National Treasury and it is necessary to spend it in accordance with the national budget),”* he said.

He noted that Duterte ordered the efficient use of public funds, including the utilization of infrastructure-related expenses, implementation of financial assistance to local government units (LGUs), implementation of rice subsidy, and the prompt release and utilization of the National Disaster Risk Reduction Management (NDRRM) Fund.

Duterte also ordered the need to observe prevailing laws, policies, and regulations in relation to procurement-related provisions, distribution of allowances and benefits, the use of the Quick Response Fund, identifying program beneficiaries, establishing evacuation centers, implementing service contracting, and funding foreign-assisted projects among others, he added.

Roque also said Duterte urged Congress to promote the proper and transparent management and expenditure of public funds based on sound fiscal policies.



Duterte signed Republic Act No. 11518 to boost the administration's efforts to effectively respond to the challenges of the Covid-19 pandemic and provide critical measures to aid the economic and social sectors.

One of the most important allocations in the 2021 national budget is the PHP72.5 billion for the purchase of storage, transportation, and distribution of Covid-19 vaccines, he said.

Duterte also assured the public that the administration would ensure the efficient use of resources to help overcome the debilitating effects of the pandemic on public health and the economy.

He said the 2021 national budget attests to a fruitful collaboration between the executive and legislative branches of government especially at a time when the health and welfare of people are at stake. (PNA)



# UNDP: Broken societies place humans on collision course with planet, nature

By [BusinessMirror](#)

December 30, 2020



Empowered lives.  
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NEW YORK—The ongoing pandemic is the latest crisis facing the world, but unless humans release their grip on nature, it won't be the last—according to a new report by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which includes a new experimental index on human progress that takes into account countries' carbon dioxide emissions and material footprint.

The report lays out a stark choice for world leaders: Take bold steps to reduce the immense pressure being exerted on the environment and the natural world, or humanity's progress will stall.

"Humans wield more power over the planet than ever before," said UNDP Administrator Achim Steiner. "In the wake of [the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19)], record-breaking temperatures and spiraling inequality, it is time to use that power to redefine what we mean by progress, where our carbon and consumption footprints are no longer hidden."

"As this report shows, no country in the world has yet achieved very high human development without putting immense strain on the planet," Steiner explained. "But we could be the first generation to right this wrong. That is the next frontier for human development."

The report argues that, as people and planet enter an entirely new geological epoch—the Anthropocene or the Age of Humans—it is time to for all countries to redesign their paths to progress by fully accounting for the dangerous pressures humans put on the planet, while dismantling the gross imbalances of power and opportunity that prevent change.

## Human Development Index

TO illustrate the point, the 30th anniversary edition of the *Human Development Report, The Next Frontier: Human Development and the Anthropocene* introduces an experimental new lens to its annual Human Development Index (HDI).

By adjusting the HDI, which measures a nation's health, education and standards of living to include two more elements: a country's carbon dioxide emissions and its material footprint, the index shows how the global development landscape would change if both the well-being of people and also the planet were central to defining humanity's progress.

With the resulting Planetary-Pressures Adjusted HDI, or PHDI, a new global picture emerges, painting a less-rosy but clearer assessment of human progress. For example, more than 50 countries dropped out of the very high human development group, which reflects their dependence on fossil fuels and material footprint.

Despite these adjustments, countries like Costa Rica, Moldova and Panama have moved upward by at least 30 places, recognizing that lighter pressure on the planet is possible.



“The Human Development Report is an important product by the United Nations (UN). In a time where action is needed, the new generation of Human Development Reports—with greater emphasis on the defining issues of our time such as climate change and inequalities—helps us to steer our efforts toward the future we want,” said Prime Minister Stefan Löfven of Sweden, host country of the launch of the report.

## Working with nature

THE next frontier for human development will require working with nature, and not against it, while transforming social norms, values, and government and financial incentives, the report argues.

For instance, new estimates project that by 2100, the poorest countries in the world could experience up to 100 more days of extreme weather due to climate change each year—a number that could be cut in half if the Paris Agreement on climate change is fully implemented.

Yet, fossil fuels are still being subsidized: The full cost to societies of publicly financed subsidies for fossil fuels—including indirect costs—is estimated at more than \$5 trillion a year, or 6.5 percent of global gross domestic product, according to figures from the International Monetary Fund cited in the report.

Reforestation and taking better care of forests could alone account for roughly a quarter of the pre-2030 actions humans must take to stop global warming from reaching 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.

“While humanity has achieved incredible things, it is clear that we have taken our planet for granted,” said UN Secretary-General’s Envoy for the Youth Jayathma Wickramanayake. “Across the world, young people have spoken up, recognizing that these actions put our collective future at risk.”

“As the 2020 Human Development Report makes clear, we need to transform our relationship with the planet—to make energy and material consumption sustainable, and to ensure every young person is educated and empowered to appreciate the wonders that a healthy world can provide.”

## Inequalities, colonialism, racism

HOW people experience planetary pressures is tied to how societies work, according to UNDP’s Human Development Report Office Director and lead author of the report Pedro Conceição. He declared: “Today, broken societies are putting people and the planet on a collision course.”

Inequalities within and between countries with deep roots in colonialism and racism mean that people who have more capture the benefits of nature and export the costs, the report shows. This chokes opportunities for people who have less and minimizes their ability to do anything about it.

For example, land stewarded by indigenous peoples in the Amazon absorbs, on a per-person basis, the equivalent carbon dioxide emitted by the richest 1 percent of people in the world. However, IPs continue to face hardship, persecution and discrimination, and have little voice in decision-making, as stated by the report.

Discrimination based on ethnicity frequently leaves communities severely affected and exposed to high environmental risks such as toxic waste or excessive pollution—a trend reproduced in urban areas across continents, argued the authors. According to the report, easing planetary pressures in a way that enables all people to flourish in this new age requires dismantling the gross imbalances of power and opportunity that stand in the way of transformation.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/12/30/undp-broken-societies-place-humans-on-collision-course-with-planet-nature/>



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