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STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE

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DENR wraps up Asian Waterbird Census 2022, urges public to protect environment

Published January 28, 2022, 6:03 PM

by Faith Argosino

To provide healthy wetlands for migratory birds, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has urged the public to maintain a clean environment as it concluded the Asian Waterbird Census 2022 recently.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Roy Cimatu (File photo)

"Filipinos should be more conscientious about the impact of migratory birds on the environment. Maintaining the ecological integrity and abundance of our coastal areas, offshore habitats, and inland wetlands are crucial for bird migration and beneficial to people," DENR Secretary Roy A. Cimatu said in a statement on Jan. 27.

The annual waterbird count is held every second or third week of January. It is part of the International Waterbird Census, a global waterbird monitoring program coordinated by Wetlands International.

According to Cimatu, a total of 300,000 to 500,000 waterbirds have been recorded in over 150 wetland areas across the country in the last five years.

Likewise, Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) Director Natividad Bernardino emphasized the importance of a well-kept environment. She said that the capacity of migrating birds to complete their migration cycle depends on intact and functional wetlands.

"These migratory waterbirds rely on healthy wetlands which serve as their staging site or temporary stop-over to rest and feed to build up sufficient energy for the next phase of their journey down south and back to their breeding ground in the northern hemisphere," Bernardino said.

"The results of the Asian Waterbird Census help us identify wetland sites for priority protection and management and set aside wetlands of national and international importance," she added.



'Blue guards' to secure country's protected areas

Rhodina Villanueva - The Philippine Star January 30, 2022 | 12:00am



Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said this will be made possible through its field offices, and with the Biodiversity Management Bureau overseeing the protected areas' administration and management on the national level. Senate PRIB / Cesar Tomambo

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) bared its plan to hire security personnel or "blue guards" to prevent individuals from illegally occupying the country's protected areas.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said this will be made possible through its field offices, and with the Biodiversity Management Bureau overseeing the protected areas' administration and management on the national level.

"We will continue to make the preservation of the country's protected areas a top priority this year by focusing on efforts to address the illegal occupation on these areas," Cimatu said.

The DENR chief added, "We have taken for granted these protected areas. The perennial problem of illegal occupants is the reason why these areas are polluted and destroyed."

With the enactment of Republic Act 11038 or the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System (ENIPAS) Act of 2018, 94 protected areas were added to the roster of legislated protected areas, bringing the total number to 107.

The public lands within these legislated protected areas are classified as national parks under the 1987 Philippine Constitution.

The DENR is also looking into tapping the Armed Forces of the Philippines and the Philippine National Police to reinforce security in the protected areas.

Under the law, "occupying or dwelling in any public land within a protected area without clearance from the concerned Protected Area Management Board, is strictly prohibited."

The violators of the ENIPAS Act, as amended, will be fined P200,000 to P1 million or will be imprisoned for one year, but not more than six years, or both.

Source: <u>https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2022/01/30/2157342/blue-guards-secure-countrys-protected-areas</u>





Headline Editorial Column Opinion Feature Article

Cimatu: Preserbasyon ng protected areas mananatiling prayoridad



January 29, 2022 @ 4:19 PM 14 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Upang protektahan ang kalikasan sinabi ni Secretary Roy A. Cimatu na ipagpapatuloy ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ngayong taon ang pagbibigay prayoridad sa pag-iingat sa mga protected areas sa pamamagitan ng pagbibigay pansin sa "illegal occupation" sa mga naturang lugar.

"We have taken for granted these protected areas. The perennial problem of illegal occupants is the reason why these areas are polluted and destroyed," saad ni Cimatu sa ginanap na taunang Expanded Executive Committee Conference kasama ang mga opisyal ng DENR noong Enero 18.

Kaugnay nito ikinokonsidera rin ng DENR ang pagtalaga ng security personnel o "blue guards" sa pamamagitan ng mga field offices nito upang mapigilan ang sinumang gustong sakupin ang protected areas. Ang Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) ang siyang mamamahala nito sa national level.

Dahil na rin sa pagpasa bilang batas ng Republic Act (RA) 11038 o ang Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System (ENIPAS) Act of 2018 ay 94 pang protected areas ang nadagdag sa listahan ng legislated protected areas kung saan ay umabot na ito sa 107.

Samantala ang mga public lands sa loob ng mga legislated protected areas ay itinuturing na national parks sa ilalim ng 1987 Saligang Batas ng Pilipinas.

"We are studying the possibility of hiring blue guards in these areas to secure them from illegal occupants," anang Cimatu na idinagdag pa na ang Upper Marikina River Basin Protected Landscape ay ang isa sa magiging prayoridad.

Kaugnay nito tinitignan din ng DENR ang pagkuha sa Armed Forces of the Philippines at Philippine National Police upang palakasin ang seguridad sa protected areas.

Nakasaad sa batas na "occupying or dwelling in any public land within a protected area without clearance from the concerned Protected Area Management Board is strictly prohibited."

Ang sinumang lalabag sa NIPAS Act, as amended, ay papatawan ng multang P200,000 hanggang P1 million o pagkakakulong ng isang taon at hindi lalampas sa anim na taon, o ng parehas na parusa.



Samantala, ayon kay DENR-BMB Director Natividad Bernardino, patuloy na ipinatutupad ang mga hakbang upang epektibong mapangalagaan ang protected areas ng bansa.

Ang paghihiwalay sa mga protected area ay alinsunod na rin sa mga probisyon ng ENIPAS Act at ng DENR Administrative Order No. 2015-10 at dagdag na rin dito ang BMB Technical Bulletin No. 2019-01. (Santi Celario)

Source: <u>https://www.remate.ph/cimatu-preserbasyon-ng-protected-areas-mananatiling-prayoridad/?fbclid=IwAR0J_guZIKzgKNNBfysInw26roNalzGSeyYret-agt4Eqx30A-bnYo-TqXk</u>



Ethnic tribes elated with Cimatu's visit to copper-rich town

John Unson - Philstar.com January 29, 2022 | 2:06pm



Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu (2nd from right) was briefed extensively on the planned extraction of copper deposits in Tampakan, South Cotabato during his visit to the municipality Monday.

KORONADAL CITY, Philippines — The Blaans saw as "good sign" the visit of Natural Resources Secretary Roy Cimatu to Tampakan town where there are copper deposits they want mined to bail them out from grinding poverty.

Dalena Samling, a Blaan tribal leader, told reporters Saturday they were elated with Monday's dialogue between Cimatu and community representatives wishing to have the copper fields in the municipality explored for socio-economic gains.

Cimatu was accompanied on Monday to Tampakan, a centuries-old domain of ethnic Blaans, by mining engineers and geologists from the central office of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and senior Region 12 DENR officials.

"That visit of a DENR secretary to Tampakan was a strong proof that the national government supports our struggle to be permitted to extract the copper deposits in Tampakan. A good sign indeed," Samling said.

Domingo Collado, Tampakan's municipal indigenous people's mandatory representative, said Saturday the visit of Cimatu to their hometown should encourage members of the South Cotabato Sangguniang Panlalawigan to immediately lift the controversial provincial ordinance that bans copper mining activities in the province.

"It's obvious that the national government wants responsible mining activities done in the country to generate revenues to cope up with deficits due to huge expenditures for anti-COVID-19 measures," Collado said.

Cimatu, while in Tampakan, told community leaders and their mayor, Leonard Escobillo, that the DENR's only wish is for all to cooperate in ensuring responsible mining in the municipality once permitted to explore the copper fields around.

The South Cotabato SP has been reviewing since November 2021 the provincial anti-mining ban based on clamors of the Blaan and T'boli communities and the business groups here and in other parts of the province to have it rescinded.

Filipino mining experts and geologists from Europe and Australia have placed at no less than 5.8 billion in Euro currency the value of the copper deposits in Tampakan, about 14 kilometers from this city, the capital of South Cotabato.



Edmund Ugal, a T'boli datu in nearby T'boli town in South Cotabato, said Saturday they are grateful to Cimatu and his entourage for their visit to Tampakan last Monday.

"Surely, they must have felt our immense bid for the extraction of copper in Tampakan, the only way the Blaans there can rise from poverty and underdevelopment. Their visit was a good sign. We are thankful to them," Ugal said.

Cimatu was reported by local media outfits this week to have expressed fascination over how the firm contracted by the government to extract copper in Tampakan, the Sagittarius Mines Incorporated, had facilitated the schooling of now more than 700 professionals via its college scholarship program despite not having even operated yet since 1995.

SMI officials reported to Cimatu on Monday that the company had already spent hundreds in millions worth of money for reforestation, infrastructure, health and education projects and livelihood support programs for local beneficiaries.

The firm presently has 31,000 elementary, high school and college scholars, Blaan leaders told the visiting DENR officials.

"We just need to make sure there shall be responsible mining here," Cimatu told them during their meeting.



February 2 is World Wetlands Day: Wetlands are not wastelands; they are highly

productive ecosystems

BYJONATHAN L. MAYUGA JANUARY 30, 2022



The Laguna de Bay, one of country's largest inland freshwater lake, is a productive fishing ground and the biggest aquaculture hub in the Philippines. It is one of the most economically important water bodies in the Philippines. Photo courtesy of Pamalakaya

The World Wetlands Day (WWD) is celebrated every February 2 to raise global awareness about the important role of wetlands for people and planet. It marks the date of the adoption of the Convention on Wetlands on February 2, 1971, in the Iranian city of Ramsar.

This year, the celebration is the first time that WWD will be observed as a United Nations international day after it was adoption by the General Assembly on August 30, 2021, in a resolution co-sponsored by 75 member states.

The WWD theme this year is "Wetlands Action for People and Nature," to highlight the importance of actions "to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands for humans and planetary health."

The Philippines, through the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, (DENR) celebrates WWD in support of its international commitment to protect and conserve wetlands.

Global celebration

As part of the global celebration, and in recognition of the value of wetland ecosystems in the Asean region, the Philippine-based Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), in partnership with the Department of Freshwater Wetlands Conservation, General Directorate of Natural Protected Areas of the Ministry of Environment of Cambodia, the Society for the Conservation of Philippine Wetlands, and the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, will be conducting a series of events for the celebration of WWD.

"As this year's Asean chairman, Cambodia is underscoring the importance of enhancing the capacity of the region to respond against climate change and natural disasters," ACB Executive Director Theresa Mundita S. Lim told the BusinessMirror via Messenger on January 25.

"Thus, the Asean WWD 2022 event will highlight the significance of wetland protection and conservation as a key contributor to Asean's response against the impacts of climate change, and to pandemic recovery and prevention," Lim added.

Lim said this year's theme underlines the importance of wetlands in sustaining people's health and livelihoods, and its crucial role in addressing biodiversity and the climate crises.



"The events aspire to intensify regional awareness on the conservation, sustainable and wise use, and restoration of wetlands in the region," she noted.

Vanishing ecosystems

According to the UN World Wetlands Day Secretariat, about 90 percent of the world's wetlands have been degraded since the 1700s and wetlands are lost three times faster than forests.

It noted that while wetlands are critically important ecosystems that contribute to biodiversity, climate mitigation and adaptation, freshwater availability, world economies and more, protection and conservation initiatives remain wanting.

In the Philippines, wetland conservation is one of the mandates of the DENR through its Caves, Wetlands and Other Ecosystems Division (Cawed).

What is a wetland?

Republic Act 11038, or the Expanded National Integrated Protected Area Systems Act (ENipas Act), defines wetlands as a wide variety of inland habitats, such as marshes, peatlands, floodplains, rivers and lakes, and coastal areas, including salt marshes, mangroves, intertidal mudflats and seagrass beds, and also coral reefs and other marine areas no deeper than 6 meters at low tide, as well as human-made wetlands, such as dams, reservoirs, rice paddies and wastewater treatment ponds and lagoons.

According to the DENR-BMB, wetlands are land areas flooded or saturated with water, either seasonally or permanently such that they take on the characteristics of a distinct ecosystem.

To be considered as a wetland, an area should have the following characteristics, Anson Tagtag, OIC division chief of the DENR-BMB's Cawed, told the BusinessMirror via email on January 23.

1) It should be covered by water or has waterlogged soil for at least seven days during the growing season;

2) Life forms have adapted to life in the wetlands, e.g. plants develop special adaptation mechanism, such as stilt roots, pneumatophores, etc.; and

3) The soil is hydric, which means that the substrate, since filled with water, will not have enough oxygen for some plants to grow such as big evergreen trees," Anson Tagtag, OIC Division Chief of the DENR-BMB's Caves, Wetlands and Other Ecosystems Division (CAWED) told the BusinessMirror via email on January 23.

3 largest inland wetlands in the Philippines

The Philippines has three categories of wetlands: inland wetlands, human-made wetlands, and marine and coastal wetlands.

The country boasts of large wetlands—the three largest inland wetlands of the Liguasan Marsh, Agusan Marsh and Laguna Lake.

A conglomeration of Libungan, Ligawasan and Ebpanan Marshes, Liguasan Marsh spreads over the provinces of Maguindanao, North Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat.

The Agusan Marsh—home to "Lolong," the largest saltwater crocodiles ever to be captured alive—is a well-known wetland complex comprising marshes, lakes, swamps, rivers and peatlands. It is recognized worldwide having been declared as a Ramsar Site and an Asean Heritage Park.

Meanwhile, the Laguna Lake is the largest lake in the country and the third largest freshwater lake in Southeast Asia.



TOT

Home to endemic wildlife

Wetlands are critical for biodiversity, they are home to more than 100,000 known freshwater species alone, and continuously growing as new species are discovered.

The Liguasan and Agusan marshes serve as habitat of various native and endemic flora and fauna, and are known to support endemic bird species.

"They also support various migratory waterbirds, providing habitat for staging, wintering, roosting and feeding birds," the DENR-BMB added.

These two large marshes are known habitats of the critically endangered Philippine crocodiles and the Philippine duck. Both species are considered vulnerable species.

Importance of wetlands

Tagtag explained that wetlands are "highly productive ecosystems, providing many important benefits or goods and services."

They provide many ecosystem services—such as 1) provisioning services (e.g. fish and other food, raw materials, water supply, hydropower); 2) regulating services (e.g. carbon sequestration, water purification, flood mitigation); 3) cultural services (e.g. sacred natural sites and other faith sites, recreation, tourism and ecotourism); and 4) supporting services (e.g. primary production, nutrient cycling, global water cycle)."

Some wetlands like the Laguna Lake are known for its many economic uses and benefits. These include fishing, transportation, agriculture, recreation, industrial cooling, hydropower generation and water supply.

Wetlands create sustainable products and livelihoods. Globally, 61.8 million people earn their living directly from fishing and aquaculture. Including their families, more than 660 million people depend on these sectors.

Nature's shock absorber

In an earlier telephone interview, Tagtag spoke of wetland's importance as an important natural defense system against calamities like strong typhoons.

He said wetlands, however, are only able to perform its function as a "shock absorber" when they are in their natural state, undisturbed by human activities.

"The best way to use nature is by not using them at all," he pointed out.

He added that while wetlands can help protect communities from disaster in times of natural calamities, they, too have their limits.

Peatlands and wet grasslands in river basins act as natural sponges, absorbing rainfall, creating wide surface pools and reducing floods in streams and rivers, Tagtag pointed out.

This storage capacity also helps safeguard against drought. Coastal wetlands, such as coral reefs, mangroves, tidal flats, deltas and estuaries, can limit the damaging effects of storm surges and tidal waves by acting as a physical barrier that reduces the water's height and speed.

Threatened ecosystems

Tagtag said historically, throughout the world, wetlands have often been mistakenly regarded as wastelands because they are wet, soggy, muddy areas that bred mosquitoes, flies, diseases and had unpleasant odor.

"Because wetlands were not productive for our traditional needs, such as shelter or agricultural production, [they] were thought of as places to avoid, and in many cases eliminated. As a result, large areas of wetlands were drained and converted for other land uses, such as housing developments and farmland," he said.



Threats to wetlands include habitat destruction, overexploitation and unsustainable utilization, proliferation of invasive alien species, pollution, poaching and illegal trade, incompatible tourism activities, overlapping and conflicting policies, drought and climate change, among many others.

Saving wetlands

The DENR currently implements the Philippine Inland Wetland Conservation Program (PIWCP) and the Coastal and Marine Ecosystems Management Program (CMEMP) for the wise-use and sustainable management of Philippine wetlands.

The PIWCP covers wetlands' inventory and database management, profiling and assessment, management planning, and management plan implementation, as well as the monitoring of the program implementation.

At the same time, the CMEMP covers the establishment and strengthening of the Marine Protected Area (MPA) Network through: assessment, mapping and site selection, management plan development, and maintenance and protection.

A major strategy being pursued by the DENR-BMB is the continuous production of CEPA materials regarding the importance and conservation of wetlands to promote public awareness, instil social and environmental consciousness and effect behavior change toward wetlands ecosystems, Tagtag said.

Image credits: Pamalakaya



Metro Manila better prepared for dry season

Catherine Talavera - The Philippine Star January 30, 2022 | 12:00am



Market goers fill the walkway of Marikina Public Market on Sunday, March 21, 2021, the day before the start of the two-week Greater Manila Area "Subject Area" with stricter restrictions under a general community quarantine. The STAR / Michael Varcas, file

MANILA, Philippines — As the water level at Angat Dam continues to drop, the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) said Metro Manila and nearby areas are more prepared to face potential water supply issues in the dry season compared to the shortage in 2019 as augmentation measures are in place.

At a Laging Handa public briefing over the weekend, NWRB executive director Sevillo David said compared to 2019, the country is more prepared to address water supply issues it may face in the upcoming dry season due to the presence of deep wells and water treatment facilities, which were not available before.

Data from the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration showed that the reservoir water level of Angat Dam continues to decline as it stood at 197.85 meters as of 6 a.m. Saturday. This is lower than the dam's normal high level of 212 meters.

David said the projects and activities of the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) and its concessionaires help in preparing for the needed water supply in the summer.

The MWSS said earlier that it has put in place supply augmentation measures, along with its concessionaires, to ease the pressure in the already drought-like trend of Angat and the sustainability of clean, potable water for the 19 million people in the service area.

According to the MWSS, among the augmentation measures by its west-zone concessionaire Maynilad Water Services Inc. are the non-revenue water reduction of 40 million liters per day (MLD) for summer and additional 42 MLD at the end of 2022; the operation of existing 12 MLD deep wells (one MLD existing and additional 11 MLD for summer); the operation of four MLD Portable Water Treatment Plant by February 2022 and another 18.6 MLD by September 2022 in Cavite.

Other measures include the operation of the backwash recovery system in La Mesa Water Treatment Plants one and two, as well as network pressure management to equally distribute the available water through the regulation of 1,200 Pressure Regulating Valves and 50 primary Valves in the Bagbag network system.

East zone concessionaire Manila Water Co. Inc. announced earlier that it is preparing its water supply contingency and augmentation programs for the summer to ensure water availability, as the water level at Angat Dam continues to drop.



"To prepare for the coming summer months and in light of lower-than-projected levels at Angat Dam, Manila Water puts into motion its water supply contingency and augmentation plans while working and coordinating closely with the MWSS and the NWRB, to help ensure that customers will experience continuous water supply even during peak demand periods," Manila Water said in an earlier statement.

Among these contingencies are the maximization of the 100 MLD capacity of the Cardona Water Treatment Plant, which draws water from Laguna Lake; operation of deep wells which can provide additional 115 MLD and operation of the 20-MLD Marikina Portable Water Treatment Plant, which can treat water from the Marikina River.

Apart from the MWSS, David said the NWRB is also in coordination with the National Irrigation Administration, as the Angat Dam is also a source of irrigation for farm lands in Bulacan and Pampanga.

The NWRB earlier urged the public to conserve and use water wisely due to the Angat Dam's lower than expected water level to ensure that sufficient water is available for municipal irrigation and hydropower uses in the subsequent months.





Water supply sapat sa NCR, karatig lugar – NWRB



January 29, 2022 @ 2:38 PM 16 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Sapat ang suplay ng National Capital Region at karatig probinsya ngayong dry season, ayon sa National Water Resources Board (NWRB).

Base kay NWRB executive director Dr. Sevillo David Jr., nais nilang ma-sustain ang kasalukuyang water allocation sa gitna ng COVID-19 pandemic.

"Isa 'yung tubig sa importanteng measure para po makontra itong paglaganap [ng COVID-19] . . . Dahil po nitong pandemya, gusto natin i-maintain 'yung alokasyon at wala pong pagbabawas," ani David sa public briefing.

Nakapagtatag na rin ang water concessionaires ng water treatment facilities sa Laguna Lake at Marikina River.

"Kumpara po noong 2019, mas handa po tayo. Andiyan 'yung mga deep wells . . . At ito pong water treatment facilities wala rin po noong 2019. Masasabi natin na ito pong mga . . . projects. . . ay makakatulong para mapangalagaan iton glimitadong supply sa Angat Dam," dagdag pa ni David. **RNT/FGDC**

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Water in Angat Dam limited, but we are prepared —NWRB exec

Published January 29, 2022 2:25pm **Updated** January 29, 2022 2:27pm



Water level in Angat Dam, which supplies nearly 95% of the water need of Metro Manila and nearby provinces, is limited. But the National Water Resources Board and other concerned government agencies are ready with mitigating measures especially for the dry season.

At the Laging Handa briefing, NWRB executive director Dr. Sevillo David, Jr. said that as of Saturday morning, January 29, 2022, water level at the dam was at 197.85 meters, which is 10 meters lower compared to the same date last year.

Angat Dam has a <u>normal high water level of 210 meters</u>, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).

"Sa ganitong sitwasyon, kailangan nating paghandaan at i-manage ng maayos itong limitadong suplay ng tubig sa Angat Dam para naman po sa panahon ng tag-init" (We need to be ready with measures to manage the use of water from the dam for the dry season), David said.

Likewise, he said the NWRB, together with the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) and the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), is already ready with mitigating measures to effectively manage the limited water supply, especially in the time of pandemic.

Moreover, he said the MWSS is ready with water allocation measures, and the NIA, for its part, has water management projects for irrigation, particularly in Bulacan and Pampanga.

Pressed on the possibility of water shortage, David said concerned agencies are making efforts to ensure that present water supply allocation will be sustained and made reliable until the dry season.

"Gusto nating masiguro na sustained at maintained po ang kasalukuyang allocation hanggang sa summer po, para mas reliable ang supply ng tubig."

He pointed out that the NWRB, MWSS, and the NIA have already set up mitigating measures, including deep wells that are ready for use, water treatment facilities, and tube wells for irrigation.

He added that water treatment facilities are being set up for Laguna Lake and the Marikina River.



"Ready na po anytime ang paggamit ng ng mga deep well. Ang MWSS at water concessionaires ay meron pong mga na-establish na water-treatment facilities sa Laguna Lake at dito po sa Marikina River na makatutulong pangdagdag sa suplay ng tubig. At ready na rin ang tube wells for irrigation," he said

[Deep wells, water treatment facilities, and tube wells are ready for use anytime].

David also encouraged consumers to do their part in conserving water especially that the dry season is coming and we are still very much into the COVID-19 pandemic. —LBG, GMA News



Headline Editorial Column Opinion Feature Article

Water supply enough for now in NCR, nearby areas as dry season nears, says official

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Jan 29 2022 01:48 PM

MANILA—The National Capital Region and nearby areas will have enough water supply during the dry season, with the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) saying allocation adjustments were not needed for now.

NWRB executive director Dr. Sevillo David Jr. on Saturday said his agency wanted to sustain the current water allocations amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Isa 'yung tubig sa importanteng measure para po makontra itong paglaganap [ng COVID-19] . . . Dahil po nitong pandemya, gusto natin i-maintain 'yung alokasyon at wala pong pagbabawas," David said during a public briefing.

Mitigating measures are also in place to prevent water shortage, he said.

Water concessionaires have already established water treatment facilities in Laguna Lake and Marikina River, besides Angat Dam, that could help add to the water supply, according to the official.

"Kumpara po noong 2019, mas handa po tayo. Andiyan 'yung mga deep wells . . . At ito pong water treatment facilities wala rin po noong 2019. Masasabi natin na ito pong mga . . . projects. . . ay makakatulong para mapangalagaan iton glimitadong supply sa Angat Dam," David added.

Source: <u>https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/01/29/22/water-supply-enough-for-now-in-metro-manila-</u> official?fbclid=IwAR1mCTLdbAT7OEmcAYBQJZL5vL6MLX9EYKqlpTt5TID8X0iv5pXmy mRS7AQ



NWRB, nakahanda sa patuloy na pagbaba ng lebel ng tubig sa Angat dam

By RadyoMaN Manila -Jan. 30, 2022 at 5:19am



Nakahanda ang National Water Resources Board (NWRB) at ibang ahensya ng pamahalaan sa paparating na dry season.

Sinabi ito ni NWRB Executive Director Dr. Sevillo David Jr. kasabay ng pagbaba ng lebel ng tubig sa Angat dam na ngayon ay nasa 197.85 meters na lamang.

Mas mababa ito sa normal water level nito na 210 meters.

Dahil dito, siniguro ni David na napaghandaan nila ito at mina-manage nang maayos ang limitadong suplay ng tubig sa Angat Dam.

Dagdag pa nito, nakahanda silang gumamit ng deep wells at nakapag-establish ng mga water treatment facilities sa Laguna Lakes at Marikina River na maaaring makatulong sa pagdagdag ng suplay ng tubig.

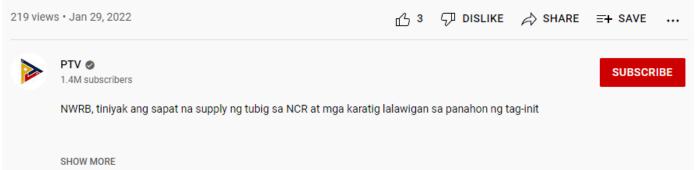
Ang Angat Dam ay sumusuplay sa 95% ng bahagi ng Metro Manila at karatig probinsya.







NWRB, tiniyak ang sapat na supply ng tubig sa NCR at mga karatig lalawigan sa panahon ng tag-init



Source: <u>https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cz2uwxbaQ-s</u>



Ericsson, PLDT, Smart partner for environmental conservation

BYRIZAL RAOUL REYES JANUARY 30, 2022

Ericsson, a multinational networking and telecommunications company, recently renewed its partnership with PLDT Inc., one of the Philippines' telecommunication provider, and its wireless unit, Smart Communications, for nature conservation in the Philippines.

By signing a new memorandum of agreement (MOA), the three companies aim to leverage the use of technology and advanced machine-learning solutions to support environmental sustainability in Sasmuan, Pampanga.

The partnership also includes the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the local government unit (LGU) of Sasmuan.

"Our approach to sustainability and corporate responsibility is an integral part of Ericsson's strategy and culture that is embedded across all our operations," said Martin Wiktorin, head of Ericsson Singapore, Brunei and the Philippines in a news statement.

Wiktorin said the company's vision is to create a world where limitless connectivity improves lives, redefines business and pioneers a sustainable future and this latest partnership embodies this.

"As a long-standing partner to Smart, we are constantly striving to leverage technology to create positive impact on communities, first with the use of IoT [Internet of Thing] to connect mangroves and now with AI [artificial intelligence] to further protect nature as well as the ecological biodiversity in the Philippines," he added.

Melissa Vergel de Dios, first vice president and head of PLDT's Sustainability and Investor Relations Offices, said the five-party collaboration will boost the conservation of the Sasmuan Bangkung Malapad Critical Habitat and Ecotourism Area (SBMCHEA) that was recently declared by the DENR as a protected area.

Located in Sasmuan, the project includes a 405-hectare mangrove wetland, which is an important habitat to many endemic, migratory, and threatened water bird species.

Vergel de Dios pointed out that mangrove swamps are effective natural flood and typhoon barriers and help to preserve marine biodiversity.

In 2021, the mangrove swamps of Sasmuan were also designated as the eighth wetland of international importance in the Philippines under the Ramsar Convention, a treaty for the conservation and sustainable use of wetlands.

Under the MOA, Wiktorin said the Swedish firm will deploy AI-enabled CCTV cameras to identify migratory bird species, and hope to introduce more effective methods of preservation of endangered wildlife in Sasmuan.

Meanwhile, de Dios said PLDT will host the cloud system for the data that will be collected by the AI cameras, while Smart will provide end-to-end Internet mobile connectivity. The relevant data will then be processed via a dashboard made available to the DENR and the LGU of Sasmuan.

"This partnership demonstrates how we can leverage information and communications technology and connectivity in caring for the environment and preserving it for the next generation. Together with Ericsson, we continue to explore innovations to see how we can



create more IoT and AI technology-based solutions that could address environmental challenges and help mitigate climate change," de Dios explained.

The latest partnership is a follow up to the Connected Mangroves project in 2017, where an IoT solution for the reforestation of mangroves was also deployed in Sasmuan.

Data such as water level, humidity, soil moisture and temperature, was also captured by solarpowered sensors via wireless connectivity over a cloud system.

De Dios said the data gathered allowed the community to better manage the area's conservation. Based on a census in 2020, over 50,000 birds are using SBMCHEA as a migration stopover.



Editorial

Column

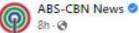
Opinion

Feature Article





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Isang patay na dolphin at patay na pawikan ang napadpad sa dalampasigan ng Panay, Capiz.

Naaagnas na ang pawikan nang matagpuan ni Precy Alavaro sa Barangay Navitas kaya kaagad niya itong inulat sa mga awtoridad Biyernes.

Sunod na natagpuan ang isang patay na dolphin sa Barangay Butacal noong Linggo. Kaagad na inilibing ang patay na marine animals.

Nababahala na ang Capiz Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office dahil sa magkasunod na pagkakataon na may natagpuang patay na marine animals sa lugar.

Samantala, isang sugatang dolphin ang napadpad sa dalampasigan ng Barangay Dalakit sa Catarman, Northern Samar Lunes. Nasa pangangalaga na ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources ang dolphin na pinaghihinalaang pinana.

Isa namang nalambat na babaeng hawksbill sea turtle na may habang 12 pulgada at may lapad na 10 pulgada ang pinakawalan sa baybayin ng Lola Sayong Eco-Surf Farm sa Gubat, Sorsogon Sabado. (
CAPENRO; Rhealyn Emanda Rosales; Lola Sayong Eco-Surf Camp) | via Rolen Escaniel; Ranulfo Docdocan; Aireen Perol-Jaymalin

Para sa iba pang mga balita, magtungo lamang sa news.abs-cbn.com.



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CBCP calls for unity and action amid the COVID-19 pandemic and climate emergency

Published January 29, 2022, 12:49 PM by Dhel Nazario

The Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) urged the faithful to take part in addressing the impacts of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic and the climate emergency being experienced worldwide.

In its Pastoral Statement on Ecology released after the bishops' 123rd Plenary Assembly, the CBCP mentioned that the proposed measures and policies for addressing the impacts of this crisis should always place social and ecological justice at the forefront.

"As one of the most vulnerable nations in this era of global emergency, the Philippines has the moral imperative of pursuing the most sustainable development pathway possible for the sake of current and future generations, ensuring that the voices of everyone are accounted for," CBCP said.

"The task of ensuring this becomes all the more apparent in the context of an upcoming national election that will shape governance in our country during this critical decade for climate and ecological action," it added.

CBCP expressed concern that while suffering from the impact of the pandemic, climatevulnerable nations have also experienced intensifying calamities due to the instability of the biosphere. CBC cited the country, for example, was battered by multiple tropical storms including some declared to be the deadliest in the world from 2013 to 2021.

It added that this has occurred even after almost two years of the issuance of its Pastoral Letter on Ecology entitled "An Urgent Call for Ecological Conversion, Hope in the Face of Climate Emergency".

CBCP said that the Pastoral Letter is a testimony of the Church's long-standing regard for the care of God's creation.

"We are committed to advance the teachings of the Laudato Si' and be bearers of hope in the face of an ecological crisis, following our Lord Jesus, our redeemer. As such, we commit to "integrate the care of creation as our common home in our teaching and practice of Christian discipleship" through concrete ecological actions in caring for our Common Home," CBCP said.

"In 2019, the CBCP Pastoral Letter on Ecology detailed 13 such action points; in 2020, the celebration of the special anniversary year of Pope Francis's encyclical led to the creation of Laudato Si' Goals (LSGs) to guide our work towards integral ecology," it added. CBCP mentioned three reflections that the faithful may use as a guide which are:

- Ecological Conversion through Stewardship of our Resources Laudato Si' Goals: Response to Cry of the Earth and Ecological Economics
- Laudato Si' Formation and the National Laudato Si' Program -Laudato Si' Goals: Ecological Education, Ecological Spirituality, and Community Resilience and Empowerment
- Advancement of the Rights of Nature and the Defense of Life Laudato Si' Goals: Response to the Cry of the Poor and Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles

Source: https://mb.com.ph/2022/01/29/cbcp-calls-for-unity-and-action-amid-the-covid-19-pandemic-and-climate-emergency/





Sa itinapong 'medical waste' 7 bata naglaro ng heringgilya, nagka-COVID-19

Joy Cantos - Pang-masa January 30, 2022 | 12:00am



In this photo illustration taken on September 2, 2020, syringes are displayed at the Hindustan Syringes factory in Faridabad. India's biggest syringe manufacturer is ramping up its production to churn out a billion units, anticipating a surge in demand as the global race to find a COVID-19 coronavirus vaccine heats up.

MANILA, Philippines — Tinamaan ng COVID-19 ang pitong bata na namulot at naglaro ng heringgilya mula sa "medical waste" ng isang laboratoryo na itinapon sa basurahan sa tabing aplaya ng Brgy. Concepcion sa Virac, Catanduanes kamakailan.

Nabatid na nagpositibo sa antigen test ang mga bata na nagkakaedad ng 3 hanggang 11 na isinagawa ng mga health authorites sa naturang barangay.

Ang babaeng nanita naman sa mga batang naglalaro ng gamit na heringgilya ay na-infect din ng COVID-19.

Sa isang panayam, sinabi ni Brgy. Concepcion chief Anthony Arcilla na ang mga bata ay nakaisolate na at binigyan ng mga gamot at vitamins para lumakas ang immune system. Nakatakdang sumailalim sa RT-PCR test ang mga bata bilang confirmatory test bukas, Enero 31.

Nabatid na ang tambak na medical waste ay unang nakita sa kahabaan ng tabing dagat ng Brgy. Concepcion ng buwang ito.

Sa isinagawang sesyon sa barangay, humingi ng paumanhin ang kinatawan ng laboratoryo sa pagtatapon ng kanilang mga medical waste sa tabing aplaya.

Sa kasamaang palad, isinailalim din sa quarantine ang mga miyembro ng konseho matapos na magpositibo sa virus ang kinatawan ng laboratoryo.



When endangered species recover, humans may need to make room for them

BYTHE CONVERSATION JANUARY 30, 2022



Two sea lions on the beach of Otago Peninsula, New Zealand.

Imagine discovering a sea lion in the middle of the woods, more than a mile inland from the beach. Or coming face to face with one of these curious creatures in a local swimming pool or on your front porch.

These encounters are happening in New Zealand with the return of the endangered New Zealand sea lion, the world's rarest sea lion species.

The females normally move up to a mile (about 1.5 kilometers) inland with their pups during the breeding season to protect them from rougher conditions at the coast—but now there are a lot more humans in the way.

Encounters between wild animals and humans can be dangerous for both sides.

Sea lions have been stabbed, clubbed, shot and accidentally hit by cars. Roads, fences and residential development can block their movement inland.

Some females and pups have adapted to commercial pine forests on private lands that could one day be cleared or developed.

As an ecologist, I study species around the world whose populations are recovering after decades or even centuries of immense human pressures and exploitation.

Nations are now preparing for a landmark UN conference on protecting Earth's biodiversity that will take place in China from April 25 to May 8; one important question is how humans can strike a new balance with recovering species, such as sea lions, sharks and whales, and make space for these resilient creatures to thrive .

Making way for sea lions

Like many other creatures valued for their meat or fur, New Zealand sea lions were historically hunted to near-extinction.

For the past 150 years, remnant populations could only be found on New Zealand's undeveloped subantarctic islands, more than 300 miles from the nation's mainland. Today, their population is estimated at 12,000.

These animals typically return to and breed at the original location where they were born, but in 1993, a female sea lion gave birth on the mainland for the first time in centuries.



Since then, her offspring have bred for five generations. Other females have followed, and some 20 pups are now born on the mainland each year.

When wild species recolonize areas or shift their ranges in this way, scientists can make predictive models to help determine where the animals could settle in the future and take steps to protect them.

But traditional versions of these models can't account for when and where the recovering species may interact with humans, because these encounters are new developments and may occur under conditions that differ from the past.

In a study published in November 2021, my team and I addressed this issue by creating an integrated species distribution model database, which pairs algorithmic models with expert knowledge to highlight suitable habitats and flag areas for concern.

Through it, we found and mapped 395 potential breeding grounds for sea lions all over the New Zealand mainland. We also identified human-related challenges for the animals, such as roads and fences that could block their inland movement.

Our research can help wildlife managers and local officials search for sea lions, post sea lion crossing signs on roads, verify or restore breeding sites and determine where to work with landowners and spread awareness.

This kind of tool can help inform similar efforts for other species that are recovering or moving into new habitats and regions in response to climate change.

Welcoming whales back

Of course, humans are happier to make space for some wild species than for others.

I did research in the Falkland Islands from 2015 to 2016 and found that residents welcomed the return of sei, fin, minke, southern right and blue whales to local waters.

All of these species were intensively hunted beginning in the 1800s but started making noticeable comebacks after nations adopted the 1982 moratorium on commercial whaling.

For local residents, seeing whales offshore while tending sheep, taking the ferry or flying from island to island was a special experience. We used residents' historical knowledge and thousands of whale observations from the 1940s to 2015 to inform scientific surveys around the islands.

This work helped others analyze sei whale distribution around the islands and resulted in the creation of the world's first Key Biodiversity Area for sei whales—a place that is considered globally significant for the rare, unique, or many species it contains.

Finding that Falkland residents enjoyed seeing whales offshore suggested to us that they would support processes like marine spatial planning to help protect them.

Marine spatial planning is a public process for organizing human uses of the ocean, such as shipping, tourism, oil exploration and commercial fishing, in ways that balance them with environmental protection.

When predators rebound

Coexisting with some recovering species can be more controversial and delicate to manage, especially if they are perceived as threats to public safety or property.

Along the northeast US coast and up into Canada, white sharks once were severely overfished but are now rebounding in response to climate change, protection efforts and growing populations of seals, their preferred prey.



As top predators, sharks help control other ocean species and increase ocean carbon storage. They also are one of the few shark species known to attack humans.

Over the past several years, lifeguards have repeatedly closed popular beaches along Cape Cod in Massachusetts when white sharks are present.

Warnings and restrictions intensified after a shark killed a swimmer in 2018. Such measures often spark declines in tourism, but in some places the presence of sharks is slowly becoming an attraction.

Nevertheless, the growing abundance of white sharks is divisive. As shark numbers and sightings increase, scientists and local officials are working to raise awareness and educate the public about them.

Monitoring shark movement with drones and other equipment can also help lifeguards warn beachgoers that sharks are present in advance.

Know who's moving in

Scientists widely agree that the Earth is losing species at a rapid rate, potentially representing the sixth mass extinction in its history.

Against that background, these ongoing stories of species recovery take on new urgency, especially when conflicts arise.

Science can help. Predictive models and maps highlight where species may appear in the future. Monitoring species on the move can reveal how numerous they are, how they behave, what habitats they prefer and where they may interact with humans.

When wild species enter new areas, they inevitably will have to adapt, and often will have new kinds of interactions with humans.

These encounters won't always be easy to manage, but I believe that when communities understand the changes and are involved in planning for them, they can prepare for the unexpected, with coexistence in mind. *Veronica Frans, Michigan State University/The Conversation (CC)*

Image credits: Wikimedia Commons



BC

Plastic PPE to be recycled in waste-reduction project

Published 2 days ago



Hundreds of tonnes of plastic personal protective equipment (PPE) like masks and gloves could be recycled as part of a new waste-reduction project.

Since the start of the pandemic, about 8.4 million tonnes of plastic PPE waste has been generated from 193 countries.

The majority ends up in landfill or, in some areas, dumped at sea.

Now a research partnership between Heriot-Watt University and PPE maker Globus Group hopes to give it "a second life" as new PPE products or fuels.

At the moment, much of the plastic polypropylene PPE waste cannot be recycled mechanically. It is hoped the new project will develop a process for cost and energy-efficient recycling and repurposing that could be adopted globally.

How does the recycling work?

Using thermal heating technology, a machine heats and compacts the plastic polypropylene into large, reusable blocks.

They are then collected and processed into pyrolysis oil.

This can be used to provide raw materials to create new PPE products - reducing waste by around 85%.

Dr Aimaro Sanna, assistant professor in chemical and process engineering at Heriot-Watt University, said the project was "a significant step towards addressing the increased waste generated during the pandemic".

He added: "Initially, the research will help to recycle over 100 tonnes of product generated by the manufacturing process every year - the equivalent to 10kg of waste every hour.

"However, our hope is that this new process will be adopted more widely.

"Many countries have been unable to process their plastic waste PPE properly.

"Our ground-breaking research aims to address these challenges providing an exemplar technique for application globally."



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What is PPE and who should wear it?

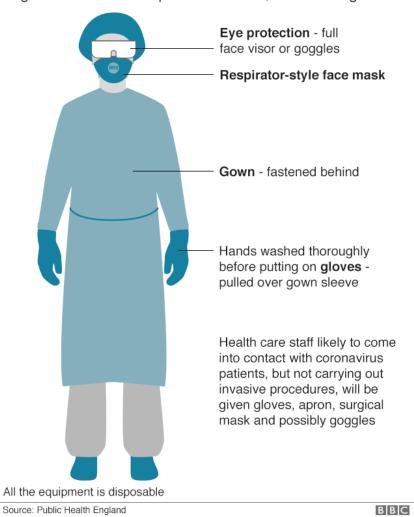
Anyone in close contact with patients should wear some form of protection. That includes staff in care homes, prisons and the community, as well as in GP surgeries or hospitals. People giving vaccines will also use PPE.

The type of PPE required depends on the level of risk.

Guidelines say all hospital staff should wear a face mask, while people visiting hospital or attending outpatient departments should wear a face covering.

Face coverings, unlike surgical face masks, are not classed as PPE as they are not usually made to a recognised standard and do not provide a proven level of protection for work.

Personal protective equipment for health staff handling coronavirus patients



Full protective gear given to staff carrying out procedures likely to generate airborne droplets from mouth, throat or lungs

Since the start of the coronavirus crisis, Globus Group said it had been producing one billion masks for healthcare trusts across the UK.

But the manufacturing process currently results in 7g of waste material per mask.

Pete Lee, head of quality at the company, said the thermal heating machine at its factory in Golborne, near Manchester, "will be a real game changer in the way we tackle our PPE waste".

He added: "This machine is a fundamental part of our process to re-purpose and utilise waste material to achieve a circular economy.





"At Globus Group, we acknowledge our responsibility to the NHS, supporting it in delivering a net zero sustainable future, and the long-term welfare of future generations."

He added that once the research was completed there would be an expansion in its operations in southern Scotland where it has sites in Dumfries and Annan.

It would see the construction of a new facility to turn items like ventilators and masks into a secondary raw material for reuse.

"We will work with Heriot-Watt to design the process - what kind of process needs to work and what the plant needs to look like - and then we will build it in Dumfries," he said.

30 JANUARY 2022, SUNDAY



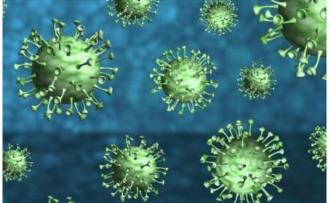
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New Covid-19 cases continue to drop; 35K recover

By Joyce Ann L. Rocamora January 29, 2022, 7:48 pm



MANILA – The country's daily new cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) continued to decrease, with Saturday's tally of 17,382 infections down from the 18,638 recorded the previous day.

To date, 213,587 are undergoing treatment, accounting or 6.1 percent of the total confirmed 3,528,796 cases since the outbreak began.

Based on the latest data from the Department of Health (DOH), 35,382 have recuperated from the disease, raising the recovery tally to 3,261,338 or 92.4 percent of the total.

The DOH also logged 70 new fatalities, pushing the Covid-19 death toll to 53,871.

Of the active cases, 8,736 are asymptomatic, 199,893 have mild symptoms, 3,114 are moderate, 1,526 are severe, and 318 are critical.

The positivity rate is 33.3 percent based on the 56,447 people who were tested on Thursday.

All laboratories were operational that day but three failed to submit their data to the Covid-19 Document Repository System.

The concerned laboratories contributed, on average, 0.6 percent of the samples tested and 0.7 percent of the positive individuals, based on the data over the past 14 days.

Nationwide, 48 percent of 3,900 intensive care unit (ICU) beds, 48 percent of 20,800 isolation beds, and 50 percent of 15,900 ward beds dedicated to Covid-19 patients are occupied.

In Metro Manila, about 40 percent of 1,300 ICU beds, 37 percent of 4,800 isolation beds, and 43 percent of 4,400 award beds are filled. *(PNA)*



PH eyes to limit vaccines to 3 or 4 brands

By Joyce Ann L. Rocamora January 29, 2022, 5:22 pm



(PNA file photo)

MANILA – The Philippines is planning to reduce the number of coronavirus vaccine brands in its portfolio to a maximum of four, the Department of Health (DOH) said on Saturday.

DOH Undersecretary Myrna Cabotaje said the country does not need to acquire all vaccine brands.

"*Hindi na po tayo bibili sa aking pagkakaintindi ng* Sputnik vaccine. *Alam naman natin na kailangan natin nang i*-limit. *Masyado nang marami tayong* portfolio *ng bakuna* (Based on my understanding, we are no longer going to purchase Sputnik vaccines. We know that we need to limit. We have many vaccines in our portfolio)," she said at the Laging Handa briefing.

"There are some preferences so *baka i*-limit *lang natin ngayon sa* (we might limit to just) three or four vaccines in the future," she added.

Cabotaje said the single-dose Sputnik Light, manufactured by Russia's Gamaleya Institute, may be administered as first, second, or booster doses.

The country's vaccine portfolio is composed of AstraZeneca, Pfizer, Sinovac, Moderna, Janssen, Sputnik V, Sputnik Light, and Sinopharm.

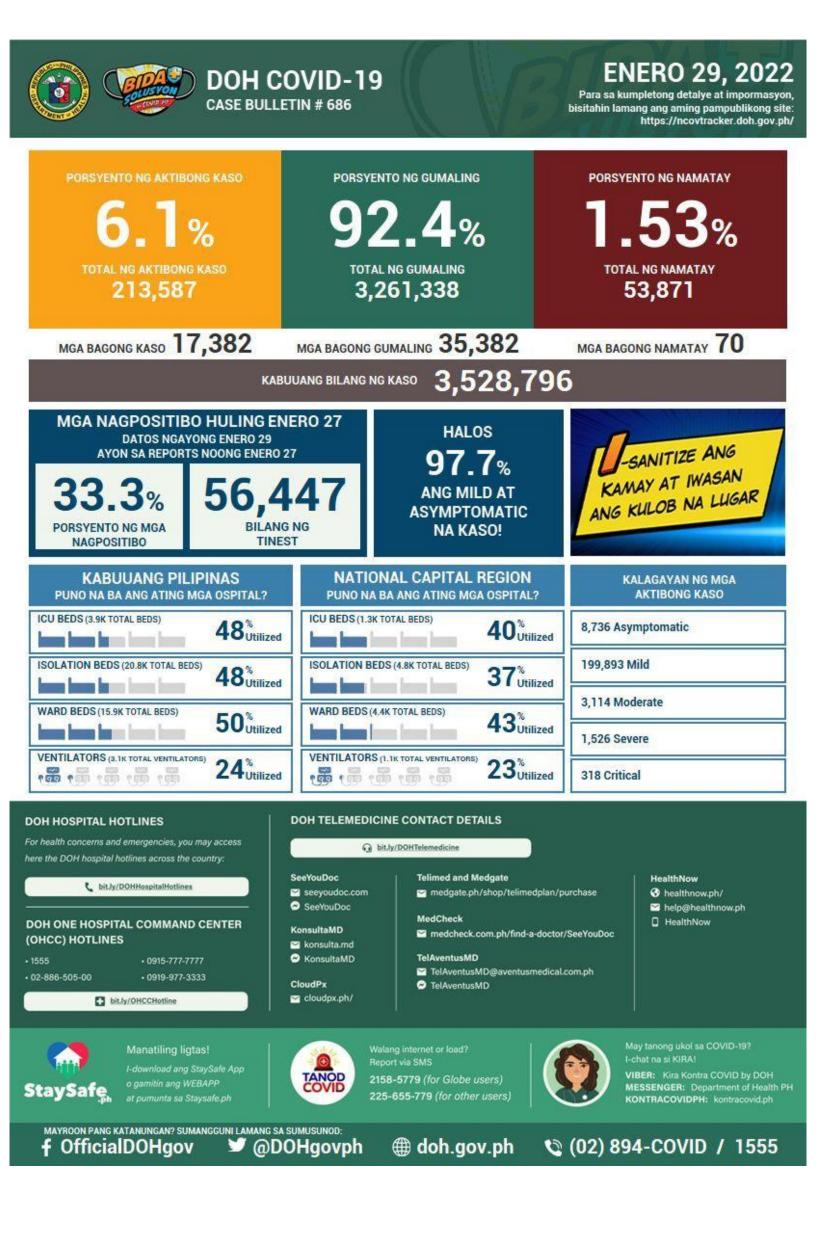
As of January 26, the Philippines has already administered 125,089,118 vaccine doses, according to the National Task Force Against Covid-19.

Of the total, 58,149,158 are fully vaccinated, including 7,391,735 individuals from the 12 to 17 age group.

Select sites will pilot the vaccination of lower-dose Pfizer jabs for the 5 to 11 age group on February 4 and 5. (PNA)

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Covid-19 Situation and Response



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