



Cavite's active COVID-19 cases up from 327 to 1,156 in 5 days

CAVITE – Gov. Jonvic Remulla announced a sharp increase in active coronavirus disease (COVID-19) cases in the province in a span of five days.

“NOT GOOD. COVID-19 cases in Cavite soar to 1,156 today from 327 last December 31,” Remulla tweeted on Wednesday (Jan. 5).

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BOC overshoots 2021 collection goal by 4.7%

The Bureau of Customs (BOC) has exceeded its annual collection target in 2021 by 4.7 percent or equivalent to PHP29.016 billion.

The preliminary report from the Revenue Collection Monitoring Group (RCMG) showed BOC collected PHP645.765 billion as against its target of PHP616.749 billion. The 2021 collection was higher than the pre-pandemic amount of PHP630.31 billion

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Passport applicants at malls in NCR, Rizal, Cavite, Bulacan should be vaccinated—DFA



Passport applicants who have booked their slots at the malls in Alert Level 3 areas should be fully vaccinated against Covid-19, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said.

The DFA said malls hosting DFA Consular Offices and Temporary Off-Site Passport Services have advised them that they will not allow the entry of passport applicants who are unvaccinated, including minors.

“DFA Consular Offices are unable to override the host malls’ security and

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PNP ends 2021 with greater transparency, enhanced capability



The year 2021 marked a milestone for the Philippine National Police (PNP) in upholding transparency and accountability, as well as enhancing its capability through acquiring new assets which are vital in per-

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Protocols in place to protect Duterte without limiting activities

Amid a spike in Covid-19 cases in the country, Malacañang on Wednesday said it is taking the necessary steps to enforce strict Covid-19 protocols following the planned visit of President Rodrigo Duterte to areas hit by Typhoon Odette last month.

Acting Presidential Spokesperson, Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles, said the Palace is devising measures to protect Duterte’s health and safety without limiting his activities.

“While ensuring his safety and his health, we also do not want to limit his movements especially kung gusto niyang bumisita rin sa mga lugar, gaya ng sina-bi niya kagabi, bumisita muli sa mga naapektuhan ng Typhoon Odette, at yung ibang activities na gusto rin

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Male Teenager Makes Kangkong Chips Earns P5, 000 Per Day

KANGKONG CHIPS – A male teenager from Cavite is now earning P5, 000 per day for selling Kangkong chips to help his parents.

A 17-year-old teenager named Josh Mojica of Mendez, Cavite started his own venture at a young age. He planned to start a healthy business to help parents after his grandfather passed away in June 2021.

Mojica shared his idea to his parents and offered his P3, 500 savings to start the

business. His parents supported him and the business started to grow after a few months. He earned about 18 times a few months later.

The family was able to complete their 13th batch racking up 1100+ packs of Kangkong Chips generating P64, 000+ in revenues. The young man was able to do his small business while attending his online classes as a senior-high school student.

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Harry Roque: maraming isusulong na batas sa Senado



Kakampi mo ang BATAS
ni Atty. Batas Mauricio

INSPIRASYON SA BUHAY: "... Ngunit pumili ka ng mga taong may kakayahan, may takot sa Diyos, mapagkaka-tiwalaan at di masusuhulan..." (Paalala ni Jethro sa manugang niyang si Moises, sa Exodo 18:21, Ang Tanging Daan Bibliya).

MAHINANG INTERNET, SMUGGLING NG AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTS, PAGBUHAY SA HANAPBUHAY, AT MARAMI PANG IBA, TUTUTUKAN NI HARRY ROQUE PAG MANANALO SIYANG SENADOR SA HALALAN 2022: Aayusin ang mahinang Internet service sa Pilipinas sa pamamagitan ng pagpapapasok ng iba pang internet service providers o telcos sa bansa. Pagpapatigil ng lahat ng uri ng smuggling ng mga produktong agricultural.

Pagpapalawak ng libreng pananghalian para sa lahat ng mga estudyante sa Pilipinas. Pagtatatag ng iba't ibang uri ng hanapbuhay sa iba't ibang rehiyon ng Pilipinas upang magkaroon muli ng pagkakakitaan ang marami nating mga kababayan natigil sa trabaho dahil sa COVID 19 pandemic.

At paghihigpit sa mga social media intermediaries gaya ng Facebook at iba pang kilalang online chat groups upang matiyak na totoo lahat ang mga inilalabas sa kanilang platforms at hindi fake news.

Ito, at maraming iba pa, ang nilalayong isusulong ng puspun sa dating presidential spokesperson at ngayon ay senatorial candidate Harry Roque noong umaga ng Miyerkules, Enero 05, 2022.

Ginawa ni Roque ang paghahayag ng kaniyang mga nais gawin bilang senador sa isang malawakang talakayan sa 22nd episode ng 1 Boto Ko TV, isang online presentation tuwing Miyerkules sa Facebook at YouTube.

Bilang tugon sa mga tanong ng mga hosts ng 1 Boto Ko TV na sina Pastor Jojo Gonzales, Ms. Aileen Papin, Atty. Melchor Magdamo, at ng inyong lingkod Atty. Batas Mauricio, niliwanag ni Harry Roque na hindi na bago sa kaniya ang pagiging mambatas, dahil nauna na siyang naging congressman ng Kabayan Party List.

HARRY ROQUE, NAKAPAG-AKDA NG LAGPAS 200 PANUKALANG BATAS NOONG PARTY LIST CONGRESSMAN PA SIYA: Sa kaniyang panunungkulan bilang party list congressman, nakapagsumite si Roque ng lagpas 200 mga panukalang batas na nakatutok sa iba't ibang mahalagang isyu sa bansa.

Dahil sa kakapusan ng panahon noong nanunungkulan siyang representante ng Kabayan Party List, labinlima lamang sa nasabing 200 panukalang mga batas na kaniyang iniakda ang pumasa at naging ganap na batas.

Itong mga hindi naging batas na kaniyang ipinanukala noon ang mga uunahin ni Roque na muling maisulong, sa Senado naman ng Pilipinas kapag siya ay nahalal bilang senador sa Halalan 2022.

Sa pagsasaliksik ng Kakampi Mo Ang Batas, nakilala ang educational accomplishments ni Roque. Nagtapos siya ng Bachelor of Arts in Economics at Political Science sa Estados Unidos, sa University of Michigan sa Ann Arbor.

Sa UP College of Law naman nakuha ni Roque ang kaniyang law degree, samantalang nakuha niya ang kaniyang Master of Laws degree, with merits, sa London School of Economics. Nalaman din ng Kakampi Mo Ang Batas na naging isang mahusay na abogado si Roque. Kasama siyang nagtatag ng grupong Center for International Law, na siyang kumatawan sa mga pamilya ng mga napatay o nabiktima sa Ampatuan Massacre.

Naging abogado din si Roque ng mga pamilya ng mga tinaguriang Malaya Lolos, o yung mga matatandang babae na naging parausan ng mga puwersang Hapones noong ikalawang digmaang pandaigdig; ng pamilya ng transgender na si Jennifer Laude; at ng pamilya ng pinatay na environmental advocate Gerry Ortega sa Palawan.

"HINDI AKO NAGBAGO NG AKING PRINSIPYO," GIIT NI HARRY ROQUE Humarap din siya sa at nakipag-argumento sa Supreme Court sa maraming kaso, dahilan upang tagurian siya ni dating Associate Justice Antonio Nachura bilang isa sa mga abogadong nagpahanga sa kaniya (kay Nachura) dahil sa galing ng kaniyang mga salita. Niliwanag din

ni Roque na kabilang siya sa pananampalatayang Kristiyano, dahilan upang maging laman din siya ng mga tinaguriang Sunday School system of Christian learning. Ang kaniyang mga magulang at mga malalapit na kamag-anak ay naglingkod bilang mga pastor at mga manggagawa ng kanilang mga sinapiang simbahang Kristiyano.

Ayon kay Pastor Jojo Gonzales, ang 1 Boto Ko TV host na nag-anyaya kay Roque upang maging panauhing tagapagsalita, kinakitaan ang dating presidential spokesman ng katapatan bilang mananampalataya sa Diyos, nakikinig at sumusunod sa Kaniyang mga utos.

Naging bahagi si Roque ng iba't ibang pagkilos, ayon kay Pastor Jojo, ng mga Kristiyano upang isulong ang pagkakamit ng katarungan ng mga may ipinaglalaban sa kanilang mga buhay. Sa bandang huli, tinugon ni Roque ang tanong na nagbago siya noong maging tagapagsalita siya ng Pangulong Duterte, mula sa isang maprinsipyong abogado, tungo sa pagiging tagasunod na lamang ng mga binabanggit ng presidente.

Ayon kay Roque, bilang spokesman, tungkulin niyang ulitin o ibahagi ang mga sinasabi ng Pangulo, at walang kinalaman sa pag-uulit o pagbabahagi niyang ito ng mga pahayag ng Pangulo sa kaniyang sariling mga prinsipyo o pananaw sa mga isyu.

SSS calls out to members; be vigilant against fixers and scammers

The Social Security System (SSS) is reminding all members and employers to protect their personal information and be vigilant against fixers and scammers following the increasing reports on fraud incidents.

"We are deeply concerned with the increasing number of fraud victims who are mostly our members. That's why we constantly remind them not to patronize these individuals. Never share your SS Number, My.SSS login credentials and other personal information with individuals who claim to be SSS employees because these will be compromised and used in illegal activities," SSS President and Chief Executive Officer Aurora C. Ignacio said.

SSS further warns the public against joining Facebook Groups, offering assistance on various online transactions for a fee. SSS offers free services and doesn't charge from its members except for Unified Multi-purpose ID Card (UMID) replacement. These groups are considered illegal and unauthorized as they could be data mining accounts used to extract an individual's personal information.

"We also reiterate that SSS shall not be held accountable for any transactions once the member is found to have connived with the fixer. This act is considered a violation R.A. No. 11032 or the Ease of Doing Business and Efficient Government Service Delivery Act of 2018 as well as R.A. 11199 or the Social Security Act of 2018. Hence, we strongly ad-

vised our members to coordinate with legitimate SSS branch personnel only. Aside from that, E-centers are also available in SSS branches where they can be assisted by our member service representatives. We also made our My.SSS Portal and SSS Mobile App user-friendly which they can easily navigate and proceed with their online transactions," added Ignacio. As part of SSS' initiatives to curb these illegal activities, social media posts and accounts were taken down in coordination with the Philippine National Police Anti-Cybercrime Group. This is an ongoing operation since these accounts are evident in social media accounts. Sending your complaints will provide notable information which will help the authorities to track them. Rest assured that the SSS shall penalize these fixers/scammers to protect the interests of our members and employers." Ignacio concluded.

Concerned citizens and victims may report fixers/scammers to the Special Investigation Department (SID) through email fid@sss.gov.ph and telephone number (02) 8924-7370.

For accurate information and updates on SSS programs and benefits, visit and follow SSS on Facebook and YouTube at "Philippine Social Security System," Instagram at "mysssp," Twitter at "PHLSSS," join its Viber Community at "MYSSSPH Updates," or visit the uSSSapTayo Portal at <https://crms.sss.gov.ph/>.

Cavite's Active covid 19 cases << P1

"Please avoid all unnecessary socializing and eating in groups. Maintain all social distancing and health protocols please. Omicron will most likely infect a huge number of the population."

Cavite has been placed under Alert Level 3 together with Bulacan and Rizal from Jan. 5 to Jan. 15 to curb the further spread of the virus amid the threat of the Omicron variant.

In other developments,

Noveleta. The municipal government's vaccination program and the operations at the lying-in center and municipal health center were suspended on Tuesday after 11 medical staff tested positive for Covid-19.

In compliance with the protocols set by the Department of Health and the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases, the Noveleta Health Office staff

members and their close contacts have been placed under quarantine and isolated.

Mayor Dino Chua ordered the temporary shut down of the Noveleta Health Center, Primark Vaccination Center, and Noveleta Lying-in Center for immediate sanitation and disinfection. The health center resumes operations on Thursday. After recording no cases in December 2021, the town of Noveleta recorded 36 posi-

tive cases and 61 suspected cases on Tuesday. "We advise everyone, especially the youth, the senior citizens and persons with disabilities to stay home because we are now on Alert Level 3," Chua said. Cavite, Batangas, Bulacan and Metro Manila were placed under Alert Level 3 due to the sudden increase in Covid-19 cases.

On Wednesday, there were 10,775 new cases recorded in the Philippines.

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PNP ends 2021 with greater << P1

forming its mandate to serve and protect.

Among these key measures is the acquisition and distribution of body-worn cameras for police officers.

Based on the latest data as of December 23, the PNP has distributed 2,696 BWCs to all its 16 regional commands, including those in Metro Manila.

These can be broken down into 144 for Police Regional Office (PRO-1), 64 for PRO-2, 244 for PRO-3, 288 for Region-4A, 32 for PRO-4B, 112 for PRO-5, 256 for PRO-6, 256 for PRO-7, 112 for PRO-8, 80 for PRO-9, 144 for PRO-10, 96 for PRO-11, 80 for PRO-12, 96 for PRO-13, 32 for PRO-BARMM, 32 for PRO-Cordillera, and 40 for the National Capital Region Police Office.

Former PNP chief Gen. Guillermo Eleazar earlier said the transparency and legitimacy of law enforcement operations will now be assured with the use of BWCs.

"Dati ang sinasabi lang natin, baka sakali. Ngayon, tuloy na tuloy na matapos maglabas ang ating Supreme Court (SC) ng mga panuntunan sa pagsumite bilang court evidence ng mga video na kuha ng ating mga body cameras (In the past, we just say it may be possible. Now, it is really possible as the SC issued guidelines on the use of videos from body cameras as court evidence," he added.

Eleazar also thanked former PNP chiefs, including Senator Ronald dela Rosa, for initiating the review for the procurement of the best body cameras up to his predecessor Debold Sinas, who signed the final papers of the delivery.

He also thanked the Supreme Court (SC) for continuously assisting the PNP in coming up with the guidelines for the presentation of the BWC data as court evidence.

"The procurement and eventually the use of body camera-worn system is a tribute not only to Kian delos Santos who died of police

abuse in Caloocan City but also to the policemen whose ultimate sacrifice in the line of duty were tainted by claims of extra-judicial killings, planting of evidence and other unfair allegations," Eleazar said.

He added that a BWC-equipped force will also ensure that there will be no violation in police operating procedures or human rights abuses. It will also protect PNP personnel from malicious and baseless charges. He also assured the public that the BWCs are tamper-proof and cannot be manually turned off by policemen wearing them.

"The cameras capture real-time events and these are recorded in our central database. More importantly, footage taken through the BWCs cannot be erased easily as they are only accessible at the PNP Command Center," Eleazar said.

He added the BWC System, in support of the S.M.A.R.T. (Secured, Mobile, Artificial-Intelligence driven, Real-time Technology) Policing initiative of the PNP, will allow the PNP Command Center to monitor the actual police operations of all units nationwide.

"The BWC will not only satisfy the requirement of transparency in police operations but, more importantly, capture real-life actions for their evidentiary value in investigation and prosecution," he said.

Under the "Revised Operational Guidelines and Policies on the Use of Body-Worn Camera", PNP personnel would use BWCs in anti-illegal drug operations, except where police operatives act as poseur buyers and perform test-buys; service of search warrant and warrant of arrest; hostage rescue operations; high-risk checkpoint/choke-point operations; security operations during the implementation of decision/orders of the court, and quasi-judicial or administrative bodies; and security coverage during

major events in the country.

Another accomplishment of the PNP this year is the so-called "faceless and nameless" recruitment system to ensure that only the best candidates can enter the organization.

Eleazar earlier said the system aims to accept applicants who are most qualified and most deserving, noting that getting rid of the unfair and possibly corrupt practices in the recruitment process will ensure that only those who truly have the heart to serve the country can become law enforcers.

Under the recruitment scheme, a QR (quick response) Code System will be used to conceal the identity of the applicant. Only the applicant's qualifications will be evaluated in determining if he/she will be accepted in the police force.

For this year's recruitment, the National Police Commission approved 17,134 slots to be filled up in the PNP to replenish personnel losses, increase strength, enhance visibility, and improve the police-to-population ratio for the maintenance of peace and order in the community.

The QR Code System will be utilized in the entire application process of the applicant, including the Body Mass Index and agility test, drug, and neuropsychiatric test, and physical, medical, and even dental examinations. Meanwhile, the Integrity Monitoring and Enforcement Group (IMEG) has put up a complaint desk at the venue of all recruitment across the country to monitor the process in various police regional offices (PROs).

Then IMEG chief, Brig. Gen. Thomas Frias said this is part of the PNP leadership's ongoing massive Intensified Cleanliness Policy aimed at penalizing police personnel defying strict directives and other policies.

"Let me go directly to my marching orders from the Chief, PNP which are very clear and simple, we will en-

sure the integrity and credibility of both the recruitment process and the applicants undergoing the said process, my team will be employing overt and covert approaches to preempt possible irregularities and to apprehend violators of existing policies in recruitment," he said.

The IMEG complaint desk will be established at the venue of all the recruitment activities for CY 2021 with the following salient functions: conduct information dissemination; monitor and gather information; receive complaints; conduct validation and case build-up; and render the reports to the concerned field unit.

Frias said information may also be forwarded to Facebook Page: Integrity Monitoring and Enforcement Group and Twitter account: @imeg2017. He assured the public that the identities of the informant will be kept strictly confidential.

The PNP has also boosted the available number of its air assets to around nine helicopters, of which four Airbus H-125 units are operational, with another three undergoing maintenance, and one Robinson 44 helicopter operational and another one undergoing maintenance check-up.

Also, there are now six PNP officers with commercial pilot licenses and seven with private pilot licenses for these helicopters with another one with a commercial pilot license for fixed-wing aircraft.

Also, one helicopter is slated for procurement to replace the one that crashed in Laguna in March 2020.

The PNP earlier said it is eyeing the purchase of more fixed and rotary wing assets to beef up its rescue and transport capabilities. It is eyeing the deployment of two helicopters each in Central Visayas and Southern Mindanao and one in Northern Luzon. It also has included an air ambulance to its shopping list of programmed procurements. (PNA)

VP Leni Robredo brings back free antigen testing in response to COVID-19 uptick of cases

Vice President Leni Robredo responded to the rapid increase in COVID-19 in the country by announcing the return of the Office of the Vice President's Swab Cab services, where citizens can avail of free mobile antigen testing service.

In a Facebook post, Robredo said that the Swab Cab, in partnership with the local government of Quezon City, OVP's Angat Buhay, and UBE Express rolled out on Wednesday, January 5, and was stationed at Tandang Sora Avenue corner Visayas Avenue Extension in Quezon City. The Swab Cab in Quezon City was open from 8am to 5pm. As of 1:20 p.m., 191 out of 410 people tested yielded a positive antigen test result, which is equivalent to a positivity rate of more than 46 percent.

Pre-registration, meanwhile, is required through <http://bit.ly/QCfreetest> for the Swab Cab rollout on Thursday, January 6, at the QCX site, Quezon Memorial Circle.

"With the continuing increase of COVID-19 cases, patuloy po sana tayong sumunod sa mga health protocol. Magsuot ng mask, at kung hindi kailangang lumabas, manatili sa loob ng bahay. Magpabakuna at magpa-booster shot na rin kung qualified na. Let's keep each other safe from the virus," Robredo said after the Department of Health reported 5,434 new infections on January 4, the highest daily record in over two months. Robredo also called for medical, licensed mental health professional and non-medical volunteers for the Bayanihan E-Konsulta, the free teleconsultation service she launched when there was a surge in COVID-19 cases in April last year.

General practitioners and doctors specializing in allergology, pediatrics-endocrinology, general surgery, pediatric surgery, internal medicine, neurology, urology, adult infectious disease, gastroenterology, developmental pediatrics, rehab medicine and other specializations may sign up through <https://bit.ly/BEK-doctor-signups>.

Psychiatrists, licensed psychologists, licensed psychometricians, counselors, students of MA in Clinical Psychology and other volunteers with mental health training and experience may register at <https://bit.ly/BEK-mhprofessionals-reg>. Non-doctors or nurses, non-licensed medical students, call center agents, chat agents, college students, who will be tasked to connect the volunteer doctors with the patients needing e-consultation, may get on board through <https://bit.ly/BEK-nondoctor-signups>. Volunteers will work remotely and must have their own gadgets and internet connection.

"Sa OVP, hangad natin ang kaligtasan ng lahat. Sa ating pagtutulungan, makakaya nating labanan ang pandemyang ito," said Robredo.

Protocols in << P1

gawin ni Pangulo (if he wants to visit again areas affected by Typhoon Odette and other activities he wants to engage in)," he said in a Palace press briefing.

He said the Palace has already taken into consideration Duterte's nature of wanting to interact with people in areas he visits.

"As he's known to be [a] very active president, and he wants to be always on the ground, he always wants to be with people. So, we are putting the necessary protocols to protect him while as much as possible not limiting what he wants to do so that he can effectively govern as our chief executive," he added.

Currently, he said the Palace is "planning" Duterte's schedule in the next few days.

Duterte, in a recent public address, said he plans to visit areas battered by Typhoon Odette.

Last month, Duterte visited Maasin, Leyte; Inabanga, Bohol; Argao, Cebu; and Kabankalan City, Negros Occidental, Dinagat Islands, and Siargao Island to meet local officials and personally distribute relief assistance to those displaced by the typhoon.

On December 30, Mala-

cañang announced that visitors who wish to meet with Duterte have to present a negative reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) before they are allowed inside the Palace.

Nogralas said visitors and guests must undergo antigen testing inside the Palace as part of their second screening.

"This forms part of the Palace health and safety protocol," Nogralas said.

RT-PCR tests are still considered the gold standard in detecting the virus that causes Covid-19, according to the Department of Health (DOH).

As of Tuesday, the DOH reported 5,434 new Covid-19 infections bringing the country's total caseload to 2,861,119.

The DOH reported a positivity rate of 26.5 percent out of 25,704 tests, way above the 5 percent benchmark set by the World Health Organization (WHO).

Recoveries increased by 611 for a total of 2,779,706 while deaths reached 51,604 after 18 succumbed to respiratory disease.

Metro Manila and the provinces of Bulacan, Cavite, and Rizal are currently under a stricter Alert Level 3 until January 15. (PNA)

Male teenager << P1

After more than five months of operations, he is currently earning at least P5,000 a day and was able to provide job opportunities to

his fellow young people. Last week, Josh has also expressed his gratefulness towards the people who believed and supported his products.

Passport applicants at malls << P1

health protocols," the DFA said in a news statement. Recently, the Inter-Agency Task Force Against Emerging and Infectious Diseases (IATF) has placed Metro Manila, Rizal, Cavite and

Bulacan under Alert Level 3 due to the increasing number of Covid-19 cases. Health Secretary Francisco Duque said there is also a recommendation to include Laguna under Alert Level 3.

The DFA Consular Affairs said unvaccinated passport applicants, including minors, should first check the regulations of the malls where they made their online booking before proceeding to their

appointments. Applicants can opt to re-schedule their slots after their full vaccination against Covid-19 or just wait for the lifting of the entry restriction on unvaccinated persons by either malls or local government units.

BOC overshoots 2021 << P1

in 2019. "Our strong collection performance is a testament to the hard work and dedication of the men and women of the Bureau of Customs. It is likewise a reflection of our strong commitment to provide our county the best public service we can offer at this difficult time," Assistant Commissioner lawyer Vincent Philip Maronilla told the Philippine News Agency in a

text message. RCMG, under a Deputy Commissioner, maintains an accounting of revenues collected; administers the legal requirements of the BOC; provides information and analysis of collection statistics; and audits liquidated entries and bonds.

The December revenue likewise exceeded the target by 20.8 percent with a collection of PHP62.478

billion collection against the PHP51.705-billion goal. Thirteen of 17 collection districts exceeded their 2021 target, namely Manila International Container Port, Ninoy Aquino International Airport, and the ports of San Fernando, Manila, Batangas, Legazpi, Iloilo, Surigao, Zamboanga, Davao, Subic, Clark, and Limay. In a statement, Commissioner Rey Leonar-

do Guerrero attributed the collection performance to improved valuation, intensified enforcement operations against illegal importations, traders' improved compliance with the law, gradual improvement of importation volume, and efforts that ensured unhampered movement of goods domestically and internationally amid the pandemic. (PNA)



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16 areas in NCR under granular lockdown

A total of 16 areas in Metro Manila are under granular lockdown as Alert Level 3 has been raised in the National Capital Region (NCR) from January 3 to 15, the Philippine National Police (PNP) said Tuesday.

PNP data showed that 14 areas are under the jurisdiction of the Northern Police District and one each for the Manila Police District and Southern Police District.

Nationwide, the number of areas under granular lockdown also increased from eight to 27, including the NCR, Mimaropa, and the Cordillera regions.

NCR Police Office (NCRPO) Chief, Maj. Gen. Vicente Danao Jr., reiterated his call for the stricter implementation of guidelines and health protocols to curb the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) in the communities, especially amid the rise in the number of cases and the Omicron

variant. "We will be strict in the implementation of laws and ordinances to protect our citizens from this deadly virus," Danao said in a statement.

At the NCRPO, 14 active cases were recorded as of January 2, after reporting just one active case on December 27 last year.

Aside from the NCR, the provinces of Rizal, Bulacan, and Cavite have also been placed under Alert Level 3 following the rising number of Covid-19 cases in these areas.

Under Alert Level 3, a 30 percent indoor venue capacity and 50 percent outdoor venue capacity will be allowed for some activities, provided employees are fully vaccinated.

However, face-to-face or in-person classes for basic education; contact sports, except those conducted under the bubble-type setup; funfairs/carnivals and kid

amusement industries; venues with live voice or wind instrument performers and audiences; casinos, horse racing, cockfighting, and operation of cockpits, lottery and betting shops, and other gaming establishments; and gatherings in residences with individuals not belonging to the same household will be prohibited.

On Monday, Interior Secretary Eduardo Año directed Philippine National Police chief, Gen. Dionardo Carlos, to conduct random inspection in the quarantine hotels to determine if all individuals subject to isolation are following the health protocol.

Carlos said the police will make sure that health protocols are strictly implemented particularly in the areas under more stringent Alert Level 3 status.

"This will give the PNP the authority to intensify our inspection of these es-



tablishments since there is a directive from the DILG. These inspection rounds will be unannounced and shall be conducted randomly to determine which establishments are compliant with Public Health protocols. Let this be a warning that there is no room for complacency during this health emergen-

cy," Carlos said in a press statement on Tuesday.

Año's directive came after Gwyneth Anne Chua, a returning Filipino traveler from the United States, was able to skip quarantine procedures at Berjaya Hotel and attended a party a day after arrival. She infected several other partygoers after testing

positive for Covid-19.

"We believe that police visibility will serve the purpose to monitor how the quarantine hotels are accommodating their guests who are required to isolate while waiting for the completion of the required number of quarantine days," Carlos said. (PNA)

Surgical masks offer better protection vs. Covid-19: Magalong



Mayor Benjamin Magalong has appealed to residents, regardless of vaccination status, to use medical-grade or surgical masks instead of cloth masks for better protection amid the threat of the Omicron coronavirus variant.

"People may also opt for double masks using cloth masks over surgical ones for an added layer of defense against the new variant said to be far more contagious than the previous ones," the mayor said in a statement released by the city's Public Information Office (PIO) on Thursday.

Magalong said health experts in the United States and other countries currently experiencing a surge in infections have recommended upgrading from reusable cloth masks to more protective medical-grade disposable masks.

The mayor is currently under mandatory quarantine after traveling to the United States to visit his parents.

He said the N95 mask is said to be the "gold standard" pandemic mask that can filter out 95 percent of airborne particles as approved by the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) in the US.

However, with its much higher cost, disposable surgical masks that are at least three-ply are said to be next to N95 in terms of efficiency.

"Even though Omicron is proving to be milder, its high transmissibility remains a concern as it can cause asymptomatic to mild cases to rise exponentially and can still upend the city's health care system. This is why we should not take the omicron threat lightly and do everything to prepare through tightened restrictions, enhanced all-around control measures, and strict adherence to minimum public health standards including the proper wearing of appropriate personal protective equipment like face masks," he added.

In a phone interview, PIO chief Aileen Refuerzo said the city has come up with preparedness measures as early as when the Omicron variant was first detected in other countries. She said aside from issuing stricter entry protocols, a general curfew, and a 12-hour liquor ban, the city also prepared isolation areas for reopening to accommodate Covid-19 patients. (PNA)

2 cities, 1 town in Cavite tighten curbs on unvaccinated persons

CAVITE, Philippines – Two big cities and a municipality in Cavite, a province just south of Metro Manila, imposed new curbs on the movement of unvaccinated individuals to stem a post-holiday COVID-19 surge.

Tagaytay City is banning unvaccinated individuals, whether visitors or residents, from entering business establishments.

The new policy forms part of Mayor Agnes Tolentino's January 5 addendum to Executive Order 404, which she signed on January 4.

The EO otherwise repeats the Alert Level 3 guidelines of COVID-19 Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases.

The addendum directs establishments to require guests and customers to present their vaccination card before entry.

The mayor also limits intrazonal and interzonal travel to adults 18 to 65 years old.

But her order allows persons below and above this age group to access essential goods and government services, move during emergen-



cies, and work in permitted industries and exercise outdoors.

In Bacoor, the city administration has issued a "no vaccine card, no entry" policy in local and national government offices.

Unvaccinated individuals need to present a negative result of a rapid antigen test or reverse transcription-polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) test as an alternative.

The Bacoor City Office of the Clerk Court-Regional Trial Court announced on Thursday, January 6, that it was closing for a 14-day quarantine period until January 19. On Thursday, the municipality of Kawit ordered all unvaccinated individuals to undergo a weekly RT-PCR

test at their own expense.

Kawit Mayor Angelo Emilio Aguinaldo's Executive Order No. 003-2022 directs the unvaccinated to remain at home and bans them from taking public transportation, unless they need to access essential goods and services. It orders all transportation services and business establishments to require proof of vaccination from patrons.

The order covers all non-Kawit residents who work and transact business in the municipality. The order covers even al fresco dining, and entry to malls, event venues, and sports facilities. Any outdoor exercise for the unvaccinated will be allowed only in the general area of their residence, within subdivisions and barangays.