



EDITORIAL

Fight for free and safe Covid-19 vaccines

The grave delay and lack of supply of Covid-19 vaccines is the most recent of an apparent endless failures, neglect and corruption of the Duterte regime in facing the Covid-19 pandemic.

It has been a month since mass vaccination started in various parts of the world, but the Duterte regime has yet to take steps to ensure that a large part of the Philippine population is protected from Covid-19.

In fact, the Duterte government has no plans to lead a mass vaccination program. In its 2021 budget, it allotted a mere 2.7% of the estimated ₱72 billion needed to vaccinate 60% of the population. The rest will be borrowed from the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank.

It is also now requiring big capitalists to "donate" half of the vaccines they will purchase. Duterte declared that he does not care if local government units buy vaccines on their own from pharmaceutical companies, but obliges them to have the national government be

part of the deals. Local governments without funds are sure to be last to get vaccines.

Planned vaccine purchases are grossly insufficient. A mere 42 million is said to have been contracted by the national government (Sino-vac), and by LGUs and private companies (AstraZeneca). Even if all these are distributed, only 21 million or 19% of the 110 Filipinos will be covered, far from the recommended 60%. Several million vaccines are also set to be sold by Moderna, Novavax and Pfizer.

Vaccine purchases stink with corruption. As early as September, Duterte had expressly favored buying vaccines from China and Russia. Secret negotiations have been going on for months. Duterte's officials were securing deals for themselves until a "vaccine czar" was appoin-

ted, who recently announced that a contract with the Chinese Sinovac company has been sealed, even if the price and efficacy of the vaccine is not yet clear. Duterte and his officials are believed to have pocketed large amounts of kickbacks. Sinovac is globally known for bribing government officials.

According to Duterte's officials, the earliest vaccines will arrive by the end of February. But even before this, people close to Duterte, including his personal soldier guards, have already been inoculated, to the displeasure of health workers who were supposed to be first in line. It has been reported that Chinese vaccines have already been smuggled in to vaccinate 100,000 Chinese POGO workers.

In the Philippines and the entire world, monopoly capitalist control of vaccine development is now being put to focus. Vaccines are developed and manufactured not for the benefit of humanity but for

profits. The Covid-19 is being exploited by giant pharmaceutical companies who are now racing to control the market. Instead of cooperation, there is secrecy and competition between these companies. They keep their vaccine researches and knowledge under wraps. Negotiations for sales are also done secretly to sell these at the highest price.

The Philippines has no capacity to develop or manufacture its own



vaccines or other important medicine, except paracetamol. Under Duterte, funding for research has further been cut. Thus, when it comes to Covid-19 vaccines, the monopoly capitalists and foreign governments hold Filipinos by the neck. They are in partnership with local big capitalists and in connivance with the bureaucrat capitalist government.

In the face of the Covid-19 pandemic that has infected half a million Filipinos, and more than 95 million people globally, and caused the death of more than 2 million, various countries are exerting efforts to carry out a program for widespread vaccination. Capitalist countries such as the United Kingdom, United States, Japan, China, Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Singapore and others have taken lead. Even less developed countries as Cuba, India, Vietnam,

Iran and others have developed their own vaccines and are set on distributing these for free.

The Party encourages all Filipinos to have themselves vaccinated against Covid-19. This is for the health of every individual and the whole society. Widespread vaccination of the population is one of the key measures to stop the spread of the Covid-19. At the same time, the decision of individuals not to have themselves vaccinated for their beliefs must be respected.

All revolutionary forces must carry out efforts to disseminate information to raise the people's knowledge of vaccines to allay their fears and misbeliefs. Help everyone understand the importance of vaccines.

People must demand that research and development of Covid-19 vaccines be made public. This is in order for people to have a firm basis for deciding which vaccine they will allow themselves to be injected with.

The Filipino people must fight for free Covid-19 vaccination. They must assert the state's obligation to ensure that free and safe vaccines are available to everyone who chooses to be inoculated. Expose and denounce the lack of budget and the corruption of government officials in secret negotiations for vaccine sales.

At the same time, they must demand free testing and free treatment for Covid-19. The people must continue to demand the strengthening of the public health system. There must be increased allocations for improving public hospitals, hiring more nurses and medical workers and for raising their salaries.

Vaccination is an important aspect in controlling the spread of infectious diseases. Many diseases have been eliminated or controlled through vaccines. This is one of the important scientific weapons of humanity.

AB

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Data on vaccines to be used in the Philippines

AS OF JANUARY 18, approximately 42.2 billion doses have been administered in 51 countries with an average rate of 2.43 million doses per day. The biggest capitalist countries have reserved 8.33 billion doses. The Philippines is among the countries which still have to wait until next to meet the local demand for vaccines.

Presently, information about the efficacy of these vaccines is limited. On the one hand, this can be attributed to the competition and secrecy among monopolistic pharmaceutical companies. On the other hand, it can also be attributed to the urgency that these vaccines had to be developed at the soonest possible time. In the past, around three years are spent on researching and developing vaccines before these are allowed to be used by the general public. The Covid-19 vaccines just underwent six months of clinical tests.

The spokesperson of the regime announced on January 18 that it was already able to secure 25 millions of doses from Sinovac, 17 million doses from AstraZeneca, 10 million from Moderna, and 30 million from Covovax. It remains unclear where funds for these purchases will come from, as well as when these will arrive in the Philippines.

Latest reports indicate that at least 21 big cities in the Philippines have expressed their plans to allocate funds to inoculate their constituents.

Protest against the abrogation of the UP-DND Accord





MORE THAN 200 individuals converged at the University of the Philippines (UP)-Diliman, Quezon City on January 19 to denounce the unilateral termination of the UP-Department of National Defense (DND) accord by DND Sec. Delfin Lorenzana. The said accord prohibits the entry of police and military forces in the campus without due permission from university administrators.

The maneuver aims to allow the military to intervene in UP which has long drawn the ire of the regime. This violates academic freedom and shrinks the democratic space in the campus. Soldiers can now freely roam around campuses empty of students with the implementation of the online learning system.





In a show of force, the military brazenly entered UP Diliman the next day. Duterte's minions in congress now aim to also abrogate a similar agreement between the DND and the Polytechnic University of the Philippines.

To oppose these attacks, students must bravely defend the universities by holding assemblies in campuses to manifest their resistance.

LEGEND:

-  Company/Institution
-  Efficacy
-  Storage Temperature
-  Price





CoronaVac (China)

-  Sinovac Life Sciences
-  50.4%-91.25%
-  2-8°C
-  ₱680-₱1,487.5





AZD1222 (UK)

-  AstraZeneca-University of Oxford
-  70%
-  2-8°C
-  ₱305





BNT162b2 (US)

-  Pfizer and BioNTech
-  95%
-  -70°C
-  ₱1,180




mRNA-1273 (US)

-  Moderna and US National Institutes of Health
-  94.1%
-  2-8°C
-  ₱1,952-₱2,252

Sputnik V (Russia)

-  Gamaleya Research Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology
-  92%
-  2-8°C
-  ₱560

Covovax (US)

-  Novavax
-  2-8°C
-  ₱183

NOTE: Majority of the prices were based on data by the World Health Organization and Center for Disease Control of the US. Prices vary from what were presented during the first Senate hearing on vaccines.

Economic cha-cha, a treasonous maneuver amid the pandemic

Duterte's minions in the Senate and Congress are once again attempting to railroad the charter change (cha-cha) scheme which seeks to change the 1987 Constitution at the start of 2021.

In the Lower House, the committee on constitutional amendments has started discussing the Resolution of Both Houses No. 2 on January 13 on the instigation of House Speaker Lord Allan Velasco. Velasco is the author of the said proposal known as the "one-line cha-cha." This pertains to the inclusion of the phrase "unless otherwise provided by law" in various sections of the constitution which limits foreign ownership of land, natural resources, public utilities, educational institutions, media and advertising. Should this be implemented, Congress may change or remove the said provisions in the law through legislation. This targets to amend the sections which promote economic and national patrimony; education, science and technology, arts, culture and sports; as well as general provisions. It primarily aims to fully liberalize the economy in order to allow 100% foreign ownership of land and essential enterprises which are currently exclusive to Filipinos.

Velasco asserts that this cha-cha aims to help the economy recover from the pandemic by attracting foreign investment. Studies, however, indicate that what the country needs is not foreign investment but adequate allocation to subsidize distressed enterprises and

individuals in order to stimulate the economy.

Foreign capitalists aim to accumulate superprofit in the Philippines and not to develop the economy. According to the Ibon Foundation, the inflow of foreign capital since the 1980s is uninterrupted and continues to increase despite constitutional restrictions. From an average of inflow of \$187 million in the 1980s, it has increased to \$6.3 billion in 2015-2019.

Foreign companies have only depleted the country's resources and benefited from the cheap labor of Filipinos in order to accumulate superprofits. Foreign capital has failed to improve the economy and enable it to stand on its own feet. The pandemic has highlighted the country's inability to manufacture basic medical needs. Filipinos and workers depend on the supply of equipment and medicines from foreign companies and are left at their mercy. They have no say on how these should be priced. They cannot do anything but wait for these vaccines.

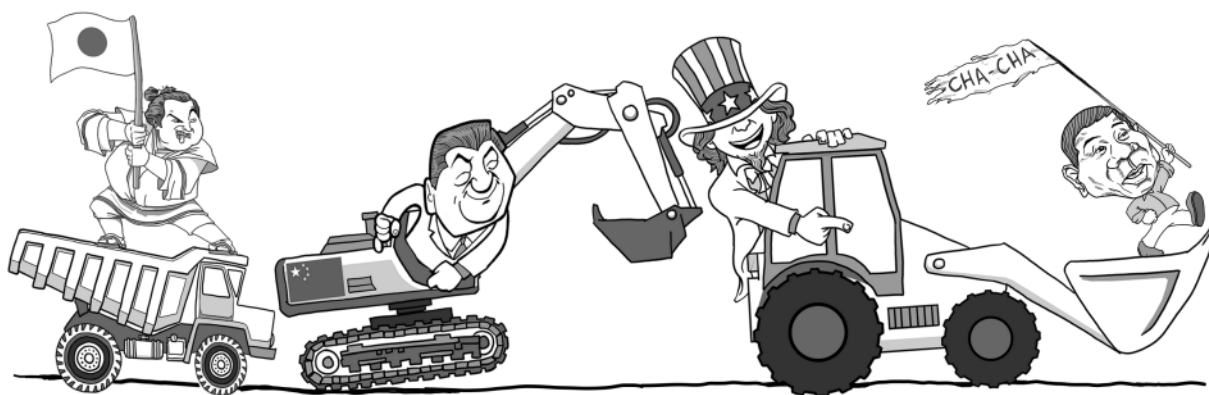
In the Senate, Sen. Vicente Sotto III disclosed that Duterte talked to him on November 2020 to revive the push for charter change to kick progressive parties out of Congress by dismantling the party-list system, and amend the eco-

nomie provisions of the constitution. In December 2020, two of his henchmen senators have already filed a resolution for Congress to convene as a constituent assembly to introduce "limited amendments."

The Party denounced the push for economic cha-cha. It said that economic-only cha-cha does not make cha-cha less evil than previous ones which mainly focused on political amendments. It pointed out that its declared aim of giving foreign capitalists the right to fully own land, natural resources and business operations is equivalent to complete economic subjugation. House Speaker Velasco and his cohorts are acting as traitors in pushing for the complete colonization of the Philippines by multinational corporations, in connivance with local big bourgeois comprador companies.

Not one regime has not attempted to amend the 1987 constitution to completely remove all remaining protections to the economy. Attracting foreign direct investment through liberalization has always been the centerpiece program of successive bureaucrat capitalist governments which serve as agents of big bourgeois compradors.

Duterte's minions last attempted to railroad cha-cha in congress in December 2018 through former House Speaker Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo but has failed to hurdle the Senate. AB



NPA-Abra ambushes butcher soldiers

THE NEW PEOPLE'S Army (NPA)-Abra (Agustin Begnalen Command) ambushed the abusive and butcher soldiers of the 24th IB and 72nd Division Reconnaissance Company (DRC) on January 4 in Barangay Pacgued, Malibcong, Abra. Nine soldiers were killed, including platoon leader 2Lt. Zaldy D. Lapis, Jr.

The surprise NPA attack against the soldiers was carried out swiftly. The said military units have been conducting focused operations and occupied the said community for a month. The NPA also sniped at a helicopter which responded to the scene and which was used to indiscriminately strafe the area. From January 5 to 7, the military deployed a Super Tucano bomber plane and dropped 23 bombs which ravaged farmlands and forests.

The 24th IB and 72nd DRC are notorious for perpetrating fascist crimes against Abreños. These include the strafing of six young fisherfolk in Barangay Lan-ag, Lacub in February 2020. The victims survived the attack but the residents were traumatized. The victims include the chairman of the Sangguniang Kabataan in the barangay. The soldiers made it appear that the victims are members of the NPA. On top of this, the unit is also notorious for theft and ransacking the houses of civilians.

From 2018 to 2019, the 24th IB

has relentlessly intimidated and threatened the members and leaders of Kakailian Salakniban Tay Amin a Nagtaudan, local chapter of the Cordillera People's Alliance in Abra.

Negros. Thirteen soldiers of the 62nd IB were killed in an ambush by the NPA-Central Negros on January 10. Red fighters blasted the soldiers at Sitio Batong-buang, Barangay Trinidad, Guihulungan, Negros Oriental.

The 62nd IB operated in the community for more than a week. Ka JB Regalado, spokesman of the said NPA unit, belied the military's claim that another encounter took place in the afternoon of the same day. "That was a misencounter between 62nd IB and CAFGU," he pointed out. The offensive is a counteroffensive to the attacks and suppression campaign of the Duterte regime against Negrenses.

Albay. The NPA-Albay (Santos Binamera Command) was able to seize three short firearms in an ambush against the 31st IB on January



17 in Barangay Banquerohan, Legazpi City. Three soldiers were slain.

Rizal. The NPA-Rizal mounted two ambushes against a platoon comprised of elements of the 80th IB and Philippine National Police-Rizal at Sitio Dapis, Barangay Puray, Rodriguez on January 4. A soldier was killed and many others were wounded.

Panay. Red fighters launched three armed offensives against state forces in December 2020. Two ambushes were mounted by the NPA-Capiz against operating troops of the 12th IB in Barangay Buri, Tapaz, Capiz on December 9, 2020. On December 16, 2020, the NPA-Iloilo blasted a police mobile in Barangay Balicuas, Tubungan, Iloilo. A soldier was killed and eight others were wounded in the said offensives. AB

NPA-Mindoro snipes Solcom helicopter

A UNIT OF the New People's Army (NPA)-Mindoro (Lucio de Guzman Command) sniped at a S70i BlackHawk helicopter of the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) and prevented it from landing in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro on January 9.

The helicopter was about to land at Sitio Mantay, Barangay Monte Claro to transport officers of the AFP Southern Luzon Command (Solcom) when the incident took place. The said officers, which include AFP Solcom commander Lt. Gen. Antonio Parlade,

Jr., were set to facilitate the forced surrender of residents in the area.

Parlade was left with no other choice but to walk to the next barrio while surrounded by a phalanx of soldiers to escape the area.

Meanwhile, a Huey (UH-1H) of

the AFP crashed at Sitio Nahigit, Barangay Bulonay, Impasug-ong, Bukidnon on January 16. The helicopter was sighted six times conducting reconnaissance and delivering supplies to operating troopers in the boundaries of Misamis Oriental, Agusan del Sur and Bukidnon. Due to the incident, the Department of National Defense ordered a temporary stop to the use of Huey helicopters. AB

Recruitment campaign in Bicol

The dedication of members of the Party branch in Barangay Higos in Bicol was key to their successful recruitment campaign last year.

To reach the target of contributing at least 10 new recruits, each Party member was tasked to recommend individuals whom they recommend to join the people's army, especially the youth. In the recruitment process, they take into consideration the age of their targets, their organizational membership, parental and family background, and readiness to join the people's army.

Party cadres tirelessly educated those who expressed their interest to join. Cadres visited them almost daily in their houses and simultaneously convinced their families. The Party branch also help residents in their production activities. Through these, they are able to educate their targets about the root causes of their daily hardships. "We explain to them that there is no other solution to the crisis but their united resistance, and that its armed form is the most correct and appropriate," said Ka Mario, a Party branch member.

Aside from regular educational discussions given to mass organiza-

tions, the targets are given a course on the basic military regulations of the people's army. They are also educated on the significance of serving full-time in the army and readiness to be deployed wherever it is needed.

As a result of their endeavor, Baryo Higos was able to produce seven full-time Red fighters last year, while several other youth joined part-time. "We have another platoon of militia which can serve as a source of new recruits," added the comrade.

The Party branch regularly checks on them and boosts their morale even after they joined the people's army. The Party branch also attends to the needs of the families of Red fighters.

Those who are recruited were also motivated by the outstanding example of Party branch members. "If we aim to recruit full-time Red fighters, we must also work full-time in our barrio. We have learned to dedicate a time each day to pay attention to the problems, interests and needs of the barriofolk," Ka Mario concluded. AB



Impending vegetable shortage

AMID SKYROCKETING vegetable prices, the Department of Agriculture (DA) has no plans to improve local production. The department itself announced that the country may experience a 79-day food shortage this year. The vegetable supply deficit is projected to reach 434,841 metric tons (MT), or equivalent to the consumption requirement of Filipinos for two and a half months.

Since last year, consumers have been complaining about high vegetable prices due to shortages. The prices of vegetables increased by an average of 60% since November. Prices of some vegetables more than doubled.

Instead of addressing the local supply deficit, the regime has chosen to prioritize boosting the production of export crops. It allocated ₱360 million to the Productivity Enhancement Project, a program which aims to improve the production of cash crops and agricultural produce such as bananas, bamboos, mangoes and onions. The highest allocation (₱220 million) will go to banana production. Only big producers who are registered with the Security and Exchange Commission can avail of this benefit and not small farmers. On the other hand, 900,000 distressed farmers will only receive a one-time ₱3,000-cash aid and ₱2,000-food aid for the entire year. This is equivalent to a measly ₱8/day subsidy.



Skyrocketing pork prices

Many Filipinos are alarmed about the continuously increasing prices of food commodities, especially pork, in Luzon since December 2020. A recent report by the Department of Agriculture (DA) indicates that the price of pork belly in Metro Manila is already at ₱380 to ₱420 per kilo, while pork tenderloin is at ₱320 to ₱380. The aforementioned prices are way higher than the suggested retail prices set at ₱290 and ₱260 a kilo respectively.

The average price of pork may reach ₱400 in the coming weeks with the impending stop of local importation to Luzon from Visayas. This is almost equivalent to the daily minimum wage.

This has a huge impact on the nation given that pork is the most consumed typed of meat by Filipinos. On average, every Filipino consumes 15.6 kilos of pork every year, higher than the 14.2-kilo global average. Meanwhile, Filipinos also consume 12.8 kilos of chicken meat and 3.1 kilos of beef.

Due to skyrocketing pork prices, many Filipinos are now forced to just consume other meat products. The surge in prices and the drop in local supply is primarily attributed to the African Swine Fever (ASF) pandemic in the country. ASF is a virus which infects pigs. There is no vaccine for ASF, and all pigs that are infected with it die. To prevent the spread of the disease, infected pigs and others that are in the same piggeries or backyard farms are culled. ASF has no known effect on humans.

The regime has predicted in early 2020 that the pork production will drop by at least 10%. Despite this, the DA has not implemented any program to urgently address the pandemic and protect local producers. It has not

allocated enough funds to aid affected farmers, especially small farmers who raise pigs in their backyards.

The DA has only implemented a program to produce test kits for ASF two years after the onslaught of the pandemic. It allotted ₱10 million to produce test kits which cost ₱45 each. It was also only now that the department has allocated a measly ₱400 million budget for the repopulation of hogs.

As of now, around 431,000 pigs have been killed in the Philippines since the ASF pandemic the country in 2019. Luzon hog raisers are the most affected, with around 4 to 5 million pigs (53%-67% of the total) culled. In recent months, around

200,000 pigs have been delivered to Luzon from Visayas (Cebu) and Mindanao (Gen. Santos City) to address the pork shortage in the island.

Instead of boosting local production, the DA announced on January 8 its plan to just continue with the local importation of pork from other parts of the country to Luzon. This will not address the supply shortage and may even lead to price increases in areas where huge volumes are imported.

Worse, the department is using the shortage as pretext to fully liberalize not only pork importation, but also of other meat products such as chicken and beef. Last year, the government has imported 895 million kilos of meat products from other countries, mostly (45%) chicken. Compared to 2019, the volume of imported chicken in 2020 is higher by 18%. The volume of imported beef and carabao meat also increased by 45% and 10% respectively. Imported meat are mostly used by local food manufactures who produce processed foods such as canned goods, hotdogs and corned beef among others. Demand for the said products increased significantly during the pandemic. The highest volume of Philippine meat imports is from the US.

As in the past, DA's response to pork supply shortage is more importation. It aims to tripple the volume of pork imported by the country in 2021, despite the high price of the said commodity in the global market.

Meanwhile, fisherfolk and poultry owners also warned that the prices of their products could also surge given that many consumers are now opting to buy fish and chicken meat. AB



State forces refuse to turn over cadaver of unionist to family

IT TOOK MORE than three weeks before the cadaver of Vilma Salabao, a unionist who was among those massacred by the police and 2nd ID on December 17, 2020, was turned over to her family.

The victim was killed in a mango farm at Sitio Malalim, Barangay San Jose, Baras, Rizal along with Carlito Zonio, caretaker and chief security guard of the farm; cousins Jonathan and Niño Alberga, security guards; and Wesley Obmerga. Obmerga was suffering from tuberculosis, while Salabao had cancer. The victims are known as the Baras 5.

The Karapatan-Southern Tagalog said that the cadavers of the victims bore marks of harsh torture.

After the brutal crime, the fascists planted evidences of firearms and explosives to make it appear that the victims were members of the New People's Army (NPA). The 2nd ID, through Lt. Gen. Antonio Parlade, Jr. first announced that the victims were revolutionary tax collectors of the NPA and were killed after fighting back. After a few weeks, Sec. Eduardo Año of the Department of Interior and Local Government announced that the victims were partisans.

Killing. Elements of the Philippine National Police (PNP)-Camarines Sur killed Aldren Lagdaan Enriquez on January 6 in Barangay Sagrada, Iriga City. The victim was an active member of the Camarines Sur People's Organization and was accused of being a member of the NPA. Around 30 policemen entered his house. He was shot in cold blood in front of his two young children.

The PNP-Region 5 also killed Eddie Barcoma Belludo, a resident of Sitio Camenorial, Barangay Banquerohan, Legazpi City, on January 11. He was also accused of being an NPA member and was planted with evidences of firearms and explosives.

Harassment. A policeman based in Tagum City, Davao del Norte, filed a trumped up murder charge against Windel Bolinget, chairman of the Cordillera Peoples Alliance (CPA). He and 9 other individuals were accused of killing Garito Tiklonay Malibato, a member of Lumad group Karadyawan. Malibato was killed in March 2018 by Alamara paramilitary forces.

Illegal arrest. Joint elements of the police and 201st IBde arrested Ruel Custodio and Ruben Estocado at Zone 3, Barangay Poblacion, Atimonan, Quezon on December 26. The victims are members of the Coco Levy Funds Ibalik Sa Amin who were accused of being NPA members. Evidences of firearms and explosives were likewise planted to justify the arrest. They were not allowed to be visited by their relatives.

Abduction. The 62nd IB has yet to surface farmer Anselma Garde, 31, who was abducted by its soldiers on January 17 at Sitio Batong-Buang, Barangay Trinidad, Guihulngan City, Negros Oriental.

On the same day, the military shelled and bombed the mountainous areas of barangays Sandayao, Trinidad, Binobohan, Imelda and Tacpao of the same town. This resulted in the forcible evacuation of around 100 families. AB

Panay. On January 7, Mayor Roberto Palomar of Tapaz, Capiz ordered around 500 Tumandok families to return to their communities after evacuating last month. The Tumandoks left their communities after the police arrested and massacred their leaders last December 30, 2020. Initial reports indicate that 300 individuals were also coerced by the AFP to surrender in Tapaz.

Caloocan City. Hundreds of Caloocan residents were alarmed after the DSWD announced the cancellation of the verification process for the second tranche of the Social Amelioration Program sa lugar last January 13. They also complained about the complicated Starpay online registration system implemented by the DSWD and the lack of clear instructions on how to receive aid.

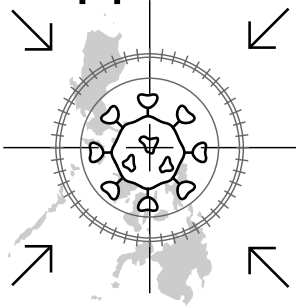
Navotas. To pave the way for the reclamation in Tanza, Navotas, 30 fisherfolk families were evicted from their communities by personnel of the San Miguel Corp. last January 15. Residents complained that the site where they were relocated is a dangerous and prone to flooding. They were also barred from fishing in nearby seas.

Negros. More than 7,000 families were affected by the flashfloods in the towns of Talisay, Silay, Victorias and EB Magalona in Negros Occidental last January 1 and 9. The floods resulted in the destruction of properties and livelihoods worth ₱16.5 million.

Cebu City. The military deployed war tanks and soldiers in the barangays of Pasil, Sawang Calero, Suba and Ermita in Cebu City on January 15. The martial-law-like deployment terrorized residents and resulted in confusion. The soldiers occupied the said barangays for three days.

—IN—SHORT

New Covid-19 variant detected in the Philippines



A 29-year old male resident of Quezon City tested positive of the new variant on January 13. He went to U.A.E on December 27 and returned to the country on January 7.

only **2.8%**

of the GDP was **allocated** by the regime to **stimulate the economy.**

The allocation is very small and is almost the same compared to years when there was still no pandemic. This is the lowest budget allocation among countries in Asia.

Source: Ibon Foundation

teachers' measly and largely unreleased communications allowance

under the blended learning system.

₱300/month



* if you consume 200 kWh, you will pay an additional ₱55 .

power rate hike by



this January. The company has simultaneously started to issue disconnection notices to consumers who have failed to settle their balance since March 2020

\$13.36B

or

₱641.28 billion

(\$1=₱48

exchange rate)

borrowed by the regime **supposedly** for its **pandemic programs**. There is no information on where and how this will be spent except for the **₱70 billion allocation purportedly to buy vaccines.**

Non-Covid-19 deaths from January to October 2020.

438,809

Source: Phillipine Statistics Authority

\$6.79 billion

net worth of Manny Villar,

the **only Filipino** in the list of **500 richest billionaires in the world.**

He is the 375th richest in the list which is topped by Elon Musk (net worth: \$197 billion).

Source: Bloomberg Billionaires Index

₱8.8 billion

minimum annual income to be earned by Ramon Ang with the opening of



should the company start to charge **₱110** this February 1 to approximately **110,000 motorists**. This means, that he will be able to fully recover his investment in just 5 years.

Heightened political crisis on Trump's final days

US President Donald Trump was impeached for the second time by Congress on January 12, eight days before he was set to be replaced by Joseph Biden in the White House. Trump became the first president to be impeached twice.

In the impeachment case, Trump was charged with "incitement of insurrection." He was found responsible of peddling disinformation for several weeks about the November 2020 elections and during his speech in a rally on January 6 which resulted in "violent, destructive and seditious acts." These acts refer to the failed attempt of pro-Trump groups to overrun the US Congress wherein five were killed and scores were wounded.

Aside from the said speech, the impeachment complaint also contained Trump's attempts to subvert election results in Georgia. Trump was first impeached by Congress in December 2019 but was acquitted by the Senate in January 2020.

The impeachment is the culmination of the political and economic crisis in the US which is characterized by the worst health crisis, worsening jobs crisis and the sharpening of the American people's dissatisfaction with Trump's anti-

immigrant, racist and fascist administration.

Attack on Capitol Hill

On January 6, more than 2,000 Trump supporters stormed the Capitol Hill where senators and representatives were holding a ceremonial counting of electoral votes. The counting was the last step to declare Joseph Biden as the 46th president of the US.

The Capitol Hill attack took place after more than two months of Trump's denial of losing the elections. He has repeatedly declared, without basis, that he won by landslide while electoral results showed a wide gap between him and Biden. Biden was way ahead of Trump by 7 million votes in the popular vote. He also led in the electoral votes—306 votes to Trump's 232.

Hours before Trump's supporters overran Congress, Trump incited them to attack by telling them to "march to Congress" to "stop the

steal" of the elections. Some of them were armed and planned on "arresting" those who Trump named as "enemies of democracy."

Inside Congress, 100 representatives and 13 senators planned on questioning the electoral results. The US is now investigating the role Trump's partymates played in the siege.

Ouster by whatever means

The impeachment pushed through after Vice President Mike Pence refused to remove Trump from office through the Amendment 25 of the US Constitution. The said amendment allows the president to be removed from office, with the help of Congress, and be replaced by the vice-president.

According to Democrats, it is important to impeach Trump so that his case will serve as precedent and in order to ban him from running for any government office in the future.

At the end of his term, officials, businesses and his partymates have gradually distanced themselves from Trump. Many of his cabinet members have also resigned. More companies have withdrawn their donations to the Republican Party.

Prior to this, social media companies (Facebook, Twitter and Instagram) have suspended Trump's accounts which he has been using to incite violence and sow disinformation for a long time.

In the morning of January 20, midnight in the Philippines, Biden took his oath as the 46th US president and Trump's reign came to an end. AB

