



DA-PhilRice proposes truthful labelling of rice



Truthful labelling of local rice by retailers will remain a national concern unless stringent policies and standards are strengthened and fully enforced.

In the November 2020 celebration of the National Rice Awareness Month (NRAM), Alice B. Mataia, Policy Research and Advocacy Project lead of the DA-PhilRice, underscored the importance of labelling to maintain locally produced rice's standards of quality, safety, identity, and origin.

As the local food system is under pressure because of rising population and growing sophistication of Filipinos in rice consumption, such a step will help consumers to distinguish local rice from imports and reinforce their perceptions that they are selecting and buying safe and quality rice from a shorter supply chain.

The passage of the Rice Tariffication Law, however, greatly reduced the role of the National Food Authority in

pursuing national grains standards. The Philippine National Standards now implements the Grains Grading and Classification of Paddy and Milled Rice developed by the Bureau of Agriculture and Fisheries Standards.

In this era of e-commerce, the importance of truthful labelling of rice boxes and price tags indicating milling classification and source is instrumental in promoting and marketing unpacked rice to support local farmers.

Mataia encouraged local government units to enforce proper and truthful labelling in rice for consumers' protection through ordinance or resolution to help them exercise their right of choice.

NRAM 2020 with its theme, "Grow local, Buy local, Eat local: Support our Rice farmers," featured a series of webinars for policy makers, stakeholders, and farmers, while other government institutions, departments, and agencies conducted their own activities during the celebration. 🍌

WHAT'S INSIDE?

- 2 Director's message
- 3 35 years of R4D celebrated
Staff undergo psychological assessment tests
- 4 Former PhilRice ED now DA Asec/COS
DA-ATI, DA-PhilRice Bicol sign RiceBIS MOA
Typhoon victims aided
Yearend activities benefit advocacy groups
- 5 Partnership to increase farm machines' availability
VAW-FREE DA-PhilRice
- 6 1st Quarter DA-PhilRice events
DA-PhilRice products
- 7 Infrastructure projects
RCEF seeds updates
Awards
- 8 Strict rules imposed vs. COVID-19



DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

When day comes, we ask ourselves, where can we find light in this never-ending shade? And yet the dawn is ours before we knew it— to grow, to hope, to try, to be victorious together in all that we make. So, let us lift our gaze to what stands before us... When day comes, the new dawn balloons as we free it. For there is always light, if only we're brave enough to see it. If only we're brave enough to be it.

(Excerpted from The Hill We Climb by Amanda Gorman)

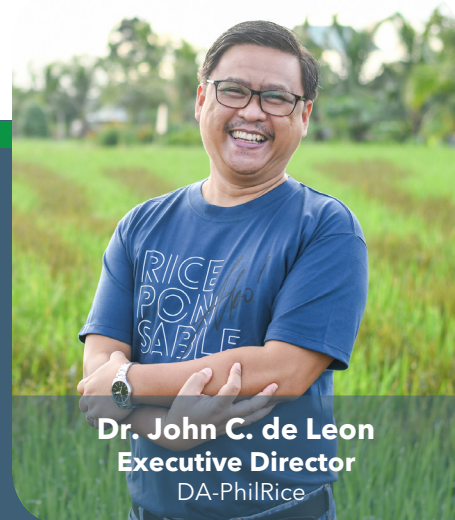
Happier new year, mga Ka-PhilRice!

Indeed, 2021 stands before us all – ready to become what we would like it to be. And it will require (as usual) courage to step into a new year. But as the much-celebrated poem conveys, we can in fact fill it (2021) with every hope, every growth, every victory. We see that light here at PhilRice. And as in the year past, we continue to dare to be that light and continue the build-up towards our 3 Ks (Kaalaman or knowledge, Kakayahan or capacity, and Kaunlaran or prosperity), inspired by our DA's 'New Thinking' and by what Digital Technology and Agri 4.0 offer the entire agri-food production chain.

So, let's lift our gaze and step farther to the 2021 horizon – **One DA** mas Masaganang Ani, mas Mataas na Kita para sa lahat ng ating mga Magsasaka! The Almighty God bless us all.

The year 2021 ahead of us – big goals to deliver and other information:

- 2021 DA rice production goal of 20.48MMT of palay. For the first two quarters, the target production is 9.02MMT. (This new goal is 6% higher than the 2020 projection of 19.32MMT, revised from 20.34MMT after a series of typhoons in the latter part of 2020).
- Continue to reach all our 2.1M rice farmers. (Rice employs 2.5M households, broken down into 2.1M farmers, 110,000 workers for post-farm activities, and 320,000 for ancillary activities, FAO).
- PSA said total rice stocks reached 3.158MMT in Nov 2020, enough for around 98 days based on



Dr. John C. de Leon
Executive Director
DA-PhilRice

the country's average daily rice consumption of 32,000MT. (About 57.3% with households, 30.5% held by commercial warehouses, 12.2% by NFA).

- The country's annual consumption total is currently 12.9MMT of milled rice. (PSA reported in May 2020 that on average, a Filipino consumes 118.81kg annually. This is equivalent to 325.5g of milled rice daily).
- Our population as of January 9, 2021 is 110,340,452M (109,581,078 at mid-2020; projected to reach 142M by 2045).



Philippine Rice Research Institute
Central Experiment Station
Maligaya, Science City of Muñoz, 3119 Nueva Ecija



RICE MATTERS is the bi-monthly newsletter of the Department of Agriculture-Philippine Rice Research Institute that delivers information about the Institute's activities to its partners, and internal and external clients.

DA-PhilRice, Maligaya, Science City of Muñoz, 3119 Nueva Ecija
Tel. Nos. +63 (44) 456-0277, 0258, 0285 Fax No. +63 (44) 456-0354
Email: prri.mail@philrice.gov.ph



Quality Rice. Quality Life.

EDITORIAL BOARD

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF:
Diadem B. Gonzales-Esmero

MANAGING EDITORS:
Precious Mae C. Gabato
Pamela V. Carbungco

DESIGN/LAYOUT:
Pamela V. Carbungco
Jude C. Pangilinan
Andrei B. Lanuza

WRITERS:
Pamela V. Carbungco
Precious Mae C. Gabato
Lorelie Vee C. Domingo
Jungie A. Diamsay
Chona Mae S. Narvadez

CONSULTING EDITOR:
Juanito F. Goloyugo
Constante T. Briones

EDITORIAL ADVISERS:
Karen Eloisa T. Barroga
John C. de Leon

CIRCULATION:
Mariel S. Peria

35 years of R4D celebrated



DA-PhilRice's first Director (1986-2000), Dr. Santiago R. Obien (SRO), expresses his confidence that the Institute will keep on finding ways to better serve the Filipino rice farmers.

DA-PhilRice summed up its 35 years of rice research for development (R4D) and service to Filipino farmers as it celebrated its 35th anniversary on Nov. 4-6, 2020, with the theme, "Kaalaman, Kakayahan, Kaunlaran."

R4D products such as seeds, machines, diagnostic tools, and rice-based foods/drinks were exhibited. Impact of training, integrated pest

management, and knowledge products on a rice-secure Philippines were also highlighted.

Extension modalities used since the Institute's beginning from face-to-face encounters to VHS tapes, and high-tech information and communications technologies were displayed.

Online thanksgiving, moral enrichment program, and Dangal ng PhilRice awards program were parts of the subdued celebration.

The annual SRO Seminar Series on Research Management and Institution-Building was also held with Dr. Fernando A. Bernardo, renowned expert in rice research, former DA-PhilRice Trustee, and first president of the Visayas State University, as the resource person. Dr. Obien, now 85, was the guest of honor for the entire anniversary celebration.

"My fervent wish is for the Institute to sustain the high quality of its science in the midst of change, and our protracted battle against the COVID-19 virus. May it remain relevant, empowered, and compelling in its service to our rice farmers - whether they are among our aging farming population, or the younger and enterprising ones. May it embrace change, and co-create the new, or the next, or the better normal," Executive Director John C. de Leon said.

DA-PhilRice was established on Nov. 5, 1985 through Executive Order 1061. (Pamela V. Carbungco)

Staff undergo psychological assessment tests

Baseline data gathering and developing mental health-related activities and programs for DA-PhilRice Central Experiment Station, branch, and satellite personnel were rolled out late last year.

"The Institute's step was in response to the Civil Service Commission's Memorandum Circular No. 04, series 2020 known as Mental Health Program in the Public Sector and in compliance to Republic Act 11036 (National Mental Health Law)," Executive Director John C. de Leon said.

According to Ms. Ethel P. Gibe, Human Resource Management Office (HRMO) Head, the assessment determined employees' strengths, lifestyle, coping strategies, work habits, attitudes, level of productivity, and identifying employees experiencing mental health issues.

In the Evidenced-based Psychological Assessment of the Institute, staff accomplished a personality inventory (60 items), three well-being scales (55 items), and a productivity measure (60 items), which were administered in three batches to avoid test-taking fatigue and information overload.

Kumusta Ka-PhilRice?
Asking for help is so important. Starting to talk about your **mental health** can open so many doors.
You deserve help just like everyone else.

Reach out to us for free and confidential psychosocial support during this time of pandemic.
Call us at **09988432961**.
Psychological first aiders are ready to help you from Monday to Friday @ 8:00AM to 5:00 PM

Our partners from the United Registered Social Workers can be reached on a 24/7 line through 0966 875 2396

Materials were sourced from licensed service providers and administered by selected HRMO staff and branch station AOs/HR.

Former PhilRice ED now DA Asec/COS

Agriculture Sec. William D. Dar inducts Dr. Leocadio S. Sebastian, former executive director of DA-PhilRice, as assistant secretary, Jan. 8.

Sebastian, who was DA-PhilRice ED from July 2000 to July 2008, was also designated as chief of staff (COS).

Prior to his return to public service, Sebastian served as program leader of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research - Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS) Program for Southeast Asia based in Hanoi, Vietnam.

Sebastian through the CCAFS program has been a staunch advocate of climate-smart agriculture (CSA) where he led various research for development activities promoting locally adaptive CSA technologies and practices to help farmers cope with climate change.

Sebastian was awarded the highest and prestigious medal for his "contribution to the cause of agriculture and rural development" by the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development of Vietnam.

While at DA-PhilRice, Sebastian strengthened and mobilized the national rice research and development network that enabled the Philippines to increase rice productivity and sustain DA-PhilRice's stature as a premier knowledge generating institution in Southeast Asia.



Sebastian (right) takes his oath as DA assistant secretary and Chief of Staff with DA Secretary William Dar. | PHOTO / DA

An expert in agriculture, genetics, agricultural chemistry, and plant breeding, he is recognized for his development of rice cultivars (Matatag lines 5-8) with resistance to rice tungro spherical virus (RSTV), molecular mapping of the RSTV and its vector, the green leafhopper, and the development of marker-aided selection techniques for the transfer of the resistance genes to other elite rice cultivars.

Sebastian was also a recipient of The Outstanding Young Men Award, Outstanding Young Scientist in Plant Breeding, Pantas (Sage) Award for Research Management, and the Japan International Cooperation Agency Award.

A number of DA-PhilRice senior staffers are also currently detailed at DA doing specialized tasks. 🍌

DA-ATI, DA-PhilRice Bicol sign RiceBIS MOA



DA-Agricultural Training Institute (DA-ATI) and DA-PhilRice Bicol have signed a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) on Rice Business Innovations System (RiceBIS) designed to introduce new ideas, workflows, and methodologies or services in rice production and business to help farmers sustain Bicol's rice productivity and strengthen their competitiveness and revenue. At the signing ceremony were (from left) DA-PhilRice's Shiela O. Sabaria and Melanie Aileen C. De Peralta, and DA-ATI's Elsa A. Parot and Vivien O. Carable.

Typhoon victims aided



DA-PhilRice provided cash assistance of P200,000 to its Bicol staff devastated by typhoons late last year. Rice, grocery items, clothes, and personal essentials, among others, were also distributed in Isabela communities.

Yearend activities benefit advocacy groups



Through activities like talent and draw for a cause, DA-PhilRice raised funds that were awarded to three advocacy groups— Talikala, Inc., Jeremiah Foundation, and Home for Girls.

**MAY TANONG TUNGKOL SA
PAGPAPALAYAN?**

Magtext o tumawag na sa
Farmers' Text Center!



Partnership to increase farm machines' availability



(L-R) DA-PhilRice Deputy Executive Director for Research Dr. Eduardo Jimmy P. Quilang, Executive Director Dr. John C. de Leon, and Guimba, Nueva Ecija-based Val-Agri Machineries proprietors Engr. Roman S. Lugto and Ma. Fe P. Lugto signed the agreement.

DA-PhilRice recently signed a technology transfer agreement with an agricultural machine shop to fabricate and commercialize the Institute's developed machines.

"[Within this agreement], DA-PhilRice becomes the first agency to be issued a Fairness Opinion Report facilitated by the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) in Region 3. It's not an easy task because four technologies were evaluated," Leidi Mel B. Sicat, OIC

Provincial Science and Technology Director in Nueva Ecija, said.

Under the Technology Transfer Act of 2009, technologies funded by the Philippine government are subject to a Fairness Opinion Board (FOB) review and report to determine the fairness of the transaction to the government.

The agreement allows the Val-Agri Machineries to manufacture the DA-PhilRice-developed microtiller, laboy tiller, reversible flatbed dryer, and

seed cleaner, which can reduce farm expenses on land preparation and post-harvest activities.

Microtiller is a lightweight equipment for tilling small-sized paddies, while laboy tiller is for land preparation particularly for puddling soil with hardened depth.

Reversible dryer is a batch-type mechanical dryer used to dry grains by introducing heated air at the bottom layer of the grains and then reversing the flow of the heated air at the later part of the drying process. Meanwhile, seed cleaner is used to remove foreign materials from the seed mass.

The said technologies, which are the first to undergo an FOB evaluation, are regarded in the scientific community, including the developers some of whom are conferred scientists by the DOST's Scientific Career Council. DA-PhilRice Intellectual Property Management Office under the Business Development Division is one of the most prolific and reliable patent agents in the industry. (Chona Mae S. Narvadez)

VAW-FREE DA-PHILRICE



DA-PhilRice supported the 18-day campaign dubbed "VAW-free community starts with Me." Violence Against Women (VAW) is an international campaign held annually from Nov. 25 to Dec. 12. The United Nations defines VAW as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or likely to result in, physical, sexual, or mental harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life." In the Philippines, VAW is enshrined in Presidential Proclamation No. 1171. (Precious Mae C. Gabato)



1ST QUARTER DA-PHILRICE EVENTS

JANUARY 2021

6	1 st R&D Meeting (Agusan)
11	FutureRice Farm Management Planning (CES)
13-14, 28	MOET Hands-On Training (Los Baños)
18	1st Research Management Team Meeting (CES)
19	13th Mancom Meeting
25	JICA Implementers' Meeting and Program Launching (Midsayap)
27-28	Seminar-Workshop Towards a New Agenda for the Philippines-IRRI Partnership in Rice R4D

FEBRUARY 2021

1-5	Strengthening Inbred Rice Seed Production Practices for Accredited Seed Growers in Catanduanes (Bicol)
1-12	RCEF-Training of Trainers (ToT) on the Production of High-Quality, Inbred Rice and Seeds, and Farm Mechanization (CES)
2-16	ToT on Pest and Nutrient Management (CES)
3-5	RCEF Seed and Extension Annual Review (CES)
5	DA-PhilRice Batac Anniversary Meeting regarding DA-PhilRice and University of the Philippines MOA
8-12	Seed Production and Finance Management Skills Training for Women (Bicol)
9	1st Development Sector Meeting (CES)
10-12	Refresher Course on PalayCheck System and Fertilizer and Pesticide Handling for Laborers (Negros)
11	PalayAralan on Pest Management, (DA-PhilRice Facebook)
12, 19	PalayAralan (Negros)
15	2nd Research Management Team Meeting (CES)
15-19	Binhing Palay Farm Field Walk (Bicol)
16	1st GASS Sector Meeting (CES) Meeting with University of Eastern Philippines regarding partnership (Bicol)

18	1st Quarter Seminar Series on Agricultural Research Statistical Analysis Tools (Agusan) Meeting with DA-RFO8 and other regional partners for BDI project (Bicol)
17, 19, 22-23	Farmers' Training on Inbred Rice Production and Farm Mechanization (Los Baños)
23-24	DA-PhilRice Gender and Development Agenda Workshop
25	PalayAralan on Disease Management Series (DA-PhilRice Facebook)
29	Gender-Based Seminar on Rice Farming (Bicol)
Feb - Apr	Rice Specialists' Training Course (CES)
Feb - May	Modified Farmers' Field School at Rice Business Innovations System Canlaon City, Negros Oriental (Negros)
(TBA)	LOA signing with Cavite State University regarding Mobile One-Stop Information Shop (Los Baños)

MARCH 2021

1-30	Women's Month Celebration (Institute-wide) Fire Prevention Month
2-4	Seminar Series on "Gender sensitivity, Anti-Bastos Bill, Anti Sexual Harassment Law, Magna Carta of Women, Gender statistics, GAD Agenda-Mission-Vision" (Agusan)
7-20	ToT on the production of high-quality inbred rice and seeds and farm mechanization (Negros)
11	PalayAralan on Weeds Management (DA-PhilRice Facebook)
(TBA)	ToT on Production of Inbred Rice Seeds, and Farm Mechanization of LGU Rice Program Officers in Batangas Province (Los Baños)
24	1st Pinoy Rice Webinar Series on "Women in Farming: Seeing Climate Change Through a Gender Lens" (Los Baños)
25	PalayAralan on Harvest Management (DA-PhilRice Facebook)
(TBA)	Gender Sensitivity Training for Staff (Negros)



Let's have fun learning about Rice Science!

Follow Rice Science Museum on Facebook!



Scan and watch our episodes!

DA-PHILRICE PRODUCTS

Get your own **MINUS ONE ELEMENT TECHNIQUE (MOET) KIT** and **SAVE** on fertilizer costs!

P220 ONLY

EASY and RELIABLE DIY soil analysis

LEAF COLOR CHART (LCC) AVAILABLE!

P50 ONLY

- ✓ Knowing N levels of rice crop with less effort
- ✓ Easy to use and quick result
- ✓ One tap of leaf and N level is determined

To order: Contact **PhilRice Products** Facebook Page or email **bdd@philrice.gov.ph**

2020 INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS

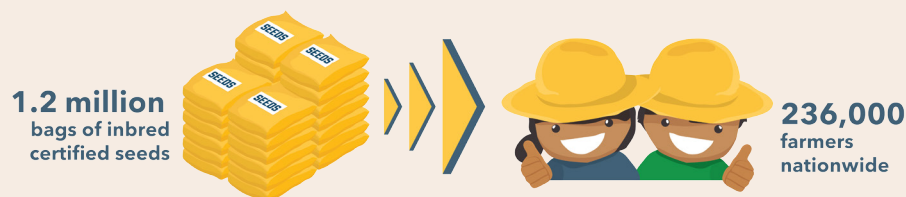


Now 91% completed, the DA Crop Biotechnology Center based at DA-PhilRice will serve as the hub for implementing effective and efficient agricultural biotech R&D.

PROJECT NAME	STATION	STATUS
Improvement of Laboratories at Research Building	CES	Completed
New Administrative Building	Isabela	Completed
Powerhouse and Electrical Distribution System	Negros	Completed (98% - for testing)
Central Warehouse for Housekeeping	CES	Partially Completed (95%)
Flatbed Reversible Dryer	Agusan	Ongoing (95%)
Crop Biotech Center Laboratory and Plenary Building	CES	Ongoing (91%)
Construction and Improvement of Various Facilities	Midsayap	Ongoing (90%)
Completion of Multi Purpose Building	Midsayap	Ongoing (85%)
Breeder Seed Production, Processing Shed and Warehouse	CES	Ongoing (70%)
Rehabilitation of Cold Storage of Nucleus Seeds	CES	Ongoing (60%)

RCEF SEEDS UPDATES

Seeds Distributed as of Dec 31, 2020
(for Dry Season 2021)



WE LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU.

Scan the QR code and tell us how the newsletter can serve you better.

AWARDS

GANTIMPALA AGAD AWARDEES (Dec 2020)

BAYANI KA AWARD

- RCEF Seed Inspectors
- Ryan M. Domingo (CES-IMSSO)
- Materials Recovery Facility Workers (CES-IMSSO)
- Analyn A. Mayordo (Negros)

MOST REGISTERED UTILITY MODELS AWARD

- Amelia V. Morales & Rosaly V. Manaois (CES - RCFSD)

EXCELLENCE AWARD

- Julian C. Macadamia (Bicol)

MOST DILIGENT AWARD

- Joeronel I. Villarosa (Negros)

MOST RELIABLE AWARD

- Noel V. Orzame (CES - PBBD)
- Michael E. Valenton (Negros)

RETURNING SCHOLAR

Jaime A. Manalo IV, PhD
Climate Change Adaptation
University of Queensland
(Australia)

FutureRice™
Reopens in March 2021!



Follow us on Facebook for more updates!

Quality Rice. Quality Life.

Strict rules imposed vs. COVID-19

IKAW, AKO, TAYO

ang lulutas sa Covid-19 krisis ng ating bayan.



Magsuot ng face mask, maglinis ng kamay (sabon at tubig/alcohol), mag-distansya, at iwasan hawakan ang mata, ilong, at bibig.



Iwasang lumabas ng bahay hangga't maaari o pumunta sa lugar na maraming tao.



Kung may nararamdamang sintomas (lagnat, tuyong ubo, mabilis na kapaguran), sumangguni sa inyong local healthcare worker at maging tapat sa pagsagot sa kanyang mga tanong.

The continuous global upsurge of Corona Virus Disease-19 (COVID-19) and its variants has led government institutions like DA-PhilRice to adopt stringent protocols to prevent its spread.

Executive Director John C. de Leon issued guidelines under the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ), Modified ECQ (MECQ), and General CQ (GCQ) in memorandums issued in 2020.

Highlights of the guidelines focus on the use of the main entrance gate, DA-PhilRice Employees Multi-purpose Cooperative (PEMCO) operations, meetings and group activities, official travels, workplace sanitation, visitors and other stakeholders, and construction activities.

The NO MASK, NO ENTRY policy applies to everyone entering the Institute. They will be thermally scanned and vehicles entering the main gate shall pass thru a disinfecting rug.

Although staff are not allowed to travel especially in infected areas except those related to the Rice Competitiveness Enhancement Fund (RCEF), they are required to undergo 14-21 days quarantine at the fully sanitized DA-PhilRice Hostel after their travels.

Staff coming from barangays with reported COVID cases will no longer

undergo quarantine in the facility upon presentation of a certification as non persons under monitoring (PUM) or persons under investigation (PUI) during the entire quarantine period.

"For safety precautions, only those reporting to work who were previously PUMs, PUIs, and Covid positive cases shall present Quarantine Clearance and medical certificate and shall undergo quarantine for seven days," said Ms. Hazel M. Orge, Integrated Management Standards and Services Office (IMSSO) Head.

To address concerns for staff members returning to the CES after the holidays, stricter guidelines were implemented. Staff reporting back to work but were stranded in provinces, including newly hired personnel, will automatically be quarantined in the hostel for 7 days for those with medical certificate and 14 days without medical certificates from their local Rural Health Unit.

A 7-day work from home arrangement is resorted to for returning staff based on the assessment of officials, safety officers, and members of their respective division/unit.

Results of face-to-face meetings are emailed, while Facebook live, Zoom, Webex, virtual tours, recording for delayed streaming/sharing, and other communication platforms are instead

used for mass gatherings such as field days, seminars, and conferences.

Visitors and guests delivering rice R&D services are allowed following Department of Health protocols, as are farmers and seed growers with quarantine and food lane passes, while prior approval for appointments are required for students and clients inquiring about investigatory project and testing services.

Only suppliers/service providers with approved appointments and with no COVID symptoms shall be accommodated, as are technicians and service engineers conducting check and repair of lab equipment are allowed to enter the Institute, while contractors should follow the Inter-Agency Task Force construction project guidelines on ECQ, MECQ or GCQ, Physical Plant Division in coordination with the IMSSO.

Orge reiterated the safety protocols for staff experiencing or have experienced COVID-19 virus symptoms for the past 7 days to undergo swab testing or strict home isolation for 14 days and submit quarantine clearance from concerned authority upon reporting back to work.

At the same time, a staff exposed to a COVID-19 positive based upon the evaluation of Rural Health Unit, Barangay Health Unit, and IMSSO is also barred from reporting to work. A quarantine clearance issued by concerned authority is also required upon reporting to work.

Also, not more than 10% capacity is allowed physically in meeting rooms and staff must practice health safety protocols such as physical distancing, wearing of face masks and face shield, and washing or disinfecting hands.