

Metro air quality improves



By [Eireene Jairee Gomez](#)

March 27, 2020

The air quality in some areas of Metro Manila significantly improved after the government implemented the enhanced community quarantine over Luzon to contain the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19), the Department of Environment and Natural Resources said.



A look at Metro Manila's skyline PHOTO BY JOHN ORVEN VERDOTE

Data from the Air Quality Information System of the Environment Management Bureau showed a significant drop in the concentration of particulate matter (PM), based on results gathered from air monitoring stations in the cities of Las Piñas, Marikina, Muntinlupa and Parañaque.

On Sunday, March 22, the 24-hour average level of PM 10 (dust) in Las Piñas and Marikina went down, respectively, to 31.67 and 27.21 micrograms per normal cubic meter (ug/Ncm) from a high 57.81 ug/Ncm and 31.28 about two weeks earlier.

The acceptable threshold standard level of PM 10 is 60 ug/Ncm.

In Muntinlupa and Parañaque, PM 2.5 levels were recorded at 10.78 and 14.29 ug/Ncm, respectively, lower than the 28.75 and 27.23 ug/Ncm on March 10, 2020.

“This explains why our sky now is clear and looks clean,” Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda said.

“The Covid-19 pandemic has brought to the fore on a global scale the realization that a country’s economic and sociopolitical pillars are underpinned by healthy environment,” he added.

Meanwhile, Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu said the sudden stop of activities in many countries “allows the earth to heal from environmental degradation.”

“The major cause of climate change, air pollution, due mainly by mass transport energy emissions, is being abated,” he added.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/03/27/news/national/metro-air-quality-improves/707013/>

Community quarantine rewards Metro with breath of fresh, cleaner air

By: [Jhesset O. Enano](#) - Reporter / [@JhessetEnanoINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 06:03 PM March 26, 2020

The disruption of the daily grind in Metro Manila due to the enhanced community quarantine to contain the coronavirus has resulted in a rare, welcome sight: clear blue skies, thanks to lesser smog.

In Quezon City, the level of pollutants in the air had dropped by as much as 180 percent, after public transport systems were suspended and the general public's movement was restricted, according to data gathered by AirToday.ph and analyzed by the Institute of Environmental Science and Meteorology of the University of the Philippines Diliman (UP-IESM).

Air quality measurement stations set up in the Lung Center of the Philippines and along Edsa-Muñoz, both in Quezon City, showed decreased levels of particulate matter (PM) 2.5, a small yet deadly compound that could lead to various respiratory and cardiovascular diseases. "We have never seen this much decrease. During the weekends, there are drops in PM2.5 levels, but not like this," said Dr. Mylene Cayetano, head of the Environmental Pollution Studies Laboratory of UP-IESM and technical adviser of AirToday.ph. "With lesser human activities, the air quality really improved," she said.

Computation

Data analysis led by Cayetano showed an 80 to 180-percent reduction in PM2.5 levels recorded at the measurement station by the Lung Center from 9 p.m. to 4 a.m.

These percentage values, she said, referred to the amount of PM2.5 that was "prevented" from being emitted into the atmosphere due to the lockdown.

Following a 24-hour observation period, data showed that the peak reduction in pollutant levels at this station was recorded at 3 a.m.

Two weeks before the enhanced community quarantine, the average levels of PM2.5 at this hour at the Lung Center station was at 20 micrograms per normal cubic meters of air (ug/Ncm).

A week before the lockdown, the pollutant levels dropped to 14 ug/Ncm, and even further down to 7.1 ug/Ncm during the imposition of the quarantine, showing a reduction of 180 percent from two weeks ago.

In calculating the percentage reduction, Cayetano said she got the difference between the value recorded during the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) and the value two weeks before it was imposed.

"Then you divide the result by the value during the ECQ and multiply it by 100," she explained.

(20 less 7.1 results in a difference of 12. 19, which is then divided by 7.1. The result of 1.8 is then multiplied by 100, or a reduction by 181.6 percent)

Crucial for hospitals

A partnership between UP-IESM, the Rotary Club of Makati and the Lung Center of the Philippines, the AirToday.ph project measures air quality through the two stations in Quezon City.

Similar trends were observed in the station located in Edsa-Muñoz, where reduction of 70 to 90 percent in the levels of PM2.5 was recorded.

Cayetano said this decrease in pollutants was crucial, particularly in the Lung Center, which has been declared as one of the hospitals catering exclusively to patients with coronavirus disease.

Other government-run and tertiary hospitals are also located nearby, such as the East Avenue Medical Center, the Philippine Heart Center and the National Kidney and Transplant Institute.

“This is a manifestation that if we lessen the human activities, particularly vehicle emissions, we can protect the patients that are in the hospital zone,” she said. “In the time of COVID-19, these patients need clean air more than ever.”

Decreased pollutants were also recorded by different monitoring stations of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) across Metro Manila during the lockdown. In the cities of Las Piñas and Marikina, the 24-hour average levels for PM10 — a particulate matter larger than PM2.5 — went down to 31.6 ug/Ncm on March 22, from 57.8 ug/Ncm on March 9. The PM2.5 recorded in these cities also went down to 27.2 ug/Ncm from 31.2 ug/Ncm over the same period.

In the cities of Muntinlupa and Parañaque, the PM10 and PM2.5 levels were recorded at 10.7 and 14.2 ug/Ncm, respectively, also on March 22. These levels were lower compared to those logged before the lockdown, which was at 28.7 and 27.2 ug/Ncm, respectively.

Clean Air standards

According to the Philippine Clean Air Act, the average values of PM10 in a 24-hour measurement period should not exceed 150 ug/Ncm. The average values of PM2.5, meanwhile, should not exceed 50 ug/Ncm in the same period.

Government data indicate that mobile sources are largely to blame for the poor air quality in the country. This reality is reflected even more in the National Capital Region, where vehicles are responsible for nearly 88 percent of pollutants, according to latest data from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The World Health Organization considers air pollution as a major killer, causing the deaths of some 4.2 million people in 2016 alone. In the Philippines, as many as 120,000 Filipinos die yearly due to air pollution from cars and fossil fuel burning.

Community quarantine rewards Metro with breath of

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Worldwide drop

As the coronavirus spread and upended the world's economies, many activities that cause pollution were placed to a screeching halt. Across the world, emissions in the atmosphere have dramatically fallen in major metropolitan areas, such as in the United States and in China, due to the governments' efforts to lock down cities.

While these emissions were expected to rebound once the pandemic is over, experts said the decreased levels in pollutants during the quarantine should also offer lessons moving forward.

Cayetano said these data simply show that clean air is attainable in the country's economic and political center.

"A lockdown is one drastic example... but the data shows that there needs to be measures that would be long term, sustainable and would not affect the economy and our daily activities," she said.

"The demand for mobility will always be there," she said, "so we need to put up a sustainable and inclusive transport system, with clean energy as source."

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1249003/community-quarantine-rewards-metro-with-breath-of-fresh-cleaner-air-2#ixzz6Hq7Wcl3f>

Antas ng tubig sa Angat Dam muling bumaba: PAGASA

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Mar 26 2020 11:40 AM

Bumaba muli ang antas ng tubig sa Angat Dam sa nakalipas na 24 oras, ayon sa PAGASA-Hydrometeorology Division nitong Huwebes.

Sa kanilang tala ngayong Huwebes, nasa 197.84 meters ang lebel ng tubig ng nasabing dam, mas mababa sa naitalang 198.10 meters na water level noong Miyerkoles.

Malayo pa ito sa critical level ng dam, na pangunahing pinagkukuhanan ng tubig ng Maynilad at Manila Water, na nagseserbisyo sa mga kabahayan at establisimiyento sa Metro Manila at karatig-lalawigan.

Bumaba rin ang antas ng tubig sa San Roque, Pantabangan, Magat, at Caliraya Dam.

Samantala, nadagdagan ang antas ng tubig sa Ipo Dam at La Mesa Dam.

Bahagya namang tumaas ang lebel ng tubig sa Ambuklao at Binga dam.

Dati nang nag-abiso si Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte sa publiko na mag-tipid sa suplay ng tubig para maiwasan ang shortage ngayong dry season.

-- Ulat ni **Raya Capulong**, ABS-CBN News

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/03/26/20/antas-ng-tubig-sa-ang-at-dam-muling-bumaba-pagasa>

#ChangeTheEnding: Aim for doable, long-term

March 27, 2020

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#ChangeTheEnding: Aim for doable, long-term environmental solutions this Earth Hour

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published Mar 26, 2020 9:33:19 AM



Metro Manila (CNN Philippines) — The world is now caught up in battling a pandemic — and fighting for the environment. With this being said, there is now an even greater need for awareness on the importance of nature and a healthy planet, and for long-term solutions to the current environmental crisis.

The annual Earth Hour will be celebrated on March 28 in an effort to bring together millions of people around the world in a show of commitment for the planet. And the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)-Philippines encourages Filipinos to help #ChangeTheEnding of the current environmental crisis.



WWF-Philippines Earth Hour Pilipinas National Director Atty. Angela Ibay describes the evolution of Earth Hour throughout the years. Photograph © Aio Lantin / WWFPhilippines

“We want to be able to use Earth Hour to galvanize people, to bring our messages forward - that our own actions have an effect on our planet, and that our own actions are also the solution that will be able to provide for us and for our shared home,” said WWF-Philippines Earth Hour Pilipinas National Director Atty. Angela Ibay.

#ChangeTheEnding: Aim for doable, long-term

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Since the first “lights out” event was held in Sydney in 2007, the movement has continued to bring together individuals, businesses, and governments alike in joint acts of commitment toward a future of environmental integrity and where man lives in harmony with nature.



Climate Change Commission Policy Research and Development Division Chief Jerome Ilagan expresses the government's commitment to combating the country's environmental issues. Photograph © Alo Lantin / WWF-Philippines

Climate Change Commission Policy Research and Development Division Chief Jerome Ilagan expresses the government's commitment to combating the country's environmental issues. Photograph © Alo Lantin / WWF-Philippines

Climate Change Commission Policy Research and Development Division Chief Jerome Ilagan also said the Philippine government is ready to make things possible to make sure that Filipinos survive and thrive in this era of climate change.

“Public support and the translation and mainstreaming of conservation science across all levels of Philippine government are crucial in addressing the country’s environmental issues,” Ilagan added.



From left to right: WWF-Philippines Advocate Enzo Pineda, WWF-Philippines Executive Director Joel Palma, WWF-Philippines Child Advocate Xia Rigor, WWF-Philippines Earth Hour Philippines National Director Atty. Angela Ibay, WWF-Philippines Earth Hour Ambassador Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski, and WWF-Philippines National Ambassadors Rowilson Fernandez and Marc Nelson pose with WWF-Philippines Mascot Chi Chi the Panda. Photograph © Alo Lantin / WWFPhilippines

WWF-Philippines is inviting the general public to participate in the local Earth Hour 2020 activities, to be held across the country on the 28th of March. Earth Hour 2020 Philippines will largely be a digital effort, and WWF-Philippines will be supporting the events of government agencies, local government units, and private businesses.

#ChangeTheEnding: Aim for doable, long-term

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More importantly, WWF-Philippines is encouraging individuals to take part in Earth Hour 2020 from their own homes, through actions as simple as closing and leaving off non-essential lights for the night.



WWF-Philippines Earth Hour Ambassador Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski introduces the #ChangeTheEnding campaign. The campaign aims to stress the urgency of our environmental issues while emphasizing the need to act now in order to change the ending on the current crisis. Photograph © Alo Lantin / WWF-Philippines

WWF-Philippines Earth Hour Ambassador Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski introduces the #ChangeTheEnding campaign. The campaign aims to stress the urgency of our environmental issues while emphasizing the need to act now in order to change the ending on the current crisis. Photograph © Alo Lantin / WWF-Philippines

“This year, we decided to invest in a campaign that will reach beyond Earth Hour,” said WWF-Philippines Earth Hour Ambassador Mikee Cojuangco-Jaworski. “This campaign will hopefully send a message that will show how everything that we've allowed to happen is affecting the generations after us. It's us right now, however, who are in a position to make a change.”

Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/lifestyle/2020/3/26/changetheending-earth-hour.html?fbclid#.XnwN09Pb6Z0.twitter>



Philippine Star 10 hrs · 🌐

The usual murky water of Manila Bay clears up in some areas as the natural harbor rests from usual human activities amid Luzon-wide enhanced community quarantine on Thursday.

This, explains environmentalist Gregg Yan, is due to the reduced amount of pollutants discharged by factories and inbound ships.

Vince Cinches, also an environmentalist, says this should give the public a glimpse of what will happen "if we sustainably regulate activities and eradicate destructive activ... [See More](#)

👍❤️😬 15K 567 Comments 2.4K Shares

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/134752476678442/posts/1711479969005677/>

Is Manila Bay healing after turning turquoise? Not exactly, say authorities

Published March 26, 2020 10:45pm



Video link: https://youtu.be/_FE8XhOR3aM

Manila Bay became a trending topic on Twitter on Thursday after a video showing its surprisingly turquoise waters spread on social media.

Taken by Manuelito Zape Bajao from a building in Pasay City, the video quickly went viral as people took the bluish color as a sign that the Manila Bay is healing due to the [enhanced community quarantine](#).

But according to Chino Gaston's report in "24 Oras," the change in color could actually be a sign of more pollution.

Source: https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/hashtag/content/731450/is-manila-bay-healing-after-turning-turquoise-not-exactly-say-authorities/story/?utm_source=GMAnews&utm_medium=Facebook

News5 11 hrs · 🌐

Maraming netizen ang natuwa sa mala-Boracay nang kulay ng tubig sa Manila Bay. Pero sabi ng isang grupo, maaaring senyales ito ng pollutants na posibleng makasira raw ng ecosystem doon.

NEWS 5

“
This is not an indication of cleansing waters nor a signalling self-restoration.
It actually manifests that there might be pollutants discharged in its waters. The discoloration is same with the chlorination of swimming pools, which could be hazardous and might result [in] ecosystem disturbances, including fish kill.
”

PAMALAKAYA-PILIPINAS

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Source: https://www.facebook.com/163550757135020/posts/1932393326917412/?substory_index=0

LOOK

Mt. Samat shrine in Bataan seen from GMA Network building

Published March 26, 2020 9:49pm

GMA News anchor Raffy Tima captured photos of the Mt. Samat National Shrine from the GMA Network building in Quezon City.

Thanks to clear skies, the Dambana ng Kagitingan located in Pilar, Bataan is visible roughly 50 kilometers across the Manila Bay.

"When you see it," Tima said in his Facebook post. "Mount Samat and the 1,821 feet Memorial Cross of the Mt. Samat Shrine in Bataan as seen from the GMA Network Bldg. in Quezon City across the expanse of Manila Bay."

The Mt. Samat National Shrine was built to honor the Filipino and American soldiers who fought the Japanese in World War II.

As of this writing, the photos have over 9,000 shares and 9,000 reactions as netizens marveled at the view.



Mount Samat and the 1,821 feet Memorial Cross of the Mt. Samat Shrine in Bataan as seen from the GMA Network Bldg. in Quezon City across the expanse of Manila Bay. | Photo by Raffy Tima

Source: https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/hashtag/content/731455/mt-samat-shrine-in-bataan-seen-from-gma-network-building/story/?utm_source=GMAnews&utm_medium=Facebook



MEDIAMEN: IWASANG MAGING TAGAKALAT NG COVID-19

March 26, 2020 @ 1:30 PM 17 hours ago
Views: 85

MARAMING mediaman ang pinayagan ng pamahalaang Duterte na mag-ikot kahit saang sulok ng mahal kong Pinas.

Daan-daan ang binigyan ng Presidential Communications Operations Office ng media pass upang mangalap at magbato ng importasyon o balita at kaisipan ukol sa Corona Virus Disease-19 at iba pang mga pangyayari na dapat malaman ng sambayanan.

Ang mga Public Information Office ng mga Local Government Unit na panrehiyon, panlalawigan, panlungsod at pambayang pamahalaan sa labas ng Metro Manila, sa pag-unawa natin, ay may kapangyarihang namang mag-isu ng media pass na pangrehiyon at pang-lokal na pamahalaan.

Dahil sa media pass, hindi haharangin ang mediamen saan man sila mangalap ng balita ng mga pulis, militar, LGU traffic enforcer at barangay official at tanood na nagmamando sa mga checkpoint at lockdown laban sa Covid-19.

Dahil sa kalayaang maglakbay at pumunta kahit saan ang mediamen, may posibilidad na maging carrier o tagahawa ang mga ito sa kanilang mauugnayang tao.

COVID-FREE BAGO LUMABAS

Upang hindi tayo maging carrier o taga-dala ng sakit sa iba, mga Bro, tiyakin muna na paglabas natin sa ating mga tahanan at opisina para isagawa ang ating mga tungkulin, wala tayong sintomas ng Covid-19.

Kabilang sa mga sintomas ang pagkakaroon ng lagnat, ubo, hirap huminga, pagbahin-bahin, pagtatae at iba pa.

Hindi kaila sa atin na may nag-quarantine ng sarili na mediamen na nakatalaga, halimbawa, sa Senado at Kamara, makaraang ma-expose o makahalubilo ang mga nagpositibo sa Covid-19.

Alalahanin, dalawa ang namatay na taga-Kamara: isa ang nasa printing office na namatay noong Maro 15 at isang staff ng isang kongresman ang namatay nitong Marso 21 makaraang maospital ng dalawang beses sa St. Luke's Hospital, Quezon City.

Itong huli, dumalo pa sa isang kasalan sa Cavite bago pumunta sa nasabing ospital para magpa-tsekap na unang idineklarang negatibo at huli na lang nagpositibo.

Nagpositibo rin si ACT-CIS Partylist Representative Eric Yap.

Sa Senado naman, naging positibo sina Senador Miguel Zubiri, Sonny Angara at Aquilino 'Koko' Pimentel III at kanyang misis.

HUWAG MAGTAMPO O MAGMATIGAS NG ULO

Hindi absoluto o lubos ang ating kalayaan bilang mediamen na maglakbay kahit saan at pumasok sa mga lugar na bawal sa sinoman gaya ng mga nauugnay sa pambandang seguridad at makipag-usap sa nais nating makapanayam.

Tiyak na may magsasara ng pintuan o kalsada sa atin sa anomang kadahilanan, kasama na ang posibleng pagiging carrier ng Covid-19.

Makiusap lang tayo sa ganitong mga pagkakataon subalit may tamang dahilan at kung hindi tayo pagbibigyan, huwag tayong magtampo o magpilit at ipagmalaki na tayo'y mediamen.

Kapahamakan at kaguluhan lang ang lilikhain ng pagtigas-tigasan natin.

Malikhain naman tayo, nakakalap tayo ng balita sa likod ng mga hindi reasonableng pagbabawal sa ating paggampanan ng tungkulin sa pagbabalita.

Pero kapag nirespeto ng iba nang buo ang ating katauhan bilang mediamen, huwag nating haluan ng pang-aabuso dahil, tanggapin man natin o hindi, hindi walang hanggan ang kalayaan natin sa pamamahayag.

WALANG NANG NECRO SERVICES

Sa paglalakbay ng ating pahayagang Remate sa iba't ibang lugar, napag-alaman nitong wala nang isinasagawang papagpaparantal o necrological services sa mga namamatay.

Lalo sa mga namatay sa Covid-19.

Pagpapasya mismo ito ng mga kasamahan ng isang namayapa, nasa pamahalaan man o nasa pribadong sektor.

Halimbawa na lang ang mga namamatay na titser at mataas na opisyal ng kolehiyo o unibersidad, nasa aktibong serbisyo o hindi dahil sa Covid o ibang kadahilanan.

Ngunit may mga habilin din mismo maging ang Philippine National Police sa mga mamamayan na dapat iwasan ang mga malalaking pagtitipon para sa lamay at paglilibing.

Mismong si PNP General Guillermo Eleazar, hepe ng Joint Task Force Corona Virus shield, ang nag-uutos sa mga pulis na tiyaking mga miyembro lamang ng pamilya ng mga namatayan at mga pari, pastor, ministro o imam ang papayagang dumalo sa mga lamay at libing.

Maaaring hindi mapigilan ang mga kapitbahay na dumalo sa mga lamay at paglilibing, lalo na kung hindi naman namatay sa Covid-19 ang tao.

Subalit, maganda na ring sumunod sa batas sa social distancing at pagbabawal sa mga pagtitipon sa gitna ng pagsalakay ng nakahahawa at nakamamatay na sakit.

BUNGA NG PAGSUNOD SA BATAS

Maganda ang ibinubunga ng pagsunod sa mga patakaran o batas sa ilalim ng deklarasyon ng Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) na sumasaklaw sa buong Luzon, ng Public Health Emergency (PHE) at State of Calamity (SC) sa buong bansa.

Sa ECQ, napipigilan ang mabilis na pagkalat ng sakit sa mga checkpoint at lockdown at kahit papaano, maliit pa rin ang bilang ng mga namamatay at naiimpeksyon na Pinoy sa loob ng bansa.

Sa PHE, naatasan ang lahat ng mga ospital, doktor at nurse na maglingkod sa mamamayan at naririyang pagtatayo ng mga sentro ng pagsusuri at panggagamot.

At sa SC, hinuhuli at ikinukulang na ang mga nagsasamantala sa presyo ng mga bilihin, kabilang na ang mga mask, gamot at iba pang gamit na medikal.

Sumunod po tayo sa mga umiiral na batas laban sa Covid-19 alang-alang sa kaligtasan nating lahat.

EcoWaste Coalition appeals for reduced waste at home during quarantine

By: [Niña V. Guno](#) - [@NGunoINO](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 12:50 PM March 26, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — While families stay home during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, one environmental group calls for households to reduce waste, especially those that come with food.

EcoWaste Coalition said Thursday that an increased amount of waste can come from households during the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) as more people order take-out and consume perishable food.

It noted however that the volume of commercial waste has declined while businesses shut down during the quarantine period.

If one must order food from outside, it suggested to decline receiving single-use utensils, straws, and stirrers. It advised to prepare a weekly meal plan and “only cook or prepare food that can be consumed” to achieve zero food waste at home.

Steps can be taken to minimize waste while doing the grocery too, such as bringing reusable bags and containers. It encouraged buying healthy food such as fruits, vegetables and root crops, some of which have peels that can be composted.

EcoWaste also recommended separating infectious waste such as face masks, tissue, and wipes from the rest of the household garbage.

“While the coronavirus is transmitted mainly from person to person through respiratory droplets, it is also possible for a person to get infected by touching contaminated surfaces or objects and then touching his mouth, nose or eyes.” Jove Benosa of EcoWaste Coalition said.

The group, which advocates for a zero waste and toxics-free society, cited benefits in reducing waste for health such as preventing exposure to germs and depriving disease-carrying pests, like rats and mosquitoes, of places to breed and live.

It mentioned too that zero-waste practices have benefits for the environment, namely that less single-use plastic will accumulate, greenhouse gases can be reduced in disposal sites and chemical pollutants can be prevented from leaking into marine ecosystems.

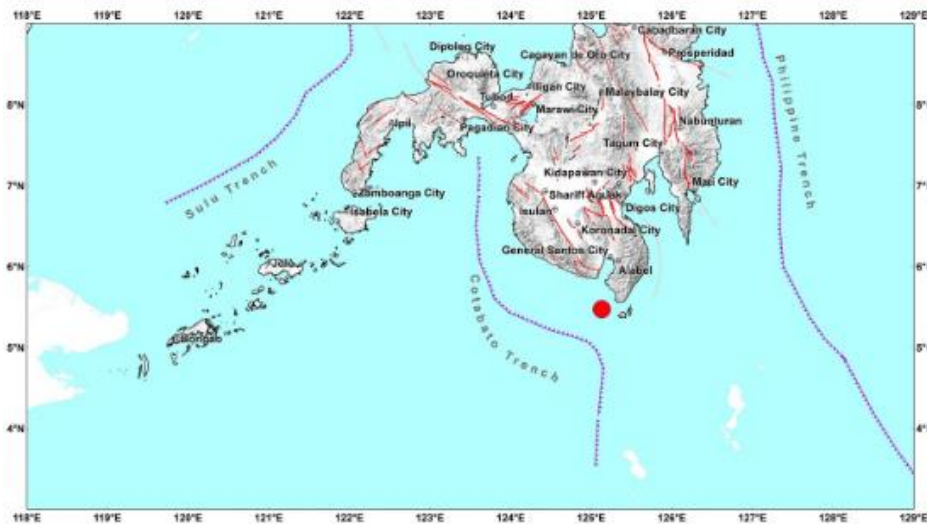
Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1248751/ecowaste-coalition-appeals-for-reduced-waste-at-home-during-quarantine#ixzz6HqAcOtMO>

Magnitude 6.1 quake jolts Sarangani

Published March 27, 2020, 1:26 AM

By MB Online

A magnitude 6.1 earthquake struck Sarangani Thursday night, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) reported.



(PHIVOLCS/ MANILA BULLETIN)

The quake, which occurred at 11:38 p.m., was tectonic in origin and was traced 17 kilometers southeast of Maasim (Sarangani).

It had a depth of 49 km, with the following registered intensities:

Intensity V -Maasim, Glan and Malapatan, Sarangani; South Cotabato; General Santos City; Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat

Intensity IV: Jose Abad Santos, Malita, and Sarangani, Davao Occidental; Koronadal City

Intensity III: Davao City; Maco, and Mawab, Davao de Oro

Instrumental Intensities:

Intensity VI: General Santos City

Intensity V: Alabel, and Malungon, Sarangani

Intensity IV: Koronadal City

Intensity I: Gingoog City, Misamis Oriental

Aftershocks and damages are expected from the tremor.

Source: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/03/27/magnitude-6-1-quake-jolts-sarangani/>

Expedite ‘Bayanihan’ implementation – Go



By [Javier J. Ismael](#)

March 27, 2020

SEN. Christopher Lawrence “Bong” Go on Thursday appealed to the Executive department to hasten the implementation of Republic Act (RA) 11469, or the “Bayanihan to Heal as One Act,” stressing that the government only has three months to roll out the programs aimed to help those severely affected by the enhanced community quarantine.

“The authority granted to the President (Rodrigo Duterte) during this state of emergency is for a limited period only and is subject to restrictions, as stated in the law and in the Constitution,” he said.

“Hindi po ito maaabuso. Gagamitin lang po ito sa limited time... at kung kailangan po ay maaaring palawigin pa ito ng Kongreso. Pwede rin po itong bawiin ng Kongreso kung sakaling hindi na po kailangan (This emergency power will not be abused. It will be used for a limited period only and, if needed, it could be extended by Congress. This could also be recalled if there is no longer a need for it),” he added.

Go called on the executive branch to accelerate the help needed by those affected by the crisis, particularly the 18 million Filipino families under lockdown.

The senator, chairman of the Senate Health and Demography Committee, served as the special assistant to the President before becoming a senator.

He explained that a technical working group in the executive branch to operationalize the social program of the government was being formed.

The Inter-Agency Task Force will be composed of the head of the Department of Social Welfare and Development as chairman, with the heads of the Departments of Trade and Industry, Labor and Employment, Agriculture, Finance, and Budget and Management, as well as the Presidential Legislative Liaison Office as members.

Go also urged economic managers and concerned agencies to study if a 30-day grace period for payment of loans and waiving of fees could be considered if necessary, in line with the provisions of the law.

The new law authorizes President Duterte to exercise powers necessary in addressing the crisis triggered by the coronavirus pandemic.

One of the temporary emergency measures that the President may adopt is to direct financial institutions to implement a grace period of at least 30 days for the payment of all loans without incurring interest, penalties, fees and other charges.

The covered loans include salary, personal, housing and motor vehicle loans, as well as credit card payments falling due within the period of the enhanced community quarantine.

Interests, penalties, fees or other charges will be waived and persons with multiple loans shall also be given the minimum 30-day grace period for every loan.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/03/27/news/national/expedite-bayanihan-implementation-go/707075/>

Baguio puts up ‘survival’ gardens

By [Dexter A. See](#)

March 27, 2020

BAGUIO CITY – Repacked vegetable seeds are being distributed by the City Veterinary and Agricultural Office (CVAO) to individuals and barangays (villages) to put up “survival gardens” as emergency response to the possible lack of food supplies brought about by the quarantine measures to control the coronavirus disease (Covid-19). City veterinarian Brigit Piok said the project aims to sustain the supply of vegetables in the coming months in households that have spaces or container gardens. “This lock down will greatly affect the low income daily wage earners and indigents in meeting their family’s daily needs especially in terms of food,” Piok said. The CVAO is pushing for the container gardening, rooftop and vertical gardening with short-season crops like pechay, lettuce, beans and spinach among others. Vegetables can be harvested within two months, the CVAO projected. Piok said 16 identified agricultural barangays in the city were already given seeds for free starting March 24. Other barangays may request upon showing proof such as picture of container or plots ready for planting.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/03/27/news/regions/baguio-puts-up-survival-gardens/706898/>

ARTA urges adoption of anti-red tape measures

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By **AJ Bajo**

These measures are being issued to assist the Government Agencies in their duty to streamline their processes in delivering government services especially during this emergency period.



The Anti-Red Tape Authority (ARTA) is calling on all government agencies to implement suggested anti-red tape measures in their respective procedures and documentary requirements during the enhanced community quarantine in effect in Luzon due to the novel coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic.

In Advisory 01 Series of 2020 issued on 25 March, the anti-red tape watchdog suggested for government agencies to extend the validity of permits, licenses and certifications and other similar authorizations under the respective agencies' wing which are set to expire within the period of state of national emergency in the country.

ARTA also urged concerned agencies to accept applications, submissions of documents and approvals of such via e-mail or online platforms; suspend notarization requirement unless required by the law; reduce signatories and requirements; and allow online payment schemes or consider waiver or deferment of payments.

It likewise suggested for a "whole-of-government approach" between agencies.

"Government agencies shall take an integrated approach to public service delivery, characterized by seamless government transactions, integrated policy design and implementation across several agencies, inter-operability of government processes, horizontal coordination and strengthened linkages among government units," the advisory states.

Lastly, ARTA also told government agencies to furnish the University of the Philippines — Office of National Administrative Registrar copies of their regulations, including issuances and those previously issued, as required to give them legal effect.

"These measures are being issued to assist the Government Agencies in their duty to streamline their processes in delivering government services especially during this emergency period. All agencies are also reminded to adopt a ZERO RED-TAPE POLICY and to ensure unhampered delivery of government services to the Filipino people," ARTA further said in the advisory.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/03/27/arta-urges-adoption-of-anti-red-tape-measures/>

Strong states – yes, authoritarian states – save lives



By [Rigoberto D. Tiglao](#)

March 27, 2020

IF there's anything the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic has demonstrated, incontrovertibly, I think, it is that at the end of the day, people and even our entire human species have to rely on strong — yes, even authoritarian states — for their survival.

Argue as much as you can over some details — for example, that Italy has a huge over-70 population, which made its citizens more vulnerable to the disease — the data stares us in the face:

It is nations with strong, authoritarian states — mainly the People's Republic of China and the Russian Federation — that have beaten back this pandemic, which some religious fanatics even see as ushering the biblical end of days. Nearly overwhelmed in February with 77,016 cases, China now has just 3,947. Russia has only 626 case.

I would even include in that list Asian nations that have had a long history of authoritarianism — Singapore, South Korea, Taiwan and, yes, even Japan — which appear to have the pandemic under control within their territories, with cases only by the hundreds, in contrast to the democracies with their tens of thousands.

We may not have an authoritarian state, contrary to what the Reds and Yellows are claiming, but we do have a strong leader.

Congress

How else could the Congress have passed a law in a few days' time that allow President Rodrigo Duterte to do things our United States-patterned, ultra-democratic system would have prevented him from doing, or at least slowed him down? How else could he have been so bold as to ban travel in and out of the metropolis, still the country's economic and political capital?

In contrast to these authoritarian states, several nations that have been steeped in the notion of individual choice as the highest human value — that is, democracies — have had their Covid-19 cases, and deaths from it, unbelievably soar in a matter of weeks: the US now (March 26) has 66,995 cases from just 35 cases 30 days ago; Italy, 57,521 from 79 ; Spain, 28,570 from two; France, 20,002 from 12; and the United Kingdom, 8,929 from just nine.

World Health Organization experts who studied how China beat back Covid-19 had emphasized one particular lesson: the government should act fast and decisively. But how can democracies really do that, burdened with “due processes” and even parliamentary requirements?

When Wuhan started to be deluged with cases, the Chinese central government took over the city government. Can that be done in a democratic system like ours or in the US, where for instance the New York State Gov. Andrew Cuomo is squabbling with US President Donald Trump, blaming him for not delivering the respirators New York needed when the Federal Emergency Management Agency had boasted it had 2,000 in its warehouse?

Can the US, or even our government, simply order the appropriate factories to operate 24/7 to produce as much as they can of the necessary protective masks, the personal protective equipment and even ventilators? We may have to sing paeans to authoritarianism if our Covid-19 situation goes out of control. Ordered by the central government, Chinese factories have produced so much of these items that they have now been giving these out to democracies severely hit by the pandemic.

Wuhan

Last month, anti-China liberals expressed horror as they posted video clips of Wuhan scenes such as the one showing the gates to a residence with uncooperative virus-infected people being welded shut and of another a family, which we presume were sick with Covid-19, being dragged out of their apartments. That was roughly when cases here totaled about 40.

STRONG STATES, WEAK STATES

COVID-19 ACTIVE CASES AS OF :

	2/23/2020	3/25/2020
S. Korea	946	4,996
China	77,016	3,947
Japan	132	952
Russia	2	626
Philippines	3	572
Singapore	47	469
Taiwan	24	204
USA	35	66,995
Italy	79	57,521
Spain	2	40,501
France	12	20,002
U.K.	9	8,929

Source: WHO

Now that it's past 500, many netizens of this political color are demanding that Sen. Aquilino Pimentel 3rd — who defied quarantine to go to the delivery room of a hospital — be similarly treated.

Video clips in social media of Britons partying in a pub or of young Americans in a Florida beach defying their governments' "stay at home" pleas illustrate vividly the core problem of democracy: individual choices do not necessarily lead to collective good.

One of the key responses to curb the Covid-19 pandemic is to deny individuals many of their rights under a democratic system: to congregate, socialize, travel and even work. But it is the total denial of those rights by a state that can save the collective that is the nation. After all, how can humans exercise their rights, if they're dead?

Liberals, who mostly belong to the comfortable, never-starved social classes, find it difficult to understand the advantages of authoritarianism because their idea of a nation is where they usually live: in gated villages of people of the same class, where the concerns of the homeowners association (the state) focus on such things as how to maintain the streetlights, repair the roads and ensure security, especially from bad people outside the subdivision.

Nations

Nations are far from being gated villages of peers. The best analogy for a nation is to imagine it as a group of people traveling through a jungle, where there is danger all

around them that could wipe them out. They don't have the luxury to vote what their response would be if, say, a pride of lions suddenly emerge from the bushes. They can only rely on the orders of their leader, who would have to be a strong man.

“But we've tried Marcos martial law, and it was a catastrophe” is the knee-jerk response one would hear to columns like this one.

Look, I fought martial law two years before and years after it was declared, and it was my job to observe it and report on it as a reporter. The country soared — economically, politically and even culturally (remember the kind of Filipino movies then?) until 1979 — with its average annual gross domestic product in those years at 6 percent.

What ruined that strong state was after those heyday years was, ironically, creeping weakness. It weakened when President Ferdinand Marcos enervated the authoritarian system by setting up the Batasan Pambansa first in 1978, when the communists in alliance with the oligarchs sapped its strength, and finally when the strongman himself weakened because of his debilitating kidney disease that required a transplant.

Marcos' story was also a retelling of the King Lear tragedy, or maybe more accurately its Japanese version, in the movie “Ran,” where a powerful warlord decides to divide his kingdom among his three sons, who promptly fight among themselves, pushing the kingdom to an early ruin. It's easy to guess who the counterparts of those three sons were in Marcos' case.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/03/27/opinion/columnists/topanalysis/strong-states-yes-authoritarian-states-save-lives/707006/>



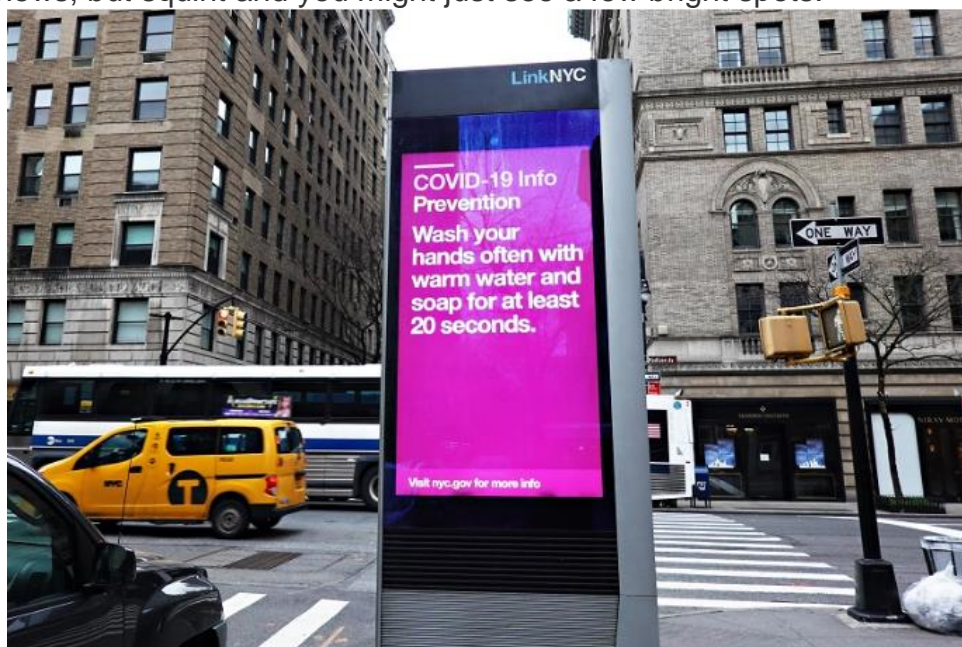
Source: <https://www.facebook.com/163550757135020/posts/1932486583574753/>

Cleaner hands, bluer skies: what has coronavirus done for us?

posted March 25, 2020 at 10:54 am by **AFP**

Tokyo, Japan | AFP | by Sara HUSSEIN

Deaths, economic meltdown and a planet on lockdown: the coronavirus pandemic has brought us waves of bad news, but squint and you might just see a few bright spots.



NEW YORK, NEW YORK :: A view of a LinkNYC box with a COVID-19 Info NYC Update reading 'Wash your hands often with warm water and soap for at least 20 seconds' as the coronavirus continues to spread across the United States. The World Health Organization declared coronavirus (COVID-19) a global pandemic on March 11th. AFP

From better hygiene that has reduced other infectious diseases to people reaching out as they self-isolate, here are some slivers of silver linings during a bleak moment.

- Wash your hands! -

The message from health professionals has been clear from the start of the outbreak: wash your hands.

Everyone from celebrities to politicians has had a go at demonstrating correct technique -- including singing "Happy Birthday" twice through to make sure you scrub long enough, and hand sanitiser has flown off the shelves.

All that extra hygiene appears to be paying off, at least in some countries, including Japan, where the number of flu cases appears to be sharply down.

Japan recorded 7.21 million cases by early March -- usually around the peak of the flu season that runs until May.

That was far below figures for previous years, including the 21.04 million infections seen during the 2017/18 season.

"We estimate that one of the reasons behind it is that people are now much more aware about the need to wash hands... given the spread of the new coronavirus," Japanese health ministry official Daisha Inoue told AFP.

- Carbon curbs -

Factory shutdowns, travel bans and a squeeze on demand spell economic disaster, but it isn't all bad news for the environment.

In the four weeks to March 1, China's CO2 emissions fell 200 million tonnes, or 25 percent, compared to the same period last year, according to the Centre for Research on Energy and Clean Air.

That's a decline equivalent to annual CO2 emissions from Argentina, Egypt or Vietnam.

The slowdown in China also saw coal consumption at power plants there down 36 percent, and the use of oil at refineries drop by nearly as much.

Air travel is also grinding to a virtual halt, achieving at least a short-term drop-off in emissions from a highly polluting industry.

And there have been other environmental benefits, including crystal-clear waters in Venice canals usually choked with tourist-laden boats.

Unfortunately, experts say the cleaner air may be short-lived.

Once the health crisis is over, experts expect countries will double down to try to make up for lost time, with climate change concerns likely to be sidelined in a race to recover economic growth.

- Save the pangolins -

The source of the coronavirus remains in question, but early tracking focused on a market in China's Wuhan where a variety of live wildlife was on sale for consumption.

A number of animals, including bats and the highly endangered pangolin, have been identified as possible culprits for the virus.

As a result, China in February declared an immediate and "comprehensive" ban on the trade and consumption of wild animals that was welcomed by environmentalists.

Beijing implemented similar measures following the SARS outbreak in the early 2000s, but the trade and consumption of wild animals, including bats and snakes, made a comeback.

This time the ban is permanent, raising hopes that it could end the local trade in wildlife.

"I do think the government has seen the toll it takes on national economy and society is much bigger than the benefit that wild-eating business brings," said Jeff He, China director at the International Fund for Animal Welfare.

Reports linking the virus to the pangolin have also scared off would-be consumers of the scaly mammals elsewhere, with bushmeat vendors in Gabon reporting a plunge in sales.

- Apart, together -

One of the most difficult aspects of the stringent lockdowns imposed to slow the spread of the virus has been loneliness, with families and friends forced to endure weeks or even months apart.

But some people have found the measures are creating a sense of community spirit, and prompting them to make more of an effort to check in with family and reconnect with friends.

In Colombia, where a nearly three-week period of self-isolation is now in place, 43-year-old Andrea Uribe has organised everything from group exercise classes to family talent shows using video messaging programmes including Zoom.

Cleaner hands, bluer skies: what has coronavirus done

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COLUMBIA: Personal trainer Maryoris Salinas (R) gives a body functional training private class to Lorena and Valentina Negrette as outdoors activities were prohibited as a preventive measure against the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus in Medellin . Colombian President Ivan Duque announced mandatory preventive isolation from March 24 to April 13 as a measure against the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus. AFP.

"I have called my parents more often, I have talked to friends that I usually don't talk to... I have organised Zoom meetings with friends in multiple countries," Uribe, who works in development, told AFP.

"It is wonderful to be forced to be there for one another. It has made me more creative. It just shows that we need to be present in people's lives."

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Source: <https://manilastandard.net/news/top-stories/320372/cleaner-hands-bluer-skies-what-has-coronavirus-done-for-us-.html>

Koalas being released back into wild after Australian

March 27, 2020

TITLE: bushfires

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Koalas being released back into wild after Australian bushfires

Published March 26, 2020, 2:36 PM

By **Gabriela Baron**

Months after Australian bushfires ravaged the continent's koala populations, the endangered critters are finally being released back into wild.

Sydney-based wildlife conservation organization Science for Wildlife announced that four adult koalas and a baby joey were returned to the Blue Mountains region of Australia.



"We have been busy assessing the burnt area that we rescued them from, to establish when the conditions have improved enough that the trees can support them again. The recent rains have helped and there is now plenty of new growth for them to eat, so the time is right," Kellie Leigh, executive director of Science for Wildlife, said in a statement.

A total of 12 koalas were rescued and the organization is working to bring back all 12 this week.



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While the released koalas are a small group, researchers are hopeful they will help begin the rehabilitation of the species' decimated population.

10,000 koalas (a third of the total koala population of New South Wales) are estimated to have died from the bushfires, as well as drought over the summer.

The unprecedented fires reportedly devastated over 2.5 million acres (1 million hectares) of Australia's forests over the summer.

Source: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/03/26/koalas-being-released-back-into-wild-after-australian-bushfires/>

China park staff feed wild animals



By [Xinhua](#)

March 27, 2020

HARBIN: Staff in the National Park of Siberian Tigers and Amur Leopards in northeast China's Heilongjiang province are spreading forage feed in the snow-covered mountain range to provide food for wild boar and roe deer, which are the prey of the endangered wild cats.

Rounds of snowfall in March have blocked many parts of the mountain, making it difficult for wild animals to find food. Some wild boar and roe deer cubs had died of hunger and cold, said Zhang Lianfeng, the park administration



Photo taken with a mobile phone shows a staff member feeding chimpanzee at Beijing Wildlife Park in Beijing, capital of China, July 12, 2019. Xinhua Photo

He noted that the staff spread corn and soybean meal while patrolling the mountain.

Built in 2017, the national park covers 1.46 million hectares of land in Jilin and Heilongjiang provinces, bordering Russia and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea.

The national park management has helped improve the biodiversity in the area, which is crucial for the survival and reproduction of wild Siberian tigers and leopards at the top of the food chain in the area.

XINHUA

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/03/27/news/world/china-park-staff-feed-wild-animals/706938/>