

DENR: Viral video of Mt. Banahaw eruption just a minor landslide

By: [Delfin T. Mallari Jr.](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Inquirer Southern Luzon](#) / 12:52 PM March 29, 2020

LUCENA CITY, Philippines — A recent [video circulating on Facebook that showed falling stones and thick dust from atop Mount Banahaw](#) was only a small landslide, a local official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, said Sunday.

“It was only a minor landslide that was covered with spurting thick dust. There was no Banahaw eruption or explosion. There is no cause for the public to be alarmed,” Salud Pangan, park superintendent for Banahaw and San Cristobal of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), said in a phone interview Sunday.

Pangan said the affected area only covers one hectare. “The probable cause of the landslide was wildlife,” she said.

Pangan based her information from the report of the inspection team that was immediately dispatched to a site at the mountaintop after Casiano Magadia, chairman of Barangay Concepcion Banahaw, posted a more than 3 minutes long video on his Facebook that he reportedly took on March 27.

According to Pangan, the video has triggered a public “misconception” that there was an explosion or eruption of Banahaw.

The Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology station in Lucban town declared that there was “no seismic activity was recorded/observed since March 23, 2020 within the area of MBSCPL (Mount Banahaw/San Cristobal Landscape Area)”.

Meanwhile, Pangan disclosed that Mounts Banahaw and San Cristobal have been totally closed to the public since March 15 according to the declaration of the Protected Area Management Board.

“It was a precautionary closure in compliance with President Rodrigo Duterte’s enhanced community quarantine order to prevent the spread of the coronavirus,” she explained.

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1250354/denr-viral-video-of-mt-banahaw-eruption-just-a-minor-landslide#ixzz6I7fzd1hI>

Wildlife trafficking perfect recipe for next zoonotic disease

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

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:56 AM March 30, 2020

(First of two parts)

MANILA, Philippines — In roughly three months, the new coronavirus has drastically reshaped the world, forcing economies and daily activities to a standstill. Following the earliest reported cases in mainland China, the coronavirus disease, or COVID-19, has rapidly spread to at least 171 countries, afflicting over 650,000 people and killing more than 30,000.

Governments are scrambling to contain the virus, but its actual source remains unconfirmed. COVID-19 is a zoonotic disease, meaning that it is caused by a virus that has leaped from animals to humans.

But while studies have yet to reach their conclusions, viral posts online have pinned the blame on bats and pangolins as potential hosts.

As the world grapples with the pandemic, conservationists say this public health emergency should also reinforce a hard-earned lesson: To prevent the next pandemic from zoonotic diseases, wildlife must be left to thrive in the wild.

Emerging diseases

At the crux of this target is serious action from governments worldwide to finally put an end to the illegal wildlife trade, a multibillion-dollar industry fueled by the demand for the rare and made complex by poverty, misconceptions, and cultural beliefs.

Scientists say 70 percent of emerging infectious diseases are zoonotic. Animals serve as reservoirs of viruses, bacteria, and fungi that occur naturally in their bodies but which may be fatal in case of a “spillover” to another species.

In biodiversity hot spots like the Philippines, which loses P50 billion a year due to the illegal trade, the risk for the transfer of pathogens between wild animals and humans is high, with hunters and poachers coming in contact with a wide variety of animals sourced from different areas. COVID-19 should offer a familiar story. The Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) and the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS) were caused by different strains of coronaviruses transmitted from animals.

While some studies have identified bats as the primary origin of the viruses, experts say that human consumption of palm civets and exposure to dromedary camels had allowed the pathogens to jump from one species to another, triggering the SARS and MERS epidemics, respectively.

“In the last 30 or 40 years, what we see is an acceleration of these emerging infectious diseases,” said Phillip Alviola, a field biologist from the University of the Philippines Los Baños and one of the country’s foremost experts on bats. Since the SARS outbreak, Alviola and other scientists had thoroughly studied these winged mammals to learn the pathogens that their bodies may be carrying.

“The interface between humans and animals is getting narrower, meaning they are getting more in contact with each other,” he told the Inquirer.

Shrinking interface

As populations swell, more and more humans also encroach on the habitats of wild animals, forcing them out and leading to biodiversity loss.

“Aside from this shrinking interface,” Alviola said, “there is wildlife trade and consumption, which could increase the threat.”

When the first cases of COVID-19 were reported, authorities turned their eyes on a seafood and meat market in the Chinese city of Wuhan, considered the outbreak’s epicenter. Before its forced closure, it was a wet market where live animals, including those exotic and threatened, were slaughtered and sold as food.

In February, Beijing announced an immediate ban on the trade and consumption of wild animals, in the hope of stemming the growing cases of COVID-19 in China. In 2003, a similar but limited ban on trade was imposed by Beijing following the SARS outbreak that originated in the southern city of Guangdong.

But when that public health crisis tapered, the trade easily returned. Today, China remains among the largest markets for wildlife trade, including those trafficked from regions such as Southeast Asia.

Perfect disaster

The very nature of wildlife trafficking makes for a perfect recipe for the next zoonotic disease, experts say.

Beyond being an environmental concern, trafficking wild animals is a “biosecurity issue,” said lawyer Edward Lorenzo, wildlife crime prevention adviser for USAID Protect Wildlife. “These animals are consolidated in a single establishment or packed in small containers,” he said. “Are these wildlife mixed with other species? Yes. Is there a risk of transmission? Yes.” Also present is the threat of spreading diseases throughout the entire trafficking route, where animals are often smuggled long distances via land or sea to avoid capture. When placed in stressful conditions, they can shed more viruses, as seen in a new study on bats by scientists from the University of California in Berkeley.

Whatever the source of the new coronavirus would turn out to be, conservationists hope that the COVID-19 pandemic will leave in its wake crucial lessons for the global community on how it deals with wildlife.

“If you call it a good thing—for lack of a better term—I think now there is increased awareness on the additional risks of wildlife trade,” Lorenzo said.

“And we have to stop saying that we were infected by wildlife. It’s the other way around,” he added. “We are the ones who exposed ourselves to what they were carrying. They didn’t give it to us. I hope people see that it’s not the fault of the wildlife.”

(This story was produced with the support of Internews’ Earth Journalism Network. –Ed.)

(To be concluded)

Read more: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1250712/wildlife-trafficking-perfect-recipe-for-next-zoonotic-disease#ixzz6I7PGd5KA>

PHL culls more hogs to prevent spread of deadly pig disease

By **Jasper Y. Arcalas**

-March 30, 2020

The Philippines has culled over 250,000 pigs to control the spread of the dreaded African swine fever (ASF), which has managed to find its way to provinces in Northern Luzon and Southern Luzon.

In its eight follow-up report to the World Organisation for Animal Health (OIE), the Philippines said it culled 41,953 hogs in 69 additional confirmed outbreaks from January to February in Luzon.

This now brings the country's total cull count to 250,877 pigs, about 2 percent of the estimated 12 million local hog population.

The number of hogs that were susceptible to ASF, as reported by the Philippines to the OIE as of March 26, has risen to 246,918 heads.

The additional outbreaks reported by the Philippines to the OIE were recorded in backyard farms in Cavite, Nueva Ecija, Tarlac, Rizal, Bataan, Aurora, Quezon, Pangasinan, Isabela, Batangas, Benguet, Ifugao, Camarines Sur, Nueva Vizcaya, and Laguna.

The report, which was submitted by Bureau of Animal Industry (BAI) OIC-Director and country's Chief Veterinarian Ronnie D. Domingo, indicated that at least 824 pigs were infected by ASF in the 69 outbreaks, while 76 died from the fatal disease. The Philippine report explained that the source of the outbreaks include illegal movements of animals, swill feeding and fomites, such as vehicles and animal feeds.

In the latest national zoning map released by the BAI, Visayas remains free from ASF as of March 23.

Industry sources noted that the figures being reported and disclosed by the government is "underestimated" as it doesn't include pigs depopulated or culled by large commercial pig farms.

In a separate report to the OIE on March 26, Domingo said the Philippines has not recorded new bird flu outbreaks following the confirmation of an outbreak in a one quail farm in Nueva Ecija two weeks ago.

Domingo's report indicated that the source of the bird flu outbreak in the Nueva Ecija quail farm remains "unknown or inconclusive" but he noted the presence of wild birds in the area.

"The event is continuing. Weekly follow-up reports will be submitted," the Philippine report read.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/03/30/phl-culls-more-hogs-to-prevent-spread-of-deadly-pig-disease/>

Meat vendors sa Davao City dumidiskarte para makabenta sa gitna ng quarantine

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Mar 29 2020 04:58 PM

DAVAO CITY — Kaniya-kaniyang diskarte ang mga tindera ng karne sa lungsod matapos maging matumal ang benta nila sa gitna ng ipinatutupad na community quarantine kontra COVID-19.

Ang mga vendor sa palengke, gumawa ng mga pakulo para lamang magkaroon sila ng bahagyang kita.

Ang ilan, gumagamit ng social media para doon ialok ang kanilang tinda.

Free delivery naman ang diskarte ng iba.

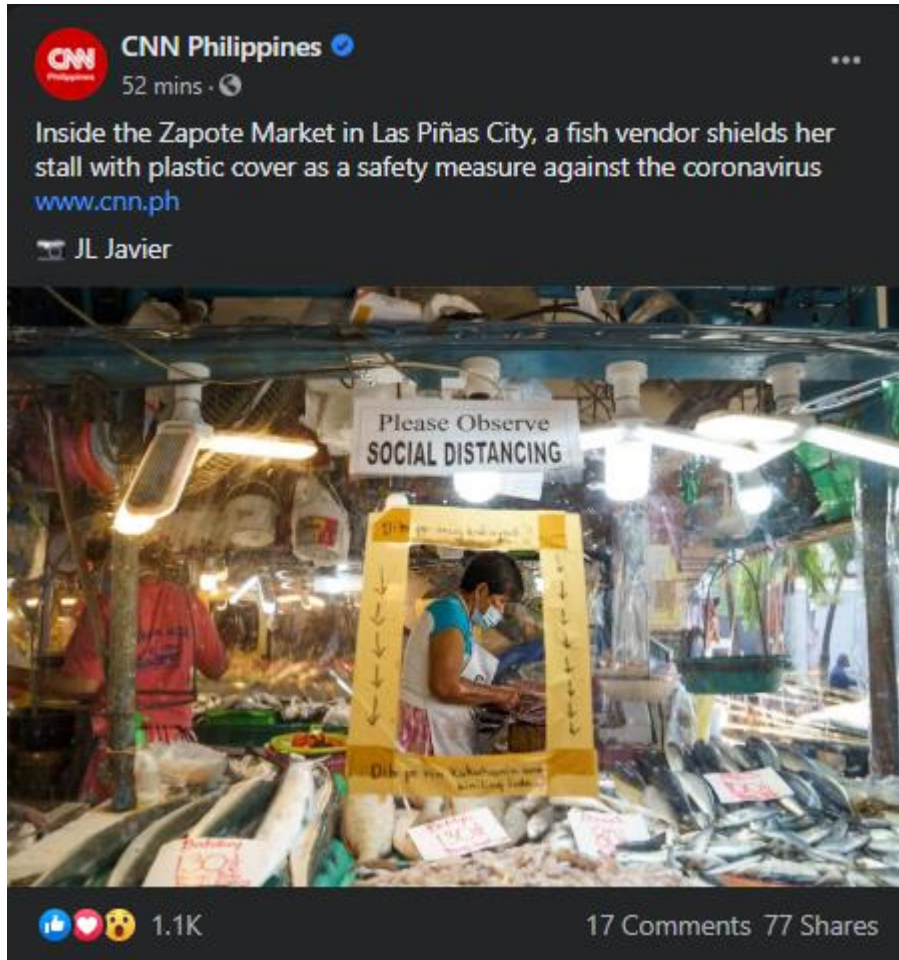
Ayon sa meat vendor na si Evelyn Guevarra, kailangan nilang dumiskarte para hindi malugi.

"Medyo okay na ang income namin ngayon, nakakabenta kami sa mga kaibigan namin. May charge lang na P100 para sa pamasaha. Kung ano ang presyo dito [sa palengke] yun din ang benta namin sa kanila," ani Guevarra.

Samantala, naglagay na rin ng kani-kanilang stall shield ang vendors sa Matina Crossing Public Market gamit ang isang makapal na plastic cover.

Ginawa ito bilang proteksyon sa kanila lalo't hirap din na maipatupad ang social distancing sa loob ng palengke.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/03/29/20/meat-vendors-sa-davao-city-dumidiskarte-para-makabenta-sa-gitna-ng-quarantine>



Source: <https://www.facebook.com/1515763818663512/posts/2778695289037019/>

LOOK

A bloom of jellyfish takes over a portion of Palawan waters and it's quite stunning

Published March 29, 2020 6:36pm



A bloom of jellyfish swarmed through a portion of waters in El Nido, Palawan and the visual is a little too stunning.


A netizen was able to take a video of the blobs of red surfacing on the waters.

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/hashtag/content/731787/a-bloom-of-red-jellyfish-take-over-portion-of-palawan-waters-and-it-s-quite-stunning/story/>



Daily Tribune
15 hrs · 🌐

WATCH: Tens of thousands of tomato jellyfish are in the waters off Corong Corong Beach in El Nido, Palawan on 23 March 2020. Local scientists say the phenomenon called jellyfish bloom is triggered by the abundance of nutrients in the water and higher temperature. (Video from Alimar Amor) #jellyfishbloom #corongcorongbeach



0:17 / 0:47

185 35 Comments 95 Shares

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/2056657031212662/posts/2539125182965842/>

‘Bio-men’ keep on working—Villar

posted March 29, 2020 at 10:30 pm

by [Macon Ramos-Araneta](#)

Strictly adhering to social distancing, the so-called “bio-men,” or the barangay-employed collectors of kitchen wastes, continue to bike around Las Pinas City to collect kitchen wastes, said Sen. Cynthia Villar.

Despite the enhanced community quarantine being imposed in Luzon and other parts in the country, Villar stressed that proper handling of waste products can still be done.

AS chairperson of the Senate Environment Committee, Villar said it is important that garbage collection and recycling efforts continue to prevent additional health and sanitation woes.

“We continue to generate waste even if we are under quarantine. Garbage will pile up if these are not collected and overwhelm our landfills if not properly segregated and recycled,” Villar said.

The senator also added that used masks and gloves can easily mix with household waste when these should be treated as hazardous wastes.

She urged local government officials to implement environmentally-sound practices alongside measures battling the spread of COVID-19.

In her home city of Las Pinas, Villar said composting and recycling facilities continue operating to properly manage the city’s waste and at the same time continue to provide livelihood to residents.

The bio-men, she said, turn over their collection to composting and vermi-composting centers where kitchen wastes were converted into organic fertilizers in their own barangay.

“In a month, we produce 70 tons of fertilizer and give them out to farmers in nearby provinces. In Metro Manila, there are also urban gardeners and vegetable farmers who benefit from this free farm input,” Villar said.

Waste coconut husks are also collected to be turned into coconet and charcoal.

“Our composting and recycling projects helped us recycle 70 percent of waste and enabled us to save on garbage hauling services. This is very important especially now that garbage collection can no longer be brought to the landfill in Montalban, Rizal because of quarantine measures,” Villar said.

She added that workers in these composting and recycling centers live nearby and operate on spacious areas where social distancing can be easily observed.

Source: <https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/320659>

Climate change a bigger crisis than COVID-19

04:01 AM March 30, 2020

All around the world, governments are taking similar drastic measures to fight COVID-19. It is a wonder, therefore, why governments are not acting with the same urgency against a threat that is as equally threatening as (if not more dangerous than) COVID-19: climate change.

Just as COVID-19 brought with it daily mortality statistics, climate change has been bringing calamities that are putting humanity on the brink of extinction. Sea levels are steadily rising, submerging coastal communities such as those in northern Metro Manila and its bayside.

Supertyphoons are the new “normal” in the tropics (especially the Philippines), while wildfires are intensified in countries like Brazil, Indonesia, and Australia. Entire species of animals are disappearing. Those that are clinging to survival are resorting to cannibalism.

All in all, just as COVID-19 is a crisis, climate change is an even bigger crisis. It has been happening since the Industrial Revolution, and is getting worse with every single day of inaction.

Yet, the climate crisis is not addressed with the same urgent response given to COVID-19. World leaders have been brushing it off. In fact, in the Philippines, the Duterte administration continues to approve coal plants, mining operations, and the exploitation of our marine biodiversity. The 25th UN Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, or COP25, was put to waste by the stalling and empty talk of world leaders. All these are happening simply because governments are careful not to stand in the way of capitalists who parasitically boost their profits at the expense of our natural resources.

This is the very essence of climate justice: Climate change is not an isolated problem. As with the COVID-19 health crisis, it goes hand in hand with and is amplified by the deep-rooted structural problem of social inequality. Political leaders and the richest in society have been ignoring climate change for decades. On the other hand, it only took a few months before world leaders resorted to desperate measures to contain the COVID-19 outbreak. Only after famous personalities had been infected were such measures executed, and leaders realized that they were not immune from the crisis.

However, even the response to COVID-19 is not as flawless as leaders are claiming. Particularly in the Philippines, Mr. Duterte resorted to fear-mongering and heightened military presence instead of providing wider access to testing and health services. Many workers are still forced to travel and go to work despite the threat of spreading the infection, simply because missing a day’s work could mean not receiving their wages and being unable to provide for their families.

It is thus clear: Social inequality is the underlying problem beneath both the present COVID-19 health crisis and the longstanding problem of climate change.

We call on the government to take responsibility for the environmental degradation around us and declare a climate emergency. At the same time, corporations that operate environmentally hazardous activities must be held accountable, and a just transition to safe and renewable energy must be initiated.

FERDIE SALAZAR,

coordinator, SAVE Philippines (Stewards and Volunteers for the Earth),

Source: <https://opinion.inquirer.net/128430/climate-change-a-bigger-crisis-than-covid-19#ixzz6I7KrbwL3>

'Bird of Hope' mural raises awareness on effects of climate change

(Philstar.com) - March 29, 2020 - 9:44am



MANILA, Philippines — Aimed at raising awareness on the different creatures most vulnerable to climate change, PLDT-Smart recently completed a mural featuring a Rufous-headed Hornbill at the rear facade of its Makati General Office.

A pair of the critically endangered bird—incubated earlier than expected in October 2019—was spared as the company postponed an event beside the Talarak Foundation breeding center in Bacolod City late last year.

This prompted the telco to raise awareness on the said species through the 120-foot artwork made by renowned Filipino environmental muralist AG Saño. The piece is said to be the tallest environmental mural in Southeast Asia.

The Rufous-headed Hornbill is also painted on the main entrance of PLDT Makati General Office.

The vertical mural is a continuation of the more than 3,000-square-foot plant and animal life painting throughout the PLDT headquarter's Legazpi frontage, Dela Rosa walkway, and Gallardo back entrance. The horizontal artwork was first unveiled during the National Climate Change Awareness Month and 91st anniversary of PLDT, both held before the end of 2019.

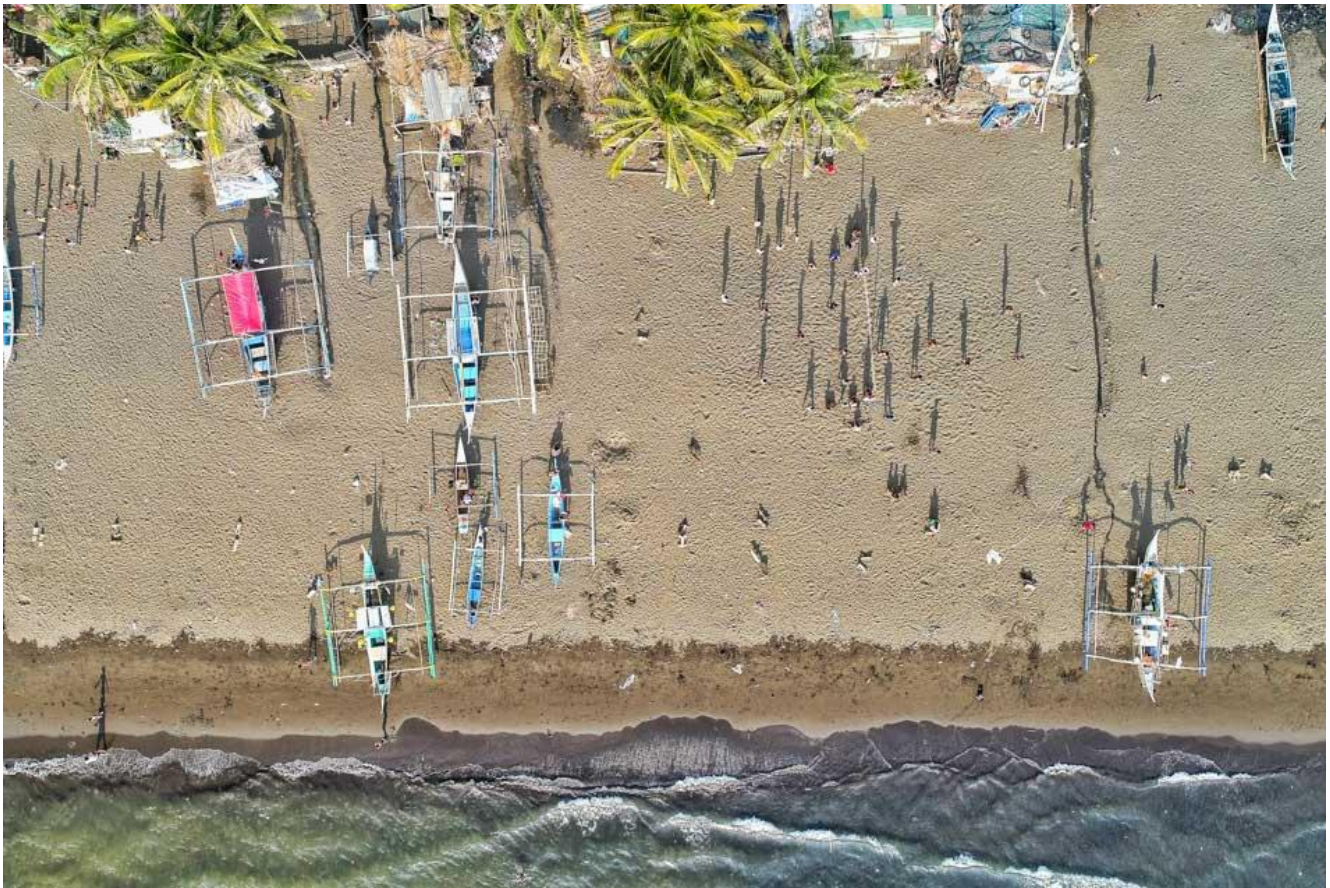


Source: <https://www.philstar.com/other-sections/supplements/2020/03/29/2003799/bird-hope-mural-raises-awareness-effects-climate-change>

Playing beach volleyball amidst COVID-19

Domcar C. Lagto, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Mar 29 2020 06:04 PM | Updated as of Mar 29 2020 07:02 PM



People in Barangay Wawa in Nasugbu, Batangas pay no heed to physical distancing amidst the ongoing COVID-19 scare in the country as they gather and play beach volleyball on Sunday. The Philippine government has imposed a lockdown on Luzon until April 12, ordering millions to stay at home, to slow down the spread of the disease.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/life/multimedia/photo/03/29/20/playing-beach-volleyball-amidst-covid-19>



Out of the ordinary Empty plastic bottles may turn out to be the unexpected life savers in the battle against the coronavirus as these are easily convertible into protective face shields that health workers lack.

ADB approves \$5 million grant for COVID food

March 30, 2020

TITLE: distribution program

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DATE

ADB approves \$5 million grant for COVID food distribution program

[Mary Grace Padin](#) (The Philippine Star) - March 30, 2020 - 12:00am



MANILA, Philippines — The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will provide a \$5-million emergency grant to the Philippines to support the distribution of food items to poor households in Luzon affected by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic, the Department of Finance (DOF) said over the weekend.

Quoting ADB president Masatsugu Asakawa, the DOF said the multilateral bank has approved the \$5-million grant to fund a food distribution program which will be implemented as early as next week for the benefit of Luzon's poorest households.

The food distribution program will be implemented in coordination with the DOF, the Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of the Interior and Local Government and the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III said this program would augment the Philippine government's own efforts to provide support to the poorest families adversely affected by the measures put in place to contain the spread of COVID-19.

Meanwhile, the DOF said the ADB is also working on a \$100-million emergency project loan for the construction of healthcare facilities and procurement of medical supplies, such as medical ventilators and protective gear for frontline health workers.

The ADB also committed to accelerate the approval of a \$1-billion loan through the proposed COVID-19 Pandemic Response Option under the bank's Counter Cyclical Support Facility, according to the DOF.

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The ADB likewise pledged another \$150-million financing under the Social Protection Support Project to provide additional support for the Pantawid Familyang Pilipino Program (4Ps), the DOF said.

In addition, Asakawa also committed to accelerate the approval of its \$500-million project loan for the Expanded Social Assistance Project, also in support of the 4Ps.

Earlier, the ADB had approved a \$3-million grant to the Philippines for the purchase of medical supplies.

It had also committed to deliver a bigger financing package, which will consist of three quick-disbursing policy-based loans worth \$1.1 billion, and another \$500 million for disaster resilience financing.

In a related development, the DOF, together with the Department of Health (DOH), will also look into the financing packages that will be offered by the Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) to improve the country's public health infrastructure, Dominguez said in a text message to reporters.

In a statement, the AIIB said it is working to scale up support for infrastructure investment, including public health, health care and information and communications technology to members impacted by the coronavirus. – With Mayen Jaymalin, Delon Porcalla, Paolo Romero, Neil Jayson Servallos

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/03/30/2004257/adb-approves-5-million-grant-covid-food-distribution-program>

Romblon power co-op taps solar energy



By [Jordeene B. Lagare](#)

March 30, 2020

ROMBLON Electric Cooperative Inc. (Romelco) has turned to solar energy to sustain energy demand within its franchise area, the National Electrification Administration said. This, as Romelco recently installed its grid-tied solar roof mounted project, a 200-kilowatt (kW) solar photovoltaic system distributed in various villages developed in partnership with local governments of Romblon. The P12-million project is composed of 528 high-efficiency solar panels installed on the rooftops of the four covered courts in Barangays Lunas, Macalás, Mapula and Ilauran. The grid-connected installations are all located in the municipality of Romblon, Romblon. Each distributed solar power plant has a capacity of 50 kW that already generates electricity for consumers.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/03/30/business/at-a-glance-business/romblon-power-co-op-taps-solar-energy/707947/>

Earth Hour marked digitally amid Covid-19 pandemic

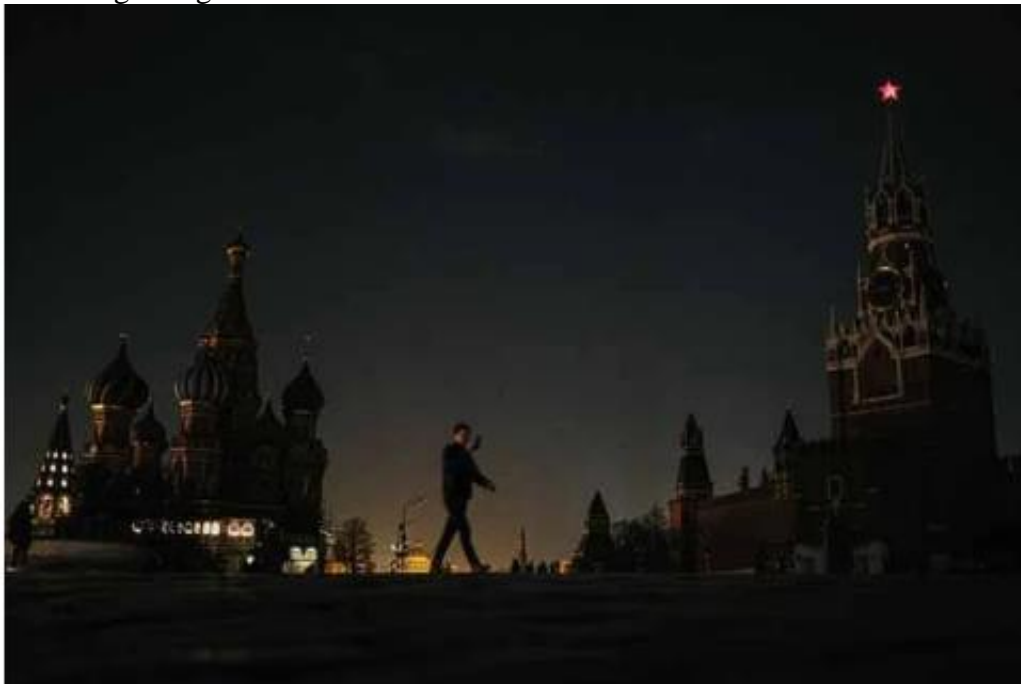


March 30, 2020

BEIJING: The annual observation of Earth Hour on Saturday night took a digital form in various places in light of the global health crisis.

Initiated by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) in 2007, the Earth Hour has become a popular movement worldwide.

On every last Saturday of March, if not Holy Saturday, individuals, communities, enterprises and government departments around the globe are encouraged to turn off their lights for an hour, with the purpose of inspiring reflections and actions regarding environmental issues.



LIGHTS OFF A man walks across the Red Square with lights off during the Earth Hour event in Moscow, Russia on Saturday night. XINHUA PHOTO

At 8:30 p.m. (1730 GMT) on Saturday in Moscow, the facade lighting of the Kremlin was turned off and so was the external lighting of the Russian White House, as part of the global environmental event.

Indonesia also joined the movement on Saturday evening but without traditional gatherings to avoid the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19). Awareness calling for serious efforts to slow down global warming were relayed online.

“Through the participation in this Earth Hour and the voice for planet movement, we have helped world leaders make a decision to support improvement in the health sector and earth protection as well as the welfare for all the living things,” said Lukas Adhyakso, acting chief executive officer of the WWF Indonesia.

Because of the Covid-19 outbreak, restaurants or museums were closed in Hungary. But the lockdown did not stop people from joining the Earth Hour movement in a digital way.

WWF Hungary encouraged people to announce what they would do differently in their lives to protect nature and sustainability when life returns to normal, and to share their engagement posts on community platforms.

“In the midst of the coronavirus epidemic, the Earth Hour is also a sign of solidarity for the planet: communities around the world are organizing their events digitally. WWF is also relocating this year’s Earth Clock to the online world,” the WWF told Xinhua in a press statement.

Kenya on Saturday also leveraged digital platforms to raise visibility on the green agenda to mark the Earth Hour during the curfew.

Partners and stakeholders are encouraged to stay at home and use digital tools like Skype and mobile phones to sensitize the public on the need to adopt sustainable lifestyles.

XINHUA

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/03/30/news/world/earth-hour-marked-digitally-amid-covid-19-pandemic/707956/>

Global economy now in recession, says IMF

AP By [Associated Press](#)

March 30, 2020

WASHINGTON, D.C.: The head of the International Monetary Fund said on Friday (Saturday in Manila) said it is clear that the global economy has now entered a recession that could be as bad or worse than the 2009 downturn.

IMF Managing Director Kristalina Georgieva said the 189-nation lending agency was forecasting a recovery in 2021, saying it could be a “sizable rebound.” But she said this would only occur if nations succeed in containing the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) and limiting its economic damage.

“A key concern about a long-lasting impact of the sudden stop of the world economy is the risk of a wave of bankruptcies and layoffs that not only can undermine the recovery but erode the fabric of our societies,” she told reporters at a news conference following a telephone conference with finance officials from the 24 nations that make up the IMF’s policy-setting panel.

She said the IMF was updating its economic outlook that would be released in a few weeks, allowing the agency more time to assess the economic impacts of the virus.

Asked if the United States was now in recession, she noted that Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell said on Thursday (Friday in Manila) that America “may well be in a recession.” Georgieva said she believed not only the US but many other advanced economies and a number of developing countries had already entered downturns.

Georgieva said lower income countries were being hit hard by the spreading Covid-19, with 81 nations now seeking support from an IMF emergency financing program being used to provide aid.

She announced that Kyrgyzstan would receive the first IMF support package of \$120.9 million to deal with adverse effects of the virus.

She repeated a pledge that the IMF stood ready to make all \$1 trillion of its lending resources available to countries being hit by the virus.

“We have seen an extraordinary spike in requests for IMF emergency financing,” Georgieva said. “We are being asked by our members to do more, do it better and do it faster than ever before.”

She said that to meet the increased demand she would seek to double the emergency financing program and simplify the procedures countries will have to go through to obtain IMF support. Georgieva said the IMF was also looking for ways to expand its current lending facilities to provide more help to countries.

The IMF also wanted to find ways to provide more debt relief to the poorest countries.

Georgieva said she planned to discuss these issues with the IMF’s executive board with the goal of putting together a package of reforms that could be presented at its IMF’s spring meetings in mid-April. Because of the virus, the spring meetings of both the IMF and its sister lending organization, the World Bank, will be virtual this year in place of meetings in Washington.

“IMF efforts that start to offer debt relief to the poorest countries and that increase financing to help prevent a global financial crisis are really positive and needed steps,” said Eric LeCompte, the executive director Jubilee USA, a group that campaigns for increased assistance for low-income countries

Not good news

Sought for comment, Union Bank of the Philippines (UnionBank) chief economist Ruben Carlo Asuncion stressed the IMF's view on a global economy now in a recession is not a good news for the Philippines.

"It is not good for the Philippines' case. We know that the Philippines has been more integrated to the global economy now than a decade ago," he said.

"The deeper the downturn in and among the advanced countries, the deeper the downturn it would be for the Philippines," Asuncion added.

The UnionBank economist also sees a negative Philippine economic growth for this year if the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) implemented in entire Luzon would last for about three to four months.

"Note that this scenario does not even include the possibility of a virus outbreak resurgence through the year or in succeeding years. This potential downturn is unprecedented," he further said.

Earlier, the economist said the Philippine gross domestic product (GDP) growth this year is now expected at 5.4 percent under a month-long ECQ.

His estimate is slower than last year's GDP expansion of 5.9 percent, and the government's 6.5- to 7.5-percent growth target for 2020.

WITH MAYVELIN U. CARABALLO

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/03/30/business/business-top/global-economy-now-in-recession-says-imf/707955/>