

‘Huge improvements’ in air quality noted as motor vehicle use lessened

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

-April 13, 2020

Air quality in Metro Manila continues to improve amid the ongoing implementation of the enhanced community quarantine in Luzon, which limited the movement of motor vehicles since March 17, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) noted.

Based on the DENR’s latest Air Quality Monitoring Data released, the air breathed in the National Capital Region (NCR) is much safer today than a month ago, or before the entire country was ordered placed under a State of Public Health Emergency due the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic.

This was attributed by the DENR-NCR air quality monitoring to the fact that public transportation was suspended immediately, while the movement of private vehicles was also drastically cut down.

Much of the air pollution in urban areas is carbon monoxide or half-burned smoke emitted by motor vehicles, which is being monitored by quality monitoring stations put up in strategic areas in the NCR.

The Marikina City Hall Air Quality Monitoring Station noted that air pollution in the city decreased in daily particulate matter, or PM-10 concentration from 13 percent to 72 percent, with an average of 43 percent from March 15 to April 10.

In Parañaque City, Don Bosco Barangay Hall Air Quality Monitoring Station reported the decrease in daily PM-10 concentration ranges from 4 percent to 54 percent or an average of 22.6 percent.

The significant drop in air pollution in Metro Manila was observed as early as a week after the quarantine was implemented.

The acceptable threshold standard level of PM-10 is 60 mass per unit volume (expressed as ug/Ncm).

Based on DENR Administrative Order 2013-13, the acceptable limit for PM-2.5 is 50 ug/Ncm for the short term 24-hour average level, and 35 µg/Ncm for the long term one-year average level.

“We can see the drastic drop in numbers of PM-2.5 in Muntinlupa and Parañaque, and the drop in numbers of PM-10 in Las Piñas and Marikina. This explains why our sky now is clear and looks clean,” DENR Undersecretary Benjamin D. Antiporda said.

“The sudden stop of activities in many countries allows the Earth to heal from environmental degradation,” Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu said underscoring the upside of the lockdown. “The major cause of climate change, [which is] air pollution due mainly by mass transport energy emissions, is being abated.

The number 2.5 in PM-2.5 refers to the diameter in micrometers or micron of the fine mixture of minute solid particles and liquid droplets present in the atmosphere. When inhaled, these can affect the heart and lungs.

PM-2.5 particles come from emissions of motor vehicles, fossil fuel power plants, and wood burnings, among others. PM-10 is typically from emissions of crushing and grinding machines and dust from cemented and dirt roads.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/04/13/huge-improvements-in-air-quality-noted-as-motor-vehicle-use-lessened/>

Don't export monkeys for research—activist

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

-April 13, 2020

A leading animal-rights activist and expert on veterinary medicine has appealed to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to reject applications for a special permit to harvest native monkeys from the wild.

Nedim C. Buyukmihci, speaking on behalf of the group Action for Primates, also asked the DENR to scrap the plan of allowing the export of monkeys for research and development purposes.

Buyukmihci wrote a letter addressed to DENR Assistant Secretary Ricardo L. Calderon after reading the BusinessMirror story titled “DENR official sees revival of native monkey farming amid global virus contagion.” In the story published on April 2, Calderon, the concurrent director of the DENR’s Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB), bared the plan to allow the capture of long-tailed macaques (*Macaca fascicularis spp. Philippensis*) and allow its export for scientific research.

Potential carriers

IN the report, Calderon said the DENR-BMB plans to allow harvesting of the species after confirming reports of the spike in the population of the native monkeys in the island Municipality of Banton, Romblon. Native monkeys are aggressive and potential carriers of deadly viruses like Ebola, the DENR said.

In Banton, there are already reports that monkey packs are starting to raid farms in desperate search for food. However, there is still no report of an unprovoked attack on humans.

Calderon is eyeing a revival of monkey farms in the Philippines, especially because of an expected demand for live specimens by research institutions outside the country to develop cures to deadly virus and diseases in the face of the Covid-19 global pandemic.

Unsound argument

AN Emeritus Professor of Veterinary Medicine at the School of Veterinary Medicine of the University of California-Davis, Buyukmihci said in his letter that the DENR’s major justification that “there are too many monkeys creating conflict with people and that they spread disease” is not a sound argument.

“Conflicts arise primarily due to human population growth and an ever-increasing expansion into and destruction of wildlife habitat,” he said. “However, people add to the problem by feeding the monkeys thus reducing the monkeys’ innate fear of people.”

Buyukmihci added that it is not fair to blame the monkeys for a problem created by humans.

Instead, he said steps should be taken to prohibit people from activities that aggravate the situation.

Furthermore, he said removing animals, though it may result in a short-term reduction in animal numbers, is cruel and it fails to address the issue over a longer period of time.

“It has been shown to be largely ineffectual in reducing damage to human property and crops or in reducing the number of individuals long term,” Buyukmihci explained. “For example, despite the trapping and export for research of 10,000 vervet monkeys over a 14-year period in Barbados, this did not have the desired effect of reducing crop raiding, as the population of monkeys, remained stable due to the species’ high breeding rate.”

Considerable misinformation

According to Buyukmihci, there is considerable misinformation about what diseases monkeys carry and which might be transmissible to human beings. He added there is very little likelihood that free-living monkeys could transmit any disease to human beings.

“It is more likely that they would become ill from contact with human beings rather than the reverse,” he said.

“The capture and removal of wild primates from their native habitats and social and family groups is, by its very nature, extremely cruel and inflicts great suffering and distress on the animals, as well as resulting in injuries and even death. The substantial negative impact caused by trapping and removal of wild primates from their natural social groups is universally recognized by relevant organizations and official bodies,” Buyukmihci added.

Moreover, citing the most recent entry on the IUCN Red List Category, Buyukmihci said that the *Macaca fascicularis spp. Philippensis* is listed as a “near threatened” species, with a decreasing population, and not a species of “Least concern” as earlier reported.

Management plan

Buyukmihci urged the DENR “to adopt an effective management plan that will deal with any human-macaque conflict in the community in a humane way as well as addressing some of the issues that are causing conflict, such as deforestation and inappropriate disposal of food waste.”

He said many countries, including India, Thailand, and Bangladesh, have taken a strong stance over the years in protecting their indigenous population of monkeys and refuse to allow their export for food and research purposes.

“Several of these and other countries have implemented successful methods of managing populations of wild macaques,” Buyukmihci said.



Ilang operatiba ng PCG, nag-ikot sa Manila Bay kasunod ng pagbabawal sa mga mamamayang maligo, mamingwit at pumalaot dito

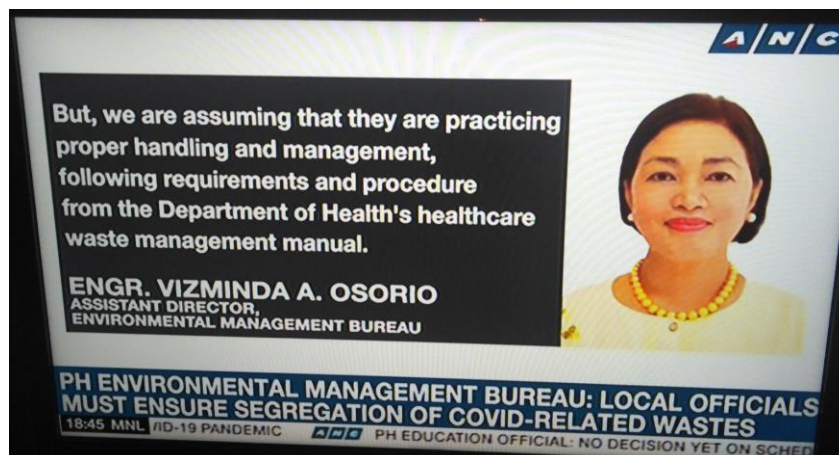
April 12, 2020 @ 4:40 PM 14 hours ago
Views: 197

Tumatanaw sa malalayo ang mga operatiba ng Philippine Coast Guard sa kanilang pag-iikot sa Manila Bay, Diokno Boulevard, Pasay City nang kanilang mahigpit na ipinagbabawal ang maligo sa dagat, mamingwit at pumalaot ang mamamayan ng Metro Manila sa laot upang hindi makahawa ang kumakalat na nakamamatay sakit na coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID 19). JULIUS GARCIA



Source: <https://remate.ph/ilang-operatiba-ng-pcg-nag-ikot-sa-manila-bay-kasunod-ng-pagbabawal-sa-mga-mamamayang-maligo-mamingwit-at-pumalaot-dito/>

ANC Interview with EMB Assistant Director Vizminda A. Osorio regarding Observe Proper Handling of Household Healthcare Wastes on April 12, 2020



Incineration of COVID-19 wastes will worsen the situation

posted April 13, 2020 at 12:40 am

By Merci Ferrer, Faye Ferrer and Jorge Emmanuel, PhD

A recent memo by the Environmental Management Bureau of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources violates the law, undercuts safer and cheaper options, and poses a threat to public health and the environment.

On March 26, 2020, EMB issued a memorandum that allows incineration for all COVID-19 related healthcare wastes collected during this period of Enhanced Community Quarantine. While purporting to ensure continuity of operations in public health and safety, the memo will only make the situation worse. Violation of RA 8749

The memo issued and signed by Engineer William Cuñado, EMB OIC-Director, directs all EMB regional directors to use thermal treatment by incineration as a mode of disposal with total disregard for RA 8749 or the Philippine Clean Air Act. Section 20 of the Clean Air Act bans incineration. Even the Supreme Court's obiter dictum (opinion that does not set precedent, is not binding and is unenforceable) in the *MMDA v. Jancom* case does not annul the prohibition. The memo is in clear violation of the law.

Disinfection and treatment systems

All the "alternative" treatment modes in the EMB memo with the exception of incineration and crematoria have already been in use for medical waste treatment for decades. Disinfection through chlorination and sterilization using an autoclave or hydroclave are all in the Philippine Department of Health (DOH) Healthcare Waste Management Manual that hospitals have been using since the manual's early version in 2004. The latest version of the manual (2012) also includes microwave treatment, disinfection by hydrogen peroxide, and methods of encapsulation and burial, which are not even mentioned by Engineer Cuñado.

The only thing new in the memo is permitting incineration and use of crematoria. It appears that the EMB memo intends to bypass the Clean Air Act by allowing a process which emits poisonous and toxic fumes while introducing the use of crematoria for healthcare waste disposal.

Disinfecting COVID-19 contaminated materials

Despite its high transmissibility and case fatality rate, the virus responsible for COVID-19 is ironically enough easily destroyed by decontamination. The COVID-19 coronavirus belongs to a group of viruses called enveloped viruses that are among the most sensitive to chemicals and heat compared to other disease-causing microorganisms. The COVID-19 virus is readily inactivated by such disinfectants as 0.1 percent sodium hypochlorite (the active ingredient in Zonrox, Winrox, and other bleach products), 70 percent ethyl alcohol, 50 percent isopropyl alcohol, and 0.5 percent hydrogen peroxide.

WHO already recommends these and other disinfectants for clinical laboratory waste. WHO also recommends disinfecting COVID-19 contaminated linen in a diluted bleach solution of 0.05 percent hypochlorite for 30 minutes. The DOH Manual calls for decontamination of infectious waste by 5 percent hypochlorite, which is a safe concentration since it is ten times higher than what is needed to inactivate the COVID-19 virus.

Coronaviruses such as the COVID-19 virus are also easily destroyed by simple soap and water because of the nature of enveloped viruses. Soap molecules act as chisels that break open enveloped viruses and trap their fragments in structures called micelles that are formed by soap. The WHO, DOH, and other health agencies keep emphasizing washing hands with soap for 20 seconds and rinsing with water as a simple but effective method to stop transmission of the COVID-19 virus.

Furthermore, past studies have found that other coronaviruses are destroyed by hot water at only 56°C (133°F) for about 45 minutes. It is likely that the COVID-19 coronavirus will also be destroyed at 56°C, which by the way is the temperature of the hot water setting of many commercial washing machines. WHO adds a safety factor by recommending washing contaminated clothes, bedding, and towels of COVID-19 patients in hot water with detergent at 60-90°C. Boiling in water would destroy the virus even faster.

Incineration of COVID-19 wastes will worsen the

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Microwave units used for infectious waste require enough water to produce steam and operate around 100°C to achieve high levels of disinfection in about 30 minutes. Autoclaves, which are basically pressure cookers operating at temperatures between 121-134°C, reach sterilization levels (the same levels used to sterilize surgical instruments) and are far more than adequate to handle COVID-19 wastes.

Since coronaviruses can be destroyed at temperatures even below the boiling point of water (100°C), incinerating infectious wastes at 850 to 1200°C is overkill and completely unnecessary, especially since cheaper methods as those mentioned above are readily available on-site. Unlike alcohol, ordinary bleach is still found throughout the country.

Incinerating healthcare waste produces toxic substances

Opposing incineration goes beyond the legal requirement and has everything to do with health. Much of healthcare wastes are single-use materials such as disposable gloves, gowns, face masks, and IV bags, which are mostly plastics made from fossil fuels. When burned, they release toxic substances, including respirable fine particles, heavy metals, carbon monoxide, and acid gases, all of which adversely impact the respiratory system. COVID-19 is a severe acute respiratory disease that will be exacerbated by respiratory pollutants. Patients that experience severe and even fatal outcomes for COVID-19 are those with other health problems including chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and other respiratory disorders. Many of the pollutants from incinerators are also known to suppress the immune system. Thus, creating air pollutants by incinerating infectious wastes will further compromise COVID-19 patients in healthcare facilities and communities.

The Clean Air Act prohibits the burning or incineration of medical wastes in part because incineration creates the most toxic chemicals known to science, dioxins, and furans, which remain in the environment for decades to hundreds of years. Dioxins and furans are linked to various types of cancers, reproductive disorders, birth defects, endocrine disruption, suppression of the immune system, and other health problems. The Philippines does not have the capacity to continuously monitor incinerator emissions of dioxins and furans. This means it is unlikely that emission limits for dioxins and furans will be enforced even without a pandemic.

Large amounts of dioxins and furans are also found in incinerator ash. This is why the ash must be safely transported and disposed of in hazardous waste landfills according to the Stockholm Convention for Persistent Organic Pollutants, to which the Philippines is a party. The guidelines of the Convention even recommend catalytic treatment of ash, solidification prior to landfilling, or use of double-walled containers. Since the country does not even have enough hazardous waste landfills, toxic incinerator ash will probably end up in dumpsites or rivers.

Protecting people's health

The EMB's role should not be to negate the protection of public health and the environment by undermining the Clean Air Act and the DOH Healthcare Waste Management Manual. What hospitals and other healthcare facilities should do is to ensure compliance with the DOH Manual and where possible, strengthen their waste management systems. Rigorous waste segregation and proper handling, storage, and transport of healthcare waste should be strictly followed. The correct use of personal protective equipment should be enforced. The COVID-19 pandemic should not be an excuse to return to outdated and polluting disposal methods like burning and incineration. Continued use of safe and environmentally sound treatment methods is more protective of public health.

Merci Ferrer is convener, War on Waste/Break Free From Plastic-Negros Oriental manager, Zero Waste Cities Project-Dumaguete, and the former director, Asia Office, Health Care Without Harm.

Faye Ferrer is a consultant for Healthcare Waste Management.

Jorge Emmanuel, PhD is adjunct professor, Silliman University, co-author, "Safe Management of Wastes from Healthcare Activities," World Health Organization, former UNDP chief technical advisor on Global Healthcare Waste Projects and former healthcare waste expert for UNDP's Ebola Crisis Response Program in Africa.

MWSS waits for IP permit

Manila Bulletin

13 Apr 2020

BY MADELAINE B. MIRAFLOR

Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) is still waiting for one last permit, which will come from the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), to greenlight the construction of the highly controversial Kaliwa Dam project.

Despite this, MWSS Administrator Emmanuel Salamat is hopeful that the construction for the project, which has been pegged by the Duterte administration as the top solution to Metro Manila's water woes, could still push through within the second half of this year.

In an interview, Salamat told Business Bulletin that MWSS is still in the process of addressing some concerns that several communities of Indigenous People (IP) from Rizal and Quezon province have against the project.

The ₱12-billion Kaliwa Dam project involves the construction of a massive dam in Quezon and Rizal province that will have a capacity to treat as much as 600 million liters of water per day (mld). To be constructed by China Energy Engineering Corporation (CEEC) through the Philippine government's Official Development Assistance (ODA) deal with China, the project secured its environment clearance from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in October last year, but with many conditions.

These conditions include ensuring that "sacred sites and burial grounds, as well as the IPs culture and livelihood" in the areas covered by the project are not disturbed.

The Indigenous Peoples' Rights Act of 1997 also requires the project's proponents to secure from the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples a Free and Prior Informed Consent (FPIC) and other clearances from the IP communities that will be affected.

"We already said that we will not proceed with the construction until we get the NCIP permit. Right now, we are already in MOA [memorandum of agreement] negotiation after completing the assembly and consultation with communities," Salamat said.

Salamat explained that consultations have different levels and that if members of the IP communities will not approve the project, the concern will be brought directly to the "elders and chieftains" of the IP groups.

"We are following the process that NCIP prescribed. Now we are on the MOA framework negotiation," he said.

In January, Marcelino Tena, Head of Samahan ng mga Katutubong Agta/ Dumagat, told Business Bulletin that while MWSS indeed conducted consultations with them, a lot of their members didn't give their consent to the project.

"There are more of us who said no to the project than those who said yes. And those who said yes were invited to a separate room during the consultation meetings," Tena said. "From the very start, we already said no to this project. Our position is non-consent from day one."

Tena and his colleagues believe that the Kaliwa Dam project will destroy their ancestral land and will result to the displacement of thousands of IPs.

Nevertheless, Salamat said the government is now "including all the request and interventions that we are supposed to provide to IP communities" before proceeding with the project's construction.

Remembering Jun Factoran

“To a probinsyano lawyer, migrating to Metro Manila is tough even for one equipped with modest academic credentials, wide experience and firm determination.

Published 1 day ago
on April 12, 2020 12:22 AM
By [Macabangkit B. Lanto](#)



While studying law at the University of the Philippines (circa 1964) I wrote a haiku entitled “To a brother gone.” This found print in *The Seekers*, a publication of the Sigma Rho, a law fraternity based in UP of which I am a member. I cannot recall now the exact text. But it tells about the lament and agony for a friend who has transited to the life hereafter.

This comes to mind with the death of another friend, Fulgencio “Jun” Factoran Jr. Unlike other fallen buddies I have reported in past columns, his death is not COVID-19-related, but due to lingering illness, after a kidney transplant and respiratory problem induced mainly by cigarette smoking.

A multitude of friends have showered him with accolades, describing him as a paragon of what a friend is, a pillar of our fraternity, Harvard-educated lawyer-scholar, environmental protection vanguard and human rights advocate.

I learned about his hospital confinement from Jojo Binay, a classmate (UP Law ‘67). I visited him twice, while at the intensive care unit and later when transferred to a regular room. He was intubated but we communicated by writing on a piece of cardboard. He asked me about my family, which he treated like his own, and the progress of the reconstruction of Marawi, knowing that my house and a row of commercial houses were bombed into ruins. I told him I was going back to Marawi, but I promised to visit him again when I returned. To the end, he was a sincere caring friend. It was our last goodbye.

Allow me to give you a glimpse of the kind of friend Jun Factoran was by narrating snippets of past events. But first let me tell you that he was our class valedictorian, cum laude, bar topnotcher and my fraternity batchmate (‘63).

To a probinsyano lawyer, migrating to Metro Manila is tough even for one equipped with modest academic credentials, wide experience and firm determination. It takes time to adjust to the dynamics of the labyrinthine socio-political, bureaucratic, corporate and political setting. You need real friends, in the purest sense of the word, who will shepherd, sponsor and stand by you as you navigate through life’s challenges and bumps to eke out a living in the metropolis. Fortunately, I have them in the likes of Jun Factoran, Frank Drilon, Jojo Binay and other classmates and fraternity brothers.

A provincial politico, especially a tyro, needs sponsors and “connection” in the national stage who “walk in the corridors of power” or power brokers to boost one’s political aspiration.

The first wedding in my family (Maamor to Apipa) had put on notice our local powers-that-be about my growing influence in the national political setting. Among the bridal sponsors were then “Little President” Executive Secretary Drilon, Environment Secretary Factoran, lawyers Arturo Tiu and Frank Pangilinan and a coterie of influential personalities who were potential supporters if I bid for a higher elective office. They came all the way from Manila to Marawi.

To some it was just an ordinary marital event. But to local political observers, it was a big deal. It was a clear message that I have true friends who will brave the distance and weather the inconvenience of travel to answer my call for help. Not that I was completely a political newbie having been elected earlier as assemblyman for three terms and later Speaker of the Regional Legislative Assembly of the Marcos-version of the Autonomous Government of Central Mindanao. But that foray in politics was no sweat because of the backing of the Marcos administration through strongman and political kingpin Ali Dimaporo, which degenerated local hustling into selection (by the administration).

After migrating to the Big City, Jun took me under his wings as consultant to a foreign-assisted project of the DENR. It gave me income while lawyering mostly for Muslims who had court cases. It did not stop there. After he retired from public service, he took me as one of his assistants in his environmental consulting firm, GAIA South, cum law office. And in all my political adventures he was there to support me along with Frank Drilon and wife Violy (another deceased classmate) and a host of friends.

My family feels the agony of loss with the passing of Jun. We cannot thank him enough.

No, Jun has not transited to oblivion. He will be remembered...



Duterte: Easter represents hope amid pandemic

[Iris Gonzales](#), [Emmanuel Tupas](#), [Alexis Romero](#), [Edith Regalado](#) (The Philippine Star) - April 13, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Easter Sunday brings hope not only for the country but the entire world now battling the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), according to President Duterte.

In his Easter message yesterday, Duterte said: "The triumph of the risen Christ presents us all with hopeful assurance that, even as we face adversities, there is always hope of better and new beginnings."

The President said he joined the entire Christian world in celebrating a joyful and meaningful Easter Sunday of the Lord's resurrection.

He said Easter, the most important festival of Christianity, reminds everyone of the grace that "comes from selfless love that is able to transcend diverse cultures, faiths, backgrounds and even circumstances."

"May this occasion fill us with gladness and enable us to find solace and strength in the narrative of the Resurrection. I trust that its message of forgiveness will inspire us to live our days with gratitude and humility, with further acts of kindness and charity to our families, friends and to those who are most in need," the President further said.

The COVID-19 pandemic has forced churches to scrap masses and other activities intended to celebrate Easter but bishops said the cancellation of the rituals should not prevent the faithful from reflecting on the teachings of Jesus.

Malacañang said the resurrection of Jesus is a reminder of the truth that a new tomorrow awaits the world after the pandemic.

“After going through pain and suffering there will be healing... After a storm a new dawn beckons,” presidential spokesman Salvador Panelo said in a statement.

Duterte spent Holy Week, including Easter Sunday yesterday, at the Bahay Pagbabago inside Malacañang grounds.

As of press time, the Department of Health has placed the number of Filipinos infected with COVID-19 at 4,648, recoveries 197 and deaths at 297.

“In this time of renewal, we are reminded of the grace that comes from selfless love, that is able to transcend diverse cultures, faiths, backgrounds and even circumstances,” Duterte said in the same Easter message.

Duterte likewise expressed hope that Easter Sunday will bring all Filipinos as a nation profound happiness and purpose as everyone joins hands in shaping a better and brighter future.

Stay strong

Businessman Manuel V. Pangilinan rallied employees of the MVP Group to stay strong amid the COVID-19 pandemic, and to continue to obey the rules to help contain the virus, as he likened these difficult times to Jesus Christ’s Agony and Resurrection.

In his Easter Sunday message for the Group, Pangilinan said the situation the country is in now, is like a collective Crucifixion, which would also come to an end, painful as it is.

“We are still making our way – step by painful step – to our Calvary, with no clear idea of when redemption may come. It is therefore paramount that each of us faithfully follows the rules – stay at home, wear masks, clean your hands often, keep social distancing – knowing that each day we persevere brings us closer to that day of redemption,” Pangilinan said.

He likened the Sunday of resurrection to scenes of patients who’ve recovered from COVID-19, being discharged from hospitals, and cheered on loudly by doctors, nurses and health workers for their triumph over the virus as they exit.

“While they do not rise to the level of the divine like Christ’s Resurrection, I cannot fail to be moved by the demonstration of compassion and care, by the giving and sharing. This is close to a sublime experience one can have, even if it were only a feeble reflection of Christ’s Agony and Resurrection. Nonetheless, it still gives us a humble glimpse of that lofty Mystery which surrounds us all,” he said.

Pangilinan noted a silver lining that can be gleaned from the whole experience.

“Perhaps we can take some comfort from this global grief. The air is cleaner, the skies are bluer, families get closer and, most importantly, we are all learning how to work from home, how to communicate digitally, how to work together from a distance. We are also beginning to appreciate the value of the internet, to realize how basic utilities can make lives under quarantine that much easier – something we take for granted in normal times. And I can see we are making decisions quicker,” he said.

Pangilinan said it is difficult to see when the pandemic will end but when it does, it would still take time for the country to recover.

“And when we do reach that summit, hopefully by end April or early May, I am sure we will all be relieved because it is the beginning of the end. I am sorry to say this but realistically, we should not expect to see the pandemic to end as quickly as it started. Viruses do not simply keel over and die. Instead, a tail would likely emerge from the apex, the shape and length of which will be determined by how well we manage the virus’s exit. This could take a few more weeks, or a few more months,” Pangilinan said.

Meanwhile, Philippine National Police chief Gen. Archie Francisco Gamboa yesterday urged Filipinos to rally behind President Duterte in the administration’s efforts to contain COVID-19.

“Let us commemorate this Easter Sunday by rallying behind our President in the war against one common enemy,” Gamboa said in his Easter message.

Gamboa said the public can contribute in the effort to protect healthcare workers and other frontline personnel by staying at home and avoid infection.

“Let us take part in our own 40 days of passion by staying at home while praying and supporting our last line of defense – the medical health workers together with all the frontliners,” he said.

DBM issues guidelines on Bayanihan grant use

[Mary Grace Padin](#) (The Philippine Star) - April 13, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Budget and Management (DBM) has issued the guidelines on the use of the P30.82-billion grant to city and municipal governments in their fight against the coronavirus disease 2019 or COVID-19.

Based on Local Budget Circular 125 signed by DBM Secretary Wendel Avisado on April 7, the local government units (LGUs) should be given the Bayanihan Grant to Cities and Municipalities (BGCM) to strengthen their capacity in responding to the health crisis.

The grant is equivalent to the one-month shares in the internal revenue allotments of the LGUs for the fiscal year 2020.

According to the DBM circular, municipal and city governments will receive P18.39 billion and P12.44 billion, respectively.

The BGCM should be used exclusively for COVID-related programs, projects, activities and expenses including procurement of personal protective equipment, testing kits, medicine and vitamins, hospital equipment and supplies, and disinfectants, the DBM said.

The grant may also be used for the purchase of food, transportation and accommodation expenses of medical and other LGU personnel involved in the COVID-19 response, as well as food assistance and provision of other relief goods for affected households.

The LGUs may also use the grant for the construction, repair or lease of additional space for use of COVID-19 patients and persons under investigation and monitoring.

The grant can also be used for the operation of stand-alone or mobile testing laboratories, purchase or lease of spaces for temporary shelters of the homeless, training of personnel and other necessary expenses related in the fight against the virus.

The DBM clarified that the BGCM could not be used as financial or cash assistance, payment of salaries or wages of LGU employees, administrative and travel expenses and other projects or expenses not related to the pandemic.

“The fund may be utilized by cities and municipalities for the duration of the state of calamity as declared by the President by virtue of Proclamation 929 signed on March 16,” the DBM circular read.

Funds that are unused after the state of calamity is lifted will be reverted to the national treasury.

LGUs are required to prepare monthly reports on the use of the grant as well as the status of implementation of their projects or programs related to COVID-19.

These reports should be posted on the LGUs’ website and in three conspicuous public places in the locality at the end of every month.

Meanwhile, the DBM also released Budget Circular 2020-2, which contained the guidelines on the grant of special allowances to frontline public health workers involved in the COVID response.

Under the circular, public health workers will receive a one-time special risk allowance equivalent to a maximum of 25 percent of their monthly basic salary.

Health workers who worked for three to seven days will receive 25 percent of the total amount of incentive.

Those who reported to work for eight to 12 days will receive 50 percent; 13 to 17 days, 75 percent, and those who worked for 18 days or more will received 100 percent.

Government still debating size of economic recovery package

April 12, 2020 | 10:49 pm



A health worker uses a thermal scanner to check a man's temperature at a checkpoint in Quezon City, March 15. – REUTERS

THE government's economic team has identified funding for P1.171 trillion worth of social amelioration measures and tax and fiscal action to mitigate the impact of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), with a decision yet to be reached on how much will go towards supporting economic recovery.

According to a document sent by Finance Secretary Carlos G. Dominguez III to reporters late last week, the COVID-19 response package consists of four pillars, for which funding levels for only three have been pencilled in. These consist of P830.47 billion worth of fiscal and monetary action, P305.218 billion for emergency support to vulnerable sectors and P35.722 billion to fund medical expenses.

The last pillar is the economic recovery plan, the funding level for which has yet to be determined.

The P1.171 trillion package is equivalent to 6.3% of gross domestic product (GDP). The accepted international rule of thumb for prudent deficit spending is around 3% of GDP, which the government has sought to exceed in recent years to drive its flagship infrastructure program.

The P830.47 billion worth of fiscal and monetary action includes additional financing from multilateral and bilateral lenders worth P310 billion. Some P470 million comes in the form of administrative relief through tax deadline extensions as well as the exemptions from documentary stamp tax for credit extensions or loan restructurings.

On the monetary side, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) accounted for P520 billion after buying P300 billion worth of government securities at zero interest and injecting liquidity to the financial markets totaling P220 billion via the reduction of policy rates and bank reserve requirements.

Support for the vulnerable will include P205 billion for emergency cash aid to 18 million low-income families, a P35 billion wage subsidy for employees of small businesses that closed during the lockdown, P30 billion worth of additional assistance to local government units (LGUs), P16.5 billion worth of rice programs to boost reserves and a P10-billion lending package for the Land Bank of the Philippines (LANDBANK) intended for LGUs.

Other programs include P3 billion worth of online programs offered by Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA), P2.8 billion in zero-interest loans by the Agriculture department for farmers and fisherfolk, P2 billion worth of cash assistance by the Department of Labor and Employment (DoLE) for displaced workers and P1.5 billion to support Overseas Filipino Workers.

Some P1.2 billion will fund unemployment benefits provided by the Social Security System (SSS), and P1.203 billion will support loan programs for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) with P15 million worth of loan programs for micro and small businesses involved in agriculture and fisheries.

Funding for medical expenses outbreak include P22.185 billion worth of coverage by PhilHealth for COVID-19 patients and assistance to health workers, including compensation for severe infections and a death benefit; P5 billion from the World Bank in the form of a fast-track loan facility to buy medical supplies and test kits; P2.9 billion worth of medical equipment and supplies funded by Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corporation (PAGCOR) and Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO); P2.701 billion worth of tax and duty exemptions for the import of personal protective equipment (PPE) and other medical goods; P1.8 billion to the Department of Health (DoH) to acquire 1 million sets of PPE.

Also authorized was P511.8 million worth of compensation to private facilities used in the COVID-19 response; P420.6 million from PCSO for Philippine Health Insurance Corporation's (PhilHealth) medical coverage remitted to COVID-19 patients; and P53.2 million allocated for the production of test kits developed by the University of the Philippines-National Institutes of Health, with funding from the Department of Science and Technology (DoST).

The government can also tap a P150 million grant from the Asian Development Bank (ADB) to support health measures. The estimates were issued on April 9 and are subject to regular updating.

It said the “bounce back plan” for the post-quarantine period aims to create jobs and sustain economic growth via continued investment in social and infrastructure programs.

While some of the funds were sourced from the national budget, Mr. Dominguez said the government will tap multilateral lenders as well as commercial markets to plug the funding gap.

The government has sought a \$100-million loan from the World Bank to fund the DoH’s efforts to contain COVID-19. The loan is expected to be acted on by the bank’s board on April 20.

With the additional spending on COVID-19 items, Mr. Dominguez said the budget deficit may rise to 5.3% of GDP this year, against the previous target of 3.2%, while the debt stock is expected to rise to 47% of GDP from the record-low 41.5% last year.

Mr. Dominguez has said the government may consider raising taxes “in a year or two” for additional revenue in order to support the higher debt load. However, there are still no immediate plans for such a move.

Michael Henry Li. Yusingco, a senior research fellow at the Ateneo de Manila University Policy Center said legislators should conduct “meaningful and genuine consultation” to draft appropriate tax bills by engaging with businesses, civil society organizations, labor groups and fiscal experts.”

The proposal to increase taxes must be anchored on a clear and coherent relief and recovery plan. Meaning, any legislation for this purpose must palpably be about ensuring the healthy recovery of the country from this global pandemic,” Mr. Yusingco said in an e-mail. — **Beatrice M. Laforga**

IATF eyes add'l measures to address overcrowding in

TITLE: markets

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April 13, 2020

DATE

IATF eyes add'l measures to address overcrowding in markets

By Azer Parrocha April 12, 2020, 5:58 pm



OVERCROWDED. A photo from Facebook page of Danny Buenafe shows crowded Balintawak public market in Quezon City on Saturday (April 11, 2020) despite the government's social distancing measure to prevent transmission of coronavirus disease (Covid-19). In response, the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases said on Sunday the government will impose additional measures to prevent overcrowding in marketplaces. *(Photo courtesy of Danny Buenafe)*

MANILA – The government will be implementing additional measures to prevent overcrowding in marketplaces, the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) said on Sunday.

Cabinet Secretary and IATF spokesperson Karlo Nograles made this statement following reports that some public markets, particularly in the Balintawak market in Quezon City, ignored social distancing measures.

“Para maiwasan natin ang the same thing from happening, is kailangan lagyan natin ng sistema (So that we can avoid the same thing from happening, we have to put in place a system),” he said in a virtual presser.

He said the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) will be coordinating with local government units (LGUs) to ensure that these preventive measures against Covid-19 would be strictly followed.

Among the recommendations is a “one entry, one exit” scheme to control the number of persons allowed inside the marketplace.

“Tulad pag bumili ka sa supermarket or sa convenience store or sa drugstore, one entry, one exit lang ‘yan e so madali mong tantiyahin ilan ang puwede pumasok (Just like when buying in the supermarket or convenience store or drugstore, they observe one entry, one exit so it’s easy to estimate how many are allowed inside),” he said.

He said the IATF is also eyeing the deployment of joint social distancing teams to ensure that this preventive measure is observed during the enhanced community quarantine placed over Luzon.

“So, it will be a joint team made up of AFP (Armed Forces of the Philippines), PNP (Philippine National Police) with the assistance ng ating mga (of our) LGUs,” he said.

On Saturday, the Quezon City government stopped retail selling in Balintawak markets after large crowds were seen in the area.

However, it allowed wholesale selling and drop-off of products to ensure the supply of vegetables and other farm products in various parts of Metro Manila.

Quezon City officials met with the owners of the Cloverleaf, North Diversion, Riverview I, Riverview II, Pilson’s, MC, and Edsa Bagsakan markets and all parties agreed that retail sales would no longer be allowed in these markets.

IATF eyes add'l measures to address overcrowding in

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Since retail stalls will no longer be permitted, vendors can use the city's jeepneys to sell their produce to different barangays through the "QC Fresh Market on Wheels" project.

The whole of Luzon is currently under enhanced community quarantine until April 30 to minimize the risk of catching and spreading the highly-infectious disease.

In Quezon City, at least 12 barangays are under "extreme enhanced community quarantine" with at least three confirmed Covid-19 cases.

Quezon City, which so far has the largest number of Covid-19 cases among local government units, is also set to begin community-based testing this week

As of Saturday, Quezon City reported a total of 764 confirmed Covid-19 cases, 60 fatalities, and 45 recoveries. **(PNA)**

Police, army to enforce social distancing in public markets

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published Apr 12, 2020 3:03:01 PM



Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, April 12) — Soldiers and policemen will now man public markets to strictly enforce social distancing measures, Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles said Sunday.

"Gagawa po tayo ng joint social distancing teams consisting of AFP and PNP personnel na ide-deploy sa public markets to enforce social distancing measures," Nograles, spokesperson for The Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases, said in a virtual presser.

[Translation: We will form social distancing teams consisting of AFP and PNP personnel to be deployed in public markets to enforce social distancing measures.]

He also said that they will coordinate with local government units to implement this directive.

The policy comes after reports circulated that people still flocked to the Balintawak public market in Quezon City despite the implementation of the Luzon-wide enhanced community quarantine.

Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte then ordered to stop retail selling in the Balintawak market. Wholesale selling and drop-off of products will still continue in the area.

The local government will coordinate with affected vendors to sell their products through its "Fresh Market on Wheels" program to different barangays.



'Free ride for health workers' program, mas pinalawak pa sa pakikipagtulungan ng LTO, LTFRB

April 12, 2020 @ 2:47 PM 17 hours ago
Views: 103

Manila, Philippines – Sa pakikipag-ugnayan at kooperasyon ng Land Transportation Office (LTO) at Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB), mas pinalawak pa ang 'free ride for health workers program' o libreng sakay para sa mga medical frontliners.

Ang nasabing programa ay naipapatupad hindi lamang sa National Capital Region (NCR), kundi maging sa iba pang rehiyon sa buong bansa, kabilang ang regions 1, 2, 3, 4A, 4B, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, CAR at CARAGA.

Kahapon, 11 Abril 2020, umabot na sa 146,250 ang kabuuang bilang ng mga medical frontliners na natulungan ng programa, kung saan umabot sa 39,343 ang mga nag-avail sa NCR, habang 106,907 ang kabubuan naman sa iba pang mga rehiyon.

Ngayon ay nadagdagan pa ang mga sineserbisuhan sa NCR na umabot na sa 20 ruta at kasama pa maging ang mga ruta sa iba pang rehiyon sa Pilipinas.

Matatandaan na nagsimula lamang sa tatlong (3) ruta ang DOTr Free Ride for Health Workers Program noong ika-18 ng Marso 2020.

Bukod pa rito, sa pakikipagtulungan ng Google sa Road Sector ng DOTr, makikita na ngayon ang 19 NCR routes ng libreng sakay sa GOOGLE MAPS na magbibigay-daan upang mas mapadali para sa ating mga Health Workers na malaman kung saan maaaring i-avail ang free ride ng DOTr.

Kasama din sa programa ang assistance ng mga oil companies Phoenix, Total, CleanFuel, Petron at Seoil, na nag handog ng FUEL SUBSIDY para sa mga bus company na kalahok sa libreng sakay ng DOTr.

Samantala, para naman sa mga health workers na may sariling sasakyan, LIBRE na ang kanilang TOLL FEE sa lahat ng EXPRESSWAYS sa Luzon habang nakataas ang Enhanced Community Quarantine sa nasabing isla.

Ang FREE TOLL FEE program naman ay nakamit dahil sa kooperasyon at pakikiisa ng mga toll operators sa Toll Regulatory Board (TRB) ng DOTr.

‘Free ride for health workers’ program, mas pinalawak pa

TITLE: sa pakikipagtulungan ng LTO, LTFRB

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Naisagawa ang DOTr Free Ride for Health Workers Program sa pakikipagtulungan ng DOTr sa Office of the President, House of Representatives, Supreme Court, Office of the Solicitor General, Court of Appeals, Sandiganbayan, Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), Department of Health (DOH), Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG), Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), Department of Trade and Industry (DTI), Philippine National Police (PNP), Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), Commission on Audit (COA), Land Transportation Office (LTO), Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB), Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), at Inter-Agency Council for Traffic (I-ACT).

Ilan pa sa mga pribadong kumpanya ang nagbibigay ng kanilang walang suporta at koopersyon sa programa ang HM Transport, San Agustin, MetroExpress, RRCG, Megaworld Corp. (Citylink), Precious Grace Transport, Ceres Transport, Jac Liner, Dagupan Bus, St. Rose Transit, Hafti Transport, Jasper Jean, Pascual, Hi-Star, Pamana, Ube Express, G-Liner, Thelman Transit, Manrose, Pilipinas Autogroup, Beep, Star 8, Mitsubishi Motors, Elmer Francisco Industries, Isuzu Philippines, Foton Motors, Hino Motors, Suzuki, MERALCO e-Sakay, at Lucena Lines.

Upang malaman ang updated map link ay maari namang bisitahin ang <https://bit.ly/DOTrFrontlineShuttleMap>.
Jocelyn Tabangcura-Domenden



PNA Philippine News Agency ✓
16 hrs · 🌐

LOOK: Some Filipinos celebrate Easter Sunday (April 12, 2020) by bathing in the sea near a mall in Pasay City and at Navotas Baywalk despite the implementation of the enhanced community quarantine in the entirety of Luzon. | via Avito Dalan

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More patients recover from COVID-19 as referral

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TITLE: hospitals open - data

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A nearly empty road is seen in Manila on March 20, 2020, after the government imposed an enhanced community quarantine in Luzon against the rising numbers of COVID-19 coronavirus infections. The quarantine has since been extended to April 30 from its original expiration last April 12.

AFP/Ted Aljibe

More patients recover from COVID-19 as referral hospitals open —data

[Prinz Magtulis](#) (Philstar.com) - April 12, 2020 - 1:32pm

MANILA, Philippines — While still outnumbered by deaths, recoveries from coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19) accelerated over the past week, an indication better testing and faster response are paying off, although a government adviser warned it is too early to celebrate.

As of Saturday afternoon, a total of 157 patients have recovered from complications brought by the respiratory disease, nearly three times their level a week ago in April 4, latest data from the Department of Health showed.

Based on seven-day moving average of daily tabulated cases, more than 14 patients are recovering from COVID-19 per week as of Saturday, up from just around 10 in the previous week, data showed.

Tony Leachon, special adviser to the interagency task force on emerging infectious diseases, attributed the increase in recoveries to improve testing, with the arrival of around 100,000 test kits from China, South Korea and Brunei, as well as COVID-19 referral hospitals that went online starting last March 30.

Three government hospitals were transformed into COVID-19 facilities namely the Philippine General Hospital in Manila starting March 30, and Lung Center of the Philippines and Dr. Jose N. Rodriguez Memorial Hospital in Quezon City beginning April 3.

More patients recover from COVID-19 as referral

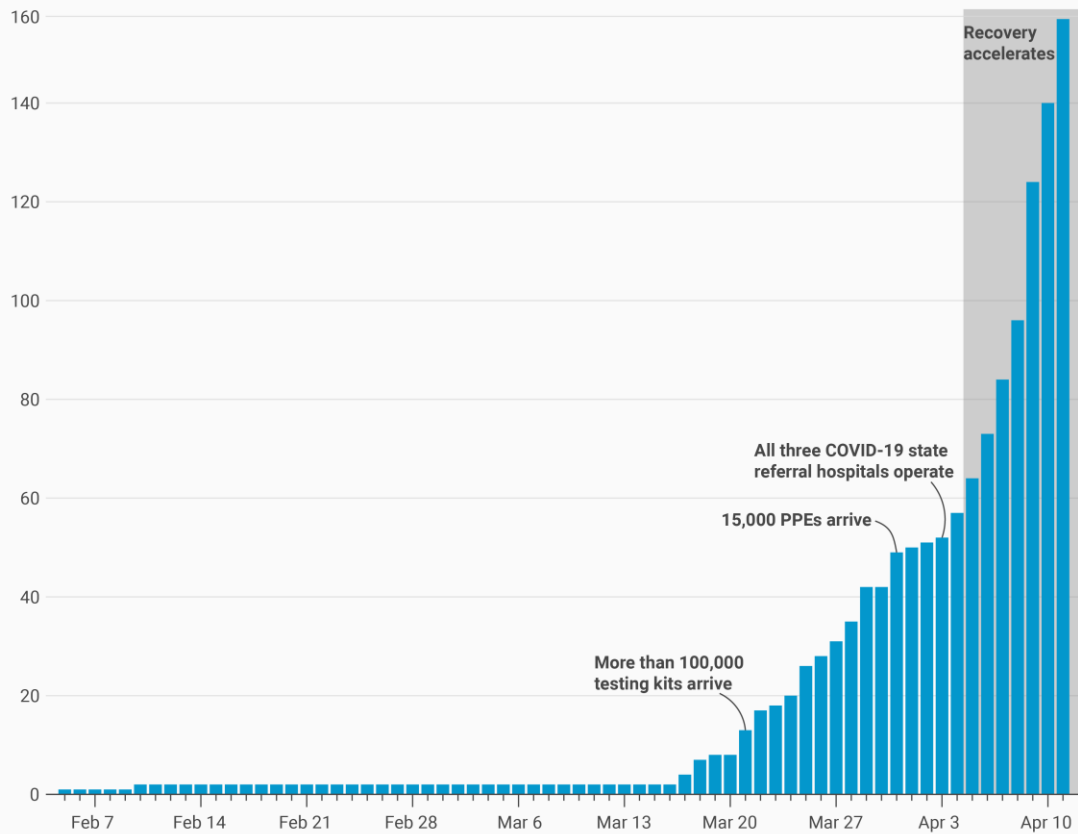
TITLE: hospitals open - data

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Philippines sees more COVID-19 patients recovering

Cumulative number of recovered patients from coronavirus since first recovery recorded



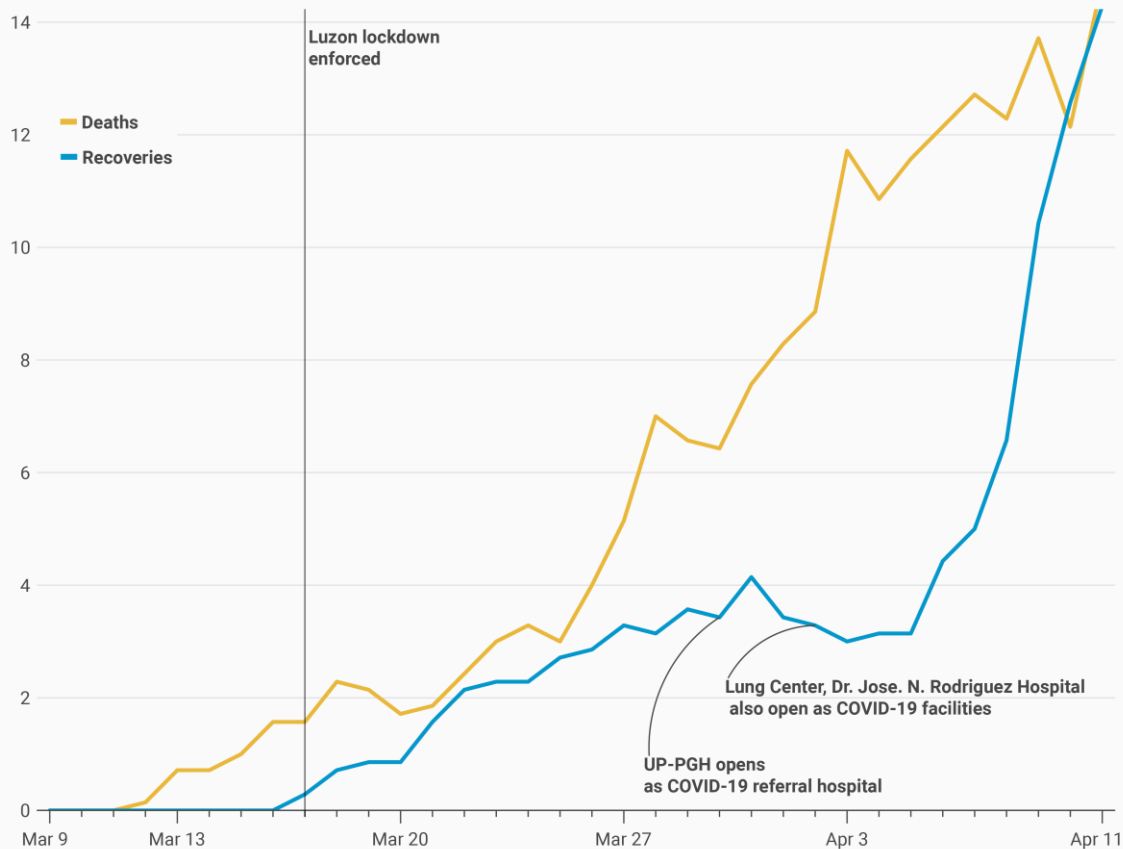
Note: As of April 11.

Source: Department of Health

Philstar.com

Recovery cases from COVID-19 improve after referral hospitals open

Deaths and recoveries from coronavirus since public health emergency declared (7-day moving average)



Note: There was only 1 COVID-19 death from February 1 to March 11, and 2 recoveries from February 10 to March 16.

Source: Department of Health

Philstar.com

Too early to declare victory

Despite the positive development, Leachon cautioned on reading too much on the data and for the government and the public to get complacent.

For one, the total number of recovered patients in the Philippines still fall behind most of Southeast Asia. In the five developing economies in the region, only Vietnam lags behind the Philippines in terms of number of recoveries at 69 people, although this hardly matter since Manila has more than 4,000 cases, way bigger than around 100 in Hanoi, with the latter conducting more tests.

Leachon said most local COVID-19 patients are also “very serious of critically ill,” which means it takes weeks for them to recover. Validating a patient’s recovery from the novel virus can also be tedious, and therefore delay official recording.

“It’s the reporting system, too. These recoveries were the cases reported three weeks ago at the start of the (Luzon) lockdown,” Leachon said.

“Then following the timeline of when the disease was reported, I am assuming two to three weeks recovery or demise duration,” he said, adding the upcoming reports would be crucial to see whether the Luzon lockdown that started March 17 was effective. The lockdown will lapse April 30, unless extended.

Apart from more recoveries, Leachon said it is also important for the country to reduce the number of new cases and deaths to “flatten the curve.” As of Saturday afternoon, 4,428 infection had been recorded, 247 of whom died.

“We need to execute well the last two weeks and we will over the virus,” Leachon said.

DOH: Here's how to make bleach disinfectant solution

Published April 12, 2020, 5:01 PM

By **Gabriela Baron**

Here is a guide on how to safely and effectively make a bleach disinfectant solution according to the Department of Health (DOH).

Mga hakbang sa paggawa ng iyong 0.5% sodium hypochlorite/bleach disinfectant solution para sa surfaces ng bagay-bagay.

- Ipunin ang lahat ng mga materyales na kakailanganin.
- Gumamit ng guwantes, apron at bota kapag humahawak at naghahanda ng mga solusyon ng bleach.
- Ibuhos ang dami ng tubig na kinakailangan (sa isang plastik na lalagyanan) pagkatapos ay idagdag ang bleach:
- OPTION 1:** Gamit ang bleach na may 5% na aktibong chlorine:
100 mL bleach + 900 mL tubig
- OPTION 2:** Gamit ang chlorine powder/ granules / tablet na may 60-70% aktibong chlorine:
1 kutsara (20g) ng chlorine + 2 L tubig
- Lagyan ng label ang iyong mga lalagyan ng disinfectant at tukuyin ang konsentrasyon ng bleach. Pwede nang gamitin ang disinfectant solusyon

f OfficialDOHgov @DOHgovph doh.gov.ph (02) 894-COVID / 1555

The coronavirus that causes COVID-19 may survive for several days on some surfaces so it is crucial to clean surfaces and bleach is a strong and effective disinfectant.

Steps in making 0.5 percent sodium hypochlorite/bleach disinfectant solution:

Prepare all the materials needed (gloves, water, bucket, bleach, measuring cup, and a container for your solution)

Use gloves and apron while making the solution

Pour the amount of water needed to the bucket, add the bleach after

Option 1: Using a bleach that has 5 percent active chlorine: Mix 100 milliliter bleach per 900 milliliters of water

Option 2: Using a chlorine powder that has 60-70 percent active chlorine: Mix 1 tablespoon of chlorine per two liters of water

Put the solution in a container/spray bottle and label it properly and put it in a place where kids cannot reach it.

Bleach mixtures can be used only on hard surfaces — they will permanently damage most fabrics and many other soft materials — and are unpleasant to work with so wear gloves and ventilate the place as well.

The DOH also advised to not mix more than you will use within a day or two because bleach degrades rapidly once taken from its original container, becoming less effective each day.



Philippine Star 15 hrs · 🌐

How's your Easter Sunday?

IN PHOTOS: The Mount Samat Cross was silhouetted against the setting sun as seen from Manila Bay on Saturday.

72K 1.1K Comments 22K Shares

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/134752476678442/posts/1734147090072298/>

Asia-Pacific response to COVID-19 and climate emergency must build a resilient and sustainable future

posted April 13, 2020 at 12:35 am

By Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana

The unprecedented public health emergency triggered by the COVID-19 pandemic and its multi-faceted impact on people's lives around the world is taking a heavy toll on Asia and the Pacific.

Countries in our region are striving to mitigate the massive socioeconomic impact of the pandemic, which is also expected to affect the region's economic health. In its annual Economic and Social Survey of Asia and the Pacific 2020 launched last week, the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) expects growth in Asia-Pacific developing economies to slow down significantly this year.

Bold investments to sustain the region's physical and economic well-being is imperative. The Survey advises policymakers to protect the economic health of the region with measures that support affected businesses and households and prevent economic contagion. To tackle COVID-19 in developing Asia-Pacific countries, the Survey also calls for an estimated increase in health emergency spending by \$880 million per year through to 2030. Fiscal support will be crucial in enhancing health responders' ability to monitor the spread of the pandemic and caring for infected people. ESCAP is also calling on Asia-Pacific countries to consider setting up a regional health emergency preparedness fund.

The pandemic is also an opportunity for us to rethink our economic growth path that has come at a heavy cost to people and planet. According to the latest ESCAP assessment on implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Asia and the Pacific is not on track to achieve any of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) by 2030, with regression on several environmental Goals.

This stands in stark contrast with the region's impressive gains in material prosperity, which have been powered by intensive resource use. We are currently paying the price amid a public health emergency in a region with 97 of the 100 most air-polluted cities in the world and five of the 10 countries most vulnerable to climate change. Economic policymaking is understandably focused on maximizing growth to reduce poverty and create jobs. Yet, we need to question this when the methods of growth undermine its sustainability over the long term.

The 2020 Survey is proposing a transition towards a growth path that ensures we bequeath a healthy planet to future generations. It is calling for a shift in the paradigm of production and consumption, which is at the core of all economic activities.

To bring about this fundamental shift in the way we produce and consume, we need to adopt the motto of "no more business as usual" for all stakeholders in planetary well-being, namely governments, businesses and consumers. Policymakers should not lose sight of a looming climate crisis, but rather design economic stimulus packages with social inclusion and environmental sustainability built into every decision.

The Survey identifies challenges and constraints to making this switch for each group of stakeholders. The good news is that it is possible to take on these challenges and align the goals of all stakeholders with the 2030 Agenda's goal of sustainability.

In particular, the Survey urges governments in the region to embed sustainability in policymaking and implementation, transition out of fossil fuel dependency and support the greening of finance. The region continues to provide \$240 billion worth of annual subsidies to fossil fuels while investments in renewables remain at \$150 billion.

Asia-Pacific response to COVID-19 and climate

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TITLE: emergency must build a resilient and sustainable future

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Businesses can integrate sustainability by factoring in environmental, social and governance aspects in investment analysis and decisions. Carbon pricing will be a key tool to reduce emissions and mitigate climate-related risks. The region is already a leader in adopting the emerging sustainable business paradigms of the shared economy and circular economy.

All of us as consumers must understand the importance of switching to sustainable lifestyles. This will begin with increasing awareness of the impact of consumer choices on people and planet. Governments will have to play a significant role in encouraging consumer choices through positive reinforcements, small suggestions and eco-labelling of products.

Integrating sustainability also requires international collaboration, given the interconnected world in which we live. Asia-Pacific governments need to coordinate their climate action, particularly the development of climate-related standards and policies. Having achieved so much, yet also at the risk of losing so much, the Asia-Pacific region stands at a pivotal moment in its development journey. The next phase of its economic transformation should be more sustainable, with cleaner production and less material-intensive lifestyles.

With headwinds to the region's development journey strengthened by the COVID-19 pandemic, let us heed the United Nations Secretary General's call to mobilize for a decade of action to build a sustainable and resilient future.

Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana is the United Nations' under-secretary-general and executive secretary of ESCAP.

Primatologist Jane Goodall says 'disrespect for animals'

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TITLE: caused coronavirus pandemic

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Primatologist Jane Goodall says 'disrespect for animals' caused coronavirus pandemic

Stéphane Orjollet, Agence France-Presse

Posted at Apr 12 2020 08:13 AM



In this file photo taken on January 22, 2020 Jane Goodall UN Messenger of Peace, speaks at the Securing a Sustainable Future for the Amazon, during the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland. *Fabrice Coffrini, AFP*

PARIS - World-renowned British primatologist Jane Goodall says the coronavirus pandemic was caused by humanity's disregard for nature and disrespect for animals.

Goodall, who is best known for trail-blazing research in Africa that revealed the true nature of chimpanzees, pleaded for the world to learn from past mistakes to prevent future disasters.

During a conference call ahead of the release of the new National Geographic documentary "Jane Goodall: The Hope", the 86-year-old also said everyone can make a difference.

HOW DO YOU VIEW THIS PANDEMIC?

Goodall: It is our disregard for nature and our disrespect of the animals we should share the planet with that has caused this pandemic, that was predicted long ago.

Because as we destroy, let's say the forest, the different species of animals in the forest are forced into a proximity and therefore diseases are being passed from one animal to another, and that second animal is then most likely to infect humans as it is forced into closer contact with humans.

It's also the animals who are hunted for food, sold in markets in Africa or in the meat market for wild animals in Asia, especially China, and our intensive farms where we cruelly crowd together billions of animals around the world. These are the conditions that create an opportunity for the viruses to jump from animals across the species barrier to humans.

WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT THESE ANIMAL MARKETS?

It's really good that China closed down the live wild animal markets, in a temporary ban which we hope will be made permanent, and other Asian countries will follow suit.

But in Africa it will be very difficult to stop the selling of bush meat because so many people rely on that for their livelihoods.

It will need a lot of careful thought on how it should be done, you can't just stop somebody doing something when they have absolutely no money to support themselves or their families, but at least this pandemic should have taught us the kind of things to do to prevent another one.

Primatologist Jane Goodall says 'disrespect for animals'

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WHAT CAN WE HOPE FOR?

We have to realize we are part of the natural world, we depend on it, and as we destroy it we are actually stealing the future from our children.

Hopefully, because of this unprecedented response, the lockdowns that are going on around the world, more people will wake up and eventually they can start thinking about ways they can live their lives differently.

Everyone can make an impact every single day.

If you think about the consequences of the little choices you make: what you eat, where it came from, did it cause cruelty to animals, is it made from intensive farming -- which mostly it is -- is it cheap because of child slave labor, did it harm the environment in its production, where did it come from, how many miles did it travel, did you think that perhaps you could walk and not take your car.

(Also consider) ways that you could perhaps help alleviate poverty because when people are poor they can't make these ethical choices. They just have to do whatever they can to survive -- they can't question what they buy, they must buy the cheapest, and they are going to cut down the last tree because they are desperate to find land on which they can grow more food.

So what we can do in our individual lives does depend a little bit on who we are, but we all can make a difference, everybody can.

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Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/overseas/04/12/20/primatologist-jane-goodall-says-disrespect-for-animals-caused-coronavirus-pandemic?fbclid=IwAR3kLqLQOACBvXwlCpc7ok9mKNxjCm2sfmxU8zEUIv1hWf4rriYANeo2wwA>



News5 16 hrs · 🌐

Inapula ng mga bumbero ang forest fires malapit sa Chernobyl nuclear power sa Ukraine, na nagtala ng worst nuclear accident sa buong mundo noong 1986. Nagsimula ang sunog noong April 3 sa kanlurang bahagi ng exclusion zone.

Ayon sa Ukrainian Ecology Inspection, mas mataas sa normal level ang radiation sa epicenter ng sunog. | via Reuters

🇺🇦: Ukrainian State Emergency Service






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Source: <https://www.facebook.com/News5Everywhere/posts/1954940927995985>