

DENR on alert for forest fires as dry season sets in

Published April 14, 2020, 3:27 PM

By *Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz*

The regional and satellite offices of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) are on alert for forest fires that usually occur during the dry season.



Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu
(RTVM / MANILA BULLETIN FILE PHOTO)

“As the dry season sets in, and even during this COVID-19 pandemic, our personnel from our regional and satellite offices will all the more continue with their duty to protect our forests from fire and illegal activities,” DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu said.

On April 5, a grass fire burnt a portion of the Kaliwa Watershed Forest Reserve at Barangay San Andres in Tanay, Rizal.

The fire swept through 10 hectares of bush and grassland that served as a site for the National Greening Program in 2013 and was planted with pioneering species of kakawate, more commonly known as madre kakaw. The area is now dominantly covered with grass.

According to the Rizal Provincial Environment and Natural Resources officer Isidro Mercado, the grass fire occurred within the 550-hectare property of the provincial government of Rizal within the Kaliwa Watershed, which is under its “Palayang Bayan” project.

Initial investigations showed that the six-hour grass fire may have been caused by the practice of residents to smoke honeycombs in trees to collect honey.

It’s also possible that passersby intentionally set the area on fire, since no kaingin activity was seen in the periphery of the grass fire.

Mercado said his office is now in the process of identifying the culprits and assessing the cost of the damage. Patrol operations in the area are also being intensified to prevent a recurrence of the incident, he added.

Cimatu said the DENR prioritizes strict monitoring for potential outbreak of forest fires in protected areas given their importance in ensuring sufficient water supply, and because they also function as habitat for endangered and threatened species of plants and animals.

“Protected areas are essential to biodiversity conservation. Our quick response workforces are constantly on alert to protect these homes of our threatened and endangered species from illegal activities that benefit a few,” he said.

Cimatu said that while the dry season creates favorable conditions for forest fires, starting a fire is the work of humans, either deliberately or by accident.

Source: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/04/14/denr-on-alert-for-forest-fires-as-dry-season-sets-in/>

DENR to guard against forest fires

posted April 14, 2020 at 08:08 pm

by [Rio N. Araja](#)

The Environment department vowed Tuesday to stay vigilant against forest fires that usually occur during the dry season—but now amid the coronavirus pandemic.

Environment Secretary Roy Cimatu made the assurance after he ordered all regional and satellite offices to continue to prevent, monitor and fight forest fires despite the Luzon-wide enhanced community quarantine.

“As the dry season sets in and even during this COVID-19 pandemic, our personnel from our regional and satellite offices will all the more continue with their duty to protect our forests from fire and illegal activities,” Cimatu said.

A grass fire affected a portion of the Kaliwa watershed forest reserve in San Andres village in Tanay, Rizal, on April 5.

Cimatu says his department gives priority to the strict monitoring of the potential outbreak of forest fires in protected areas—and given their importance in ensuring sufficient water supply and in protecting the habitat of endangered and threatened species of plants and animals.

“Protected areas are essential to biodiversity conservation,” Cimatu said.

“Our quick response workforces are constantly on alert to protect the homes of our threatened and endangered species from illegal activities that benefit a few.”

Cimatu says while the dry season creates favorable conditions for forest fires, starting a fire is the work of humans either deliberately or by accident.

DENR nakaantabay vs forest fire sa gitna ng COVID-19

April 15, 2020

TITLE: pandemic

PAGE 1/ 1/2

DATE



DENR nakaantabay vs forest fire sa gitna ng COVID-19 pandemic

April 14, 2020 @ 5:29 PM 13 hours ago

Views: 112

Manila, Philippines – Sa kabila ng limitadong paggalaw dahil sa ipinatutupad na Enhance Community Quarantine (ECQ) bunsod ng epidemya ng COVID-19 patuloy ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) sa pagbabantay sa mga kagubatan upang maiwasan asng pagkakaroon ng forest fire na kadalasang nangyayari sa panahon ng tag-init.

Ito ang nabatid kay Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, matapos magbigay ng kautusan sa lahat ng DENR regional at satellite offices upang patuloy na maiwasan, ma-monitor at malabanan ang forest fire kahit na sumasailalim sa ECQ ang Luzon at iba pang lugar sa bansa.

“As the dry season sets in and even during this COVID-19 pandemic, our personnel from our regional and satellite offices will all the more continue with their duty to protect our forests from fire and illegal activities,” ani pa ni Cimatu.

Ang pahayag na ito ni Cimatu ay patungkol sa naganap na grass fire sa isang bahagi ng Kaliwa Watershed Forest Reserve sa Barangay San Andres, Tanay, Rizal noong Abril 5 ng kasalukuyang taon.

Ayon sa ulat ang naganap na sunog ay nakaapekto sa 10 ektarya ng damuhan na nagsilbing lugar ng National Greening Program noong 2013 na tinaniman ng kakawate o mas kilala sa tawag na madre kakaw. Ang naturang lugar ay natatakpan na ngayon ng damo.

Sinabi ni Rizal Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Officer Isidro Mercado, ang naganap na grass fire ay sumiklab sa 550-hectare na lupain na pag-aari ng Rizal provincial government sa ilalim ng “Palayang Bayan” project ng Kaliwa Watershed.

Lumalabas sa inisyal na imbestigasyon na ang anim na oras na grass fire ay maaaring nagsimula sa pagpapa usok ng mga residente ng mga pulot-pukyutan sa taas ng mga puno upang makakuha ng honey. Malaki rin ang posibilidad na sinadyang mag-iwan ng apoy ang mga dumadaan sa naturang lugar dahil wala naming nakitang bakas na may nagkaingin malapit sa pinangyarihan ng sunog.

Sinabi pa ni Mercado na kasalukuyang nag-iimbestiga ang kanyang tanggapan upang matukoy ang pagkakakilanlan ng may kagagawan ng grass fire at inaalam na rin kung magkano ang napinsala ng sunog.

Nagsasagawa na rin ng patrol operation sa naturang lugar upang maiwasan na muling maulit ang insidente.

Samantala, idinagdag ni Cimatú na binibigyan ng prayoridad ng DENR ang pagmonitor sa mga lugar na posibleng pagmulan ng forest fire partikular na sa mga protected areas lalo na at mahalaga ang mga kagubatan bilang pinagkukunan ng tubig. Ito rin ay nagsisilbing tirahan ng mga endangered at threatened na mga halaman at hayop.

“Protected areas are essential to biodiversity conservation,” pagdidiin pa ni Cimatú. “Our quick response workforces are constantly on alert to protect these homes of our threatened and endangered species from illegal activities that benefit a few.”

Aniya, ang panahon ng tag-init ang kadalasang dahilan ng pagkakaroon ng forest fire ngunit ito ay posibleng gawa ng tao o isang aksidente.

Bago pa man ipatupad ang ECQ sa buong Luzon upang mapigilan ang pagkalat ng COVID-19 ay pinakilos na ng DENR ang workforces nito upang agad na makaresponde partikular na sa pagpapatupad ng batas laban sa mga krimen na may kinalaman sa forest at wildlife. **Santi Celario**



Masungi Georeserve 13 hrs · 🌐

We salute Secretary Cimatu for his firm orders to close the quarry and cancel permits, and humbly await their swift & full implementation. Watch the #SaveMasungi documentary at bit.ly/savemasungidocu 🎥 #EarthDay2020

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Mines and Geosciences Bureau Penro-Rizal DENR CALABARZON

“
Gusto ko mawala ang agam-agam na may magmimining diyan, because this is a watershed, this is a protected area.”

DENR SECRETARY
ROY A. CIMATU

Watch the documentary at bit.ly/savemasungidocu

👍❤️😬 369 7 Comments 25 Shares

Source: <https://www.facebook.com/1591599464459612/posts/2751271138492433/>

DENR lifts suspension of mineral export permit of
E.Samar firm

PAGE 1/ 1/2

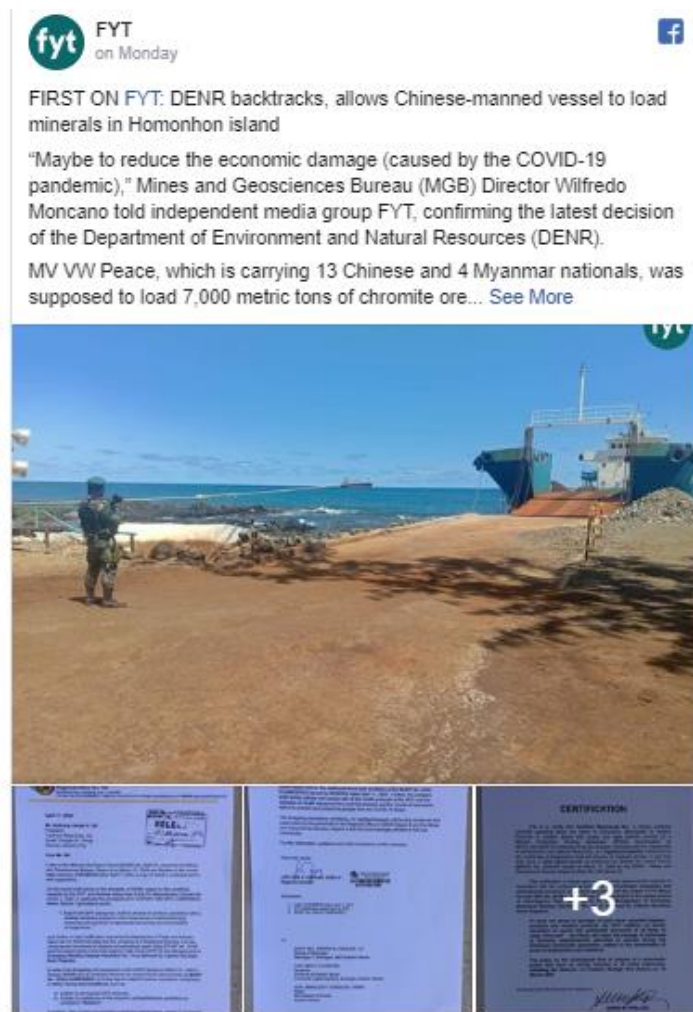
April 15, 2020
DATE

DENR lifts suspension of mineral export permit of E. Samar firm

Published April 14, 2020 1:10pm
By TED CORDERO, GMA News

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has lifted Mineral Ore Export Permit (MOEP) of Techiron Resources Inc. after the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) allowed continued operations of export-related industries amid the enhanced community quarantine.

Independent media group [FYT](#) reported that the DENR-Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) Region 8 has lifted on April 11 the suspension of MOEP of Techiron issued on March 31.



Asked to confirm, MGB Director Wilfredo Moncano told GMA News Online that “IATF guidelines are clear that export-related industries are exempted from the lockdown.”

The MGB Region 8 earlier suspended the MOEP of Techiron and delayed its shipment to MV VW Peace after Eastern Samar's provincial government imposed a general community quarantine on the entire province, which banned entry of non-residents to its coastlines and in response to protest by Guian town residents.

DENR lifts suspension of mineral export permit of

April 15, 2020

TITLE: E.Samar firm

PAGE 1/ 2/2

DATE

According to FYT, the MV VW Peace is carrying 13 Chinese and 4 Myanmar nationals and was supposed to collect 7,000 metric tons of chromite ore worth more than P61 million from Techiron's mining operations before it was barred by Guian town from docking.

Moncano, however, clarified that the DENR and MGB Central Office only set parameters for the lifting of the MOEP suspension.

Among the parameters are "certification from Bureau of Quarantine that quarantine protocols are complied."

Also foreign vessels, Moncano said, will not be allowed to dock but should stay several miles away from the shore.

The mining firm should pay its taxes and surety bond and must ensure there is no physical contact between vessel crew members and locals. It should also secure endorsement from the Department of Trade and Industry, mineral ore validation, issuance of export permit.

The decision left Homonhon, a fishing community of about 8,000 people, shocked and helpless, according to FYT. --**KBK, GMA News**

DENR-EMB San Fernando embraces digital archiving with Epson scanners

posted April 14, 2020 at 06:55 pm

by [Manila Standard](#)

In today's modern workplace, traditional organizational archives are slowly becoming a thing of the past.



DENR-EMB San Fernando, Pampanga

Gone are the dusty, dim-lit storage rooms, floor to ceiling shelves full of paper and stacks of cardboard boxes bursting with files and folders. Enterprises are learning to effectively manage the growing mass of documents they generate and use modern scanning technology to digitally archive vital documents fast and efficiently.

Like most offices that value productivity, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources – Environment Management Bureau (DENR-EMB) office in San Fernando, Pampanga, has embraced the benefits of going digital.

The Environment Management Bureau is a line bureau of the DENR mandated to formulate programs and appropriate environmental quality standards for the protection of the environment. The bureau ensures the implementation of these programs and standards through its regional offices, which issue hundreds to thousands of permits and clearances each year.

The records section of DENR-EMB's San Fernando office receives and safekeeps all applications for permits and clearances in the municipality, such as the Environmental Compliance Certificate (ECC) or Certificate of Non-compliance (CNC), among others.

Cristine Dunca, a staff for the branch's Property in General Section, emphasized that one of their major roles is to find new technology to improve the document archiving system in their records section.

In the past, hard copies of applications would be filed into folders and placed in ceiling-high shelves. To retrieve a file, staff would need to check a logbook and go through thousands of folders stacked upon one another, unidentifiable with its fading labels. File safety also became an issue when hard copies were lost and, in some cases, eaten by termites, which made it extremely difficult for the staff to recover records.

This was when the EMB San Fernando office decided they needed a change, which came in the form of the Epson WorkForce DS-310 and DS-530 scanners.

"We considered its quality, durability, affordability, and its environmental friendliness," Dunca said. "We began exploring Epson products in 2018 and found that their scanners would help improve the workflow of our records section."

DENR-EMB San Fernando embraces digital archiving

April 15, 2020

TITLE: with Epson scanners

PAGE 1/ 2/2

DATE

Compact and lightweight, the DS-310 is portable and can easily fit into small spaces, allowing the branch to use their desk space more efficiently. With scanning speeds of up to 50ipm and automatic feeding mode, large volumes of documents are scanned continuously.

The versatile DS-310 has a dedicated card slot for plastic cards, and a maximum scan size of up to 215.9 x 1,117.6mm, proving that it can cater to the variety of document sizes that the DENR-EMB San Fernando branch receives for different permit and clearance applications within the municipality.

The DS-530 is another versatile workforce scanner of the DENR-EMB San Fernando branch that complements the DS-310. Boasting a scan speed of up to 70ipm, the DS-530 handles a wide variety of media between 27-413 gsm, allowing the branch to scan anything from papers to plastic cards efficiently and seamlessly. Different groups can also access the same file through ethernet connectivity, making the different departments more aligned and the workflow smoother.

“Thanks to Epson, we can provide our clients with efficient service and fulfill the Environmental Management Bureau’s goal of safeguarding the environment,” said Ma. Theresa Pangilinan, Head of Records Section, DENR-EMB San Fernando, Pampanga.

The digital revolution may have ushered in the age of the paperless office, but for many businesses in the Philippines, massive quantities of data are still generated in hard copy. Government bodies, like DENR-EMB, still create mountains of paper records through form-filling, reporting, accounts, book-keeping, and much more. It is clear then, that a digital archiving system that holds, protects and integrates documents in a central, secure location is an essential component of modern business practice.

To know more about Epson scanners, visit: <https://www.epson.com.ph/scanners>.

Uncollected

posted April 14, 2020 at 10:15 pm

by [Ey Acasio](#)



Sackloads of garbage are left uncollected along Salinas St. in Bacoor, Cavite as the Luzon-wide lockdown is extended until the end of April 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Amid ECQ, Angat Dam's dwindling reserve, Metro

April 15, 2020

TITLE: consumers reminded to conserve water

PAGE 1/ 1/2

DATE

Amid ECQ, Angat Dam's dwindling reserve, Metro consumers reminded to conserve water

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

-April 14, 2020



In Photo: Photo from the Wikimedia Commons shows the Angat Dam viewed from the San Lorenzo hilltop in Norzagaray, Bulacan. AS water at the Angat Dam continues to fall below its normal operating level, the Climate Change Commission (CCC) appealed to water consumers in the National Capital Region (NCR) and nearby towns in Rizal and Cavite provinces to conserve water throughout the dry season.

The Angat Dam, which is part of the Angat-Ipo-La Mesa water system, supplies about 97 percent of raw water for some 19 million water consumers in the NCR and other water consumers in the Greater Manila Area.

In a news statement issued on Tuesday, the CCC reiterated the implementation of Administrative Order 24 issued by the President mandating all government agencies, government-owned and -controlled corporations (GOCCs), and state universities and colleges (SUCs) to strictly implement water conservation measures.

As of 8 a.m. of April 14, 2020, the water level in the Angat Dam is at 192.95 meters, which is 17 meters lower than its normal operating level of 210 meters. This may eventually compel the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) to cut water supply application in Metro Manila.

To prevent this, the CCC encourages the public to avoid unnecessary and excessive use of water, especially now that there is a greater household demand due to the imposed enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) to arrest the spread of the novel coronavirus disease (Covid-19).

Amid ECQ, Angat Dam's dwindling reserve, Metro

April 15, 2020

TITLE: consumers reminded to conserve water

PAGE 1/ 2/2

DATE

The CCC explained that the inadequate and intermittent water supply in Metro Manila and in other parts of the country could have massive impacts on different sectors, especially in agriculture and health. While the country is still grappling with a pandemic, the CCC said that we must be prudent and wise in consuming our limited water resources.

The CCC mentioned that water security is among the seven thematic priorities of the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP). Access to safe water and proper sanitation are necessary to achieve climate resilience and sustainable development.

Among the measures that individuals could do to observe responsible water utilization and conservation in their homes are the following:

Check water pipelines and report leaks and illegal connections regularly;

Recycle water by using a basin while rinsing dishes, fruits, vegetables, and other food products and using the water to flush toilets;

Cut down your shower time by a minute or two;

Turn off the faucet while brushing your teeth and washing your hands; and

Install rainwater catchment.

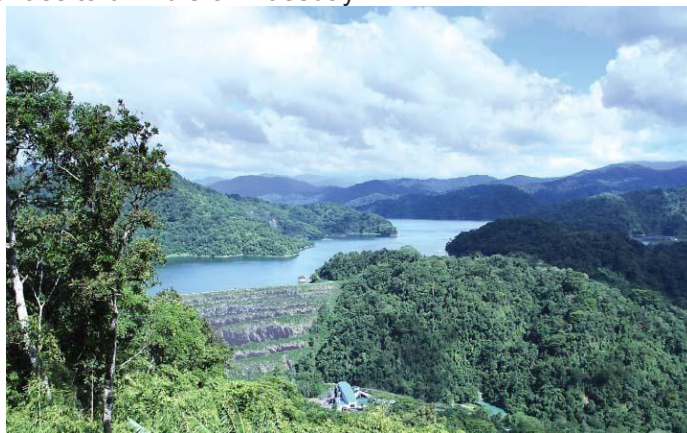
According to the CCC, water scarcity is a growing threat the country must confront squarely and address immediately in the "new normal."

Angat Dam's water level continues to dwindle, public urged to conserve

Updated April 14, 2020, 12:06 PM

By Ellalyn de Vera-Ruiz

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) has urged the public to conserve water throughout the dry season as the Angat Dam's water level continues to dwindle on Tuesday.



Angat Dam in Bulacan (Freddie Velez/ MANILA BULLETIN)

The water level in Angat Dam was down to 192.95 meters on Tuesday from 193.15 meters last Monday. The reservoir is part of the Angat-Ipo-La Mesa water system that supplies about 90 percent of water requirements in Metro Manila and nearby areas.

CCC reiterated the implementation of Administrative Order No. 24 issued by the President, which mandates all government agencies, government-owned and controlled corporations, and state universities and colleges to strictly implement water conservation measures.

Last March 12, water allocation for domestic use sourced from Angat Dam was increased to 46 cubic meters per second or around 4,000 million liters per day to undertake preventive measures against the coronavirus disease. Angat Dam's water level has declined by almost 8 meters since then.

To prevent the potential further decrease of water supply allocation in Metro Manila and nearby regions, the CCC encouraged consumers to avoid unnecessary and excessive use of water, especially now that there is a greater household demand.

It warned that the inadequate and intermittent water supply in Metro Manila and in other parts of the country could have massive impacts on different sectors, especially in agriculture and health.

While the country is still grappling with a pandemic, the CCC said that everyone must be prudent and wise in consuming the limited water resources.

The CCC cited that water security is among the seven thematic priorities of the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP), emphasizing that access to safe water and proper sanitation are necessary to achieve climate resilience and sustainable development.

Among the measures that individuals could do to observe responsible water utilization and conservation in their homes include checking water pipelines and reporting leaks and illegal connections regularly; recycling water by using a basin while rinsing dishes, fruits, vegetables, and other food products and using the water to flush toilets; cutting down shower time by a minute or two; turning off the faucet while brushing your teeth and washing your hands; and installing rainwater catchment.

"The increasing demand for water is exceeding available supply. While individual contributions are vital, the government is pursuing long-term solutions to provide access to safe and reliable drinking water sources to people," the CCC said.

"At the community level or in every city or municipality, importance must be given to programs on water safety and availability measures, strengthening water systems and capacities, and improving water, sanitation, and hygiene for all," it added.

Angat water level continues to drop

April 14, 2020 | Filed under: [News, News Roundup](#) | Posted by: [Tempo Desk](#)

BY ELLALYN RUIZ



ANGAT Dam

THE Climate Change Commission has urged the public to conserve water throughout the dry season as the water level of Angat Dam continues to dwindle.

The water level in Angat Dam was down to 192.95 meters yesterday from 193.15 meters last Monday. The reservoir is part of the Angat-Ipo-La Mesa water system that supplies about 90 percent of water requirements in Metro Manila and nearby areas.

CCC reiterated the implementation of Administrative Order No. 24 issued by President Duterte which mandates all government agencies, government-owned and -controlled corporations, and state universities and colleges to strictly implement water conservation measures.

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Source: http://tempo.com.ph/2020/04/14/ang-at-water-level-continues-to-drop/?fbclid=IwAR13_WtYukfVeM_BEmUxQm3lV7WEkN1AuvPTV346aEzz8HvvtuMxG4wpeM

Lebel ng mga dam sa Luzon bumaba

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Apr 14 2020 05:06 PM

MAYNILA — Kahit na nakaranas ng mahinang pag-ulan sa ilang lugar, hindi ito nakatulong sa mga dam sa Luzon dahil patuloy na bumababa ang water level nito.

Batay sa tala ng PAGASA-Hydrometeorology Division, ang Angat dam na may normal high water level na 212 meters ay nasa 192.95 meters lang ang lebel ngayong Martes mula sa 193.15 meters noong Lunes.

Angat dam ang pangunahing pinagkukuhanan ng tubig ng Maynilad at Manila Water, na nagseserbisyo sa mga kabahayan at establisimyento sa Metro Manila at karatig-lalawigan.

Ang Ipo dam naman na may normal high water level na 101 meters, nabawasan din ang antas sa 100.40 meters mula sa 100.49 meters noong nakaraang araw.

Ang La Mesa dam naman na may normal high water level na 80.15 meters ay nabawasan din ang water level na nasa 77.09 meters nitong Martes mula sa 77.10 meters noong Lunes.

Bumaba rin ang water level ng Ambuklao dam sa 746.11 meters ngayong Martes mula sa normal high water level nito na 752 meters.

Ang San Roque dam na may normal high water level na 280 meters ay bumaba rin ang lebel sa 245.10 meters nitong Martes.

Ang Pantabangan dam na may normal high water level 221 meter, nasa 185.95 meters lang ang antas ngayong araw.

Noong Marso 20 ay inanunsiyo ng PAGASA ang opisyal na pagsisimula ng dry season sa bansa.

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

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

These Rizal windmills are now visible in Pasay City as
TITLE: air quality improves amid COVID-19 quarantine

PAGE 1/ 1/2

April 15, 2020
DATE

These Rizal windmills are now visible in Pasay City as air quality improves amid COVID-19 quarantine

By Jeline Malasig

- April 14, 2020 - 9:01 PM



A view of the Pililla windmills in Rizal province as seen from Pasay City. (Photo by Samuel Andre Mcdonald via News5 Facebook)

Windmills from **Pililla, Rizal** could be clearly seen from a vantage point in **Pasay City** as a result of a much-improved air quality amid the **enhanced community quarantine** in Luzon.

Photographer **Samuel Andre Mcdonald** shared that he was able to take a photo of the windmills in the **Pililla Wind Farm** in Rizal province despite being more than 50 kilometers [away](#) from the area.

“I never thought or imagined this simple photo is gonna go viral. Just took the photo and posted it on FB (Facebook),” he wrote as he shared a cropped version of his photo that was featured on [News5’s](#) Facebook page.

Mcdonald’s original photo featured the Pililla windmills taken with his DSLR camera and lens while he was in [Pasay](#), particularly near the old building of the foreign affairs department and the **Cuneta Astrodome**.

The cropped version featured a closer look at the windmills which eventually caught the Filipinos’ attention.

Mcdonald said that he only thought of taking the photo when he went to their rooftop and noticed with his “naked eye” the windmills on a distance.

“Actually, just took the shot nung napansin ko (with) my naked eye ‘yung windmills. Lagi ako sa rooftop, now ko lang napansin at a glance. So just took the shoot,” he [shared](#).

Mcdonald’s photo impressed Filipinos who expressed their admiration in the comments section of his post.

TITLE: These Rizal windmills are now visible in Pasay City as
air quality improves amid COVID-19 quarantine

PAGE 1/ 2/2

April 15, 2020
DATE

“Sarap talaga pagmasdan,” a [Facebook user](#) wrote.

“Galing mo kuya!” another [online user](#) said with clapping emojis.

“Congrats! Rare shot ‘yan,” wrote another [Filipino](#).

Photos of similar nature have also appeared on Filipinos’ social media feeds and on digital media outlets ever since Luzon was placed under enhanced community quarantine.

Others noted that the mountain range of [Sierra Madre](#), the “backbone” of the Luzon island, could also be clearly seen from Ortigas in **Pasig City**.

Locals from [Bataan](#) province, which is across the other end of **Manila Bay**, also reported that **Metro Manila**’s skyline could be clearly seen from their vantage point.

Air quality over the metro has improved as an effect of the drastic reduction of vehicles plying the road while Filipinos observe strict home quarantine in light of the novel coronavirus pandemic.

Mass public transportation has also been banned, further reducing carbon dioxide emissions from vehicles.

The **Environmental Management Bureau** of DENR [confirmed](#) that air quality over urban communities like the cities of **Marikina, San Juan, Manila, Taguig** and **Quezon** improved compared to its levels pre-quarantine.

AQI is defined by IQAir as a “system for translating sometimes confusing or unintuitive pollutant concentration measurements, into one easy-to-understand scale to clearly represent the health risk posed by ambient air pollution.”

Pandemic not affecting China's strategy in West PH Sea – U.S. analyst

Expanding control over the strategic waterway is so much a part of Beijing's regular policy that the coronavirus pandemic does not appear to have hampered or boosted it, says Asia maritime expert Greg Poling

JC Gotinga

Published 12:50 PM, April 14, 2020

Updated 1:00 PM, April 14, 2020



DAMAGED BOAT. A fisherman walks on the shore near the fishing boat Gem-Ver on the coast of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, in June 2019. Photo by LeAnne Jazul/Rappler

MANILA, Philippines – Opening new research units and harassing fishermen in the South China Sea are hardly new tactics by Beijing seeking to tighten its grip on the strategic waterway, and the [coronavirus pandemic](#) has neither helped nor distracted it from doing so, an American geopolitical analyst told reporters on Tuesday, April 14.

Ramping up presence and control in the South China Sea, which includes the West Philippine Sea, is so much a part of China's regular programming that it continues even as the Chinese government grapples with the pandemic, said [Greg Poling](#), director of the Asia Maritime Transparency Initiative of the Washington-based Center for Strategic and International Studies.

Poling spoke in an online forum hosted by the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines in Manila.

He noted that China's work of reclaiming and building installations in the South China Sea is so well-advanced that it needs no pandemic or any other pressing global concern to ease attention away from these activities – they're pretty much done.

"Our data suggests that there's nothing different today that China wasn't doing 6 months ago, and presumably China won't be doing 6 months from now," Poling said.

"Beijing has a long-term intent to establish de facto control over all the sea and the airspace and the seabed within the South China Sea. It has been steadily increasing its presence, both Navy, Coast Guard, and the maritime militia, and steadily increasing the harassment of Southeast Asian oil and gas operations, fishing operations etcetera," he added.

The South China Sea grabbed public attention last week when a Chinese coast guard ship [harassed and rammed](#) a Vietnamese fishing boat near the Paracel Islands, a clump of maritime features disputed by Vietnam and China, but not by the Philippines.

The disputes between the Philippines and China, and with several other claimant states, involve a swath of the Spratly Islands – the Kalayaan Island Group (KIG) – and Panatag or Scarborough Shoal near Zambales in northwestern Luzon.

An international arbitral award affirmed the Philippines' sovereign rights to these features and its exclusive economic zone – the West Philippine Sea – and debunked China's spurious 9-dash line claim.

In late March, Beijing announced [new research outposts](#) in Zamora or Subi Reef and Kagitingan or Fiery Cross Reef – among 7 maritime features it reclaimed and militarized starting 2015. Poling believes Beijing merely added new research units or personnel, and built no new physical structures.

On March 29, an Israel-based satellite imaging company reported spotting a [Chinese military transport plane](#) on Kagitingan Reef. ImageSat said it showed that China's military was "hardly affected" by the pandemic.

Events such as these are part of a broader, ongoing trend, but they've drawn more public attention and condemnation recently because people are surprised they've carried on despite the pandemic.

"Now I think people are more scandalized. They've assumed that amid a global pandemic, there would be a calming [of Chinese activities in the South China Sea], and that has not happened," Poling said.

'Luck will run out sooner or later'

With Chinese vessels becoming more aggressive towards other countries' boats and oil-and-gas extraction facilities in different parts of the South China Sea, the risk of even more violent encounters is increasing, too.

All that is part of Beijing's plan, Poling said.

"China's intent is to so overwhelm the region with its navy, its coast guard, its militia, its fishing fleets, that Southeast Asian governments decide there is no reasonable choice but surrender, that they should just take whatever deal Beijing is putting on the table and go home. Because it's increasingly going to be too risky, at least for civilian actors. It is already too risky for civilian oil and gas operators. It's increasingly too risky and dangerous for fishermen to go out there."

The Philippines and China have made preliminary steps on an agreement to explore and extract oil and natural gas from Recto or Reed Bank near Palawan. The deal so far uses [existing service contracts](#) with private companies that acknowledge Philippine sovereignty in the area. Filipino maritime law expert Antonio Carpio, a former Supreme Court judge, earlier said the deal is "safe" as long as it sticks with those service contracts.

Meanwhile, Chinese fishing trawlers functioning as militias have [maintained a constant presence](#) near Pag-asa or Thitu Island in the KIG – the largest Philippine-controlled feature with a civilian population of roughly 250. Poling believes this has hampered Philippine efforts to build and improve structures on Pag-asa, although Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana earlier denied that.

Similar Chinese vessels have harassed Philippine resupply missions to the BRP Sierra Madre, a grounded warship that has been serving as a military outpost on Ayungin or Second Thomas Shoal.

On June 9, 2019, a Chinese trawler rammed and sank the [Philippine fishing boat Gem-Ver](#) in Recto Bank, and left its 22 Filipino crew clinging to their boat's debris for their lives until Vietnamese fishermen came and rescued them.

Poling worries that the tepid reactions, if any, from the Philippine government and the international community to these incidents leave room for even worse encounters.

"What's also clear is that this status quo can't last.... Sooner or later, luck's going to run out. We're going to have dead mariners in our hands. And when there are bodies in the water, governments around the world are going to have to decide whether or not they want to speak up. I wish that we could get there before that happens, but it seems like that's the only thing that's going to wake everybody up," Poling said.

No 'flowery language' can stop China

Although the Philippines' Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) sent [a letter "expressing solidarity"](#) with Vietnam over the recent mishap with the Chinese coast guard, Poling said it was not strong enough to even tweet China.

"It doesn't call out China. It doesn't mention anything about who did the ramming or what Beijing should do about it. It just says, we hope everybody calms down and comes back to the table," he said.

"And it couches it in an awful lot of flowery language, which has become kind of standard for DFA these days, but it doesn't say much behind that flowery language. It certainly doesn't suggest to me that [Foreign] Secretary [Teodoro] Locsin, much less the Palace, is suddenly prepared to speak out more forcefully," Poling added.

Besides, it would take a lot more than even the strongest condemnation from the Philippines to make China desist from taking over the West Philippine Sea, and the entire South China Sea.

"The only thing that could change that would be a concerted multilateral effort led by Southeast Asian claimants with backing by the US and Australia and others, to name and shame Beijing, to impose some kind of diplomatic and economic cost to start undermining China's larger global effort to be seen as a regional leader, or as a global leader," Poling said.

"Because if China is seen as a bully in some neighborhood, nobody is going to want to sign up to the idea that China is going to help set rules internationally," he added.

As for the Philippines and its sovereign rights in the West Philippine Sea now severely undermined by China, Poling expects President Rodrigo Duterte to maintain his administration's non-confrontational tack with Beijing, which means not much will change for Filipino fishermen and mariners who have now largely been edged out by Chinese vessels.

The only thing that could possibly pressure Duterte to be tougher on China, Poling said, would be an incident worse than Gem-Ver, which is bound to happen with China's unbridled vessels out at sea. –

Rappler.com

Source: <https://www.rappler.com/nation/257875-analyst-says-pandemic-not-affecting-china-strategy-west-philippine-sea>

Mga barko ng China tuloy ang pagpapatrolya sa South China Sea

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Apr 14 2020 09:37 PM



Habang aligaga ang mundo sa pagharap sa banta ng coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, isiniwalat ng isang eksperto na tuloy pa rin sa pagpapatrolya ng mga barko ng Tsina sa South China Sea at nanggigipit sa mga mangingisda sa laot. Nagpa-Patrol, Willard Cheng. **TV Patrol, Martes, 14 Abril 2020**

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/video/news/04/14/20/mga-barko-ng-china-tuloy-ang-pagpapatrolya-sa-south-china-sea?fbclid=IwAR3QXnDvDcur8xGNYI9lqMHjlldAnQwy16Le2Vc7H1gRmPflAqE3RhL6g58>



PAG-ARALAN ANG COVID-19 PARA SA ATING KALIGTASAN

April 14, 2020 @ 1:43 PM 17 hours ago
Views: 104

NALULUNGKOT tayo nang labis sa pagdami ng namamatay nating kababayan sa loob at labas ng bansa sanhi ng pag-atake ng Corona Virus Disease-19.

Kamakalawa lumundag sa 50 ang namatay bagama't humigit-kumulang sa 20 bago at matapos ang nasabing araw ang nasasawi.

Habang tinitipa natin ito, mga Bro, may kabuuang 315 nang nasasawi sa buong bansa at kung idaragdag natin ang nasa Pinoy na namatay sa ibang bansa, bale meron na tayong 370 patay.

Kabilang sa mga namatay ang 21 doktor sa Pilipinas at ilang nurse sa Amerika at United Kingdom na kung tutuusin ay maalam sa pakikipaglaban sa sakit ngunit napuruhan pa rin sila.

MAGAGANDANG ALAMIN

Makatutulong nang husto kung patuloy nating alamin ang mga natutuklasang bagay ukol sa Covid-19.

Siyempre pa, alalahanin at huwag kalilimutan ang mga karaniwang sintomas o palatandaan ng sakit na ito upang tayo mismo sa loob ng ating mga pamilya ay makakilos nang tama...kung isangguni sa health center o doktor ang kapamilya natin.

Ubo, lagnat, pamamaos, bahing, sipon, diarrhea, pananakit ng tiyan, hirap sa paghinga, pagkawala ng lasa sa pagkain at pagkawala ng pang-amoy ang karaniwang mga sintomas.

Maaaring magkaroon ng mga sintomas na ito dahil sa tinatawag na local transmission o pagdating sa pamilya at komunidad natin ng mga taga-ibang lugar o abroad kaya.

Kung dikit-dikit at nagkikiskisan tayo, madali tayong mahawa mula sa mga droplet o patak ng laway, luha, uhog at iba pang likido na nanggagaling sa isang positibo sa sakit.

Kaya namang mahalagang-mahalaga ang social distancing o paglalayo-layo natin sa isa't isa kahit saan.

Alam ba ninyo, umaabot pala ang virus sa layong 13 piye o feet 'pag tinangay ng hangin ito kaya mahahawa ang dinadapuan nito?

Hindi lang sa ubo at bahing lumalabas ang virus sa atin kundi sa simpleng pakikipag-usap, kaya naman labis na kailangang ang anomang pantakip ng bunganga at ilong.

NERVOUS SYSTEM, UTAK INAATAKE

Hindi lang sa baga natin pumapasok ang Covid-19 sa pamamagitan ng ilong, bunganga at mata.

Pumapasok din at sinisira nito maging ang immune system natin.

Kabilang sa mga bumubuo ng immune system ang utak, gulugod, mga cell at mga litid at ugat na konektado sa utak at gulugod.

Kapag tinamaan ang nervous system, nariryan na ang pagiging pagkalimutin at kawalan ng katinuang makausap ang isang tao, hirap sa paghinga, kasama na ang panghihina ng iba't ibang parte ng katawan na para siyang may alzheimer's disease.

Kasama rin sa nervous system ang mga parte ng katawan na tonsil, balat, bituka, utak ng buto, lugar ng kulani gaya ng leeg, singit, kili-kili at iba pa, pali o spleen at balat sa loob ng ilong, lalamunan at ari.

Kapag natalo ng Covid-19 ang nervous system natin na gumagawa ng mga bagay at paraan na malabanan ang virus o bakteryang, diyan na tayo manghihina at magkakasakit na posibleng ikamatay natin.

MAGANDANG ALAMIN PA

Malaki ang pag-asa na malalabanan natin ang Covid-19 kung sasadyain nating alamin ang lahat na pupwede nating alamin gaya ng kung paano tayo mahawa at hindi makahawa.

Ang isang good news lagi, higit na mas marami ang mild o mahinang Covid-19 kaya mas marami ang nakarerekober o gumagaling.

At kahit seryoso o kritikal ang ating kalagayan, gagaling at gagaling din tayo kung hindi pa huli ang lahat.

'Yung bang === kung maging maagap tayo sa pakikipag-giyera sa sakit.

Una, pangalawa at pangatlo sa idiniriin sa ating ng mga awtoridad ang stay at home, pagsusuot ng maskara at social distancing sa mga pampublikong lugar at kung maaari sa loob mismo ng ating mga tahanan para hindi tayo mahawa at makahawa.

Nariryan na rin ang mga natutuklasang gamot na epektibo laban sa Covid-19 gaya ng dati nang mga gamot laban sa human immuno virus, malaria at bakteria.

Silang mga doktor na ang magsasabi kung ano-anong tatak ang mga ito dahil kailangan ang reseta nila.

Nariryan din ang convalescent plasma therapy o pagsasalin ng dugo mula sa mga gumaling na sa Covid-19 at matagal na itong ginagawa sa ibang mga sakit.

Hindi natin kailangang hintayin na mabuo ng mga siyentista ang saktong mga gamot bago tayo kumilos laban sa salot na sakit.

Kung may alam tayo lahat kahit man lang sa mga nabanggit natin sa itaas at isagawa o isabuhay natin ang mga ito, walang duda na maliligtas tayo at kada susunod na paggising natin mula sa pagkaidlip o pagkatulog, makapagpapasalamat tayo sa Diyos at sa isa't isa na buhay pa rin tayo hindi lang para sa sarili at pamilya kundi para na rin sa iba.

Duterte: ASEAN must remain open for trade as
TITLE: coronavirus pandemic persists

PAGE 1/ 1/2

April 15, 2020
DATE

Duterte: ASEAN must remain open for trade as coronavirus pandemic persists

Arianne Merez, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Apr 14 2020 02:29 PM



President Rodrigo Duterte gives his intervention as he joins other leaders from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member countries during the special ASEAN Summit on COVID-19 video conference at the Malago Clubhouse in Malacañang on April 14, 2020. *Presidential Photo*

MANILA - Trade in Southeast Asia should remain open, President Rodrigo Duterte said Tuesday as the region's leaders discussed how to combat the coronavirus pandemic in a special video conference.

Duterte said trade among member countries of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) should be maintained despite the pandemic as no country can survive on its own.

"ASEAN must remain open for trade. Crisis or no crisis, as no country can stand alone," the President said in his intervention during the video conference.

"Let us, therefore, ensure the supply chain connectivity and the smooth flow of goods within our region," he added.

Among items that should be prioritized for trade within Southeast Asia are medical gear and medicine needed to address the pandemic, Duterte said.

"We face a shortage of vital medicines and medical equipment and supplies. We need to boost production and facilitate intra-ASEAN trade of these life-saving necessities," he said.

"Retreating from the regional and global connections cannot be the answer. To effectively overcome the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic, ASEAN must collaborate and coordinate within our region and beyond," he said.

Duterte also conveyed the Philippines gratitude to neighboring countries that have lent a hand in the country's pandemic response, particularly Brunei, and Singapore.

The Philippines has the most number of confirmed COVID-19 cases in Southeast Asia as of Monday, data from the ABS-CBN Data Analytics team showed.

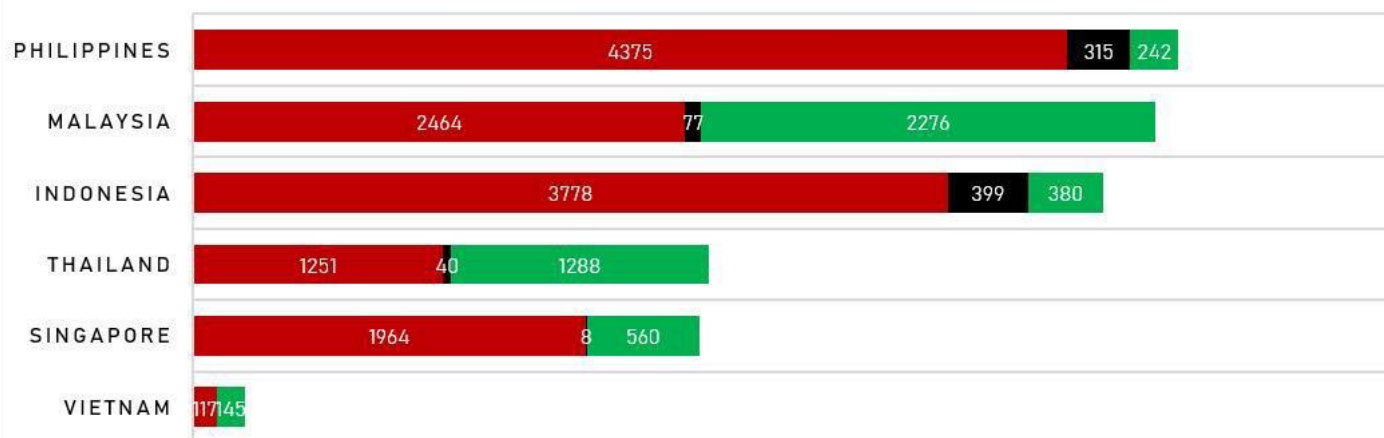
Duterte: ASEAN must remain open for trade as
coronavirus pandemic persists

PAGE 1/ 2/2

April 15, 2020
DATE

CONFIRMED COVID-19 CASES

■ Active Cases ■ Deaths ■ Recoveries



The country has recorded 4,932 confirmed COVID-19 cases as of Monday. Of that number, 242 have recovered and 315 have died.

Vietnam earlier said ASEAN's 36th summit was rescheduled from April to the end of June due to worries about the spread of COVID-19.

-with a report from Reuters

Source: https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/04/14/20/duterte-asean-must-remain-open-for-trade-as-coronavirus-pandemic-persists?fbclid=IwARiK5E8fh34oM_OzofwcPTgDWenCx6A-ITJwsmkayrPwUkaO2SgY7iGpHm4

Several senators favor extending community quarantine after April 30

Published April 14, 2020 5:43pm
By DONA MAGSINO, GMA News

After President Rodrigo Duterte said that he would lift the Luzon-wide enhanced community quarantine once the "antibody medicine" developed by a major pharmaceutical company becomes available in the market, several senators on Tuesday weighed in on the possibility of further extending the ECQ beyond April 30.

"I would rather play the conservative card and side with a continuing lockdown if no clear evidence of a solution to the virus is in sight," Senate President Vicente Sotto III said in a message to reporters.

Meanwhile, Senator Imee Marcos, who chairs the Senate Committee on Economic Affairs, suggested a modified community quarantine after April 30.

"I suspect only a partial easing may be allowed at the end of the month, doctors warning of a second wave of infection has occurred in some countries, sometimes more virulent than first infections," Marcos said in her message.

"Hence, we should expect only critical businesses will be allowed to fully open—medical production, importation, and distribution, food chain sectors, essential transport, communication, general services, and maintenance," she added.

Moreover, Marcos suggested that local government leaders of northern Luzon and other island provinces that were free from COVID-19 should be given more discretion in their implementation of the enhanced community quarantine.

"While the exponential increase of infection in NCR may require close government regulation, the less-afflicted provinces should be allowed a measure of self-determination, so that they may even provide NCR's food, personnel, and other requirements," Marcos said.

On Tuesday, Duterte claimed that a major pharmaceutical company was [ready to roll out an "antibody medicine" for COVID-19](#).

"Mayroon nang medisina, antibody, ang isang giant pharmaceutical pero hindi galing sa tao. Sabi by May, they would start to market it," Duterte said.

However, he said the Philippines was "on the last ladder."

"Ang problema sabi nga, we are on the last ladder. Ang mauna niyan 'yung mga mayayaman," Duterte said.

"Kung meron na 'yan tapos makita ko na ginagamit na ng tao, ili-lift ko [ang quarantine]. Tatal kung magkasakit kayo may antibodies naman tayo mabili," he added.

An enhanced community quarantine is in effect over the Luzon region and other affected areas until April 30. — **DVM, GMA News**

Source: https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/733970/several-senators-favor-extending-community-quarantine-after-april-30/story/?utm_source=GMAnews&utm_medium=Facebook&fbclid=IwARiMN94kj5lwBPsRnOulEnAc bXTm_JQpfNgAZ77XOqzfvUfCF3Chma5ICiY

News5 12 hrs · 🌐

Naglabas ng analysis at recommendation ang UP COVID-19 Pandemic Response Team kung paano ipatutupad ang community quarantine matapos ang April 30 para makatulong sa decision-making.

UP Resilience Institute


The Enhanced Community Quarantine helped contain the spread of COVID-19

If you stayed at home during the Enhanced Community Quarantine, you contributed to its relative success, along with other interventions to contain the spread of COVID-19.

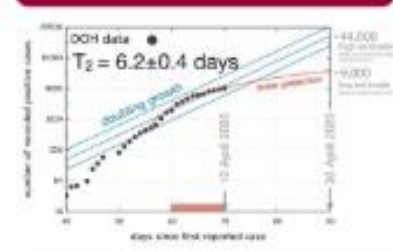
We slowed down the spread of the virus.

What took 5 days for the total number of cases to double now takes about 8 days to happen.

70,000 cases of disease (observed 10,000-30,000 cases and over of total)



Time-series analysis shows it now takes a little longer for the number of confirmed cases to double in number.



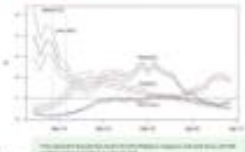
Legend: **OCM data** (black dots), **Actual growth** (red line), **Doubling growth** (blue line)

$T_2 = 6.2 \pm 0.4$ days

COVID-19 Fatality Rate


Research by DepEd and partners, including UP, is used to help in the program's implementation.

Based on data available until April 10, 2020, the spread of confirmed cases today (rate of 1.3%) and a reproduction number of 0.92, which means the ECQ has been effective.




Quantifying the effectiveness of the ECQ, however, is highly dependent on efforts to discovering new cases.

In the case of cases, consistent increased testing coupled with contact tracing facilitates detection and management of the system, lowering the reproduction number of COVID-19.



Planned restriction on the movement of goods and services over a large area (i.e., regions-wide or nationally-wide) can necessarily analyze local economies.

Successful as it may seem, an ECQ covering a wide area may not be sustainable over the long run.



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Source: https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?id=163550757135020&story_fbid=1957772544379490

Interior Department to LGUs: Identify crematoriums, cemeteries for COVID-19 related deaths

By [Gerg Cahiles, CNN Philippines](#)

Published Apr 14, 2020 5:14:32 PM



Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, April 14) — The Interior Department has ordered local government units (LGU) to have designated crematoriums to accommodate the remains of COVID-19 related cases.

Interior Undersecretary Jonathan Malaya said this is to prevent problems concerning the management of unclaimed remains in hospitals like what happened at the East Avenue Medical Center in Quezon City last week.

Malaya reiterated that the remains must be cremated within 12 hours after the patient's death except for Muslims who need to be buried based on their religious belief.

"Na-identify na natin lahat ng Muslim cemeteries in Luzon. And we're giving a heads up to all the Mayors that they cannot deny the burial of a Muslim within 12 hours. Otherwise, we will issue a show-cause order against them gaya ng ginawa namin sa Montalban," Malaya told CNN Philippines.

For LGUs without a crematorium in their respective areas, the undersecretary said a cemetery must be designated where the remains will be buried.

"Preferred ang cremation pero kung wala naman crematorium, how can we apply that? So it will be the usual standard burial. But should be within 12 hours and should be in sealed cadaver bags," Malaya clarified.

Malaya added the local government must shoulder the cremation expenses if the victim is from a poor family.

The LGUs have the power to revoke the license to operate crematoriums and cemeteries should they refuse to accommodate those whose death is related to the new coronavirus.

And they have also the authority to impose price ceilings.

"Ang suggestion namin sa LGUs especially dito sa Metro Manila kasi marami tayong COVID-19 positive patients dito, our suggestion is marami na silang kausap na crematorium, hindi lang isa. Wag silang mag-rely sa sarili nilang crematorium," Malaya said.

"They should talk to several para walang backlog. Kasi they need to do the cremation as fast as possible," he added.

Interior Department to LGUs: Identify crematoriums,
cemeteries for COVID-19 related deaths

PAGE 1/ 2/2

April 15, 2020
DATE

Malaya said the local government must take care of all those who died within their area of jurisdiction, even if the patient was a resident of another city or municipality.

"Kahit hindi mo residente pa yan, for example, taga Quezon City unfortunately namatay sa ospital sa Parañaque or ospital ng Muntinlupa, bahala na si Muntinlupa diyan. Ganon talaga yun, hindi tayo pwedeng maging masyadong bureaucratic about it," the undersecretary clarified.

Local government action

In Valenzuela City, Mayor Rex Gatchalian told CNN Philippines that since the beginning of the enhanced community quarantine, they already signed a memorandum of agreement with a crematorium in the city to handle the remains of COVID-19 related cases.

Gatchalian said the crematorium management even agreed to lower the price of the cremation services provided that the local government supplies the protective gear and training for the staff.

"We struck a deal with the Ever Memorial wherein they are going process two cremations a day, sometimes three depending on the load. In return, they give us a discount at cost na yun, P10,000 which the city will shoulder. Dati P22,000," the Mayor said.

But Gatchalian admitted that during the Holy Week, they had a backlog in the cremation because the facility was closed for a few days.

The Mayor said that they are now catching up.

"Wala na kaming problema. By tomorrow, tapos na kami sa backlog namin," Gatchalian clarified.

San Juan City Mayor Francis Zamora said the city has no issue on remains piling up in hospitals and other cremation-related issues.

Zamora said they have accredited funeral service companies for the cremation of the remains.

"San Juan gives free cremation for all deceased San Juaneños including of course those who have died due to COVID-19. They just have to coordinate with the Mayor's office," Zamora said in a text message.

On Monday, the Quezon City Council passed a resolution penalizing funeral parlors and crematoriums that will refuse to accommodate remains of COVID-19 related cases.

There is a local government operated crematorium in Quezon City and at least three privately operated ones.

Nationwide lockdown ruled out

posted April 15, 2020 at 01:35 am

by **Jimbo Owen B. Gulle and Vito Barcelo, Macon Ramos-Araneta, Othel V. Campos**

The government on Tuesday ruled out the expansion of the Luzon-wide lockdown to the entire country in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The implementation of community quarantines in Mindanao and the Visayas has been good. There’s no possibility that we will lock down the entire Mindanao or the whole of the Visayas,” COVID-19 reponse chief implementer Carlito Galvez Jr. told radio dzMM.

Galvez’s assurance came as experts at the University of the Philippines warned that while the Luzon-wide lockdown has achieved “relative success,” there could still be outbreaks in Metro Manila and 15 provinces.

The Philippines currently has the most number of COVID-19 cases in Southeast Asia with 5,223 as of Tuesday, the study by the UP COVID-19 Pandemic Response Team said.

“Based on these trends, one can estimate about 9,000 to 44,000 possible cases reported by the end of April 2020,” the report said.

While the country looks to restarting the economy, the government should also prepare for outbreaks in 13 areas in Luzon, two provinces in the Visayas and one in Mindanao, the UP study said.

Based on the group’s mathematical model, these provinces registered a probability of more than 90 percent that they would experience a COVID-19 outbreak, said Dr. Teodoro Herbosa, UP executive vice president and co-leader of the study group, in an interview with ABS-CBN News.

Aside from Metro Manila, the study identified the provinces as: Aklan, Bataan, Batangas, Benguet, Bulacan, Cavite, Cebu, Davao Del Sur, Laguna, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Pangasinan, Quezon, Rizal, and Tarlac.

One option, the UP group said, is to continue the enhanced community quarantine in high-risk areas, and implement stricter measures in those with an even higher probability of an outbreak.

Others with “80 to less than 90-percent probability” of an outbreak may be covered by a less stringent “general community quarantine.”

“Successful as it may seem, an Enhanced Community Quarantine covering a wide area may not be sustainable over the long run,” the UP study said.

“Our best recourse after April 30 is to implement graduated activation of Enhanced Community Quarantine depending on the level of risk in certain areas at a given time.”

On Tuesday, the President said he would lift the ECQ over Luzon only if a vaccine, antibody or medicine to cure COVID-19 is available to Filipinos.

In a televised address during a meeting with select Cabinet members, President Rodrigo Duterte insisted that Filipinos stay at home during the quarantine because the country would still need to endure two to three waves of the epidemic before they would see the end of the lockdown entering its fifth week.

“There’s no end in sight. When will it end, we have no clue. And our numbers are increasing,” the President said while reading the latest tally of COVID-19 infections.

“At this time, we need to treat the sick, we need to feed our people,” he said, as he admonished hospitals for turning away potential COVID-19 patients.

His remarks were made on the eve of government-led mass testing for coronavirus infections, which official Department of Health numbers put at just under 5,000 on Monday.

The President also discussed the utility of the National ID system to identify those who would need government aid, the distribution of aid to 18 million families most affected by the quarantine, observing social distancing, the United States “being part of the problem,” and the temporary travel ban on medical professionals and frontline workers from leaving the country.

In related developments during the same meeting:

- The Finance Department proposed a wage subsidy for employees of small businesses, as Undersecretary Karl Chua said 3.4 million workers are affected by quarantine measures.
- Presidential Adviser for Entrepreneurship Joey Concepcion said the government needed to plan “on how to gradually shift towards reviving the economy” because if not, “many of our Filipino brothers will suffer.”
- Duterte ordered authorities manning checkpoints to let trucks and vehicles carrying food and essential goods from the provinces to pass unhampered to their destinations.
- The President told medical workers to hail police vehicles to take them home, especially late at night.

Duterte reiterated several points raised in his previous late-night addresses, including his warning on discriminating against health workers, for local government leaders to “not play around” with quarantine efforts, and for the Left and other critics to inform him “if you have a better way of dealing with the problem.”

Filipinos needed to brace for a longer lockdown, the President said, because the country was just in the first wave of the epidemic that has claimed over 115,000 lives worldwide, including at least 315 in the Philippines.

“This doesn’t end with those at the hospital, those being treated now, that’s just the first wave. This will have a second wave. While those hit [by the disease] are dying, the others that are being infected, they are the second wave. That’s why you should maintain the social distancing rule,” Duterte said.

The President promised that if a cure for the coronavirus was already “tested medically” and made available to the country, he would lift the ECQ, which he had extended to April 30 from an initial one-month lockdown that would have ended at midnight of April 12, Sunday.

In an interview with the ANC news channel, the country’s deputy social economic planning chief said the Philippines is looking for ways to restore the public’s confidence in the economy.

Under lockdown for a month and with 17 more days to go, some 60 percent of consumers polled by the National Economic and Development Authority said they would not buy durable goods in the next 12 months.

They are also foregoing travel, NEDA Undersecretary Rosemarie Edillon told ANC.

“We need to address the uncertainty. We need to build confidence in health systems capacity,” said Edillon.

The Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases on Tuesday said it is still studying on what measures it will take after the ECQ expires on April 30.

Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles said discussions were still ongoing, saying no decisions have yet been made.

Among these decisions is which industries will be allowed to reopen and who among the labor force could get back to work.

The government will also decide what to do with the public transportation system, which has been shut down during the lockdown.

In other developments:

Large manufacturing companies expect a gradual reopening of local businesses as the rest of the world moves toward that direction. Integrated Micro-Electronics Inc. Chief Executive Arthur Tan said the rest of the world is now operating or poised to restart their own economies. In an online forum by the Management Association of the Philippines, Tan called for more extensive testing so that

Senate President Vicente Sotto III said he would rather be safe than lift the lockdown before any solution to the virus is in sight. Reacting to the same issue, Senator Imee Marcos said she suspects only a partial easing may be allowed at the end of the month, citing warnings about a second wave of infection that occurred in other countries.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III inspected the Ninoy Aquino Stadium which has been designated as a quarantine facility for COVID-19 patients. To date, some 112-bed units have been installed.

Source: <https://manilastandard.net/news/national/321569/nationwide-lockdown-ruled-out.html>

Task force chief warns public: ‘Neglect of COVID-19 measures could lead to more deaths’

Updated April 14, 2020, 11:27 PM

By *Martin Sadongdong*

Failure to observe the strict implementation of enhanced community quarantine (ECQ), social distancing, and other measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) could lead to more deaths, the pandemic response chief warned on Tuesday night.

National Task Force (NTF) COVID-19 chief implementer Secretary Carlito Galvez, Jr. urged local chief executives and concerned government agencies, such as the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA), Philippine National Police (PNP), and Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP), among others to further intensify the implementation of the lockdown as they have observed that some areas are not following orders.



National Task Force (NTF) Covid-19 chief implementer Secretary Carlito Galvez Jr. (Screenshot / RTVM / PCOO / FILE PHOTO / MANILA BULLETIN)

“Nananawagan po ako sa ating MMDA, mayors, barangay captains, at ang ating PNP at AFP na lalo pa po nating paigtingin ang pagpapatupad ng enhanced community quarantine. May mga nakita po kaming mga tahasang paglabag ng lockdown (We appeal to the MMDA, mayors, barangay captains, the PNP and AFP to intensify the enforcement of enhanced community quarantine. We have seen outright violations of the lockdown),” Galvez said in a virtual briefing at Camp Aguinaldo in Quezon City.

The chief cited the situation in the United States and some European countries where the daily death toll is pegged between 1,000 to 2,000.

“Huwag po tayong magpabaya dahil buhay ninyo at ng inyong pamilya ang nakataya. Nakita natin ang nangyari sa mga bansang hindi sumunod sa social distancing at lockdown. Libu-libo ang namamatay sa kanila araw-araw (Let us not take things for granted because it’s you and your family’s lives that are at stake. We have seen the situation in countries that did not follow social distancing and lockdown. Thousands are dying there everyday),” he said.

In the Philippines, there are 5,223 confirmed cases with 335 deaths and 295 recoveries as of 4 p.m. Tuesday, according to the Department of Health.

Earlier in the day, Galvez called out the local governments of Manila, Quezon City, and San Juan where select barangays have reportedly failed to follow ECQ and social distancing.

Meanwhile, Galvez commended the local governments of Baguio City, Valenzuela City, Davao and Caraga regions which have “improving situations” with increasing recovery rate and decreasing new confirmed cases.

He reiterated his appeal to the public to stay at home, observe proper hygiene, practice social distancing, and wear face masks.

Source: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/04/14/task-force-chief-warns-public-neglect-of-covid-19-measures-could-lead-to-more-deaths/>

NEDA: Philippine economy can bounce back

[Czerina Valencia](#) (The Philippine Star) - April 15, 2020 - 12:00am

The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) assured the public yesterday that measures will be in place to enable the economy to bounce back from the dual shock of the virus pandemic and the extended enhanced community quarantine.

Amid the extension of the Luzon-wide community quarantine that saw a significant stoppage of business activity and consumption, economic managers now see economic growth of between zero to minus one percent this year.

“Our economy and the government are prepared to make sure that the decline will not be severe and, if possible, the bounce back will be strong,” said NEDA Undersecretary for Policy and Planning Rosemarie Edillon in yesterday’s Laging Handa virtual briefing.

She noted that the country is now implementing first phase of the government response to the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 or COVID-19 by strengthening the capacity of the health sector and implementing aggressive social distancing measures the imposition of a quarantine, school closures, travel bans, and prohibition of public gatherings.

The second phase, focused on mitigation of adverse effect on the economic welfare of the public is now being implemented through the social amelioration program.

“They may not be affected by COVID-19 but they may go hungry; that’s what we are preventing,” Edillon said.

The last phase of the pandemic response will be centered on the resumption of a “new normal” of economic activity.

Edillon said that while it is still too soon to determine a period of normalization of economic activity after the lockdown, the government is already identifying various measures and policies to be implemented during the transition.

The transition plan will be guided by the responses gathered from the recently-conducted rapid survey for consumers and businesses.

“While we still do not know when we can transition, the government is prepared. We are now identifying policies and programs to ease the transition to a new normal,” said Edillon.

Redefining the new normal state of economic activity under Phase 3 of the government’s pandemic response includes recalibrating development plans and work programs to conform to present conditions.

NEDA has said it will begin its preparations for Phase 3 by conducting various scenario and foresight planning exercises involving multiple stakeholders, including experts and development partners.

As the country remains in the thick of the first and second phase of the response, Edillon urges the public to strictly follow the quarantine rules and try to stay fit to lessen the burden on the health system.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/business/2020/04/15/2007321/neda-philippine-economy-can-bounce-back>

Public demands closure of wildlife markets

posted April 13, 2020 at 06:40 pm

by [Manila Standard Lifestyle](#)

In light of the coronavirus disease pandemic, majority or over 90 percent of respondents surveyed in Southeast Asia and Hong Kong support a government-led closure of illegal and unregulated wildlife markets, according to a research for the World Wide Fund for Nature.



A vendor selling yak meat at a wet market in Beijing, China. AFP Photo

COVID-19 has brought the link between zoonotic diseases—those transmitted from animals to humans—and wildlife markets into sharp focus, as previous studies revealed that coronavirus originated in a wet market selling wildlife in Wuhan, China.

The survey conducted by Globescan in March among 5,000 participants from Hong Kong SAR, Japan, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam found that 82 percent of respondents are extremely or very worried about the outbreak, with 93 percent of respondents in Southeast Asia and Hong Kong supporting action by their governments to eliminate illegal and unregulated markets.

On Feb. 24, the Chinese government announced a comprehensive ban on the consumption of wild animals. WWF's research shows that citizens support similar action from other governments across the region.

“China has taken great steps prohibiting the hunting, trade, transport, and eating of wild animals, and Vietnam is working on similar directives,” said Christy Williams, regional director of WWF's Asia Pacific program.

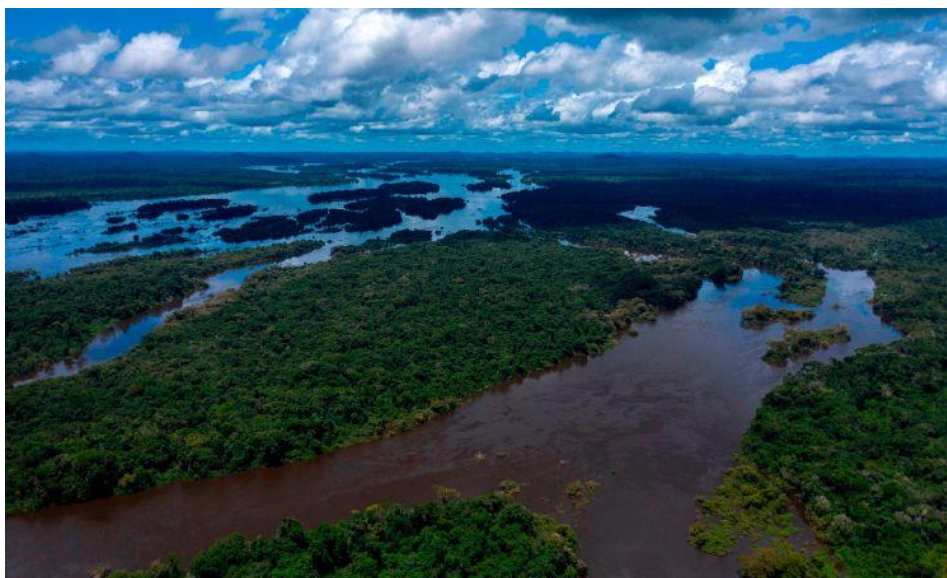
Williams added, “Other Asian governments must follow by closing their high-risk wildlife markets and ending this trade once and for all to save lives and help prevent a repeat of the social and economic disruption we are experiencing around the globe today.”

The World Health Organization has reported that the current COVID-19 pandemic, along with at least 61 percent of all human pathogens, are zoonotic in origin—wildlife trade is an aggravating risk in the spread of zoonoses. Other recent epidemics, including SARS, MERS, and Ebola, have also all been traced back to viruses that spread from animals to people.

Coronavirus fears grow for Brazil's indigenous groups

By Shasta Darlington, Guilherme Venaglia and Luciene Kaxinawa, CNN

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(CNN) -- Fears are growing that the coronavirus could ravage Brazil's indigenous communities, following the death of a teenage boy in the Amazon region.

A member of the Yanomami people, the 15-year-old boy from the village of Rehebe in northern Brazil had been studying in a nearby town, before returning to his ancestral village where he began to feel symptoms and was transferred to a hospital. He died on Friday from complications related to COVID-19, according to the Health Ministry.

"We have to be extremely careful with indigenous communities," Health Minister Luiz Henrique Mandetta said after the Yanomami boy first tested positive. "The government is concerned about indigenous health. We are providing helicopters to withdraw people and take them to more sophisticated health centers."

Some 800,000 indigenous people live in villages throughout Brazil. They may be particularly endangered by the pandemic, with some tribes never having had previous contact with the outside world, and others living far from healthcare facilities and without basic sanitation facilities.

The teenager was one of nine indigenous Brazilians to test positive for coronavirus. Three have died, according to the ministry's Special Secretariat of Indigenous Health, which only monitors indigenous people living in traditional villages or communities.

The Yanomami live in the rainforests of northern Brazil and southern Venezuela. Because they are largely isolated from the outside world, they are more vulnerable to even common viruses. There are an estimated 38,000 Yanomami today, according to the indigenous rights group Survival International.

The nonprofit Socio-Environmental Institute (ISA) has warned the virus could spread among the Yanomami through miners who had illegally entered indigenous territory.

"Today, without a doubt, the main vector for the spread of COVID-19 inside the Yanomami Indigenous Territory is the more than 20,000 illegal miners that go in and out of the territory without any control," ISA said in a statement on its website.

Indigenous rights activists warned that illegal mining and logging on indigenous lands, which have increased since Brazil's pro-development President Jair Bolsonaro was sworn in last year, now pose an even greater threat to remote communities in general and the Yanomami in particular.

The nearest hospital in the capital of Roraima state has only 20 hospital beds equipped to deal with COVID-19 patients, according to authorities.

In the neighboring state of Amazonas, more than 90 percent of ICU beds are already occupied and the incidence of coronavirus in relation to the population is the highest in Brazil at 19.1 per 100,000 inhabitants, according to the Health Ministry. The number of confirmed cases in Brazil rose to 23,430 on Monday and deaths related to COVID-19 reached 1,328.

The mayor of Manaus, the riverside capital of Amazonas and the biggest city in the region, told CNN that the health system was already collapsing. "There aren't enough ICUs to meet demand," he said. "I would say that the private options are headed towards exhaustion and the public part has collapsed."

Over the weekend, Mandetta, the health minister, said authorities were building a field hospital in Manaus to attend to the many indigenous communities.

"The emerging spread of COVID-19 could have a devastating effect on indigenous peoples, particularly those living in voluntary isolation, due to their vulnerable immune systems, lack of access to healthcare facilities, and lack of potable water and sanitation infrastructure in villages," the watchdog group Amazon Watch warned even before the first case of coronavirus in Brazil's indigenous population was confirmed earlier this month.

The first indigenous person to test positive for COVID-19 was a 20-year-old woman of the Kokama people in Amazonas state. Many villages have responded to the crisis by barring access to outsiders and encouraging villagers to avoid communal gatherings.

"Besides uncontacted tribes, the pandemic is particularly worrying for many other indigenous people given their communal ways of life which could encourage its spread within communities, and, in some cases, their geographical distance from hospitals," said Sarah Shenker, a campaigner for Survival International.

This story was first published on CNN.com "[Coronavirus fears grow for Brazil's indigenous groups](https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/4/14/Coronavirus-fears-grow-for-Brazil-s-indigenous-groups.html?fbclid=IwAR1ahWBc5w3U5OO_GdsISMSj36k69Lv_r7tGT6Gcx-r_3ozz7tVizakE_lk)."