

DENR to issue memo safeguarding garbage collectors

April 16, 2020

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) will issue a memorandum obliging local government units and private companies to protect their employees from COVID-19 after a garbage collector in Southern Luzon tested positive for the disease.

Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda admitted the agency is alarmed at the extent of vulnerability of the country's garbage collectors who are also considered frontline workers in the fight against COVID-19.

Amid the risks, transporters and collectors will be required to wear personal protective equipment (PPE) while on duty.

The DENR will also urge private companies to take responsibility for the medical expenses of their trash collectors should they test positive for the disease.

Meanwhile, trucks collecting wastes will undergo disinfection before and after usage. Hospitals without treatment, storage, and disposal facilities will also be forced to segregate their biodegradable, solid, and hazardous wastes before collection and hauling.

The department said it will take initiative to treat septic tanks in temporary quarantine facilities to ensure waterways of non-viral contamination. In cases of large amounts of wastewater, the DENR will setup mobile treatment plants.







Nagbigay ng rekomendasyon ang DENR sa DILG para sa waste management sa quarantine at healthcare facilities sa gitna ng #COVID19. Nagtalaga ng color-coding scheme sa garbage bags para masiguro ang tamang solid waste segregation. | via Shyla Francisco



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Hon. Eduardo M. Año
Secretary
Department of Interior and Local Government
DILG Bldg. cor. EDSA Quezon Avenue, Quezon City

Subject: Recommendations on the Management of Waste in Identified Quarantine and Healthcare Facilities Nationwide

Dear Secretary Año :

Relative to the Memorandum on Community Quarantine Over the Entire Luzon and Further Guidelines for the Management of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID – 19) issued by President Rodrigo Roa Duterte and cognizant of the DILG’s role in its enforcement and implementation, we would like to endorse herewith the DENR’s recommendations on the management of solid waste in the identified quarantine and healthcare facilities nationwide:

1. Ensure proper solid waste segregation particularly on food and other residual wastes by adopting the proper color-coding scheme for garbage bags.


Green	Biodegradable wastes
Black	Non-biodegradable wastes (residual waste)
Yellow	Medical and other Health Care wastes (M501)

However, medical and other health care wastes including used PPEs should be placed in the proper storage area designated for the purpose prior to collection by the authorized transporter for treatment.

2. Ensure regular collection of garbage by providing one garbage truck for biodegradable wastes and another garbage truck for non-biodegradable wastes that will collect wastes exclusively at the quarantine and healthcare facilities.
3. The garbage truck to be assigned should be provided with disinfecting agents in the appropriate concentration as recommended by the Department of Health. The waste collector should be fully equipped with the personal protective equipment such as gloves, face mask/shields, coveralls, etc. and must be properly apprised of decontamination protocols.
4. Prior to the collection, personnel-in-charge at the Quarantine or Health care facility shall disinfect the bags containing the non-biodegradable and biodegradable wastes.
5. Prior to loading of the collected garbage to the garbage truck, garbage should be disinfected again to ensure that all surfaces of the bag are covered.
6. At the garbage disposal area or sanitary landfill, the wastes should be again disinfected to ensure that the COVID-19 virus is eradicated.
7. No scavengers or unauthorized personnel are allowed to loiter in the disposal site.

For your information and consideration.

Very truly yours,


ROY A. CIMATU
Secretary



JUST IN: Maglalabas ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources ng memorandum na nag-uutos sa mga lokal na pamahalaan at kumpanyang nangongolekta ng basura na pagsuotin ng Personal Protective Equipment ang kanilang mga empleyadong nangongolekta ng basura. Ito'y matapos mag-positive ang isang garbage collector sa COVID-19 virus. | via Cleizl Pardilla



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Guard against fires, DENR local officers told

Philippine Daily Inquirer / 05:06 AM April 16, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has instructed its local offices to remain on guard against forest fires during the dry season, following a six-hour grass fire that razed several hectares of a forest reserve in Tanay, Rizal province.

On April 5, fire swept through 10 hectares of bush and grassland in the Kaliwa Watershed Forest Reserve in Barangay San Andres in Tanay, the site of the government's National Greening Program in 2013.

Ecotourism and conservation site Masungi Georeserve had earlier reported observing an increasing number of forest fires within areas in Tanay and Antipolo.

—*JHESSET O. ENANO*

Critically endangered Philippine eagle rescued in

April 17, 2020

TITLE: Zamboanga del Norte

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Critically endangered Philippine eagle rescued in Zamboanga del Norte

Published April 17, 2020 2:42am

By AUDE HAMPONG



Philippine eagle rescued in Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte. PHOTO BY AUDE HAMPONG

A Philippine Eagle was rescued and turned over to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Region IX thru the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) of Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte on Thursday.

The eagle with scientific name *Pithecophaga jefferyi* was rescued at Barangay Bulacan in Siocon by Barangay Chairman Romeo G. Dumencil and Nito Bitogwas.

According to the CENRO report, Bitogwas found the eagle trapped in the grassland of the barangay.

He immediately rescued it and reported the find to Dumencil, who accompanied him to CENRO Siocon despite the fact that the municipality is under Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ).

Based on the initial assessment by the Eagle Watch Team of CENRO Siocon, the bird showed no signs of injury and is considered to be in good condition.

The eagle weighs around 3.5 kilos and is placed in an improvised cage for further observation and health assessment before its release back to the wild.

Critically endangered Philippine eagle rescued in

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DENR IX Regional Executive Director Crisanta Marlene P. Rodriguez expressed her gratitude to Dumencil and Bitogwas for rescuing the Philippine Eagle and turning it over to CENRO Siocon.

She added that the Department is appreciative of their effort and in giving their time in rescuing the bird despite being busy in attending to their constituents in this time of the pandemic COVID-19 crisis.

Rodriguez also said that there is still the threat of the Avian Influenza or bird flu and cautioned the public not to approach, handle, capture or kill wild birds particularly migratory birds as they are known carriers of the disease.

The International Union of Conservation of Nature (IUCN) has listed the Philippine Eagles as Critically Endangered having only an estimated 400 pairs in the wild.

Despite the ECQ due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), DENR IX continues to conduct information, education, and communication campaign to combat the violation of Republic Act No. 9147 otherwise known as "Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act" and other illegal environmental activities under its area of jurisdiction. --

BAP, GMA News

Metal output rises 7% in 2019

[Louise Maureen Simeon](#) (The Philippine Star) - April 17, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The country's metallic production continued its upward trend, driven by the nickel sector as the Philippines benefitted from the ore export ban in Indonesia.

Latest data from the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) showed that aggregate value of metal production increased by seven percent to P130.73 billion last year.

This marks a three-year positive run for the metallic minerals industry.

“The driving force for the upbeat performance came from the collective production value of nickel ore and its products, mixed nickel-cobalt sulfide and scandium oxalate,” MGB said.

Indonesia earlier announced an export ban of nickel ore with nickel content below 1.7 percent. Indonesia is currently the world's largest nickel-producing country with 560,000 metric tons, followed by the Philippines with 340,000 MT.

Direct shipping nickel ore and mixed nickel-cobalt sulfides took the spotlight, accounting for P63.71 billion or an increase of 15 percent year-on-year. This as nickel price accelerated to \$13,897.85 per MT from \$13,103.36 per MT in 2018.

The nickel group accounted for 49 percent of the total metallic production value last year. Nickel has been outpacing the yellow metal since 2018.

Gold production accounted for 36 percent of the total production value with aggregate earnings of P47.36 billion, up six percent even as output slightly decreased to 20,646 kilograms.

Gold metal price accelerated to \$1,390.91 per troy ounce from \$1,269.15 per troy year-on-year.

Revenues from copper production, which comprises 14 percent of total metal production value, declined by 11 percent to P18.46 billion despite a five percent hike in output to 296,997 dry metric tons.

The decline was attributed to the eight percent drop in copper price to \$5,988.37 per MT.

The production value of silver, meanwhile, increased by five percent to P827 million as production rose five percent to 31,267 kilos.

Moreover, the Philippine Gold Processing and Refining Corp. was the country's major gold producer, accounting for 6,760 kilos valued at P15.61 billion.

For nickel direct shipping ore, Taganito Mining Corp. in Surigao del Norte took up 24 percent of the total output.

To date, the country hosts 50 operating metallic mines consisting of 31 nickel, 10 gold with silver as co-product, three copper with gold and silver as co-products, three chromite, three iron, and two nickel plants, two gold plants and one copper smelter.

These are in addition to the numerous small-scale gold mining operations across the country.

Loren to households: Reduce carbon footprint

Published April 16, 2020, 3:10 PM

By **Charissa Luci-Atienza**

Deputy Speaker and Antique lone district Rep. Loren Legarda asked on Thursday, April 16 households to minimize their carbon footprint by setting up food gardens, eating more vegetables, and reducing food waste.



Antique Rep. Loren Legarda
(FACEBOOK / FILE PHOTO / MANILA BULLETIN)

She strongly urged the public to lead a “more environment and climate-friendly” lifestyle to help address global warming and climate change.

“Outside our homes, we can already expect a significant reduction of harmful gases and pollutants as our transport sector, offices, and businesses remain limited due to COVID-19. But as we continue to stay at home during this quarantine period, let us also be mindful of the impacts that our daily activities have on our environment,” Legarda said in a statement.

“If every household could lead a more environment and climate-friendly lifestyle, we could also help address the climate crisis and pave the way for a greener and more sustainable economy,” she added.

Legarda explained that “carbon footprint” measures the total greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions that an individual or entity produces from their daily activities and lifestyle.

She urged every household to plant food gardens and convert spaces into edible landscapes to help increase food supply, while also addressing climate change.

The former senator also asked the public to eat more vegetables and less meat, and choose organic and locally sourced food.

“Reduce or avoid food waste and practice proper solid waste management by composting and recycling,” she added.

Legarda said to minimize carbon footprint, every household should also undertake the following initiatives: Switch off lights and unplug electronic devices when not in use; Convert to LED lights to further reduce energy consumption; Set air conditioning units at 25°C, as prescribed by the Department of Energy; and Lessen screen time on gadgets and spend more time offline and with family.

“After this pandemic, let us not go back to business-as-usual. I hope we take this time to reflect and adopt ways we can live more sustainably. By taking care of our environment and climate, we also take care of our health. We need to strengthen our collective ambition and action in ensuring a healthier planet for generations to come,” she said.

Source: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/04/16/loren-to-households-reduce-carbon-footprint/>

Not 'healing': Satellite photos suggest pollution
turned Manila Bay turquoise

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Not 'healing': Satellite photos suggest pollution turned Manila Bay turquoise

[Gaea Katreena Cabico](#) (Philstar.com) - April 16, 2020 - 6:06pm

MANILA, Philippines — The abrupt change in the color of Manila Bay's surface last March could be attributed to high water pollution, an analysis of satellite images showed.

Last month, photos and videos that showed Manila Bay's waters turning turquoise went viral, with social media users attributing the change in color to the implementation of the enhanced community quarantine in Luzon.

But researchers from the Department of Science and Technology's Sustained Support for Local Space Technology and Applications Mastery, Innovation and Advancement (STAMINA4Space) program said the turquoise waters of Manila Bay may suggest pollution.

Using satellite images from the European Space Agency's Sentinel-2 and Sentinel-3, the researchers observed "relatively high" chlorophyll-a concentration and turbidity values in Manila Bay as early as March 23, with turbidity levels doubling up by March 25.

High water turbidity could indicate high water pollution, while chlorophyll-a concentration suggests algal abundance.

"Since chlorophyll-a levels did not increase significantly around Manila Bay, the change of water color could not be attributed to algal bloom," the researchers said.

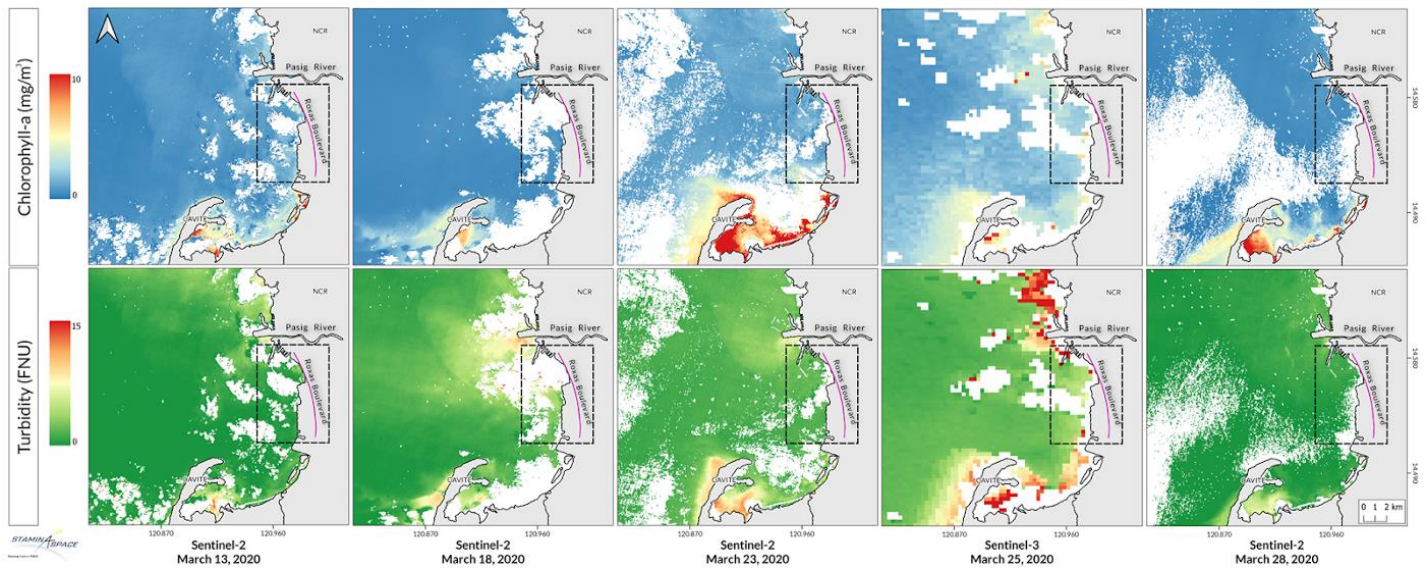
Not 'healing': Satellite photos suggest pollution
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Areas in red indicate high values of chlorophyll-a concentration and water turbidity. STAMINA4Space

Pollution 'hotspots'

The STAMINA4Space researchers identified Pasig River and Bacoor Bay as “hotspots,” saying waters from these areas might have influenced the waters of Manila Bay depending on the direction of wind and the circulation of water.

“Pollutants from aquaculture, industry and commercial establishments contribute to the turbid waters of Bacoor Bay, while collective wastes from residential, commercial and industrial industries negatively impact the water quality of Pasig River,” the researchers said.

It was only on March 28 that significant decrease in chlorophyll-a and turbidity was observed.

Fishers group PAMALAKAYA earlier said that pollutant materials might have been dumped in Manila Bay.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources launched an investigation into the sudden color change of the bay’s water.

Non-profit ocean conservation organization Oceana said Manila Bay is a principal fishing ground for sardines, mackerel, mullet, threadfin, bream, squid, blue crab, round scad and fusilier

The rehabilitation of Manila Bay kicked off on January 23 last year.

Angat Dam water level continues to dip despite isolated rains

Published April 16, 2020 10:06am

Despite [isolated rains](#) and thunderstorms affecting Central Luzon and Metro Manila, water levels in major dams in the area have continuously recorded slight declines, [hydrologists from state-run weather bureau PAGASA](#) indicated Thursday.

In its 6 a.m. Thursday dams monitoring report, PAGASA indicated that water level in Angat Dam, the source of nearly 100% of Metro Manila's water needs, dropped by 0.18 meters from 193.01 at 6 a.m. on Wednesday to 192.83 at 6 a.m. on Thursday.

PAGASA-DOST @dost_pagasa · 2h
DAM STATUS as of 6am, 16 April 2020

DATE UPDATED: 16-Apr-2020
TIME UPDATED: 6:00 AM

	Observation Time & Date	Reservoir Water Level (RWL) (m)	24-Hr W. Deviation	Normal High Water (m) (NHW) (m)	Deviation from NHW (m)	Fully-Closed Elevation (m)	Deviation from Rate Curve (m)	Deficit of RWL Amount to reach (NHW) (m) (K-NS)	Gate Opening (meters)
ANGAT	6:00 AM 16-Apr	192.83	-0.18	21200	-19.17	188.27	4.56		
	6:00 AM 15-Apr	193.01			-18.99	188.40	4.51		
IPO	6:00 AM 16-Apr	103.52	0.04	10100	-0.48	-	-		
	6:00 AM 15-Apr	103.48			-0.52	-	-		
LA MESA	6:00 AM 16-Apr	77.05	-0.04	80.15	-3.12	-	-		
	6:00 AM 15-Apr	77.07			-3.08	-	-		
AMBUKLAO	6:00 AM 16-Apr	745.81	-0.20	75200	-6.19	748.27	-2.46		
	6:00 AM 15-Apr	746.01			-5.99	748.50	-2.49		
BINGA	6:00 AM 16-Apr	573.32	-0.07	57500	-1.68	569.20	4.12		
	6:00 AM 15-Apr	573.39			-1.61	569.50	3.88		
SAN ROQUE	6:00 AM 16-Apr	244.82	-0.12	28000	-35.18	241.20	3.52		
	6:00 AM 15-Apr	244.94			-35.06	241.37	3.57		
PANTABANGAN	6:00 AM 16-Apr	185.73	-0.12	22100	-35.30	205.26	-19.56		
	6:00 AM 15-Apr	185.82			-35.18	205.33	-19.51		
	6:00 AM 15-Apr	167.44			-25.56	178.59	-11.15		

All major Luzon dams, except Ipo, have registered slight water level declines on Thursday, compared to levels on Wednesday, PAGASA shows in its monitoring report. —**LBG, GMA News**

MWSS assures sufficient water supply

By [Jed Macapagal](#)

-April 16, 2020

THE Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) has assured anew that Metro Manila's primary sources of water supply are stable and that there is enough water to last this summer season.

Still, MWSS said while the capacities of Angat, Ipo and La Mesa dams are enough, it is best to properly manage the dams and practice conservation to avoid any supply issues.

As of April 14, MWSS said Angat Dam's water level is at 192.95 meters, or 4.42 meters higher than the normal rule curve elevation of 188.53 meters. While it is 4.42 meters above the lower rule curve, the water level is 1.18 meters less than the year-on-year upper operational curve of 192.95 meters.

La Mesa Dam, which is used as reserve raw water storage for emergencies or water shortage, is at 77.08 meters as of April 15, while the Ipo Dam is at 100.49 meters.

"Emphasis must be made that there is no disruption to the raw water supply to portals to trigger an emergency or water shortage to warrant withdrawal from the La Mesa reservoir. While there may have been disruptions in water supply availability, said disruptions are due to leak repairs, operational adjustments, and network maintenance activities to improve water supply availability," the MWSS explained in a statement.

The agency also cited that weather outlook from April to September as predicted by the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration indicates near normal rainfall.

"Though the summer heat and the spread of the COVID-19 had seen an uptick in domestic water consumption, we assure the public that mitigation measures and technical solutions are in place to optimize our existing water supplies," the regulatory body said without identifying the actual demand growth.

Dar touts indigenous Filipinos to use ancestral lands for food production

Published April 16, 2020, 10:43 AM

By *Ellalyn de Vera-Ruiz*

The Department of Agriculture (DA) is eyeing the transformation of vast ancestral lands into food production areas as “practical” strategy to produce more food amid the coronavirus pandemic. DA Secretary William Dar asked the indigenous peoples (IPs) to help the government in transforming part of their idle ancestral lands into vegetable and high-value crop farms, which can provide immediate results during this time of crisis.



Department of Agriculture Secretary William Dar (Department of Agriculture – Philippines / FACEBOOK / FILE PHOTO / MANILA BULLETIN)

“Our IPs can also consider going into diversified farming systems, integrating vegetable and livestock raising, that will provide them not only continuous source of food, but also source of additional income,” he said.

Dar committed a “substantial” budget to bankroll the enhanced food production program in ancestral lands under the P31-billion Plant, Plant, Plant Program.

The program aims to intensify the promotion of urban and community agriculture as one of the interventions to help ensure availability of and access to food nationwide.

Based on the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP) data, in terms of territory, about 7.7 million hectares are occupied by the IPs, or 26 percent of the country’s total land area of 30 million hectares.

As of 2019, the NCIP has issued 243 certificates of ancestral domain titles, with a total land area of 5.7 million hectares and 1.3 million IPs as rights holders.

“Aside from profitable types of vegetables like onion, string beans, potato, carrots, pineapple, garlic, cauliflower, and watermelon, our brother IPs can grow cacao, coffee, abaca or black pepper, or they may go into raising native pigs and free-range chicken,” Dar said.

Other crops include ampalaya, asparagus, cabbage, cassava, garlic, ginger, mungbean, papaya, peanut, sweet potato, and tomato.

DA has realigned its programs and refocused its budget to enhance the country’s food production, recognizing its equal importance as a major strategy in the fight against coronavirus.

Indigenous peoples urged to plant more on ancestral land

April 16, 2020 | 7:15 pm



PHILSTAR/MICHAEL VARCAS

THE Department of Agriculture (DA) is seeking the use of indigenous peoples' (IP) ancestral land for food production to shore up food security during the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak.

Agriculture Secretary William D. Dar urged the indigenous peoples (IPs) to convert part or most of their idle land to farm vegetables and high-value crops.

“Our IPs can also consider going into diversified farming systems, integrating vegetable and livestock raising, that will provide them not only a continuous source of food, but also a source of additional income,” Mr. Dar said.

Mr. Dar added substantial funding is available from the DA to support enhanced food production on ancestral land.

“It forms part of the Duterte administration’s P31-billion Plant, Plant, Plant Program, where we will, among other projects, intensify the promotion of urban and community agriculture as one of the interventions to help ensure availability of and access to food nationwide,” Mr. Dar said.

According to the National Commission on Indigenous Peoples (NCIP), IPs occupy about 7.7 million hectares or 26% of the country’s total land area of 30 million hectares.

As of 2019, the NCIP has issued 243 certificates of ancestral domain title, covering an area of 5.7 million hectares. Some 1.3 million IPs have been certified as rights holders.

Mr. Dar said that the IPs can grow ampalaya, asparagus, cabbage, cassava, garlic, ginger, mungbean, papaya, peanut, sweet potato, and tomato.

“Aside from profitable types of vegetables — like onion, string beans, potato, carrots, pineapple, garlic, cauliflower, and watermelon — our brother IPs can grow cacao, coffee, abaca or black pepper, or they may go into raising native pigs and free-range chicken,” Mr. Dar said. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

Source: <https://www.bworldonline.com/indigenous-peoples-urged-to-plant-more-on-ancestral-land/>

Total lockdown 'an option:' Palace

By Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos [April 16, 2020, 4:56 pm](#)



MANILA – Malacañang on Thursday raised the possibility that President Rodrigo Duterte might impose a “total lockdown,” in case the government fails to “flatten the curve” of coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) cases in the country.

Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said the proposed implementation of total lockdown is an “option,” considering that there are still many quarantine violators who continue to defy Duterte’s order to observe strict home quarantine.

“Kinu-konsidera ang total lockdown lalung-lalo na kung magpapatuloy ang mga pasaway sa ating kalsada (We are considering total lockdown, especially now that there are many people who are still loitering in the streets),” Roque said in a virtual presser aired on state-run PTV-4.

The entire Luzon and some parts of Visayas and Mindanao have been placed under enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) to contain the spread of Covid-19 in the country.

Implementing an ECQ means people are prohibited from leaving their homes, unless they have to access basic necessities or they are exempt from observing the quarantine protocols.

ECQ is deemed different from the proposed total lockdown, which bars people from going out of their homes and recommends the closure of all public establishments.

Roque clarified that there is no decision yet to implement a total lockdown.

“*Siyempre po, isa iyang option na iku-konsidera, pero uulitin ko po, wala pa pong desisyon na mag-total lockdown.* (That’s an option being considered, but I repeat, there is still no decision to impose a total lockdown),” he said.

ECQ’s fate known Monday

The implementation of ECQ in Luzon is set to expire on April 30.

Cabinet Secretary and Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) spokesperson Karlo Nograles said the “small group” tasked by Duterte to study the possible scenarios after April 30 would come up with recommendations with regard to ECQ’s fate by Monday.

“This coming Monday, they will have something to present to the IATF. So *hintayin na lang natin.* (So let’s just wait). But they’re looking at all aspects,” Nograles said in a separate virtual press briefing.

Nograles said the IATF-EID would then have an extensive deliberation on the recommendations that would be made by the small group.

Selective lifting of ECQ, not martial law

Pending the IATF and Duterte's decision on the fate of Luzon-wide ECQ, there have been proposals to impose a "selective" lifting of ECQ or a martial law.

Nograles said when it comes to the proposed selective lifting of ECQ, the government has to take into considerations five parameters, which include the trends in Covid-19 epidemiological curve, the capacity of the health care system, and the social, economic, and security factors.

He, however, said the declaration of martial law was not an option.

"For you to use or declare martial law, *ano po 'yun* (there should be) rebellion and invasion. So *hindi po pinag-uusapan* (we're not talking about it)," Nograles said.

Article 7, Section 18 of the 1987 Constitution states that the President can declare martial law, "in case of invasion or rebellion, when the public safety requires it."

Help in reducing Covid-19 cases

With only two weeks before Luzon-wide ECQ expires, Roque called on the public to follow the quarantine measures imposed by the government to stop the further transmission of Covid-19.

Roque reminded everyone that the Covid-19 cases in the country would have "doubled or tripled," had the government failed to impose an ECQ.

He stressed that while it is difficult to restrain public movements, doing so would help reduce the number of Covid-19 cases in the country.

"*Ang katunayan, kapag hindi tayo nanatili sa ating mga tahanan, hindi po natin mapapaba ang cases ng Covid-19* (The truth is we cannot reduce the number of Covid-19 cases in the country, if we do not stay at home)," Roque said.

The Philippines has so far recorded 5,660 Covid-19 infections, with 362 deaths and 435 recoveries. **(PNA)**

Cabinet members 'in good health:' Palace

By Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos **April 16, 2020, 7:18 pm**



GOOD HEALTH. President Rodrigo Duterte presides over the last Cabinet Meeting at the Malacañan Palace on March 2, 2020. Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said Duterte's Cabinet members are in "good health" amid the coronavirus disease outbreak in the country. *(Presidential photo by Robinson Niñal Jr.)*

MANILA – Members of President Rodrigo Duterte's Cabinet are in "good health," Malacañang said on Thursday amid the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) outbreak in the country.

"*Lahat naman po sila ay mabuti ang kalusugan* (All of them are in good health)," Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said in a virtual presser aired on state-run PTV-4, when asked about the health condition of the Cabinet secretaries.

Roque's statement came even after Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año and Education Secretary Leonor Briones had both tested positive for Covid-19.

Año and Briones are now tested negative for Covid-19 after acquiring the infectious disease.

The two Cabinet officials, however, still need to continue to observe self-isolation.

Roque said other Cabinet members remain healthy.

"*Wala naman pong ibang miyembro ng Gabinete na nagkasakit ng Covid-19, bukod po kay Secretary Año* (Other Cabinet members have not contracted Covid-19, except Secretary Año and Secretary Briones)," he said.

Roque on Wednesday announced that Duterte has authorized the use of Covid-19 rapid test kits for individuals who wish to see the President at Malacañan Palace in Manila.

The Philippine Security Group (PSG) Task Force Covid-19's medical team would administer the rapid tests for the new pathogen.

PSG commander Col. Jesus Durante III said Wednesday that the procedure does not exempt high-ranking government officials, PSG troopers, and close-in personnel who always accompany Duterte.

Durante said those who will be found positive during the rapid tests will be barred from entering Malacañan Palace.

He, however, clarified that results of rapid tests are still subject to Research Institute for Tropical Medicine's confirmation since these are not "definite and absolute."

Real-time Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) tests, which detect the actual presence of Covid-19, are currently being undertaken by the Philippines.

The PSG's initiative to impose stricter health protocols at Malacañan was meant to protect Duterte against Covid-19, which has so far infected 5,660 people in the country. **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1100097>

Duterte threatens military, police takeover for stricter enforcement of quarantine measures

By [Xave Gregorio, CNN Philippines](#)

Published Apr 16, 2020 10:37:33 PM



Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, April 16) — President Rodrigo Duterte on Thursday threatened a takeover by the military and police to enforce quarantine measures after officials noted that more people have been out of their homes, in violation of the Luzon-wide lockdown.

Duterte said he is putting the police and military on standby for them to enforce quarantine measures if people continue to break them.

"I'm just asking for your *disiplina*," Duterte said in a televised address. "*Kaunti. Kasi kapag ayaw niyong maniwala, mag-take over pati military at police. Parang martial law na rin. Mamili kayo. Ayaw ko.*"

[Translation: I'm just asking for your discipline. Just a bit. Because if you don't follow, the military and police will take over. It's like martial law. You choose. I don't want it.]

Presently, however, police and military are already manning quarantine checkpoints. Police have also apprehend violators of quarantine guidelines and curfews.

Duterte's threat came after officials noted increased vehicle traffic on roads and highways and increased foot traffic in certain public markets, which prompted a stricter implementation of quarantine measures.

To address the increase in the number of vehicles travelling along EDSA and other major thoroughfares of Metro Manila, traffic enforcers from the [Philippine National Police](#) were directed to inspect all private vehicles to determine if the drivers and passengers belong to the list of people permitted to go out.

The list includes workers in sectors that are essential during a public health crisis, such as health, security, emergency response, banking, vendors, delivery, and sanitation. One person per household is allowed to go out to avail of essential need, such as food and medicine.

The Philippine National Police has apprehended 115,000 people nationwide who violate the lockdown measures by not following curfew or social distancing guidelines.

Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/4/16/Rodrigo-Duterte-military-police-takeover-COVID-19.html>

NGCP gives supermarket GCs worth P5M



By [Jordeene B. Lagare](#)

April 17, 2020

THE National Grid Corp. of the Philippines (NGCP) gave P5 million worth of supermarket gift certificates (GCs) to Project Ugnayan, a multisector coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) poverty relief initiative. In a statement on Thursday, the grid operator said 10,000 of these certificates were turned over to the project, which is an initiative of the Philippine Disaster Resilience Foundation and top business groups, companies and institutions. The “NGCP made a pledge to continue finding opportunities beyond our previous aids to help combat the effects of Covid-19 in our country, and we are staying true to that promise. This contribution to Project Ugnayan will hopefully sustain more families severely affected during this period,” it added. The GCs will be given to 1.5 million economically displaced families in Metro Manila. Project Ugnayan is set to end by April 30.

Bayer supports Plant, Plant, Plant program



April 16, 2020

Bayer is continuing its seed processing and distribution operations in its Calamba, Laguna and Pulilan, Bulacan facilities to support the Plant, Plant, Plant Program of the Department of Agriculture (DA) and ensure food availability amid the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic.

The Plant, Plant, Plant Program is also called Ahon Lahat, Pagkaing Sapat (Alpas) Kontra Covid-19.

As the business sector was adversely affected by the Luzon-wide enhanced community quarantine extension, the DA reaffirmed the importance of unhampered movement of food and agricultural products. This includes home quarantine exemptions for agribusiness personnel and those involved in processing and distributing agricultural inputs.

With those guidelines in place, Bayer has responded by mobilizing its product supply and logistics teams to prepare hybrid rice and corn seeds for timely delivery to its channels.

“We are looking at having bulk of our Arize hybrid rice seeds and Dekalb hybrid corn seeds available to farmers before end of April,” said Bayer Crop Science Country Commercial lead Iiinas Ivan Lao.

“We appreciate the commitment given by the Department of Agriculture to help our farmers and for recognizing early on that farmers need good performing seeds if we expect to sustain our food production capabilities,” he added.

Bayer is expecting more corn farmers to plant the Dekalb hybrid corn seeds since they have built-in resistance against the Fall Armyworm. The company has intensified its processing and distribution of rice and corn seeds in response to the DA’s call to support farm inputs so early planting of crops could be executed to counter the effects of the Covid-19 lockdown.

For its Arize hybrid rice seeds, the Bigante Plus variant is one of the most popular products in the market and recommended for wet season planting since it has bacterial leaf blight tolerance.

As part of its commitment to safety, Bayer has deployed a skeletal workforce in its plant facilities and set up protocols involving proper hygiene and social distancing.

“While we want to serve the needs of our corn and rice farmers, safety remains a top priority for all our employees,” said Lao.

“We have established stringent safety measures at our plant facilities to minimize the risk of Covid-19 infection among our employees and agencies,” he added.

The safety measures cover the entire operational cycle from transportation of its workers to and from the site and all the activities being done to process the seeds and ship them to agriculture distributors across the country.

“Since we’re expecting less face-to-face interaction with customers and farmers due to the quarantine, we encourage them to interact with us via text message or through our local Facebook page,” Lao added.

Property developer pushes for earth-friendly sailing

April 16, 2020 | 7:03 pm



ABOITIZLAND's Seafront Residences property in San Juan, Batangas, was the starting point of this year's Philippine Hobie Challenge. — ABOITIZLAND

WITH the country boasting among others of beautiful islands and beaches, sailing presents itself as an exciting way to explore the Philippines. It is something that property developer AboitizLand recognizes and pushes for.

To highlight its thrust on such front, AboitizLand partnered early this year with the Philippine Inter-Island Sailing Federation (Phinsaf) for the 20th Philippine Hobie Challenge.

Regarded as the country's premier international extreme sailing event, the challenge is a five-day regatta promoting earth-friendly sailing aboard the Hobie Cat 16, a 16-foot long, twin-hulled wind-powered sailboat capable of negotiating open seas.

For this year's edition of the Hobie Challenge, the race sailed off from AboitizLand's Seafront Residences property in San Juan, Batangas to Boracay Island.

The event was a throwback of sorts, retracing its original Laiya-to-Boracay route when the regatta was introduced in 1999.

Portuguese sailors Maria Videoira-Hagedorn and Tomas Camelo ruled the regatta, clocking 24:32:39 to edge 10 other teams from the Philippines, Australia, the United States and Hong Kong.

Geoff Rowden and Rosie Phelan of Australia settled at a close second while Keli and Arli Corlett, also from Down Under, ended up at third place.

Organizers said the Philippine Hobie Challenge is a way of promoting earth-friendly sports across the archipelago and a unique way to sharpen sailing skills to international standards, create environmental awareness, discover various hidden islands, and support communities through outreach programs.

For Aboitizland, events like the regatta are also a good platform to push eco-sports tourism in places like Laiya.

“It was a great opportunity to showcase how Seafront’s residents will enjoy the benefits of living by the sea,” said AboitizLand first vice-president for operations Rafa de Mesa as he spoke of their involvement with the Philippine Hobie Challenge.

To address the residents’ need for a peaceful respite to pursue life’s passions, Mr. De Mesa said they are continuously rearing development of Seafront to such a direction.

Seafront Residences offers house and lots, parks and outdoor amenity areas, as well as Residences and Villas designed and inspired by world-class designers and featuring modern Filipino styles with panoramic viewdecks.

The property also has the Seafront Villas or condominium by the beach and has a cozy lifestyle hub for dining, retail and leisure. — **Michael Angelo S. Murillo**

With no tourists around, animals at Yosemite are
TITLE: 'having a party'

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April 17, 2020
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With no tourists around, animals at Yosemite are 'having a party'

By Marnie Hunter, CNN

Published Apr 16, 2020 1:06:57 PM



Yosemite National Park recently posted video of this bear climbing a tree near ranger housing.

(CNN) — Being cooped up at home is no fun for humans, but bears are making the most of the extra space at California's shuttered Yosemite National Park.

"The bears are just literally walking down the road to get to where they need to go," Ranger Katie Patrick said during a Facebook Live event on Sunday. She is a wildlife biologist who has worked with black bears in Yosemite since 2007.

"For the most part, I think they're having a party," she said in response to questions about what the animals have been doing since Yosemite closed on March 20.

Normally this time of year is difficult for animals at Yosemite because there can be "literally walls of cars, stop-and-go traffic or people in the park," especially in the sort of "urban" Yosemite Valley area.

Katie Patrick, known as Ranger Katie, works with the Human Bear Management Program, mitigating conflicts that arise when you have humans and bears so close together.

"The goal of my position is to have as wild of bears as possible in this park," she said during her presentation from Cook's Meadow in Yosemite Valley.

For visitors, that means storing food properly and staying more than 50 yards away from bears.

Yosemite is the fifth most popular of the National Park Service's 62 headliner parks. Some 4.4 million people visited the park in 2019.

Bears out and about

Yosemite is home to about 300 to 500 black bears, according to a Yosemite National Park post on Twitter.

"Though there hasn't been an increase in their population since the park closure," the post said, "bears have been seen more frequently than usual."

With no tourists around, animals at Yosemite are
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During the talk on Sunday, Ranger Katie demonstrated some of the equipment used to tag and track bears that seem too habituated to humans. Less than 1% of the bears in the park are tagged, she said.

One viewer on Facebook asked whether visitors have ever been "eaten" by bears at Yosemite.

Fortunately not: No human deaths by black bears have ever been recorded there, park officials posted.

"However, bites and swats by bears have occurred. In most of these cases, humans were too close to bears and the bears reacted to protect themselves," Yosemite said in the response, with a link about how to behave around bears in the park.

While Yosemite is about the size of Rhode Island, much of the human visitation is concentrated in areas such as Yosemite Valley, which is also a great habitat for bears, Ranger Katie said.

Black bears move around quite a bit every spring foraging for food, Yosemite officials posted during the event, but with fewer people around "bears also seem to be a little more relaxed when they are out in the open, possibly because it is much quieter in the park right now."

There's no estimated reopening date for Yosemite yet, park officials said in the Facebook comments.

Mababangis na hayop gumagala na sa iba't ibang siyudad sa mga bansa

April 16, 2020
|Lolet Abania



Sa loob ng daang taon, inilagay ng mga tao ang mga wildlife sa maliit na bahagi lamang ng mundo at hinayaan na mamuhay sila roon.

Subalit ngayon, dahil sa maraming lugar sa mga bansa na nasa isolation at lockdown, walang makikitang tao sa mga kalsada at ang mga siyudad nito ay nagmimistulang ghost town, kaya pilit na bumabalik ang dating kalikasan sa kanyang pinagmulan.

Kamakailan, may paikut-ikot sa mga kalye ng Barcelona na mga wild boar o baboy ramo. Ang mga mountain goat o mababangis na kambing ay namamasyal sa kalye ng Llandudno, Wales. Palakad-pakad naman ang mga buffalo sa highway ng India. Gayundin, ang mga endangered sea turtles ay naglimlim sa kanilang itlog sa Brazilian beach. Namataan din ang isang whale sa Mediterranean coast ng France at nakitang natutulog sa taas ng puno ang isang mountain lion sa Boulder, Colorado.

Sa tindi ng nararanasan ng mga tao, maging ng mga hayop, ibinabagay na lamang ng magkaibang mundo ang pagbabagong ito kahit na ang kinalalabasan ay pagpapalit ng kanilang tirahan.

“The whole world is under risk,” sabi ni environmentalist Herbert Andrade. *“But this was a moment of happiness. It was a feeling that nature was transforming itself.”*

Lubhang nakakagulat, na sa una ay aakalaing fake news pero para kay Andrew Stuart, residente ng Llandudno, Wales, *“That goats absolutely love it.”* Nang makita niyang namamasyal ang mga kambing sa kalye doon. *“They keep coming back, multiple times per day, 10 to 15 of them. They’re taking the town back. It’s now theirs. Nothing is stopping them.”*

Gayundin, isang kahanga-hangang karanasan na makita sa itaas ng puno ang natutulog na mountain lion. *“I’ve lived in Boulder for 30 years, and I’ve never seen a mountain lion before,”* sabi ni Bruce Borowsky, isang videographer sa Boulder, Colorado. *“And I’m a filmmaker and am outdoors constantly. Animals are sensing that people aren’t around much and are coming out more.”*

Gayunman, habang nananatiling nasa loob ng kani-kanilang tahanan, magiging ligtas pa rin ang lahat sa anumang banta, kahit pa madagdagan ng mababangis na hayop sa iba't ibang lugar.

Source: <https://www.bulgaronline.com/single-post/2020/04/16/Mababangis-na-hayop-gumagala-na-sa-iba%E2%80%99t-ibang-siyudad-sa-mga-bansa>

A zoo in Germany is struggling so much that it may
TITLE: have to feed some animals to other animals

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April 17, 2020
DATE

A zoo in Germany is struggling so much that it may have to feed some animals to other animals

By Harmeet Kaur, CNN

Published Apr 16, 2020 1:40:02 PM



A baby female sea lion "Jogi" lies next to its mother "Eike" in the zoo in Neumünster, Germany, on July 11, 2014.

(CNN) — Faced with disrupted supply chains and steep revenue declines due to the coronavirus pandemic, one zoo is considering a drastic measure: turning some of its residents into food.

The longer that the coronavirus lockdowns continue and the the more dire financial situations become, the more realistic it is that Neumünster Zoo in northern Germany will have to consider its absolute, last resort plan: slaughtering some of its zoo animals to feed others.

The Neumünster Zoo, home to more than 700 animals and more than 100 species, has drafted an emergency plan listing which animals would be euthanized to cut costs, and in what order, zoo director Verena Kaspari told German news agency Deutsche Presse-Agentur (DPA).

Though it's unclear which animals would be slaughtered first, a polar bear named Vitus — which stands nearly 12 feet tall — would be the last animal to go.

"If — and this is really the worst, worst case of all — if I no longer have any money to buy feed, or if it should happen that my feed supplier is no longer able to supply due to new restrictions, then I would slaughter animals to feed other animals," Kaspari told the news agency.

Kaspari said she would rather euthanize the zoo's animals than have them starve.

CNN has reached out to Neumünster Zoo for comment.

German zoos in crisis

Now that the Neumünster Zoo is no longer generating revenue from visitors due to the national shutdown enacted on March 15, the zoo is currently operating solely through donations, Kaspari told DPA.

The German government has started rolling out an economic rescue package worth up to €750 billion (\$825 billion) — among the largest relief packages launched anywhere in the world. The package includes measures to spur lending to businesses, take stakes in companies and support furloughed workers, though it's unclear whether zoos are receiving funds

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"We're an association and don't get any city money, and all the state money we've applied for so far hasn't arrived yet," Kaspari told DPA.

The Association of Zoological Gardens (VdZ), a Berlin-based zoo association with members in Germany, Switzerland, Austria and Spain, has asked Chancellor Angela Merkel for €100 million in emergency aid. VdZ represents 56 zoos in Germany, including Neumünster Zoo.

The association said in a letter to the country's government that many of the animals in its member zoos are endangered species and a part of international conservation breeding programs.

"A possible loss of this valuable animal population would be a bitter setback for our struggle to conserve biodiversity and would therefore amount to a catastrophe," VdZ President Jörg Junhold said in a statement.

The association noted that unlike other facilities, zoos can't shut down or limit operations to cut down on losses.

Animals still have to be fed and cared for, often an expensive endeavor.

Wuhan's 'wet markets' struggle after virus lockdown

posted April 16, 2020 at 09:15 pm

by [AFP](#)

At a large food market in the Chinese city of Wuhan, signs forbid the selling of wild animals and live fowl, while announcements calling for "victory" over COVID-19 play on a loop from speakers.

China's "wet markets" have been slammed internationally as the coronavirus roils the world, with the disease having seemingly emerged from stalls selling live game in Wuhan late last year.

The government has since banned the sale of wildlife for food, but the reopening of markets has drawn criticism from around the world as the death toll from the pandemic continues to mount.

Shut down during the lengthy quarantine that sealed off Wuhan until April 8, the city's markets are now fighting for survival as customers have not been rushing back.

"There's no question, we're doomed this year," spice seller Yang, who runs a stall at the massive Baishazhou wholesale market, told AFP. "There have never been so few people at our market."

Yang, whose sales have fallen by a third from before the lockdown, dismissed criticism of markets as virus hotbeds as "unnecessary panic."

One market remains closed: The Huanan Seafood Market that sold a range of exotic wildlife and is suspected to be the cradle of the virus that jumped from animals to humans.

Wet markets are popular venues to buy fresh meat, vegetables and fish across Asia—most selling common, everyday produce to locals at affordable prices.

Most don't sell live animals, although some do.

During visits to three Wuhan markets this week, AFP saw live turtles, frogs, fish and crustaceans for sale, but no fowl or mammals blamed for past diseases.

Workers at Baishazhou said they were now required to disinfect their stalls several times a day. Yang keeps multiple bottles of disinfectant in her small office, alongside a box of masks.

Nevertheless, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said this week the decision to reopen wet markets was "unfathomable."

"We need to protect the world against potential sources of outbreaks of these types of viruses," he told Australian TV.

The top medical specialist for the US government, Anthony Fauci, told Fox News earlier this month that wet markets should be shut down "right away."

While the World Health Organization has said governments must ban the sale of exotic wildlife and enforce food safety regulations, it has not called for any wet markets to be closed.

Vendors at Wuhan's markets say unaffordable rents and the lingering effects of the citywide shutdown are more immediate concerns than the threat of contagion.

"Business is very bad," said Zhang Zhizhen, a duck meat seller at Lanling market. "It's because of the epidemic — there are still very few people on the streets."

"We don't know if we can survive," another seller said. "Do you see anyone here?"

Source: <https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/321688>