

# Incinerating COVID-19 waste a 'worst-case scenario' option – DENR to EcoWaste

By: [Katrina Hallare](#) - Reporter / [@KHallareINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 10:21 PM April 18, 2020



DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda (File photo by HENZBERG AUSTRIA / Senate Public Information and Relations Bureau)

MANILA, Philippines — Incinerating waste produced in the care of patients with the new coronavirus disease, or COVID-19, is only an option for a “worst-case scenario” being considered by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda made the clarification in a telephone interview with [INQUIRER.net](#) on Saturday.

He was referring to a March 26 memo issued by Environmental Management Bureau Director William Cuñado was to all regional directors, who were tasked to look into incineration, among other methods, to dispose of the COVID-19 waste materials.

He stressed that the memo was internal.

He made the clarification in response to the nonprofit environmental group EcoWaste Coalition, which urged the DENR to scrap the memo.

Incineration, the group said, would be [detrimental to the environment](#) and would violate the Clean Air Act and the Code on Sanitation of the Philippines.

Looking at ‘bigger health care wastes’

Antiporda added that the DENR was also being “proactive” with the memo, saying that it was looking at “bigger health care wastes in the future,” considering the rising number of COVID-19 cases.

On March 26, when the memo was issued, March 26, there were 707 confirmed COVID-19 cases. The numbers have drastically increase since then.

Incinerating COVID-19 waste a 'worst-case scenario'  
TITLE: option – DENR to EcoWaste

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April 19, 2020  
DATE

As of this writing, the Department of Health has recorded [6,087 COVID-19 cases](#). of the coronavirus, according to the latest data from the Department of Health.

“As of this very moment, there is still no clear answer to the question of whether it would stop there or if it would still increase. So we’re trying to look at bigger health care wastes in the future,” Antiporda said, speaking partly in Filipino.

“So now, since that’s what we’re seeing now, we’re trying to explore each and every option, if in case our waste problem becomes worse — especially in this case, because [the waste] is infectious,” he added.

Antiporda cited a 2002 Supreme Court decision on the case between the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) and Jancom Environmental Corp., saying that the process of incineration was allowed as long it passed the standards of the Clean Air Act.

“Now, since we are here to protect the environment, we are not in any way interested to go into burning this hospital waste,” Antiporda said. “But if in case we have no choice — this is the last flat option, the worst scenario — we will have no choice but to give in to that as a lesser evil.” Antiporda also said the group was “capitalizing” on the DENR’s name.

“It seems to be like they’re capitalizing on the good name of DENR, trying to destroy its good name, telling the people around the world that we are not doing our job. And that is not the right way to deal with this COVID-19 issue,” he said.

/atm

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1260933/denr-answers-ecowaste-using-incinerators-crematoriums-on-covid-19-waste-only-an-option#ixzz6Kolle4Oa>

# DENR: Mining operation on Homonhon Island among export businesses allowed by IATF

Published April 18, 2020, 7:37 PM

By *Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz*

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) clarified on Saturday that the ongoing mine loading activities on Homonhon Island, Eastern Samar were part of the regular mining and export operations in the area.

“The mine has been operating for more than three years, so there’s nothing unusual in this particular transaction,” DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny Antiporda said.

He said the continued operation of Techiron Resources, Inc. was based on the instruction from Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) on Emerging Infectious Diseases that export-oriented businesses should not be hampered.

The DENR official issued the statement to dismiss allegations that the mine loading activities were made “secret” and timed to coincide with the enhanced community quarantine imposed in Luzon and other parts of the country.

Antiporda also clarified that the loading operations were initially suspended just to make sure that “everything is in order.”

“After thorough investigation and the mining company secured all the necessary quarantine certificates, the DENR had no choice but to lift the suspension,” he pointed out.

He also gave the assurance that proper safety protocols and guidelines were in place for the loading of a mineral shipment on a foreign cargo vessel commissioned by the mining company.

This was to ensure the protection of residents, mine workers, pier or dock personnel, and stevedores from risks associated with COVID-19.



## Mining ops sa E. Samar, legal: DENR

April 18, 2020 @ 6:12 PM 12 hours ago

Views: 163

Manila, Philippines – Nilinaw ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) na ang nagaganap na mine loading sa Homonhon Island sa Eastern Samar ay legal at bahagi ng regular na mining at export operations sa naturang lugar.

“We wish to clarify that this is a regular mining operation. The mine has been operating for more than three years, so there’s nothing unusual in this particular transaction,” ayon kay DENR Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny D. Antiporda.

Ayon kay Antiporda, ang patuloy na operasyon ng Techiron Resources, Inc. ay batay sa utos ng Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases na ang mga negosyo na export-oriented ay dapat na magpatuloy.

Ginawa ni Antiporda ang pahayag para linawin ang mga paratang na ang nasabing mga mine loading activities ay sinikreto at itinaon sa enhanced community quarantine na ipinatutupad sa Luzon at iba pang bahagi ng bansa upang mapigilan ang pagkalat ng coronavirus disease or COVID-19.

Kaugnay nito niliwanag pa ni Antiporda na ang loading operations ay sinuspinde noong una upang masiguro na “everything is in order.”

“After thorough investigation and the mining company secured all the necessary quarantine certificates, the DENR had no choice but to lift the suspension,” aniya.

Samantala, siniguro ni Antiporda na ipinatutupad ang proper safety protocols at guidelines para sa pagsakay ng mineral shipment sa isang dayuhang barko na kinumisyon ng mining company.

Ito, ayon kay Antiporda, ay upang masiguro ang proteksyon ng mga residente, mga nagtatrabaho sa minahan, mga tauhan sa pier at estibador sa panganib na dala ng COVID-19 pandemic.

“What’s important is there is no physical contact with the crew of the cargo vessel anchored off 1.5 kilometers from Homonhon Island,” sabi ni Antiporda.

Dinagdag pa nyia na ang loading ay gumagamit ng makinarya at walang Pilipino ang pinapayagang pumasok sa loob ng nasabing foreign cargo vessel. Santi Celario

# DENR: No violations found in mining ops on Eastern Samar island

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published Apr 18, 2020 11:46:41 PM



CBCP/FR. CHRISTIAN OFILAN

*The Department of Environment and Natural Resources said it did not find any violations from the mining and export operations in Eastern Samar's Homonhon Island, which earlier caused a stir among local officials. (FILE PHOTO)*

**Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, April 18)** — The Department of Environment and Natural Resources said it did not find any violations from the mining and export operations in Eastern Samar's Homonhon Island, which earlier caused a stir among local officials.

The operation, led by Techiron Resources, Inc., complied with quarantine requirements and the government's order to allow export work to continue, the agency clarified in a statement.

Over public health concerns amid the COVID-19 pandemic, on April 4, Governor Ben Evardone said he [urged national government officials](#), including the police and coast guard, to stop the entry of a Chinese-manned vessel set to load 7,000 metric tons of chromite ore in Homonhon Island.

The DENR later suspended the company's mining operations on the area to "make sure that everything is in order" but eventually lifted the measure.

"After thorough investigation and the mining company secured all the necessary quarantine certificates, the DENR had no choice but to lift the suspension," said Undersecretary for Solid Waste Management and Local Government Units Concerns Benny Antiporda said.

He maintained that the crew did not make contact with anyone from the island since the vessel was anchored 1.5 kilometers away. The DENR also denied that mining activities are being done in secret amid the Luzon-wide quarantine. Techiron's operations are still ongoing, it added.

The Inter-agency Task Force on the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases earlier assured [free movement for cargo shipments](#), despite the enhanced community quarantine in Luzon amid the spread of COVID-19.

Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/4/18/no-violation-on-homonhon-island-mining-denr-says.html?fbclid#.Xpsh5gGyeko.twitter>

# Fire razes protected area in NegOr

By Mary Judaline Partlow April 18, 2020, 1:54 pm



**FOREST FIRE.** A fire of unknown origin razed a reforested area at Mt. Guintabon in Sibulan, Negros Oriental. Efforts are still underway late Friday to contain and stop the spread of the fire in the protected area of the Twin Lakes Natural Park. *(Photo by Chari Amos Katigbak)*

**DUMAGUETE CITY** – A forest fire of still unknown origin damaged on Friday the protected area of the Twin Lakes Natural Park in Barangay Enrique Villanueva in Sibulan, Negros Oriental.

Firefighters, volunteers, and personnel from the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office are currently working to slow down the flames, which began around 9 and 10 a.m., Rico Mier, president of the Balinsasayao Twin Lakes Farmers' Association and a member of the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB).

Mier said that based on reports from farmer-members of their association, the fire was moving up Mt. Guintabon in a straight line.

He said he is stranded in Bukidnon with the enhanced community quarantine in Negros Oriental which required sealing all the borders of the province and the suspension of all land, sea, and air travel.

He said he was in close contact with volunteers and authorities here to help contain the spread of the fire in the government reforested land.

Indira Requiron-Puspus, Senior Administrative Assistant III and Municipal Tourism Officer of Sibulan, said that the local government unit had immediately dispatched fire trucks and personnel to the area upon learning of the blaze.

The area where the fire had started was about 20 meters away from the road from where the registration office of the Twin Lakes is situated, Mier said.

It could be reached by firefighters but he said that as the fire goes inward, firetrucks and vehicles may no longer be able to travel further in.

The cause of the fire has not been determined yet but it could either be spontaneous combustion or intentional, Mier said.

He said he does not believe that a “kaingin” or slash-and-burn activity had ignited the fire, considering that the farmers in the area are now formed into an association and are benefiting from income derived from the protected area.

The protected area of the Twin Lakes Natural Park comprises more than 8,000 hectares of forest land, he said.

He hopes that efforts to put out the fire will be successful and it would not be spreading sideways as it would bring more damage to the forests. (**PNA**)



# Manila Bay discoloration, possibly caused by pollution

Published April 18, 2020, 6:30 PM

By *Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz*

The striking discoloration of Manila Bay last month may have actually been caused by pollution, based on satellite imagery analysis.

The researchers of the Space Technology and Applications Mastery, Innovation and Advancement (STAMINA4Space) Program used satellite images from the European Space Agency's Sentinel-2 and Sentinel-3 to analyze the chlorophyll-a concentration and water turbidity in the area from March 13 to March 28.

The increasing turbidity values as early as March 23 suggested that the discoloration of a portion of Manila Bay may have been due to water pollution, while chlorophyll-a levels did not increase significantly thus it could not be attributed to algal bloom, the PHL Microsat said in a post. It noted that a significant decline in chlorophyll-a and turbidity has already been observed by March 28. An initial investigation by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) last March 28 has suspected that buildings and establishments surrounding the Manila Bay may have discharged wastewater into the waters, causing the sudden color change from dark blue to turquoise blue.

After a photo made rounds on social media last March 25 showing a striking discoloration of Manila Bay, DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu inspected the wastewater discharge along the baywalk area and outfall No. 3 located near the SM Mall of Asia in Pasay City. The DENR has yet to make public its official findings on the sudden color change of Manila Bay.

The University of the Philippines-Marine Science Institute earlier has also initially considered algal bloom or chemical pollution that may have caused the discoloration of the bay. PHL Microsat is a local science program that launched the Philippines' microsatellites Diwata-1 and Diwata-2, and nanosatellite Maya-1.

It is succeeded by the STAMINA4Space program to sustain the growth of a local scientific-industrial base in space technology and applications in the country.

# Sarangani Bay Protected Seascape marks 24th year

By **BusinessMirror**

-April 19, 2020



Underwater photo contest first prize winner by Bretch Garcinez

Sarangani Bay, one of the country's richest body of water and home to the tuna industry, recently marked another milestone as it celebrated its 24th year as a protected seascape.

To mark the occasion, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Region 12, in collaboration with the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB), launched the first-ever Sarangani Bay Protected Seascape (SBPS) Week to highlight the efforts to protect and conserve its coastal and marine resources.

The bay was declared a protected seascape by former President Fidel Ramos under Proclamation 756 in 1996, covering an area of 215,950 hectares.

Held in General Santos City and various parts of Sarangani province, the weeklong observance consisted of mall exhibits of marine species and simultaneous bay-wide cleanups that were participated in by the 68 barangays, business and tourism establishments along the bay's coast.

A dive safari and underwater photography contest held at Maitum, Kiamba and Maasim towns showcased Sarangani's emerging scuba diving sites.

Topping the three-day photo tilt were Bretch Garcinez of General Santos City, and East Pardillo of Davao City who won the wide and macro categories, respectively.

Other activities included a three-day environmental forum and enforcement summit; trash-to-art, mass dance and logo-making competitions, and the search for the Ambassadors of SBPS.

Declared by the Department of Tourism as a scuba diving haven in southern Mindanao in 2017, the bay was also listed by the DENR as a Marine Key Biodiversity Areas with coral resources covering 2,293 hectares, 60 important live hard coral genera, 411 reef species, and 11 species of seagrass.

The DENR has also monitored various dolphin species, killer whales, dwarf and pygmy sperm whales in the bay, attesting to its rich biodiversity.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/04/19/sarangani-bay-protected-seascape-marks-24th-year/>

# Garbage collectors doing their part in fight against COVID-19

Published April 18, 2020, 12:28 PM

By **Noreen Jazul**

Despite their fears and worries, garbage collectors and other sanitation frontliners continue to do their part in the country's fight against COVID-19.



(PIXABAY / MANILA BULLETIN)

In an exclusive interview with GMA News, members of the Quezon City Task Force Waste Collection said their desire to help in curbing the spread of the virus is bigger than their fear of contracting it.

“Kahiti garbage collector lang po...at least po makatulong po kami sa inyo na linisin yung lugar natin para di na po kumalat yung coronavirus. Sa simple paraan po makatulong kami sa inyo,” Roldan Marijuan, a special waste collector said.

(Even though we're just garbage collectors...at least we can help in curbing the spread of the virus by maintaining the cleanliness of different places. In simple ways, at least, we could help our fellow Filipinos.)

Jan Padro, member of the disinfection team, for his part, said: “Lahat po kami natatakot po... [pero] para lang po talaga sa bayan po para makatulong.”

(We're all scared, but we are doing this for the country, to help.)

The sanitation workers have also called on the public to help them and other frontline workers to stop the virus spread by staying home, and by segregating their trash properly, especially medical waste.

Hospitals, crematoriums and households in Quezon City are encouraged to put their medical waste like gloves, masks, tissue papers and wet wipes in a separate bag, preferably a yellow plastic bag. “Yung mga gamit na pinag gamitan natin [kapag] nakalagay lang sa tama na basurahan, malaking bagay na po 'yon,” Jhon Espladon, OIC of QC's disinfection team, said.

(Segregating used hygiene and medical products in the trash would be of big help to us.)

Source: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/04/18/garbage-collectors-doing-their-part-in-fight-against-covid-19/>

# Talks on new Manila Water deal to end by June



By [Jordeene B. Lagare](#)

April 19, 2020

ONGOING discussions on new water contract with Manila Water Co. Inc. are expected to conclude by mid-2020, according to company officials, who say negotiations with the government are “proceeding well.” During his firm’s annual stockholders’ virtual meeting on Friday, Manila Water Chairman Fernando Zobel de Ayala said “negotiations have generally been going well and the government has stated that they would like the negotiations to be completed as soon as possible.” Jose Rene Almendras, Manila Water president and chief executive officer, said the current review of the contract was “moving quite well” and that the Duterte administration enlisted the Asian Development Bank to assist them on the economic and commercial aspects of the concession agreement. Some government officials intend to resolve the issue by May or June, he added.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/04/19/business/companies/talks-on-new-manila-water-deal-to-end-by-june/715861/>



## Ruling on water contract seen in next two months

[Louise Maureen Simeon](#) (The Philippine Star) - April 19, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Ayala-led Manila Water Co. Inc. expects a decision on the government's review of the concession agreement as early as next month.

In its virtual annual stockholders' meeting Friday, Manila Water president and chief executive officer Jose Rene Almendras said the company has been working closely with the government to arrive at a solution that will be beneficial not just for the customers but other shareholders as well.

"We see it moving quite well and that by May or June, there might be a resolution on this issue already. We see the effort of the government to meet this deadline," Almendras said.

"The government is giving a priority to bring this matter to a close. Even with the lockdown, they are doing a lot to keep discussions with the ADB (Asian Development Bank) moving," he said.

ADB has been enlisted for the economic and financial aspects of crafting the draft contracts of the Metropolitan Waterworks Sewerage System with water firms Manila Water and Maynilad Water Services Inc.

Last January, Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra said the new contracts that would replace the existing ones which allegedly contained onerous provisions will be ready after six months.

“We remain open with the government on the review of the concession. The involvement of the ADB sends a positive signal that discussions will be comprehensive and balanced,” Manila Water chairman Fernando Zobel de Ayala said.

“The completion of the negotiations with the government will provide a great deal of stability and make our banks more comfortable. All is proceeding well and we hope to get results very soon,” he said.

Manila Water has been submitting pertinent documents to the Department of Finance including past historical records, financial statements and other service obligation records.

# DoE: Electricity users get grace period for paying bills



By [Jordeene B. Lagare](#)

April 19, 2020

THE Department of Energy (DoE) ordered power companies to defer their billings without imposing additional charges while Luzon is under enhanced community quarantine.



*In this Noovv. 27, 2019 photoo, Ener, Energygy SSecreteretary Alf Alfonso Cusi delivonso Cusi delivers his khis keeynotynote adre address aess at the firstt the first GoGovernment-Privernment-Privaatte Fe Forum on theorum on the CCleaner Enerleaner Energy Fgy Futuruture Initiae Initiativtive fe foror AAsean in Msean in Makakaati Cti Cityty. . PHOPHOTTO FRO FROMOM THE DOE FTHE DOE FAACEBOOK PCEBOOK PAAGEGE*

In an April 16 advisory, Energy Secretary Alfonso Cusi said “all electricity consumers shall be provided a grace period to pay their bills falling due during the original and extended ECQ (enhanced community quarantine) periods without interest, penalties, fees and charges.”

Such bills shall be amortized in four equal installments, and payable in the first four months after the quarantine is lifted.

The advisory comes after the Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) released an advisory directing distribution utilities and retail electricity suppliers to give a grace period to their customers whose bills’ due dates fall between March 16 and April 30.

The cumulative amount of these bills shall be reflected as a separate item in the power bill, provided that the first billing due date after the lockdown shall be no earlier than May 15.

This also applies to all public and private corporations in the power sector, also without interest, penalties, fees and charges and payable in four installments.

The payment extension applies to those to the National Power Corp., National Transmission Corp., National Grid Corp. of the Philippines and the Power Sector Assets and Liabilities Management Corp. (Psalm), including power bills and rate adjustments; fuel/resource suppliers of generating facilities, including coal, oil, steam supply and natural gas; independent power producers; universal charges as administered by Psalm; and Independent Electricity Market Operator of the Philippines Inc. of total trading amounts and other charges.

The Energy department also suspended the collection of the feed-in-tariff allowance (Fit-All) from customers for another billing period.

ERC Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Agnes Devanadera said electricity users would continue to benefit from the P0.04 per kilowatt hour (kWh) reduction with the suspension of FiT-All collection.

Customers and companies are encouraged to settle their dues ahead or within the due dates to help cushion the impact of the quarantine on the sector.





## GRABE NA ANG COVID-19 KAYA LAHAT DAPAT LUMABAN

April 18, 2020 @ 5:46 PM 13 hours ago

Views: 131

Manila, Philippines – Nagpapalitan sa unang pwesto ang Pilipinas at Indonesia sa may pinakamaraming kumpirmadong positibo sa Corona Virus Disease-19.

Habang tinitipa natin ito, nangunguna ang Indonesia sa bilang na 5,923 kumpara sa Pilipinas na may 5,878 habang nasa pangatlong pwesto ang Malaysia na may 5,251 at ikaapat ang Singapore na may 5,050.

Nangunguna naman ang Indonesia sa may pinakamalaking bilang ng patay na 520 at sinundan ito ng Pilipinas na may 387 habang may 86 ang Malaysia at 11 ang Singapore.

Ang punto rito, partikular sa mahal kong Pinas, habang dumarami ang mga testing kit at mga ospital at organisasyon na nagsasagawa ng mga test, mabilis ding natutukoy ang mga positibo sa sakit.

Kaya inaasahan nating magmukhang lalala pa ang sitwasyon habang dumaraan ang mga araw dahil libo-libo na ang kayang testingin o suriin ng ating mga ospital at iba pa gaya ng Philippine Red Cross.

Ayon pa nga sa Department Health, nakapagsagawa na ang Pilipinas ng mahigit 40,000 na test o pagsusuri.

### GRABE SA ABROAD

Mayayanig ka sa nagaganap sa ibang bansa gaya ng sa United States of America at Europa.

Ang USA, meron nang 710,021 biktima at may patay nang 37,242; Italy – 172,434 biktima at 22,745 patay; Spain – 190,839 biktima at 20,002 patay; France – 165,027 biktima at 18,681 patay; United Kingdom – 108,692 biktima at 14,576 patay; Germany – 141,397 biktima at 4,352 patay; at Belgium – 36,138 biktima at 5,163 patay.

Maimadyin ba ninyo na mismong mga military truck na ang sumusundo at nagkakarga sa mga patay saka sinusunog o inililibing ang mga ito sa tinatawag na “mass grave?”

Sana naman, hindi mangyari ang ganito kabigat na kalagayan sa Covid-19.

Pero kung mangyari ito sa Pinas, saan kaya tayo patutungo?

Tanong ito dahil mahirap tayong bansa habang ang mga nasa abroad ay sila ang kabilang sa mga pinakamayayamang bansa sa buong mundo.

Nakakayanan ng mga mayayamang bansa na balikatin ang pagdagan ng mundo sa kanila at tiyak na sila'y makababangon bilang bansa.

Dahil mahirap tayo, baka daanin na lang natin sa iyak ang lahat at mahirap ding bumangon mula sa pagkakasadlak sa kamatayan, kahirapan, gutom at iba pang anyo ng malalang krisis.

#### MAKIPAGTULUNGAN LABAN SA COVID-19

Upang mapigil ang mabilis at malawakang paglaganap ng Covid-19, ginagawa ng lahat ng pamahalaang pambansa at lokal ang kanilang makakaya,

Kaya nariryan ang paggawa ng mga batas sa curfew, na Republic Act 11469 o Bayanihan to Heal as One Act, State of Calamity, at Extended Enhanced Community Quarantine na pinaiiral sa buong Luzon at ilang bahagi ng Kabisayaan at Mindanao at mga ordinansa ng mga lokal na pamahalaan mula sa mga rehiyon hanggang sa mga lalawigan, lungsod, bayan at barangay.

Sa curfew, may nagpapatupad ng 8pm ng gabi hanggang 5am ng umaga habang 24 oras ang pinatutupad ng iba.

Itong Bayanihan Act, nilalaman ang pagkilos ng buong pamahalaan hindi lang para malabanan ang sakit kundi pakilusin din ang mga mamamayan na lumahok dito.

Kasama sa Bayanihan Act ang pagtitiyak ng lahat ng kakayanan ng buong pamahalalan na kalingain ang mga mamamayan sa mga batayan nilang pangangailangan, lalo na sa pagkain at kalusugan.

Ginawa rin ang State of Calamity upang mapigilan ang labis na pagtaas ng presyo ng mga batayang pangangailangan at magamit ng lahat ng lokal at pambansang pamahalaan ang kanilang mga calamity fund at iba pang pondo para labanan ang Covid-19 at maayudahan ang mga mamamayan at hindi lang ang mga biktima ng sakit.

Ang community quarantine na may ilang mukha ay pinaiiral upang mapigilan ang mga tao na maglakbay nang maglakbay kahit saan sa Pilipinas at mapigilan ang pagkalat ng sakit.

Kakambal nito ang mga patakaran sa social distancing, stay at home, pagsusuot ng face mask sa loob at labas ng bahay at iba pa.

Bahala naman ang mga lokal na pamahalaan na maglapat ng mga ordinansa para sa kapakanan ng kanilang mga nasasakupan ngunit naaayon pa rin sa mga umiiral na mga pambansang batas at patakaran.

Ang kailangan na kailangan natin ay ang pagsunod ng lahat sa nabanggit na mga batas at patakaran para na rin sa proteksyon natin sa sakit at kamatayan.

Sana naman, sumunod at makipagkooperasyon tayo at huwag nating itulak ang pamahalaan na magdeklara ng martial law para lang sumunod ang lahat.

Source: <https://remate.ph/grabe-na-ang-covid-19-kaya-lahat-dapat-lumaban/>

# Palace: Lockdown extension still on study

Published 9 hours ago  
on April 18, 2020 09:31 PM  
By **TDT**



Presidential spokesman Harry Roque on Saturday disclosed that the government is still studying whether to further extend the enhanced community quarantine or resort to a “relaxed” version of it in Luzon.

In a radio interview, Roque said that President Rodrigo Duterte is listening to experts’ advice on the matter and noted that he is studying the possibilities on extending further or relaxing the enhanced community quarantine in Luzon.

Roque said that initial reports submitted by Cabinet members are pushing for a modified quarantine — which would limit the restriction of movement to the barangays or disallow vulnerable people to go outdoors.

“Presidential adviser Joey Concepcion and Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez have already given initial reports on the possibilities and scenarios that may happen,” said Roque.

The Palace official also called on the public to abide by quarantine protocols, as people await the President’s decision.

Originally slated to end on 13 April, authorities extended the enhanced community quarantine until 30 April 30.

The Health department has recorded the number of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) positive patients at 6,087.

Extended or modified ECQ possible after April 30 –

April 19, 2020

TITLE: Palace spokesman

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DATE

## COVID-19 RESPONSE

# Extended or modified ECQ possible after April 30 —Palace spokesman

Published April 18, 2020 5:01pm

An extended, or a modified enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) is possible, Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said Saturday, but either scenario could wait until after April 30.

In Dobo B sa News TV interview, Roque said the suggestions came out after Presidential Adviser for Entrepreneurship Joey Concepcion, and Finance Secretary Sonny Dominguez made their reports.

"Tingin ko, malinaw na hindi pa puwedeng mawala ang quarantine. Ang posibilidad ay magpatuloy ang ECQ as is, o di naman kaya magkaroon ng modified [one]," Roque said.

"At ilan sa mga proposals na narinig ko doon sa huling pagpupulong noong araw ng Tuesday ay 'yung modification base sa geographical location, modification base sa comorbidity, at modification base sa industriya," he added.

President Rodrigo Duterte [claimed on Thursday that "killer antibodies"](#) allegedly capable of curing the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) will be rolled out in a few days.

Also, the President claimed that [pharmaceutical giants have developed an antibody treatment for COVID-19](#) that is set to roll out in May, and he vowed to lift the Luzon-wide quarantine once the medicines are delivered to the Philippines.

"Kung ang iniisip niyo ay pagnanais, well tingin ko po lahat naman tayo nagnanais na matapos na ito. Pero ang tanong is, ano ang katumbas, ano ang kapalit ng pagli-lift ng ECQ? Gaano karami sa atin ang mamamatay? 'Yun po ang napakahirap na desisyon ng presidente, kung meron ba talagang katumbas ang buhay ng isang Pilipino doon sa pagli-lift ng ECQ para mapagpatuloy po ang hanapbuhay natin," Roque said.

### On Duque

Roque also reiterated President Rodrigo Duterte's decision to keep Health Secretary Francisco Duque III in his post, despite calls from senators for him to resign.

"Sabihin na lang po natin na nasa gitna po tayo ng krisis at ang nangunguna ng bayan natin at kasama ang presidente ay ang Department of Health. Kahit ano pa pong sabihin natin ngayon ay nasa kalagitnaan na tayo ng giyera, mahirap pong magpalit ng heneral sa kalagitnaan ng giyera," Roque pointed out.

But he said the DOH needs to step up, particularly in the conducting of the mass testing.

Extended or modified ECQ possible after April 30 –

April 19, 2020

TITLE: Palace spokesman

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"Sa ngayon po ang problema ay 'yung desisyon na gagawin ni presidente talaga ay dapat nakabase sa siyensiya, dapat nakabase sa datos. Kinakailangan po nating paigtingin ang ating mass testing, sana malaman po natin kung nasaan na ba talaga tayong dito sa ating giyera laban sa sakit na ito," he said.

"Siguro po 'yan 'yung isa sa mga pinakaimportante na dapat na bigyan ng pansin ng ating buong departamento ng health, 'yung mass testing na nasimulan na po, dapat po 'yan mapatuloy na at nang malaman natin kung ilang porsyento talaga, kung talagang we have flattened the curve at saka pangalawa siyempre, 'yung kakayahan ng ating buong health industry na magbigay ng serbisyo kung lalo pang dadami ang mga nagkakasakit," Roque added. —**Jamil Santos/LBG, GMA News**

# Extension of ECQ until mid-May not true: Nograles

By Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos [April 18, 2020, 1:52 pm](#)



Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles

**MANILA** – Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles on Saturday vehemently denied he had told businessmen that the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) in Luzon will be extended until mid-May.

Nograles merely dismissed as “fake, false, and untrue” the supposed plan to extend the ECQ anew.

“*Napakalayo sa katotohanan* (This is far from the truth). This is totally false, totally untrue, totally fake. So *huwag na po nating patulan iyan* (Just ignore it),” he said in a virtual presser aired on state-run PTV-4.

Nograles issued the statement after being asked if he had really informed businessmen about President Rodrigo Duterte's willingness to order another extension of ECQ until mid-May.

Nograles reiterated that the small group formed by Duterte has yet to present its possible recommendations with regard to ECQ's fate.

He added that the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) still has to deliberate on the recommendations that will be presented by the small group.

“*Sa Lunes, pagu-usapan namin at ire-rekomenda pa namin ito kay Pangulo*. At ultimately, *si Pangulo ang magde-desisyon* (We will discuss it on Monday. We will then make a recommendation to the President. Ultimately, the President will be the one to decide),” Nograles, spokesperson of IATF-EID, said.

The ECQ in Luzon to contain the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) in the country is expected to end on April 30.

The Luzon-wide ECQ might either be partially lifted, totally lifted, or extended anew, depending on the IATF-EID's recommendations that will be transmitted to Duterte.

The government has to consider five parameters, which include the “trends in the Covid-19 epidemiological curve, the capacity of the health care system, and the social, economic, and security factors,” in deciding on the fate of ECQ in Luzon.

## Not powerless vs. Covid-19

Nograles maintained that the country's fight against Covid-19 would be successful if everyone cooperates with the government.

He said the country is "not powerless" against Covid-19 because there are several ways to arrest the spread of the contagion.

He said Covid-19 deaths could be prevented when people heed the government's quarantine protocols.

"Each loss cannot be quantified; they hurt us all. But we are not powerless against this disease; we can do something about it," Nograles said.

Nograles then reiterated his call on the public to follow the ECQ guidelines.

"*Sundin ang ECQ. Manatili sa bahay, Mag-hugas ng kamay* (Follow ECQ. Stay at home. Wash your hands)," he said.

The Philippines has so far reported 5,878 Covid-19 infections, with 387 deaths and 487 recoveries. (*PNA*)

# Economist suggests ‘selective quarantine’ in barangays after lockdown ends

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Apr 18 2020 11:26 PM

MANILA--An economist on Saturday suggested placing some barangays in "selective quarantine" should the lockdown in Luzon be lifted on April 30.

“Let us not penalize the barangays that are infection-free and have followed the President’s orders to stay home for 6 weeks,” Joey Concepcion, presidential adviser for entrepreneurship and Go Negosyo Founder, said in a statement.

However, barangays that still have an "overwhelming" number of COVID-19 cases should remain in quarantine.

“This all serves as an incentive for the mayors, barangay captains, and the residents to keep their barangays safe, with no new cases,” Concepcion said.

He explained that, in a selective quarantine, the mayor and the barangay chairpersons are authorized to implement an extended lockdown if an area remains stricken with the virus, especially if the rate of infection there is high.

Concepcion said determining guidelines for declaring a quarantine will be provided by the Philippine inter-agency task force focused on coronavirus response.

“When we say barangay quarantine, you don’t start by locking down a certain city, you start by considering quarantines for barangays that have high infection rates,” he said.

The barangay quarantines, Concepcion added, aim to help to identify the most vulnerable communities, and redirect resources and services to help stop the spread of the disease.

Concepcion said that depending on the number and location of the confirmed cases per area, the barangay quarantine can be expanded to become a city or town lockdown, "and even a provincial quarantine, should a wider scale lockdown be necessary."

He said that if the barangay quarantine is implemented successfully, public confidence will be reinstated and the country's economy will revive.

"With proper testing and containment of the virus at the barangay levels, key industries can resume operations and the essential workforce can return safely to work," he said.

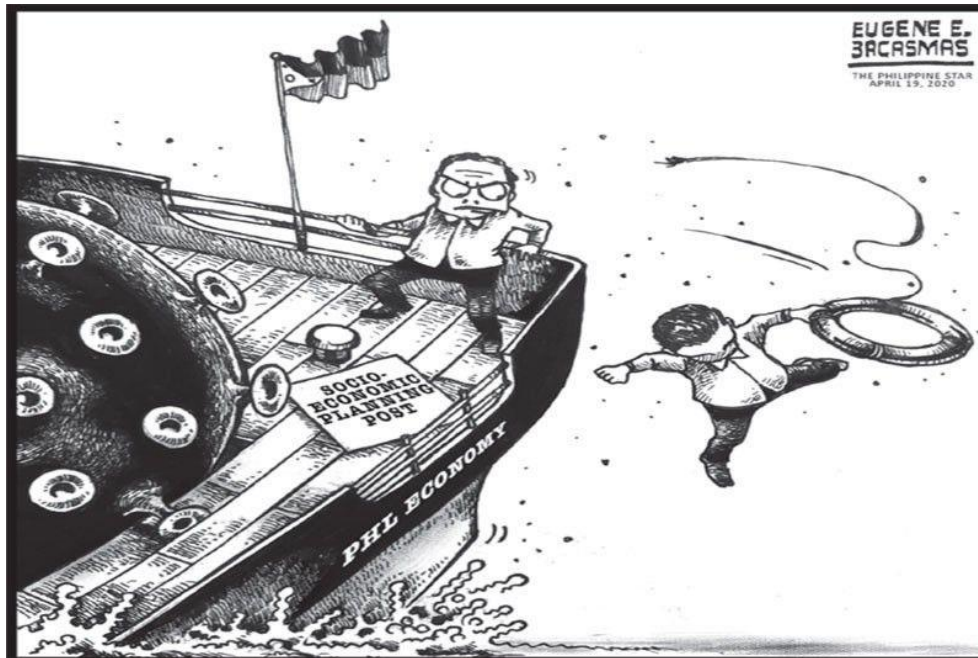
"The barangay quarantine is the most sustainable approach to containing the virus, and can be used continuously until a cure is found."

Luzon, home to half of the country's 100 million people, was locked down on March 17, a state of quarantine initially scheduled until April 12.

As of Saturday, the Philippines has recorded 6,087 COVID-19 cases with 397 deaths and 516 recoveries, the health department said.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/business/04/18/20/economist-suggests-selective-quarantine-in-barangays-after-lockdown-ends>





## EDITORIAL - Changing horses

(The Philippine Star) - April 19, 2020 - 12:00am

Health is wealth: we're seeing a dramatic manifestation of this as the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic cripples the global economy. Governments are grappling with the tough task of balancing the needs of public health and economic health. Around the world, governments are considering the gradual easing of unprecedented restrictions to contain COVID-19, weighing the risks to public health in the effort to rescue economies from the intensive care unit.

In the Philippines, as in much of the rest of the world, analysts are seeing economic contraction for the year – something that can have dire consequences for a developing country where millions have been pressed deeper into poverty by the pandemic.

In a manifestation of turbulence on the economic front, Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Ernesto Pernia resigned last Friday, citing personal reasons and “differences in development philosophy” with some Cabinet members. He did not elaborate, but Pernia had been calling for a modified community quarantine to restart the economy and avert contraction.

The Inter-Agency Task Force on COVID-19 has been studying the proposal, which echoes recommendations of the business community. The private sector has been pitching in to assist the hardest hit households, but resources for aid are not unlimited. The government also needs revenues from private enterprises to sustain aid to the neediest segments of the population as well as jumpstart the economy.

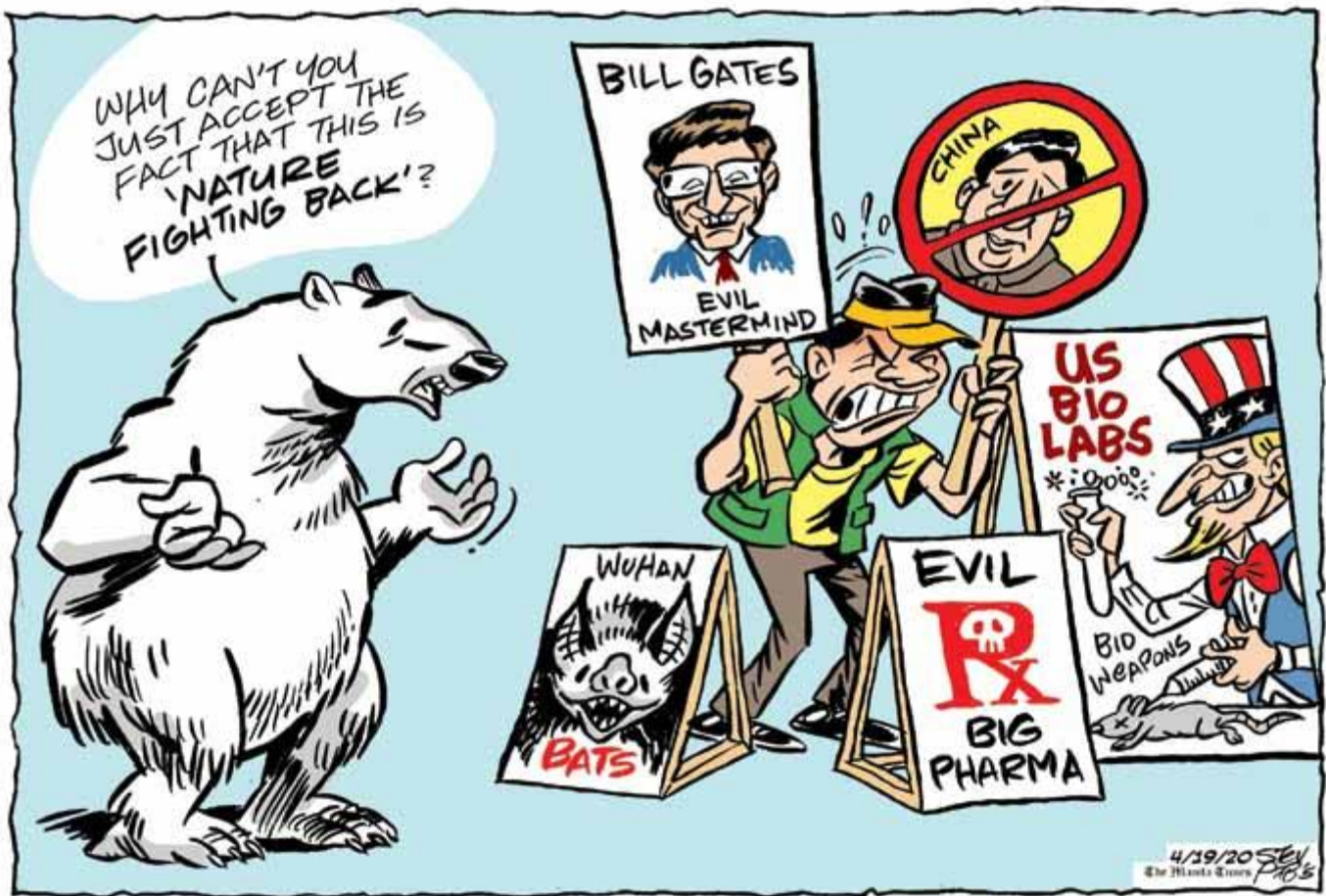
Not surprisingly, concerns were raised in the business community over the potential instability that Pernia's resignation might cause. The country is confronting a crisis, and there is the admonition against changing horses in the middle of the stream. But the concerns were allayed by the immediate designation of a replacement.

Although serving in an acting capacity as Pernia's replacement, Karl Kendrick Chua is already part of the team confronting the economic impact of the pandemic, as undersecretary of the Department of Finance. With this quick change, the government can continue focusing on the difficult balancing act between public health and the economy.

# 'NATURE FIGHTING BACK'?

By [The Manila Times](#)

April 19, 2020



'NATURE FIGHTING BACK'?

# Experimental virus drug remdesivir effective in monkeys - study

Published April 18, 2020 2:03pm

The experimental antiviral drug remdesivir has proven effective against COVID-19 in a small experiment involving monkeys, US government scientists reported Friday.

The study, which is preliminary and has not yet been peer reviewed, was designed to follow dosing and treatment procedures used for hospitalized COVID-19 patients in a large human trial.

It involved two groups of six rhesus macaques that were deliberately infected with SARS-CoV-2.

One group received the drug, which was developed by Gilead Sciences, and the other group did not.

The group receiving the drug got their first intravenous dose 12 hours after infection then every day subsequently for six days.

The scientists timed the initial treatment to occur shortly before the virus reached its highest levels in the animals' lungs.

The treated animals showed significant improvement 12 hours after their first dose, a trend that continued over the week-long study.

One of the six treated animals showed mild breathing difficulty, while all six of the untreated monkeys had rapid and difficult breathing.

The amount of virus found in the lungs was significantly lower in the treated group compared to the untreated group.

The treated group also had less lung damage.

Remdesivir was among the first drugs mooted as a treatment for the novel coronavirus and its randomized clinical trials are at an advanced stage.

The health news website Stat on Thursday reported the drug had shown great efficacy at a Chicago hospital where patients who are part of those trials are being treated.

Remdesivir causes the virus to add mutations that can destroy it. - **Agence France-Presse**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/scitech/science/734583/experimental-virus-drug-remdesivir-effective-in-monkeys-study/story/>

# Scientists try 'cloud brightening' to protect Great Barrier Reef

In an attempt to cool waters around the reef by making clouds reflect more sunlight, researchers say they used a boat-mounted fan similar to a snow cannon to shoot salt crystals into the air

Agence France-Presse

@afp

Published 10:03 PM, April 17, 2020

Updated 10:03 PM, April 17, 2020



BLEACHING. An undated handout photo received from ARC Centre of Excellence for Coral Reef Studies on April 19, 2018 shows a mass bleaching event on a coral reef at Orpheus Island on Australia's Great Barrier Reef. File photo by Greg Torda/Arc Centre of Excellence for Cor/AFP

SYDNEY, Australia – An ambitious "cloud brightening" experiment has been carried out over Australia's [Great Barrier Reef](#) in an early-stage trial that scientists hope could become a futuristic way to protect coral from global warming.

In an attempt to cool waters around the reef by making clouds reflect more sunlight, researchers said they used a boat-mounted fan similar to a snow cannon to shoot salt crystals into the air.

Results from the trial were "really, really encouraging," the project's lead scientist Daniel Harrison from Southern Cross University said on Friday, April 17.

"All the research is theoretical...so this an absolute world first to go out and actually try and take seawater and turn it into these cloud condensation nuclei," he told Agence France-Presse.

Harrison stressed that despite the success of the experiment, at least 4 years of further research would be needed to prove the theory.

Warmer seas caused by climate change have damaged the health of the Great Barrier Reef, the world's largest coral system.

The experiment was carried out by the university and the Sydney Institute of Marine Science late last month, just before a comprehensive scientific survey found that the reef had suffered its [most widespread coral bleaching on record](#).

Scientist try ‘cloud brightening’ to protect Great Barrier

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Bleaching occurs when healthy corals become stressed by changes in ocean temperatures – causing them to expel algae, which drains them of their vibrant colors.

It was the third mass bleaching event in the past 5 years, raising fears that much of the reef’s coral could be permanently damaged.

To have a significant impact on the reef, a full-scale experiment would need to be 10 times larger, involving the use of several big barge-mounted turbines, Harrison said.

But, he added, "If it works as well as we hope then maybe we could reduce the bleaching stress by about 70 per cent...potentially nearly all of the mortality."

He also said the effectiveness of the cloud-brightening technique would drop significantly as the ocean warms further.

That means the process would be similar to putting the reef on life-support while the underlying challenge of climate change was addressed.

"If we keep going on business-as-usual-type emission scenarios, then at most this technology can just buy a couple of extra decades before we see the complete loss of the reef," he warned. – **Rappler.com**

# Robots helpful against COVID-19

Published 3 hours ago  
on April 19, 2020 03:00 AM  
By **China Daily**



A robot sprays disinfectant in Tangshan, Hebei province, during the COVID-19 epidemic. Photograph courtesy of China Daily

SHIJIAZHUANG, China (China Daily) — Robots that can deliver food at hospitals, spray disinfectants and never get sick have emerged as helpful assistants in the fight against COVID-19.

At Gongren Hospital in Tangshan, Hebei province, an intelligent delivery robot was used to send food, medicines and daily necessities to wards, lightening the load of nurses and avoiding cross-infection between medical professionals and patients.

The robot is equipped with an autonomous navigation system that can lead it to a certain room and avoid obstacles.

In some places, including Hebei, such robots are used to patrol public areas to find people who are not wearing a mask and then reminding them through a loudspeaker that others can hear clearly.

Some are used for checking people's temperatures from a distance, thereby avoiding close contact from human staff members.

Other robots spray disinfectant in public places or wield equipment for urgent medical applications.

Tangshan, which boasts a research and manufacturing industry that gives birth to robots, has provided many of its automatic offspring to cities nationwide amid the COVID-19 epidemic to help combat the virus.

# Matterhorn in Swiss Alps lit up with American flag, messages of hope during coronavirus crisis

By David Williams, CNN

Published Apr 18, 2020 2:47:53 PM



**(CNN)** — Switzerland's famed Matterhorn mountain was illuminated with an American flag for a few hours as a symbol of solidarity during the coronavirus pandemic.

"Our thoughts are with all American people at this unprecedented time. We look forward to meeting again at the foot of the Matterhorn, we are all in this together," the [tourism organization Zermatt Matterhorn](#) wrote on its Facebook page.

Light artist Gerry Hofstetter projected the flag onto the 14,692 foot tall peak in the Swiss Alps as part of a nightly series designed to show the town of Zermatt's support for everyone suffering and those fighting the pandemic.

Hofstetter is known for projecting images onto landmarks to create temporary art installations. He shined a full-sized image of the Titanic onto a huge Antarctic iceberg in 2012 to mark the 100th anniversary of the ship's sinking.

He's been lighting up the Matterhorn with different images each day since March 24. The American flag was projected late Wednesday.

The mountain has been lit up with the flags of Japan, Germany, the United Kingdom, France, Italy and others in recent weeks along with the hashtags #hope and #allofus.

The popular tourist destination also projected messages encouraging people to stay home and guests to "Dream now -- Travel later."

"We know that you are longing to visit us. Soon we can meet again. For the moment, however, health is our priority," Zermatt Matterhorn wrote on its website. "But dreaming is not prohibited. We support you with great pictures in this travel-free time and send you our best wishes from the Matterhorn.

They've set up webcams, so would-be visitors can watch the displays from home.

Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/world/2020/4/18/Matterhorn-Switzerland-American-flag.html>

# Are your pets safe amid Covid-19?

By **BusinessMirror**

-April 19, 2020



If possible, let your dog out into a safely enclosed backyard so that they can relieve themselves and run around, Peta Asia says.

As we are kept indoors for a little longer by the extended enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) in Luzon to prevent the spread of the deadly coronavirus, we hope and pray that staying at home will keep us safe.

But have we ever thought about the safety of our domestic animals at home that they, too, are vulnerable to 2019 novel coronavirus disease (Covid-19)? Yes, the dogs and cats we occasionally play with, hug and kiss a lot, especially these days while on lockdown, are vulnerable, too.

Experts believe that the novel coronavirus is far more deadly because of how fast it has spread across the globe through human-to-human transmission and, lately, human-to-animal transmission.

In fact, the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared Covid-19 as a pandemic because of the extent of cross-border infection.

## First wild animal with Covid-19

As Nadia, a Malayan tiger at the Bronx Zoo in New York City, has been tested positive for the virus that causes Covid-19, while six others of the same species are exhibiting symptoms consistent with the dreaded disease, experts believe it is time we also consider protecting our domestic animals—the *munings* and *bantays* that we love so much.

The chief veterinarian for the Bronx Zoo, Paul Calle, was quoted in a National Geographic report as saying that Nadia's case was a first—wild animal—for Covid-19.

The human host or carrier of the virus that caused its transmission to Nadia could have been an asymptomatic zookeeper, he said.

Closed since March 16, the zoo's keepers are the only ones allowed to get close to the animals.

Before Nadia, domestic animals had been previously tested positive for the virus—a Pomeranian and a German shepherd in Hong Kong, and a domestic cat in Belgium, the report further said.



## Better safe than sorry

While there was no evidence that domestic animals can spread the coronavirus to people, it is always better to be safe than sorry.

Sought for her expert opinion, Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) Executive Director Theresa Mundita S. Lim said cats, especially, are not safe from Covid-19.

“If it can infect tigers, it can infect related species, like domestic cats. In fact, a few weeks ago there was a report in Belgium that the Covid-19 virus was isolated in a cat whose owner was infected. This is indicating that there is a possibility for interspecies transmission for Covid-19,” she said.

However, she said more tests are needed to have a definitive conclusion, but added “of course, we cannot do that now because of the limited test kits, we need to prioritize the human population first.”

According to Lim, a licensed veterinarian with specialization on wildlife management and disease, amid the emerging information, pet owners can take precautions by trying to keep pets away if they are Covid-positive.

## Animals in captivity

“Wild animals become vulnerable if they are in captivity and their keepers are infected,” she added.

“What this is telling us is that in managing and preventing Covid-19, and until such time that we identify the exact role of domestic species and captive wild animals in disease transmission, we need to take precautions in handling animals who may be exposed to Covid-positive households,” she said.

According to Lim, Asean member-countries, which are struggling to fight Covid-19 also has populations of Malayan tigers in the wild, pointing out that the findings and further studies may become even more relevant today in its efforts in saving tigers in Southeast Asia.

## How to protect cats and dogs

The People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (Peta), through its Senior Vice President of International Campaigns Jason Baker, gave some tips on how to do the job right.

He noted that while humans can spread coronavirus to certain animals—no cat, big or small, and no dog, is known to have spread the virus to humans.

Here are some tips to keep companion animals safe:

- Never put face masks on animals, as they can cause breathing difficulties;
- Allow animals to move about your home normally—don't cage or crate them;
- People who are sick or under medical attention for Covid-19 should avoid close contact with animals and have another member of their household care for them so as not to get the virus on their fur. The coronavirus can be left on animals' fur, just as it can remain on a doorknob, a handrail, another human hand, or any other surfaces that an infected person has touched;
- Don't stockpile unnecessarily—as this could result in shortages for others—but do plan ahead and ensure that you have adequate food and medicine, if needed, for your companion animals (approximately two to three weeks' worth); and/or
- Assist neighbors who may not be able to shop for their companion animals and donate companion-animal food to food banks.

Baker, however, reiterated that since wildlife and “filthy factory farms” are linked to the spread of Covid-19, severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), swine flu, avian flu, mad cow disease, and more—a world in which chickens, pigs and wild animals, such as bats, are not confined in filth for human consumption would make for a far safer world.

Several days ago, Peta sent an urgent e-mail to Agriculture Secretary Dr. William D. Dar, urging him to close live-animal meat markets across the Philippines permanently.

In his letter, he pointed out markets that are crammed full of sick and stressed animals are breeding grounds for deadly diseases.

“While some live-animal markets in China have closed, possibly temporarily, many continue to operate throughout Asia, including the Balintawak Public Market and Farmers’ Market in Manila,” he lamented.

As scientists from various parts of the world race to develop a vaccine that will effectively cure Covid-positive humans, governments across the world are also pinning their hope in preventing further spread of the deadly virus by implementing community quarantines or lockdowns, advising people to stay at home for their own sake.

As pet owners, when we stay at home to help mitigate the spread of Covid-19, it is also our responsibility to keep our animal companions safe.

Image Credits: [Peta Asia.com](https://petaasia.com)