

Young hawk-eagle rescued in Cotabato still learning

TITLE: to fly

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Image shows the Pinsker's Hawk-Eagle (*Nisaetus pinskeri*) rescued in Tulunan town, North Cotabato.

CENRO/Matalam

Young hawk-eagle rescued in Cotabato still learning to fly

[Rosette Adel](#) (Philstar.com) - April 21, 2020 - 4:28pm

MANILA, Philippines— The Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Soccsksargen Monday reported a rescue of a juvenile hawk-eagle in North Cotabato, one of the recent rescues of eagles reported within in Mindanao.

The Pinsker's Hawk-Eagle (*Nisaetus pinskeri*), which is endemic to the Philippines, was rescued by Baldo Lanao, a resident Sitio B'laan, Barangay New Kanibong in Tulunan last Friday.



Jestoni Almarez, of the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office of Matalam enforcement section, said the rescued hawk-eagle was weak but it had no injuries or signs of being harmed.

They also observed that the young raptor is still learning to fly.

It was turned over to CENRO Matalam office on Monday but they would first ensure the hawk-eagle is safe and in good condition before it will be released back to the wild.

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The rescue of the juvenile hawk-eagle comes a day after a juvenile Philippine Eagle (*Pithechophaga jefferyi*) was also rescued in Barangay Kolong-Kolong in Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat last Thursday.



The Philippine Eagle was placed under the custody of the local government unit of Palimbang that coordinated with the Philippine Eagle Foundation, Inc. in Davao City for “proper protocol.”

Last April 16, a Philippine Eagle was also rescued in Zamboanga del Norte and was turned over to DENR Region IX through its CENRO in Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte.

The DENR’s report read that it was rescued at Barangay Bulacan, Siocon, Zamboanga del Norte by Barangay Chair Romeo Dumencil and a certain Nito Bigog.



Bigog reportedly discovered the Philippine eagle in the grassland of barangay.

“He immediately rescued it and reported the find to his Barangay Chairman Dumencil who accompanied him to CENRO Siocon despite the fact that the municipality is under Enhanced Community Quarantine,” the report read.

The Eagle Watch team of CENRO Siocon said that the eagle weighing 3.5 kilograms, has no signs of injury and is in good condition.

It was subsequently placed in an innovated cage for further observation and health assessment before its release back to the wild.

Meanwhile, another young juvenile Crested Serpent Eagle was reportedly rescued from a hunter in Maasim, Sarangani Province last August 8.

Kiamba CENR Officer Ali Hadjinasser reminded the public that hunting of vulnerable species of bird under CITES II (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is a clear violation of the provisions of RA 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Protection and Conservation Act.

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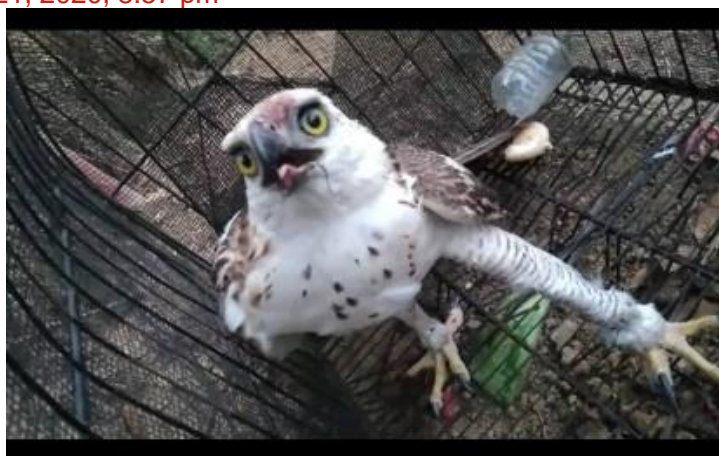


CITES, administered through the United Nations Environment Program, lists down “species that although currently not threatened with extinction, may become so without trade controls.”

The Philippines’ Wildlife law, on the other hand, prohibits the poaching, hunting and possession of wildlife species without proper documents.

5 eagles rescued in Soccsksargen

By Edwin Fernandez April 21, 2020, 8:57 pm



SAVED. The adult Pinsker's Hawk Eagle found by a village watchman of Barangay Buena Vida, Makilala, North Cotabato on Monday (April 20, 2020) is now in the hands of environment officials in North Cotabato. Four other eagles were rescued by local villagers and turned over to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources 12 in the past days. *(Photo courtesy of DENR-12)*

COTABATO CITY – Environment officials in Region 12 (Soccsksargen) made public on Monday local villagers' efforts to rescue five eagles in the provinces of North Cotabato and Sultan Kudarat in the past several days amid the implementation of the enhanced community quarantine due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19).

The endangered species were rescued in the boundary of Magpet, Tulunan, and Makilala in North Cotabato; and in Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat, according to Khadija Bayam-Benpolok, Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) 12 public affairs office chief.

Dr. Sabdullah C. Abubacar, DENR-12 chief, said two eagles, a Pinsker's Hawk-Eagle (*Nisaetus pinskeri*) and a juvenile "Besra" or "Sparrow Hawk-Eagle" were separately rescued on Monday by villagers in the mountains of Makilala and Magpet towns in North Cotabato.

One of the rescued species, the adult Pinsker's Hawk-Eagle was rescued by Juan Magdayo, a village watchman in Barangay Buena Vida, Makilala, North Cotabato.

Magdayo said he found the eagle in a bush and it appeared to be injured due to a small rope tied around its feet. The bird is now in the custody of the DENR in Makilala.

In Tulunan town, Abubacar said farmer Baldz Lanao, of Sitio B'laan, Barangay Kanibong found the endangered bird in a bush on April 19.

Upon advice from village officials, Lanao said he immediately turned over the juvenile bird to the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) of Matalam the following day.

Jestoni Almarez, a staff of CENRO-Matalam, said the rescued young raptor was weak but had no signs of harm or injury.

"The eagle is still learning to fly," Almarez said.

Also on the same day, another eagle was found by farmer Juan Suarez in the fields of Tulunan. This time, it was a young "Serpent Eagle" that appeared to be injured.

The serpent eagle has been checked by DENR personnel and will soon be sent back to the wild.

On April 17, a juvenile Philippine Eagle, also known as the "monkey-eating eagle", was also rescued by fisherman Mastura Sugkan in Barangay Kolong-Kolong, Palimbang, Sultan Kudarat while he was gathering shrimps along Butril River.

Mastura then turned over the bird to Palimbang environment officer Soraima Akmad the next day.

Last month, two Philippine eagles in North Cotabato were rescued by villagers who turned them over to the DENR. They were eventually released back to their natural habitat.

Benpolok said the series of sightings and rescue of eagles and other endangered species could be due to the upcoming summer season when the forests dry up and eagles look for food outside their natural habitat. **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1100515>

Metro Manilans assured of stable water supply

Published April 21, 2020, 2:47 PM

By *Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz*

The National Water Resources Board (NWRB) will ensure that Metro Manila customers will be given the maximum allowable water allocation for domestic use until June. They will have access to a safe, clean, and reliable water supply for the duration of the public health emergency crisis.



(MARK BALMORES / MANILA BULLETIN FILE PHOTO)

NWRB Executive Director Seville David Jr. said that Angat Dam-sourced raw water allocated to the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) has been at 46 cubic meters per second, equivalent to around 4,000 million liters per day, since March 12.

This will be maintained until June in response to President Rodrigo Duterte's call for the people to observe frequent hand washing to fight the spread of coronavirus.

In support of the government's food security program, David said water allocation for irrigation would be increased by June in time for the next wet cropping season.

The NWRB is presently allotting 15 cubic meters per second of raw water to the National Irrigation Administration for the irrigation of farmlands in Bulacan and Pampanga. The normal allocation for irrigation purposes is 30 cubic meters per second.

David earlier assured that there will be sufficient supply of water until the end of dry season citing scenarios integrating climate and rainfall projection of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration.

Angat Dam supplies the domestic water requirements of at least 16.5 million consumers Metro Manila and some parts of Rizal, Laguna, Cavite, and Bulacan; irrigation needs of 28,000 hectares of agricultural land in Bulacan and Pampanga; and hydropower generation from its by-product water releases.

He appealed to the public to avoid wastage and utilize water responsibly.

NWRB noted that if the 15 million Filipinos in Metro Manila conserve at least four liters of water everyday, up to about 60 million liters of water could be saved in a day— or equivalent to 24 Olympic-sized swimming pools.

NWRB: Enough water in Angat Dam to supply Metro Manila until May

Published April 21, 2020 1:45pm

By JON VIKTOR D. CABUENAS, GMA News

There is enough water in Angat Dam to supply Metro Manila even after the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ), the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) said Tuesday.

According to NWRB executive director Sevillo David, there is enough to cater to Metro Manila even after the lapse of the [ECQ extension](#) on April 30.

"With the current allocation of 46 cubic meters per second, there is sufficient supply until the end of the ECQ and even until the month of May prior to the onset of the rainy season," he said in a mobile message.

President Rodrigo Duterte on Monday told Congress that the [water allocation for Metro Manila was increased to 46 cubic meters per second](#), in response to the call to observe frequent hand-washing and bath-taking.

As of Tuesday, the water elevation at the Angat Dam -- which supplies 96% of Metro Manila's water needs -- was recorded at 192.25 meters.

David noted that the current level is within the normal operating level and higher than the minimum operating level of 180 meters.

"We could so note that current level is more than 8 meters higher than last year 2019 at the same time," he said.

"As for irrigation, in Bulacan and Pampanga they will be completing their dry cropping season this April and will resume on the first week of June," added David. — **RSJ, GMA News**

NWRB raises water allocation to MWSS

posted April 21, 2020 at 08:00 pm

by [Othel V. Campos](#)

The National Water Resources Board approved the allocation of 46 cubic meters of water per second (CMS) to the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) for the next two months to ensure water is available for hygienic purposes to prevent the spread of the COVID virus.

This is the second time since March that the water board increased the allocation to MWSS from 42 CMS to 46 CMS to sustain the anticipated high water demand in Metro Manila due to COVID-19.

The board also initially allocated 15 CMS for irrigation to farmlands in the southern part of Bulacan in the month of June. The higher supply will support the government's food security program by sustaining farm production while under the enhanced community quarantine.

The board assured enough water supply from Angat dam until the onset of rainy season in June. The water level in the dam as of April 21, 2020 stood at 192.25 meters, or 12.25 meters above the minimum operating level of 180 meters. The current level is more than eight meters higher year-on-year.

Water, energy supply sufficient

Published 7 hours ago
on April 22, 2020 12:40 AM
By **Hananeel Bordey**



President Rodrigo Duterte has reassured Congress that there is an adequate supply of water and energy for the country while the island of Luzon is under enhanced community quarantine (ECQ).

In his fourth weekly Bayanihan To Heal As One Act report to Congress, the Chief Executive said that the National Water Resources Board has increased the water allocation of the Metropolitan Water Works and Sewerage System (MWSS) from 42 cubic meters per second (CMS) to 46 CMS for May and June this year.

This is intended to ensure continuous supply of water in Metro Manila, the region with the most number of COVID-19 cases, and to make sure that people will observe frequent hand-washing and bath-taking.

The President reported that as of 16 April, the water level in Angat Dam is 12.83 meters higher than the minimum operating level of 180 meters.

Uninterrupted electricity

Duterte also revealed that the government is ensuring uninterrupted supply of electricity in hospitals and quarantine facilities.

As of 15 April, Luzon's actual peak for electricity is at 7,526 megawatts with available capacity of 12,089 MW and reserve capacity of 4,563 MW.

Duterte said that the excess available capacity at peak is 38 percent.

The Philippines has also higher supply of refined petroleum products, according to the President.

He detailed that the country has 59.3 days of inventory of petroleum products and crude oil as of 15 April.

"This is 2.9 days higher compared with the 56.4 days inventory last 6 April 2020," the report read.

Food, rice enough, too

Meanwhile, Cabinet Secretary and Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-MEID) spokesman Karlo Nograles on Tuesday assured the public that there is sufficient supply of rice and other essential food items in the country.

Nogralles made the assurance as the country continues to deal with the COVID-19 pandemic that has forced government to implement quarantine measures on the people in order to prevent the further spread of the virus.

In a press briefing, Nogralles said the public especially those staying in their homes due to the ECQ in Luzon doesn't need to worry of running out of food as the Department of Agriculture (DA) reported that there are enough rice and essential food items like chicken and pork in the market.

He added that the DA is undertaking efforts to ensure a sufficient supply of rice by the end of June of this year.

For disadvantaged families, Nogralles said the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has already released 445,580 family food packs (FFP) to local government units. He said there are a total of 384,426 FFP in DSWD warehouses around the country.

He said that government continues to prioritize efforts to provide the people with the financial assistance needed to ensure that everyone can secure the basic necessities during the ECQ.

with Francis T. Wakefield
@tribunephil_FTW

Philippines to celebrate Earth Day 2020 amid 'unprecedented clean air status' of Metro Manila

Published April 21, 2020 10:15pm

The celebration of the upcoming Earth Day 2020 has become more meaningful due to the "unprecedented clean air status" of Metro Manila.

This is the statement of Earth Day Network Philippines (EDNP) ahead of the international commemoration on Wednesday.

With the reduced human activity amid the enhanced community quarantine, clear skies have greeted the capital region every day.

"We now see the impact of human's abuse to nature particularly biodiversity exploitation," said Atty. Toby Tañada, EDNP President and Earth Day 2020 Co-Chair.

"As we are all in lockdown, air quality improved and nature is recovering," he added.

Environment undersecretary Benny Antiporda confirmed that [air pollution levels](#) in Metro Manila have dropped since the quarantine was implemented on March 15.

Sights from nearby provinces have become clearly visible after many years, such as the [Sierra Madre](#) mountain range, the [Mt. Samat shrine](#) in Bataan, and the [windmills](#) in Pililla, Rizal.

Due to the quarantine, the planned Earth Day Fair and nationwide clean-up have been shelved and replaced by online activities such as webinars and learning sessions.

"Let us take action every day as Earth Day is every day!" Tañada said. --**Kaela Malig/MGP, GMA News**

Antique officials seek temporary halt to operations in

TITLE: Semirara mine

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Antique officials seek temporary halt to operations in Semirara mine

Updated April 21, 2020, 6:47 PM

By Tara Yap

ILOILO CITY – Local officials are urging the national government to temporarily order a halt to operations at the Semirara Mining and Power Corporation (SMPC), the country's largest coalmine located in northern Antique province, where four workers have already tested positive for coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).



Semirara Island in Caluya town, Antique province is considered the country's largest coalmine. (Tara Yap/File/Manila Bulletin)

"We are appealing. We want to avoid the spread of COVID-19," Antique Governor Rhodora Cadio told Manila Bulletin in a Tuesday phone interview.

Cadio said she was issuing the appeal after Mayor Rigil Kent Lim of Caluya town, where SMPC is situated, has reportedly been having a hard time reaching national government officials to convey his concern over the COVID-19 situation in the island.

Semirara is classified as a coalmine reservation and under the jurisdiction of the Department of Energy (DOE). The governor added that Antique Representative Loren Legarda also supported the call to temporary halt coalmining operations.

Cadio noted that both the Antique provincial government and the Caluya local government do not have enough resources if the COVID-19 crisis in Semirara, which has a population of 21,169, worsens.

"If operations cannot be completed halted, SMPC should limit the movement of its workers to avoid infecting the rest of the people living in the island," Cadio emphasized.

Antique province recorded its first positive COVID-19 case last April 7. The first case was a 74-year-old man who flew to Semirara via private plane last March.

Last April 17, the Department of Health (DOH) confirmed that Semirara's three new COVID-19 cases had close contact with the 74-year-old man. According to Cadio, all four patients were working for a sub-contractor of SMPC.

While the four patients are already under strict isolation, local officials were still reportedly facing challenges with contact tracing.

The first patient had 53 contacts, but with the three succeeding patients, these contacts have ballooned to 198.

"But we are not sure if these are the real number of people the four men had contact with, or it could even be more," noted Cadio.

While SMPC has provided an isolation facility, the local government of Caluya was still requesting for a detailed contingency plan.

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“We requested for its immediate remedial plans to contain [COVID-19],” said Lim in statement sent to Manila Bulletin.

For its part, the Caluya local government has released funding for food assistance to those affected by the community quarantine.

Geography also plays a factor in COVID-19 responses. Semirara is one of the three islands composing Caluya town.

Swab samples are taken by Antique Provincial Health Office personnel, who have to travel by land and sea for almost an entire day from San Jose de Buenavista, the provincial capital. The swab samples then have to be transported back to mainland Antique. From Antique, it has to be delivered to the DOH-accredited testing center in Iloilo City.

Meanwhile, the Caluya local government also clarified that it was the DOE that has authority in allowing foreign-flagged vessels to dock at Semirara. This came after concerns were raised with the presence of two Chinese vessels over the weekend.

For its part, the Caluya local government has initiated a protocol as early as January 2020 not to allow personnel of any foreign ship to disembark while loading coal supplies.

Probe of Chinese mining ships in Semirara sought

Legarda wants to know if health, security protocols followed as coal firm continues operation on Antique island

By: [Joey Gabieta](#), [Nestor Burgos Jr.](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:17 AM April 22, 2020



ILOILO CITY, Iloilo, Philippines — Antique Rep. Loren Legarda wants a “full-blown” investigation of the “entry” of Chinese vessels on Semirara Island in Antique province for possible violations of health and security protocols amid the new coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

“While the coal operations in power and mines are ongoing during lockdown, are the Chinese vessels allowed? Do they undergo immigration, quarantine, stringent health protocols?” Legarda said in one of her tweets on Sunday.

In a statement, Semirara Mining and Power Corp. (SMPC) assured that docking and operation of foreign vessels on Semirara Island were in accordance with the government’s COVID-19 protocols and done in coordination with concerned agencies.

SMPC has been operating one of the biggest coal mines in Asia since 1999 on Semirara, a 5,500-hectare island in Caluya town, 159 kilometers from the Antique mainland, which is accessible only by private plane or by motorboat.

The statement said SMPC, since February, had prohibited crew members of foreign vessels from disembarking, in compliance with the “no disembarkation” policy enforced by the Caluya government.

All those involved in operations follow health guidelines, including social distancing, wearing of masks and hazardous material suits, SMPC said.

Concerned

Bong Sanchez, president of the environmental group Save Antique Movement, said three Chinese vessels arrived in Semirara starting April 11 after enhanced quarantine measures were implemented in the province. One vessel left on April 17 and another on April 20, he said. “People, including employees of the mining company, are concerned about the presence of Chinese crew members, but they are afraid to speak out for fear of earning the ire of the company,” Sanchez told the Inquirer. The first confirmed case of COVID-19 in Antique was a worker, reportedly a consultant, of the mining company who arrived on the island from Metro Manila on March 9. Three more workers, who were in close contact with the patient, were later confirmed to be infected.

Sanchez said some residents and employees raised alarm when the vessels continued to arrive despite border and port restrictions when quarantine measures were implemented last month. According to Legarda, the export of coal to China is not essential at this time.

“So why the need for Chinese vessels? This important question begs for an answer. The welfare of my people is paramount,” she said. Legarda said the island must be on lockdown to protect the people, and the mining firm and local officials must answer all these serious concerns. The presence of a China-bound vessel on an island off Guiuan town in Eastern Samar province also caused anxiety among its residents recently.

Daipen Montes, official of the Homonhon Environment Rescuers Association (Hero), said that while the foreign vessel had already left on April 18, this did not appease them.

She said the group had put on quarantine 20 men who helped load a cargo of chromite ore on the vessel which was manned by 13 Chinese and four Myanmar citizens.

The 20 were isolated inside the compound of Techiron Resources Inc., which secured a permit to mine chromite ore, and were monitored by the company doctor.

The quarantine would end on May 1.

Environment advocates worry over entry of Chinese vessels on Semirara Island

By: [Nestor P. Burgos Jr.](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:17 PM April 21, 2020

ILOILO CITY — Environmental advocates have raised concern over the continued entry of Chinese vessels in the waters of Semirara Island in Antique even after COVID-19 quarantine measures were implemented.

Bong Sanchez, president of the Save Antique Movement, said three Chinese vessels had arrived in Semirara since April 11 after enhanced quarantine measures were implemented in Antique province.

He said one vessel left on April 17 and another on April 20.

“People including employees of the mining company are concerned about the presence of Chinese crew members but they are afraid to speak out for fear of earning the ire of the mining company,” Sanchez told the INQUIRER.

But the Semirara Mining and Power Corp. (SMPC) said docking and operation of foreign vessels on Semirara Island were under government COVID-19 protocols and in close coordination with all concerned government agencies.

“Cargo loading was also done under our strict COVID-19 protocols and relevant guidelines set by the national government and local government units. To limit the risk of COVID-19 transmission, we complied with the stringent regulations of the Bureau of Quarantine, Bureau of Immigration, and Bureau of Customs,” the company said in a statement sent to the Inquirer.

It said it has prohibited the disembarking of vessel crewmembers since February, in compliance with the “no disembarkation” policy enforced by Caluya town, which includes the three villages of the 5,500-hectare island.

All those involved in the operations follow health guidelines, including social distancing, wearing masks, and hazardous material suits.

Four workers of the company have been tested positive for the disease.

Antique Rep. Loren Legarda was pushing for a “full-blown” investigation on the entry of Chinese vessels and the mining operations in Semirara.

Legarda said the export of coal to China is not essential at this time.

“So why the need for Chinese vessels? This important question begs for an answer. The welfare of my people is paramount,” Legarda said.

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1262358/environment-advocates-worry-over-entry-of-chinese-vessels-on-semirara-island#ixzz6KIBtR4jR>

Mining and power firm sheds light on vessels docked

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Mining and power firm sheds light on vessels docked in Antique's Semirara Island during ECQ

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Apr 21 2020 07:22 PM

Antique – The Semirara Mining and Power Corporation said Tuesday its continued operations on Semirara Island in the central Philippine province of Antique is in compliance with government regulations amid measures imposed in most parts of the country to slow the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Reacting to reports about the presence of foreign vessels near the island that raised public health concerns among some local residents, the SMPC issued a statement "to assure our stakeholders that the foreign and domestic vessels carrying coal cargo from our mine site were closely coordinated with all concerned government agencies."

"Cargo loading was also done in accordance with our strict coronavirus disease (COVID-19) protocols and relevant guidelines set by" government, the company said.

Stringent regulations issued by the Quarantine, Immigration and Customs bureaus were complied with to limit the risk of COVID-19 transmission, it said.

Vessel crew members have also been prohibited from disembarking since February while the ships are docked in its port, SMPC added, in compliance with the "no disembarkation" policy of the municipal government of Caluya.

Some concerned residents said a number of vessels have been spotted near the island on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. The Save Antique Movement claimed that the 'Chinese' vessels still enter the coast despite the enhanced community quarantine and border control measures in the province.



OFFICIAL STATEMENT

Recent reports of foreign vessels docking on Semirara Island in Western Visayas during the Luzon-wide enhanced community quarantine have raised public health concerns among some island residents.

We would like to assure our stakeholders that the foreign and domestic vessels carrying coal cargo from our mine site were closely coordinated with all concerned government agencies. Cargo loading was also done in accordance with our strict coronavirus disease (COVID-19) protocols and relevant guidelines set by the national government and local government units.

To limit the risk of COVID-19 transmission, we complied with the stringent regulations of the Bureau of Quarantine, Bureau of Immigration and Bureau of Customs. Since February 2020, we have also prohibited the disembarkation of vessel crew members while docked on our port. This is in response to the "no disembarkation" policy enforced by the Municipality of Caluya.

Moreover, our company, contractors and coal buyers strictly practice social distancing, health screening and disinfection inside our coal shipping facility. Employees who need to transact directly with our customers are also required to wear hazardous materials (hazmat) suits, N95 masks, face shields and other personal protective equipment, as needed. A nurse, safety officer and team of security personnel are also on site to monitor and enforce our COVID-19 protocols.

We understand the concerns and anxiety of our host community and other stakeholders during this unprecedented health crisis, and we are doing everything we can to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

We are also prepared to further tighten our safety and health protocols should the national and local government impose additional regulations, guidelines or restrictions.

Bridging the Future

2nd Floor (2MC) Plaza 2281 Choro-Rizal Avenue Extension-Makati City, Philippines 1231 | Mirasol, Semirara Island, Caluya, Antique
0521-888-2055 / 0521-818-7201-12 | 0521-818-7188 | www.semiraramining.com

Mining and power firm sheds light on vessels docked

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Bong Sanchez, the president of the movement, earlier told ABS-CBN News that Semirara residents are worried about the presence of the 'Chinese' ships because they know that the COVID-19 originated from China.

"We understand the concerns and anxiety of our host community and other stakeholders during this unprecedented health crisis, and we are doing everything we can to prevent the spread of COVID-19," the SMPC said, without confirming whether or not the vessels are from China.

It said the company, its contractors and coal buyers strictly practice social distancing, health screening and disinfection inside its coal shipping facility.

Employees who transact directly with customers wear hazardous materials suits, N95 masks, face shields and other personal protective equipment as needed, it said.

And a nurse, a safety officer and a team of security personnel are on site to monitor and enforce the company's COVID-19 protocols, it added.

In a phone interview Tuesday, Antique Governor Rhodora Cadio told ABS-CBN News she has asked for SMPC's explanation on the presence of the vessels through a letter dated April 20.

"I want to know, was this done within the parameters of the Executive Order of the President that all borders, all airports, all piers should be closed within the enhanced community quarantine? I wrote a letter to the Semirara Mining Corporation to inquire all these things," Cadio said.

"May Coast Guard ba na nagbabantay? Kasi parang hindi namin alam ang operations, and we feel that we have to know kung anong nangyayari diyan because of this COVID. May quarantine ba diyan kapag pumapasok ang foreign vessel na yan?"

In her letter, Cadio asked the company to verify the report reaching her office "that lately, two Chinese vessels with the Chinese crew docked at the Semirara Island, notwithstanding the state of Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) therein."

She also specifically asked whether cargoes were loaded or unloaded, whether the Chinese crew had contact with local residents, who authorized the vessels to dock, and whether protocols to prevent the spread of COVID-19 were observed.

Cadio, during the phone interview with ABS-CBN News, said she was able to talk to a company official and asked about the possibility of suspending its operations on the island.

The official told her that the power plant's operations cannot be suspended, while its mining operations can continue with a skeletal force.

"But the mining, sabi niya we are just on operations because this is just to sustain the salaries of our employees. Tapos, sabi niya, I'm willing to make a skeletal force diyan sa may mining operation," Cadio said.

The commander of the Coast Guard Station in Antique had earlier said that the vessels are not necessarily Chinese.

Commander Perlita Cinco said that based on her monitoring, some of the vessels came from Manila and Hong Kong.

As of Monday, four cases of COVID-19 have been recorded on Semirara Island.

Mining and power firm sheds light on vessels docked

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REPUBLIC OF THE PHILIPPINES
Province of Antique
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
New Capitol Bldg., San Jose, Antique

April 20, 2020

SEMIRARA MINING AND POWER CORPORATION
Semirara Island
Caluya, Antique

Greetings:

Please accord this letter the highest attention and priority as its subject matter is of utmost importance and involves the health and welfare of the people of Semirara Island, the Municipality of Caluya, and the Province of Antique.

A report has reached my office that lately two Chinese vessels with the Chinese crew docked at the Semirara Island notwithstanding the state of Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) therein.

Kindly verify the report and, if the same is true, ascertain the following: (a) whether or not the Chinese vessels had unloaded or loaded the cargoes; (b) what kind or type of cargoes were unloaded or loaded?; (c) Did the Chinese crew have contact with local residents?; (d) who authorized the Chinese vessels to dock and the Chinese crew to have contact with local residents?; and (e) were appropriate protocols to prevent the spread of the COVID-2019 observed?

I would appreciate very much if you can favor me with the written reply as soon as possible and, needless to say, it is for the best interest of all concerned.

Respectfully yours,


RHODORA J. CADIAO
Governor

Copy furnished:

1. Municipal Mayor
Caluya, Antique
2. Hon. Secretary
Department of Health
3. Hon. Secretary
Department of Environment and Natural Resources
4. DM Consunji Corporation
Makali City

Late senator Alvarez was physically active, healthy
before getting COVID-19 - son

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April 22, 2020
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Late senator Alvarez was physically active, healthy before getting COVID-19 — son

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Coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is a traitorous enemy, according to Hex Alvarez as he remembered his healthy 80-year-old father former Senator Heherson Alvarez who became a casualty amid the global health crisis.

In an interview on Dabol B sa News TV on Tuesday, Hex said his dad was living a healthy lifestyle before he contracted COVID-19.

"Super conscious about his health, araw-araw nagjo-jogging 'yun, araw-araw naggi-gym tapos he would always make sure that he's in good health," the younger Alvarez said.

He said the former lawmaker even showed improvements after he was admitted to a hospital.

"The first 20 hours talagang nag-improve si dad pero alam mo hindi ka naman talaga namamatay sa COVID eh, gagawin ka lang mahina tapos tatamaan ka ng mga ibang sakit. Humihina ang kaniyang internal organs," Hex said.

Nevertheless, he said his father was a fighter until the end.

"Lumalaban. Ito pa 'yung nakakatawa, kasi si dad when he was conscious daw hinihila pa niya 'yung intubation tube. Inaalís kasi alam mo si dad sobrang aktibo 'yun eh, di siya napapakali sa isang lugar," he said.

For Hex, the hardest part of the ordeal for their family is not being able to spend time with his dad while he was on his deathbed.

"Noong namatay si dad inconsolable si mommy. Hindi man lang daw niya nakausap. Gusto niyang magalit hindi niya alam kung kanino siya magagalit," he said.

"Mahirap kagabi nakita ko 'yung bangkay ng ama ko na nakabalot bago ipasok sa crematorium. I just broke down. Damn you COVID-19 hindi man lang namin nakita o nayakap ang tatay namin dahil sa'yo," he added.

Hex said he is still thankful for all the hard work of the medical frontliners who took good care of his parents.

His mom, Cecile Guidote-Alvarez, also tested positive for COVID-19 but successfully recovered despite other underlying health conditions.

Dealing with grief is also harder as their family continues to follow the quarantine protocols and Hex thanked those who expressed their condolences for their loss.

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"Kahit kaming pamilya hindi magkasama. Naka-lockdown 'yung kapatid ko, 'yung mommy ko naka-lockdown din sa kaniyang condo, ako naka-lockdown din... Magkakahiwalay din kami. Sa May 1 pa kami makakapagsama-sama ulit," he said.

Further, Hex advised the public not to underestimate COVID-19.

"Itong walang-hiyang COVID-19 na ito traydor ito, dapat sineseryoso. Huwag natin gawing biro. Ipagpatuloy natin ang social distancing at gawin natin lahat para malabanan itong traydor na sakit," he said.

As of April 20, the Philippines recorded a total of 6,459 cases of COVID-19, with 428 deaths and 613 recoveries. — **Dona Magsino/RSJ, GMA News**

Sonny Alvarez, 80

By [The Manila Times](#)

April 21, 2020

FORMER senator and Environment secretary Heherson “Sonny” Alvarez succumbed to the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) on Monday.



FORMER senator and Environment secretary Heherson "Sonny" Alvarez. PHOTO BY: RENE H. DILAN
Alvarez, 80, is survived by his wife, Philippine Educational Theater Association founder Cecile Guidote-Alvarez and two children, Hexilon and Xilca.

He reportedly underwent an experimental plasma treatment for Covid-19 last week. His wife also contracted the disease, but her condition has improved.

Senate President Vicente Sotto 3rd and Senate Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri expressed regret that Congress could not hold necrological services for Alvarez since all Covid-19 patients who had died must be cremated immediately.

“I feel more pain with his loss as I and the rest of my colleagues at the Senate and our counterparts at the House of Representatives cannot even give him the proper recognition and reverence due to a former member of Congress, given that his passing comes during this time when the country is gripped by this infectious, fatal virus and a necrological ceremony cannot possibly be held,” Sotto said.

Zubiri said the Senate had lost another pillar of its rich history as he described Alvarez as “one of the original environmentalist advocates of the Philippine Senate.”

Alvarez pushed for the enactment of The Clean Air Act and the National Integrated Protected Areas System Act.

“The saddest part is that we will not be able to properly honor him befitting an honorable statesman due to the Covid-19 protocols which prevents us from doing so,” Zubiri said.

“But on our reopening on May 4 we will sponsor and adopt a Senate resolution to honor such a statesman. Let us not forget such a great environmentalist and climate change advocate for all of time,” Zubiri said.

Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto said Alvarez “crafted policies, defended these on the floor and interpellated in plenary with the skill of a seasoned parliamentarian and the undiminished passion of a patriot.”

“He spent his last years representing one client — Mother Earth — so that our grandchildren will have clean air, safe water, blue skies. He was no longer a politician with the next election in mind, but a statesman concerned about the next generation,” Recto said.

Zubiri said Alvarez authored many of the country’s environmental laws as well as one of the country’s “most ardent fighters against climate change.”

“Senator Alvarez would always touch base with me to discuss environmental issues during the deliberation of bills and even the budget policies that could affect the environment,” he said.

Alvarez served in the Senate from 1987 to 1998. He led the committee on environment for 10 years.

After serving for two terms in the Senate, he won a seat in the House of Representatives and represented the fourth district of Isabela from 1998 to 2001.

As Agriculture secretary under President Corazon Aquino, Alvarez helped craft the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Program before running for a seat in the Senate in 1987.

He was the principal complainant in the impeachment case filed in 2000 in the House of Representatives against then-President Joseph Estrada.

When Estrada was ousted in January 2001, then President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo appointed him Environment secretary.

Ex-Sen Alvarez's son seeks Philhealth reimbursement for parents' Covid-19 expenses

By [Red Mendoza](#)

April 21, 2020

THE son of former Senator Heherson "Sonny" Alvarez appealed to the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (Philhealth) to reimburse the medical expenses of his father and mother, playwright and theater icon Cecile Guidote-Alvarez, after they were treated for the Coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19).

Alvarez died on April 20 after being confined for more than a month at the Manila Doctors' hospital.

Hexilon Alvarez said his family spent more than P8 million.

"Napakalaki, na kahit po kami, nahirapan sa gastos, Hindi naman po kami saksakan ng may pera... [kaya] nagbabakasakali po kami sa Philhealth na talagang mareimburse kami dahil malaki ang aming nagastos, hindi naming napaghandaan. [The cost is just huge that it was difficult for us. We are not moneyed, so that is why we are asking Philhealth to reimburse us as we have spent so much [for medication], we never prepared for it," the young Alvarez said in an interview on radio DZMM on Tuesday.

When asked by The Manila Times about the younger Alvarez's predicament, Dr. Shirley Domingo, Philhealth vice president for corporate affairs, said that the claim would be processed once the state-run health agency receives it but that the "daunting" amount would have to be subjected to its current guidelines.

Alvarez said the diagnosis, which he called a 'traitor', took them by surprise, as their father was asymptomatic and did not have any pre-existing conditions except for maintenance medicines for mild hypertension.

He said his parents could have gotten the coronavirus through community transmission.

"Lahat kami, ako at ang kapatid ko, para kaming nagulat, parang nawindang kami parehas sapagkat di naming akalain na ganun pala ang mangyayari (My sister and I were surprised, as we never expected that this would happen)," Alvarez said when they learned that their parents would be intubated.

He said that the last conversation he had with his father was on March 11, when the elder Alvarez asked why it took long to confirm his swab test as he "felt fine".

"He sounded fine and healthy, until my sister got in touch with me and said they were being intubated, para akong sinuntok sa tiyan bigla na parang nawalan ng hangin, hindi po kami prepared sa nangyari (It felt like I was punched in the gut, the air sucked out of me, as we were not prepared for what happened)," he added.

Alvarez also said that they were more worried for their 76-year-old mother, as she was diagnosed with diabetes and a cancer survivor but described her recovery from the virus three days ago as a "miracle".

"Yung nangyari kay mom, sobrang milagro dahil na-intubate na sya (What happened to my mom was a miracle, as she has been intubated)... she was in the worst of the worst conditions, tapos (and) she had all the underlying conditions, but miraculously, she was able to pull herself out of it," Alvarez said.

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/04/21/news/latest-stories/ex-sen-alvarezs-son-seeks-philhealth-reimbursement-for-parents-covid-19-expenses/717012/>



8K PINOY MULA ABROAD BANTAYAN VS COVID-19

April 21, 2020 @ 1:53 PM 16 hours ago

Views: 186

MAHIGIT nang 18,000 kababayan natin mula sa iba't ibang panig ng mundo ang dumating sa Pilipinas at nakakalat kahit saan.

Nais nating tutukan ito ng lahat dahil maaaring pagsimulan ito ng nakatatakot na hawaan ng Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Hindi kasi bawal ang pag-uwi ng mga kalahi natin at hindi katulad na paglabas natin ng bansa na kontrolado.

Heto ang kabilang sa mga tatandaan natin na problema sa mga nagbabalikbayan.

Halos 1,000 na ang kumpirmadong tinamaan ng COVID-19 sa abroad na nagbunga na ng nasa 160 kamatayan habang nasa 260 naman ang nakarekober o gumaling.

Kasama sa mga namatay ang 20 patay sa United Kingdom at nagpaparamihan ang Amerika, Canada at Europa sa mga patay na Pinoy habang may mangilan-ngilan sa Gitnang Silangan.

Itong mga nagkasakit ay hindi basta pinasasakay sa mga eroplano at hinaharang na mismo sa mga airport.

Pero paano ang mga asymptomatic o walang sintomas sa 18,000 balikbayan at pagdating sa bansa ay saka namang nagkaroon ng sintomas at tuluyang tinamaan ng COVID-19?

QUARANTINE

Kinukuwarantina naman ang mga dumarating kahit asymptomatic.

Pare-parehong kinukwarantina ang mga land-based at sea based o seaman.

Pero hanggang 14 araw lang.

Pagkatapos, kinukwarantina rin sila ng mga local government unit na kanilang pinupuntahan.

Kaya lang, marami ang mga umaangal sa mga ito dahil natapos na umano ang kanilang kwarentina sa mga nilapagan nilang airport o dinadaungang pier.

Dito na magsisimula ang problema, lalo na kung iisipin na kailangan pala ang tatlong linggo o mahigit pa bago talaga maideklarang COVID-19 free ang mga ito.

STEWARDESS, PILOTO TINATAMAAN

Kung pag-aralan natin ang nagaganap sa pagbiyahe ng mga galing abroad, daan-daan o libo-libo na pala ang tinatamaan na mga stewardess, piloto at baggage handler ng mga eroplano.

At klaro naman na ang mga barko, gaya ng mga cruise ship, kung matamaan ay gayon na lamang.

Inaamin na ng mga piloto, stewardess at baggage handler na tinatamaan na sila ng COVID-19 at nasa 100 sa stewardess at piloto ang tinamaan sa American Airlines lamang.

Si flight attendant Paul Frishkorn ay namatay naman noong Marso 23.

Malinaw namang may mga namamatay mula sa mga cruise ship na Pinoy.

Pero meron na rin tinamaan sa mga taong eroplano ng mga airline company sa Canada at iba pang mga airline.

UMAMING TAGAHAWA

Ngayon, sinasabi ng mga piloto, stewardess at baggage handler na kabilang na sila sa mga nagpapakalat ng COVID-19.

Ngayon naman, pag-uwi ng mga Pinoy mula sa mga cruise ship at iba pa, sumasakay ang mga ito ng mga eroplano galing sa ibang bansa na sinasalakay ng sakit.

Dito na klaro na nakatatakot ang mga Pinoy na dumarating.

Pero wala lang tayong magawa kundi tanggapin sila dahil mga Pinoy nga sila na gustong bumalik sa bansa dahil sa kawalan ng trabaho at takot na mahawa o tuluyan nang mamatay sa abroad.

LGU HUWAG SISIHING

Hindi dapat sisihin ang mga Local Government Unit na nagpapatupad ng mga quarantine sa mga taga-abroad.

Heto ang isang sampol na naengkwentro ng isang LGU at pamilya o asawa ng mga galing abroad.

Akalain ba nilang kabilang sa mga sumasalubong sa mga overseas Filipino worker ang Overseas Workers Welfare Administration sa mga airport.

At dahil walang sintomas ng COVID-19 ang OFW, idiniretso na ito sa LGU na uwian ng huli.

Heto ngayon, nataranta ang asawa at naghanap ng pupwedeng doon i-quarantine ang OFW.

Walang quarantine house ang munisipyo at maging ang barangay na pupuntahan nito ay wala rin.

Ilang kasong ganito ang naganap sa 18,000 LGU na umuwi?

Sa parehong LGU, namatayan ang isang pribadong ospital ng pasyente galing sa Malaysia at hindi umano ito dumaan sa quarantine.

Hindi natin nalaman kung namatay sa COVID-19 ang pasyente dahil sa sobrang sikretong pinaiiral ng mga ganitong uri ng ospital ukol sa mga namamatay sa kanila.

Ayaw na ayaw ng mga pribadong ospital ang balitang namatayan sila sa COVID-19 dahil mababawasan ang kanilang kita sa pag-iwas sa kanila ng mga maysakit.

MAGBANTAY TALAGA

Tama lang na talagang maging istrikto ang mga LGU sa nanggagaling sa abroad o galing sa ibang lugar sa loob mismo ng ating bansa, at maging ang pambansang pamahalaan.

Alalahaning ang limang bansa lang na karaniwang pinanggagalingan ng napakaraming Pinoy abroad ay may mahigit nang 100,000 patay.

Kasama sa mga bansa ang United States of America na may patay nang nasa 42,517; Italy – 24,114; Spain – 20,852; France – 20,265; at United Kingdom – 16,509.

Sa isang bayan o lungsod, talagang gumagana rin ang mga opisyal ng barangay sa pagbabantay at ang huli nga ang hirap sa pagbabantay.

Mabuti na lang at masisigasig ang mga opisyal ng bayan at lungsod sa pagsuporta sa mga opisyal ng barangay na dikitang kumikilos laban sa mga suspek sa COVID-19.

PHL needs to beef up R&D spending

By [BusinessMirror Editorial](#)

-April 22, 2020

The national government's budget is a reflection of the spending priorities of administrations, and in recent years, the state has been increasing its allocation for social services and health. To stimulate the economy, government raised spending for public infrastructure projects, which created more jobs and helped cut poverty. More funds were also given to the agriculture sector following the 2008 rice crisis, which saw people in some cities lining up for cheaper staple sold by the National Food Authority.

However, research and development continuously lag behind in terms of government's spending priorities. In Southeast Asia, the Philippines remains a laggard in terms of R&D spending. Allocations for R&D and science and technology initiatives have not even reached 1 percent of gross domestic product even after experts have recommended to raise them to 2 percent of GDP—or P240 billion annually—to help the Philippines become an active player in the global-knowledge economy.

This oversight is lamentable, particularly at this time when the country is grappling with the Covid-19 pandemic. More R&D funding could have helped the Philippines better cope with this disastrous public health crisis, which is also now threatening to cripple the economy. Investments in science and technology could have paved the way for many innovations that would have allowed frontliners, such as doctors and farmers, to better do their job.

The outbreak of severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS), which first emerged in Guangdong province in China in November 2002, gave governments a preview of the capability of coronaviruses to impair public health systems and threaten the economy. In a paper published in October 2019, the Asian Development Bank noted that the most significant losses occurred in China, Singapore and Taiwan. The same ADB paper revealed that international visitor arrivals declined steeply in these economies and caused an estimated GDP loss amounting to \$13 billion.

Citing estimates made by the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation in 2004, the ADB paper noted that the overall economic cost of SARS ranged from 0.5 percent to 1 percent of annual GDP across economies in the Asia-Pacific region. Private consumption, particularly those involving face-to-face services, was severely impacted in the short run. The tourism, transportation, hospitality, and retail sectors were significantly harmed by the dramatic reductions in air traffic and hotel occupancy rates. Restaurants and entertainment venues also suffered income losses.

Some countries like South Korea have taken the lessons of the outbreak of coronaviruses to heart, allowing them to ride out the storm that is Covid-19. While the Philippines has also been able to avoid a disastrous public health crisis in 2003, it did not result in significant improvements in R&D spending and innovation in the medical field. For one, doctors and other health-care workers continued to leave the country in droves, and public hospitals remained poorly equipped.

This pandemic should serve as a wake up call for policy-makers to start taking R&D seriously. Government should invest more in boosting sectors that proved vital at this time, and retool the skills of those who fought off the virus and ensured stable food supply. Innovation, such as telemedicine and artificial intelligence, should be top of mind and must be exploited to beef up the country's arsenal against public health crises and threats to food security.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/04/22/phl-needs-to-beef-up-rd-spending/>

Duterte undecided on fate of Covid

By **BusinessMirror**

-April 22, 2020



In this April 16, 2020, photo, President Rodrigo Duterte speaks to the nation about the government's efforts to prevent the spread of the coronavirus that causes the Covid-19 disease during a televised address from Malacañang palace in Manila. AFTER a five-hour meeting with former health secretaries, his top economic advisers and Congress leaders on Monday, President Duterte remains undecided on his next course of action on the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) in Luzon. While he received an almost unanimous recommendation from medical experts to “modify” its coverage when it lapses on April 30, Duterte is weighing all ramifications of a premature lifting or a needlessly sweeping extension.

Senators, meanwhile, weighed in on the increasing call for a more calibrated approach in order to balance the valid call to allow the economy to recover while avoiding a more damaging, deadly resurgence of the Covid-19 infections, which reached a total of 6,599 cases in the country, with 437 deaths and 654 recoveries as of Tuesday (April 21) afternoon.

Duterte deferred announcing if he will lift, extend, or relax the over month-long ECQ until getting additional information from the members of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF).

“The President made no decision [after the meeting]. The President said his decision may come today or it may come on April 30,” Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque told reporters on Tuesday.

Roque said Duterte was particularly concerned with the possible fatalities as well as a second wave of Covid-19 cases if he opts to relax or totally lift the ECQ.

He said the President was interested in how the actions will benefit certain sectors of society.

Roque said all of the medical experts and former health secretaries at the meeting did not recommend a total lockdown or maintaining the Luzon-wide ECQ.

Instead, they were pushing for the lifting of the community quarantine in areas where there were minimal numbers of Covid-19 cases—a similar position pushed by some members of the government economic team as well as business leaders.



Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque gets a swab test during the ceremonial signing of the memorandum of agreement between the Philippine Red Cross (PRC) and the Metro Manila LGUs on Covid-19 emergency operations at the PRC Molecular Laboratory in Mandaluyong City. Standing behind Roque is PRC Chairman and Senator Richard J. Gordon.

Balanced interests

University of the Philippines Resilience Institute (UPRI) Executive Director Mahar Lagmay, one of the participants, said while ideally, the ECQ should continue to ensure Covid-19 cases are contained, they understand the need to “reboot” businesses after being suspended for over a month because of the ECQ.

“We need to balance health with the economy. We don’t want the people to starve.... So what we are looking for is the gradual relaxation of the ECQ,” Lagmay said.

A crucial factor in making a decision would be to ensure the current healthcare system can cope with the expected increase of Covid-19 cases, which would be almost unavoidable.

Roque said the government is still in the process of improving nationwide testing capacities for Covid samples and preparing quarantine facilities for the anticipated increase in Covid cases in the aftermath of the ECQ.

The chief implementer of the government’s national policy on Covid-19 Carlito Galvez struck an optimistic note about meeting the goal of having 2 million people tested for the virus, given the huge support from the Philippine Red Cross, which opened on Tuesday its “state-of-the-art molecular testing laboratory” in Mandaluyong City.

The goal of the PRC is to have 12 polymerase chain reaction or PCR machines in Metro Manila. An expanded testing capacity “will provide the government critical data and analysis to help address the crisis brought about by Covid-19,” said Galvez.

Senators' views

Meanwhile, majority and minority senators have yet to firm up a consensus on whether to support the options of a lockdown extension or a selective lockdown.

Senate President Vicente Sotto III favors a “modified geographical ECQ,” saying “it [ECQ] seems the way to go.”

In a text message to the BusinessMirror, Sotto acknowledged, however, that it “depends on the President,” adding that “he [Duterte] now has in his possession pertinent details to warrant” the best judgment on what he had described as one of his most difficult decisions.

Sen. Joel Villanueva pointed out there are still “several things that we have to consider in deciding on whether to lift or to extend the quarantine.”

“Based on the data presented by the University of the Philippines Covid Response Team, there are areas in Luzon where the quarantine can be lifted because they are far from having an outbreak,” Villanueva said, noting that “in areas like the National Capital Region, Cebu, Bulacan and Davao City, we can look at economic considerations in exempting some sectors from the quarantine but with the caveat that we practice the social distancing, hand washing and sanitizing protocols and, of course, conducting regular random testing in these sectors.”

Villanueva noted certain sectors have a “high impact on the economy but also have a high impact on spreading the disease. We can let them operate but on the condition that they will comply with very strict protocols,” citing for example the construction, logistics and food production sectors.

He said, “we can do micro area quarantine like barangay or municipal level, but it will depend on the capacity of local government units to test and isolate infected individuals and the capacity of the health system in the area.”

For his part, Senate Minority Leader Frank Drilon favors a “selective lockdown.” Drilon earlier introduced an amendment in the Bayanihan bill that authorized the President to realign items in the national budget to aid Covid-19 victims.

Sen. Ronald de la Rosa opted to await signals from the IATF, which he described as “on top of the situation.”

Sen. Ramon Revilla Jr., on the other hand, wants to see “stricter enforcement of the ECQ in the remaining 10 days.”

“Come April 30th, the government should assess where and what sectors can start the normalization process,” Revilla added. “Those places that are not so affected, maybe they can slowly get back to normal routine.”

However, Revilla said, “the areas that have no improvement in the numbers, or even worsened, should continue to be in quarantine.”

Weeklong preparations

Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles said members of the IATF will be working within the week to finalize recommendations to Duterte on the ECQ.

“We are trying to put in as much meat and details into the several options that the President has. Because ultimately...so that when we show the decision points to the President, he will also know its repercussions,” Nograles said.

This was confirmed by Roque, who said the Department of Health (DOH) as well as the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda) have yet to submit their final recommendation to the President.

Nograles said the IATF recommendation will also be based on the guidelines of the World Health Organization for Covid response, which recommended against sudden lifting of lockdown.

'Works like soap': Scientists explains why virgin

April 22, 2020

TITLE: coconut oil could be COVID-19 cure

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'Works like soap': Scientist explains why virgin coconut oil could be COVID-19 cure

Kristine Sabillo, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Apr 21 2020 08:53 PM | Updated as of Apr 21 2020 09:18 PM



Virgin coconut oil is extracted from fresh coconut meat. *File*

MANILA — Virgin coconut oil (VCO) has long been known for its health benefits but it could be next big thing if it is scientifically proven to cure coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

Dr. Fabian Dayrit, professor emeritus at the Ateneo de Manila University's Department of Chemistry, said he proposed VCO as a supplement and treatment for COVID-19, due to its antiviral properties.

Dayrit said the easiest analogy would be to compare VCO to soap. He said viruses are usually coated in lipids or an oil-like structure. When a person washes his hand with soap, the membrane of the virus is destroyed because soap is a surfactant that breaks up water or oil. The same can be said for VCO, he added.

"The components of the coconut oil will act on the lipid membrane of the virus and destroy the membrane," Dayrit said.

Dayrit, who is the vice president of the National Academy of Science and Technology (NAST) and president of the Integrated Chemist of the Philippines, has long been studying VCO.

"The evidence for its anti-viral properties is strong. And it's (based on) evidence from different types of studies," he said in a phone interview with ABS-CBN News.

Dayrit explained that consuming coconut oil releases several enzymes and monolaurin, which has long been used to protect farm animals against bacteria and viruses.

VCO also improved the health of HIV patients, based on a 1998 pilot study at the San Lazaro Hospital.

But the team behind the clinical trials for COVID-19 will first need to see favorable results.

Earlier this month, the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) said it would fund clinical trials for VCO at the Philippine General Hospital and at various community quarantine facilities in the country.

"The study aims to assess the possible benefits of VCO if given to patients with moderate to severe COVID-19 in addition to the drugs being assessed in the clinical trials," Science Secretary Fortunato de la Peña said in a statement.

Both the hospital-based and community-based studies will involve mixing VCO with the food served to patients and persons undergoing quarantine.

Dayrit, who provided the protocol for the study, said volunteers for the community-based study will be given around 3 tablespoons of VCO a day. One tablespoon will be mixed for each meal.

‘Works like soap’: Scientists explains why virgin

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TITLE: coconut oil could be COVID-19 cure

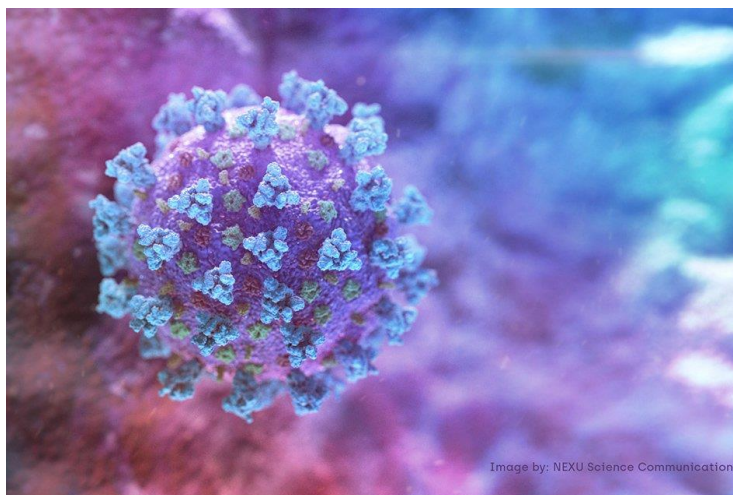
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A higher dosage will be given to patients who will join the PGH clinical trial.

Dr. Mario Capanzana, Food and Nutrition Research Institute head, said they will be mixing VCO in the food right before it is served.

“There will be no heat treatment,” he said, adding that the VCO needs to be consumed in its pure form.



Clinical illustration of coronavirus disease

Capanzana said they will likely ask those who join the community-based study to continue consuming coconut oil even after their quarantine. It will take up to 28 days for each person to complete the treatment, he added.

“We have certain indicators like for example if they are improving...there are also biochemical indicators. We’ll analyze their blood,” said Capanzana, hoping trials can start next week.

“We are just organizing and doing coordination. As soon as we complete the preliminary coordination then we will start the soonest,” he said.



STILL UNDER INVESTIGATION

The World Health Organization (WHO) Philippines, however, reminded the public that the response to COVID-19 should be “guided by science and evidence.”

“There is no robust scientific evidence that virgin coconut oil has protected people from infection with COVID-19,” WHO Philippines told ABS-CBN News.

It also reminded the public that COVID-19 still does not have a cure or vaccine.

“Until there is sufficient evidence, WHO cautions against recommending or administering unproven treatments to patients with COVID-19 or people self-medicating with them,” it added, explaining that “some specific treatments are under investigation, and will be tested through clinical trials.”

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The WHO is currently facilitating a multi-country clinical trial for a number of off-label drugs, such as remdesivir, chloroquine, lopinavir and ritonavir, that are being used for experimental treatment of COVID-19 patients.

Dayrit said the VCO as a cure was more promising than drugs like chloroquine, which can cause heart problems. He said coconut oil does not have harmful effects, except perhaps causing upset stomach in some individuals.

“So it’s (VCO) low risk and the product is inexpensive. It’s available and there’s justifiable evidence that it might be effective so DOST agreed to fund clinical studies using VCO,” he said.

He also assured that clinical studies will use high-quality VCO.

As one of the biggest exporters of VCO, he said positive results from the studies will greatly help Philippines.

Dayrit said he has also shared his research and the dosage protocol to scientists in other coconut-producing countries, as he hope to generate more studies on how VCO can help COVID-19 patients.

Philippines should protest China's new moves in

April 22, 2020

TITLE: South China Sea – Del Rosario

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Philippines should protest China's new moves in South China Sea – Del Rosario

[Pia Lee-Brago](#) (The Philippine Star) - April 21, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The government should protest China's establishment of two new districts to govern the Paracels and Spratlys in the South China Sea, former foreign affairs chief Albert del Rosario said yesterday.

The announcement by the Chinese ministry of civil affairs on April 18 on the establishment of new districts in the disputed waters came at a time when the world was busy addressing the impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic. The announcement came in the wake of the ramming and sinking of a Vietnamese fishing boat by a Chinese vessel, and China's establishment of two research stations on its artificial islands in Fiery Cross and Subi reefs.

"These recent events in the South China Sea remind us Filipinos to be eternally vigilant in the defense of our country's territory and sovereign rights even as we confront a very grave threat as COVID-19," Del Rosario said. "As we struggle against a pandemic that poses a real threat to our lives, we must not also risk losing our national patrimony upheld by international law and meant for present and future generations of Filipinos," he said.

"China has been relentless in exploiting the COVID-19 pandemic," he pointed out.

The former foreign affairs chief said China continues to pursue its illegal and expansive claims in the South China Sea to the prejudice of Filipinos, the ASEAN states and the international community as a whole.

"We therefore respectfully urge our government to protest this recent action of China, as it rightly did over the sinking of the Vietnamese fishing boat on April 8, 2020," Del Rosario said in a statement issued on Sunday evening.

Vietnam has filed an official protest against Beijing over the sinking of its fishing boat by a Chinese coast guard ship.

"In these trying times, we also respectfully urge the Chinese leadership to uphold global unity and mutual trust, and not to engage in needless provocations that may only be seen as abusive and may worsen the situation currently being confronted by the world," he said.

Philippines should protest China's new moves in

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China's Paracel administration will be based on Woody Island, called Yongxing Island by Beijing, while the Spratly administration will be placed in Fiery Cross Reef, which the Chinese call Yongshu Reef.

On April 8, the Philippines expressed deep concern over the reported sinking of a Vietnamese fishing vessel in the South China Sea by China.

The coronavirus was first detected in the central Chinese city of Wuhan in December.

Left-wing leaders tell Palace: Counter Beijing's expansion in South China Sea

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Apr 21 2020 02:58 PM

MANILA - The Philippines should file a diplomatic protest and seek joint patrols with other countries to counter Beijing's recent establishment of 2 administrative units on islands in the South China Sea, a new move to show assertiveness in the disputed waters despite the global emergency over the coronavirus crisis, left-wing leaders said Tuesday.

While other claimants are preoccupied with tackling the new coronavirus pandemic, China on Saturday said it had established an administrative district on the Paracel islands, being claimed by Vietnam, and another on the Spratly Islands, where Philippine claims on the resource-rich waters are located, said Bayan Muna Party-list Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate.

"This is totally outrageous, unacceptable and shows utter disrespect of Philippine sovereignty," said Zarate, who is also deputy minority leader of the House of Representatives.

Malacañang "should issue a diplomatic protest" as failure to do so would "only further embolden China to make a mockery of our sovereignty," he said in a statement.

The Philippines should also push for joint patrols with other claimants like Vietnam, Malaysia and Brunei "because this can become a bigger deterrent to China's plans", said Bayan Muna chairman Neri Colmenares.

"Instead of justifying the Chinese' aggressive action, the government should also rally the international community in condemning and countering these latest Chinese actions," he said.

"Like a thief in the night, China is exploiting the COVID crisis to trample on our sovereign rights in the WPS (West Philippine Sea)," he added, referring to the country's exclusive economic zone in the South China Sea.

Acting on a Philippine plea, a United Nations-backed court in 2016 junked Beijing's "historic rights" to nearly 90 percent of the resource-rich waterway. However, the tribunal has no enforcement mechanism and China has refused to recognize the ruling.

A Chinese government survey ship was spotted last week tagging an exploration vessel operated by Malaysia's state oil company Petronas, months after it undertook a similar patrol off Vietnam.

The incident prompted the United States to call on China to stop its "bullying behavior" in the disputed waters, citing concern over Beijing's provocative actions towards offshore oil and gas developments there.

Chinese maritime patrol aircraft spotted on

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Chinese maritime patrol aircraft spotted on Kagitingan Reef

By: [Frances Mangosing](#) - Reporter / [@FMangosingINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 07:51 PM April 21, 2020

MANILA, Philippines—A Chinese maritime patrol aircraft has been spotted on Kagitingan (Fiery Cross) Reef in the West Philippine Sea early this month, a satellite image showed.

The image of a KQ-200 maritime patrol aircraft of the People's Liberation Army (PLA) Navy was captured by ImageSat International (ISI)—a private satellite image provider—on the Chinese-occupied reef in the Spratly Islands last April 10 during a supposed training exercise.

“ISI intelligence report reveals a KQ-200 ASW mission plane, parked on a flight path in Fiery Cross Reef during a training exercise,” ImageSat posted on Twitter on Monday (April 20).

It said the use of this type of aircraft in training meant “practice finding enemy submarines and increasing situational awareness in the maritime arena.”

The ISI said it also captured a “rare documentation” of an active aircraft shelter on the same reef.

“Such a concentration of aircraft can be indicative of widespread exercise in the area,” ISI said.

A Chinese Y-8 military transport aircraft was also captured by ISI on the same reef in March. An international maritime security expert said this could be the start of China's escalation of efforts to militarize the highly-contested waters.

“Note Fiery Cross has recently become the site of newly formed Nansha (Spratlys) administration, which alongside the Xisha (Paracels) administration on Woody Island falls under Sansha City,” Singapore-based maritime security expert Collin Koh said on Twitter.

“This heralds the start of more militarization activities,” he said.

Last week, China announced that it had created two new districts, which were akin to local governments, in Spratly Islands and the Paracels.

Kagitingan Reef, where the maritime patrol plane was spotted, would be the base of the new district for the Spratlys.

China in recent years had transformed reefs and islands into outposts fitted and equipped with harbors, airstrips, missile shelters, communications facilities which expanded its ability to monitor its and rivals' activities in the South China Sea, which Beijing claims to almost entirely own.

The 2016 decision by the United Nations-backed arbitral tribunal in the Hague ruled that Beijing's claims have no basis and its South China Sea construction frenzy was illegal.

Chinese names

In another move to assert its territorial claims in the disputed waters, China has also named 80 geographical features in the Spratly Islands and Paracels.

China's Ministry of Civil Affairs and the Ministry of National Resources released the names and maps of 25 islands and reefs as well as 55 undersea geographic entities on Sunday (April 19), state-owned news site Global Times reported.

Chinese maritime patrol aircraft spotted on

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While the rest of the world is busy with the COVID-19 pandemic, Beijing is spreading its presence in the disputed waters to keep a tight grip on the resources-rich maritime area.

Aside from setting up new districts and naming geographical features, it has been announcing its other activities in the South China Sea like putting up research stations and mental health service stations in the disputed waters.

A Chinese government survey ship has been accused of tagging an exploration vessel operated by a Malaysian state oil company near Malaysian waters.

Hanoi filed an official protest against China early this month after a Vietnamese fishing boat was allegedly rammed and sunk by a China Coast Guard ship near the Paracels.

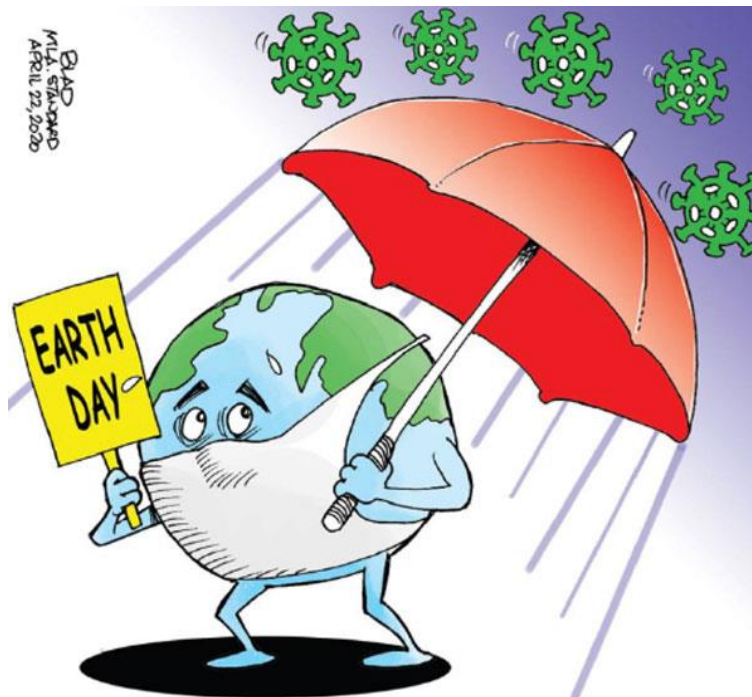
Edited by TSB

Pausing for Earth

posted April 22, 2020 at 12:25 am

The 50th Earth Day celebration takes place amid a global, existential threat—a pandemic that has sickened millions, killed thousands, and ground businesses and economies to a near halt.

In 1970, when it was first observed, some 20 million people took to the streets and protested the multifold environmental crises of oil spills, smog and polluted rivers. Participants demanded that their governments take concrete action on these crises, specifically by passing environmental laws and establishing environmental agencies.



Today, the commemoration of International Mother Earth Day takes place indoors and online, as billions of people are locked down or are sheltered in place.

Prior to COVID-19, the biggest global issue was the rapid warming of the planet. According to the United Nations Environment Programme's Emission Gap Report, at the end of this year global carbon dioxide emissions need to have dropped by 7.6 percent, and continue to drop at the same rate every year, to maintain the heating of the planet under 1.5 degrees Celsius.

If the warming continues to be higher than this limit, catastrophic climate events are expected to visit upon many parts of the globe in the coming years.

These days, as government and business leaders scramble to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus, an unintended consequence is the drastic reduction in economic activity that in turn significantly reduces emissions.

To say however that the pandemic occasioned some good for the climate cause would be a hasty conclusion and a gross oversimplification; after all, the near-stoppage of economic activity is taking an enormous toll on incomes, jobs and people's survival. Aside from the crisis faced by patients, their families, medical frontliners and entire hospital systems, hunger and displacement are specters that are just as devastating for millions of global citizens.

Those of us fortunate enough to not have to go out of their homes to earn a living can pause and rethink whether our way of life before the crisis would still be acceptable in a post-COVID world. Were the things we deemed important to achieve actually that? What constitutes "importance," anyway? Were our routines in keeping with optimizing our existence in all aspects, or were we living in manic pursuit of things that we thought would make us happy? Were we giving back to others and to the environment, or were we too busy acquiring and consuming for ourselves? Were we mindful about the planet we could leave for the next generations, or were we all about instant gratification?

Earth and its inhabitants are under siege. May we use these crucial days to imagine how we could be spared from the pestilence, and how we can live differently after we have been given the time to reflect.

Source: <https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/322059>



Conservationists prod gov't to put nature on top of the agenda

Published April 21, 2020, 11:27 AM

By *Ellalyn de Vera Ruiz*

Around 300 Filipino scientists and conservationists appealed to the country's leaders to put nature on top of the agenda as the Philippine society adjusts to a "new normal" following the COVID-19 crisis.

In an open letter ahead of the 50th year of Earth Day celebration on April 22, the environmentalists noted that the survival of humans depends on nature.

"When we create an imbalance in natural systems, the ability of nature to repair itself and take care of us is compromised," the letter said.

"Long before the COVID-19 pandemic, the conversion of natural ecosystems such as forests, mangrove forests, wetlands, seagrass beds, and coral reefs have resulted in many calamities. These have heavily impacted the lives of Filipinos through widespread flooding, landslides, destruction of farmlands and fishing grounds, and loss of property and lives," it explained.

"We have experienced water shortages and droughts due to extreme weather events as a result of the changing climate. Destroying wild habitats and wildlife trade also increases 'virus spillover risk' from wildlife to humans, giving rise to deadly diseases such as COVID-19," it added.

The letter from conservation leaders, scientists, and advocates nationwide said that in order to prevent future pandemics and other threats to the survival of the Filipino people, the country's leaders must address three interconnected emergencies—biodiversity loss, climate change, and "ecological amnesia."

They called on government leaders to "aggressively support the protection of remaining natural ecosystems and the restoration of destroyed ones, relentlessly enforce environmental laws and prosecute violators, empower and protect environmental defenders and frontliners, champion the effective management and sufficient funding of our protected, conserved and key biodiversity areas, and harmonize economic development with the sustainable management of our natural resources" and to innovate and collaborate with different sectors in doing so.

They said that business leaders must "develop a deep understanding of the spaces and communities they operate in, strictly comply with and go beyond the requirements of environmental laws, and join the government in addressing climate change and biodiversity loss."

Likewise, the media and education sector must contribute by creating "a radical new approach to produce a new generation of environmental stewards guided by science and conscience."

"Our Earth is our collective home. She provides for our needs and keeps us safe and healthy. But for the Earth to continue taking care of us, we need to take care of her first," they said.

Environmental advocates urge leaders to put nature on
top of agenda

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Environmental advocates urge leaders to put nature on top of agenda

[Gaea Katreena Cabico](#) (Philstar.com) - April 21, 2020 - 9:40am

MANILA, Philippines — Filipino scientists and conservationists called on the Philippine government to put nature on top of its priority to prevent future pandemics similar to the new coronavirus and other threats to the survival of humans.

In an open letter ahead of the Earth Day, 300 environmentalists urged the country's leaders to address biodiversity loss, climate change and ecological amnesia.

[National and local governments] must aggressively support the protection of remaining natural ecosystems and the restoration of destroyed ones, relentlessly enforce environmental laws and prosecute violators, empower and protect environmental defenders and frontliners, champion the effective management and sufficient funding of our protected, conserved and key biodiversity areas, and harmonize economic development with sustainable management of our natural resources," they said.

Businesses—whether big or small—should invest in the use of renewable energy, reusable packaging, responsible waste disposal, sustainable agriculture and ethical trade, the signatories of the open letter stressed.

"Businesses must develop a deep understanding of the spaces and communities they operate in, strictly comply with and go beyond the requirement of environmental laws and enjoin the government in addressing climate change and biodiversity loss within their business operations and spheres of influence," they said.

The scientists and conservationists also called on the media and education sector to create a "radical new approach" to produce a new breed of environmental stewards guided by science and conscience.

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“We, ordinary citizens, can also do our part by reflecting on our daily habits and consumption of food, water, energy and commodities, realizing that each individual choice can have compound effects on nature and our community,” they said.

Culture of care

The environmentalists noted that the encroaching on nature and degrading natural ecosystems have resulted in widespread flooding, landslides, destruction of farmlands and fishing grounds and loss of property and lives.

They also said that destroying wild habitats and wildlife trade increase opportunities for pathogens to spill over from wild animals to humans, giving rise to fatal diseases such as COVID-19.

In 2016, the United Nations Environment Program stressed that 75% of all emerging infectious disease in human are zoonotic—illness that can be transmitted from animals to people. These include Ebola, bird flu, swine flu, Middle East respiratory syndrome, severe acute respiratory syndrome and Zika virus.

The worldwide death toll from the coronavirus pandemic rose to 170,042, according to a tally from US-based John Hopkins University. More than 2.4 million confirmed cases have been recorded since the pathogen first emerged in China in December last year.

In the Philippines, the virus has already affected 6,459 individuals, including 613 recoveries and 428 fatalities.

“The survival of humans depends on nature. When we create an imbalance in natural systems, the ability of nature to repair itself and take care of us is compromised,” the environmental advocates said.

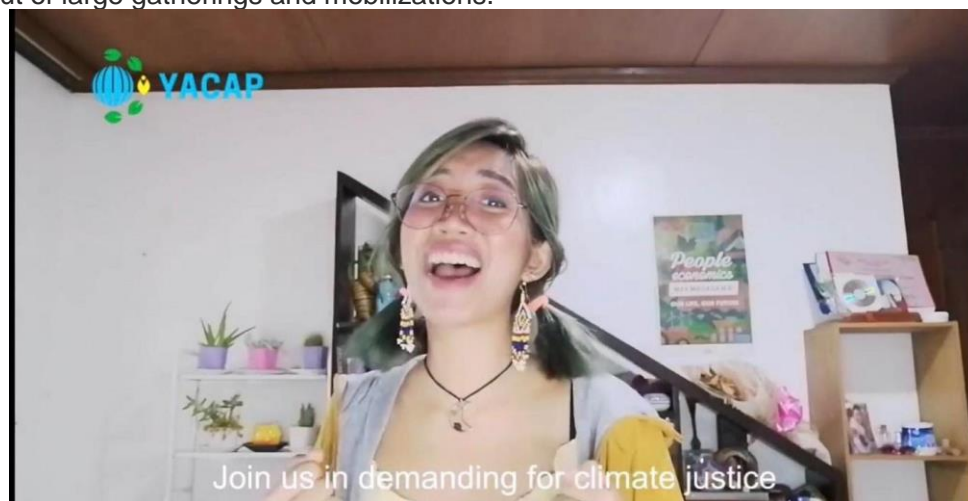
They added: “Our Earth is our collective home. She provides for our needs and keeps us safe and healthy. But for the Earth to continue taking care of us, we need to take care of her first.”

Youth activists clamor for 'climate justice'

Published April 21, 2020, 4:43 PM

By **Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz**

Youth climate activists across the world have been exploring alternative and creative methods of engaging people while remaining out of large gatherings and mobilizations.



YACAP convener Mitzi Jonelle Tan
(YACAP / MANILA BULLETIN)

In the Philippines, the Youth Advocates for Climate Action Philippines (YACAP) alliance has found various ways of continuing the struggle, both online and on the ground.

YACAP will lead the Filipino youth in demanding for climate justice through its online Global Climate Strike on April 24 with the themes #DefendTheDefenders and #FightEveryCrisis.

"Saying that the coronavirus pandemic is healing the earth and that humans are the viruses causing the climate crisis is unequivocally wrong. This idea releases the responsibility from multinational companies and industrialized countries who have contributed the most to the climate crisis," said YACAP convener Mitzi Jonelle Tan.

"While it's true that carbon dioxide emissions have gone down, without enacting systemic change, these emissions will not stay down in the long-term. It's important that, during these trying times, we fight every crisis and continue to organize and mobilize to demand for climate justice and address the root causes of the crises we face today — whether it's the COVID-19 crisis or the climate crisis," Tan added.

Meanwhile, Saribuhay UPM chairperson Kevin Aboy said that the fight for climate change must not forget its ultimate goal, which is preservation of life.

"We have to see that both the pandemic and climate change are issues that need to be addressed immediately, and that's why we have to continue the battle on both fronts," Aboy said.

One of YACAP's projects is its original song and dance composition calling for climate justice, to which everyone can sing and dance from the safety of their homes. The song entitled Climate Justice Now! was recorded and performed by YACAP members.

On April 24, Climate Justice Now! will be re-launched on YACAP's social media pages with a video collage of activists around the world dancing to the song, including renowned international youth climate activist Greta Thunberg showing her support for the climate movement in the Philippines.

On the ground, YACAP has made efforts to help in the fight against the effects of COVID-19 and climate change.

Partnering with fisherfolk organization Pamalakaya, the two organizations launched a donation drive to assist a fisherfolk community in Bacoor, Cavite affected by the current pandemic as well as the climate crisis.

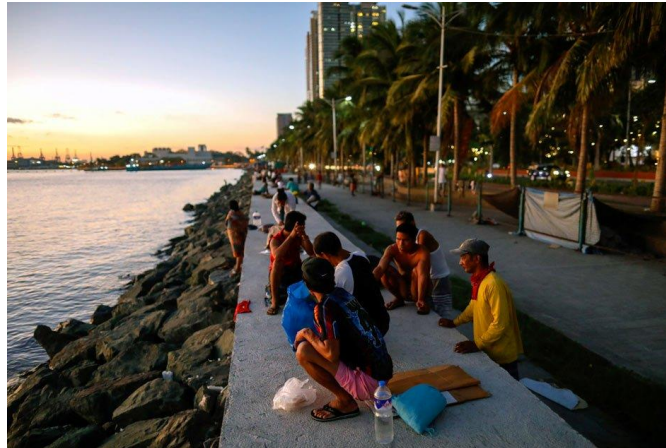
The first batch of donations was successfully delivered last April 18, and a second batch is being prepared for delivery on April 25.

Source: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/04/21/youth-activists-clamor-for-climate-justice/>

Global hunger could double due to COVID-19 blow: UN

Reuters

Posted at Apr 21 2020 05:28 PM | Updated as of Apr 21 2020 07:07 PM



Some stranded and homeless Filipinos take shelter along Manila bay following the lockdown in Luzon to contain the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) outbreak, in Manila, Philippines, April 2, 2020. *Eloisa Lopez, Reuters*

GENEVA (UPDATE) - The number of people facing acute food insecurity could nearly double this year to 265 million due to the economic fallout of COVID-19, the United Nations' World Food Program (WFP) said on Tuesday.

The impact of lost tourism revenues, falling remittances and travel and other restrictions linked to the coronavirus pandemic are expected to leave some 130 million people acutely hungry this year, adding to around 135 million already in that category.

"COVID-19 is potentially catastrophic for millions who are already hanging by a thread," said Arif Husain, chief economist and director of research, assessment and monitoring at the WFP.

"We all need to come together to deal with this because if we don't, the cost will be too high - the global cost will be too high: many lost lives and many, many more lost livelihoods," he told reporters at a virtual briefing in Geneva.

Husain said it was critical to act quickly in order to prevent people already living hand-to-mouth, such as food vendors in Kenya, from selling their assets as it could take them years to become self-reliant again.

In some cases, such as when farmers sell their plows or oxen, it could have knock-on effects for food production for years to come, he added.

"These were the people we were concerned about – those who were OK before COVID and now they are not," he said, adding he was "really worried" about people living in countries with little or no government safety nets.

"Acute food and livelihood crisis" is category three of five U.N. phases meaning a "critical lack of food access and above usual malnutrition".

Category 5 means mass starvation. U.N. officials did not give a geographical breakdown of the growing needs, but said that Africa was likely to be hardest hit.

WFP expects to need \$10-\$12 billion to fund its assistance programs this year compared to a record \$8.3 billion raised last year, Husain added. It plans to pre-position food stocks over the coming months in anticipation of growing needs.

Of those already deemed acutely hungry, many are in conflict zones such as Syria or in countries badly hit by the impact of climate change, according to a U.N. report.

Even before the coronavirus pandemic, desert locusts in east Africa had destroyed crops and boosted the number of people reliant on food aid.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/overseas/04/21/20/global-hunger-could-double-due-to-covid-19-blow-un?fbclid=IwAR2L0MqB0pmxU5koC34Hmsknj1OANGE41n2cWwy7zpNm4Dqv4-RIN2GYmyA>

Air quality in US dramatically worse than in prior

TITLE: years, says new 'State of the Air' report

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Air quality in US dramatically worse than in prior years, says new 'State of the Air' report

By Sandee LaMotte, CNN

Published Apr 21, 2020 2:09:23 PM



The air quality in the United States is dramatically declining, leaving about 150 million people — nearly half of America's population — breathing unhealthy, heavily polluted air, according to the newly released "State of the Air" 2020 report by the American Lung Association. (FILE PHOTO)

(CNN) — The air quality in the United States is dramatically declining, leaving about 150 million people — nearly half of America's population — breathing unhealthy, heavily polluted air, according to the newly released "State of the Air" 2020 report by the American Lung Association.

"We're moving in the wrong direction, with nearly 21 million more people breathing dirty air than in last year's report," said Paul Billings, the national senior vice president of public policy for the American Lung Association.

That's particularly bad news for people like Tim Seib, a 37-year-old New York City regional theater director who has suffered from asthma his entire life.

"Knowing we've let our air get worse is maddening to me because air quality directly affects my day to day health," Seib said. "It's not like a political stance, it's not an ideology thing."

"When asthma symptoms start, you don't know when your next full breath of air is going to come. It almost feels like you're drowning," Seib continued.

"I don't think until you've walked in the shoes of someone with respiratory issues (that) you really understand how scary that can be."

50th anniversary of Clean Air Act

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Clean Air Act, which charged the US Environmental Protection Agency with regulating all sources of air emissions. The goal was to reduce air pollution and acid rain, increase air quality and visibility, slow climate change and protect the ozone layer.

According to the EPA, the act is responsible for a 50% decline in emissions of key air pollutants since 1990, the year when a new series of amendments were passed.

Under the Trump administration, however, a number of those protections have been rolled back or have gone unregulated. It's that lack of enforcement — along with worsening climate change — which has led to the recent reversal of air quality gains, the report said.

"If there's no environmental cop on the beat, we know that polluters will skirt the rules of the law, will cheat and will increase emissions," Billings said. "And pollution will increase. It has increased."

Environmental advocacy groups were equally critical.

"Around the world, toxic air kills 5 million people every year and, as this report makes clear, the US has a long way to go to better protect communities," said Sarah Vogel, vice president for health at the Environmental Defense Fund.

Air quality in US dramatically worse than in prior

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"Unfortunately, the Trump administration is still trying to weaken existing safeguards and allow even more dangerous pollution in our air," Vogel said.

CNN reached out to the EPA for comment but did not receive a response.

Increases in types of pollution

The 21st annual "State of the Air" report analyzed data from 2016, 2017 and 2018 — three of the five hottest years in recorded history in the world, the report said.

Those warmer temperatures contributed to the rise of ozone levels in many places in the US, the report found, affecting more than 137 million people. Breathing in ozone, or smog, can cause asthma attacks, shortness of breath, and trigger coughing, the report said.

The heat from increasing climate change also contributed to wildfires, especially in western states, which spiked particulate pollution levels to dangerous levels, the report said.

Particulate matter is a mixture of solid and liquid matter found in the air. Dust, dirt and smoke particles are larger but there are also extremely small, inhalable particulates that can't be seen with the naked eye. Those are called PM 2.5 because their size is generally 2.5 micrometers or less.

That's really tiny. As a comparison, an average human hair is 30 times larger than a PM 2.5 particle. Because they are so small, these particulates can get deep into our airways and wreak havoc with our lungs and bodily functions.

The report found nine western cities reached their worst levels of particulate pollution ever recorded: Fairbanks, Alaska; Yakima, Washington; Las Vegas, Nevada; Phoenix, Arizona; Spokane, Washington; and the following cities in California — Chico, Salinas, Redding and Santa Maria.

In contrast, the cities with the cleanest air, defined as no high ozone or high particle pollution days over the three-year period of the study, were Bangor, Maine; Honolulu, Hawaii; Wilmington, North Carolina; and Burlington, Vermont.

"The report finds the air quality in some communities has improved, but the 'State of the Air' finds that far too many people are still breathing unhealthy air," said American Lung Association President and CEO Harold Wimmer in a statement.

"Climate change continues to degrade air quality and increase the risk of air pollution harming health," Wimmer said.

Significant health impacts

Even short-term exposure to particulate pollution can trigger cardiovascular issues, strokes and asthma attacks as well as contribute to the development of dementia, studies show.

Air pollution is also increasing the risk of dying from Covid-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus. A recent Harvard study found US counties with the highest levels of air pollution had significantly higher death rates from COVID-19 than counties with much lower levels.

Seib lives in the Harlem district of New York City, which has been extremely hard hit by Covid-19. He caught a milder form of the virus a few weeks ago, and even that was frightening for him.

"All my life, my asthma symptoms have gotten worse at night," he said. "So the Covid symptoms just kept intensifying and it was scary to go to bed at night not knowing if I was going to wake up in the middle of an asthma attack or be more compromised than I was when I went to sleep."

Knowing what it is like to struggle for breath, Seib finds it hard to understand why any regulations to protect US air quality would be cut or relaxed.

"So my message would be, please just try to see it through someone's eyes, like myself or God forbid, someone who has even even worse symptoms or health concerns," Seib said. "Because we don't have a ton of options out there, and it's a very scary and very real thing to wake up to everyday."

Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/world/2020/4/21/air-quality-report-us-2020.html>

Discarded masks and gloves are becoming a health

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TITLE: hazard a people dump them on streets

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Discarded masks and gloves are becoming a health hazard as people dump them on streets

By Aditi Sangal, CNN

Published Apr 21, 2020 9:20:30 PM



(CNN) — During a walk around his block in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Mark Benson was struck by how much discarded gloves and masks he saw on his short route.

The Louisiana State University professor, who focuses on microplastic pollution, decided to track the waste he saw with pictures geotagged to the location where he spotted it.

"It was a lot more PPE waste than I expected," he told CNN.

What Benson saw in his short walk route is a snapshot of a problem that's apparent all across the country. As more Americans wear personal protective equipment in their daily lives, they're also littering it on all over streets, parking lots and parks.

The problem is so severe that many state and county public health departments have issued advisories against throwing masks and gloves on the streets and parking lots.

Swampscott Police Department in Massachusetts has made unlawful littering finable up to \$5,500.

"We need to contain the spread of COVID-19 and do the right lawful thing by throwing these items in the trash," the Swampscott Police Department told its residents in a Facebook post, adding that it's happening all over town and not just at Stop & Shop. "Please stop littering, this is making more work and worry for the people having to pick up this trash."

Discarding plastic can create an environmental hazard

Since his first experiment, Benson has created a methodological survey with his colleagues around the world. People can email him -- at covid19waste@gmail.com -- to participate in the survey and help his study on how expansive this waste problem is.

Two Chicago residents recently sent him data to show the amount of PPE littered in the span of a few blocks.

The map, using data from the survey responders, shows Chicago's Hermosa/Logan Square neighborhood on April 16. Masks are shown as circles, gloves as triangles, and wipes as squares. The yellow area is their survey area.

"Preliminary data from these survey responses shows that gloves are the most common PPE waste," Benson said. "In the US, masks are difficult for the public to get. So gloves are most commonly found PPE waste on the street. In China, masks are freely available. So you see more masks discarded."

Gloves, masks and wipes are all plastic. When that's discarded into the environment, it goes into sewer systems or water bodies. It breaks down into microplastics, which still attract pesticides and other harmful chemicals. So when the marine animals eat it, they don't just get the plastic, they get the chemicals too.

"I can't think of a material better designed to look like a jellyfish than gloves," Benson adds.

Other experts agree: This is a growing environmental hazard.

Discarded masks and gloves are becoming a health

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"The PPE is intended to help us fight a public health challenge, not create a plastic pollution problem," said Adrienne Esposito, executive director of Citizens Campaign for the Environment.

The damage goes far beyond the marine ecosystem. Besides littering PPE in public areas, people are also disposing of these materials in their recycling. That's not where it's supposed to go.

"Even if they are plastic, they are not treated as curbside recycling," David Biderman, executive director and CEO of the Solid Waste Association of North America (SWANA), said. "You bag it to prevent the environmental harm. They should be placed in a securely tight garbage bag and be put out with the regular trash for collection."

Paul Zambrotta, who is director of safety at Mr. T Carting, a private waste management company that handles commercial waste, said he often finds rubber gloves and masks in the recycling mix.

He said he thinks that a combination of misinformation and wish-cycling is to blame.

Unlike garbage bags that are trashed just as they are picked up, waste management employees work a lot more closely with recycling material as it goes through a sorting line for quality control.

The employees use PPE to do the work according to federal guidelines, but the uptick of PPE in recycling bags has increased the risk for their health and safety.

"We're doing it more often than we have to," Zambrotta said. "We have to take out possibly contaminated PPE which wasn't even supposed to be in there."

While no workers at the company have tested positive for coronavirus because they're trained to work with PPE at all times, they have been scared, Zambrotta said.

"If anyone had a sneeze or a little itch, they thought they needed to self-isolate. At one point, I had 90% of my workforce out sick."

There is no market for used gloves and masks, and they can't be sold. However, they can easily get caught into the machinery in the recycling line and shut the facility down.

"Masks and gloves do not belong in recycling," Benson reiterated.

As Earth Day approaches, Esposito said people should feel obligated to protect the environment.

"Long after Covid-19 is gone, we still need to protect the earth."

How to manage your garbage and recycling

Experts outlined a few ways to manage garbage and recycling during the pandemic to avoid hurting the environment.

- 1. Do not litter in public areas.** "We recommend people throw their PPE in the trash. We don't want to have children or unsuspecting healthy adults to come in contact and become carriers of the infection," Kristina Hamm, a spokeswoman for Orange County, California waste and recycling, said.
- 2. Only put clean material in your recycling bins.** "With Earth Day approaching, it's more important than ever to manage our waste and recyclables properly," Biderman said. "We need to make sure that material we're putting in our recycling bins are clean and not contaminated by non-recyclable material like food. People trash yogurt containers, but if there's yogurt in there, that's a problem."
- 3. PPE is for regular trash and not for recycling.** Even if it is plastic or rubber, it is contaminated. It is regular trash and not recyclable.
- 4. Put your PPE in a secure and tight garbage bag.** Put it out with the regular trash for collection.
- 5. Carry a bag or container with you.** Take a small plastic bag, paper bag or some container with you, where you can put your contaminated PPE if you don't find a trash can nearby. Then put it in your garbage.

Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/lifestyle/2020/4/21/discarded-masks-gloves-health-hazard.html>

How the coronavirus pandemic is changing people and our planet

By [Robin Hicks](#)

April 22, 2020

The Covid-19 pandemic is affecting everything from forest cover and marine pollution to the behaviour of people and wildlife. This Earth Day, Eco-Business highlights 15 ways that the virus is affecting our planet, for better and for worse.



A woman with her baby at a bus stop in Delhi. Women in developing countries are being hit hardest by the coronavirus pandemic. Image: rajput/SOPA Images/Shutterstock

First celebrated in 1970—the year that American troops invaded Cambodia, a cyclone claimed 500,000 lives in Bangladesh, and The Beatles broke up—today is the fiftieth [Earth Day](#), a day that marked the beginning of the modern environmental movement.

Over the last 50 years, environmental protection measures have been rolled out all over the world, from the Clean Air, Clean Water and Endangered Species Acts in the United States, the birth place of Earth Day, to the Paris climate accord, which was signed on Earth Day 2016.

Despite the progress that environmentalism has made in parliaments and boardrooms, the world is under greater strain now than it was half a century ago—and this year could be the hardest yet. No single event of the last 50 years has had a bigger impact on our world than the ongoing coronavirus pandemic. Eco-Business examines how the virus is changing people and our planet.

Poverty exacerbated, inequality widening

It is a fallacy that the coronavirus is a leveller, impacting people of all socio-economic backgrounds in equal measure, the former chief executive of Unilever, Paul Polman, has [pointed out](#). Many poor people cannot afford to self-isolate, particularly those working in the informal sector. In Bangladesh, the Philippines, India, Myanmar, Vietnam, Pakistan, Thailand and Indonesia, the majority of the workforce works informally, with no severance pay or sick leave if jobs are lost. Workers face a choice between going to work while sick, and going hungry. In Indonesia, where 60 per cent of the population works informally, the coronavirus death rate of 8 per cent is double the global average. In rich countries, too, the [least advantaged are suffering the most](#) and inequality in society is widening.

Cities, too dumb for pandemics

The design of cities, where 55 per cent of humanity lives, often in close quarters, has exposed their vulnerability to pandemics. “The “unthinkable” must be part of good urban design practice from now on,” [comments Italian architect Patricia Viel](#). She said her country is paying the price for cities that

lack the data and digital infrastructure to help governments assess, forecast and prevent viral spread. From now on, experts say that cities must be [smartly retrofitted](#) for social distancing, and as much retail as possible shift online. Public transport is likely to take a temporary hit, as citizens worry about the risk of infection in communal spaces. So will ride-sharing services, [until assurances can be made about hygiene](#). The emergence of self-driving cars is likely to accelerate post-Covid, and cycling become more common. More people working from home will create more bustling residential areas, and neighbours helping one another through this crisis has shown the importance of social cohesion in city renewal.

Agriculture is going local



Discarded zucchini and squash on a farm in Florida. Image: Joe Raedle/Getty Images

Population control measures have disrupted food transport links, worries over food shortages have been followed by [vast volumes of unsold produce](#), and [farm labour has been in short supply](#) in many countries, highlighting the value in local agriculture. Nowhere has this been demonstrated like China, the first country to be hit by the virus. Aided by e-commerce giants Alibaba and JD.com, consumer demand has been matched with farmer supply, closing the gap between urban markets and the growing regions, [providing lessons](#) for other countries in more resilient, sustainable food supply chains of the future. In Singapore, which imports 90 per cent of its food, [attention has turned](#) to vertical farming and the exploration of new forms of agriculture, such as growing rice at sea and harvesting microalgae as an alternative protein, to safeguard food security.

The viral threat of losing forests



Fire fighters tackle forest fires in Sumatra, Indonesia Image: Sipongi

Clearing forests is likely to [increase the occurrence of diseases like Covid-19](#), as animals come into closer contact with people. In Indonesia, home to some of the world's largest expanses of rainforest, some 8,000 hectares of forest have been lost so far this year. Agribusiness firms warn that the lockdown has made it more difficult to police and monitor deforestation on the ground outside their concessions, and slash-and-burn forestry has been reported in some areas. Syahrul Fitra, a researcher with green group Auriga, is also concerned that the government's economic stimulus plans do not include assurances for the legal timber trade, which could fuel illegal logging. Meanwhile, as the media's attention is focused on Covid-19, [forest fires rage in northern Thailand](#).

Gender equality, locked down

The coronavirus, wrote Helen Lewis in an [opinion piece in The Atlantic](#) in March, will send many couples back to the 1950s. “Across the world, women’s independence will be a silent victim of the pandemic”, she said, pointing out that since women are generally paid less than men, they are more likely to do the unpaid care-giving work in locked-down households. Others have pointed out that [this perspective undervalues unpaid labour](#), and reaffirms the corporate idea of what valuable work really means.

However, the most noticeable gender equality narrative to emerge from the time of Covid-19 is that female political leaders—which make up just 7 per cent of the world’s heads of state—have [performed particularly well in navigating their countries through the crisis](#), with the likes of Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen, New Zealand prime minister Jacinda Ardern and Germany’s chancellor Angela Merkel taking bold action to curb the virus.

The sharp rise of domestic violence

The most widespread but least reported human rights abuse—domestic violence—has reared its head as one quarter of the world’s population has gone into lockdown. Reported cases of domestic violence tripled in the two weeks after Jakarta went into lockdown, [with similar spikes seen in Malaysia, Singapore and Australia](#). Social distancing measures have made it hard for victims to get shelter at women’s refuges. Health and financial worries combined with a desire among perpetrators to maintain a sense of power and control in their lives have prompted the increase in violence at home, [research shows](#).

Racial discrimination is rising



Africans in China wear face masks. Image: Alex Plaveski/EPA/Shutterstock

Ever since the virus emerged from Wuhan, reports of racial discrimination against people of Chinese descent have been documented around the world, from Egypt to England. In Hong Kong, racial incidents have been reported against mainland Chinese and, in China, against people from Hubei, the province of which Wuhan is the capital. The World Health Organisation recommended that the virus be known as Covid-19 to avoid the disease being associated with its country of origin. But some political leaders, such as United States president Donald Trump, have persisted in referring to Covid-19 as “the Chinese virus”.

Meanwhile in China, reports have also emerged of racism against Africans, who are being blamed for Covid-19; [people of African descent have been evicted from their homes, forced into quarantine, had visas cancelled and refused service in shops](#). African ambassadors to China have complained about what they regard as “the persistent harassment and humiliation of African nationals”.

Will personal freedom restrictions linger?

Not since World War II have governments taken such radical policy measures to curb the personal freedoms of their citizens. In locked-down China, public transport was stopped and drones deployed to police the mandatory wearing of face masks. In Dubai, citizens could not leave their homes at all,

and were only permitted to go to a supermarket after booking an appointment through a government website. In [Singapore](#), citizens are being encouraged to ‘snitch’ on one another to the authorities if they witness safe distancing violations. Human rights watchers worry that some of these measures could remain in place after lockdowns are lifted. Contract tracing apps are a particular cause for concern. These apps pose an “unprecedented” level of surveillance on citizens, [commented privacy advocacy group Privacy International](#). “All of them must be temporary, necessary, and proportionate. When the pandemic is over, such extraordinary measures must be put to an end and held to account.”

The air is clearing—for now

The closure of factories, easing of traffic and reduction in fossil fuel burning as humanity withdraws into quarantine has brought about dramatic reductions in air pollution, with the [biggest reductions seen in the most polluted places](#). Greenhouse gas emissions in China, the world’s largest emitter, fell by almost one fifth between early February and mid-March as coal consumption and industrial output ebbed. But as China loosens lockdown measures and revives its economy, emissions are already rebounding. [Experts worry that Covid-19 won’t reverse the trend of rising emissions globally](#), and as more economies emerge from lockdown and look to make up for lost time, the prospect of “revenge pollution” means that coronavirus won’t have helped the world to get any closer to climate targets.

Will renewables retreat?

Though less fossil fuels are burning, falling power consumption is [not good news for renewable energy either](#). Disrupted supply chains for clean energy materials and a tanking global economy has made financing for renewables projects harder and investment less likely, prompting energy-watchers to [slash](#) forecasts for renewables. Meanwhile a low oil price worries observers that consumers will be less motivated to use energy efficiently and electric vehicles will lose their appeal.

A stick in the wheel of the circular economy



Face masks are ending up in the ocean.

Consumption has been hit hard by coronavirus. But in certain categories, such as groceries and personal hygiene, spending has grown as locked-down consumers opt for online deliveries. This has led to concerns that coronavirus has brought with it an increase in plastic pollution, as beaches and waterways become clogged with discarded disposable face masks. Plastic bags are also [making a comeback](#) as retailers rescind single-use bag bans and [scrap bring-your-own-container schemes](#) in fear they’ll help spread the disease. The revival of single-use plastic has been prompted by research from plastic industry-backed groups that claims the virus [can survive on plastic for longer than on other surfaces](#). Meanwhile the low cost of oil has pushed up the price of recycled plastic, putting many recyclers out of business and [threatening to derail corporate sustainable packaging commitments](#).

Water-scarce places reveal their vulnerability



Residents tussle over water in Chennai, India. Image: Tim Ha/Eco-Business

We are being advised by health authorities to wash our hands more frequently [for at least 20 seconds](#) to prevent outbreaks. But what about countries like Pakistan and India, where clean water is in short supply? Some 40 per cent of the world's population lacks access to basic hand-washing facilities at home, and one billion people live in informal settlements, where overcrowding and lack of water access can fuel the spread of diseases like Covid-19. While aid agencies are helping water-stressed countries by [installing portable hand-washing stations in public areas](#) and other temporary measures, the pandemic has highlighted the urgent need for better water management to cope with future crises. Besides tripling investment in clean water access and sanitation, experts are stressing the need for greater protection of the ecosystems that safeguard water supplies.

Wildlife is reclaiming lost territory

Tales of dolphins and swans returning to the canals of Venice and elephants sauntering through a village in Yunnan, China [turned out to be fake news as people clamoured for positive stories](#) amid the terrifying Covid-19 media blizzard in March. But the return of animals to places where [humans have retreated](#) is really happening. Pumas have descended the Andes mountains into Santiago, Chile, wild boar have moved into central Barcelona, penguins have been [seen waddling in the streets of Cape Town](#), and more turtles are [laying their eggs on Thailand's deserted beaches](#).

The pandemic has shown that nature can rebound at speed when given the chance. But coronavirus has also left wildlife vulnerable in some areas. Nine rhinos have been poached in South Africa since the start of the lockdown, and conservationists worry that their funding will be affected by a drop in tourism.

Scrutiny finally falls on the wildlife trade



An orphaned Asian palm civet at an animal rescue centre. Image: Robin Hicks/Eco-Business

Though conservationists worry that the ban on the US\$74 billion wildlife trade in China—where the coronavirus is believed to have started—will not be permanent, and [has loopholes allowing the trade in wild animals for medicine, fur and research](#), it's a big step in the right direction for wildlife conservation. Could China take an unlikely lead in conserving endangered animals as its influence spreads elsewhere around Asia, the spine of the wildlife trade?

The best companies are revealing themselves. So are the worst

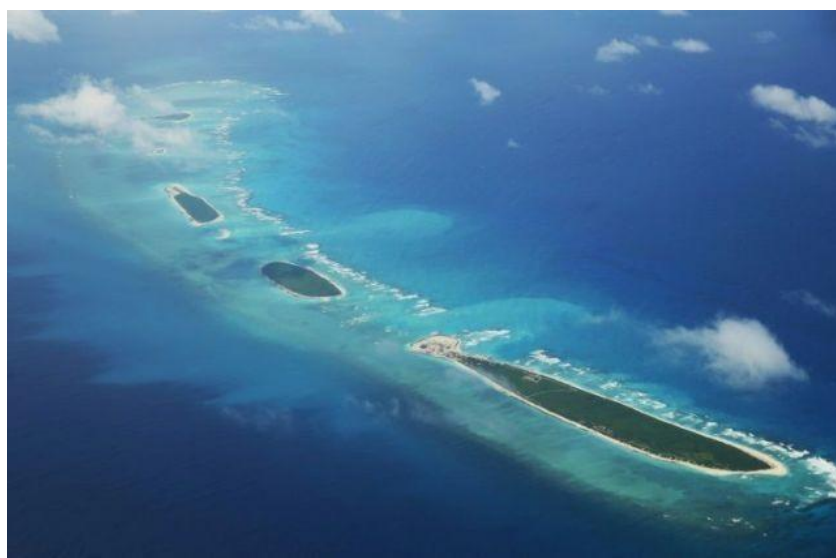
Regular outpourings of corporate communications in recent weeks have expressed how much companies “care” and how “committed” they are to help fight the coronavirus. Some have been genuine. [Others not](#). Unlikely partnerships have formed between rivals in a range of industries, from [pharmaceuticals](#) to [tech](#), to combat the pandemic, pointing to a future where cross-sector collaboration is more common. But the virus has also prompted companies in the aviation, timber, agriculture, fossil fuels, and automotive industries to seek to weaken and delay environmental protection measures while soliciting governments for stimulus packages. Environmental campaigners such as [Mighty Earth have called companies doing this “coronavirus profiteers”](#).

Beijing names islands in disputed South China Sea

Published April 21, 2020, 11:01 PM

By *Agence France-Presse*

China on Tuesday defended its naming of 80 islands and other geographical features in the South China Sea in a move likely to anger neighbors as the country asserts its territorial claims.



China has also established new administrative districts for the contested Paracel island chain (AFP Photo/MANILA BULLETIN)

A joint announcement of the names on Sunday from the Ministry of Natural Resources and the Ministry of Civil Affairs came a day after China established new administrative districts for the contested Spratly and Paracel island chains.

The notice listed the Chinese names and coordinates of 80 islands, reefs, seamounts, shoals and ridges, 55 of them submerged in water.

China last released such a list in 1983 when it named 287 geographical features across the disputed waterway.

Beijing has repeatedly asserted its sovereignty in the sea despite rival claims by Vietnam, Taiwan, Malaysia and other nations.

"No state can claim sovereignty over underwater features unless they are within 12 nautical miles of land. So is China ignorant of this or deliberately trying to overturn international law?" said Bill Hayton, associate fellow at British think tank Chatham House.

"China has ratified the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) which is very clear on what states can and cannot claim as territory. Yet China seems to be going against UNCLOS by asserting sovereignty in very far away places."

In recent years, Beijing has stepped up its territorial claims in the South China Sea by building artificial islands and a heavy military presence, making it a flashpoint for geopolitical tensions.

China angered Vietnam after announcing at the weekend that the Paracel and Spratly islands, the Macclesfield Bank and their surrounding waters would be administered under two new districts of Sansha city, which China created on nearby Woody Island in 2012.

Vietnam claimed the move "seriously violated" its territorial sovereignty in the area.

In response, China's foreign ministry said Tuesday the Spratly and Paracel islands are its "innate territories" and that Vietnam's claims are "illegal".

Earlier this month Vietnam lodged an official complaint with China and the UN saying Beijing illegally sank a fishing trawler near the Paracel Islands, killing eight people on board.

As a result, the United States warned China not to take advantage of the coronavirus pandemic to assert itself in the South China Sea.