



Earth Day 2020: Greening is part of fight vs pandemics

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

April 26, 2020

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/04/26/earth-day-2020-greening-is-part-of-fight-vs-pandemics/>



Trees felled within the watershed forest of Kasibu, Nueva Vizcaya.

As the world marked the 50th Anniversary of Earth Day, at a time when a global pandemic continues to grip every corner of every country in the world, what are the challenges and opportunities people face now?

In a statement marking the Philippines's celebration of Earth Day 2020 on April 22, Secretary Roy A. Cimatu of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said it is the perfect time to ponder the need for "long overdue" collective action.

Global pandemic

The country's environment and natural resources' chief steward said this is especially so as Covid-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus that originated from Wuhan City in Hubei, China, continues to grip many countries around the world, including the Philippines.

The disease has so far infected more than 2.5 million people worldwide and has claimed the lives of more than 180,000 people.

In March, Philippine President Duterte placed the entire country under a state of public health emergency and placed the entire Luzon under enhanced community quarantine (ECQ).

The ECQ which was supposed to end on April 14 was extended until the end of the month.

Cimatu said no one knows how long this pandemic will persist, and how many more lives will be lost.

"Already, it has virtually paralyzed many nations, forcing them to impose lockdowns and quarantines, reducing economic and other activities to a trickle," he said.

Destruction and chaos

According to Cimatu, a member of Inter-agency Task Force on Covid-19, coronavirus and climate change bring about destruction and chaos to any nation.

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"On the one hand, with Covid-19, we are faced with immediate gripping fear of losing more lives. On the other hand, with climate change, we are faced with rising sea levels, saline intrusion into aquifers, droughts, floods, and the results will impact billions of people, as well as biodiversity. However, with climate change, adaptation and mitigation responses are not as immediate because its impacts appear to be just merely creeping," he said.

Filipinos' survival at stake

In both Covid-19 and climate change, he said the Filipino people's survival is at stake.

"The urgency of the need for concerted and comprehensive action, without waiting for the problem to peak or to impact millions more of people is the same," he said.

He noted that, on a positive note, because of the lockdown, the world has a much clearer sky, more breathable air, cleaner seas and more vibrant wildlife.



Earth Day 2020: Greening is part of fight vs pandemics

“For climate-change mitigation and adaptation, our responses may be less drastic, as they generally require only lifestyle changes. But we must invest in and institute the necessary concerted reforms speedily and extensively before it becomes too late,” he said.

“With the help of the mass media, let us challenge all nations, including ours, to take decisive climate action. After all, this has long been overdue,” he said.

Batting for ‘greener’ watersheds

Environmental advocates, meanwhile, are drumming up the urgency of “greening” watershed areas and cityscapes to build the resilience of millions of Filipinos against the coronavirus.

“Restoring watershed forests and rewilding urban scapes are both immediate and long-term solutions to Covid-19 and future risks of pandemics. We will win half the battle against emerging infectious diseases if we live in sustainable environments, and address the ecological imbalances, such as water depletion, pollution and climate disruption that will exacerbate the pandemic’s impacts,” said Leon Dulce, national coordinator of Kalikasan People’s Network for the Environment (Kalikasan PNE) said in a webinar that gathered Filipino environmental advocates in cyberspace amid the extended ECQ.

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Held from April 18 to 22, the series of Earth Day 2020 webinars organized by Kalikasan PNE, the Center for Environmental Concerns-Philippines, and the Ibon Foundation gathered experts and advocates to weigh in on the ecological aspects of the global pandemic.

Ecosystem integrity

In her lecture on April 18, Dr. Marilen Parungao-Balolong, a public health expert and a microbiologist, said, “Environmental changes have a huge impact on the emergence and reemergence of certain infectious diseases.”

“Ecosystem integrity is very important. It can regulate diseases by supporting a diversity of species so that it is more difficult for one pathogen to spill over, amplify and dominate,” explained Parungao-Balolong, also currently an associate dean for research and public service of the University of the Philippines Manila College of Arts and Sciences.

A “rewilded” urban habitat, she said, will provide immune protective microbial exposure to human populations through biodiversity restoration.

She said it will result in the reduction of communicable diseases that render humans more vulnerable, such as diseases like Covid-19, and the promotion of beneficial microbiota that will compete against disease-causing microorganisms or pathogens.

She added that the Philippines has a high risk of emergence and reemergence of infectious diseases, noting that this “happens mostly in countries with high biodiversity and serious unresolved environmental, social and economic issues.”

Unique biodiversity, unique viruses

Agreeing with Parungao-Balolong, Atty. Antonio La Viña, former Ateneo School of Governance dean and former DENR undersecretary, said at the same forum that the Philippines is “a host of many unique viruses because of its unique biodiversity.”

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“This will not be our final pandemic unless we act properly,” La Viña said.

He warned that if the people continue with “business as usual and if the so-called new normal will still include mining, logging, pollution, coal-fired power plants, all of the things which led to pandemics, the problem will continue to persist.”

No to tradeoffs

He said the national government should “absolutely not allow tradeoffs when it means loss of biodiversity and the risk of environmental damage that causes societal damage, economic damage and public health issues.”



Earth Day 2020: Greening is part of fight vs pandemics

He urged that “pandemic analysis has to be integrated into every Environmental Impact Assessment.”

According to La Viña, the current situation gives the opportunity for the Filipinos, especially the DENR, to do things right.

“I actually don’t see the DENR very active in its response.... They have to be more aggressive. Instead, we have them doing things like allowing ships from China to dock in Homonhon Island to stock up on minerals at a time when we are trying to prevent viruses, especially on an island,” he lamented.

Dulce echoed the challenge to the DENR, reiterating the argument that the mining industry is a litmus test in this situation.

“Large-scale miners like Chinese companies trying to haul mineral ores from Homonhon and Semirara Islands, and Australian-Canadian mining corporation, OceanaGold, that recently violently dispersed barricaders against its illegal and destructive operations, are direct threats to forests and public health alike,” he said.

“From upland watersheds to urban forests down to coastal greenbelts, the national government should not use the Covid-19 crisis as justification for neglecting the protection of these ecosystems. Greening our landscapes is part and parcel of our common fight against the Covid-19 pandemic,” he said.



17 illegal loggers arrested in Bulacan

Published April 25, 2020, 12:20 PM

By **Freddie Velez**

<https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/04/25/17-illegal-loggers-arrested-in-bulacan/>

DONA REMEDIOS TRINIDAD (DRT), Bulacan—Seventeen illegal loggers were arrested in a joint anti-illegal logging operation conducted by environment officers and the police in Sitio Tatulo (Sumacbao River), Barangay Kalawakan this town Thursday afternoon, a belated report said Saturday, April 25.

Based on the report submitted to Colonel Lawrence B. Cajipe, acting Bulacan police director, the 17 arrested suspects were identified as Mauro Santiago Mendez, 53; Marvin De Guzman Mendez, 29; Marjun De Gusman Mendez, 20; Gaundencio Samson Mendez, 19; Marvin Pakuribot Barlis, 37; Celestino Pakuribot Barlis, 35; Sotero Bote Madrid, 22; Jordan Bote Madrid, 19; Rannie Esparez Bartolay, 19; Junjun Esparez Bartolay, 22; Alberto Mocuay Sagubat, 54; Bernie Lorlto Ferater, 22; Marlon Castro dela Cruz, 27; Joel Esporma Bulacan, 45; Danilo dela Cruz Pascual, 47; and a 15 and 17-year-old minors. The suspects were all from Barangay Pias, General Tinio, Nueva Ecija.

Investigation disclosed that the suspects were caught in act of cutting logs in the mountainous part of Sierra Madre, which was the territorial boundary of DRT and Gen. Tinio Nueva Ecija, that resulted in their arrest.

Recovered from the suspects were a chainsaw; more or less 200 pieces of illegally cut yakal logs with an estimated scale of 10, 000 bd ft, and having market value amounting to P 533, 000; two improvised cal. 22 riffle; an improvised shotgun, and two pieces of 12 gauge ammunition.

The arrested suspects were brought to the DRT municipal police station custodial facility. Criminal complaints for Violation of PD 705, Violation of RA 9175 (chainsaw act), Violation RA 10591, Violation of Art 151 of RPC, Violation of RA 11332, and Violation of RA 11469 (Bayanihan to Heal as One Act) against the arrested suspects are now being prepared for filing in court.



17 illegal loggers nabbed in Bulacan

[Ramon Efren Lazaro](#)

April 26, 2020 - 12:00am

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2020/04/26/2009825/17-illegal-loggers-nabbed-bulacan>

MALOLOS, Philippines — Seventeen illegal loggers were arrested in Sitio Tatulo, Barangay Kalawakan, Donya Remedios Trinidad, Bulacan on Thursday.

Col. Lawrence Cajipe, acting Bulacan police director, said the suspects, all residents of Barangay Pias, General Tinio, Nueva Ecija, were caught cutting trees in the forest of the Sierra Madre mountain range.

Personnel of the community environment and natural resources office in Baliwag, Army's First Scout Ranger Regiment and Bulacan police conducted the operation.

A chainsaw, around 10,000 board feet of yakal logs worth P500,000, two improvised caliber .22 rifles, a shotgun and ammunition were seized from the suspects, according to the raiding team.



Rescued sea turtle released off Bulacan coast

By Manny Balbin April 25, 2020, 4:46 pm
<https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1100979>



RESCUED. Fisherman Marlon Salvador rescues the sea turtle accidentally trapped on the riverside of Barangay Tibig, Bulakan, Bulacan on Friday (April 24, 2020). The sea turtle was immediately released off the coast of Manila Bay before sunset of the same day. *(Photo courtesy of Barangay Tibig*
BULAKAN, Bulacan – A rescued sea turtle was released off the coast of Manila Bay here before sunset on Friday.

The sea turtle was rescued after being accidentally trapped on the riverside of Barangay Tibig by a group of fishermen.

Fisherman Marlon Salvador said they were on their way home from fishing when they saw the sea turtle wiggling after being trapped in a sack on the river embankment.

“Kaagad namin itong nilapitan, kinalas sa pagkakasabit at isinakay sa aming banca (Immediately, we approached and untangled the sea turtle from being trapped and place it in our banca),” Salvador said.

He said they decided to bring the sea turtle to the barangay.

Meanwhile, village chief Maria Rosario Lava-Gamboa said they fed the sea turtle and kept it always wet.

She said that the sea turtle is healthy and approximately weighing 50 to 60 kilograms.

The village chief said they immediately reported the matter to the Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office.

After proper documentation, she said the sea turtle was released off at the coast of Manila Bay in Barangay Taliptip. **(PNA)**



NWRB assures ample water supply

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By **Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz**

<https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/04/25/nwrba-assures-ample-water-supply/>

The current water level of Angat Dam is less likely to fall below its 180-meter minimum operating level due to the full allocation of raw water for domestic purposes, as well as the scheduled releases for irrigation by June, the National Water Resources Board (NWRB) assured.



A part of Angat Dam is seen at Norzagaray, Bulacan.

(JANSEN ROMERO / MANILA BULLETIN)

Under the water regulator's protocol in the release of water from Angat Dam, water releases for irrigation needs in Bulacan and Pampanga will be temporarily halted or reduced once the dam's level falls below its 180-meter minimum operating level.

The NWRB said the Angat Dam's current water level is more than eight meters higher than the level of the reservoir during the same period last year.

Based on the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration's (PAGASA) monitoring, the level of Angat Dam is at 191.40 meters on Saturday, slightly down from 191.63 meters last Friday.

With PAGASA's rainfall projection indicating near normal rainfall condition until September, the NWRB said the water level in Angat dam is projected not to reach below the minimum operating level of 180 meters despite the full allocation to the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) and the National Irrigation Administration's (NIA) releases for the irrigation during the wet cropping season come June.

NWRB Executive Director Sevillo David Jr. earlier confirmed the approval of the full allocation of 46 cubic meters per second to the MWSS to ensure that water supply is available in performing preventive measures against the coronavirus, such as frequent handwashing and other hygiene, cleaning and disinfection procedures.

The water allocation for irrigation purposes is initially at 15 cubic meters per second for the southern part of Bulacan until June.

David assured the allocation for irrigation uses in support of the government's program on food security, which is "equally important in sustaining the food requirement of our people under enhanced community quarantine."

The NWRB also assured that water in Angat Dam is sustainable until the onset of rainy season in June.

It is coordinating with MWSS and NIA in sustaining their requirements and in providing steady supply for the public considering the importance of water against the negative effects of the COVID-19.

Along with the members of the Angat Dam's technical working group, NWRB said it will closely monitor the situation of the dam for any significant changes in the projections, which could affect future allocations.

However, David reminded the public to responsibly use water "as one of the most vital frontline defenses against the COVID-19."

In addition, saving water from the demand side not only ensures sustainable water supply for domestic use in Metro Manila but also secures water for irrigation use in the Bulacan and Pampanga farmlands.

Conserving water will also help in the recovery of Angat dam's year-end water elevation to secure the supply for all water uses until early next year, he added.



‘Biodiversity protection needed to prevent future pandemics’

Janvic Mateo (The Philippine Star)
) - April 26, 2020 - 12:00am

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/04/26/2009890/biodiversity-protection-needed-prevent-future-pandemics>



The conservation expert recommended identification of habitat areas even in cities to minimize interaction between humans and wild animals.

Kena Betancur/Getty Images/AFP

MANILA, Philippines — Environment advocates are pushing for stronger biodiversity protection measures to prevent the spread of infectious diseases in the future.

Theresa Mundita Lim, executive director of the ASEAN Biodiversity Center, said the decline in biodiversity and ecosystems can result in the emergence of infectious diseases such as the coronavirus disease (COVID-19).

While COVID-19 is attributed supposedly to consumption of wildlife that carry the virus, Lim noted that exposure to wildlife in general can result in transmission of illnesses.

“There’s more exposure now to the wilderness areas, between people and wildlife,” she told The Chiefs on Cignal TV’s One News on Thursday night.

“It’s not just the markets, not just the trade, but the encroaching of what used to be wildlife habitats, decreasing habitat areas,” she added.

She cited deforestation and the continuing demand for development areas that provide an opportunity for more human contact with wild animals.

“These past few decades, there have been a lot of interferences. If you poach them, then that’s already exposure to wild animals. If you deplete certain populations, there will be imbalance,” she added.

Lim said the current pandemic highlights the need to mainstream efforts to protect biodiversity to prevent future spread of illnesses.

“We need to instill that thinking to the public, to decision makers. It can’t just be left to the conservationists and to the environmentalists,” she said.

“Everyone now needs to be more conscious that their activities have an impact on the environment and wildlife,” she added.

The conservation expert recommended identification of habitat areas even in cities to minimize interaction between humans and wild animals.

She also called for stronger implementation of existing laws to prevent wildlife trafficking and protection of biodiversity hotspots in the country.

The Climate Change Commission earlier called for bolder and more coordinated global action on sustainable biodiversity management to avoid outbreaks of infectious diseases such as COVID-19.

It noted studies linking the emergence of new viruses and infectious diseases to the destruction of natural biodiversity and ecosystems worldwide.

The climate body said it has been advocating for the development and implementation of ecosystem-based adaptation solutions that are promotive of sustainable forest management, coastal habitat conservation, integrated resource management and livelihood resilience.

It also pushed for the stricter implementation of the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act of 2001 and the National Integrated Protected Areas System Act of 1992 to ensure the conservation of the country’s biodiversity and mitigate the outbreak of public health emergencies.



‘Philippines to bounce back better than neighbors’

[Edu Punay](#)

April 26, 2020 - 12:00am

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/04/26/2009876/philippines-bounce-back-better-neighbors>



House ways and means committee chairman Joey Salceda said the economy has “strong fundamentals” that make it more resilient than its neighbors.”

Edd Gumban, file

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine economy is in a better position to survive the impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) crisis than its neighbors in Southeast Asia, an economist-lawmaker said yesterday.

House ways and means committee chairman Joey Salceda said the economy has “strong fundamentals” that make it more resilient than its neighbors.”

The Albay representative said that while the COVID-19 crisis and measures implemented by government, particularly the two-month enhanced community quarantine, will have a huge impact on the economy, he expects it to bounce back faster than most Southeast Asian nations.

“Our fiscal and monetary position is among the strongest in the region. Our economy is remarkably resilient and we have several advantages over our neighbors,” he told The STAR.

“We will probably hit 46 percent to 48 percent debt-to-GDP (gross domestic product) this year, and that would still be among the best in Asia,” Salceda stressed.

The lawmaker maintained the fiscal policies of the administration have left the local economy robust over the past decade.

“Our largest companies are very liquid, after years of good fiscal and economic stewardship by successive governments, and because of President Duterte’s sound economic policies,” he pointed out.

Salceda said the younger population of the Philippines – with a median age of about 25 years – is also an advantage.

“As soon as you pump money into consumers, and as soon as you can reasonably allow them to go out and buy things, everything else begins to come back into place,” he pointed out.

Salceda said he expects the GDP to shrink by as much as 9.6 points in the second quarter of this year.

“If we are able to bounce back to 0.4 percent growth by third quarter and 1.2 percent by fourth quarter, both of which I believe are very reasonable, your full year GDP growth rate could be -1.1 percent, which I think is among the best outcomes you can get given the circumstances,” he said.

Still, Salceda explained the government needs to address several “institutional” challenges that put the economy into a disadvantage.

He said Singapore and Malaysia have quicker decision-making processes due to their parliamentary form of government.

“They can easily adjust tax and economic policies to suit the evolving demands of the crisis. Our system of republican checks-and-balances, on the other hand, is designed to prevent abuse in normal times,” he explained.

But the lawmaker said the government could address such disadvantage by broadening its policies during national crisis, just as Congress did in passing Bayanihan to Heal as One law that gave special powers to the President.

“In other words, let’s protect our people and finish the job of defeating this virus. The economy will survive, because our fundamentals will remain very strong,” the lawmaker stressed.

“In this virus, speed is your ally and delay is your biggest enemy,” he added.



Government relief measures gaining traction — BSP

[Lawrence Agcaoili](#) (The Philippine Star)
) - April 26, 2020 - 12:00am

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2020/04/26/2009772/government-relief-measures-gaining-traction-bsp>

MANILA, Philippines — The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) now expects a smaller contraction of the economy as the impact of the government's measures to soften the blow of the coronavirus disease 2019 or COVID-19 pandemic gains traction.

BSP Governor Benjamin Diokno said the contraction of the country's gross domestic product (GDP) is likely to be smaller at 0.2 percent instead of the earlier projection of one percent for 2020.

The Philippine economy last contracted, by 0.6 percent, in 1998 due to the Asian financial crisis, but has since booked positive GDP growth for 84 straight quarters.

Diokno said the domestic economy could slow down in the first quarter and is projected to shrink in the second and third quarters, before gradually recovering in the fourth quarter.

"The Philippines will likely follow a U-shaped economic recovery in 2021," the BSP chief said.

Diokno pointed out the domestic economy is set to bounce back next year with a GDP growth of about 7.7 percent.

"The strong recovery is based on the assumption that the pandemic is contained in the second half of 2020," he added.

Due to the sharp drop in global oil prices as well as the impact of the once-in-a-lifetime crisis on the domestic economy, the central bank further lowered its inflation forecast to two percent instead of 2.2 percent for this year.

Diokno said the BSP now expects inflation to average at the low end of the two to four percent target range amid the continued collapse of global crude prices, decline of non-oil prices and the impact of COVID-19 on global and domestic growth prospects.

Meanwhile, he added the latest average inflation forecast of 2.45 percent for 2021 is slightly higher compared to the previous forecast of 2.4 percent due to the projected strong recovery in domestic activity and higher liquidity growth.

Diokno said the world economy faces the virulent mix of monumental debt-to-GDP ratio and the deepest global economic recession in the last 100 years.

"The Philippine economy might not escape a recession this year, but unlike most emerging economies it is starting from a position of strength, and thus, will not risk a debt default as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic," he said.

The country's debt-to-GDP ratio is seen rising to 47 percent this year from 40.5 percent last year, modest by international standards, with the fiscal stimulus owing to the pandemic, and with the deficit-to-GDP ratio rising to 5.3 percent from 3.2 percent.

Diokno said the Department of Finance (DOF) has already raised some \$6.9 billion of COVID-19 related loans from multilateral and bilateral sources.

He added the Philippines is one of the few developing countries that can borrow from multilateral institutions at largely concessional rates.

"As I said the Philippines was in a sound fiscal and monetary state when the pandemic hit the country. The budget deficit was modest. The revenue base has been expanded with a series of new tax laws and improved revenue administration," Diokno said.

The BSP has slashed interest rates by 125 basis points this year, bringing the overnight reverse repurchase rate to an all-time low of 2.75 percent to boost market confidence and cushion the impact of the health crisis on the economy.

It also lowered the reserve requirement ratio by 200 basis points, freeing up P200 billion into the financial system last March 30.



Bracing for ‘new normal’

April 26, 2020 12:07 AM

By [Chito Lozada](#)

<https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/04/26/bracing-for-new-normal/>

It would be a different mall experience when the biggest retail complexes open in areas declared as under general community quarantine (GCQ) that would feature the mandated crowd spacing and sanitation, according to top executives.

This developed as the Philippine National Police (PNP) formed a top-level study group that will draft measures in implementing both GCQ and enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) in areas identified by the government.

PNP chief Police General Archie Gamboa said he has designated PNP Chief of the Directorial Staff Police Lieutenant General Cesar Hawthorne Binag to head the group.

Top executives of SM Supermalls, Robinsons Mall and Ayala Malls expect less than 10 percent will open next week when the GCQ policy starts in majority of areas in the country.

Only the essential stores inside the complexes will be given the go signal when the malls reopen.

Metro Manila, Metro Manila, Benguet, Pangasinan, Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Tarlac, Zambales, Batangas, Laguna, Cavite, Rizal, Quezon, Oriental Mindoro, Occidental Mindoro, Albay and Catanduanes, Davao del Norte and Davao City remain under ECQ.

Areas with “low” or “moderate” risk for the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) such as Negros Occidental, Negros Oriental, Siquijor, Davao del Sur, Davao Oriental, Sultan Kudarat at Lanao del Sur, will be placed under a new category called GCQ.

Most businesses including malls will be allowed to restart in GCQ areas but the executives said the opening of shopping stores remain at the mercy of local government executives who they are now negotiating with.

Slow comeback

SM Supermall President Steven Tan said the biggest retail operator in the country hopes to reopen 11 branches out of its 74 points in the country by next week.

He said that strict physical distancing and hygiene protocols will be implemented in the reopened malls to protect both the mallgoers and the staff of the retail complexes.

Reopening of the targeted malls outside Metro Manila will be subject to approval from local government officials.

Robinsons Malls President Arlene Magtibay expects only the Palawan branch of the second biggest mall chain in the country will resume operations by next week while Ayala Malls President Jennylle Tupaz said its malls in Negros Oriental and Cagayan de Oro out of 32 all over the country is expected to restart next week.

Only essential services

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque had said that the reopened malls will primarily serve the need to buy essential products and not for leisure purposes as free WiFi will be discontinued and the air conditioning will be set to a warm 26 degrees Celsius.

Mall goers will also be required to wear face masks and use hand sanitizers, Roque said.

Non-leisure shops will be allowed to reopen but these should meet minimum health standards.

Operations of supermarkets, drugstores, banks, laundry service, restaurants for takeout or delivery only and hardware stores are to resume in GCQ areas on 1 May.

Binag and his group will prepare a memorandum circular that will include police operations and administration measures as the ECQ is extended in Metro Manila, Central Luzon, CALABARZON and other high-risk areas until 15 May, according to Gamboa.

The PNP chief added that the group will also draft PNP courses of action in areas to be placed under GCQ starting 1 May — referred to as the “new normal.”

Failure not an option

“In the succeeding days onward the extension of ECQ until 15 May, we can expect better and seamless cohesion among operations of PNP frontline and back-end support units toward the accomplishment of the mission given by the national government,” Gamboa said.

“We cannot afford to fail because many lives are at stake. I expect everyone to cooperate and support each other in this massive undertaking,” he added.

The PNP chief stressed that they support the Executive Department in the continuation of delivery of aid and cash assistance to marginalized sectors despite threats from communist insurgents.



Bracing for ‘new normal’

Gamboa added that the PNP is ready to coordinate with the Department of Social Welfare and Development, Department of Health, local government units (LGU) and the Armed Forces of the Philippines in ensuring the safety of government aid workers and resources to be given to the poor.

“The PNP likewise supports the option to place certain areas or the entire country under the imposition of direct military control along with the law enforcers if only to ensure that the government aid program for the poor and needy will not be derailed by CPP-NPA-NDF (Communist Party of the Philippines-New People’s Army-National Democratic Front),” Gamboa said.

Zero tolerance

Meanwhile, in compliance with the directive of Department of the Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año and Gamboa, the Joint Task Force COVID Shield on Saturday said it will now be implementing a zero tolerance policy on ECQ violators.

This means the police-led JTF CV shield will no longer be giving out warnings or considerations to violators. Instead, they will automatically, according to task force commander, PLt. Gen. Guillermo Eleazar.

The official noted that the intensified ECQ implementation has been reinforced with the deployment of more policemen on the streets to arrest violators of not only the home quarantine but also those who do not observe social distancing and mandatory wearing of face masks.

The additional deployment of troops stemmed from the spike in the number of violators arrested on Friday, 24 April, Eleazar said.

New life online

The US-based think tank Disaster Recovery Institute International (DRI), meanwhile, said in a study that many businesses will stay shut as they struggle with the new environment introduced during the coronavirus contagion.

Small business owners are more vulnerable and may have to restart their businesses to survive.

“When the economy reopens, it won’t go back to how it was all at once,” said DRI chief executive Chloe Demrovsky said.

“Our habits may have changed together with the width of our wallets,” she added

During the lockdowns in most parts of the world, activities such as grocery shopping, movie watching, company meetings and e-learning among others have largely moved online. These may not be short-term trends, and companies will need to adapt to them as our buying behaviour changes, according to the advisory firm.

“Individual decisions like that will be multiplied throughout countries and the world as a whole. Businesses that aren’t getting creative now about how they can be useful in a new post-Covid economy will struggle,” Demrovsky added.



Palawan agri farm helps indigenous people turn to farming amid COVID-19 lockdown

Published April 25, 2020 10:31pm

By JOAHNA LEI CASILAO, GMA News

<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/regions/735592/palawan-agri-farm-helps-indigenous-people-turn-to-farming-amid-covid-19-lockdown/story/>

A group of Indigenous People affected by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) lockdown in Palawan are turning to farming to meet their daily nutritional needs, with the help of an eco-tourism destination in the provincial capital.

Yamang Bukid Farm distributed 10,000 seedlings to members of the IP group at Barangay Sabang in Puerto Princesa whose livelihood depended heavily on tourism, which is currently at a standstill due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

With the help of Yamang Bukid's farm workers, the IP members were trained how to grow their own crops to ensure they would have enough food supply in the months to come at a time when basic food commodity is scarce on the island due to the quarantine.

"Malaking bagay po ito sa amin... ang hirap pumunta ng bayan para mamili. Malaking bayan ang inyong binigay sa amin na seedlings para makatulong sa aming mga mamayan," Barangay Tagabinet chair Juvylyl Bunda said in a video posted on Facebook. The IP members live around the Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park (PPSRNP), where the seedlings were planted.

"Asahan po ninyo na ang tinanggap namin na ito na 10,000 seedling ay mapapayabong at mapapalago pa po ng mga community-based sustainable tourism natin na tourism lang talaga iyong kanilang inaasahan, dependent sila," Maclang said.

For her part, Alvie Pamugas, a resident agriculturist at the farm, said: "Lahat po kami is nagtulong-tulong po kami na mag-grow po ng lahat ng gulay na puwede nating kainin, kasi alam po namin na hindi lang po kami dito sa Yamang Bukid 'yung kailangan kumain, at hindi din po kami sa Yamang Bukid na kailangan mabuhay,"

"Yung ibang tao na hindi po sila maka-trabaho kasi lockdown, so kailangan po namin sila tulungan para mabuhay din po sila," she added.

Yamang Bukid Farm is more than just a farm tourism destination. In these trying times, it has reached out to communities, far, isolated and impoverished, to help island-residents and indigenous tribes there navigate through difficult times.

Partnering with well-meaning groups and organizations such as Puerto Princesa Subterranean River National Park (PPSRNP), Yamang Bukid Farm is living a life for others by giving communities not just food for a day, but the means and knowledge to grow their food for a lifetime.

Yamang Bukid Vice President for Community Affairs Br. George Maria said farmers like him are also bearing the brunt of the lockdown and could empathize with the the IP members who lost their livelihood after tourism in the area ceased.

"Sana makatulong ito sa lahat ng tinutulungan na communities... Thank you so much, kayo rin po ang inspirasyon namin sa mga panahon na ito," he said as he addressed the IP members and farm workers alike.

"Ramdam namin 'yung mga nararamdaman ng mga magulang kapag 'yung mga anak nila natutulog, iiyak ng gutom," he added. **-MDM, GMA News**



GMA News

7 hrs · 🌐



A group of Indigenous People affected by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) lockdown in Palawan are turning to farming to meet their daily nutritional needs, with the help of an eco-tourism destination in the provincial capital.



GMANETWORK.COM

Palawan agri farm helps indigenous people turn to farming amid COVID-19 lockdown

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14 comments 55 shares



Lowly saluyot eyed vs coronavirus

April 26, 2020 12:05 AM

By **Roy Pelovello**

<https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/04/26/lowly-saluyot-eyed-vs-coronavirus/>



Corchorus olitorius or saluyot has many health benefits. It is used for food consumption because of its high nutritional value. It is considered as a health booster. This leafy veggie belongs to the Malvaceae family and grows on tropical areas. This herbal plant carries vitamins and minerals. It is an

The common saluyot (*Corchorus olitorius*)

is being touted as one of the food plants that could help boost resistance against COVID-19 infection.

At the onset of the coronavirus epidemic, information that banana can prevent COVID-19 infection went viral in social media but the Department of Health (DoH) subsequently debunked the supposed anti-viral properties of the fruit.

An article in the Arab Times has quoted Dr. Fahd Al-Najjar, consultant for Internal Medicine and the Digestive System at the Thunyan Al-Ghanem Center at the Amiri Hospital, as saying saluyot contains a substance that can combat coronavirus infection.

Called molokhia in Kuwait, Dr. Najjar said saluyot contains flavonoid that helps zinc to enter into the virus-infected cell and prevents the virus from reproducing inside the body.

He said that scientific research has shown that flavonoids from saluyot produce anti-viral effects shown by antimalarial drugs, chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine, which are also being studied as possible treatment for COVID-19 infection.

In the Philippines, former DoH secretary and herbal medicine advocate Dr. Jaime Galvez Tan is promoting, among others, a salad dish composed of kamote tops, kangkong, malunggay (moringa), saluyot and sili (capsicum) as a way to boost immune system and resist viral infection.

Saluyot is one of the key ingredients in the favorite Ilocano dish dinengdeng — a bagoong based soup made primarily of vegetables top with grilled or fried fish.

Former Senator Juan Ponce Enrile, now just four years shy of being a centenarian, attests to the health benefit of saluyot He once claimed it is his secret to longevity, apart of course from regular sleep and exercise.

“My secret in fighting aging is saluyot. My foods are dinengdeng. Every Sunday, that is what I’m eating,” Enrile said in an earlier radio interview.



https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10158706226961977&id=116724526976&fs=0&focus_composer=0

GMA News
10 hrs · 🌐



LOOK: Kitang-kita ang Metro Manila skyline mula sa Antipolo ngayong hapon, ayon kay YouScooper Reo Aguilas. Kuha ito kaninang 1:30PM mula sa isang bahagi ng Sumulong Highway nang dumaan siya para bumili ng pagkain mula sa grocery.

Dahil sa enhanced community quarantine ay matagal nang hindi nakakapunta sa Metro Manila si Youscooper Reo, kaya naisipan niyang kunan ng litrato ang view kung saan kita ang mga matataas na gusali ng mga lungsod.

Bisitahin ang www.gmanews.tv para sa iba pang balita.



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17 hrs · 🌐

Ang ganda! 😍



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LOOK: These breathtaking photos of Boracay Island amid quarantine look almost unreal

Boracay Island is looking more and more like a paradise amid the enhanced community quarantine.

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Multi-awarded bamboo firm thanks DOST-FPRDI for support

By [BusinessMirror](#) -

April 24, 2020

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/04/24/multi-awarded-bamboo-firm-thanks-dost-fprdi-for-support/>

'Bambuhay,' a bamboo-based social enterprise which has won several international awards in the last two years, recently thanked the Department of Science and Technology's Forest Products Research and Development Institute (DOST-FPRDI) for its technical support to the company.

The major producer of bamboo straws in the Philippines, Bambuhay uses bamboo farming and entrepreneurship to help farmers fight poverty, and protect the environment.

While onlookers may say that the firm's success is largely fuelled by its leadership's aggressive drive to help poor farmers, its founder and CEO, Mark Sultan Gersava, acknowledges that Bambuhay owes part of its growth to the help they received from DOST-FPRDI in 2017 and 2019.

"The technical assistance from the institute was key to improving the quality of our products and consequently enabled us to compete in the world market," Gersava said.

Bambuhay establishes bamboo plantations in deforested areas (with the help of the government's Bamboo Agro-Forestry Program) and makes various bamboo products—straws, tumblers and bamboo charcoal—both for local and global markets.

According to Gersava, the company not only wants to give jobs to farmers in the poorest provinces, it aims to turn them into "agripreneurs."

It dreams of becoming the first social enterprise in Asia owned by everyone directly involved in its operations—from the growers who supply the raw materials, to all the production workers and all their other personnel.

Bamboo became their plant of choice because it grows very well locally, and is an efficient eco-warrior. It can absorb huge amounts of climate-changing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

"We did not know much about bamboo processing, so we were glad we have found in DOST-FPRDI a partner for our technical needs," Gersava said. "Their specialists trained us on bamboo finishing and treatment, and did microbial analysis on our bamboo straws and phytochemical analysis on bamboo leaves. As a result, our product quality increased, and sales ballooned by 250 percent."

"In the years to come, I'm sure we would go back to DOST-FPRDI to get more help," he added. "We have big plans for our farmers, so we are always on the lookout for better ways to assist them. Because of that, we would always be needing the support of anyone and everyone who knows how to make the most out of bamboo."

According to Gersava, as of 2019, Bambuhay has already helped 181 farming families (and pulled 52 of these from poverty), sold 916,727 bamboo straws, and eliminated 5.6 million pounds of carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere.

Among the awards they have collected were the following:

Grand Winner of the 2019 Asean Impact Challenge, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia;

Global 100 Winner of the 2019 Entrepreneurship World Cup (out of more than 100,000 applicants worldwide), Riyadh, Saudi Arabia;

Grand Winner Start-upper of the Year, Paris, France; and

Winner of the Action Accelerator-Enactus World Cup, Silicon Valley, San Francisco Bay Area, California.

Rizalina K. Araral/S&T Media Service



Push for virus vaccine as Trump disinfectant theory sparks uproar

posted April 25, 2020 at 09:37 am

by AFP

<https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/322329>

Washington - The United Nations on Friday launched a global push for a coronavirus vaccine as President Donald Trump triggered an uproar by suggesting patients be treated with disinfectant and the US death toll passed 50,000.

Across the Muslim world, hundreds of millions of faithful opened the Ramadan holy month under stay-at-home conditions, facing bans on prayers in mosques and on the traditional large gatherings of families and friends to break the daily fast.

With effective medical treatments still far away, UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres said defeating the pandemic will require global organizations and world leaders joining forces with the private sector to develop and distribute a novel coronavirus vaccine.

"We face a global public enemy like no other," Guterres said. "A world free of COVID-19 requires the most massive public health effort in history."

The UN chief's appeal came a day after the US president prompted an outcry with his suggestion that industrial cleansers be used to treat patients.

"Is there a way we can do something like that, by injection inside or almost a cleaning?" Trump mused during a televised briefing. "It sounds interesting to me."

As experts -- and disinfectant manufacturers -- rushed to caution against any such dangerous experiment, the president tried to walk back his comments claiming he had been speaking "sarcastically."

The hardest-hit country by far in the global pandemic, the US had recorded 51,017 deaths and more than 890,000 infections.

- Early stages -

Confirmed coronavirus cases hit 2.77 million worldwide Friday, with deaths at 193,930.

New reported cases seem to have leveled off at about 80,000 a day, as distancing measures have taken root and the daily death toll in Western countries appeared to be falling -- a sign hopeful epidemiologists have been looking for.

Yet other nations are still in the early stages of the fight and the World Health Organization has warned strict measures should remain in place.

New cases were accelerating in countries with low testing or late and limited mitigation like Russia, Sudan, Somalia, Nigeria, the Maldives and Guatemala.

In Argentina, with some 3,400 cases and 167 deaths so far, prisoners rioted and demanded their release from a Buenos Aires jail on Friday after confirmation of a coronavirus case inside the facility.

- Global vaccine cooperation -

In Geneva, the WHO hosted a virtual conference on global cooperation to develop a vaccine, together with French President Emmanuel Macron, Germany's Angela Merkel, the wealthy Gates Foundation and GAVI, the global vaccine alliance.

"The world needs the development, production and equitable delivery of safe and effective COVID-19 vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics," Guterres said.

"Not a vaccine or treatments for one country or one region or one-half of the world, but a vaccine and treatment that are affordable, safe, effective, easily administered and universally available, for everyone, everywhere," he said.

Notably absent from the group were leaders of China, where the virus surfaced, and the United States, which has accused the WHO of not warning quickly enough about the original outbreak in China.

- Mecca's Grand Mosque deserted -

The pandemic put a damper on the opening of Ramadan, during which Muslims around the world fast during daylight hours and then, after evening prayer, dine with family and friends.

In the Saudi holy city of Mecca, the Grand Mosque, usually packed with tens of thousands of people during Ramadan, was deserted as religious authorities suspended the year-round umrah pilgrimage.

"We are used to seeing the holy mosque crowded with people during the day, night, all the time... I feel pain deep inside," said Ali Mulla, the muezzin who gives the call to prayer at the Grand Mosque.

But clerics and conservatives in some countries including Bangladesh, Pakistan and Indonesia -- the world's largest Muslim-majority nation -- have pushed back against social distancing rules, refusing to stop gatherings in mosques.



Push for virus vaccine as Trump disinfectant theory sparks uproar

Several thousand attended evening prayers on Thursday at the biggest mosque in the capital of Indonesia's conservative Aceh province, and there were similar scenes in many sites in Pakistan.

- Economic contraction -

The economic devastation wreaked by the global lockdown is huge, with the world facing its worst downturn since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

Russia's central bank said its economy would shrink up to six percent this year, hit doubly by the coronavirus and the plunge in oil prices.

In the United States, the Congressional Budget Office forecast GDP will contract by 12 percent in the April-June quarter and the federal deficit, due to massive stimulus spending, will explode to \$3.7 trillion in 2020.

Trump on Friday signed the newest financial support package, providing \$483 billion for small businesses and hard-pressed hospitals.

Across the United States, state leaders were weighing whether to start gradually lifting lockdown measures.

But the governor of Georgia was under attack for going so far as to approve the opening of businesses where social distancing is difficult, like gyms, hair salons and tattoo parlors.

"If I don't cut hair I don't make money," said mask-wearing Atlanta barber Chris Edwards, as he trimmed the hair of an unmasked client. "We're being safe, we're being clean, it's all you can do."

- Europe -

In Europe, leaders haggled over their own relief package that could top one trillion euros, as the European Central Bank chief warned of the risk of "acting too little, too late."

The 27-nation European Union has agreed to ask the bloc's executive arm to come up with a rescue plan by May 6, sources told AFP.

The crucial economic discussions come as parts of Europe slowly loosen restrictions after progress on reducing the number of new infections.

Belgium became the latest to ease, announcing Friday that businesses and schools will gradually reopen from the middle of May.

"The spread of COVID-19 has been slowed down, but the virus has not disappeared," Prime Minister Sophie Wilmes said.

Experts have warned of a possible second wave of infections, particularly in the fall when temperatures cool.

Virologist Christian Drosten of Berlin's Charite Hospital said the coronavirus could return with a "totally different force."

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No, don't inject disinfectant: Outcry over Trump's musing

[Associated Press](#) / 12:49 PM April 25, 2020

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1264489/no-dont-inject-disinfectant-outcry-over-trumps-musing>



President Donald Trump listens as Vice President Mike Pence speaks about the coronavirus in the James Brady Press Briefing Room of the White House on Friday in Washington. (AP)

WASHINGTON — President Donald Trump's raising of unproven, even far-fetched ideas for fighting COVID-19 — including his latest musing about injecting disinfectants into people — triggered an outcry from health officials everywhere on Friday. It also highlighted his unconventional approach to the special responsibility that comes with speaking from the presidential pulpit.

Trump readily admits he's not a doctor. Yet with the reported U.S. death toll from the virus topping 50,000, he continues to use the White House podium to promote untested drugs and float his own ideas for treatment as he tries to project optimism.

"He's like the family member around the dinner table that doesn't have a grasp of what reality is and is willing to speak with confidence despite it," said Julian Zelizer, a presidential historian at Princeton University. He said Trump likes to provocatively push the boundaries because he thinks that appeals to his political supporters.

"But in this case it's the president of the United States and it's dangerous," Zelizer said.

Trump's offhand comment Thursday wondering if disinfectants could be injected or ingested to fight COVID-10 got intense blowback from doctors and other health officials on Friday. It also prompted blunt warnings from the makers of popular commercial products.

"We must be clear that under no circumstance should our disinfectant products be administered into the human body (through injection, ingestion or any other route)," said a statement from the parent of the company that makes Lysol and Dettol, Reckitt Benckiser.

"Bleach and other disinfectants are not suitable for consumption or injection under any circumstances" declared the Clorox Co.

The White House said the president's comments had been misrepresented by the media, and Trump said he had been speaking sarcastically. But a transcript of his remarks suggested otherwise.

He had noted at a Thursday briefing that research was underway into the effect disinfectants have on the virus and wondered aloud if they could be injected into people. "Is there a way we can do something like that, by injection inside or almost a cleaning?" Trump asked. "Because you see it gets in the lungs and it does a tremendous number on the lungs. So it would be interesting to check that."

Don't try that at home, others quickly warned.

The U.S. Surgeon General's office tweeted a reminder to all Americans: "PLEASE always talk to your health provider first before administering any treatment/ medication to yourself or a loved one."

Democrats leapt to respond.

"It's sad when you have to correct the president of the United States on a matter of science and health," said New York Mayor Bill De Blasio.

Some Republicans, too.



No, don't inject disinfectant: Outcry over Trump's musing

Indiana Sen. Mike Braun, who campaigned as a strong Trump supporter in 2018, said, "Sometimes when you're not clear with how you say things, especially when you are at a high level where people watch, its best probably not to venture into areas that you may not know a lot about."

Trump, whose daily COVID briefings often stretch 90 minutes or longer, abruptly ended Friday's appearance after only about 20 minutes and without answering questions. He did take questions earlier.

Many Americans apparently were taking Trump's comments as more than sarcastic.

After receiving more than 100 calls to its hotline, the Maryland Emergency Management Agency tweeted this alert: "This is a reminder that under no circumstances should any disinfectant product be administered into the body through injection, ingestion or any other route."

Dr. Mona Hanna-Attisha, who helped expose the Flint, Michigan, contaminated water scandal in 2015, said she routinely gives out the Poison Control hotline number during pediatric visits. In light of the president's comments, "It seems the entire country needs it now," she tweeted. "The phone number to Poison Control is 1-800-222-1222."

Speaking to reporters in the Oval Office on Friday, Trump insisted his comments were misconstrued. "I was asking the question sarcastically to reporters like you, just to see what would happen," he said.

However, "People expect presidents to speak with authority all the time," said Edward Frantz, a presidential historian at the University of Indianapolis. "You can't pick and choose the times as president when you are going to act presidential ... and then say to the public, 'You're supposed to understand I was being sarcastic.'"

Trump's imprecise language, hyperbole and outright mistruths in public statements throughout his presidency have been without precedent, said Frantz, who has researched Republican presidents from Abraham Lincoln to Ronald Reagan.

"Even before Trump attempted to walk back his comments on Friday, White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany sought to brush them off as the president faced a deluge of criticism.

"President Trump has repeatedly said that Americans should consult with medical doctors regarding coronavirus treatment, a point that he emphasized again during yesterday's briefing," McEnany said.

Dr. Deborah Birx, coordinator of the White House coronavirus task force, defended Trump as merely thinking aloud about what he was hearing at the briefing.

"He was riffing," said Jason Miller, who served as communications director to Trump's 2016 campaign. "He wasn't, saying, 'Go and pump Lysol into your veins.' But when you riff from the podium, it allows other people to define what your intent was."

Democrats were less forgiving.

"I can't believe I have to say this, but please don't drink bleach," tweeted Joe Biden, the Democrats' presumptive presidential nominee.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi accused Trump of suggesting that people "inject Lysol into their lungs."

Actually, the idea to ingest a type of disinfectant has a history.

During the influenza pandemic of 1918 — the year that Trump's paternal grandfather, Friedrich Trump, died of the flu — doctors gave patients a rash of unusual treatments to treat their symptoms, according to medical journals at the time.



No, don't inject disinfectant: Outcry over Trump's musing

One doctor advocated a boric acid and sodium bicarbonate (baking soda) powder be sniffed up the nose to rinse out nasal passages. Others prescribed quinine, strychnine and a poisonous garden plant called Digitalis to help circulation, and drugs derived from iodine for "internal disinfection," according to author Laura Spinney, who wrote a 2017 book on the pandemic entitled "Pale Rider, The Spanish Flu of 1918 and How it Changed the World."

Thursday wasn't the first time the president has talked up prospects for new therapies or offered rosy timelines for the development of a vaccine. He has repeatedly promoted the drug hydroxychloroquine as a potential "game changer" in the fight against the virus.

Last month, the FDA authorized limited use of the malaria drug for hospitalized patients with COVID-19 who aren't enrolled in ongoing research. Studies have found reports of serious side effects, including dangerous irregular heart rhythms, and deaths among patients.

Despite those negative results, Trump said Thursday he's read good reports, too. "We'll see what happens," he said.

On Friday, however, the Food and Drug Administration warned that people should not take chloroquine and hydroxychloroquine to treat COVID-19 outside of a hospital or formal clinical trial, citing reports of "serious heart rhythm problems."

The White House also has pitched "emerging" research on the benefits of sunlight and humidity in diminishing the threat of the virus. Past studies have not found good evidence that the warmer temperatures and higher humidity of spring and summer will help tamp down the spread of the virus.

Ultraviolet light is used for disinfecting masks and other medical equipment but has not been shown to be safe or effective for use on people to try to eliminate a virus, said Dr. Rais Vohra, an emergency medicine doctor at the Fresno branch of the University of California, San Francisco.

"For inanimate objects, it does make sense," but exposing yourself to ultraviolet light outside or from other sources can raise the risk of skin cancer, he said.



No evidence that people who had coronavirus are immune from second infection, WHO warns

By Lindsay Isaac, CNN

Published Apr 25, 2020 9:52:34 PM



The World Health Organization is warning that people who have had coronavirus are not necessarily immune by the presence of antibodies from getting the virus again. (FILE PHOTO)

(CNN) — The World Health Organization is warning that people who have had coronavirus are not necessarily immune by the presence of antibodies from getting the virus again.

“There is no evidence yet that people who have had Covid-19 will not get a second infection,” the WHO said in a new scientific brief.

The WHO is warning against governments issuing “immunity passports” to people who have had Covid-19, assuming they are safe to resume normal life.

“At this point in the pandemic, there is not enough evidence about the effectiveness of antibody-mediated immunity to guarantee the accuracy of an 'immunity passport' or 'risk-free certificate,'" the brief said.

The WHO published the brief as guidance on adjusting public health and social measures for the next phase of the COVID-19 response.

“People who assume that they are immune to a second infection because they have received a positive test result may ignore public health advice. The use of such certificates may therefore increase the risks of continued transmission," the WHO said.

The health agency says it is reviewing evidence on antibody responses to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19-infection. The brief says “most” of the studies show that people who have “recovered from infection have antibodies to the virus.”

But as of yesterday, no study has “evaluated whether the presence of antibodies to SARS-CoV-2 confers immunity to subsequent infection by this virus in humans.



Sun kills virus; scientists divided

By Agence France-Presse

April 26, 2020

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/04/26/news/world/sun-kills-virus-scientists-divided/718909/>

MARYLAND: Does sunlight rapidly destroy the coronavirus? A White House presentation on a mysterious government study says so, but some scientists have called for caution as we await more evidence.

An official from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) made the eye-catching announcement during President Donald Trump's daily pandemic briefing Thursday, showing a dramatic reduction in the virus' viability under the sun's rays.

But the fact there are no further details about how the study was conducted has left some experts scratching their heads.

"It looks like someone did a test somewhere," Benjamin Neuman, chair of biological sciences at Texas A&M University-Texarkana, told Agence France-Presse (AFP). "It would be good to know how the test was done."

William Bryan, the official who summarized the findings, told reporters that an experiment was carried out at the National Biodefense Analysis and Countermeasures Center in Maryland.

On a stainless steel surface in sunlight, the virus shrinks to half its amount in a matter of just two minutes in 70 to 75 degrees Fahrenheit (21 to 24 degrees Celsius) heat and 80-percent humidity, compared to six hours in the dark.

When the virus was suspended in the air, its half-life in sunlight was just a minute and a half when the temperature was 70 to 75 degrees with 20-percent humidity, as opposed to one hour in the dark.

Beyond the headline results, there are so far few details, making it impossible for experts to independently validate the findings. "As a scientist, I'd of course like to see an actual study and the actual numbers," viral epidemiologist Chris von Csefalvay told AFP.

We do know that the solar radiation contained in ultraviolet light — an invisible, energetic part of the electromagnetic spectrum — can be very effective at dealing with certain pathogens.

That is why, for example, the World Health Organization recommends that people in developing countries can place tap water in plastic bottles and leave them under the sun for five hours in order to make it drinkable.

But not all microbes respond in the same way. Sunlight in fact contains different types of ultraviolet (UV) radiation, which are classed by their wavelength.

Broadly speaking, these can be categorized into UVA, which causes the skin to tan and age; UVB, which is a bit more harmful in high doses and can cause burning and cancer, and UVC, which is the most dangerous.

Most of the sunlight that penetrates our atmosphere is UVA while UVC is completely filtered out. That is good news for us: UVC has small, high energy waves that are particularly adept at warping genetic material, whether in animal cells or in viruses.

A 2004 study on SARS — severe acute respiratory syndrome, a close genetic relative of the new coronavirus — found that UVA light "had no effect on viability, regardless of duration of exposure."

UVC light, which is commonly used to sterilize labs, hospitals and now even buses in China, completely inactivated the virus within 15 minutes. It is entirely possible that the SARS-CoV-2 — SARS coronavirus 2, the virus that causes the coronavirus disease 2019 or Covid 19 — is more vulnerable to regular sunlight than its older cousin, and not just UVC.

The problem is the DHS has bypassed scientific norms by not making its data available — even in its preliminary, non peer-reviewed form, which is how most major research during this pandemic has first made its way into the public domain.

"It would be really important for understanding this study to know how it was conducted, and I am quite hopeful that the actual paper, or at least a pre-print, will be shared soon," said von Csefalvay.

"I know for a fact that the scientific community is eager to review their findings." But even if all the findings are airtight, solar disinfection is probably going to have a limited impact.



<https://www.facebook.com/116724526976/posts/10158707031786977/?app=fbl>



GMA News

5 hrs · 🌐

The coronavirus appears to weaken more quickly when exposed to sunlight, heat and humidity, according to William Bryan, a US official.

SUNLIGHT, HEAT AND HUMIDITY WEAKEN CORONAVIRUS

Chat (5)



The novel coronavirus appears to weaken more quickly when exposed to sunlight, heat and humidity. This is a potential sign that the pandemic could become less contagious in summer months, according to William Bryan, acting head of the US Department of Homeland Security's Science and Technology Directorate.



GMA Public Affairs

7 hrs · 🌐

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SUNLIGHT, HEAT AND HUMIDITY, WEAKEN CORONAVIRUS -- US OFFICIAL

The coronavirus appears to weaken more quickly when exposed to sunlight, heat and humidity, according to William Bryan, a US official. This may be a potential sign that the pandemic could become less contagious in summer months.

FULL STORY: <http://tiny.cc/0mwqnz>

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1.2K comments 5.5K shares



Lysol maker: Please don't drink our cleaning products

By Jordan Valinsky, CNN Business

Published Apr 25, 2020 8:06:04 AM

<https://cnnphilippines.com/business/2020/4/25/lysol-dettol-donald-trump.html>

3 4



(CNN) — The company that makes Lysol and Dettol is urging customers not to consume its cleaning products after President Donald Trump suggested the possibility of injecting disinfectants to protect people from coronavirus.

Reckitt Benckiser (RBGLY), a British company, warned Friday that human consumption of disinfectant products is dangerous. It issued the statement following "recent speculation and social media activity."

"As a global leader in health and hygiene products, we must be clear that under no circumstance should our disinfectant products be administered into the human body (through injection, ingestion or any other route)," the company said in a statement.

RB said products should only be "used as intended and in line with usage guidelines."

"We have a responsibility in providing consumers with access to accurate, up-to-date information as advised by leading public health experts," the company said.

The statement followed remarks from President Trump on Thursday on the use of disinfectants.

"And then I see the disinfectant where it knocks it out in one minute. Is there a way we can do something like that by injection inside or almost a cleaning ... it would be interesting to check that," Trump said. "It sounds interesting to me," he added.

CNN's Chief Medical Correspondent, Dr. Sanjay Gupta was quick to point out that this is simply wrong.

"He also said it needs to be studied. Actually, it doesn't. I mean we know the answer to this one," he said on CNN's Anderson Cooper 360 on Thursday. "I think everybody would know that that would be dangerous and counter-productive."

Ingesting or injecting disinfectants is dangerous, according to a medical expert employed by the Trump administration. Food and Drug Administration chief Dr. Stephen Hahn told CNN's Anderson Cooper, "I certainly wouldn't recommend the internal ingestion of a disinfectant."

The US Food and Drug Administration regularly warns the public against drinking bleach, or even inhaling fumes from bleach. It's also irritating to skin.

On Monday, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention said calls about poisonings with cleaners and disinfectants had increased more than 20% in the first three months of 2020 -- as coronavirus cleaning increased -- than from the same period a year earlier. Among cleaners, bleaches accounted for the largest percentage increase in calls from 2019 to 2020.

The CDC recommends using soap and water or bleach to kill the virus. Rubbing alcohol that's at least 70% alcohol will also kill it on surfaces; 60% for your hands.

This story was first published on CNN.com "[Lysol maker: Please don't drink our cleaning products](#)"