



DENR 2 generates over P1-M donations for COVID-19 response

By DENR-2 Press Release Published on April 30, 2020
<https://pia.gov.ph/news/articles/1040606>



DENR-2 ARD Felix Taguba (in yellow polo shirt) turns over cash assistance to CVMC personnel nurse Charice Maborang (third from L) and HEPO William Apostol (at extreme right). (DENR-2 photo)

TUGUEGARAO CITY, Cagayan, April 30 (PIA) - -The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) continues to provide assistance to health workers and frontliners in Region 2 who are fighting the corona virus disease (COVID-19).

Regional Executive Director Atty. Antonio A. Abawag reported that a total of Php 1,040,635 cash donations was voluntarily contributed by DENR personnel regionwide in response to the call of DENR top management.

Most of the personnel donated an amount equivalent to their one-day salary.

On April 29, Assistant Regional Director for Technical Services Felix C. Taguba turned-over Php300,000 cash to OIC, Health Education and Promotion Officer William Apostol and Nurse Educator Charise Maborang of the Cagayan Valley Medical Center (CVMC) in Tuguegarao City.

According to Taguba, the cash assistance donated by personnel of the DENR Regional Office and Environmental Management Bureau, and BFD Multi-purpose Cooperative will be used to purchase rice, groceries and other basic necessities for the medical center's frontliners as suggested by its chief, Dr. Glenn Matthew Baggao.



DENR donates a total of 5,737.81 board feet of confiscated lumber to LGUs and other government agencies. The materials were used in the rehabilitation and construction of quarantine facilities. (DENR 2 photo)



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Earlier, Abawag instructed Taguba and the five Provincial Environment and Natural Resources (PENR) Officers to coordinate with the heads of hospitals or institutions involved in COVID-19 response.

“Please make sure our assistance reaches the intended health frontliners,” Abawag ordered.

“We shall also prioritize the protection of our personnel. Those who will start reporting to office in May shall also be provided with masks,” the regional environment chief said.

Meanwhile, the Php740,635 cash donations from the PENR and CENR Offices will be given to hospital workers and other frontliners in their respective areas of responsibility in the form of personal protective equipment and relief goods.

Aside from giving monetary contributions, personnel of the regional and field offices have distributed meal packs to health workers and checkpoint personnel.

Relief goods were also distributed to less privileged families.

Some personnel also assisted in operating monitoring checkpoints and in disinfecting public places.

Also, a total of 5,737.81 board feet of confiscated lumber were donated to local government units and other government agencies which were used in the rehabilitation and construction of quarantine facilities. *(MDCT/Reports from Corie Corpuz/PIA-2)*



Climate action, cooperation help prevent spread of infectious diseases

By **BusinessMirror**

May 1, 2020

By Dr. Theresa Mundita S. Lim

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/05/01/climate-action-cooperation-help-prevent-spread-of-infectious-diseases/>

Climate change has been linked to more severe and frequent storms that take away lives and damage properties. Its impacts include droughts and seasonal changes that affect harvests and food security.

This global phenomenon has been warming the seas, thus, bleaching corals and affecting fish catch. It also contributes to the rise of sea levels, which threatens to flood coastal communities, and even cities in the future.

While not highlighted as much, climate action also includes taking care of nature and the remaining biological diversity in the planet.

This natural solution contributes to the sequestration of the burgeoning carbon in the atmosphere, helping mitigate the rising temperature and greenhouse-gas emissions, and buffering vulnerable countries and communities from the impacts of the changing climate.

The continuing exploitation of our biological resources and degradation of our natural ecosystems have exposed us to the full brunt of disasters that are consequences of the climate crisis, which include the spread of infectious diseases.

According to the World Health Organization, climate change affects water-borne diseases transmitted through insects and cold-blooded animals, and lengthens the transmission season of vector-borne infectious diseases. Malaria, which is strongly influenced by the climate, kills over 400,000 people every year.

Destroying key ecosystems and the unabated extraction of wildlife resources from their natural habitats have increased the probabilities of livestock and humans coming into contact with pathogens.

SARS-CoV-2, the virus behind Covid-19, has been linked with human exposure to wildlife, and climate inaction has aggravated the situation.

Changes in rainfall and temperature, for example, can affect food sources of wild animals, which are common hosts to viruses. Changes in the movement and behavior of animals looking for food may bring wild animals and humans into closer contact.

Indeed, addressing climate change will help safeguard public health, and conserving biodiversity is one of the measures to achieve this.

The Covid-19 pandemic has brought to the fore the importance of decisive public-health actions in the short and long term, and climate action is crucial today and in the years to come.

On April 22, the Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) joined the international community in commemorating Earth Day, with climate action as its theme.

The far-reaching issue of climate change, the impact of which will be felt by future generations, is important, now more than ever, as we marked the 50th Earth Day.

The Asean region is highly vulnerable to climate change because of its archipelagos, long coastlines, and concentrated populations and economic activities in low-lying areas.

It is no stranger to disasters like storms, flooding, landslides and wildfire. Moreover, climate change-related diseases like dengue and malaria are constant threats.

Just as viruses recognize no borders, making infectious diseases a global concern that require nations to cooperate, so does climate change require cooperation.



Climate action, cooperation help prevent spread of infectious diseases

While one nation's aggressive climate policies and programs can be undermined by nations that do not have the same level of commitment, the agreements and coordinated actions by nations working together can multiply the results of climate action.

The ACB welcomes the ongoing initiatives of the Asean region in addressing climate change. All 10 Asean member-states (AMS) are parties to the 2015 Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

The AMS are committed to keeping the global temperature below 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, and to pursue efforts to limit the temperature increase even further to 1.5 degrees Celsius. All the AMS have submitted Intended Nationally Determined Contributions and targets under the 2015 Paris Agreement.

Additionally, AMS leaders have been regularly issuing joint statements on climate change at the UNFCCC Conference of the Parties (COP) since 2007.

The Asean joint statements highlight the region's common views and concerns toward a global solution to climate challenges, and a climate-resilient Asean through national and regional actions.

In COP 25, the AMS affirmed their commitments, including the Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation, and fostering conservation, sustainable forest management, and enhancement of forest carbon stocks (REDD+).

The AMS are in varying stages of implementing REDD+, with some planning and designing road maps, and a number engaging local communities in reforestation and sustainable forest management.

Moreover, outside of REDD+, the AMS are actively conserving and planting mangroves, which are among the best carbon sinks. Mangroves are also nature-based solutions that serve as buffers against storms and flooding.

Restoring and conserving ecosystems like forests also contributes to carbon sequestration.

The Asean region has so far placed 13 percent of its terrestrial areas under protection, and is on track to meet the global Aichi Biodiversity target on increasing coverage of terrestrial and marine areas under protection.

Asean Heritage Parks (AHPs), a regional network of protected areas that conserve Asean's rich, unique, and endangered biodiversity, likewise contributes to mitigating climate change.

To scale up their initiatives, the AMS work with other nations and partners in several climate change-related programs.

For example, the AMS collaborated with the ACB and other partners like the EU, KfW, and other organisations in the conduct of the Sixth AHP Conference.

The Conference enhanced capacities of AHP managers and facilitated sharing of best practices in AHP management, among them on climate-change mitigation and adaptation, with emphasis on nature-based solutions.

The AMS and India, together with the ACB, also worked together to share experiences and opportunities in integrating urban biodiversity conservation in cities.

Studies show that biodiversity in cities helps reduce heat, a common issue with climate change, and brings back native species in their natural habitats.

AMS leaders and experts have come together in other climate-related events to discuss actions and solutions and enhance capacities in climate response, like the Asean Climate Change Partnership Conference, and the Asean Strategic Policy Dialogue on Disaster Management in 2019.

These are but some of Asean's climate initiatives. We need all these and more to address our climate concerns, and consequently, mitigate the spread of climate-related infectious diseases.

As we work as a cohesive and a responsive Asean to address the Covid-19 pandemic, this Earth Day and beyond, let us continue to mitigate and adapt to climate change and its impacts in solidarity, for our health and our future.

Dr. Theresa Mundita S. Lim is the executive director of Asean Centre for Biodiversity.

Sand sanitation

May 2, 2020 12:04 AM

By **WJG**

<https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/05/02/sand-sanitation/>



Before the ongoing Luzon lockdown to contain the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), there was the six-month Boracay lockdown in 2018 to rehabilitate and clean up the country's top tourist destination.

After the rehab, keeping Boracay clean remains challenging. Local officials have to contend with the environmental impact of

the limited volume of visitors and vandalism. Last August, a foreign tourist let her child defecate in the powdery white sand beach of Boracay. Another foreigner buried a used baby diaper in the sand. Such incidents make it difficult to reestablish the island's reputation as a clean place.

A clean beach, including its bathing waters, should be free from litter, plastic, floodwater, wastewater spill and discharges from vessels. Also considered clean are those with Blue Flag certification from the Foundation for Environmental Education.

Blue Flag beaches have waste bins and sanitary facilities. Also, there is no unauthorized camping or driving, no dumping, pets are regulated and sustainable transportation is used.

Among the Blue Flag or clean beaches in the world are Victoria Beach in Canada, Santa Maria Beach in Los Cabos, Dado 1 in Haifa, Israel, Mellieha Bay in Malta, Palmestranden Beach in Denmark and Zona Balnear da Lagoa in Portugal.

In Spain, Zahara de los Atunes near Cadiz can now be ranked as one of the cleanest beaches in the world after its officials' draconian move last week. Tractors sprayed more than two kilometers of the beach with disinfectant bleach to make it free from coronavirus.

Officials of the fishing village said the spraying aims to protect children who will be allowed outside homes for the first time as Spain starts easing its lockdown.

Environmental groups, however, were enraged by the bleaching that they said caused "brutal damage" to the local ecosystem by killing everything on the ground.



Swimming in Boracay prohibited under GCQ

By Gail Momblan **May 1, 2020, 6:02 pm**

<https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1101600>



OFF LIMITS. Tourists enjoy an afternoon dip on Boracay, a week before the province was placed on enhanced community quarantine against the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) on March 22, 2020. Aklan Governor Florencio Tumbocon Miraflores on Friday (May 1, 2020) said swimming is still prohibited on the island and other coastal areas in Aklan after placing the province on general community quarantine. *(PNA file photo by Gail Momblan)*

ILOILO CITY – Swimming in Boracay Island and other coastal areas in Aklan is still prohibited even after the province was placed on general community quarantine (GCQ) on May 1, Aklan Governor Florencio Tumbocon Miraflores said.

“It (swimming) is part of the prohibited activities. As much as we would like everybody to enjoy already Boracay, the task force said it will not be allowed until we go out of the (15-day) GCQ,” Miraflores said in a teleconference.

“Fishing is what we only allow now,” Miraflores said.

“While tourists are not yet here, we prepare Boracay for them to be assured that they are safe. They are assured that if they visit Boracay, they will not be infected with Covid-19. We make sure that we establish a brand that Boracay is Covid-free,” he said.

Hotel owners and other tourism players are considering rapid testing for their employees to serve as a guide for safety.

For returning workers within Aklan, Miraflores said they do not need to secure special passes to enter Boracay.

“It is the business establishment’s discretion whether or not they require their employees any health certification,” he said.

The governor was assured that people within Aklan are safe as no local transmission was confirmed within the province.

Meanwhile, executive order 023 signed by Miraflores on Friday placed the province under GCQ, with additional features than the previous order for enhanced community quarantine (ECQ).

Supermarkets, agri-fishery supply stores, veterinary supply stores, and other establishments will be allowed to operate under GCQ but will have to observe 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. operating hours. Banks, meanwhile, can now follow its usual 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. opening hours.

For purposes of easier contact tracing, the governor ordered drivers and operators of vehicles allowed to operate to secure a manifest of passengers.

The GCQ in Aklan will be in effect until May 15, unless shortened or extended by the Provincial Task Force on Covid-19.

Aklan province has six Covid-19 cases, based on the Department of Health (DOH-6) bulletin on Thursday. **(PNA)**



Guidelines for workplaces allowed to operate in ECQ, GCQ areas

Published May 1, 2020 2:45pm

By TED CORDERO, GMA News

<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/money/companies/736439/guidelines-for-workplaces-allowed-to-operate-in-ecq-gcq-areas/story/>

The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) and Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) on Friday released the guidelines on workplace prevention and control of COVID-19 for private sector institutions allowed to operate during the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) and general community quarantine (GCQ).

The guidelines cover all workplaces, employers, and workers in the private sector.

The government earlier released a [list of businesses allowed to operate during ECQ and GCQ periods](#).

Below are the health and safety standards to be implemented in all workplaces.

Before entering buildings or workplaces all employers and workers shall observe the following:

Wear face masks at all times and remove the same only when eating/drinking. Employers shall provide the appropriate face masks for workers. Should a cloth mask be used, the washable type shall be worn with additional filter material such as tissue papers inside the mask may be added.

Accomplish daily health symptoms questionnaire and submit to the guard or designated safety officer prior to entry.

Have their temperature checked and recorded. For any personnel with temperature above 37.5 degrees Celsius, even after a five minute rest and needs further questioning shall be isolated. Isolation [areas] shall be well-ventilated and disinfected frequently. Clinic staff assigned to attend to isolated persons shall be provided with PPEs.

Equipment or vehicle entering hubs must go through disinfection.

If there will be long queues outside office or establishment premises, roving officers should instill physical distancing.

Inside the workplace personnel shall observe the following measures:

All work areas and frequently handled object shall be cleaned and disinfected at least once every two hours.

All washrooms and toilets shall have sufficient water, soap as workers are encouraged to wash hands frequently and avoid touching eyes, nose, mouth.

Sanitizers should be made available along corridors, conference areas, elevators, stairways, and where workers pass.

Workers shall practice physical distancing at minimum one meter radius.

Eating in a communal area is discouraged. However, if eating in an individual work area is impossible, physical distancing should be maintained in dining areas.

Canteens and kitchens should be cleaned and disinfected regularly.

The DOLE and DTI encouraged alternative work arrangements, such as working-hour shifts, work-from-home.

For those who will be physically present at workplaces, the government discouraged prolonged face-to-face interaction between workers and masks shall be worn at all times.

Meetings are advisable to be kept at a minimum number of participants and at shorter durations.



Guidelines for workplaces allowed to operate in ECQ, GCQ areas

Office tables, meanwhile, should be arranged to maintain proper physical distancing and barriers may be provided between tables.

“Work station layout should be designed to allow for unidirectional movement in aisles, corridors, or walkways,” the guidelines read.

The number of people in closed spaces such as rooms or stores shall be limited and elevator use should consider one meter physical distancing.

The government encouraged the use of stairways, but subject to physical distancing requirements.

“If more than two stairways are accessible, one stairway may be used exclusively for going up and another for going down,” the circular read.

Online systems are highly encouraged to be utilized for clients needing assistance from offices including use of videoconferencing.

Roving officers shall always ensure physical distancing and observance of minimum health protocols.

In the event that a worker is suspected of COVID-19, the following shall be observed:

The worker shall immediately proceed to the isolation area designated in the workplace and never remove his/her mask.

Clinic personnel attending should wear appropriate PPEs and if needed, should require the transport of the affected worker to the nearest hospital. Company protocols for transport for suspected COVID-19 cases and for PCR testing should be in place including providing for ambulance conduction. Hospital will report to the DOH for COVID-19 suspect.

Workplace shall be decontaminated with appropriate disinfectant. After disinfection work can resume after 24 hours.

Workers present in the work area with the suspect shall go on 14 days home quarantine. If a co-worker is negative of COVID-19, co-workers may be allowed to report back to work.

If a worker is sick or has fever but is not suspected to have COVID-19, the employer must advise the worker to stay at home and keep away from work or crowds, take adequate rest and plenty of fluids, practice personal hygiene, and seek proper medical care. — **RSJ, GMA News**



Duterte issues EO on ECQ, GCQ implementation

By Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos May 1, 2020, 7:17 pm
<https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1101639>

MANILA – President Rodrigo Duterte has signed an executive order (EO), which formally allows the implementation of enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) and general community quarantine (GCQ) to contain the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) in the country.

EO 112, inked by Duterte on April 30, approves the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases' (IATF-EID) recommendation to impose ECQ in high-risk areas and GCQ in the rest of the country until May 15.

Under the EO, ECQ is implemented in Metro Manila; Central Luzon, except Aurora; Calabarzon; Benguet; Pangasinan; Iloilo province; Cebu province; Bacolod City; and Davao City.

“An ECQ shall be in effect in the entirety of [these] geographic areas, including all provinces, highly-urbanized cities (HUCs), independent component cities (ICCs), component cities (CCs), and municipalities situated therein, from 12:01 a.m. of 01 May 2020 to 11:59 p.m. of 15 May 2020,” the EO said.

The IATF-EID recommended on Wednesday the extension of ECQ in high-risk areas in the country and the imposition of GCQ in all low-risk and moderate-risk areas nationwide from May 1 to 15.

Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque on Thursday said Iloilo City and Cebu City are covered by the ECQ.

The EO provides that GCQ is imposed in all other areas of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao, provided that “minimum health standards are achieved and continuously observed in these areas.”

EO 112 also notes that the community quarantine by a local government unit (LGU), regardless of nomenclature, ceased to take effect on 12:01 a.m. of May 1.

“The IATF may lift the GCQ in low-risk areas after 15 May 2020, provided that no deterioration in their risk level occurs,” the order read.

The EO states that all decisions to impose, lift, or extend a community quarantine in provinces, HUCs, and ICCs will rest with the IATF-EID.

Provincial governors may impose, lift or extend ECQ in CCS and municipalities upon the concurrence of the relevant regional counterpart body of the IATF-EID, according to the order.

EO 112 states that mayors of cities and municipalities are also authorized to impose, lift or extend ECQ in villages, upon the concurrence of the relevant regional counterpart body of the IATF-EID.

“This is without prejudice to the authority of the IATF to directly impose, lift or extend ECQ in these areas, should circumstances call for it,” it said. “No LGU shall declare its own community quarantine, regardless of nomenclature, without observing the foregoing procedure.”

The EO also adopts the omnibus guidelines on the community quarantine in the country.

Any amendment or modification of the omnibus guidelines may be approved by the IATF-EID sans the need for further approval of Duterte.



Duterte issues EO on ECQ, GCQ implementation

“There is a need to build on the existing response measures of the government relative to the Covid-19 outbreak, maximize the gains we have achieved thus far, and complement efforts to strengthen the health systems capacity of hospitals, medical facilities, and LGUs,” EO 112 said.

All government departments, agencies, and instrumentalities, including state colleges and universities, government-owned or -controlled corporations, government financial institutions, and LGUs, are directed to render full assistance to and cooperation with each other and mobilize the necessary resources for the ECQ and GCQ.

The EO said that if any of the provisions is held unconstitutional or invalid, the other provisions not affected will “remain in full force and effect.”

All orders, rules, regulations, and issuances that are inconsistent with EO 112 are “repealed, amended, or modified accordingly.”

“These challenging times call for the full and sincere cooperation of all LGUs, in the true spirit of nationalism and bayanihan (teamwork), as unilateral decisions to close off territorial boundaries and restrict the movement of workers and cargoes compromise the collective interests of all Filipinos and the country as a whole,” the order said.

EO 113, a copy of which was released by Malacañan on Friday, takes effect immediately upon publication in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation. (PNA)



Work-related, religious gatherings barred in GCQ zones

By Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos May 1, 2020, 1:54 pm
<https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1101587>



Baclaran Church facade (File photo)

MANILA – The Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) has retracted its recent decision to allow essential work and religious gatherings in areas under general community quarantine (GCQ), Malacañang said on Friday.

Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said essential work-related and religious activities are now prohibited in places where GCQ is imposed.

The latest development came after the IATF-EID heeded the local officials' request to suspend the work and religious gatherings in areas that are placed under GCQ, Roque said during the Laging Handa program aired on state-run PTV-4.

"Pinagbabawal po muli ang mass gathering, even for religious activities or 'yung work-related gatherings. So balik po tayo sa rule na bawal pa rin ang mass gathering po (Mass gathering, even for religious activities or work-related gatherings, is once again prohibited. So we will follow the previous rule that mass gathering is not allowed)," he said.

The IATF-EID's meeting held Friday is still ongoing, as of press time.

Roque initially announced on Thursday that essential work and religious gatherings are allowed in areas under GCQ, as long as measures such as strict social distancing of at least two meters and use of face mask or other protective equipment are observed.

The resumption of essential work gatherings and religious activities, however, was opposed local officials residing in areas where GCQ is imposed, as well as from several lawmakers.

Local officials and lawmakers have argued that allowing essential work and religious gatherings might increase the chances of having more coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) infections in the country.

Roque said religious sectors in the country have already been consulted about the government's move to suspend anew the religious activities amid the Covid-19 crisis.

"Sang-ayon naman po sila na kinakailangan pangalagaan muna ang kalusugan ng mga nananampalataya so sang-ayon po sila na huwag munang ituloy ang mga religious meeting habang tayo po ay merong GCQ (They agreed to suspend religious meetings in areas under GCQ because they believe public health is more important)," he said.

Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, religious leaders have new ways to connect to people who are required to observe strict home quarantine, Roque said.

"So para po maiwasan nga ang pagkalat ng Covid-19, pinagbabawal po muna ngayon ang religious gatherings. Sana po malinaw iyan (To avoid further spread of Covid-19, religious gatherings are prohibited. I hope it's clear to everyone)," he said.

GCQ is imposed in areas considered with moderate- and low-risk in the spread of Covid-19.

On the other hand, enhanced community quarantine is still imposed in Metro Manila; Central Luzon, except Aurora; Calabarzon; Pangasinan; Benguet; Iloilo province; Iloilo City; Bacolod City; Cebu province; Cebu City; and Davao City since these are considered high-risk areas.

As of Thursday, the Philippines has recorded 8,488 confirmed Covid-19 cases, with 568 deaths and 1,043 recoveries. **(PNA)**



Gov't finalizes rules for areas under enhanced, general community quarantine

By [Lara Tan, CNN Philippines](#)

Published Apr 30, 2020 3:38:45 PM

<https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/4/30/Philippines-ECQ-GCQ-lockdown-quarantine-guidelines-COVID-19.html>

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, April 30) — The government issued on Thursday the varying degrees of quarantine restrictions to be imposed in the country from May 1 to 15 to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 in the Philippines.

President Rodrigo Duterte has approved the recommendations made by the COVID-19 task force on rules to be imposed in areas under enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) and general community quarantine (GCQ), Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said.

The following high-risk areas will be placed under the strict ECQ for 15 days starting Friday:

- Metro Manila
- Central Luzon, except for Aurora
- Calabarzon
- Pangasinan
- Benguet, including Baguio City
- Iloilo, including Iloilo City
- Cebu, including Cebu City
- Bacolod City
- Davao City

All other provinces will be placed under the more relaxed GCQ.

Under the Luzon-wide enhanced community quarantine that will end on Friday, strict stay-at-home rules are implemented, mass transportation is suspended, and non-essential businesses remain closed to discourage people from going out except for food, banking, and medical runs.

With the final guidelines, the same rules will apply, but slight tweaks were made as to the businesses, sectors, and government work that were allowed to resume operations.

Those below 21 years old, 60 years old and above, pregnant women, those with health risks — regardless if they are in a GCQ or ECQ jurisdiction — are required to stay at home except when "indispensable under the circumstances for obtaining essential goods and services or for work in permitted industries and offices."

Transition to 'new normal' in GCQ areas

Some quarantine rules will be relaxed, several non-essential businesses will be allowed to reopen, and the so-called "new normal" will be in place in all other areas in the country that are not under ECQ. The areas under GCQ have low to moderate number of COVID-19 cases.

Minimum public health standards, such as social distancing, wearing of face masks in public, mandatory checking of temperature, and regular use

of disinfectants, shall always be in place in all areas despite the lower or moderate risk of contracting the virus.

The movement of those living in GCQ areas remain limited to accessing essential goods and services and going to work in offices and industries allowed to operate.

More businesses and sectors are also allowed to operate in areas under GCQ. Malls and shopping centers will be allowed to reopen with limited operations and capacity, but theaters, gaming areas, and other leisure stores will remain closed.

Hotels in GCQ areas are only allowed to entertain long-term bookings, those who have existing accommodations for foreigners as of May 1, and those housing distressed OFWs and stranded Filipinos or foreign nationals.

Mass gatherings remain prohibited, except for essential work assemblies and religious activities, as long as physical distancing of two meters is observed.

Unlike the strict mass transportation restrictions in ECQ areas, public transportation will be allowed in GCQ areas. Land, air, and sea public transportation are allowed to reopen at a reduced capacity to ensure physical distancing between passengers of at least one meter.

The nonessential entry and exit of people to and from the ECQ zone is prohibited.

The 15-day extension of lockdown in the Philippines came after Duterte's extensive meetings with the COVID-19 task force and medical experts.

Health experts, including from the World Health Organization, have warned that hastily lifting quarantine restrictions may lead to a second wave of infections, just like in Singapore, which initially arrested the spread of COVID-19, but later faced a resurgence of the viral disease.

This is the second extension of the enhanced community quarantine in Metro Manila. Duterte originally scheduled the Luzon-wide quarantine to last only until midnight of April 12, but eventually decided to extend it until April 30, and as of today, until May 15.

To date, the country has recorded 8,212 cases of COVID-19, including 1,023 recoveries and 558 fatalities.



'Balik Probinsya' program to boost agriculture in provinces

May 2, 2020 - 12:00am

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/05/02/2011243/balik-probinsya-program-boost-agriculture-provinces>



"The offshoot of this program is the development of the agricultural sector," Go said the other day.

STAR/File

MANILA, Philippines — Sen. Bong Go said the proposed "Balik Probinsya" program may further revitalize the country's agricultural sector as many city dwellers are reintegrated in the countryside where idle, fertile lands can be developed.

"The offshoot of this program is the development of the agricultural sector," Go

said the other day. "If we can come up with other complementary programs promoting agriculture among those who are reintegrated in the provinces through the Balik Probinsya program, I believe this program will succeed."

He noted there is a decreasing number of farmers and fishers in the country because many of them are too old to work in the fields and in the seas and also due to the migration of workers from the countryside to urban centers.

The senator also noticed that although a lot of the children of these aging farmers and fishermen prefer to work in the cities, they usually end up as factory workers, laborers, household help, sales girls, most of them earning below the minimum wage.

"We must entice a new generation of farmers to go back to our agricultural roots," Go said. "We have to make agriculture and aquaculture more promising again to attract young farmers and fishers to these industries."

Even before becoming a senator, Go has been pushing for a much needed boost to agriculture in the country. Among his proposals are the continued provision of more inputs for farmers, such as seeds, fertilizers, machineries and trainings on scientific and climate resilient farming methods to increase agricultural productivity in the country.

To support his proposed Balik Probinsya, concerned government agencies may explore the idea of providing more scholarships and even trainings abroad for Filipino farmers so they can learn the best practices on farming, such as the kibbutz system in Israel. Barangay agriculture may also be incorporated in the basic education curriculum to inculcate love of farming among Filipino students at a young age.



Agriculture gets reboot under new normal

Louise Maureen Simeon (The Philippine Star) - May 2, 2020 - 12:00am

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2020/05/02/2011165/agriculture-gets-reboot-under-new-normal>



Agriculture Secretary William Dar said the pandemic highlighted the vulnerabilities of the current systems, particularly distorting the food supply chain and global trade.

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines will reboot farming sector through the the implementation of new agricultural policies as it refocuses priorities under the “new normal” due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

Agriculture Secretary William Dar said the pandemic highlighted the vulnerabilities of the current systems, particularly distorting the food supply chain and global trade.

Thus, it is imperative for the government to rethink and restructure its policies and practices to prevent from being overwhelmed by future crises.

Dar said the country must first surpass the global crisis and from there, build its own resilience not only to threats like COVID, but also to emerging challenges such as climate change.

“After COVID, it will not be business as usual, and we should focus on three principles, namely: survive, reboot and grow,” he said.

Under the survival principle, the Department of Agriculture will continue to implement resiliency programs and projects.

Dar said the DA has provided farmers fast-moving interventions such as cash assistance and soft loans, issued food passes to ensure unhampered movement of food and agri-fishery products, and promoted the Kadiwa program that links farmers directly to consumers.

The DA also revived the urban agriculture and backyard gardening programs to help attain household food security. It formed the Bantay Presyo Task Force to enforce the price freeze and suggested retail price policies on basic food commodities.

“Secondly, we must reboot and reform our agricultural policies, and refocus our priorities to minimize the adverse effects and disruptions on agricultural production and food supply chain due to the COVID pandemic,” Dar said.

“Thirdly, the agriculture and fishery sector must grow, by attracting more investments and resources, and partnering with the private sector and local government units to increase food sufficiency levels, and at the same time modernize and industrialize the country’s agri-fishery sector,” he said.

Dar emphasized that DA should rally and steer all agri-fishery industry stakeholders to propel the sector to grow and reach its optimum potential.

“With the help of the private sector and the LGUs, we hope to improve to the next level our productivity and food supply chain through farm consolidation and clustering, provision of accessible financing, stronger linkages between production and marketing, and establishment of more postharvest and processing facilities,” Dar said.

While the COVID-19 pandemic has yet to make a significant impact on the country’s food productivity, Dar said the government is not leaving anything to chance, as it is now exploring ways on how to use the economic disruptions to improve food value chain and logistics, and climate-resiliency measures.

“Under the new normal, we will maximize the use of digital technology to link producers to consumers through e-commerce and related activities,” Dar said.



Dominguez scores Senate inaction

May 2, 2020 12:07 AM

By **Joshua Lao**

<https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/05/02/dominguez-scores-senate-inaction/>



The Cabinet economic cluster on Friday cited the slowpoke manner by which the Senate has acted on the proposed Corporate Income Tax and Incentives Reform Act or CITIRA, saying anticipated revenues from the stimulus package will help underwrite a post-COVID-19 Philippines.

“Right now, we have a bill passed by the House and it’s sitting idle in the Senate. It is a stimulus bill because it reduces taxes for everyone whether or not you were hit by the coronavirus,” Finance Secretary Carlos G. Dominguez III said at the Harvard Business School Alumni Association of the Philippines meeting on Wednesday.

The CITIRA relates to the plan to lower the country’s 30 percent tax on corporate income, the highest in the region, to only 20 percent over a 10-year span while at the same time recalibrate the system of business incentives that ostensibly encourages the inflow of foreign investments but erode the nation’s capacity to generate revenues at the same time.

Dominguez said the proposal has hurdled the scrutiny of the House of Representatives but acknowledged an apprehension the bill may not muster the Senate at a time when the nation’s coffers have been acutely depleted of revenues both actual and potential.

“People think we want to remove the incentives. We don’t want to. Actually, we want to make them more targeted,” he said of a sore point of contention among legislators.

“The reduction in corporate income tax that the bill provides would be a good stimulus to the economy,” Dominguez reiterated.

He fears the deliberations would be long, the arguments lengthy when there is so little time to act against a pandemic that has precipitated the use of 2019 savings and the realignment of the 2020 General Appropriations Act as contingent response.

Dominguez said the CITIRA will help underwrite the requirements under the Social Amelioration Program (SAP) that even President Duterte, in a moment of candor, acknowledged as having been nearly depleted were it not boosted by borrowing and realignment of budget line items.

The Department of Finance also on Friday reported the anticipated economic backlash to mandatory lockdown across Luzon and much of the country could trim revenue collection by as much as P1.1 trillion as the quarantine measures bite and the mobility of services and goods is curtailed.

Data from the Department of Social Welfare and Development’s (DSWD) monitoring dashboard for SAP show that as of 30 April 2020, P53.69 billion of the P80.79 billion obligated to local government units have been received by their intended beneficiaries.

Of the total, P37.31 billion have been distributed to 6.38 million low-income households and non-Pantawid Familyang Pilipino Program (4P) or non-indigent families, the DWSD said.

Some 3.73 million households included in the 4P initiative already received P16.38 billion. The DSWD targeted 4.29 million beneficiaries under the program.



Dominguez scores Senate inaction

According to the agency, the budget allotment for non-4P families was P81.53 billion while the allocation for 4P beneficiaries totaled P18.47 billion.

In a parallel development, the Philippine Amusement and Gaming Corp. (PAGCOR) on Friday said it will allow so-called Philippine offshore gaming operation (POGO) firms to resume business as they are considered business process outsourcing (BPO) entities.

In a statement, PAGCOR chairman Andrea Domingo said that the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) on the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has allowed the POGO — mostly based in Metro Manila — to reopen with up to 30 percent of their workforce after fulfilling requirements.

“We were informed (Thursday) that it was approved, that POGO will be considered as BPO. But because of the requirements, it could take them another week to start,” said Domingo.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque confirmed this development, saying the POGO are BPO.

“BPO are allowed and POGO are BPO,” said Roque in a previous statement.

Domingo said the POGO will be notified of the requirements on 4 May that only registered workers and those cleared of COVID-19 are allowed to go back to work.

The PAGCOR chief added operators were ordered to pay all tax obligations up to March 2020 before the resumption of operations.

Some 31,600 Filipino direct employees also need to be paid from April even though work was suspended due to the lockdown as POGO were ordered to pay a “guarantee fee” of P300 to P350 million to help boost government’s pandemic war chest, Domingo said.

Offices are required to have isolation rooms. Task force members are allowed to inspect their facilities. Social distancing and wearing of face masks are required, she said.

There are over 60 POGO license holders and over 200 service providers in the country.

House Speaker Alan Peter Cayetano opposes the resumption of POGO operations in the country.

In a broadcast interview, Cayetano clarified he is against POGO whether there is ECQ or not.

“With or without ECQ, I’m against POGOs. I don’t believe in gaming or gambling.”

Cayetano said companies allowed to resume operations should abide by social distancing protocols and other rules set by the government, be they POGO or BPO.

House Minority Leader Bienvenido “Benny” Abante Jr. also hit the decision to allow POGO to operate and both appealed to the IATF-EID to reconsider its decision as POGO cannot be considered an “essential industry.”

In a statement, the Accredited Service Providers Association of PAGCOR (ASPAP) said its members will observe the guidelines for the partial resumption of their operations that include the proper disinfection of facilities and testing of their employees.

Its members welcome their classification as BPO companies, saying the nature of their work is the same as other BPO services in the country.

“To stress a point — POGO are offshore gaming operators, while POGO service providers are typical Philippine-based BPO companies that are purely paid service fees,” ASPAP said

As for the health of their workers, ASPAP said their members have zero-COVID-19 cases on both its Chinese and Filipino workers during the pandemic.



Philippine economy likely grew by 3% in Q1 — think tank

Czeriza Valencia (The Philippine Star) - May 2, 2020 - 12:00am

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2020/05/02/2011159/philippine-economy-likely-grew-3-q1-think-tank>

MANILA, Philippines — Economic growth likely slowed down to three percent in the first quarter of the year, the slowest in 10 years, after multiple economic shocks related to the coronavirus pandemic hit the Philippine economy, said London-based Capital Economics.

In a new research brief, the think tank said that while the Philippine economy still grew in the first quarter, a deeper contraction of as much as 13.5 percent can be expected in the second quarter.

The initial hit from the pandemic in the first three months of the year was concentrated in the tourism industry as travel bans were enforced worldwide to curb the spread of the new coronavirus that causes the COVID-19 disease.

Domestic demand was hit later in the quarter after the enforcement of the lockdown in Luzon, the country's main island that accounts for 70 percent of gross domestic product (GDP).

"GDP growth is likely to have slowed down to three percent in Q1, down from 6.5 percent in the final quarter of last year," Capital Economics said.

"The Q2 figures are likely to be much worse. While lockdown restrictions have been eased in parts of Luzon recently, most of the island, including the economic powerhouse of Metro Manila, will remain under lockdown until at least 15th of May."

The restrictions to mobility enforced in the country is among the most severe in Asia as the domestic health sector struggles to cope with the surge in the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases.

"Figures from Google's Community Mobility Reports similarly suggest that the lockdown has had a bigger impact on daily life than anywhere else in the region," Capital Economics said.

"Overall, we expect a very severe contraction in GDP of around 13.5 percent year-on-year in Q2."

Recovery can be expected to occur in the second half of the year as restrictions on domestic economic activity are lifted, the firm said.

External demand should also start to pick up as lockdowns worldwide are eased.

Because of the economic beating in the first half, Capital Economics maintained its previous forecast that the Philippine economy would contract by four percent this year, its worst performance since 1984.

The firm, however, noted that this forecast is "much lower than the consensus."

Acting Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Karl Chua said growth in the first quarter can still be expected to be positive, although slower, as several economic shocks, both domestic and external, battered the economy.

These include the eruption of Taal Volcano in January, the steep decline in tourists following travel bans, and the start of the Luzon-wide lockdown in mid-March.

Chua likewise sees the economy recovering in the second half of the year as lockdown restrictions are lifted.

The Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA) is set to announce the country's growth performance for the first quarter on May 7.



'Peak' ng COVID-19 sa Pinas malabo pa

Danilo Garcia (Pilipino Star Ngayon)
) - May 1, 2020 - 12:00am

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/bansa/2020/05/01/2011009/peak-ng-covid-19-sa-pinas-malabo-pa>

MANILA, Philippines — Kasabay ng pagpasok sa 'extended community quarantine' ngayong Mayo, sinabi ng Department of Health (DOH) na hindi pa nila nakikita na nag-peak na ang bilang ng mga kaso ng nahawa ng COVID-19 sa bansa.

Sinabi ni Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire na bagama't walang malaking pagbabago sa mga numero na inilalabas nila kada araw, 'premature' pa umano na matatawag na nagkaroon na ng 'flattening' dahil sa kasalukuyan pa lang isinasagawa ang mas maraming testing.

Inaasahan umano nila na mas lalaki ang numero sa mga darating na araw dahil sa mas pinalawak na rin nila ang testing.

Mula sa tatlong surveillance platform, isa na lang umano ang ginagamit ng DOH para matukoy ang posibleng mga senaryo sa COVID sa bansa.

Ito ay ang Feasibility Analysis of Syndromic Surveillance using Spatio-Temporal Epidemiological Modeler (FASSTER) na pinondohan ng Department of Science and Technology.



Army, mining firm assist IP communities in Surigao Norte

By Alexander Lopez May 1, 2020, 4:41 pm
<https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1101574>



SUPPORT TO IPs. Around 489 indigenous people (IP) families in Guigaquit, Surigao del Norte were provided relief assistance by the Taganito HPAL Nickel Asia Corporation (THPAL) with the support of the Army's 30th Infantry Battalion on April 29, 2020. The IP families were the most vulnerable during the implementation of the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) in the province. (Photo courtesy of 30th IB)

BUTUAN CITY – The Army's 30th Infantry Battalion in partnership with the Taganito HPAL Nickel Asia Corporation (THPAL) have joined hands in the provision of relief goods to 489 indigenous people (IP) families who were affected during the implementation of the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) in the province of Surigao del Norte.

Lt. Col. Jeffrey Villarosa, commander of 30th IB, in a statement Friday said the IPs are among the most vulnerable sector during the ECQ in Surigao del Norte.

“Aside from their vulnerability during the community quarantine, our IPs are also continuously exploited by the Communist New People's Army Terrorists (CNTs) as their source of recruits to beef-up their forces against the government in the area,” Villarosa said.

The joint relief operation was a manifestation of giving value and support to the IPs to save them from the exploitations of the NPA rebels, he added.

The provision of relief goods was conducted in Gigaquit, Surigao del Norte on April 29 that was joined by Mayor Chandru Bonite and Marites Tero, community relations officer of THPAL.

Tero, in a statement, said the IP communities who received the relief goods belong to CADT-048 (Certificate of Ancestral Domain Title-048) holders situated in the province of Surigao del Norte.

Tero added that THPAL aims to ensure that IPs in the area, during the quarantine period, will have enough food supplies.

The statement of the Army also quoted Mabalaw Jerry Kalinawan, one of the tribal leaders of CADT-048, expressing gratitude to the Army and THPAL.

“I am very grateful for the help we received from the THPAL and the support of the 30th IB. We are hoping that there are still others who can help us especially during this crisis,” Kalinawan said.

Villarosa also assured the IPs of the Army's continuing support to relief operations in the area, especially in remote villages. (**PNA**)



FCF provides rice, grocery to over 10k Vizcayanos

posted May 01, 2020 at 10:20 pm

by [Manila Standard](#)

<https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/322831>

Bayombong, Nueva Vizcaya—FCF Minerals Corporation recently provided rice and grocery assistance to the villagers of Quezon and Kasibu towns as part of its support to the government efforts in mitigating the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic in the province.

Ian Moller, FCF's manager for sustainability said the rice and grocery assistance were given to the more than 10,500 households of Quezon town's 13 barangays and Kasibu town's 4 barangays as the agency's support to the 'Bayanihan to Heal as One' Act of the national government.

"The assistance was given during the Enhanced Community Quarantine period in April and given in three waves to help our villagers in coping up with the adverse effects of the ECQ in their communities," he said.

The rice and grocery assistance were given in the barangays of Quezon such as Darubba, Bonifacio, Aurora, Baresbes, Boliwao, Caliat, Calaocan, Dagupan, Maasin, Maddiangat, Nalubunan, and Runruno.

Villagers of the neighboring barangays of Tadjji, Papaya, and Antutot in Kasibu town also received food assistance.

Moller said the assistance were realized using the 2019 unused funds of the Annual Social Development and Management Plan (ASDMP) for the barangays.

"The realignment of funds was requested by the concerned barangays to the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) so that they can use them for COVID-19 mitigation assistance," he added.

Moller said the realignment of unused 2019 ASDMP funds was asked by the MGB among mining companies in the country for use in mitigating the adverse effects of the ECQ due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

He added that the 2020 SDMP realigned budget also funded the additional relief assistance of the neighboring communities to supplement the first budget released under the 2019 ASDMP unutilized fund.

The distribution of the relief assistance was conducted through the mining company's Community Relations Office (CRO) in coordination with the ASDMP focal persons in the barangays and local officials.

FCF operates the gold-molybdenum deposits in barangay Runruno in Quezon town and also funds the ASDMPs of its host and neighboring barangays.



Funeral workers face risk daily as COVID-19 frontliners

Published May 2, 2020 12:32am

https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/regions/736505/funeral-workers-face-risk-daily-as-covid-19-frontliners/story/?just_in

An undertaker or funeral director for five years, Ryan Santos did not expect the hardships they are experiencing amid the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

In Shai Lagarde's report on Stand for Truth, Ryan Santos said they are treating going to work everyday as if they were going to war.

"Ganyan, sasabak na kami. Dapat lagi po kaming nakasuot ng PPE (Personal Protective Equipment) tapos po 'yung suot naming 'yun, susunugin po namin para iwas din sa virus o kaya mikrobyo," Santos said.

He disclosed that it would take them hours to pick up cadavers from hospitals as they have to follow community quarantine protocol to the letter.

They have to interview the family, check on the medical certificate or death certificate so they would know the cause of death.

Santos related an instance in which a pick up trip that started at 1:30 a.m. ended by 5 p.m.

At the checkpoint, they also have to go through interviews themselves and further quarantine protocol followed by security personnel.

"Nung nasa checkpoint na kami, doon kami hinarang. May kailangan daw ambulansya, titingin pa, magpapaalam pa sa pulis. Parang ang daming prosesong dadaanan. Nakabailk kami sa mismong punenarya is 5:30 ng hapon," Santos said.

Santos said he was furious at first but later understood that the protocol is in place for the safety of everyone.

"'Yun po ang pinaka-matinding galit ko n'un na naramdaman sa oras na 'yun. Pero nung naliwanagan kami [na] kailangan po namin mag tigis, unang-una para sa kaligtasan ng lahat," he added.

Santos also disclosed that there was a time that he did not go home for almost a month. And for the only time he was able to go home, he did not stay long as he is also concerned for the safety of his family and a small child.

Due to being "on-call," Santos takes naps at the funeral parlor.

"Ang pinaka-matagal ko'ng tulog talaga two hours kasi maya-maya meron (kliyente)," he said

Despite all the hardships, Santos said that serving the public amid the pandemic was a kind of blessing.

"Lahat ng hirap, takot na dumadaan sa amin, mga pagsubok, pagnakita ko 'yung pamilyang namatayan, naging satisfied sila, parang blessing na rin sa amin," Santos said. -- Joahna Lei Casilao/BAP, GMA News



The dangerous life of a garbage collector in the time of COVID-19

Published May 1, 2020 3:22pm

<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/lifestyle/content/736443/the-dangerous-life-of-a-garbage-collector-in-the-time-of-covid-19/story/>

Many brave garbage collectors continue to keep their neighborhoods clean despite the risk of exposing themselves to the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

In an episode of "Frontliners: A Brigada Special Online Series," GMA Public Affairs spent a day with Anthony Jumadiao, a garbage collector who continues to provide his services to the Baseco compound in Manila.

"Simula po nang magka-virus, lubos na po kaming nabababahala," he said.

"Hindi namin po alam kung carrier na po kami ng virus na 'yan. Puwede po naming mahawaan 'yung mga bata, magulang ko, lahat po sila frontliner din po kasi kami. Lagi po kaming nasa labas," he added.

Every morning at 3 a.m., Anthony sets out to clear the mounds of trash all over Baseco.

To protect themselves from the virus, he and his companions were given some masks, gloves and soap. However, the gloves were damaged very easily.

They had to pick up every loose piece of trash that people have carelessly discarded along the streets and waterways.

"Minsan po may nakakalat na mask. 'Di po namin alam kung may virus po yun. Pero no choice pa rin, kailangan kunin pa rin namin yung basura. pero nakakatakot pa rin po," Anthony said.

Handling other people's garbage was hard, but the improper waste disposal practiced among residents made it even harder.

"Kalat-kalat po 'yung basura. Minsan binubuhos po nila, binubuhos lang po sa lapag," he said.

"Mas maganda po kung nakatali po para madali lang pong mahakot eh. Hindi gaya niyan, papalaan pa po namin minsan. Kung nakasako po yan, nakalagay sa mga drum, timba, naka-plastic, mas madali po. Tsaka iwas virus din po," he added.

Anthony gets P537 for a day's work.

He wasn't sure it would be enough to get him and his family through the enhanced community quarantine which had been extended in Metro Manila.

"Sa pagkain po, may araw din po na sumasapat. Pero itong nadugtong po yung quarantine, na extend pa po, parang kukulangin po sa tingin ko kasi po may mga kaanak din po akong walang trabaho, ang ginagawa ko po sinusuplayan ko rin po sila," he explained.

'Frontliner din kami'

A garbage collector for seven years now, Anthony has been aware of the risks of his job even before the COVID-19 threat.

Nevertheless, he knew he needed to keep working for his family and to keep their surroundings clean for other residents, as well.

"Sa sobrang hirap po ng buhay ngayon, lalo na may bata po ng COVID-19, puwede pong maapektuhan yung kalusugan namin. Puwede po kaming mahawa pero kailangan pa rin po naming magtrabaho kasi po para makakain pa rin po 'yung pamilya ko," he said.

"Para na rin po makatulong kami sa mga kababayan natin, kasi pag time na hindi po kami naghakot, kahit isang araw lang po, marami pong basura. Puwede pong maraming mahawa, lalong kakalat 'yung virus," he added.

Anthony even wrote a rap song about the hardships of being a garbage collector.

It also pays a tribute to the other frontliners like doctors, soldiers and policemen who are risking their lives everyday just to battle COVID-19.

"Nagpapasalamat din po ako sa may itaas. kahit papaano hindi niya po kami pinapabayaan mga kasamahan kong garbage collector, basta tuloy tuloy lang po 'yung serbisyo namin kahit may banta ng COVID-19," Anthony said.

Those who wish to help Anthony may contact him through these numbers: 09154798989 or 09518595311.



Observing social distancing, labor groups rally on Labor Day

Published May 1, 2020 9:52am

Updated May 1, 2020 4:01pm

<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/regions/736404/observing-social-distancing-bukluran-members-rally-on-labor-day/story/>

Observing social distancing, members of a labor group gathered in Rodriguez, Rizal to push for labor rights on Friday, Labor Day, according to Glen Juego's report on Dabol B sa News TV.

The protesters who assembled at Barangay San Isidro were from Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino.

The rally was held even amid the implementation of the enhanced community quarantine, which prohibits mass gathering to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

However, Philippine National Police spokesman Police Brigadier General Bernard Banac said many labor and transport groups have abandoned their plans to conduct mass actions in this year's Labor Day given the present health crisis.

On Thursday, PNP chief General Archie Francisco Gamboa discouraged groups to hold any protest actions.

"The PNP leadership is thankful to leaders of various groups for heeding the call of police authorities against mass gathering of persons in public assemblies and mass actions that will not sit well with public health protocols to contain COVID-19," Banac said.

Juego reported that the rallyists left in a hurry when police arrived although two of them were arrested.

Banac identified those nabbed as Clarito Rastica and Reynaldo Dulay.

Hiling nila, "paid quarantine at hazard pay, gawing mandatory" at COVID-19 mass testing sa mga manggagawa.

Similarly, members of a labor group also gathered in Tondo, Manila, asking the government to make paid quarantine and hazard pay mandatory, as well as to conduct mass COVID-19 testing for laborers, according to a separate report by Isa Avendano-Umali.



On Labor Day, Duterte reminds employers to provide 'humane working conditions' for Filipino workers

(Philstar.com) - May 1, 2020 - 10:20am

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/05/01/2011116/labor-day-duterte-reminds-employers-provide-humane-working-conditions-filipino-workers>



Displaced jeepney drivers place a countdown of the prevailing enhanced community quarantine on one of the passenger jeeps as they appeal for help from passers by along Nagtahan in Manila a day before Labor Day, April 30.

The STAR/Miguel de Guzman

MANILA, Philippines — On Labor Day, President Rodrigo Duterte reminded employers to provide Filipino workers “stable career opportunities and humane working

conditions.”

Duterte, in his Labor Day 2020 message, recognized the excellence and diligence of the Filipino workforce that help communities and industries across the globe.

He reaffirmed “the government’s commitment to uphold the dignity of labor by safeguarding the rights of our workers through the humanization of laws and the equalization of social forces.”

“I thus remind everyone in the business sector of their shared responsibility in improving the lives of our workers by providing them stable career opportunities and humane working conditions,” the president, who once vowed to end “endo,” said.

Ending labor-only contracting or “endo,” a Filipino-coined term for “end of contract,” is one of Duterte’s key campaign promises.

“As all work is vital in forging a more inclusive and more progressive Philippines, may each and every Filipino rightfully enjoy the fruits of their labor and lead more productive and dignified lives,” he added.

Last April 29, the government funnelled additional funds to its two flagship programs meant to assist formal and informal workers displaced by the COVID-19 pandemic.

An additional 530,000 workers will get assisted by the combined P2.5 billion new allocations for the COVID-19 adjustment program (CAMP) as well as the Tulong Panghanapbuhay sa Displaced/Disadvantaged Workers (TUPAD) program, officials from the labor department said.

A qualified applicant receives a one-time P5,000 cash aid under CAMP.

DOLE earlier said that 2.3 million workers had been displaced by the pandemic. — Kristine Joy Patag with report from The STAR/Alexis Romero



Muntinlupa City, among WWF's One Planet City Challenge finalists

By Ma. Alaine P. Allanigue Published on May 1, 2020

[HTTPS://PIA.GOV.PH/NEWS/ARTICLES/1040619](https://pia.gov.ph/news/articles/1040619)



E-jeepneys of Muntinlupa LGU (Photo courtesy of Muntinlupa PIO)

QUEZON CITY, May 1 (PIA) -- Muntinlupa City was chosen as one of the three finalist cities from the Philippines in the World Wide Fund for Nature's (WWF) One Planet City Challenge (OPCC) this year.

The WWF-OPCC is a global competition that recognizes cities with effective climate change action plans. One to three cities per participating country are chosen as finalists. WWF announced that Muntinlupa City, along with Batangas City and Santa

Rosa in Laguna, has been selected as national finalists from the country for this year.

Over 250 cities from 53 countries, including 13 from the Philippines, joined the 2020 WWF's One Planet City Challenge through the Global Covenant of Mayor's Unified Reporting System hosted by CDP and ICLEI.

Muntinlupa, Batangas City, and Santa Rosa bested other Philippine cities in their efforts to reduce carbon emissions contributing to the global target of keeping the global average temperature rise to below 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The OPCC was launched in 2011 originally as the Earth Hour Challenge, a friendly competition wherein cities share best practices in climate mitigation and develop adaptation plans anchored in their crucial role towards building a sustainable and climate-safe future.

"In these trying times, being business-as-usual in the way we do things is no more sufficient to secure a safe and sustainable future. I would like to acknowledge the cities who participated in this initiative for pursuing innovative ways towards sustainable and healthy cities for the current and future generations," WWF-Philippines Executive Director Jose Angelito Palma said.

The country's finalists will be evaluated by the OPCC jury of experts, composed of urban sustainability experts from around the world, who will make the final selection of national winners and one global winner.

The three Philippine cities have also qualified to join the OPCC's We Love Cities campaign, which aims to bridge better communication between city officials and citizens they represent on climate and sustainability issues.

The OPCC finalists this year are: Argentina: Buenos Aires, Chacabuco and San Martin de los Andes; Brazil: Belo Horizonte, Fortaleza and Rio de Janeiro; Canada: Vancouver; Chile: Peñalolén, Santiago and Valdivia; Colombia: Mantizales, Montería and Villavicencio; Côte d'Ivoire: Commune de Cocody; Ecuador: Municipio de Loja; Finland: Turku; France: Paris; Guatemala: Escuintla, Iztapa and San José; Iceland: Reykjavik; India: Kochi, Nagpur and Rajkot; Indonesia: Balikpapan, Banda Aceh and Jakarta; Malaysia: Melaka, Petaling Jaya and Sebarang Perai; Mexico: Hermosillo, Mérida and Mexico City; New Zealand: Wellington City Council; Norway: Arendal and Baerum; Peru: Borja, Lima and Magdalena; Philippines: Muntinlupa, Batangas and Santa Rosa; Republic of Korea: Suwon City; South Africa: Cape Town, Durban and KwaDukuza; State of Palestine: Abasan Al-Kabira; Sweden: Helsingborg, Uppsala and Växjö; Thailand: Hat Siao, Khonkaen and Patong; Turkey: Bursa, Denizli and Izmir; UK: Greater London, Greater Manchester and Bournemouth-Christchurch-Poole; US: Cleveland, Los Angeles and Park City; and Vietnam: Dong Hoi City. (Muntinlupa PIO/PIA-NCR)

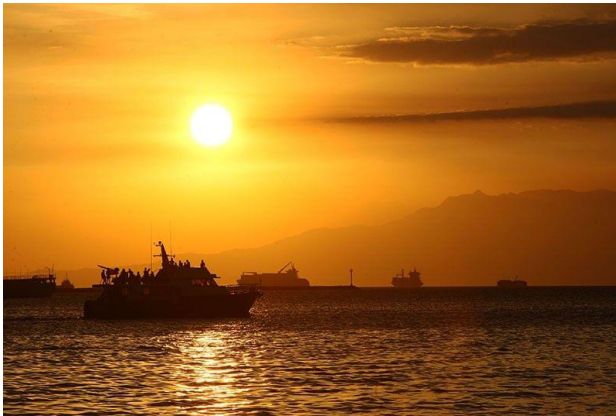


Hotter temperatures seen this month

[Helen Flores](#) (The Philippine Star

) - May 2, 2020 - 12:00am

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/05/02/2011288/hotter-temperatures-seen-month>



Ana Liza Solis, chief of PAGASA's climate monitoring and prediction section, said the temperature in Northern Luzon might even hit 41 degrees Celsius.

Miguel De Guzman

MANILA, Philippines — Filipinos should brace for even hotter air temperatures this month, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) warned yesterday.

Ana Liza Solis, chief of PAGASA's climate monitoring and prediction section, said the temperature in Northern Luzon might even hit 41 degrees Celsius.

"We could experience the hottest or maximum temperature, possibly of this year, this May. We could get as high as 40 or 41 degrees Celsius in Northern Luzon, usually in Cagayan, Tuguegarao or Isabela areas – the areas that experience this extreme temperature during May," Solis said during PAGASA's recent climate outlook forum via Facebook.

"Climatologically speaking, we record the highest or maximum temperature during the month of May," she added, clarifying that "this is the extreme and not the sustained maximum temperature."

In Metro Manila, the maximum temperature this month could range from 36 to 38.2 degrees Celsius.

The lowlands of both the Visayas and Mindanao could also experience maximum temperatures of 38 and 38.8 degrees Celsius, respectively.

PAGASA said the country's hottest temperature on record was at 42.2 degrees Celsius registered in Tuguegarao City on May 11, 1969.

The other warmest temperatures recorded in the country include: 38.5 degrees Celsius in Quezon City on May 14, 1987; 38.6 degrees Celsius in Port Area, Manila on May 17, 1915; 38.1 degrees Celsius in Parañaque on May 18, 1969 and, 38.5 in Cavite on May 16, 1987.

Meanwhile, PAGASA, in its monthly astronomical diary, said astronomy lovers in the Philippines and other countries in the northern hemisphere could watch out for the Eta Aquarid meteor shower, which would have about 20 or more meteors per hour before dawn on May 6.

The best time to observe the Eta Aquarid is a few hours before dawn, it said.

The Eta Aquarid meteor shower occurs each year as a result of the Earth's passing close to the orbit of Halley's comet twice a year, the agency explained.

"The point from where the meteors appear to radiate is located within the constellation Aquarius, the Water Bearer. The radiant of the meteor shower will virtually lie on the celestial equator and is more favorable to southern hemisphere viewers," it said.

Meteor showers can be seen with the naked eye.



No 'sugarcoating' on the new normal for Boholanos

By [Vince Ferreras, CNN Philippines](#)

Published May 1, 2020 11:17:14 PM

<https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/5/1/No-sugarcoating-new-normal-Bohol-.html?fbclid=IwAR07hjeSIX5zKXbzT2bYZjRC8zVdPcwBfetOkJfJmlwRe7jeUb86g-AoVlw>



Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, May 1) -

Despite having more relaxed quarantine measures, the province of Bohol does not hide the fact from its people that they have to adapt with the new norm of living brought by the pandemic.

“What we are doing right now is we are getting all sectors of Bohol together, to consider the new normal and we are not sugarcoating

anything. We are not telling them that we can go back to the old way of doing things,” Bohol Governor Arthur Yap told CNN Philippines’ The Final Word.

As part of the new normal, people in Bohol are expected to always have a hand sanitizer, wear face masks, and consider online payment. Meanwhile, establishments in the province like restaurants would have reduced number of seats and passengers in public transportations would be limited.

“All of these will be the new norm right now and that’s the reason why we feel confident. Because we are priming everybody that this is how we are going to do things,” said Yap.

Places under the general community quarantine (GCQ), which include Bohol, are those which have low to moderate number of COVID-19 cases.

Unlike in areas under enhanced community quarantine, several non-essential businesses will be allowed to reopen in GCQ areas.

Yap said that provincial government is trying to help micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) like salons, barbershops, small eateries, and other small retail stores to transition into the new normal.

“That means helping them maintain social distancing as for their workplaces or to accommodate their patrons or their clients. What will it mean to serve their clients in this new norm? What will be the protocol? How are they going to receive their needs? How can they customize their services for these new clients?,” he said.

However, Yap said that helping MSMEs to transit into the new norm will take time and money.

“All of these are going to take time and funds and money right now,” he said.

“That’s the reason why we’ve been asking for support also from Land Bank, DBP (Development Bank of the Philippines), and other government financial institutions to, at least, support the governors and the mayors right now to be trained to re-adapt and to give the grants that are going to be needed by these MSMEs to transition into the new regime, the new economic regime,” he added.



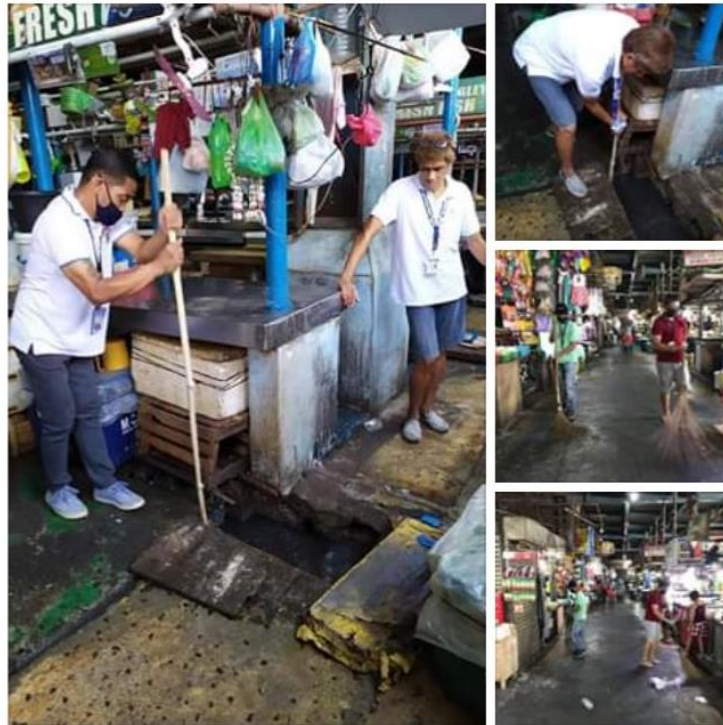
https://m.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=1979107455579332&id=163550757135020&fs=0&focus_composer=0



Nagsagawa ng cleaning at declogging operations ang mga kawani ng Pritil Market sa Tondo ng; Biyernes para tiyaking malinis at maayos ang daluyan ng waste water sa pampublikong pamilih.

📷: @ManilaPIO

See translation



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Mandaue veterinarian explains 'Don't feed the stray animals' post

By: Futch Anthony Inso - Correspondent/CDN Digital | May 01, 2020 - 05:42 PM

<https://cebudailynews.inquirer.net/306905/mandaue-veterinarian-explains-dont-feed-the-stray-animals-post>



Personnel of the Mandaue City Veterinarian's Office post a "Do not feed stray animals" sign on the wall of a quarantine facility in Mandaue City. | MCVO FB page

MANDAUE CITY, Cebu, Philippines — The Mandaue City Veterinary Office (MCVO) has clarified that the reminder that they had posted on a quarantine facility's wall is only intended to the concerned employee and coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) patients who will be confined in the facility that the city has prepared.

Dr. Karen Merilles, Mandaue's city veterinarian, was referring to the Facebook post of a job order employee of the MCVO, who took a photo of MCVO personnel putting a sign on the facility's wall, which stated "Do not feed the stray animals."

An MCVO job order employee posted that shot in his FB account, which circulated online and the photos eventually got posted in the "Veterinary LGU Mandaue" page which gathered 3.3K shares, 4.4K comments, and 5K reactions.

But the post resulted to an outburst of negative comments from the netizens, and as of this writing, the page could no longer be accessed.

Merilles, however, said that the reminder was a part of the city's precautionary measure to avoid the spread of the virus and to prevent cross contamination.

"Ani man gud ni siya, the COVID virus is still kanang, nature niya cannot still be understood. So with regards (to) cross contamination mao na atong gilikayan. It is possible that stray animals mosud, mo-mingle with the patients. Mo come in contact with their personal belongings," Merilles said.

(This is the situation. The nature of the COVID virus still cannot be understood. So with regards to cross contamination, that is what we are trying to avoid. It is possible that stray animals will enter the quarantine facility, they will mingle with the patients, and they will come in contact with the patients' personal belongings.)

She said that stray animals, such as dogs could become vessels of the virus which would result in its spread.

"Dili siya necessarily carrier since wala ta'y proof no nga maigo siya sa COVID. However, iyang hair, iyang paws, they could come in contact with COVID patients, who knows mahimo siyang vessels sa virus," she added.

(Stray animals will not necessarily be carriers since we do not have proof that the animals will be infected with the COVID-19 virus. However, the stray animals' hair, paws, they could come in contact with the COVID patients, who knows they might become vessels of the virus.)

Merilles also recommended to properly dispose of leftover food of COVID-19 patients to discourage stray animals from coming in and out in the facility.

Although the city had also been concerned about the welfare of animals, Merilles said that with the health crisis in the country, the government's priority would be the humans' health and their security against the virus./dbs



DOBLE QUARANTINE AT RAPID TEST NAPAKAHALAGA

May 1, 2020 @ 2:30 PM

<https://remate.ph/doble-quarantine-at-rapid-test-napakahalaga/>

SAAN bansa ba galing ang mahigit nang 23,000 Pinoy na iniuwi ng pamahalaang Duterte simula nitong buwan ng Pebrero?

Mahalagang katanungan ito kaugnay ng pagsusumikap ng pamahalaan na mapigilan ang malawak at mabilis na pagdami ng mga biktima ng Corona Virus Disease sa loob ng mahal kong Pinas.

Tingnan ninyo ang China, ngayong nakontrol na nila ang COVID-19 at pailan-ilan na lang ang nagkakasakit at namamatay sa kanila, siya naman ang pagdami ng mga may COVID-19 mula sa ibang bansa, partikular ang Russia na matinding sinasalakay ng nasabing sakit.

Bumabalik ang mga Chinese sa sarili nilang bansa mula sa Russia at sila ngayon ang pinanggagalingan ng mga panibagong COVID-19.

Ayaw nating mangyari ito kaya naman dapat malinaw kung saan galing ang mga Pinoy na iniuwi ng pamahalaan para makagawa tayo ng mga paraan na hindi sila maging carrier o tagadala ng COVID-19 papasok sa Pilipinas.

SAMPOL ANG BACOLOD CITY

Nitong nagdaang mga araw, dumating ang 28 seaman na bahagi ng iniuwi ng pambansang pamahalaan mula sa ibang mga bansa.

May dala ang lahat ng ito na mga dokumento na nagpapatunay na dumaan na sila sa quarantine at pagiging negatibo sa Covid-19.

Subalit hindi pumayag ang Bacolod City government ni Mayor Evelio Leonardia na basta umuwi agad ang 28 seaman nang hindi muna dumaan sa rapid test.

Hayun, 4 sa 28 ang natagpuang positibo at ngayon inilagay na ang mga ito sa Graciano Lopez Jaena Elementary School sa Bacolod City.

Kinunan na sila ng swab o sample sa bunganga at ipinadala ang mga sample sa Western Visayas Medical Center sa Iloilo para isasailalim sa real time – polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR test) at malaman kung positibo o negatibo nga sila sa virus.

Assymptomatic o walang palatandaang may dalang virus ang apat nang dumating sila sa Bacolod City ngunit hindi basta tinanggap sila nina Mayor Leonardia at nagbunga ang mahigpit na pag-iingat ng kanyang pamahalaan.

Kung pinabayaan lang na dumiretso ang 28 seaman sa kani-kanilang mga bahay at barangay, aba, tiyak na magkakaproblema ang mga pamilya, barangay at buong lungsod nila hindi lang sa kung paano bunuin ang kaso ng apat kundi sa pagsasagawa ng contact tracing na napakahirap talagang gawin.

Kasi mahahawa ang mga tsuper ng mga sasakyan na sasakyan nila at ang mga tsuper makahahawa rin sa iba at ang mga pamilya nilang makasalamuha ay mahahawa rin na makahahawa rin sa kanilang mga kamag-anak, kabitbahay at kabaranggay.



DOBLE QUARANTINE AT RAPID TEST NAPAKAHALAGA

Ngayon pa lang ay pinasasalamatan na natin si Mayor Leonardia sa mahigpit nitong kampanya laban sa COVID-19.

SEA BASED AT LAND BASED

‘Yung dumating sa Bacolod City ay sea-based ang trabaho dahil mga crew o tripulante sila ng mga barko.

Pero higit na nakararami ang mga land-based gaya ng mga nasa konstruksyon, pabrika, langis, opisina, ospital, bahay, hotel at iba pa.

Nagsara ang mga pinapasukan nilang kompanya bilang ligal o iligal na obrero nang sumalakay ang COVID-19.

Ang iba naman, ginusto lang umuwi upang makaiwas sa kamatayan sa ibang mga bansang grabeng sinasalanta ng virus.

Sa totoo lang, dinudumog ng ating mga kababayan ang mga bansang magandang magpasahod at magbigay ng benepisyo sa mga obrero.

Kabilang sa mga magagandang magpasahod at magpabenepisyo ang United States, Spain, France, United Kingdom, Italy, Germany, Belgium, Japan, Singapore, Russia.

Pero tingnan naman ninyo ang tindi ng kalagayan ng mga ito.

Ang US, may 1,095,023 nang naimpeksyon at 63,856 patay; Spain – 239,639 naimpeksyon at 24,543 patay; Italy – 205,463 naimpeksyon at 27,967 patay; United Kingdom – 171,253 naimpeksyon at 26,771 patay; France – 167,518 naimpeksyon at 24,376; Germany – 163,009 naimpeksyon at 6,623 patay; Russia – 106,498 naimpeksyon at 1,073 patay; Canada – 53,236 naimpeksyon at 3,184 patay; Belgium – 48,519 naimpeksyon at 7,594 patay; Saudi Arabia – 22,753 naimpeksyon at 162 patay; Japan – Japan 14,088 naimpeksyon at 430 patay; Singapore – 16,169 naimpeksyon at 15 patay; Qatar – 13,409 naimpeksyon at 10 patay; United Arab Emirates – 12,481 naimpeksyon at 105 patay; South Korea -10,765 naimpeksyon at 247 patay; at iba pa.

NAKATATAKOT

Nakatatakot ang nagaganap sa ibang mga bansa dahil sa rami ng impeksyon at kamatayang dumadapo sa kanila.

Kaya nga, maraming Pinoy ang natakot na magtagal o manirahan sa nasabing mga bansa at sila’y umuuwi.

Dito nating sasabihin na bukod sa 23,000 overseas Filipino workers na iniuwi ng pamahalaan, higit na marami ang umuwi sa bansa takot na madamay sila sa sakit at kamatayan.

Dahil napatunayan nang may mga umuuwi na asymptomatic o walang sintomas pagdating sa ating mga paliparan at pantalan ngunit sa huli ay positibo pala, kailangan talaga ang awtomatikong pag-quarantine sa mga ito at pagsasailalim na rin sa kanila kahit man lang sa rapid testing na kung minsan naman ay pumapalpak.

Kung hindi gagawin ang kung minsan ay double quarantine (pagdating sa airport o pantalan at pagdating sa Local Government Unit), hindi tayo makaaasa na malabanan natin nang epektibo ang COVID-19.

Kaya pasensya na po sa abala sa mga pag-quarantine at kailangan nating sumunod.

Tatal para naman sa ating sarili, pamilya, barangay at buong bayan ang mga prosesong ito.

Magtulungan po tayong lahat sa lahat ng hakbang laban sa nakahahawa at nakamamatay na COVID-19.



Elitistang komisyoner, pinutakte sa FB, Twitter

April 30, 2020 @ 12:01 AM 2 days ago

<https://remate.ph/elitistang-komisyoner-pinutakte-sa-fb-twitter/>



Manila, Philippines – Bumaha ang komento sa Facebook at Twitter laban kay Commission on Elections Commissioner Rowena Guanzon nang lumabas ang resulta ng mga topnotcher sa ginanap na Bar Examinations kamakailan lang.

Samu't saring komento ang mababasa sa FB at Twitter hindi lamang sa pagpuri sa mga nakapasa at sa Top 10 kundi, paniningil din sa ginawang pangmamaliit ni Commissioner Guanzon sa mga hindi nagtapos sa Ateneo at University of the Philippines-College of Law na kanyang pinanggalingan.

Magugunitang nagtapos sa UST Legazpi ang topnotcher na si Mae Diane Azores, 2nd naman si Princess Fatima Parahiman ng University of the East at 3rd naman si Myra Baranda ng UST Legazpi.

Samantala, pumuwesto sa 4th ang San Beda Alabang, 5th ang Palawan State University, 6th ang University of Sto. Tomas, 7th ang Jose Rizal University, 8th ang Saint Louis University, 9th ang Polytechnic University of the Philippines at 10th naman ang University of St. La Salle.

Sa nasabing nag-top ten na mga estudyante, wala ni isa rito ang nagtapos sa University of the Philippines o Ateneo na pagpapatunay lang umano na 'yung pinangatangang "Others" na paaralan ni Guanzon ay 'di hamak na mas magaling sa iniidolo niyang dalawang unibersidad.

Donna Villa Milan Gil
@DonnaVillaMila7
Ok lang sana mawrong spelling ng isang beses pero hindi na pwede kung paulit ulit!
Bar topnotcher yun Madam @rowena_guanzon
Matapang pa nman kayo madam 😊
Baka mali nman din ako kasi di ako magaling sa English! 😊 But since you Englishen Us Now I will englishen you 😊

Hindi pa rin nadala sa kapo-post sa Twitter si Guanzon at napansin ni netizen @DonnaVillaMila7 ang kahinaan ni Guanzon sa Ingles kung saan sa dalawang tweet nito ginamit ang salitang "topnocher" na dapat sana ay topnotcher.

Ayon sa isang netizen "Yung unang pagkakamali typo error 'yun, 'yung pangalawa shunga ka na roon."

Kilala ang nasabing Comelec commissioner sa paggamit ng #BawalAngShunga kaya sa kanya ngayon ginagamit ito ng mga netizen at tinatawag itong "Komishunga."



Base sa unang post ni Guanzon sa Twitter, sinabi nito na "Congratulations! I hope your topnocher will join us @COMELEC."



Is tourism dead?

posted May 01, 2020 at 09:25 pm

by [Bob Zozobrado](#)

<https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/322814>

Far from it! If you remember the past years, our industry has been dealt with many blows by all types of catastrophes. We've had a bloodless revolution, coup d'états, super typhoons, devastating earthquakes, volcanic ashfall, etc. Name it and we've had it.

Although I must admit that this latest blow to our industry is the biggest and will probably take us the longest to recover from.

However, every time we are faced with an earth-shaking challenge, we always bounce back, stronger than ever. Thank God, our industry is made up of hardworking, committed, never-say-die, astute strategists who bring it back to its feet.



SEE YOU SOON. *Despite the uncertainty and expected losses, Philippine tourism strategists are optimistic that the industry will bounce back—the world will reopen and people will travel again—hence they are developing new strategies, approaches, and tools necessary to survive during and after this pandemic. (Photo by June Famur, Jr.)*

Let us not be disappointed, frustrated, nor saddened by the fact that—NORMAL IS DEAD. We have to face and accept that, but console ourselves with the fact that HOPE IS STILL VERY MUCH ALIVE. This is why during this global standstill

we keep ourselves busy. We learn new strategies, new tools, and new approaches to bring us back to the rhythm of life, where we enjoyed serving our customers and earning our keep at the same time.

The better question should now be: “How can government help us survive these trying times?” I have to say our Department of Tourism (DOT), in cooperation with other government agencies, has been very supportive of us during these times. It started with the Department of Labor and Employment’s (DOLE) COVID-19 Adjustment Measures Program (CAMP), which gave P5,000 cash to all employees of tourism-related establishments who are either unemployed or underemployed because of the imposed quarantine.



Normal may be dead, but hope is still very much alive. (Photo by Gerald Yambao)

We have also submitted to DOT a proposed list of measures that would help tourism-related enterprises survive these months of zero revenues. This was in response to the filing of the “Economy Moving Forward as One” Act by Rep. Stella Luz Quimbo of Marikina for a P375-billion stimulus package.

Included in our list are: Tax Holidays/Tax Cuts; Interest-free Loans to cover employees’ payroll for the duration of the global standstill; and Government Subsidies to cover operational expenses aside from payroll.

We also proposed several measures which we want the DOT to lobby for with the other government agencies like the Department of Finance, National Bureau of Investigation, Civil Aeronautics Board, and DOLE, to help ensure our survival during these months of uncertainty. For all the aforementioned requests, our DOT has signified its willingness to help.



Is tourism dead?



Tourism professionals are taking advantage of this time to sharpen their skills and prepare themselves for what is perceived to be the 'new normal.'

Meantime, we, tourism professionals are getting involved with webinars to further sharpen our skills and prepare us for the challenges of what is perceived to be the new normal. Future business transactions in our industry will then be very different from what we are currently used to,

but new things always motivate people to do more, resulting in their exceeding target.

I see our situation right now as something similar to a group of people involved in the renovation of an establishment. Every design, every procedure, and every detail is paid attention to, because we are all excited looking forward to the day our business starts grinding again.

The local tourism industry is getting ready for our RE-OPENING SALE.

Differing strokes

posted May 02, 2020 at 12:25 am

<https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/322824>



Some seniors, by law those 60 years old and above, have raised a board in social media, arguing for protection, not isolation during the pandemic coronavirus which has infected thousands and killed hundreds in the Philippines.

“Do not shackle the healthy seniors,” goes their first line of argument, adding the object of government policies should be “ensuring protection and ease of living and mobility, not restriction and isolation.”

Their beef is there are still many—though figures were not raised for immediate appreciation by both sides—who are gainfully employed and physically fit.

They have also raised the line the assumption of “health vulnerability” by the Department of Health “is not based on conclusive study and research, and at best a cautionary assumption.”

Their line, of course, is in and by itself an assumption, and an assumption without proof is an assumption denied.

On the other hand, the DOH, resting on research by medical experts and practitioners from the Geneva-based World Health Organization, including epidemiologists and microbiologists, have said, repeatedly, that older people are at high risk in contracting COVID-19 which have infected at least more than 8,000 and killed nearly 600 in the Philippines—and the numbers are still rising.

This is not agreeing they are the only ones at high risk, since younger people have been included in the horrifying statistics on infections and deaths.

But it seems some seniors, if in fact gainfully employed, have glossed over the reality that their offices are closed--or if essential services were on stream they could work off site or work from home but intentionally concealed in their argument.

Medical experts—not the seniors eager to go out for a short-sighted definition of mobility—have underlined that older people have weaker lungs, making them an easy target for the virus which has clawed into the world’s population.

And the elderly are higher likely to suffer from chronic inflammation which, in experts’ views we endorse, undermines the body’s ability to quickly respond to the virus.

Certainly the quarantine is not house arrest, which presupposes a crime, as some with jejune mental frames have described it.

The crime would be to allow unnecessary movements and let the healthy and working seniors infect, or be infected unnecessarily—when the government and health authorities can protect them for the greater good.



COVID-19's 2nd peak

“While the curve is indeed being tamed, we cannot let our guard down and must follow the same rules just as diligently.

May 2, 2020 12:25 AM

By Dean Dela Paz

<https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/05/02/covid-19s-2nd-peak/>

There are a number of mathematical models applied and are under consideration by the authorities tasked to strategize and come up with the quarantine policies to address the COVID-19 pandemic that is currently ravaging not simply our lives but the economy now virtually comatose and unlikely to awaken to the world as we then knew it.

While there may be wide variations in the number and types of variables, plus the extraneous beta coefficients that differentiate one population afflicted with an epidemic from another, the basic equation spawns from a mathematical relationship that uses three dependent variables applied on generally the same data inputs.

We recall those excruciating nights we wrestled with calculus as its kilometric equations seemed irrelevant to our lives, only to suddenly discover belatedly elusive eureka moments when the calculus we dreaded actually has practical uses. In hindsight, which is perfect vision, the mathematics of calculus then seemed more complex than the mathematical models now applied to COVID-19.

Calculus in layman's terms is simply the mathematics of change. It computes for values where things transform as in fluid dynamics, or when heat is applied to metals and liquefy it, or logarithms to determine effective rates on financial annuities that change over time. In this last few months while there seem to be more than one strain of COVID-19, there is still little known of it or how much it might have mutated if at all since reaching our shores. Thus to calculate its impact and determine its peak, or peaks as we might later learn, simpler maths might suffice.

For epidemics and pandemics it's differential equations.

First of all, strictly adhering to the lexicon and gobbledegook of geeks, Einsteins and Oppenheims, there is technically no real infinitesimal calculus in the mathematics of epidemics as yet applied at this early stage of COVID-19. Remember, we know little of it and need only basic data to predict its peak for quarantine policies.

What makes the mathematics of epidemics such as that applied on COVID-19 in a society such as ours at this time is not the possibility of change but the vast number of incremental and influencing variables that can complicate the three that are basic to the epidemic.

The simplest and most basic epidemic model is the SIR model. It's an acronym. It represents dependent variables of susceptible, infected and recovered individuals, each as a function of time. Each variable is then measured as a ratio of the total but necessarily fixed population.

Here is where the quarantine comes in. The Metro Manila quarantine started by closing its borders. That was critical to peg down a limited universe. The model assumes a fixed population discounting births and immigration. If quarantines were lifted then the population count changes with influxes and exits.

In a scenario where a peak has been achieved from a first cycle of quarantining, then prematurely lifting restrictions not only increases infection rates but the denominators also increase as an influx adds to the population. Such partially explains why a second peak, when it occurs, would be higher than the first.

In the current model being employed, the peak would have been between 30 March and 3 April for cases and approximately 14 days thereafter for deaths. Thus the pressure to lift by mid-April was ill-advised and would have led to a second higher surge at about mid-year like a rerun kicking off from our index case in January to a thousand viral carriers from April.

The decision to extend to mid-May allows the health system breathing space for a second peak. Unfortunately, while the curve is indeed being tamed, we cannot let our guard down and must follow the same rules just as diligently. Stupidly loosening the quarantines in excess could open up the population to influxes, resurrect rapid infection and death rates, and thus, with a bigger population in the SIR variable numerator and denominators, catalyze a second higher and deadlier peak tenfold sometime in November.



PCA umayuda na sa pag-aaral sa VCO kontra COVID-19

April 30, 2020 @ 7:35 PM 2 days ago

<https://remate.ph/pca-umayuda-na-sa-pag-aaral-sa-vco-kontra-covid-19/>

Manila, Philippines – Isa sa mga sinasabing potensiyal upang mapigil ang pandaigdigang paglaganap ng Corona Virus o COVID-19 ay ang gawang Pilipinas na Virgin Coconut Oil (VCO).

Ito ang nais tuklasin ng Philippine Coconut Authority (PCA) kung kaya puspusan na rin itong nakilahok sa siyentipikong pag-aaral sa VCO sa pag-asang makatulong ito para malutas na ang pandaigdigang krisis na hatid ng virus.

Ang high potency anti-viral, anti-bacterial at anti-fungal na kalidad ng VCO ay sinasabing nakitaan ng bisa sa mga nakalipas na pag-aaral.

Higit pa rito, ang Lauric Acid na makikita sa VCO ay nakatutulong na labanan ang corona virus sa tatlong paraan; ang disintegration ng virus membrane, inhibition ng virus maturation, at prevention ng binding ng viral proteins sa host cell membrane.

Para matiyak ang kalidad ng VCO products na gagamitin sa naturang research studies, ibibigay ng PCA ang lahat ng dekalidad na VCO na pumasa sa kanilang laboratory analysis para sa physio-chemical, microbial at heavy metal content.

Bukod sa supply ng VCO para sa pag-aaral, ang PCA bilang major player ay susuportahan ang lahat ng clinical laboratory tests ng naturang subject sa community-based studies bago at matapos ang pag-inom ng VCO para madetermina ang benepisyo nito, kapwa sa anti-viral at immune system booster.

Ang dalawang pag-aaral ay kabilangan ng community-based modified clinical study sa paggamit ng VCO ng isang persons under investigation ng COVID-19 infection na may sintomas ng virus at ito'y isasagawa ng FNRI, DOST-Calabarzon, Santa Rosa, Laguna government at Medical City South Luzon.

Ikalawa, ang VCO ay magsisilbing supplement o daily treatment regimen ng COVID-19 positive patients sa UP-PGH para aralin ang benepisyo nito sa pasyenteng may moderate to severe COVID-19, dagdag sa gamot na sinusuri sa clinical trials.

Sa kasalukuyan, inaprubahan na ng PCA Board ang paglalabas ng P 1.4 milyong pondo bilang bahagi ng P5 million fund requirement sa proyekto sa pakikipagtulungan ng Department of Science and Technology's Food and Nutrition Research Institute (FNRI), Philippine Center for Health Research and Development (PCHRD), DOST Region 4A, Department of Health (DOH), University of the Philippines-Philippine General Hospital (UP-PGH) at iba pang research groups, gaya ng Professor Fabian Antonio Dayrit ng Ateneo de Manila University institutions.

Pinuri naman ni Agriculture Secretary William Dar ang partisipasyon ng PCA sa proyekto.

"This is an inter-agency effort reflective of the 'Bayanihan to Heal as One Act'. The success of this research will not only heal COVID-19 patients but also an antidote to poverty in coconut growing communities," ayon kay Dar.

Sinabi naman ni PCA Administrator Benjamin Madrigal, Jr. na ang demand para sa VCO ay nagsisimula nang lumaki at sa patuloy na confirmatory clinical research sa UP-PGH at ng community quarantine facility sa Sta. Rosa, inaasahang lalo pa itong lolobo.

Iniatas na ni Madrigal sa lahat ng kanyang regional at provincial managers na palakasin pang lalo ang kanilang pagtulong sa pagpaparami o produksyon ng VCO sa buong bansa.

Pinag-aaralan na rin ng PCA ang paggamit ng coconut-based ethyl alcohol (ethanol) bilang epektibong disinfectant para sa mga ospital at quarantine centers. *RNT*



Getting the vaccine

“Government itself must also plan on getting hold of candidate vaccines in face of the stark reality local medicine makers might not be able to cope.

May 2, 2020 12:20 AM

By Nick V. Quijano Jr.

<https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/05/02/getting-the-vaccine/>

It’s so difficult, isn’t it? To see what’s going to happen next when we’re in the absolute middle of something that’s a matter of life and death.

Yet, if we don’t momentarily see beyond our difficulties and find the time to find out how adequately prepared we are for whatever happens next with this pandemic we surely will end up as losers, again holed up inside our houses.

Whatever happens next in this case is going to be either on cures or vaccines against COVID-19. They are our last best hopes to survive this pandemic.

Merely hoping, however, doesn’t qualify as foresight when it comes to cures or vaccines. We need to be wholly practical by looking closely at where we are exactly with cures and vaccines, which now pretty much revolves around how fast we can get our hands on them.

Immediately paying attention to this now will help save us a heap of trouble. We can’t afford a repeat of the first outing against the pandemic where we were caught without crucial medical supplies like test kits, personal protective equipment (PPE), alcohol, disinfectants, ventilators and hospital beds.

Preparing too is also the smartest thing this government can do. If government remains a laggard and niggardly about planning ahead, we potential beneficiaries of cures and vaccines shouldn’t put up with it.

Otherwise, if we aren’t noisy enough not only will we end as beggars for medicines but worse, slaves to countries who do have the cures or vaccines. As a quote goes, “Slaves are men who did not take care of their future because if you neglect your future, you will be a slave to someone that did.”

But is there time to get our act together? Certainly. Experts say it will at least take 18 months to develop, test, approve and manufacture a vaccine. Cures though may come sooner than 18 months.

Eighteen months is certainly enough time to get ready before vaccines are widely available. Experts are agreed on this. Public health advocate Gideon Lasco says aside from waiting for vaccines, we need “to make sure we have the necessary manufacturing capacity to produce the millions or even billions of doses that will be needed.”

Getting ahead in this case means taking a hard look on our local producers of medicine and see if they are up to the challenge to locally manufacture cures and vaccines.

This also means we set aside our native optimism that Filipino ingenuity will somehow miraculously put us ahead of the race for a vaccine or cure. The truth of the matter is that other countries, particularly rich ones, are way ahead of us in the race.

Should these rich countries get to the finish line first, the question then is — who gets it first?

In short, rich countries will likely gorge themselves first on the cures and vaccines before even thinking of us. How long before we can get hold of enough vaccines for our people remains the open question.

As it really is, “Countries like the Philippines, who largely rely on importing vaccines or counting on international organizations like UNICEF, stand to lose unless the government takes action in ensuring vaccine manufacturing capacity and including it as a matter of national health security,” says Lasco.



Getting the vaccine

Hopefully, treating the whole thing as a matter of national security can get the butts of our officials off the comforts of their armchairs.

Anyway, researchers from the De la Salle University (DLSU) say the same thing. In a recent study, three DLSU researchers appeal to government to come up with sustainable and resilient strategies not only on local vaccine manufacture but also “for the likely scenario that those pharmaceutical products will be in short supply.”

The shortage scenario is no imagined scarecrow. There is simply no assurance our local pharmaceutical industry can adequately make enough vaccines in the face of high demand.

This is so because while we do have medicine manufacturing facilities the local pharmaceutical industry essentially imports most of its raw materials to make medicines.

DLSU says, “Active ingredients in drugs sold in the Philippines are largely imported and then compounded into user form. It is the supply of these actives that the Philippine government must work on.”

Safeguarding and securing supplies of raw materials then is the first challenge if we want to make our own vaccines or to avoid shortages. And this is where government must take an active role.

On their own, says DLSU, local pharmaceutical companies can insure their imports by making advance and favorable arrangements with their foreign suppliers or parent companies.

Similarly, too, large pharmaceutical chains like Mercury Drug with its financial heft can already start sourcing several candidate drugs and vaccines and stockpile these.

But we can't leave drug manufacturers or pharmacy chains to their own devices. Government must still have them together in one room with other industries making basic raw materials needed by the pharmaceutical industry like oil and alcohol for one coherent strategy.

On the matter of industrial chemical companies, “These companies (usually foreign) can step up their sourcing of raw materials such as petroleum, alcohol and other chemical reagents for the drug precursors,” says DLSU, adding these chemical firms can even start synthesizing the initial steps of the possible drug precursors to ease the burden of the pharmaceutical firms.

Where then does government fit in all of this, aside from making sure private companies act as one?

Government must “facilitate the seamless flow of transactions throughout the supply chain by easing restrictions on regulated chemicals, lowering or waving of import tariffs, and creating an express lane for efficient movement of materials from the ports,” says DLSU.

Aside from government coordinating all private sector activities, government itself must also plan on getting hold of candidate vaccines in face of the stark reality local medicine makers might not be able to cope.

This even in the face of the risk that what the country procures might end up as useless vaccines.

In the eventuality government seriously thinks of this, DLSU says “the Philippines has two options: secure contracts for the drugs and potentially waste money if the drugs fail, or wait for the trials to end and then look for suppliers.” Either way it's the same gamble — either we end up with useless but expensive vaccines or we won't be able to get the correct vaccines because of worldwide demand.

DLSU recommends government secure the contracts now “so that we do not end up begging the richer countries for the drugs they've already stockpiled ahead of time.”

And there it is again, the “beggar” word. Do we still want to be beggars when we can do something about it?



Inevitable change

By: Lorenz R. Defensor - @inquirerdotnet
Philippine Daily Inquirer / 05:02 AM May 02, 2020
<https://opinion.inquirer.net/129415/inevitable-change>

Nothing can be more frightening than an unseen enemy that has no conscience.

As these lines are being written, someone somewhere is taking his last breath. Someone is saying goodbye to a father, a son, or a friend for the last time.

Our kind has been through many fights. We have fought against each other for land, for God, and even for sheer hatred of one's race or color.

But this time we all have a common foe. If we could not be inspired or forced to face this challenge together, our ignorance could wipe out humanity.

This is a fight where courage must give way to patience and time. This is a war where the heroes are no longer just soldiers, but also dedicated men and women who care for the sick and the dying.

Around the world, more than 3 million have been infected with COVID-19, and more than 200,000 have already died. We must remember that we are all on the same boat when it comes to this invisible enemy. Everyone—rich or poor, the elderly and the young—is in danger.

These days, the patience of human beings is indeed a virtue. Let us accept that we cannot rush out and face the virus head-on without a cure or a vaccine.

Now that life in much of the world has changed, maybe we can start rethinking our priorities. Not too long ago, leaders of great nations would race to build weapons to take out thousands of lives with the push of a button. But this time, life has never been more precious when one's own is on the line.

This pandemic knows no borders. Countries big and small in Asia and Europe, as well as major cities in America, have suffered deaths by the thousands. Even the leader of Great Britain was not spared from infection. This virus has humbled the human race.

But our experience may just be what this generation needs: a new perspective on our purpose in life. For so long, modern society has dictated the norms of happiness and set the standards for success. But when wealth and power become meaningless, people rediscover the utter joy of simply being alive.

We have seen during these times that life can go on with people having less and doing less. Now more than ever, we should foster this newfound sense of equality among human beings.

The power of choice in democracies must be exercised vigorously. Someone once said that "one of the easiest paths to change is for the less powerful to speak as much as they listen, and for the more powerful to listen as much as they speak." In the face of COVID-19, we have come to admire the leaders of nations. Unfortunately, some have acted recklessly with no regard for science in deciding the fate of millions. This should never happen in a pandemic. The leaders we choose must learn to listen and act with humility and, more so, accountability.

Businesses and industries, too, should reconsider their motives. The time has come for big multinational companies to spend more on corporate social responsibility and less on the exploration and exploitation of Third World countries and their natural resources.



Inevitable change

Because of lockdowns in different parts of the world, the price of oil per barrel has, for a time, plunged to zero. Streets are free from traffic, and energy consumption worldwide has been reduced. Pollution levels are at their lowest in years. This may sound bad for many economies, but not all is lost because it is good for our planet.

There are other things brought about by this pandemic. Though less global in scale, they are nonetheless as significant. We cannot deny that when we are forced to stay inside for weeks, food becomes the most basic need. Many countries have grown to depend so much on importation that it will not be able to sustain its population if and when the movement of goods becomes impossible.

For years, people have dreamed of finding a career in the big cities. However, when a pandemic like COVID-19 strikes, the stock market will not put food on the table, while a lawyer could easily be the last person to save us from hunger. In spite of that, most of us seem to neglect the source of food that sustains us every day—agriculture. This is the moment to turn our attention back to the land and the farmers.

Let us keep in mind that this is not our first and only bout with a pandemic. So much is wasted by governments to build arms against each other. If we want to sustain the gains we have achieved, health care, education, and the environment, together with agriculture and food security, should be everyone's priority. This will not only solve poverty, but also slowly bring equality closer to reality.

Inevitably, change is upon us. How we define "closer" as a species no longer applies, because "distance" between family and loved ones could mean our survival. Clearly, this new norm of living will continue and may even become our permanent way of life.

This virus has brought us fear, but knowing we might lose against it through our ignorance and neglect is even more terrifying.

In a world where we will all share the fate of our planet, understanding that we are all connected one way or another will ensure our survival. Let us find the strength to overcome. Let us find the inspiration to sustain this change for the better.

We may live life with more distance between us, but we should continue to love and care for each other nonetheless.



WHO wants invite to China's probe into coronavirus origins

Agence France-Presse / 06:09 PM May 01, 2020

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1268077/who-wants-invite-to-chinas-probe-into-coronavirus-origins>



FILE – This photo taken on February 10, 2020 shows a laboratory technician making their way during an epidemiological investigation in Linyi in China's eastern Shandong province. (Photo by STR / AFP) / China OUT

The World Health Organization said Friday it hoped China would invite it to take part in its investigations into the animal origins of the novel coronavirus.

“WHO would be keen to work with international partners and at the invitation of the Chinese government to participate in investigation around the animal origins,” WHO spokesman Tarik Jasarevic told AFP in an email.

He said the UN health agency understood there were a number of investigations under way in China “to better understand the source of the outbreak,” but added that “WHO is not currently involved in the studies in China.”

Scientists believe the killer virus jumped from animals to humans, emerging in China late last year, possibly from a market in Wuhan selling exotic animals for meat.

The UN health agency chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus did travel with a team to China in late January, where he met with Chinese President Xi Jinping to learn more about the response.

This paved the way, Tedros explained earlier this week, for an international team of scientists to travel there in February to investigate the situation, including experts from China, Germany, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Nigeria, the Russian Federation, Singapore and the United States of America.

But as investigations into the origins of the virus have picked up pace in China, the WHO has not been involved.

The ongoing investigations are believed to be looking at “human cases with symptom onset in and around Wuhan in late 2019, environmental sampling from markets and farms in areas where the first human cases were identified, and detailed records on the source and type of wildlife species and farmed animals sold in these markets,” Jasarevic said.

He stressed that the results from the virus origin studies were “essential to preventing further zoonotic introductions of the virus that causes COVID-19 into the human population.”

“WHO continues to collaborate with animal health and human health experts, countries and other partners to identify gaps and research priorities for the control of COVID-19, including the eventual identification of the source of the virus in China,” he said.



WHO says novel coronavirus 'natural in origin'

Nina Larson, Agence France-Presse

<https://news.abs-cbn.com/spotlight/05/02/20/who-says-novel-coronavirus-natural-in-origin>

The World Health Organization (WHO) reiterated Friday that the new coronavirus was of natural origin after US President Donald Trump claimed he had seen evidence it originated in a Chinese lab.

Scientists believe the killer virus jumped from animals to humans, emerging in China late last year, possibly from a market in Wuhan selling exotic animals for meat.

Trump claimed Thursday that he had seen proof that the Wuhan Institute of Virology was actually the source of the outbreak, although he refused to give details.

Asked about Trump's claim during a virtual press conference, WHO emergencies chief Michael Ryan stressed that the UN health agency had "listened again and again to numerous scientists who have looked at the sequences" of the virus.

"We are assured that this virus is natural in origin," he said, reiterating a stance the UN agency has expressed previously.

The WHO said earlier Friday that it wanted to be invited to take part in Chinese investigations into the animal origins of the pandemic, which in a matter of months has killed more than 230,000 people worldwide.

"What is important is that we establish what that natural host for this virus is," Ryan said, stressing the need to understand "how the animal-human species barrier was breached."

"And the purpose of understanding that is that we can put in place the necessary prevention and public health measures to prevent that happening again anywhere," he said.

WHO chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus meanwhile continued Friday to push back against criticism lobbed at his organisation, by Trump in particular, who suspended Washington's funding after accusing the UN agency of downplaying the seriousness of the outbreak and kowtowing to China.

- WHO 'didn't waste time' -

Tedros said the WHO had sounded the highest level of alert by declaring that the COVID-19 outbreak constituted a "public health emergency of international concern" on January 30, when there were no deaths and only 82 cases registered outside China.

"We didn't waste any time," he told Friday's briefing. "The world had enough time to intervene."

His comments came after WHO's emergency committee met for the first time since making its declaration three months ago.

"Of course, the pandemic remains a public health emergency of international concern," Tedros said after receiving the recommendations from the committee, made up of 19 independent experts.

While maintaining the global alert level, the experts made a range of general recommendations on how the WHO and countries should adjust their response to the pandemic.

It called among other things for broad cooperation to "identify the zoonotic source of the virus and the route of introduction to the human population."

It also called on WHO to "update recommendations on appropriate travel measures" linked to the outbreak, and to consider "the balance between benefits and unintended consequences," such as the difficulties of transporting humanitarian aid when so many flights are grounded.



WHO targets teens on social media to debunk virus myths

Published May 1, 2020 11:56pm

<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/world/736508/who-targets-teens-on-social-media-to-debunk-virus-myths/story/>

The World Health Organization said Friday it was working with social media companies in a bid to quash misinformation about the coronavirus pandemic -- including on more light-hearted apps popular with teenagers.

The WHO said it had started working with TikTok and Snapchat since the pandemic broke out in a bid to reach out to teen and younger social messaging app users.

"We're battling misinformation every day," said Andy Pattison, the UN health agency's digital solutions manager.

On social media, "false stories outperform the truth on every single subject" in how far and how quickly they spread, he told a virtual press briefing.

The WHO is therefore attempting to combat falsehoods with science-based messages through the most commonly-used social media apps, he said.

Aleksandra Kuzmanovic, the WHO's social media manager, said the organization had also established a presence on TikTok and Snapchat during the COVID-19 pandemic, because most of its followers on previous platforms were in the 25 to 35 age bracket.

"On TikTok and Snapchat, we are now reaching audiences that are much younger," she said.

"It was important for us to communicate with teenagers how they can protect themselves.

"We are a science-based organization that has serious information and TikTok is a platform that is perceived as funny -- people share funny videos and information."

Kuzmanovic said the challenge was how to put across serious, educational information on TikTok.

"With their help, we adjusted some of our video products to be suitable to the platform," she said.

Google, YouTube filtering

The WHO has its own dedicated COVID-19 "Myth busters" page, directly debunking popular rumors about the virus, which has killed more than 230,000 people worldwide and infected over 3.2 million.

Pattison said the WHO was working on chatbot features with WhatsApp, Viber, Facebook Messenger and Apple Business Chat, but hoped to open channels on up to 30 such apps to take into account the most popular ones in various countries, such as Line in Japan.

"It's really important that we reach millions of people directly in their own language," he said.

Pattison said that the WHO was partnering with YouTube to try to remove harmful misinformation and eliminate scientifically baseless rumors, in a two-way relationship.

YouTube gives the WHO insights into trending COVID-19 rumors and the UN agency tells them which are harmless and which might be dangerous.

Pattison said Google was working with the WHO so that searches for COVID-19 produced news from credible outlets and local in-country health information.

"They've been very good at finding the right balance," he said. **-Agence France-Presse**



COVID-19 still a public health emergency of international concern, WHO says

By CNN

Published May 2, 2020 12:49:50 AM

<https://cnnphilippines.com/world/2020/5/2/COVID-19-public-health-emergency-international-concern-WHO--.html>



(CNN) — The World Health Organization said it still considers the coronavirus pandemic a public health emergency of international concern, WHO's highest level of alarm for the world.

"Covid-19 pandemic is not finished," committee member Dr. Didier Houssin said during a media briefing on Friday.

Houssin added that there is still much to learn about the transmission of the coronavirus. Currently, there is no vaccine nor licensed therapeutics for the treatment of Covid-19.

Assessing the response: On Thursday, WHO reconvened the committee of independent international experts to assess the state of the coronavirus pandemic and review WHO's recommendations on how to respond.

Officials said the committee would meet again in 90 days, or sooner, if needed.

Additionally, earlier today, WHO confirmed to CNN that it has not been involved in China's investigations of the origins of the novel coronavirus — but it "would be keen" to participate in such studies.



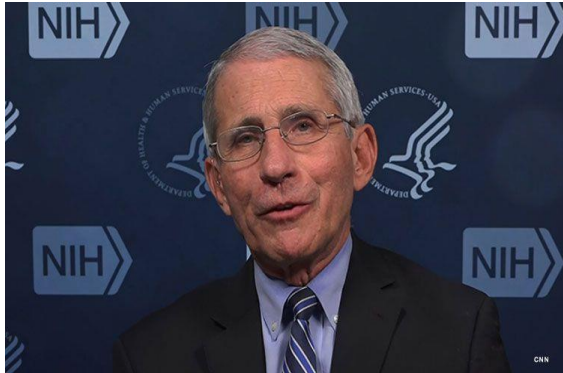
A vaccine could be ready by January 'if everything falls into place,' Fauci says

By CNN

Published May 1, 2020 9:23:41 AM

<https://cnnphilippines.com/world/2020/5/1/vaccine-may-be-ready-january-2021.html>

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(CNN) - Top infectious disease expert Dr. Anthony Fauci said on CNN's town hall that "if everything falls into place right" there could be a coronavirus vaccine by January - but there are "a number of situations that could go wrong."

An assumption of safety: "It may all of a sudden have a safety signal," he said. "If it doesn't work, it doesn't protect people. I've been involved in vaccine work for decades. Not every vaccine we went after worked. That's

an assumption that it's going to be safe, that it's going to be effective and we're going to be able to do it quickly. I think each of those are not only feasible, but maybe likely. That's what I mean when I say by January we'll do it. But I can't guarantee it."

Doing things differently: Fauci said that developing a vaccine without knowing it works first is "risky" but he said it "certainly is worth the risk given what's at stake."

"What's being done now that's different than some situations are, before we know a vaccine works, we're going to have to make the vaccine. When you ultimately prove it works, you don't have to wait five or six months to scale up to get enough doses to give to a meaningful number of people. That's a risky financial circumstance, but it certainly, certainly is worth the risk given what's at stake," he said.

This story was first published on CNN.com. "[A vaccine could be ready by January 'if everything falls into place,' Fauci says](#)"



IEA: Lockdowns to slash energy demand, emissions

By Reuters

-May 1, 2020

https://malaya.com.ph/index/index.php/news_business/iea-lockdowns-to-slash-energy-demand-emissions/

COVID-19

The IEA is analysing the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic on global energy markets, energy security, and clean energy transitions.

International
Energy Agency

LONDON – Economic lockdowns brought on by the coronavirus pandemic look set to cut global energy demand and carbon dioxide emissions by record amounts, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said.

Global energy demand could slump by 6 percent in 2020 due to the restrictions placed on homes and industry in what would be the largest contraction in absolute terms on record, according to Paris-based IEA, which advises industrialised nations on energy issues.

The slump would lead to a drop in carbon dioxide emissions of 8 percent, six times larger than the biggest fall of 400 million tons recorded in 2009 following the global financial crisis, according to the IEA, which described its estimate as conservative.

“Some countries may delay the lifting of the lockdown, or a second wave of coronavirus could render our current expectations on the optimistic side,” the organisation’s executive director Fatih Birol told Reuters.

Business activity has stalled across much of the globe as the containment measures hammer the world economy, cementing economists’ views of a deep global recession.

Carbon intensive coal demand has so far been hit the hardest by the pandemic, with demand in both the first quarter and projections for 2020 as a whole down 8 percent compared with the same periods last year.

Global natural gas demand could fall by around 5 percent in 2020, while electricity generation fell by 2.6 percent in the first quarter but renewable power generation rose during the period by 3 percent with new wind and solar projects coming online.

“Given the number of deaths and the economic trauma around the world. This historic decline in global emissions is absolutely nothing to cheer,” Birol said, urging governments to seize on the disruptions to build greener energy infrastructure.

The share of renewables in global electricity supply neared 28 percent in Q1 2020, up from 26 percent in Q1 2019 and is expected to reach 30 percent by the end of the year.

An unprecedented pact by top oil producing countries this month to rein in output to balance supply with flagging demand may not succeed, the IEA warned, with places to store the excess crude running out.

Oil demand fell by 5 percent over the first quarter but could ultimately be the worst hit fuel over 2020, with total demand down as much as 9 percent.

“At the current pace in the oil market, we may well see around mid-June the global storage capacity can be full,” Birol said, noting the problem was worst in North America.

Global oil demand is expected to fall a record 9.3 million barrels per day (bpd) in 2020 and the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) and other top producers like Russia agreed to cuts of almost 10 million bpd, equivalent to about 10 percent of global production, starting on May 1.

“My call to them is to consider further cuts,” Birol said.



Animal lovers take to India's streets to feed virus strays

Agence France-Presse / 06:56 PM May 01, 2020

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1268073/animal-lovers-take-to-indias-streets-to-feed-virus-strays>



An army of Indian animal lovers has emerged to feed millions of strays left hungry and thirsty by the coronavirus lockdown across the world's second-most populous nation. Image: AFP/Arun Sankar

Tails are already wagging as Priyanka Gusain stops her car, sacks of cattle fodder and dog pellets on her back seat and water in the boot for her evening rounds in Delhi.

Gusain and her mother, Vilochna, are serving in an army of Indian animal lovers that has emerged to feed millions of strays left hungry and thirsty by the coronavirus lockdown in the world's second-most populous nation.

Used to scavenging scraps from hotels, restaurants and roadside stalls, the animals were left without sustenance as people withdrew to their homes in late March.

"No one is taking care of them. That thought made me do all of this," Gusain, who designs and sells her own line of footwear, told Agence France-Presse.

An estimated 30 million stray dogs and five million stray cattle roam India's usually bustling streets—weaving in and out of traffic and sheltering under highway overpasses during the scorching summer afternoons.

But as the virus lockdown took hold, many urban areas turned into virtual ghost towns, leaving the animals to fend for themselves.

In the southern city of Chennai, Vinod Kumar—of the animal welfare charity Blue Cross of India—said the situation was desperate.

"In many cases, the dogs... in places where there are not many residences, they actually starve," he told AFP.

Stray cattle, left to roam the streets by their owners or abandoned when they get old, are also struggling to survive.

Even working animals have become casualties.

With tourism and mining having ground to a halt, horses, donkeys and ponies were being "thrown out left, right and center," said Gauri Maulekhi of People for Animals India.

Compounding the problem, pets are being abandoned for fear they could spread coronavirus to their human owners, several shelters told AFP.

An army of Indian animal lovers has emerged to feed millions of strays left hungry and thirsty by the coronavirus lockdown across the world's second-most populous nation. Image: AFP/Arun Sankar

'Huge shortage'

Animal activists have pressed local authorities to issue "feeding passes" that will allow them outside to help the animals at risk.

Many launched online campaigns to raise funds and set up WhatsApp chat groups to coordinate feeding runs.

On one feeding mission, an AFP reporter saw cows, dogs and crows all descend on an offering of dried food.

The mercy missions are not universally popular.

Gusain, who obtained a pass through a Delhi shelter organization, has faced pushback from people who snap at her: "You are doing so much for dogs, what about humans?"

But animal lovers like Maulekhi are not discouraged.

"If there are a hundred mouths to feed, we are perhaps able to feed only 10," she told AFP.

"There is never enough. There is a huge shortage." **CL /ra**



Ocean warming is causing massive ice sheet loss in Greenland and Antarctica, NASA study shows

By Mallika Kallingal, CNN

Published May 2, 2020 3:24:39 AM

<https://cnnphilippines.com/world/2020/5/2/Ocean-warming-ice-sheet-loss-Greenland-Antarctica-NASA-.html>



(CNN) — The Earth is losing ice at a record speed chiefly due to warming from the ocean caused by climate change.

A new study by NASA shows that Antarctica and Greenland's ice sheets lost 118 gigatons and 200 gigatons of ice on average per year. That would fill more than 127 million Olympic-sized swimming pools.

According to NASA, the amount of ice lost could cover New York's Central Park in ice more than 1,000 feet thick, reaching higher than the Chrysler Building.

This loss of ice has caused the sea level to rise by about half an inch between 2003 and 2019. That's slightly less than a third of the total amount of sea level rise observed in the world's oceans, according to the study.

And although East Antarctica has gained some ice, that gain is little compared to the total amount of ice lost in the other areas.

Warmer summer temperatures are chiefly to blame for this ice loss, according to NASA. The warm temperatures have melted ice from the surface of the glaciers and ice sheets.

NASA says it recorded the data from its Ice, Cloud and land Elevation Satellite 2 (ICESat-2), which was launched in 2018 to make detailed global elevation measurements, including over the Earth's frozen regions. That data was then compared with measurements taken by the original ICESat from 2003 to 2009, allowing researchers to generate a complete picture of the complexities of ice sheet change and insights into the future of Greenland and Antarctica.

"If you watch a glacier or ice sheet for a month, or a year, you're not going to learn much about what the climate is doing to it," said Ben Smith, a glaciologist at the University of Washington and lead author of the new paper.

He told NASA, "We now have a 16-year span between ICESat and ICESat-2 and can be much more confident that the changes we're seeing in the ice have to do with the long-term changes in the climate."

Alex Gardner, a glaciologist at NASA's Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Southern California and co-author of the Science paper, told NASA that the new analysis reveals the ice sheets' response to changes in climate in great detail, revealing clues as to why and how the ice sheets are reacting the way they are.

The NASA study also looked at ice shelves: the floating masses of ice at the downstream end of glaciers. The researchers found ice shelves are losing mass in West Antarctica, where many of the continent's fastest-moving glaciers are located as well, according to NASA.

NASA explains that ice that melts from ice shelves doesn't raise sea levels, since it's already floating -- just like an ice cube already in a full cup of water doesn't overflow the glass when it melts. But the ice shelves provide stability for the glaciers and ice sheets behind them.

"It's like an architectural buttress that holds up a cathedral," says Helen Amanda Fricker, a glaciologist at the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at the University of California San Diego, and co-author of the Science paper.

She told NASA, "The ice shelves hold the ice sheet up. If you take away the ice shelves, or even if you thin them, you're reducing that buttressing force, so the grounded ice can flow faster."

This study was conducted over 16 years and published online in Science April 30.

This story was first published on CNN.com "[Ocean warming is causing massive ice sheet loss in Greenland and Antarctica, NASA study shows.](#)"



Birdlife urges U.N. to make a 'healthy natural environment' a human right

ByBusinessMirror

May 1, 2020

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/05/01/birdlife-urges-u-n-to-make-a-healthy-natural-environment-a-human-right/>

In an open letter to the United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres, the leading global conservation partnership, BirdLife International, recently marked the 50th anniversary of Earth Day by calling for the UN to take a bold and unprecedented step: declare a healthy natural environment a fundamental human right.

The letter called on the UN as part of its response to the coronavirus pandemic, to add an "Article 31" to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights—enshrining a universal right to a healthy natural environment, guaranteed by public policies, governed by sustainability and by scientific and traditional indigenous knowledge.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights rose from the ashes of World War II, and mapped out for the first time the fundamental human rights that must be protected globally.

Its 30 articles cover subjects, such as torture, slavery and education, but crucially, nothing about preserving the environment—on which human and all life depends.

If successful, this amendment would be the first addition since the milestone document was proclaimed in 1948.

"Covid-19 is the biggest global crisis since World War II. But while the pandemic is devastating, it also gives world leaders a chance, indeed an obligation, to transform society—to further protect our welfare and future generations," said Patricia Zurita, CEO of BirdLife International, in a news release. "Our planet's health is our health. We humans rely on nature for our survival and sanity, but our actions have upset Earth's natural balance."

We are in the grips of the twin climate and biodiversity crises, which have put over a million species at risk of extinction, and negatively impact human health, too, Zurita added.

The current pandemic has its roots in habitat loss and illegal wildlife trade. And as with the climate and biodiversity crises, Covid-19 highlights once again the need and possibility for humanity to be bold, decisive and work together—quickly.

"There have been efforts to include a right to a healthy environment in the past," said Melanie Heath, director of Science and Policy of BirdLife International. "Today, we hope that the gravity of the pandemic is a strong enough wake-up call for the UN and world citizens to come together to restore nature and protect us from similar crises in the future."

"Article 31 would be a gift to the world and future generations. And what more appropriate time to launch a manifesto for it than on Earth Day," said Asunción Ruiz, CEO of SEO/BirdLife, BirdLife's Partner in Spain.

"Instead of learning from the corona crisis, some leaders are cynically using it as an excuse to roll back environmental protection. Enshrining a healthy natural environment as a sacred human right will be an accomplishment that will benefit humanity for centuries to come, and is the only way to achieve the UN sustainable development goals," Ruiz said.

"Covid-19 marks the persistence of an old enemy. We believe that human-caused ecosystem disturbances is one of the urgent environmental issues that should be addressed today in order to prevent pandemics," said Alejandro T. Flores Jr., Haribon Foundation Board of Trustees chairman.

The letter urgently calls for Article 31's right to a healthy natural environment to be included on the Agenda of the UN General Assembly's Summit on Biodiversity in September 2020, with the ultimate goal of its approval in December 2023, to mark the 75th anniversary of the adoption by the General Assembly of the Universal Declaration.

"The future of human health lies on the crucial decisions we make today. As the BirdLife Partner in the Philippines, we support the call of BirdLife International to the UN Secretary-General on the need to recognize the right of people to a healthy environment," Flores said.

This letter forms part of a wider push to improve climate and nature policy at the end of the UN Decade on Biodiversity, and is an open call to the rest of the planet's civil society for support; the inclusion of the right to a healthy natural environment is a task we should all be behind if we are to protect our welfare, survival and save our planet, BirdLife said.



Penguins get chance to explore zoo

posted May 02, 2020 at 12:50 am by AFP

<https://manilastandard.net/news/world-news/322859/penguins-get-chance-to-explore-zoo.html>



One cute group is making the most of Singapore's partial virus lockdown—penguins at the city-state's zoo, who are being given the run of the empty complex and reveling in the chance to do some exploring.

With the zoo closed to the public as the country battles a worsening virus outbreak, the African penguins had little in the way of stimulation without passers-by stopping to admire them.

So their keepers began taking them on outings around the complex, nudging the pint-sized explorers to check out the area around their exhibit and the children's playground.

The colony of around a dozen birds appeared unimpressed by the climbing-frame and the slide and soon waddled off to the next section.

Further along, several life-sized models of sea lions – which occasionally eat penguins in the wild – gave them pause for thought. AFP

But they soon regained their courage and were back to hopping over rocks, with a pair later splitting off from the main group to go and explore behind a shed.

As well as roaming the empty walkways of the zoo, the penguins have also been tackling an obstacle course which has been specially designed to keep them entertained.

They got their first glance as they jumped out of a pool in their sandy enclosure—and initially stopped dead in their tracks, appearing baffled at the sight.

One brave soul timidly ventured onto the course, waddling slowly through the sand between colorful plastic balls, crossing a small bridge, and navigating trenches, before the rest of the colony followed.

The zoo says the workout strengthens the creatures' leg muscles and helps them navigate new environments.

Their natural habitat is off the southwestern coast of Africa.

"The new normal presented opportunities for our African penguins to make discoveries at Singapore zoo," said the animal park's operator.

Singapore has reported more than 16,000 virus infections and has imposed curbs to halt the spread of the outbreak, including closing schools and most workplace.



Dumi ng manok, pangtaboy sa mga tao para iwas-COVID-19 sa Sweden

Mayo 1, 2020 6:16pm GMT+08:00

<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/balitambayan/umg/736471/ebak-ng-manok-pangtaboy-sa-mga-tao-para-iwas-covid-19-sa-sweden/story/>

<https://remate.ph/dumi-ng-mga-manok-sa-sweden-ginagamit-bilang-pantaboy-sa-tao-vs-covid-19/>

Isang lungsod sa southern Sweden ang naisipan na gumamit ng dumi ng mga manok para itaboy ang mga tao at hindi magkumpulan sa kanilang central park nang maiwasan ang pagkalat ng coronavirus disease 2019.

Sa ulat ng Reuters, sinabing iniutos ng alkalde ng Lund City ang paggamit ng dumi ng mga manok dahil na rin sa idaraos na taunang kapistahan sa kanilang lugar na "Walpurgis Night."

Alagang aso sa North Carolina, nagpositibo sa COVID-19

Sa halip kasi na ipagbawal ang pagdiriwang ng kapistahan, hinihikayat na lang ng lokal na pamahalaan ang mga tao na iwasang magkumpulan at ugaliin ang pagpapatupad ng social distancing.

Paliwanag ng alkalde ng lungsod na si Philip Sandberg, mabisang paraan ang dumi ng manok para itaboy ang mga tao at may magandang epekto pa sa pananim sa parke.

"We don't want Lund to become some kind of an infection epicentre. Chicken manure has two effects- firstly it will smell which means that it won't be particularly nice to sit here behind me in the park today and have a picnic in the grass but it's also good for the lawn and good for the park," paliwanag ng alkalde.

It contains a lot of nitrogen and phosphorus so we're taking the opportunity to do a lot of maintenance work in the park today," patuloy niya.--**Reuters/FRJ, GMA New**

'Crazy beast' fossil discovery shows the evolutionary weirdness of early mammals

By Ashley Strickland, CNN

Published May 1, 2020 7:14:55 AM

<https://cnnphilippines.com/world/2020/5/1/weird-ancient-mammal-Madagascar.html>



(CNN) — Researchers have uncovered the fossil of an early mammal named the "crazy beast" that lived 66 million years ago on Madagascar, and it's unlike any mammal ever known, living or extinct.

This mammal, about the size of an opossum, had a mix of strange characteristics that haven't been seen together before. It highlights evolutionary strangeness that can arise from evolution when it occurs in isolation on islands like Madagascar, which is home to other species, living and extinct, found nowhere else in the world.

The mammal is the most complete and well preserved skeleton of a gondwanatherian, which is a mammal that lived on the ancient southern supercontinent Gondwana, which is now the continents of the southern hemisphere.

Fossils from the Mesozoic era, between 65 million and 252 million years ago, are sparse from Gondwana, largely including items such as a single skull, bits of jaw bone and teeth.

But this mammal, which looks a bit like a badger in the artist rendering based on the skeleton, is so well preserved that it includes cartilaginous tissue, small bones and the creature's short tail.



The researchers named it *Adalatherium hui*, a hybrid name that combines the Malagasy word for "crazy" and the Greek word for "beast." Hui is a nod to the late Yaoming Hu, a study co-author at Stony Brook University.

They believe this particular creature was a juvenile, weighing around seven pounds. But compared to the other Gondwana mammals living at the time, which were the size of mice, it was quite large. And it lived among dinosaurs and ancient crocodiles before the asteroid impact wiped them all out 66 million years ago at the end of the Cretaceous period.

It was also incredibly weird.

"Knowing what we know about the skeletal anatomy of all living and extinct mammals, it is difficult to imagine that a mammal like *Adalatherium* could have evolved; it bends and even breaks a lot of rules," said David Krause, lead study author, senior curator of vertebrate paleontology at the Denver Museum of Nature & Science and professor emeritus at Stony Brook University.

The study published Wednesday in the journal [Nature](#).

The skeleton contains a number of strange features that researchers can't quite figure out.

For instance, *Adalatherium* had more holes on its face than any known mammal, Krause said in a press call Tuesday. These holes, called foramina, created pathways for blood vessels and nerves, leading to an incredibly sensitive snout that was covered in whiskers. It also had a large hole at the top of the snout that can't be compared to any known mammal that ever lived or is currently living.

Its teeth can't be compared with anything else either. They're structured in a strange way that can't be explained. Krause said its back teeth "are from outer space."

The animal's backbone contained more vertebrae than any known mammal from the Mesozoic era. And it must have walked in a strange way, because the front half of the animal doesn't match the back half. And one of its back legs was bowed.

The forearms and shoulders can be compared to cats and dogs, meaning they were placed under the body -- very unusual for early mammals who walked more like reptiles, said Simone Hoffmann, study co-author and assistant professor at the New York Institute of Technology's department of anthropology.



'Crazy beast' fossil discovery shows the evolutionary weirdness of early mammals

But the hind legs are the opposite pattern, suggesting that the legs spread out and had more sprawling knee joints like reptiles. Two patterns in one animal means that it walked very differently than anything living today, Hoffman said. But they believe it was capable of running, in addition to other ways of moving.

Adalatherium also had strong, long claws on its back legs, suggesting that it dug using its hind legs.

"Adalatherium is the oddest of oddballs," Hoffmann said. "Trying to figure out how it moved is nearly impossible because, for instance, its front end is telling us a different story than its back end."

Weird island animals and where to find them

Krause and his colleagues have been investigating fossils that belonged to unusual animals living on ancient Madagascar for 25 years. This fossil was found in 1999 at the site of a sedimentary basin in northwest Madagascar. But it was investigated recently.

Multiple expeditions to that basin have revealed the bones of dinosaurs and other vertebrates, or backboned animals, well preserved and buried by the ancient flow of debris in the basin. But they had to collect thousands of specimens just to find a handful of mammal fossils, Krause said.

In 2010, they found the skull of a gondwanatherian. Before that, discoveries of them were largely restricted to teeth and jaw fragments.

Fossils of gondwanatherian fossils were first found in Argentina, followed by discoveries in Africa, India, the Antarctic Peninsula, and Madagascar. At first, researchers believed they were related to sloths, anteaters and armadillos. But they stand on their own, unrelated to anything alive today, "now known to have been part of a grand evolutionary experiment, doing their own thing, an experiment that failed and was snuffed out in the Eocene [Epoch], about 45 million years ago," Krause said.

If the "crazy beast" can be related to anything, it's multituberculates, a group of extinct rodent-like mammals that lived on the northern continents, according to the researchers.

The researchers chalk it up to evolving in the isolated environment of an island. And Madagascar has been an island for a long time. It separated from the Indian subcontinent 88 million years ago and has been on its own ever since.

This allowed animals and dinosaurs on Madagascar, like Adalatherium "ample time to develop its many ludicrous features," Krause said.

Krause's team has found a number of other strange fossils on Madagascar, including a giant, armored, predatory frog called Beelzebufo, a short-snouted herbivorous crocodile called Simosuchus and a buck-toothed dinosaur called Masiakasaurus.

"Madagascar is a pretty weird place," Krause said. "Plants and animals there are not known anywhere else in the world. Evolution on islands leads to that in some sense."

When animals evolve in isolated areas, like islands, they deal with competition, predators and sources of food. This causes them to evolve into species that don't resemble mainland animals, including unusual shapes and sizes.

Researchers call it the "island rule:" small animals increase in size, a form of gigantism, while large mammals decrease in size.

Adalatherium likely disappeared along with the rest of the strange animals on Madagascar 66 million years ago, before the island population began anew with native species like lemurs. But the discovery sheds light on the fascinating mammals that came before the ones we know today. And only more research and discovery will fill in the remaining gaps.

"Adalatherium is just one piece, but an important piece, in a very large puzzle on early mammalian evolution in the southern hemisphere," Krause noted. "Unfortunately, most of the pieces are still missing."

This story was first published on CNN.com "['Crazy beast' fossil discovery shows the evolutionary weirdness of early mammals](#)"



Hundreds of tourists are still stranded in the Maldives, an island nation known for its luxury resorts

By Allen Kim and Pamela Boykoff, CNN

Published May 1, 2020 3:22:17 PM

<https://cnnphilippines.com/world/2020/5/1/maldives-tourists-coronavirus.html>

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Hundreds of tourists have been stranded in the Maldives because of the coronavirus pandemic.

(CNN) — There are worse places to wait out a pandemic.

Hundreds of tourists are still stuck in the Maldives, Ali Waheed, the country's tourism minister told CNN's Richard Quest, more than a month after the novel coronavirus arrived there.

Waheed said there was about 500 tourists on the islands, with 100 of them stranded at the airport. The government is helping people who cannot afford to continue staying in resorts.

"We believe they are like locals, they are the people who have brought this country to where it is now," Waheed said.

The first two coronavirus cases in the Maldives were confirmed on March 8, and a state of public health emergency was declared by the Minister of Health on March 12.

There have been 468 total coronavirus cases on the island. A total of 17 have recovered from the virus, while one has died, according to the country's Ministry of Health.

The island nation in the Indian Ocean is known for its luxury resorts, and the tourism industry there has been rocked by the coronavirus pandemic as the country closed its national borders and canceled flights.

In early April, the New York Times reported on life for one couple stuck there on a never-ending honeymoon. "There is nowhere to go. The couple reign like benign yet captive sovereigns over their islet. The days are long and lazy. They sleep in, snorkel, lounge by the pool, repeat," the NYT wrote.

"Everyone says they want to be stuck on a tropical island, until you're actually stuck," Olivia De Freitas told the paper. "It only sounds good because you know you can leave."

This story was first published on CNN.com "[Hundreds of tourists are still stranded in the Maldives, an island nation known for its luxury resorts](#)"