

'Leave bats, rats and snakes alone'

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

May 3, 2020



As the Philippines braces for the worst impact of the 2019 novel coronavirus disease (Covid-19) pandemic within its shores, the blame has put weight on where it all started—a wet market in Wuhan City in Hubei, China—where exotic live animals and their meat are openly sold.

Equally placed on the spotlight are some of the most unappreciated and abhorred animals on the planet—bats, rats and snakes.



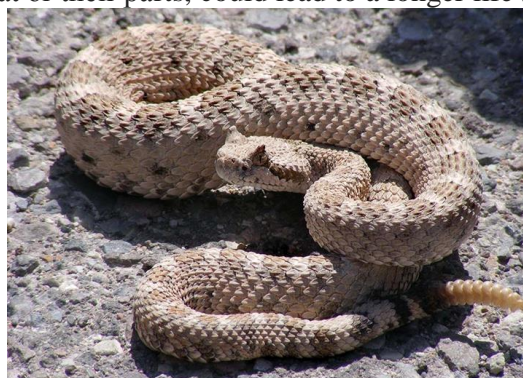
Even the little known scaly anteater, incidentally one of the most traded animals in the world today, is put on trial.

Before we go on full blast in victim-blaming here, let us trace back where the problem really began—hunting for food, trophy and sports—which later on emerged into a transnational crime, the lucrative illegal wildlife trade, a major driver of biodiversity loss.

Exotic food, medicine, pet trade

Environment Assistant Secretary Ricardo Calderon said there are scientific studies linking deadly viruses and diseases to wild animals and the illegal wildlife trade.

It is primarily because of human consumption of wild animals, driven either by the love for exotic food or belief that eating certain wild animals' meat or their parts, could lead to a longer life span.



Some people also believe that the meat and parts of certain wild animals have high medicinal value, or have aphrodisiac effects when eaten.

Many of the arrests made by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), in coordination with various law enforcement agencies, Calderon said, can also be attributed to the increasing demand in the illegal pet trade.

“That is why we are strengthening our law enforcement and we are scrutinizing every application for import permits. We get inputs from our research agency, the Ecosystems Research and Development Bureau [ERDB], to determine whether the requested species for importation are not invasive and may cause an environmental problem in the future,” Calderon said.

Lucrative trade

The value of illegal wildlife trade in the Philippines is estimated at P50 billion a year, or roughly over \$1 billion, including the market value of wildlife ecological role and value, damage to habitats incurred during poaching, and loss in potential ecotourism revenues.

Based on the DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) confiscation records, the top 3 illegally traded species in the country by number of confiscated individuals from 2010 to 2019 are the Palawan pangolin, the common hill myna, and the tokay gecko.

Based on the Bureau of Customs (BOC) records, snakes, monitor lizards and turtles are the most common illegally traded species for export.

On the other hand, assorted spiders, live pigeons, impala, rhinoceros horns, tarantulas, scorpions, elephant tusks and birds' nests are the most common animals and items for import.

Conduit of zoonotic disease

Describing illegal wildlife trade as “a conduit through which coronavirus is transmitted to humans,” Theresa M. Tenazas, officer in charge of the Wildlife Resources Division of DENR-BMB, said hunting for domestic and international wildlife trade continue to threaten the country's rich biodiversity.

“While hunting animals from the wild are source of food for some communities in the Philippines for generations, the scale of this practice was relatively small and observed to be limited to subsistence consumption in the early years,” she said.

However, as years passed and the trend and behavior changed, she said wildlife began to be traded in wet markets and gained momentum since 1980s when high demand for wildlife species started and went beyond mere subsistence consumption.

“Nowadays, wildlife is not only sold primarily for food, but also for traditional medicine, pets and ornaments,” she said.

Bats as 'ecological reservoir'

Citing a report published by the World Health Organization on February 21, Tenazas said it was reported that the most likely “ecological reservoir” of the novel coronavirus is bats.

While there are no known record of study or research directly linking human consumption, trade of wildlife and open market sale of wildlife raw meat as causing an epidemic in the Philippines, there are already scientific and research studies that prove that coronavirus is a zoonotic disease, which means that it can be transmitted from an animal host to humans, caused by wildlife trade, she said.

Not food or 'medicine'

Calderon said, unlike animal livestock or farm animals raised specifically for meat, wild animals are not for human consumption and neither are their parts, nor they are meant to be cure for cancer or lingering illnesses.

"More often than not, these beliefs that animal parts have medicinal value or aphrodisiac effect are untrue," Calderon said.

He said bats, rats, snakes and other wildlife that are often hunted and killed have important ecosystem functions and they are best left alone in their natural habitats.

"It is best to leave wild animals alone," he said.

Wet markets' dilemma

According to Tenazas, wet markets have been identified as ideal places for incubating new diseases and bolstering their transmission to humans.

"The increasing rate of wildlife trade, trafficking and poaching tend to likely increase the spread of global epidemics," she said.

According to Tenazas, emerging infectious diseases (EIDs), particularly zoonotic ones—diseases that can be transmitted from animals to humans—are a significant and growing threat to global health, and global economy and security.

She said it is highly probable that transmission can occur through close contact between humans and wildlife as part of ongoing illegal wildlife trade.

Limiting interaction

TENAZAS, hence, suggested that the best way to avoid a potentially deadly virus: people should limit interaction with wildlife.

"The Philippine is a megadiverse country. Thus, in order to secure sustainable utilization of the country's wildlife and its resources, and to be able to ensure public health and safety, the DENR, through the [BMB] has long been enforcing Republic Act 9147 and is totally prohibiting the collection, hunting and possession of wildlife, its by-products, and derivatives including trading and transporting," she said.

'Slap in the wrist'

Under the Wildlife Act, the penalty is not severe for those caught in illegal wildlife trade. It depends not only on the act but also on the conservation status of the wildlife.

Currently the highest penalties for critically endangered species that can be imposed are six years and one day to 12 years imprisonment, or a fine of P100,000 to P1 million for killing; two years and one day to four years imprisonment or a fine of P30,000 to P300,000 for hunting; and only two years and one day to four years imprisonment or a fine of P5,000 to P300,000 for trading wildlife.

For mere transport of wildlife, the penalty is only six months to one year imprisonment and/or P50,000 to P100,000.

Often, violators get the minimum jail term or fine upon pleading guilty to the crime, hence, getting some sort of reprieve.

Stiffer penalty

The DENR-BMB is now pushing for an amendment to the law to impose the most stringent penalty, possibly, of 20 years imprisonment, for wildlife trafficking.

“This effort to amend [the law] is to ensure effective punishment of wildlife crimes to act as a significant disincentive, together with our incessant effort to regulate import and export of wildlife trade,” she said.

This, according to Tenazas, aims to ensure compliance of the permitting system under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora and the DENR to prevent illegal wildlife trade.

Strengthening law enforcement

Recognizing the indispensability of effective law enforcement, the DENR-BMB is also strengthening partnership with different law-enforcement agencies in the country that man airports, ports and other borders to prevent wildlife crimes and to include other cross-collaborative activities, she said.

On the capacity building side, she said there are 12 workshops lined up for 2020, such as Online Trade Investigation, and the Financial Investigation on Wildlife Crimes Advance Prosecutor and Enforcement Workshop, which are to be conducted in partnership with UNODC, USAID Protect Wildlife Project, BMB-ADB/GEF IWT Project and the United States Department of Justice Office of Overseas Prosecutorial Development, Assistance, and Training Counter Wildlife Trafficking.

“Our effort will include escalation of the campaign to the public to raise awareness of the risks of wildlife consumption, to public security and to public health with the end in view of furthering the enforcement efforts against trafficking of wildlife,” she said.

FCF's relief assistance benefits over 10,000 Vizcayano villagers

By Benjamin Moses M. EbreoPublished on May 2, 2020

AYOMBONG, Nueva Vizcaya, May 2 (PIA) – 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 four barangays as the agency's support to the 'Bayanihan to Heal as One' Act of the national government.

"These assistance were 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, Nalubbunan and Runruno.

Villagers of the neighboring barangays of Tadjji, Papaya and Antutot in Kasibu town also received the 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 neighbouring 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 projects at barangay Runruno and also funds the SDMPs of its host barangay and neighboring communities.(MDCT/BME/PIA 2-Nueva Vizcaya)

Green gold

Calamansi brings in revenues to residents of Homonhon

By: [Cyrain Cabueñas](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Inquirer Visayas](#) / 05:15 AM May 03, 2020



Homonhon island, known as the landing site of Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan in 1521, has become a major producer of calamansi or Philippine lime. —CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Borongan City, Eastern Samar—While other areas of Homonhon island are grappling with the impact of open pit mining, three barangays are extracting revenues from another source: calamansi.

Calamansi or Philippine lime enjoys high demand as it is used heavily for food and beverage preparations, thus some residents are able to earn as much as P30,000 a month from the sale of their produce, with the fruits sold at around P70 for every 100 pieces. Most of the producers are small shareholder farmers with each household owning 200-300 trees. The biggest farm spanning 10 hectares has 5,000 calamansi trees, which grow well in coastal areas.

As it is, the three barangays in this island two hours by boat from the town of Guiuan are able to produce enough calamansi to supply the needs of some towns in Eastern Samar, even going as far as the regional center of Tacloban City. But there remains room for growth and one opportunity can be unlocked by putting in place light processing equipment that will, for example, make powdered juice out of the excess fruits that accumulate when production hits its peak and the selling price plunges to as low as P20 for every 100 pieces.

For longtime Homonhon resident Ma. Josefina Montes, who also heads the Homonhon Environmental Rescuers Association (Hero), the earnings potential of calamansi gives another reason to protect the island from environmental degradation.

When Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan crossed the Pacific Ocean and dropped anchor off Homonhon island in March 1521, his chronicler Antonio Pigafetta indeed recorded lush vegetation, tall trees and clear waters.



Natural bounty

Montes said much of that natural bounty could still be enjoyed during her childhood, but the steady mining activities since 1983 had spoiled her piece of paradise.

On April 8, a Panamanian cargo vessel arrived in the waters off Homonhon and loaded 7,000 metric tons of chromite ore to be shipped to China. Locals, along with Guiuan Mayor Annaliza Gonzales, Vice Gov. Maricar Sison-Goteesan, Gov. Ben Evardone, Rep. Maria Fe Abunda, Bishop Crispin Varquez and members of the Borongan clergy, strongly protested the ship's presence and its loading activities.

Noting the vessel's crew being made up of 13 Chinese and four Myanmar nationals, Evardone called it a violation of quarantine restrictions that are being imposed to prevent the spread of the coronavirus.

But the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) dismissed the governor's objection, saying the ship was anchored far from the shore and that no crew member had disembarked. Neither did workers from the island board the ship, the agency added.

The DENR also quoted the guidelines set by the Inter-Agency Task Force on the Management of Emerging Diseases saying the flow of exports and imports should not be hampered. It also said Tech Iron Resources Inc., a mining company operating in the island since 2015, had secured a Department of Health clearance to continue its activities during the quarantine period. Thus, the ship was able to set sail on April 18 with ore worth an estimated P61 million.

The 26,000 acre Homonhon island is known for its vast deposits of nickel and chromite, from which chromium is extracted to be used in the production of corrosion-resistant superalloys, nichrome and stainless steel. Chromium is also used as a pigment for glass, glazes and paint, and as an oxidizing agent for tanning leather. It is also sometimes used as a gemstone.

Aside from small scale miners, five big mining companies have staked their claim to the island. The mining companies do perform some community services like ferrying children to school, giving galvanized iron sheets and generator sets, and offering jobs, the Hero advocates acknowledged, but their habitat and their family's welfare are more important, they added.

Critically endangered

One environmental cost that mining has exacted from the island is the loss of the rare Philippine cockatoo (*Cacatua haematuropygia*) that the locals call "abukay." It has been listed by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature as a critically endangered species.

Fr. Roneil Canillas, an avid photographer and a member of the National Bird Watchers society, has observed that Homonhon used to be a haven for birdwatchers.

"These days, Homonhon is no longer very rewarding for birdwatchers. The last two times I've been there, I didn't catch sight of the red-vented cockatoo endemic to the island," Canillas said.

What you see now are balding forests due to mining activities, he added, a view shared by Bishop Varquez, who has been resolute in opposing mining activities in the province. Any visitor can see the evidence of degradation there, he said.

"Even the quality of the water has been affected," Varquez lamented. A recent assessment of the flora and fauna in the island by the Philippine Misereor Partnership Inc. and the Visayas State University confirmed that other species have become endangered, among them the Visayan tarictic hornbill, the giant golden-crowned flying fox, Philippine tarsier, and the Philippine iron wood.

On April 22, Earth Day, the locals expressed their environmental advocacy through social media since mass gatherings are still forbidden. An online petition to save Homonhon and stop mining operations in the island spearheaded by Pastor Fr. Christian Ofilan gathered 10,000 signatures in just two days.

Providing a ray of hope is the plan of Lea Torres, head of the Community Environment and Natural Resources Office, to have Homonhon declared as a protected area not just because of its natural resources but also because of its historical significance being the landing site of Magellan.

Community concern

The community's concern about the presence of the ship with Chinese and Myanmar nationals, as well as the DENR's turnaround in approving the loading activity despite the COVID-19 restrictions, have made headlines and reached the United Nations' attention.

That same day, pictures of vegetables and fruits being harvested by local farm owners also flooded the Facebook page of some Homonhon residents. Root crops and calamansi abound in the remaining three barangays in the island that remained untouched by mining activities. Other citrus fruits such as "dalandan" likewise grow there. People from these villages are self sufficient and experience no water shortage.

Some enterprising families have already produced calamansi concentrate and have sold them in grocery stores in bigger cities.

Such contrast in fortune has nurtured a sliver of hope among other islanders: What if Homonhon could again become a hideaway for nature lovers, or at least become a major source of calamansi for the province and the region? —CONTRIBUTED

Air pollution in Manila during ECQ improves; levels
rise in some provinces

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Air pollution in Manila during ECQ improves; levels rise in some provinces

Published May 2, 2020, 1:43 PM

By *Ellalyn de Vera-Ruiz*

Air pollution in Metro Manila continues to dramatically improve as people shelter in their homes to halt the spread of coronavirus disease, according to a study released by experts from the University of the Philippines (UP).



(ALVIN KASIBAN / MANILA BULLETIN)

Using a combination of ground, satellite, and modeling-based approaches, experts from the UP-Diliman's Colleges of Science and Engineering visualized the extent of changes in air quality weeks before the implementation of the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) and during the six weeks of lockdown.

Professor Roseanne Ramos of the Department of Geodetic Engineering mapped the weekly average nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), a pollutant from emissions of cars, trucks, buses, power plants and off-road equipment.

Weeks before the ECQ, elevated levels of NO₂ have been observed in the northern and central cities of Metro Manila.

However, NO₂ levels have decreased from the second up to sixth week of lockdown.

The UP experts cited that this observation was confirmed by continuous data from Airtoday.ph stations at EDSA-Muñoz and the Lung Center of the Philippines (LCP) in Quezon City.

Airtoday.ph, which measures the pollution index through stations in strategic sites in the metropolis, is a joint effort of UP Diliman, Rotary Club of Makati, and LCP.

HIGH POLLUTION LEVELS IN PROVINCES

While Metro Manila saw an improvement in air quality on the sixth week of ECQ, some provinces outside the capital observed otherwise.

The UP team plotted the aerosol optical thickness of NO₂ using images from the Himawari-1 satellite to study the air pollution levels in Metro Manila and other provinces.

Professor Gerry Bagtasa of the Institute of Environmental Science and Meteorology (IESM) confirmed that the drop in the National Capital Regions's pollution levels in the second week of March is due to the ECQ.

However, parts of Pampanga, Tarlac, and Cagayan Valley experienced higher pollution levels due to open burning.



Air pollution in Manila during ECQ improves; levels
rise in some provinces

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“Car emission is a big contributor, but not the only contributor to NCR pollution,” Bagtasa said. The second half of April registered an overall lower pollution in most of Luzon, but an increase in Metro Manila and its southern portion, he also said.

The slightly higher pollution in NCR could be due to dust and contamination from open burning in some parts of Central Luzon, brought to the region by winds from north, he added.

IESM professor Mylene Cayetano urged the public to make conscious choices in our pre-ECQ activities if we have to maintain a good air quality as the “new normal.”

“As we slowly enter the ‘new normal’ activities, the air pollution will go back to moderate to unhealthy levels,” Cayetano said.

To improve air quality, she advised avoiding unnecessary idling of vehicles, keeping away from burning solid wastes in open spaces and smoking in public places; maintaining a road-worthy vehicle through regular maintenance; checking Airtoday.ph before heading out; and informing people about the benefits of clean air.

Swimming still not allowed in Boracay even if Aklan is under GCQ

Published May 3, 2020 5:58am



Even if the province of Aklan is under general community quarantine (GCQ), swimming in the waters of its famous island Boracay is still not allowed, according to a report by Katrina Son on GMA News' 24 Oras Weekend on Saturday.

Based on guidelines from the Inter-Agency Task Force, no swimming will be allowed until the threat of COVID-19 persists.

On Saturday, resorts in Boracay remained closed.

Swimming still not allowed in Boracay even if Aklan is
TITLE: under GCQ

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Sixty-four hotel and restaurant management students doing on-the-job (OJT) training were stranded on the island when it was placed under enhanced community quarantine (ECQ).

Forty-five of them however have already been brought back to Manila as of Saturday through sweeper flights organized by the Department of Tourism (DOT) and the Commission on Higher Education. The students underwent rapid testing for COVID-19 upon arrival at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport and were awaiting test results.

Twenty more students are still in Boracay waiting for available flights.

Palawan

Meanwhile, 230 tourists stranded in Puerto Princesa City in Palawan at the time the ECQ was imposed [were able to board sweeper flights](#) organized by the national government, DOT and Palawan Provincial Tourism Office.

Among the tourists were 13 mountaineers who went to Mt. Mantalingahan in Palawan and 39 students doing OJT in hotels.

Manila Bay

Meanwhile, on Saturday in Manila Bay, youths were seen swimming in Baseco as the sun shone bright, despite the fact that swimming is not allowed.

Manila is still under enhanced community quarantine until May 15.

One of the youths said they are happier and more free out in the sea than in their homes.

They said the Philippine Coast Guard would ask them to get back to shore when they spot them. —**KG, GMA News**

'NEW NORMAL' Quality education key to 'Balik Probinsya'— Go

Published 6 hours ago
on May 3, 2020 01:40 AM
By [Jom Garner](#)



SENATOR Christopher Lawrence 'Bong' Go, 'Balik-Probinsya' proponent. photograph courtesy of SBG

Senator Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go yesterday encouraged schools, universities and colleges in the provinces to aim for quality education that would lure students to join the government's "Balik Probinsya" Program.

The lawmaker said raising the quality of education in the provinces is an important key to the project that aims to decongest the primary cities while giving other provinces opportunities to become areas of development.

Go also emphasized the need to prepare schools in different parts of the country for the expected transfer of students from urban areas as more Filipinos expressed willingness to relocate to their home provinces after the new coronavirus pandemic stalled social, business and other activities in the whole of Luzon.

President Rodrigo Duterte has extended the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) in Metro Manila and some part of Luzon as the country continues its battle against the pandemic.

"More families are waiting for this crisis to end so that they could go back to their provinces," Go said. "And so, schools must be ready to take in the displaced and returning students."

Go also urged other government agencies to make long-term solutions to help the country recover more quickly from the COVID-19 crisis.

The lawmaker said Filipinos should adapt to the "new normal."

In preparation for the implementation of the "Balik Probinsya" Program, Go said the education system in rural areas must be enhanced to prepare for the student transferees.

Aside from the physical facilities of schools, he said that a thorough review of the teaching strategy based on new technology and availability of the internet for E-learning must be considered.

Go further explained that one of the primary considerations of families when they choose a community to live in or relocate to is the availability of quality schools and learning institutions in the area for their children.

For the long term, he emphasized that the availability of good learning institutions in provinces will develop educated and skilled workers that would attract employers and businesses to invest in the countryside.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/05/03/new-normal-quality-education-key-to-balik-probinsya-go/>



Sen. Go: Mga paaralan agad ihanda sa ‘Balik-Probinsiya’

May 2, 2020 @ 12:20 PM 20 hours ago

Views: 170

Manila, Philippines – Pinatitiyak ni Senator Christopher Lawrence “Bong” Go sa sektor ng edukasyon, partikular sa Department of Education (DepEd), ang kahandaan ng mga paaralan o learning institutions para sa inaasahang pagbabalik-probinsiya ng maraming pamilyang Filipino lalo na ng mga estudyante matapos ang coronavirus disease (COVID-19) health emergency.

“Ihanda na natin ang mga probinsya dahil marami pong pamilya ang gustong umuwi na pagkatapos ng krisis na ito. Isa sa dapat ikonsidera ay ang kahandaan ng mga eskwelahan at learning institutions sa mga lilipat na estudyante,” paliwanag ni Go.

Patuloy na hinihikayat ni Go ang mga ahensiya ng pamahalaan na magplano ng long-term solutions para tulungan ang bansa upang mabilis na makabangon mula sa COVID-19 crisis at tulungan ang mga Filipino na makapag-adjust sa “new normal”.

“Habang patuloy nating nilalaban ang COVID-19, pinaghahandaan na rin natin ang ‘new normal’ kung saan kaya nating harapin ang epekto ng krisis na ito sa ekonomiya at sa pang-araw araw natin na buhay,” aniya.

Nauna rito, inirekomenda ni Go sa pamahalaan ang implementasyon ng “Balik Probinsya” program kapag kontrolado na ang pagkalat ng sakit at tuluyan nang binawi ang travel restrictions.

Aniya, ang pinakamahirap na karanasan habang ipinatutupad ang enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) at maging ang adverse socio-economic impact ng krisis sa pangkabuhayan ng Filipino ay ang pangangailangan na tulungan ang mga pamilya na magsimula ng bagong buhay sa kanilang ‘home provinces’.

Sa paghahanda sa implementasyon ng “Balik Probinsya” program, sinabi ni Go na ang education system sa rural areas ay kailangang mapahusay bilang paghahanda sa paglilipat ng mga estudyante.

Bukod sa physical facilities ng eskuwelahan, sinabi ni Go na ang masusing pagrerebisa ng teaching strategy base sa bagong teknolohiya at availability ng internet para sa E-learning ay kailangang ikonsidera.

“Sa paghikayat na bumalik sila sa mga probinsya, siguraduhin rin natin na hindi maaantala ang pag-aaral ng mga kabataan,” ang pahayag ni Go.

“Kapag maganda ang education system sa iba’t ibang rehiyon sa bansa, mas makakaenganyo ito sa mga pamilya na lumipat,” paliwanag ni Go.

Para naman sa long term, binigyang diin ni Go ang availability ng good learning institutions sa mga lalawigan ay naglalayon din na makapag-develop ng ‘educated and skilled workers’ na makapanghihikayat sa employers at businesses na mag- invest sa kanayunan.

Isa pa rin aniya kung bakit gusto ng mga estudyante at maging ng buong pamilya na lumipat mula probinsiya tungo sa urban areas ay dahil sa paniniwala na ang mga eskuwelahan sa Metro Manila ay mas mabuti kumpara sa mga probinsiya.

“Tulad ko noon, probinsyano po ako pero lumipat ako sa Maynila para makapag-aral. Pero kung maayos ang mga eskuwelahan sa probinsya, hindi na kailangang pumunta pa ng siyudad ang mga estudyante at mapalayo pa sa pamilya nila,” ang pahayag ni Go.

Kaya nga, naniniwala si Go na kailangang i-promote ng pamahalaan ang mga eskuwelahan sa rehiyon na may mahuhusay na estudyante na nag-excel sa kani-kanilang larangan.

“Marami naman pong magagaling na eskuwelahan sa iba’t ibang parte ng bansa. Pruweba rito ang resulta ng 2020 Bar exams kung saan ‘probinsyano’ ang karamihan na nasa Top 10,” ani Go.

Aniya pa, ang buong education system sa bawat rehiyon ay kailangan na maikunsidera upang maiwasan ang pangangailangan ng estudyante na lumipat matapos tapusin ang isang one level at pagkatapos ay lumipat na naman sa susunod.

“Dapat mula basic education hanggang higher education maging maayos sa iba’t ibang bahagi ng bansa para hindi na kailangang lumipat pa,” ani Go.

Samantala, hinikayat naman ni Go ang Department of Education, Commission on Higher Education, at Technical Education and Skills Development Authority na magtulungan at ipagpatuloy ang pag- assess sa kalidad at kakayahan ng eskuwelahan sa bawat rehiyon na makapag-aambag sa tamang implementasyon ng “Balik Probinsya” program. **RNT**

Sa 'Balik Probiinsya' program: Education system sa
rural areas, pinasisiguro ni Sen. Go

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Sa 'Balik Probinsya' program: Education system sa rural areas, pinasisiguro ni Sen. Go

May 2, 2020 @ 8:50 AM 23 hours ago

Views: 181

Manila, Philippines – Binigyang diin ni Senador Bong Go ang kahalagahan ng paghahanda na gagawin ng pamahalaan sa iba't ibang bahagi ng bansa para sa inaasahang paglilipat ng maraming pamilyang Filipino lalo na ng mga estudyante mula urban areas matapos ang coronavirus disease (COVID-19) health emergency.

"Ihanda na natin ang mga probinsya dahil marami pong pamilya ang gustong umuwi na pagkatapos ng krisis na ito. Isa sa dapat ikonsidera ay ang kahandaan ng mga eskwelahan at learning institutions sa mga lilipat na estudyante," paliwanag ni Go.

Patuloy na hinikayat ni Go ang mga ahensiya ng pamahalaan na magplano ng long-term solutions para tulungan ang bansa na mabilis na maka-recover mula sa COVID-19 crisis at tulungan ang mga Filipino na makapag-adjust sa "new normal."

Partikular na hinimok ni Go ang education sector na maghanda ng mga hakbang upang ang estudyante ay makapagpatuloy ng kanilang pag-aaral nang hindi nalalagay sa panganib ang kanilang buhay.

"Habang patuloy nating nilalabanan ang COVID-19, pinaghahandaan na rin natin ang 'new normal' kung saan kaya nating harapin ang epekto ng krisis na ito sa ekonomiya at sa pang-araw araw natin na buhay," aniya pa rin.

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Sa 'Balik Probiinsya' program: Education system sa
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"Sa paghikayat na bumalik sila sa mga probinsya, siguraduhin rin natin na hindi maaantala ang pag-aaral ng mga kabataan," ang pahayag ni Go.

Ipinaliwanag pa ni Go na ang isa sa mga pangunahing konsiderasyon ng mga pamilya nang piliin ng mga ito na manirahan sa komunidad o mai-relocate ay ang availability ng kalidad ng mga eskuwelahan at learning institutions sa lugar para sa kanilang mga anak.

"Kapag maganda ang education system sa iba't ibang rehiyon sa bansa, mas makakaenganyo ito sa mga pamilya na lumipat," paliwanag ni Go.

Para naman sa long term, binigyang diin ni Go ang availability ng good learning institutions sa mga lalawigan ay naglalayon din na makapag-develop ng 'educated and skilled workers' na makapanghihikayat sa mga employers at businesses na mag- invest sa kanayunan.

"Bukod pa rito, dadami rin ang mga negosyo dahil makasisiguro ang mga ito na magkakaroon ng educated and skilled workforce sa lugar na lilipatan nila," paniniyak ni Go.

Bukod dito, isa pa rin aniya kung bakit gusto ng mga estudyante at maging ng buong pamilya na lumipat mula probinsiya tungo sa urban areas ay dahil sa paniniwala na ang mga eskuwelahan sa Metro Manila ay mas mabuti kumpara sa mga probinsiya.

"Tulad ko noon, probinsyano po ako pero lumipat ako sa Maynila para makapag-aral. Pero kung maayos ang mga eskwelahan sa probinsya, hindi na kailangang pumunta pa ng siyudad ang mga estudyante at mapalayo pa sa pamilya nila," ang pahayag ni Go.

Kaya nga, naniniwala si Go na kailangang i- promote ng pamahalaan ang mga eskuwelahan sa rehiyon na may mahuhusay na estudyante na nag-excel sa kani-kanilang larangan.

Ito ani Go ay makapang-aakit sa pamilya na bumalik sa probinsiyang kanilang pinagmulan at pagpapabula na rin sa paniniwala na ang de- kalidad na eskuwelahan ay matatagpuan lamang sa Metro Manila.

"Marami naman pong magagaling na eskwelahan sa iba't ibang parte ng bansa. Pruweba rito ang resulta ng 2020 Bar exams kung saan 'probinsyano' ang karamihan na nasa Top 10," ani Go.

"Patunay ito na kung patuloy nating ayusin pa ang kalidad ng edukasyon sa mga lalawigan, hindi na kailangang lumuwas ng Kamaynilaan para mag-aral," dagdag na pahayag ni Go.

Tinukoy din ni Go na maraming estudyante ang stranded sa Metro Manila na malayo sa kanilang pamilya na nasa probinsiya dahil sa enhanced community quarantine (ECQ).

"Marami ngayong mga estudyante na hindi makauwi sa kanilang pamilya dahil dito sa Maynila nag-aaral. Naipit dahil sa ECQ," aniya pa rin.

Aniya pa, ang buong education system sa bawat rehiyon ay kailangan na maikunsidera upang maiwasan ang pangangailangan ng estudyante na lumipat matapos tapusin ang isang one level at pagkatapos ay lumipat na naman sa susunod.

Sa 'Balik Probiinsya' program: Education system sa
rural areas, pinasisiguro ni Sen. Go

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"Dapat mula basic education hanggang higher education maging maayos sa iba't ibang bahagi ng bansa para hindi na kailangang lumipat pa," ani Go.

Samantala, hinikayat naman ni Go ang Department of Education, Commission on Higher Education, at Technical Education and Skills Development Authority na magtulungan at ipagpatuloy ang pag- assess sa kalidad at kakayahan ng eskuwelahan sa bawat rehiyon na makapag-aambag sa tamang implementasyon ng "Balik Probinsya" program.

Aniya, sa kabila ng inisyatiba na maaaring kasama sa massive infrastructure projects para sa edukasyon, ang hakbang ay maaari ring makabawas ng paghihirap ng 'overcapacity of classrooms' dahil ang populasyon sa urban areas ay luluwag.

Kaya nga ang panukala ni Go sa education sector ay magbigay ng mas maraming government-funded scholarships at subsidy plans para sa mga mahihirap subalit 'deserving students'.

"Kailangan ring dagdagan pa natin ang oportunidad para sa mga kabataang Pilipino na makapag-aral muli lalo na pagkatapos ng COVID-19 crisis," paliwanag ni Go.

Inulit ni Go na ang "Balik Probinsya" program ay isang long-term plan na ipatutupad matapos na makontrol ang pagkalat ng COVID-19.

Aniya, kailangan na gawin na agad ang paghahanda upang masiguro na magiging matagumpay ito at para na rin sa pag-asa ng mga Filipino na magkaroon ng magandang bukas matapos ang krisis.

"Right now, our priority is to address and overcome this health crisis first. But this also means that preparations have to start now. This must be properly planned with the full commitment of all government agencies and the private sector. Magtulungan po tayo," aniya pa rin.

"As President Duterte said, starting fresh in the provinces would give Filipinos HOPE for a better future after COVID-19 crisis," dagdag na pahayag ni Go. **Kris Jose**

Bong Go: 'Balik Probinsya' to boost agriculture sector

By [Javier J. Ismael](#)

May 2, 2020

SEN. Christopher Lawrence “Bong” Go said his proposed Balik Probinsya (Back to the Provinces) Program may further revitalize the country’s agricultural sector, as many city dwellers were reintegrated in the countryside, where idle, fertile lands could be developed.

“Nakikita po nating isa sa mga offshoot ng programang ito ang lalong pagsigla at pag-unlad ng ating agricultural sector (One of the offshoots of this program is the further revitalization and progress of the agricultural sector),” he added.

“If we can come up with other complementary programs promoting agriculture among those who are reintegrated in the provinces through the Balik

Probinsya Program, naniniwala po ako na hindi ito malayong mangyari (I believe that this is not far from happening),” he said.

The senator said he would also propose new agriculture programs to entice a new generation of farmers to go back to their agricultural roots.

“We have to make agriculture and aquaculture more promising again to attract young farmers and fishers to these industries,” he added.

Among his proposals include the continued provision of more inputs for farmers such as seeds, fertilizers, machineries, and training on scientific and climate resilient farming methods to increase agricultural productivity in the country.

To support the program, Go suggested that concerned government agencies could explore the idea of providing more scholarships and even training abroad for Filipino farmers, so they could learn the best practices on farming.

He added that Barangay Agriculture may also be incorporated in the basic education curriculum to inculcate love of farming among Filipino students at a young age.

“If government can conduct and offer more free skills training, livelihood seminars to convert the nonworking wives and other members of the families of our farmers and fishers, perhaps we can also make them become ‘agripreneurs’” Go explained.

Meanwhile, Agriculture Secretary William Dar seconded Go’s statements and expressed his support to the program as a way to strengthen the country’s agriculture.

“This is now the time to plan properly this one as part of our recovery program for the rural areas... [There should also be] economic opportunity din doon sa mga areas na nai-resettle natin. So, i-tie up dapat natin doon sa mga rural industries na pwede nating i-invite na ma-develop based doon sa competitive advantage ng area (...in areas where we resettle the people. So, these areas should be tied up with the rural industries that we can invite for development based on the competitive advantage of the area).” He said in a statement.

Dar added that the program must be buttressed with a law that could support the program and develop it into a whole-of-nation approach.

“Sa tulong po nitong Balik Probinsya program at mga programang pang-agrikultura, positibo po tayo na mas maraming mae-engganyo na bagong farmers [and] fishers sa bansa (With the help of this Balik Probinsya program and other agricultural programs, we are positive that we can encourage new farmers and fishers in the country),” Go said.

Old model jeepneys allowed to operate in GCQ areas

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

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 11:31 AM May 02, 2020



RICHARD A. REYES

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Transportation (DOTr) on Saturday said that old jeepneys are allowed to operate in areas placed under general community quarantine (GCQ).

However, DOTr Undersecretary for Administrative Services Artemio Tuazon Jr. clarified that old jeepneys will only be allowed back on the road if there are no of modernized jeepneys in a particular area.

“Actually sa totoo, pwede rin po sila mag-operate pag nakita po na may kakulangan sa public transport sa lugar na pinago-operate ng ating mga modernized jeeps,” Tuazon said in an interview over radio station DZBB.

(Actually in truth, they can operate if we see that there is a lack of transportation in public transport in places where modern jeepneys operate.)

Tuazon added that old jeepneys will be checked based on their “road worthiness” before being allowed to operate.

“Yung mga medyo mausok at hindi na po maayos ang lagay ng sasakyan ay hindi po papayagan,” Tuazon said. “Kailangan po makita yung road-worthiness po nila.”

(Those that emit smoke and are not in good condition will not be allowed to operate. We need to look into their roadworthiness.)

The DOTr executive earlier said that [old jeepneys will not be allowed to operate](#), clarifying what Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año said that jeepneys are not allowed to go back on the road in GCQ areas.

Partial operations of public transportation in GCQ areas have been allowed by the government, provided that a “one-meter distance between passengers” or social distancing would be followed.

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1268386/old-model-jeepneys-allowed-to-operate-in-gcq-areas#ixzz6LK2Tpo2e>

Lumang jeepney, papayagang pumasada sa GCQ

[Mer Layson](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon) - May 3, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Inihayag kahapon ng pamunuan ng Department of Transportation (DOTr) na papayagan nilang makapag-operate at makapamasada ang mga lumang jeepney, sa mga lugar na isasailalim na sa General Community Quarantine (GCQ).

Gayunman, sinabi Transportation Undersecretary Artemio Tuazon Jr. na prayoridad ng pamahalaan na makapag-operate ang mga modernized jeepneys at buses, kaysa mga lumang jeepneys.

Paglililinaw naman ni Tuazon, basta't 'roadworthy' pa ang lumang jeepney ay papayagan ng pamahalaan na makapamasada ang mga ito.

“Actually, puwede sila mag-operate,” ani Tuazon.

Ang hindi lamang aniya papayagan ay yaong mga lumang jeepney na maayos at di na maayos ang kondisyon.

Paliwanag pa ng opisyal, pina-prayoridad lamang ang mga modernized jeepneys dahil sa tap card system nito, na nakatutulong para maiwasan ang close contact ng mga pasahero.

Mas maluwang rin umano ang mga modern jeepneys at mataas pa ang mga kisame ng mga ito.

Magsisilbi rin naman aniyang augmentation ang mga lumang jeepney kung hindi sapat ang mga modernized jeepneys upang pagsilbihan ang mga commuters sa mga lugar na nasa GCQ na.

“Kung ‘di mapupunan ng modernized jeeps ang pangangailangan ng mga pasahero, puwede sila pag-opereytin,” aniya pa

Nabatid na sa ilalim ng GCQ, ang mga public utility vehicles (PUVs) ay dapat na kumuha ng special permit mula sa Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB).

Dapat ring magsuot ng face masks at guwantes ang mga drivers, at i-disinfect ang kanilang mga sasakyan at kanilang terminal para masigurong hindi magkakaroon ng hawahan ng virus.

Dapat rin umanong 50 porsiyento lamang ng passenger load ng mga bus at jeep ang kanilang isasakay para walang siksikan sa sasakyan.

Kaugnay nito, nilinaw naman ni Tuazon na hindi pa rin pinapayagan ang anumang uri ng transportasyon sa mga lugar na nananatiling nasa ilalim ng enhanced community quarantine (ECQ).

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/metro/2020/05/03/2011443/lumang-jeepney-papayagang-pumasada-sa-gcq>

As possible ECQ lifting looms, DILG chief says PH must avoid 2nd COVID-19 wave

ABS-CBN News

Posted at May 02 2020 09:45 PM

MANILA--Interior Secretary Eduardo Año on Saturday said the public must continue to follow COVID-19 policies and the new normal guidelines when the lockdown in the Philippines is lifted to avoid a second wave of the deadly disease.

Año said in an interview with radio DZMM that how people will behave in public is an important factor to decide if the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) and general community quarantine (GCQ) implemented in parts throughout the country will be lifted, as it plays a big role in curbing the fast-spreading COVID-19.

"Ready na ba 'yung mga tao sa bagong normal? Katulad ng nangyari sa Singapore, they thought that successful na sila, pero hindi pala ready 'yung mga tao nila doon," Año said.

Singapore in late April logged a record daily jump of more than 1,400 coronavirus cases, with almost all new infections linked to dormitories housing foreign laborers.

The city-state was initially successful in keeping its outbreak in check with a strict regime of testing and contact-tracing, but is now facing a fast-moving second wave.

"Nu'ng dumating 'yung mga expats nila, ay nag-celebrate na sila. Ta's du'n sa mga condo nila, talagang dikit-dikit, so biglang nagkaroon ng wave, ng surge, at biglang taas nila," Año said.

"Sa atin, ang tanong . . . pwede na kaya ang instinct at disiplina at behavior ng mga kababayan natin?"

Año said avoiding a second wave of COVID-19 cases in the Philippines, as it lifted the ECQ and GCQ in its provinces and cities relies largely on the discipline of its citizens.

"Kapag ba tinanggal natin ang ECQ at GCQ, 'yung mga kababayan natin, kapag sasakay ng jeep, hindi siya makikipag-agawan, pipila siya dun sa mahabang pila ng maraming tao?" he said.

"Dapat kasi 'yun na ang pumasok sa isipan natin ano, ang responsibilidad ay nasa indibidwal. Hindi actually nasa gobyerno o nasa community, nasa indibidwal 'yan. Nasa'yo 'yan kung gusto mo mahawa o hindi."

The official said that policies to address the spread of COVID-19 in the Philippines are telling that Filipinos should be used to this kind of new normal, such as regularly wearing face masks and observing physical distancing, until a vaccine for the disease is found.

"Sabi nga na there's only one objective for 2020 -- stay alive," he said.

The country earlier in the day logged 156 new COVID-19 infections, bringing its total number of cases to 8,928.

Of the total, 603 died while 1,124 others recovered, the health department said.

Life or economy: Gov't on a tightrope in COVID-19 response, says Dela Rosa

By: [Bong Lozada](#) - Reporter / [@BLozadaINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 09:55 PM May 02, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — Senator Ronald “Bato” dela Rosa on Saturday said the national government is on a tightrope whether to allow the reopening of businesses or continue to impose a form of lockdown while threats of the potentially deadly coronavirus persist.

Talking to DWIZ, the legislator said among the first issues that will be discussed when Senate resumes session on May 4 is how to stop the spread of the virus and how to jumpstart the economy.

“Marami talagang kailangan pag-usapan pero unang-una talagang tutukan natin is yung buhay ng tao, paano natin maisasalba buhay ng mga tao na hindi na kakalat ang virus,” said dela Rosa. “Talagang hirap na hirap ang gobyerno pano i-balance ang situation.”

(We have many issues to tackle but the foremost focus must be on life, how can we save the lives of the people that transmission of the virus will be prevented. The government is really having a difficulty in balancing the situation.)

“Pangalawa na ‘yung economy, and kung paano natin idi-distinguish ‘yan. Ang naglalaban talaga ngayon, ang nag-uumpugan, ay kung ano ang ipa-priority natin, buhay o economy?”

(Economy comes second, and how will we distinguish that. The two issues really clashing right now is what must we prioritize, life or economy?)

According to the former national police chief, prioritizing life over economy, or economy over life is not that easy and that merely choosing one to work might mean compromising the other.

Dela Rosa also expressed fear that even if the Philippines contains the spread of the virus now, a second wave could happen and could be deadlier.

“May school of thought na nagsasabing pinapagana ang ekonomiya para gumanda ang buhay ng tao. Paano naman kung gumagana nga siya and at the same time masira naman buhay ng tao,” pointed out Dela Rosa, who even used the Spanish Flu pandemic as an example.

(There’s a school of thought that says economy must run to improve the lives of the people. What if the economy is indeed running and at the same time lives of many will be jeopardized.)

The Spanish Flu lasted from 1918 to 1919 and killed an estimated 17 million to 50 million people worldwide. A second wave of the Spanish Flu likewise proved more dangerous.

The [Philippines has 8,928 confirmed cases of COVID-19](#) with 1,124 recoveries and 603 deaths as of May 2. This gives the country a mortality rate of 6.75 percent, which is lower than the 7.11% mortality rate worldwide. The COVID-19 pandemic also took a toll on the country’s economy as work was widely suspended due to the imposition of lockdown to avert the further spread of the novel coronavirus or SARS-CoV-2, which causes respiratory ailment COVID-19.

According to the Asian Development Bank, the Philippines’ economy is seen to drop 2% this year from a 5.9% growth in 2019. Although it also predicted a massive 6.5% bounce back for the Philippine economy next year.

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1268552/life-or-economy-govt-on-a-tightrope-in-covid-19-response-says-dela-rosa#ixzz6LKSPfA8X>

Among emerging economies: Philippines ranks 6th best in fight vs COVID

[Lawrence Agcaoili](#) (The Philippine Star) - May 3, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippines has been ranked as the sixth strongest among 66 emerging market economies in facing the coronavirus disease 2019 or COVID-19 pandemic, according to London-based publication The Economist.

The financial paper ranked 66 countries that are relatively safe and are in distress based on four potential sources of peril including public debt, public and private foreign debt, borrowing cost and reserve cover.

Botswana, Taiwan, South Korea, Peru, and Russia were the top five strongest countries while Venezuela was the weakest.

According to The Economist, Russia, Peru, and the Philippines look relatively robust while 30 are in distress or flirting with it.

COVID-19 hurts emerging economies by locking down their population, damaging their export earnings, and deterring foreign capital, The Economist said.

According to the International Monetary Fund (IMF), emerging economies would need at least \$2.5 trillion to weather the health crisis.

It said 66 economies need to find over \$4 trillion to service their foreign debt and cover any current account deficits

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Benjamin Diokno said the Philippines being ranked as one of the strongest among emerging economies reflects the country entered the health crisis from a position of strength.

“The Philippines before the COVID-19 crisis was on the road to A-rating. We’re not saying that the Philippines has not suffered from this crisis, together with the rest of the world,” he said in a text message to reporters.

Diokno said other countries are not well positioned, noting that the Philippines could put into good use the fiscal and monetary space from past reforms and prudent management of the economy to address the COVID-19 challenges.

“But our relative position among emerging economies gives us confidence that the Philippines would have a U-shaped bounce back once the pandemic fades,” Diokno said.

He said the country’s gross domestic product (GDP) would likely contract by 0.2 percent instead of one percent this year before bouncing back to a 7.7 percent growth next year amid measures taken by monetary and fiscal authorities to soften the blow of the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The strong economy may be attributed to the well crafted economic plan, the close coordination and competence of President Duterte’s economic team, and the President’s strong leadership in getting the much needed legislation passed by Congress,” Diokno said.

Among emerging economies: Philippines ranks 6th

May 3, 2020

TITLE: best in fight vs COVID

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The BSP's Monetary Board makes sure there is enough liquidity at this critical time.

It entered into a repurchase agreement with the Bureau of the Treasury involving P300 billion worth of government securities.

The central bank has also reduced the overnight reverse repurchase volume offering, suspended the weekly term deposit auction facility, and reduced to zero the spread in the peso rediscounting facility to encourage banks to re-channel funds into loans or government securities.

It also continues to ease regulatory measures to encourage lending to micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) severely affected by business shutdowns due to the enhanced community quarantine to prevent further spread of the deadly disease.

According to the BSP, it stands prepared to use its full range of monetary instruments and to deploy regulatory relief measures as needed in line with its price and financial stability mandates.

Long wait for COVID vaccine

May 2, 2020 | Filed under: [Headlines,News](#) | Posted by: [Tempo Desk](#)

By ELLALYN RUIZ

The Philippines is hoping to develop a vaccine against COVID-19, but scientists and health experts said the process may still take a long time.

World Health Organization acting country representative Dr. Socorro Escalante said it may take about 12 to 18 months before a vaccine can be approved for mass use.

The Philippines, like other countries, is scrambling for a coronavirus vaccine, with President Duterte promising to give P50 million, from an initial P10 million, to Filipino scientists who can develop a vaccine against COVID-19.

“I think the country could take advantage of the vaccines that are now in the pipeline, but what is key for the country is to be able to prepare its regulatory processes because the vaccine development will really take time. For the meantime, we encourage the country to prepare its regulatory processes in terms of assessment and evaluation of the vaccine,” Escalante had earlier said.

Department of Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said they are working on improving the country’s vaccine development capabilities.

Globally, the WHO has received 102 candidate COVID-19 vaccines as of April 30. Of the 102 potential vaccines, eight are currently under clinical evaluation, while 94 are still in the pre-clinical trial stage.

Clinical testing, WHO explained, is a type of research that studies new tests and treatments and evaluates their effects on humans.

China’s CanSino Biological Inc., in partnership with the Beijing Institute of Biotechnology, has its candidate vaccine currently on second stage clinical trial. The vaccine is based on the same platform as the Ebola virus disease.

United States drugmaker Pfizer, in partnership with Germany’s BioNtech and other pharmaceutical companies, are on first and second stages of testing.

Also on Phases 1 and 2 trials is a vaccine developed by scientists at the University of Oxford in England. Scientists had used the same platform directed against various infections, such as the Middle East Respiratory Syndrome coronavirus, influenza, tuberculosis, Chikungunya, Zika, and Meningitis B.

Currently on Phase 1 are potential vaccines developed by United States-based Inovio Pharmaceuticals and Moderna, as well as candidate vaccines offered by China’s Wuhan Institute of Biological Products/Sinopharm, Beijing Institute of Biological Products/Sinopharm, and Sinovac.

There are four phases of biomedical clinical trials, according to WHO.

Phase 1 tests new drugs for the first time in a small group of people to evaluate a safe dosage range and identify side effects.

Phase 2 involves testing treatments that have been found to be safe in Phase 1 but now need a larger group of human subjects to monitor for any adverse effects.

During Phase 3, tests are conducted on larger populations and in different regions and countries, and are often the step right before a new treatment is approved.

Lastly, during Phase 4, studies take place after a country approval but there is a need for further testing in a wide population over a longer period.

FINDING CURE SOON

While it seems that it may take a little longer to find a vaccine, scientists are hoping to find a cure for COVID-19 soon.

Leading a team of Philippine experts taking part in the WHO’s solidarity trial is Dr. Marissa Alejandria of the University of the Philippines-College of Medicine and president of the Philippine Society for Microbiology and Infectious Diseases.

The solidarity trial is an international randomized and adoptive clinical trial to test the safety and effectiveness of four possible therapies in treating COVID-19, according to the DoH.

The DoH announced last April 22 the participation of the Philippines among more than 100 countries in the evaluation of the safety and efficacy of antiviral drug against Ebola virus, Remdesivir; anti-malarial drug, Chloroquine or Hydroxychloroquine; antiretroviral drugs used to treat human immunodeficiency virus infection (HIV), Lopinavir with Ritonavir; and multiple sclerosis treatment, Lopinavir with Ritonavir plus Interferon beta-1a.

Source: <http://tempo.com.ph/2020/05/02/long-wait-for-covid-vaccine/>

Government offices urged to use DICT service for electronic transactions

[Richmond Mercurio](#) (The Philippine Star) - May 3, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) is encouraging various government institutions to utilize the Philippine National Public Key Infrastructure (PNPKI) as the prevalence of work from home arrangements increase the need to ensure confidentiality and authenticity of electronic transactions and documents.

The DICT has reached out to the Civil Service Commission, Commission on Audit, Supreme Court, House of Representatives and the Senate for the use of its PNPKI services.

“PNPKI allows users of public networks to exchange important data in a secure manner. PNPKI proves to be very useful during this time where most government offices are in work from home arrangements,” said DICT Secretary Gregorio Honasan.

DICT’s PNPKI services were initially offered to the Department of Justice-National Prosecution Service for conducting electronic and online inquest proceedings, as well as to the National Economic and Development Authority—Regional Development Council Northern Mindanao for securing electronic documents.

“We are in a state of crisis and it is the duty of the DICT to ensure security in electronic and online transactions among our institutions. We shall take strengthened measures to support the collective vision of our government, through the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases, in its battle against COVID-19.” Honasan said.

Operating the PNPKI is one of the core services of the DICT that aims to encourage the public and private sector to adopt the use of digital certificates.

Digital certificates serve as a form of authentication or proof of identity, allowing people to sign, save and email official e-documents securely, and therefore facilitating faster remote work transactions.

DICT operates the root certification authority and government certification authority for the processing and issuance of digital signature certificates.

This is part of the government’s effort to institutionalize the application of digital signatures in e-government services.

Ito na ang new normal sa trabaho–Bello

By Leifbilly BegasMay 02,2020



MAGKAKAROON din ng ‘new normal’ sa pagpasok ng mga empleyado sa trabaho.

Sa isang pahayag, sinabi ni Labor Sec. Silvestre Bello III na ipatutupad ang Interim Guidelines on Workplace Prevention and Control of COVID-19 upang malimitahan ang pagkalat ng coronavirus disease 2019 kapag inilagay na ang malaking bahagi ng Luzon sa General Community Quarantine.

Ang guidelines ay pirmado nina Bello at Trade Secretary Ramon Lopez.

Ang mga empleyado ay dapat na nakasuot ng facemask na hindi maaaring tanggalin maliban na lamang kung kakain o iinom. Ang mga employer ay inatasan na maglaan ng angkop na facemask sa kanilang mga empleyado.

Araw-araw ay dapat sumailalim sa temperature check at sumagot ng health symptoms form.

Kada buwan ang employer ay pinagsusumite ng DOLE Work Accident/illness Report Form (WAIR).

Ang mga empleyado na hindi bababa sa 37.5 degrees Celsius ang temperatura matapos ang limang minutong pahinga o batay sa evaluation ng clinic staff ay kailangang ihinalay. Kung kailangan ay dapat itong dalhin sa ospital.

Kailangan ding magsagawa ng disinfection sa mga gamit at sasakyan lalo na sa mga madalas hawakan gaya ng doorknob isang beses kada dalawang oras.

Ipatutupad din ang physical distancing kahit na sa pagkain at pinaiiwasan ang matagalang face-to-face interaction ng mga empleyado at kliyente.

Ang mga bisita ay kailangang sumagot ng ‘Visitor’s Health Checklist Form’ na maaaring makuha sa <https://www.facebook.com/laborandemployment/> o <http://bwc.dole.gov.ph/issuances>

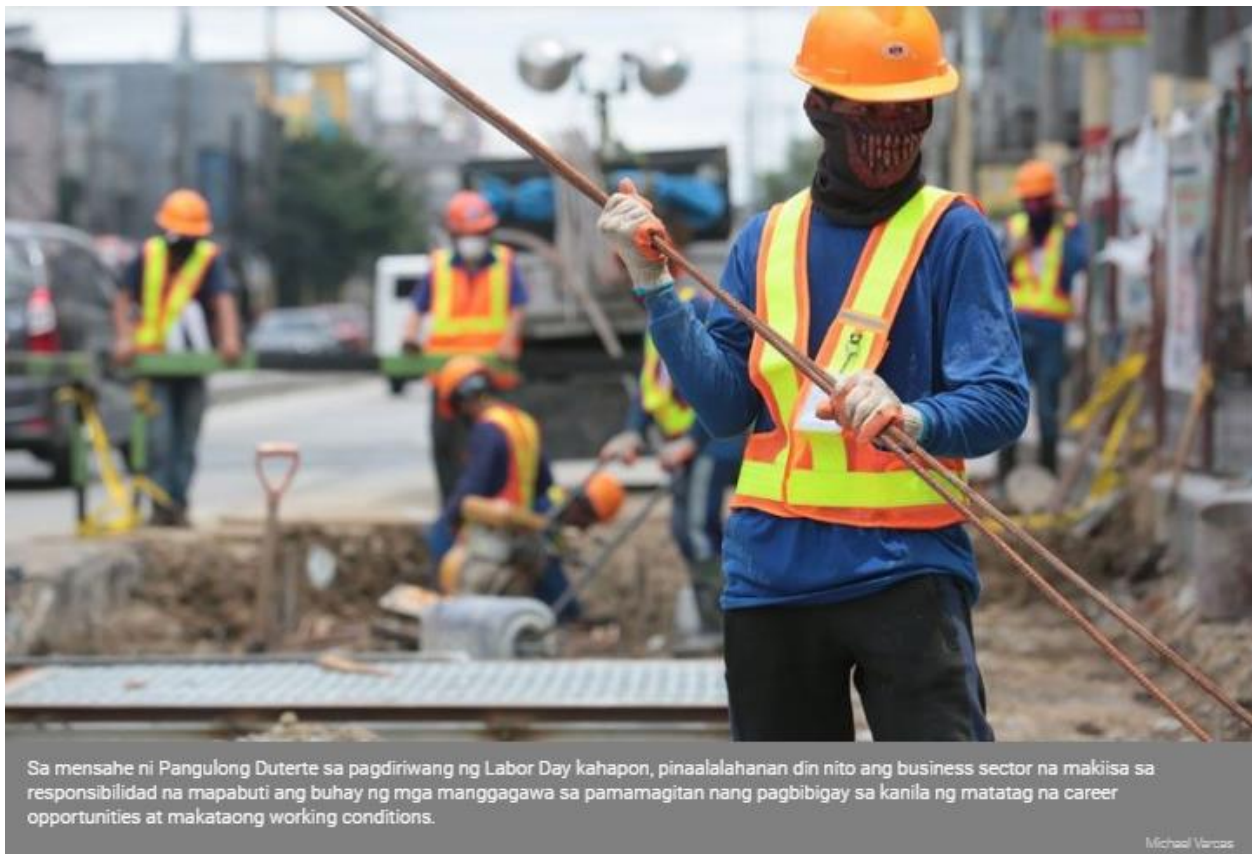
Pinalilimitahan din ang physical meeting at kung maaari ay magpatupad ng alternative work arrangements gaya ng working-hour shifts, work from home at rotational na pagtatrabaho.

Ang mga “at risk” workers gaya ng mga edad 60 pataas o mayroong karamdaman ay hinihikayat na sumailalim sa work from home arrangement.

Kung maaari ay makabubuti umano kung maglalaan ang kompanya ng shuttle service sa mga empleyado nito. “Employers may test workers for COVID-19. Testing kits used and procured shall be the responsibility of the employer,” ani Bello.

Nakasaad din sa guidelines ang paglikha ng kompanya ng COVID-19 Hotline o Call Center na matatawagan ng mga empleyado nito na mayroong sintomas.

Source: <https://bandera.inquirer.net/251470/ito-na-ang-new-normal-sa-trabaho-bello#ixzz6LKa8HslZ>



Sa mensahe ni Pangulong Duterte sa pagdiriwang ng Labor Day kahapon, pinaalalahanan din nito ang business sector na makiisa sa responsibilidad na mapabuti ang buhay ng mga manggagawa sa pamamagitan nang pagbibigay sa kanila ng matatag na career opportunities at makataong working conditions.

Michael Vercos

‘Karapatan ng manggagawa pinapahalagahan ng gobyerno’

[Malou Escudero](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon) - May 2, 2020 - 12:00am

Labor Day message ni Duterte

MANILA, Philippines — Tiniyak ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na ginagawa ng pamahalaan ang lahat para mapangalagaan ang karapatan ng mga manggagawa at lalo pang maitaas ang dignidad ng mga nasa sektor ng paggawa.

Sa mensahe ni Pangulong Duterte sa pagdiriwang ng Labor Day kahapon, pinaalalahanan din nito ang business sector na makiisa sa responsibilidad na mapabuti ang buhay ng mga manggagawa sa pamamagitan nang pagbibigay sa kanila ng matatag na career opportunities at makataong working conditions.

Sinabi pa ng Pangulo na ang mga manggagawa ang pundasyon ng pag-asenso at paglago ng bansa.

Kilala rin aniya sa buong mundo ang galing sa trabaho at kasipagan ng mga manggagawang Filipino.

Sa huli ay sinabi ng Pangulo na umaasa siya na makakamtan ng bawat Filipino ang bunga ng kanilang pinagtrabahuan na magiging daan para sa mas produktibo at marangal na pamumuhay.

DOST-FPRDI produces bamboo-framed face shields

By [BusinessMirror](#)

May 3, 2020



The bamboo-framed face shields produced by a team led by DOST-FPRDI's Froilan B. Samiano, Audel V. Mosteiro, Noel M. Medrano, Val DV Valderama and Engr. Cesar O. Austria.

Responding to the need for more personal protective equipment (PPE) amid the Covid-19 pandemic, the Department of Science and Technology-Forest Products Research and Development Institute (DOST-FPRDI) produced bamboo-framed face shields for distribution to frontline services in Laguna.

“Our team had to improvise with the materials at hand because the enhanced community quarantine made it challenging to procure supplies,” explained DOST-FPRDI Director Romulo T. Aggangan.



Turn-over of face shields to some barangays in Los Baños, Laguna.

The frames of the face shields were made from bamboo (*kauayan-tinik*)—a perennial, woody-stemmed grass known for its versatile uses.

Bamboo grows very well locally and is a favored raw material for handicraft and furniture production.

According to Aggangan, at least 300 face shields were produced and turned over to the University of the Philippines Los Baños, some barangays in Los Baños, Laguna, and rural health units of LB and Bay, Laguna, among others. Another batch will be produced in the coming weeks.

“The DOST-FPRDI is one with the science community in finding ways to protect our frontliners and the public from Covid-19. Currently, we are exploring other possible uses of forest products to help combat this global pandemic. The use of R&D and scientific facts is all the more needed to cope in these challenging times,” he said. *Apple Jean C. Martin- de Leon/S&T News Service*

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/05/03/dost-fprdi-produces-bamboo-framed-face-shields/>

Pagbubukas ng mga simbahan, hirit ng CBCP

[Ludy Bermudo](#) (Pang-masa) - May 3, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Umapela ang Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) sa pamahalaan na payagan na ang pagbubukas ng mga simbahan para makapag-misa sa publiko

Ayon kay Fr. Jerome Secillano, executive secretary ng CBCP-Permanent Committee on Public Affairs, dapat ikonsidera bilang pangunahing panga-ngailangan ng mananampalataya ang pagdalo sa misa sa mga parokya.

Ang apela ng CBCP ay isinagawa matapos na bawiin ng Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) ang na-ging pahayag na maaari nang magsagawa ng religious gatherings na tulad ng misa sa mga simbahan kung sa mga lugar na nasa ilalim na lamang sa general community quarantine (GHQ).

“No, the church is not quiet. The church is doing her thing through our leaders in the proper way. Nakikipag-ugnayan po ang CBCP sa IATF para ma-rekonsidera ang mga public celebration ng sakramento sa mga simbahan natin in the general community quarantine,”ang pahayag ni Fr. Secillano sa kaniyang programang Veritasan.

Ang kahilingan ay para sa mga simbahang nasasakop sa mga lugar na nasa ilalim ng general community quarantine o ang pag-iral ng mas maluwag na panuntunan tulad ng paglabas ng mga residente sa kanilang tahanan at ilang negosyo na nagsimula ngayong Mayo.

EDITORIAL - Mass gatherings 'di pa puwede

(Pilipino Star Ngayon) - May 3, 2020 - 12:00am

Una nang sinabi ng Malacañang na ang mga lugar na nasa ilalim ng General Community Quarantine (GCQ) ay maaari nang magdaos ng religious gatherings, prayer meetings at iba pang pagtitipon na may kinalaman sa kinaaanibang relihiyon. Pagka-anunsiyo nito, biglang nagkaroon agad ng religious activities ang ilan sa mga lugar na isinailalim sa GCQ. May nagdaos ng misa at mga Bible studies.

Pero isang araw makaraan itong ibrodkas, binawi rin ito ng Malacañang. Hindi muna papayagan ang mga ganitong aktibidad. Inirekomenda umano ng local officials na huwag munang payagan ang anumang religious gatherings sapagkat imposibleng maipatupad ang social distancing at pagsusuot ng facemask. Kapag pinayagan ito, maaaring kumalat muli ang COVID-19 sa mga lugar na itinuring na mababa ang kaso at nasa GCQ. Magkakaroon ng second wave ng virus.

Ang pagbabawal sa religious gatherings at iba pang katulad nito ay inihayag ni Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque, "Alinsunod po sa mga reklamo na natanggap na nanggaling sa mga local official, imposible raw po na ma-implement ang social distancing sa religious meetings mga work gathering. Nabago na po ang guidelines. Bumalik po tayo sa rules under ECQ."

Huwag munang payagan ang pagdaraos ng religious gatherings at iba pang aktibidad ukol sa pananampalataya. Maaaring kumalat muli ang virus at masasayang ang sinimulan. Panibago na namang pag-iingat at pagpapatupad ng social distancing.

Matutulad ang bansa sa ginawa ng Singapore at South Korea na nag-relax nang bumaba ang kaso ng COVID-19. Marami rin ang nagtipun-tipon, binuksan ang ilang establishment, transport at nagkaroon ng ikalawang hagupit ang coronavirus. Ngayon ay nagsisimula uli sila.

Huwag munang magdaos ng mga bagay na may kinalaman sa relihiyon. Kaunting tiis na lang. Ipagpatuloy ang social distancing at panatilihin ang pag-iingat. Mawawala at lilipas din ang pandemic at babalik sa normal ang lahat. Magagawa na ang mga dating ginagawa kabilang ang may kinalaman sa pananampalataya.

Ecozone firms extend more than P110M to fight COVID-19

By: [Roy Stephen C. Canivel](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:48 AM May 02, 2020

Companies registered with the Philippine Economic Zone Authority (Peza) have made more than P110 million worth of donations, the investment promotion agency said in a statement.

A total of 137 companies have donated so far, either in cash or in kind such as medical supplies and food. These companies came from 45 economic zones nationwide, the investment promotion agency said.

Majority of the companies came from 20 ecozones in Region IV-A, Peza added.

As of April 27, bulk of the total donation was monetary, or more than P56 million.

Food accounted for the second biggest portion, amounting to donations worth around P39 million.

Meanwhile, personal protective equipment donations were worth P12.5 million, medical supplies (P2.08 million) and medical equipment (P304,080).

“As we continue to fight the effects of COVID-19 in our country, we sincerely thank our registered companies for their outpouring help and support to those in need,” said Peza Director General Charito Plaza.

The donations have been distributed to various hospitals and agencies, Peza said.

These included the Philippine General Hospital, the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine and the Philippine Red Cross Laguna.

Peza said donations were also made to local government units, to the poorest of the poor, senior citizens, solo parents, persons with disability, the Philippine National Police and volunteer-front line checkpoints, and not-for-profit organizations like the Project Pearls, SOS Children Village Alabang and Vice President Leni Robredo’s Angat Buhay.

Some donations were also given to various beneficiaries with the help of the Semiconductor and Electronics Industries in the Philippines Foundation Inc., North Luzon Tollways Corp., Philippine Science High School Batch ’76 and the Philippine Navy. INQ

Source: <https://business.inquirer.net/296286/ecozone-firms-extend-more-than-p110m-to-fight-covid-19#ixzz6LKV6JqL9>

Antique buys almost P3M worth of produce from farmers to sustain economy

Published May 2, 2020 5:24pm

By JAMIL SANTOS, GMA News

The Antique government has purchased almost P3 million worth of produce from their farmers to be distributed to temporary markets in different barangays, as they sustain their economy amid the general community quarantine (GCQ).

"Noong third o fourth week ng enhanced quarantine namin, pumunta sa akin 'yung aming provincial agriculturist. Umiiyak daw 'yung farmers kasi walang bumibili ng kanilang mga kamatis, tone-tonelada na mga singkamas, tone-toneladang pakwan," Antique Governor Rhodora Cadio said at the Laging Handa public briefing on Saturday.

The Antique government thus held their "Pagkain Para sa Tanan" project and bought the goods of their farmers to be distributed as capital to the talipapas of different barangays, Cadio said.

"So far almost P3 million na ang nabili naming produce ng mga farmers namin dito. Kumabaga binubuksan lang namin ang ekonomiya ng aming probinsya para mabuhay naman ang maliliit na aming trabahador," she added.

The Antique governor said talipapas or temporary markets in barangays are preferable in their current situation as compared to general markets where social distancing is neglected.

Antique is one of the provinces that was downgraded to general community quarantine as recommended by the Inter-Agency Task Force. **-MDM, GMA News**

Between survival and collapse

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:07 AM May 01, 2020

While the world observes Labor Day today, an occasion for “celebrating the working class and laborers across the world,” workers everywhere are finding that there is little or nothing for them to celebrate.

This is because the COVID-19 pandemic has not only affected over three million people worldwide and killed over 200,000, it has also led to policies that have laid to waste prospects of continued or future employment for many.

Currently, studies say a staggering 81 percent of the global workforce of 3.3 billion have seen their places of employment shuttered with the real possibility of a permanent closure. “Social distancing” measures have led to “work from home” arrangements for a lucky few, while many more have no way of knowing if they will still have a job or source of income in the future.

“Workers and businesses are facing catastrophe, in both developed and developing economies,” says International Labor Organization director general Guy Ryder. “We have to move fast, decisively, and together. The right, urgent, measures could make the difference between survival and collapse.”

COVID-19 has been described as the “great equalizer” that threatens the health and life of anyone who is infected: rich or poor, patient or caregiver, young or old. And yet, as the New York Times points out, “In societies where the virus hits, it is deepening the consequences of inequality, pushing many of the burdens onto the losers of today’s polarized economies and labor markets.”

Camille Adle of Oxfam notes that “Poor people inordinately bear the brunt of economic shocks brought by this pandemic. Many informal, micro-, small-scale and even up to medium-scale enterprises will take the hit as compared to the larger and more established businesses.”

At the same time, people are just now realizing that certain workers are crucial to society’s survival. Top of mind would be our health workforce—doctors, nurses, medical technologists, x-ray technicians, even hospital sanitary workers—whom we often take for granted but are today hailed as heroes. With lockdowns in place, people are also seeing the necessity for public transport workers whose absence from the streets is creating hardship for many; likewise for sanitary workers since trash still needs to be collected; maintenance workers; staff in essential establishments such as markets, groceries, and pharmacies; even law enforcers. All of whom, we must point out, are poorly paid while putting their lives at risk.

Research suggests, says the NYT article, that “those in lower economic strata are likelier to catch the disease, likelier to suffer loss of income or health care as a result of quarantines and other measures, potentially on a sweeping scale.” Indeed, the poor stand a greater chance of catching the disease and of dying from it. And even if they manage to steer clear of the virus, the conditions they must endure even without a quarantine make them vulnerable to “old” diseases like TB and dengue, to chronic (and often untreated) health conditions like diabetes or heart disease, and to malnutrition and even heat stroke.

If the COVID-19 emergency has taught us anything, it is that the basic inequalities of society cannot be papered over; it has in fact exacerbated them, putting them in sharp relief.

While doctors the world over are still baffled why some patients recover fairly quickly from COVID-19 or remain asymptomatic with little effect while others steadily worsen and die, one thing is clear: A person’s ability to fight off harmful organisms, one’s immunity, is developed through a lifetime. It’s not just a question of family income and background, but also of nutrition levels and access to health care, a healthy diet, enough exercise, clean air, sanitary surroundings, and stressors encountered in the course of a lifetime.

But, as the Oxfam piece laments, safe water, just to take one example, “is beyond the reach of poor communities because of access and cost barriers... The lack of access and the high costs of safe water puts the poorest and most vulnerable at risk since proper hygiene is a challenge.” Also, “many jobs have no paid sick leaves. Irregular workers, including those who are paid on a per output, takay, or pakyaw basis, are

particularly vulnerable. Working from home is not an option for all workers, as in the case of jeepney drivers and service workers. Crowding cannot be avoided in mass transport systems...”

What can Filipino workers expect in the “new normal” post-COVID-19 scenario? Will previously ignored and downtrodden workers, their status elevated in the light of their crucial contributions during this crisis, be rewarded with better wages and working conditions? Or will we simply reboot and revive the old unjust order?

Fighting COVID-19 is a battle for human rights

[NOTES FROM THE EU DELEGATION](#) - [Eamon Gilmore](#) (The Philippine Star) - May 3, 2020 - 12:00am

The COVID-19 crisis is a human rights issue, one of the most global and urgent we have ever seen. This is a struggle by all of humanity, for the right to life, and for the right to health of every person.

“The inherent dignity and the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family” are among the opening words of the Universal Declaration of human rights, adopted just over 70 years ago. These are now the principles that drive the efforts of governments, international bodies, communities, families and individuals all around the world. Most of all, they motivate the work of healthcare and frontline staff, who are putting themselves at risk, every day, to save the rest of us.

Never before has the entire population of the world shared such a need to work together in the common interest of all. Our dependence on each other as a human family has never been so clear. Rarely, if ever, has international cooperation and solidarity been so important. International co-operation is no longer what governments and official bodies should do; it now belongs to the people. We are all now joined in a common enterprise, beyond borders and across continents, because this deadly virus respects no boundaries or distinctions. Our best chance for survival and recovery is to fight the coronavirus together.

Protecting and preserving life is the primary purpose of this struggle. Without the right to life, it is impossible to exercise other rights. To protect life, we must vindicate the right to health. The right to health, in turn depends not only on access to healthcare, but on rights to safe drinking water and sanitation, on adequate nutrition and on a safe and healthy environment. It also requires access to information, so that people are empowered to protect their own health and those of others. And in this health crisis, which requires a collective response, and the co-operation of people everywhere, respect for civil society is more important than ever. All human rights are interdependent and indivisible and must inform our response to the crisis. Human rights are at the core of the battle against COVID-19.

That is why the European Union is working closely with the United Nations, with other international organisations and with countries throughout the world, in the great global effort to overcome the virus and its consequences. On 8 April, the EU announced a robust and targeted global response of more than €20 billion from existing external action resources to support partner countries’ efforts in tackling the pandemic. This ‘Team Europe’ package combines resources from the EU, its Member States and financial institutions, in particular the European Investment Bank and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development. The current pandemic is a grave and immense threat to the health and life of humanity. The health of the whole world is only as strong as the weakest health system.

We recognise that there are many people for whom this crisis, and sometimes the measures taken to address it, will add even greater risks to their already fragile existence: refugees; the displaced; the homeless; minorities who are already victims of discrimination; children who are being abused or maltreated; women subjected to sexual or domestic violence; marginalised indigenous peoples; persons with disabilities, older people and the poor who are at greatest risk from the economic consequences. No one should be left behind, and no human right ignored.

The EU has expressed to support for, and taken action on the UN High Commissioner Bachelet's call for special measures regarding prisoners and others in places of detention and closed facilities. We strongly support the UN Secretary General's call for a ceasefire by all armed actors in the world today and for a co-ordinated humanitarian response. We will continue to play our part in the global effort.

We recognise that many governments have already taken steps, and introduced emergency measures, in response to the crisis. We believe that these measures should apply for this crisis only, be time-bound and be proportionate to what is absolutely necessary. This crisis should not become an excuse for the power-hungry to increase repressive measures, to weaken democratic checks and balances or to dilute the rule of law. Neither should fears over COVID-19 be exploited to spread disinformation or racist and xenophobic reactions.

This is a time for solidarity and for human rights to be at the centre of our endeavours. Since this crisis began we have seen millions of small acts of kindness, and stirring solidarity across the world. The indomitable spirit of humanity is displaying its great generosity. Our global human family will come through these frightful days. The changed world to which we will emerge, will be all the better for the care and compassion we show each other now. Let us not squander that future, give in to fear or our lowest inclinations. Let us not forget that human rights define our very humanity.

* * *

(Eamon Gilmore is European Union Special Representative for Human Rights)

GMA News 15 hrs · 🌐

Kahit na may takot na baka mahawaan ng virus, walang choice ang working student na si Mark kundi magtrabaho bilang isang grocery store bagger. Kailangan niyang tulungan ang mga magulang na apektado ng ECQ ang kabuhayan.

0:14 / 1:34

Brigada April 30 at 9:00 PM · 🌐

BASURERO AT BAGGER: "FRONTLINERS DIN KAMI!"

Hindi man healthcare workers, frontliner din na maituturing ang mga basurero at bagger na araw-araw pa rin nagtatrabaho sa gitna ng banta ng exposure sa virus ngayong may COVID-19 pandemic. Kahit delikado, patuloy sila sa pagkayod upang masustentuhan ang pangangailangan ng kani-kanilang pamilya.

Ang kanilang kuwento, tunguhan sa video na ito.
#Frontliners #Brigada

👍👎❤️ 1.7K 31 Comments 63 Shares

Source:

https://www.facebook.com/story.php?story_fbid=10158737574421977&id=116724526976&fs=0&focus_composer=0

1,766 rats eliminated in Pied Piper contest at Baguio

May 3, 2020

TITLE: Market during quarantine

PAGE 1/ 1/2

DATE

1,766 rats eliminated in Pied Piper contest at Baguio Market during quarantine

By: [Vincent Cabreza](#) - Reporter / [@Inquirer Baguio](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 10:35 AM May 02, 2020



QUIET TIME. Baguio residents have designated market days due to the long quarantine, so only a quarter of the Baguio Market stalls have been open. PHOTO BY EV ESPIRITU

BAGUIO CITY — A Pied Piper-like contest aimed at sanitizing the Baguio City Public Market during the quarantine period has eliminated 1,766 rats.

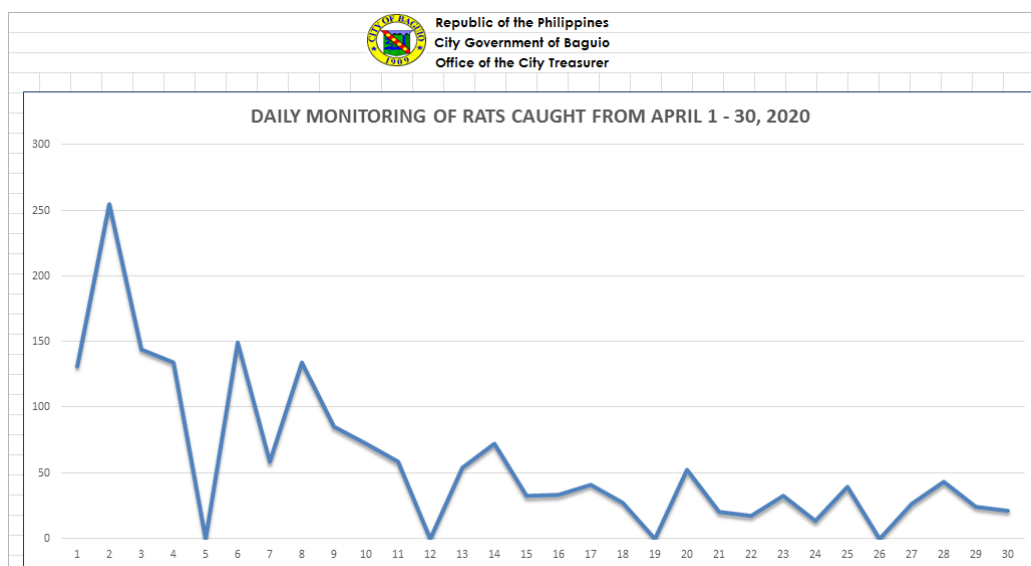
The “Rat-Catching Challenge” pitted 30 sections of the market in a month-long contest that ended on Thursday (April 30), for cash prizes put up by Mayor Benjamin Magalong.

“The results were computed based on the ratio of the catch and the number of stalls operating during the enhanced community quarantine period,” according to the city public information office.

Ten stalls that sell lechon (roast pig) caught 79 rodents generating a catch ration of 7.9 that entitles their vendors to the P20,000 top prize, the PIO said.

The biggest haul of rats was the 536 rodents captured by 84 stalls at the extension of the fish market stalls, giving it the fourth highest rank with a catch ratio of 6.38.

Vendors have been encouraged to continue trapping the pests by the City Veterinarian and Agriculture Office.



Graph showing the rate of rat elimination at the Baguio City Public Market during the quarantine , for break, 1,766 rats caught in Pied Piper contest To clean Baguio Market during lockdown

1,766 rats eliminated in Pied Piper contest at Baguio

May 3, 2020

TITLE: Market during quarantine

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DATE

Market patronage has been restricted to only one member of Baguio's over 350,000 residents for designated days each week due to the lockdown that was meant to stop the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) from spreading.

Before the quarantine was imposed, the Baguio government had been reviewing proposals to replace the current market with interconnected market buildings, as part of a Baguio redevelopment initiative.

LZB

Father, 3 kids rescued from Dumanjug mini-landslide

By: Alven Marie A. Timtim - Reporter/CDN Digital|May 02,2020 - 06:54 PM



A 48-year-old man and his three children were rescued by the Dumanjug emergency response team after they were buried in a sand due to a mini landslide in Barangay Tapon, Dumanjug, Cebu Saturday morning, May 2, 2020. | Photo from Dumanjug Police

CEBU CITY, Philippines — A father and his three children were rescued by the emergency response team after they were buried by sand when a mini-landslide happened in Barangay Tapon, Dumanjug, a southern Cebu town, at around 9:50 this morning, May 2, 2020.

Police Major Adioleto Cabagnot, chief of Dumanjug Police Station, said that Rodrigo Rosello Pino, 48 years old, was extracting sand along the river in the area together with his two daughters and son whose ages are 10, 7 and 8 years old, respectively, when the sand above the area they were extracting from suddenly collapsed.

“Ga uwan ganinang buntag sa amoa unya na form og mura og langub ang ilaha gi kalutan dayun kalit nga na hugno na tabunan sila,” said Cabagnot.

(It was raining in the early morning and the place where they dug and extract sand was formed like a small cave, which collapsed.)

The residents near the area were able to immediately report the incident which led to the quick arrival of the emergency team.

However, Cabagnot said that it took them almost an hour to rescue the victims since they were careful not to hit them while the rescue operation was ongoing.

Cabagnot said it was a miracle that no one was badly injured when they were all rescued. The victims were then brought to Barili District Hospital for proper health checkup.

Cabagnot reminded the public after the incident that extracting sand or quarrying is illegal and those who will be caught may face charges.

However, Cabagnot said that Rodrigo’s case would be further investigated as they were unable to ask him about what he was doing with the sand he has extracted.

Cabagnot also said that those who might be going out of their houses to work, should refrain from bringing with them minor children as the province was still under enhanced community quarantine (ECQ)./dbs

Read more: <https://cebudailynews.inquirer.net/307148/father-3-kids-rescued-from-dumanjug-mini-landslide#ixzz6LKLqxPlj>

PH urged to withdraw from coal

By [John Leo Algo](#)

May 2, 2020

Church leaders and civil society organizations (CSOs) have urged Philippine financial institutions to divest their funds from the coal industry.

The call was made in San Carlos, Negros Occidental.

“Kita mismo, na mga ga-deposito sa mga banko, hambalun gid naton sila na we don’t want na ang aton gina deposito sa ila, gamiton para mag pondo sa sini nga mga kalihukan kay maathag man ang gina batian bisan pa nga iba ang naga-denial ba.” (We ourselves, the depositors, must communicate to them that we don’t want what we deposit to them to be used for these kinds of activities since the message is clear, even if other parties involved are in denial),” said Bishop Gerardo Alminaza of the Diocese of San Carlos.

Alminaza expressed support for the directive of President Rodrigo Duterte to “fast-track” the development of renewable energy resources and reduce dependency on coal. He highlighted the commitment of the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines and his diocese to divest its resources from coal.

“Pakonsenya bala naton nga may kabahig kita nga kita, ang aton kwarta, gamiton para sa kakaingad sang atung isig-ka tao (We must put it to their conscience that we have a responsibility, that our money must be used for the betterment of everyone),” he added.

The groups made the call during the launch of the Church-CSO Empowerment for Environmental Sustainability (ECO-Convergence), a group of faith-based organizations and environmental advocates from all over the Visayas and national organizations. It was hosted by San Carlos, known as one of the greenest cities in the Philippines and hosting facilities including a 45-megawatt solar plant by San Carlos Solar Energy and biomass and bioethanol power plants.

Experts previously declared 1.5-degree Celsius global warming as a point of no return for the climate crisis, and that the world has only a decade to reduce its coal usage by 78 percent to prevent catastrophic impacts.

The long-term security of the Visayas has been threatened by climate change impacts in recent years. Food security has been threatened by extreme weather events, from heavy rains and flooding to long-term droughts. Parts of the region are still rehabilitating from the impacts of super-typhoon Yolanda, which killed around 6,300 persons and displaced thousands of people.

Despite this situation, coal operations continued to expand in areas such as Cebu and Iloilo, some of which were funded by two of the country’s biggest banks — Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) and BDO. They collectively accounted for more than 54 percent of financing for coal expansion projects from 2017 to 2019.

Neither BPI nor BDO responded to requests for comments as of this writing.

Impact of coal on communities

Alminaza stated his opposition to more coal-fired power plants built in the Visayas and called “clean coal” a lie. Asserting that Negros must continue to thrive as a renewable energy hub in Asia, he said “so amo na ang atong pang lantawan kay di naton luyag nga ipanubli sa mga kabataan naton sa urihi ang isa ka palibot nga guba na kag hindi na livable (that is what we need to look into because it is not our wish for our children to inherit from us an environment that is broken and unlivable).”

Aside from greenhouse gas emissions, burning fossil fuels also produces air pollution that causes adverse health impacts on nearby communities. A report released by Greenpeace Philippines earlier this month revealed the said pollution costs the Philippines up to 1.9-percent of gross domestic product loss and 27,000 premature deaths every year.

Rodrigo Montemayor, a resident of Toledo, Cebu, shared the struggles of his community in dealing with the impacts of the nearby Toledo Power Corp.-owned coal plant, which was funded by banks such as BPI and Metropolitan Bank & Trust Co. He stated that despite persistent smog and smoke being inhaled by residents, the local government refuses to address the coal plant's impacts on the community.

“Ako gipanguta ang mayor, ‘unsa man atoaang solusyon ana Mayor?’ Ang tubag niya ‘sa kumpanya mangutana unsay solusyon.’ Maayo ba ng tubaga?” [So I asked the mayor, ‘so what is our solution, mayor?’. His answer was ‘go ask the company responsible for a solution.’ Do you think that’s an appropriate answer to say?],” he said.

Montemayor added that the locals have been manipulated by the local government into being silent on this issue, making it difficult to create local initiatives to address the air pollution caused by the facility. He hopes that the case of his community would inspire others to resist coal expansion into their areas.

Alminaza echoed this sentiment, arguing that financing energy production must consider the moral implications as much as economic factors.

“Makahatag trabaho, makapa-eskwela pero wala nagapamangkot diin halin ang gina-pakaon mo? Diin gahil ang gina pa-eskwela mo? Sa maayo bala nga pamaagi? (There is money that provides jobs, provides education, but no one ever asks where the money that feeds your loved ones comes from? Where does the money that you use to provide education come from? Was it attained through good means?),” he said.



4.8-magnitude quake jolts Davao Occidental

Published May 2, 2020, 7:56 AM

By *Mike Crismundo*

BUTUAN CITY – A 4.8-magnitude earthquake jolted Davao Occidental province on Friday night, May 1, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said.

In its bulletin, Phivolcs said the tremor was recorded at 9:48 p.m.

The epicenter was plotted 222 kilometers (kms) southeast of Sarangani, Davao Occidental province. The tremor had a depth of 70 kms, Phivolcs said.

The earthquake was tectonic in origin, and no aftershock or tsunami alert was raised by the agency.

The regional office of the Southern Mindanao Office of Civil Defense and provincial disaster risk reduction and management council there reported no damage or injury.

On the same day, a 2.2-magnitude tremor was also registered, and its epicenter was traced nine kms northeast of Surigao City, Surigao del Norte province, with a depth of 29 kms, Phivolcs also said.

In its instrumental intensity, Phivolcs also registered Intensity 1 at the city proper of Surigao. The earthquake was tectonic in origin and no aftershock or tsunami alert was raised by the state agency.

The Surigao del Norte provincial disaster risk reduction and management council there also reported no damage or injury.

WHO says coronavirus 'natural in origin'

Agence France-Presse / 12:32 PM May 02, 2020



FILE – This picture taken on April 24, 2020 shows a sign of the World Health Organization (WHO) in Geneva next to their headquarters, amid the COVID-19 outbreak, caused by the novel coronavirus. (Photo by Fabrice COFFRINI / AFP)

The World Health Organization 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 organization, 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.

Washington approves virus drug as US states ease

May 3, 2020

TITLE: lockdowns

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Washington approves virus drug as US states ease lockdowns

posted May 02, 2020 at 01:41 pm

by [AFP](#)

American authorities approved an experimental drug for emergency use on coronavirus patients, as more US states eased pandemic lockdowns despite another spike in deaths from the disease.

The approval is the latest step in a global push to find viable treatments and a vaccine for the coronavirus, which has left half of humanity under some form of lockdown, hammered the world economy, and infected more than 3.3 million people.

Remdesivir, an antiviral drug initially developed to treat Ebola, was given the green light on Friday after a major trial found that it boosted recovery in serious COVID-19 patients.

"It's really a very promising situation," President Donald Trump said on Friday at the White House, where he was joined by Daniel O'Day, CEO of Gilead Sciences, which developed Remdesivir.

Remdesivir incorporates itself into the virus's genome, short-circuiting its replication process.

The drug approval came as the US leaders struggled with growing pressure from citizens wearying of stay-at-home orders.

With about 1.1 million confirmed coronavirus cases, nearly 65,000 of them fatal, the United States has the highest tolls of any country, and Trump is keen for a turnaround as the world's largest economy reels with tens of millions left jobless.

"Hopefully, we're going to come in below that 100,000 lives lost, which is a horrible number nevertheless," said Trump, after suggesting earlier in the week the country could expect 60,000 or 70,000 fatalities.

Texas became the largest US state yet to ease curbs, while anti-lockdown demonstrations were held in several states -- including California, where officials had re-closed beaches beginning Friday to avoid a repeat of last weekend when crowds flocked to the shoreline.

There were protests in 11 cities in California -- where more than 50,000 coronavirus cases have been reported -- with people chanting against the lockdown.

In Huntington Beach, about 35 miles (55 kilometers) south of Los Angeles, several thousand people rallied to denounce Governor Gavin Newsom's beach shutdown order.

"It was the straw that broke the camel's back," protester Monica Beilhard fumed.

"It was uncalled for, unnecessary and people out here are making that known," she said. "And we're also very much saying enough is enough, we have the right to work... and it's time for the governor to allow the healthy to be able to get back to business."

- 'Slow, phased' reopening -

Like the United States, governments around the world are struggling to balance the immense political and economic pressure to ease lockdowns with the need for public health measures against the spread of the virus, which has killed more than 236,000 people.

Several European countries, including Austria, have begun to ease restrictions with authorities in some of the hardest-hit parts like Spain reporting signs that the pandemic there was slowing.

Britain announced that it had hit its target of conducting 100,000 coronavirus tests a day, a step toward eventually lifting lockdown rules in the UK -- which this week overtook Spain to record the world's third-highest death toll.

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Ireland, however, extended its lockdown by two weeks to May 18, with Prime Minister Leo Varadkar saying the nation will reopen "in a slow, phased, staged way" after that.

Meanwhile in South Asia, India announced that the lockdown on its 1.3 billion people -- the world's biggest -- would continue for two more weeks from May 4.

The virus restrictions also put a damper on May Day celebrations worldwide on Friday, with many labor unions delaying their rallies and some holding online events, while a determined few hit the streets in face masks in defiance of lockdown orders.

In Cuba's capital Havana, where around a million workers and their families take part in the annual May Day march, the image of Che Guevara gazed down on an eerily silent Revolution Square.

- Sharp rhetoric -

May Day carried extra significance this year because of the staggering number of people put out of work by the pandemic, with the global economy in a tailspin and facing its worst downturn since the Great Depression.

Stock markets tumbled again on Friday after President Trump's unproven allegation that the virus may have come from a lab in Wuhan -- the central Chinese city where the disease first emerged late last year.

Beijing has rejected the accusation, and scientists believe the virus jumped from animals to humans.

The White House has accused Chinese authorities of mishandling the outbreak, "slow-walking" coronavirus data and putting US lives at risk.

The disease overwhelmed healthcare infrastructure when it hit the United States, putting immense pressure on doctors, nurses and emergency responders.

Some US medics relied on past experience in other countries to fight the virus.

David Callaway, a doctor and academic who has worked in the past on diseases in conflict-hit nations such as South Sudan and Iraq, said he found overseas epidemics easier to handle in some ways.

"Family and loved ones, you can put them in a box and you use them as a source of motivation and inspiration when things get rough, but you know they are safe," he told AFP.

"A pandemic at home, you know that your family and your loved ones are still at risk, their lives hang on the line."

Animal shelters rescue pets left behind by deceased COVID-19 patients

INQUIRER.net / 04:42 PM May 02, 2020



INQUIRER.net Stock Photo

Animal shelters in New York are rescuing the pets of COVID-19 patients who have passed away due to the disease, such as the Animal Care Centers of NYC, which has already rescued 40 animals.

The animal center's spokesperson, Katy Hansen, said that pet owners who have contracted the virus need to have a plan for their pets, especially once they enter the hospital. Meanwhile, a cat left behind by its 82-year-old owner was rescued on April 21, New York Daily News reported last Wednesday, April 29.

The unidentified 82-year-old man apparently left his cat in the care of his neighbor Judith Zaborowski.

Since the man was hospitalized, Zaborowski has been dropping off food and water in the COVID-19 patient's apartment. According to the report, because the place has been inhabited by a person positive for the virus, Zaborowski could only leave the pet's supplies by the door inside the apartment.

After the man's death, Zaborowski emailed several animal rescue groups including Animal Haven, which immediately responded to the woman's message.

The animal group was able to rescue the animal and named the cat Winter while it is waiting to be adopted.

The animal shelter's director for community engagement, Jennifer Coffey, told the newspaper that the group has rescued around two dozen pets since the health crisis started.

As per the report, over 40,000 citizens of New York City have been hospitalized due to the new coronavirus disease. Coffey suspects that there are more undiscovered cases of pet owners who can no longer take care of their furry companions or have already left them behind after getting sick. **Chalino /ra**

Read more: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1268446/animal-shelters-rescue-pets-left-behind-by-deceased-covid-19-patients#ixzz6LK5QujaI>

The Sea of Galilee is full, but the beaches are empty

Associated Press / 02:20 PM May 02, 2020

JERUSALEM — After an especially rainy winter, the Sea of Galilee in northern Israel is at its highest level in two decades, but the beaches and major Christian sites along its banks were empty.

Tourism usually peaks in April, when Christians flock to the holy sites during the Easter season, and Israelis descend on the beaches and nearby national parks to enjoy the spring weather and see the wildflowers bloom.



In this Saturday, April 25, 2020 photo, a dog swims in the water as trees stand where dry land was in the Sea of Galilee, locally known as Lake Kinneret. After an especially rainy winter, the Sea of Galilee in northern Israel is at its highest level in two decades, but the beaches and major Christian sites along its banks are empty as authorities imposed a full lockdown. (AP Photo/Ariel Schalit)

This year, that coincided with a lockdown aimed at preventing the spread of the coronavirus. The borders have been closed and Israelis have been largely confined to their homes since mid-March.

While authorities have recently begun loosening the restrictions, they imposed a full lockdown over Independence Day last week, barring anyone from traveling more than 100 meters (yards) from home except in case of emergency.

That left the shores of the Sea of Galilee, locally known as Lake Kinneret, empty. Chairs and umbrellas were stacked up on beaches that in previous years would have been packed with families enjoying outdoor cookouts and watching fireworks displays.

“It’s full of water and we are very excited,” said Idan Greenbaum, head of the Jordan Valley Regional Council. “Unfortunately, because of the virus, it’s empty.”

Christians believe Jesus did much of his preaching on the shores of the freshwater lake and even walked on its waters. Churches are built on the locations where he is believed to have miraculously multiplied loaves and fish, and where he delivered the Sermon on the Mount.

For Israelis, the lake provides some 25% of the country’s water and has long been seen as a gauge of national health, with newspapers posting regular updates on water levels.

The northeastern bank of the lake borders the Golan Heights, which Israel seized from Syria in the 1967 war and later annexed. Access to the lake was a major sticking point in peace talks with Syria that collapsed in the 1990s. The U.S. recognized Israel's annexation last year, breaking with an international consensus that it is occupied territory.

The water level came close to its all-time low in April 2017, when the level dropped to 212.95 meters (about 698 feet) below sea level. The current level is minus 208.92 meters (minus 685 feet).

That may not sound like much, but it has transformed the landscape. Islands that had appeared in recent years have vanished, and dry vegetation along the shore is now submerged.

Haim Statyahu, the general manager at Ein Gev tourism, lamented that there are no visitors to see it, but he was optimistic about the future. He said tour groups are already taking bookings for autumn and winter.

“We see light at the end of the tunnel,” he said. “It won't be long, and we will see the pilgrims return.”

Aquarium asks people to video call its garden eels that are ‘forgetting’ humans amid COVID-19

INQUIRER.net / 07:17 PM May 02, 2020



INQUIRER.net Stock Photo

An aquarium in Japan will be holding a three-day “emergency event” for its garden eels, which seemed to have developed a newfound shyness in the presence of human beings after aquariums, zoos and other leisure parks have closed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Sumida Aquarium, located at Japan’s tallest structure, Tokyo Skytree, is the home to hundreds of spotted garden eels, which have been acting odd whenever the aquarium’s workers pass by its tank, Quartz reported on April 30.

The event, named “Face-showing Festival,” will start this Sunday, May 3, until Tuesday, May 5, according to the aquarium’s website.

The aquarium suspects that the eels have become unfamiliar with humans since the place has been closed since March 1.

The garden eels usually submerge themselves in the sand, according to the aquarium’s website. They are also known to be vigilant and sensitive creatures. But since the aquarium usually has many visitors, the eels have learned to accept the presence of human beings.

The aquarium expressed its concern over the eels’ new behavior because it makes it difficult for the aquarium’s keepers to monitor the eels’ health.

The aquarium showed how the eels respond to a human being approaching its tank via its Twitter post today, May 2. When the eels sensed that someone was approaching, all of them that had emerged from the sand immediately hid and became unviewable in the video.

The aquarium also said that this will be its first attempt to expose the eels to humans via teleconferencing and is uncertain if it will deliver positive results.

The website stated that people may video call them via Facetime, attaching five different email addresses that people can contact on its [website](#). It also advised potential callers to refrain from making loud noises. Each call can only last five minutes. **Cha Lino /ra**

Read more: <https://technology.inquirer.net/98991/aquarium-asks-people-to-video-call-its-garden-eels-that-are-forgetting-humans-amid-covid-19#ixzz6LKIo2OXh>

First giant panda born in Netherlands

posted May 02, 2020 at 07:56 pm

by [AFP](#)

Wu Wen, a giant panda loaned to a Dutch zoo by China, has given birth in a first for the Netherlands, Ouwehands animal park announced Saturday.



This handout picture released by the Ouwehands Zoo on May 2, 2020 shows a female panda holding her cub in her mouth. - One of the giant pandas loaned by China to The Netherlands has given birth in the animal park in Rhenen, a first for the country, the Ouwehands Zoo announced on May 2, 2020. (Photo by - / Ouwehands Zoo / AFP)

place in January and the cub, which belongs to Beijing just like the mother and father Xing Ya, was born on May 1.

"The mother and her cub are staying in the maternity den and are doing well," the zoo in the central city of Rhenen said in a statement said.

"This cub was born and conceived naturally," said Ouwehands owner Marcel Boekhoorn. "Male or female? The cub's gender will remain a surprise for the time being," he added.

"The keepers are leaving Wu Wen and her cub alone. When the cub leaves the maternity den after a few months, we will be able to see what the gender is.

"When that happens, the little giant panda will be named," Boekhoorn said. The cub will go to China after four years to join the breeding programme.

The mother and father were loaned to the Netherlands in 2017 for 15 years.

Giant pandas are found only in the wild in China where their habitat is shrinking.

However since 2016 they are no longer considered in danger of extinction but remain "vulnerable".