

Lung Center has lowest Metro pollution level

Published 5 hours ago
on May 5, 2020 02:10 AM
By **Perseus Echeminada**



The air quality near the Lung Center of the Philippines (LCP) has registered the lowest in terms of pollution in Metro Manila, a top official of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) said yesterday.

DENR Undersecretary Benny Antiporda told *Daily Tribune* the air quality monitoring system in Quezon City near LCP has been consistent with single-digit results since the COVID-19 enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) was implemented in Luzon.

“As of yesterday, the LCP air quality is good compared before when it ranged from fair to very unhealthy,” Antiporda said.

Caloocan was monitored with the highest on the National Capital Region pollution index.

The DENR has set up at least 16 air quality monitoring systems, aside from the mobile manual systems carried by environment monitoring teams.

Antiporda said the improvement of air quality near LCP could be attributed to the reduction of motor vehicles in the area.

“Because of the fear of the coronavirus people are staying away from Lung Center,” he said.

Escaped pet serval cats alarm Cainta subdivision residents

Published May 4, 2020 11:02pm



Residents of a private subdivision in Cainta, Rizal were alarmed when two serval cats escaped from the care of one of their neighbors.

According to a report by Cedric Castillo on Monday, the serval cats were kept as pets by a resident living in the subdivision.

One of the cats managed to climb a local's 10-meter fence, alarming the homeowner.

Residents said they complained about the matter to the homeowners' association but the body did not take action.

Meanwhile, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources said a serval cat was considered a wild cat and only domesticated animals were allowed as house pets.

The DENR said it would investigate the matter.

However, the pet owner claimed they have a permit for their animals.

"We were able to retrieve the cat immediately and no one was harmed. This serval was born and raised here and has corresponding permits from DENR," the owner said.

The owner added that the serval cats were attractions at their cat cafe in Quezon City. Their business closed late last year.

The owner added they were supposed to relocate the animals to their farm in Lemery, Batangas but due to the Taal Volcano eruption and the enhanced community quarantine, they were unable to move the cats.

"[W]e ask help from the authorities to grant us a pass so we can personally transport them to our farm in Batangas ASAP," the owner said.

"We appeal for understanding and apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused." — **Ma. Angelica Garcia/DVM, GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/regions/736809/escaped-pet-serval-cats-alarm-cainta-subdivision-residents/story/?fbclid=IwAR08PUigpeQorPA0g5DfI3Nuhrru-rf2FvINBNXVgz3wZAHYJIJEyH3Ae60>

Coral reef area damaged by cargo vessel that ran aground off Sarangani Bay

Published May 4, 2020, 10:50 AM

By *Ellalyn de Vera Ruiz*

Around 45 square meters of coral reef area was damaged when a 125-foot local cargo and fishing vessel accidentally ran aground off Sarangani Bay after delivering goods in General Santos City last May 1, authorities said yesterday.



PHOTO FROM DENR/ MANILA BULLETIN

This was estimated by a composite team from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources-Region 12 (DENR-Soccsksargen), Sarangani Bay Protected Seascape-Protected Area Management Office (SBPS-PAMO), municipal government of Glan, Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources, Philippine National Police-Maritime Group, and the Philippine Coast Guard.

The F/B Mark Anthony-17, a Philippine cargo and fishing vessel owned by the Rodrigo Lorna Gere Fishing Industry Corporation (RLGFI), ran aground a massive reef area in Barangay Batulaki due to bad weather.

In a statement posted on Facebook, DENR-Soccsksargen Regional Executive Director Sabdullah Abubacar said the RLGFI already settled with the Protected Area Management Board (PAMB) for the release of the ship, while the full penalty is yet to be determined by the technical working committee with the approval of the Board.

The company has voluntarily pleaded for indemnification amounting to P500,000.

“The company made an assurance to pay for any difference and guarantees to deliver back the vessel when required,” Abubacar, who is the co-current chairperson of the PAMB said.

The sum will be deposited to the Integrated Area Protected Fund account of SBPS for the rehabilitation of the area and for the management of the strict protection zones in the SBPS.

Sarangani Bay is known for its rich biodiversity, harboring a wide variety of ecosystems ranging from mangroves to sea grasses to the varying depths of its coral reefs.

It was declared a protected seascape by virtue of Presidential Proclamation No. 756, dated March 5, 1996, for the protection, conservation, and sustainable management of its coastal and marine resources. (Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz)

Source: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/05/04/coral-reef-area-damaged-by-cargo-vessel-that-ran-aground-off-sarangani-bay/>

Villagers rescue endangered sea turtle in Ilocos Norte

Published May 4, 2020, 9:57 AM

By *Freddie Lazaro*

PAGUDPUD, Ilocos Norte – Villagers here have rescued an endangered Green Sea Turtle on the shoreline of Sitio Ayoyo, Barangay Caparispisan on Saturday evening, May 2.



Officials of the local government of Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte, and the North Luzon Renewables release a rescued Green Sea Turtle at the shoreline of Ayoyo Bay, Barangay Caparispisan, Pagudpud town on Sunday. (Freddie G. Lazaro / MANILA BULLETIN)

The turtle was accidentally caught on a net cast by a group of local fishermen led by Jimmy Villa, Sr. when discovered.

Barangay Caparispisan Chairperson Lovella Garvida said she was informed by Villa's group that it had caught the endangered sea turtle. She said she immediately relayed this to Eduardo Angadol, who is the forestry senior manager of North Luzon Renewables, which owns and operates the famous Wind Farm of Pagudpud.

Angadol, in turn, reported the incident to the Pagudpud Municipal Environment and Natural Resources (MENRO)

A combined team from the North Luzon Renewables and Pagudpud MENRO proceeded to rescue the sea turtle, which was identified as a female Green Sea turtle (*Chelonia mydas*), weighing about 12 kilos, and measuring 45 centimeters in length and 38 centimeters in width.

After documentation, the village officials released the turtle to Ayoyo Bay on Sunday morning with the presence of local officials of Pagudpud town and North Luzon Renewables.

Last April 16, another group of fishermen netted another green sea turtle in Barangay Caunayan, Pagudpud, Ilocos Norte and was released to Ayoyo Bay in Barangay Caparispisan.

Meanwhile, North Luzon Renewables President Gabby Mejia lauded the efforts the villagers in rescuing the endangered green sea turtle.

“We hope to strengthen this collaboration among the local community, the government units, and the private sector,” said Mejia.

“Our goal is to create awareness on coastal environment protection to keep the coast clean and safe for the people, and as a nesting ground for the turtles. The participation of the community is very important,” he added.

Sarangani raises alarm over rising sea turtle deaths

By Richelyn Gubalani May 4, 2020, 2:40 pm



DEAD SEA TURTLE. Photo shows the dead male olive ridley sea turtle that washed ashore in Sitio Bilong-Bilong, Alabel town in Sarangani province last April 27. The Sarangani Environmental Conservation and Protection Center has asked the Protected Area Management Board of the Sarangani Bay Protected Seascape to investigate the suspicious deaths of the turtles, which already reached 16 cases since last year. *(Photo courtesy of the Sarangani Bay Protected Seascape-Megafauna Response Team)*

GENERAL SANTOS CITY – Environment personnel in Sarangani have raised alarm over the rising cases of deaths since last year of the critical sea turtles or “pawikan” in parts of the province’s coastal areas.

Dr. Roy Mejorada, the in-house veterinarian of the Sarangani Environmental Conservation and Protection Center, said Monday they have asked the Protected Area Management Board of the Sarangani Bay Protected Seascape to look into the suspicious deaths of olive ridley sea turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) in the area.

He said there are documented cases indicating that the turtles might have died due to possible human abuse.

Mejorada, who is also a marine biologist, cited the case of a dead male olive ridley turtle that washed ashore last April 27 at a portion of Sitio Bilong-Bilong, Barangay Maribulan in Alabel town.

He said the turtle had a fatal head injury, which appeared similar to the case of the injured turtle that was found stranded in Alabel's shoreline last April 12.

The dead turtle, which measured 64 centimeters long and weighed about 30 to 40 kilos, had injuries on the throat and liver and could have suffered from “internal hemorrhage.”

“A necropsy conducted on the dead sea turtle suggests that the head injury could possibly be human-inflicted,” he said in a radio interview.

Since last year, Mejorada said a total of 16 dead marine turtles have washed ashore in parts of the province.

Portions of the shores of Sarangani’s six coastal municipalities had been identified as nesting sites of olive ridley sea turtles. The municipalities of Maasim and Maitum have established hatcheries for the species.

Mejorada said the turtles have been thriving in the shores of Sarangani Bay to hunt for food and partners.

He admitted that the turtles were considered as pests by “guso” or seaweed planters in coastal villages in the province and this city.

“They will be included in the investigation,” Mejorada said.

He reiterated that any form of violence against wildlife, especially to vulnerable species like marine turtles, is punishable under Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act.

Since it happened within a declared protected seascape, he added that offenders may be further penalized for violating provisions of RA 11038 or the National Integrated Protected Areas System Act. **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1101763>

Sarangani pawikan deaths rising

Published 6 hours ago
on May 5, 2020 01:00 AM
By **Trina Ibarle Orquiza**



Environment personnel in Sarangani have raised the alarm over the rising incidence of deaths among sea turtles or pawikan in the province after a total of 16 dead olive ridley sea turtles (*Lepidochelys olivacea*) have washed ashore in parts of the province's coastal areas last year.

Dr. Roy Mejorada, in-house veterinarian of the Sarangani Environmental Conservation and Protection Center, said that they have asked the Protected Area Management Board of the Sarangani Bay Protected Seascape to look into the suspicious deaths of sea turtles in the area as some necropsy results on the animals' bodies pointed to possible human-inflicted injuries.

Mejorada said the turtles have been thriving in the shores of Sarangani Bay to hunt for food and partners. Portions of the shores of Sarangani's six coastal municipalities had also been identified as nesting sites of the sea turtles, while the municipalities of Maasim and Maitum have established hatcheries for the species.

He reiterated that any form of violence against wildlife, especially to vulnerable species like marine turtles, is punishable under Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act.

Senate adopts Go-sponsored resolution pushing for 'Balik Probinsya' program

[INQUIRER.net](https://www.inquirer.net) / 01:47 AM May 05, 2020



Sen. Christopher Go (Photo from his Facebook account)

MANILA, Philippines — The Senate adopted on Monday, May 4, a resolution, mainly sponsored by Sen. Christopher Lawrence “Bong” Go, urging the executive department to formulate and implement a “Balik Probinsya” program that aims to decongest Metro Manila, promote more robust regional development, and encourage equitable distribution of wealth, livelihood opportunities and economic growth nationwide.

The proposal also aims to better prepare the country in responding to emergencies such as the current COVID-19 pandemics.

In his sponsorship speech, Go said the pandemic “exposed and brought to the surface many of our country’s perennial problems, including congestion in our urban centers, particularly in Metro Manila.”

“Such a problem results in a whole lot of other issues, including poverty, economic inequality, traffic jams, environmental issues, among others,” Go said. “More importantly, overcrowding in Metro Manila makes it more difficult to contain diseases here, putting us all at risk for future pandemics.”

Go cited data from the Department of Health which reveals that, as of May 1, 2020, of the total 8,772 COVID-19 infection cases, NCR registered a total of 5,968 cases, representing 68% of the nationwide total.

Go’s resolution also cited a study of the Asian Development Bank tagging Metro Manila as the most congested natural city in Asia with a population greater than five million.

The traffic congestion alone costs the economy P3.5 billion pesos a day and the situation can get worse — costing the economy P5.4 billion a day by 2035 if interventions will not be made, according to another study conducted by the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

According to Go, overcrowding predisposes Metro Manila to disease outbreaks and makes it harder for the government to contain pandemics in the National Capital Region.

“Given the nature of the virus and the manner by which it is spread between individuals, highly dense communities in Metro Manila explain why nearly seven out of ten infected Filipinos are found in the nation’s capital,” he said.

To alleviate congestion in the metropolis, the Senator then highlighted the need to improve the quality of life in the country and improve access to quality social services, especially in rural areas, through a “Balik Probinsya” program.

“The proposed program is envisioned as a multi-sectoral comprehensive program to decongest Metro Manila by helping stranded workers and OFWs, assisting people who want to relocate to the provinces, and encouraging people to settle down in the provinces for good,” Go said in his speech.

Go said the program would also encourage informal settlers and those living in danger areas to move out of Metro Manila and go back to their home provinces by providing them with decent housing, easier access to key services, nearby schools, job and livelihood opportunities and even small-business support in the grassroots level, among others.

“Kasi kami pong mga probinsyano, we are always fascinated na dito sa Maynila. Maganda.

Kumpleto rito. Nandirito na lahat. Pero ngayon, gaya ng sinabi ni Senator [Richard] Gordon, eight out top 10 po na pumasa sa bar [exams], they came from the provinces,” Go said.

[We provincial folk have always been fascinated with Metro Manila. It’s beautiful. It’s complete. It has everything. But now, as Senator Gordon said, eight out of 10 of those who passed the bar exams came from the provinces.]

Gordon was among those who gave his support for the resolution.

Go added that the delivery of social services was also adversely affected due to workers being stranded in Metro Manila during Luzon-wide quarantine while their families remained in the provinces.

“Alam ninyo po, isa rin po sa mga dahilan kaya maraming hindi nakakatanggap ng mga Social Amelioration dahil ‘yung iba po ay nandun sa probinsya ang kanilang mga pamilya, habang nagtatrabaho sila dito,” Go said.

[You know, this is one of the reasons why so many have not received the Social Amelioration aid — because some of them have families in the provinces while they are working here.]

“Madami pong mga stranded na mga workers na napapabayaang lang po diyan sa construction site nila, na gusto na rin pong umuwi,” he added. “Sana po, sa pamamagitan ng Balik Probinsya Program, mabigyan ng bagong pag-asa ang mga Pilipino na makakabangon muli pagkatapos malampasan ang krisis na ito. Magbayanihan po tayo.”

[So many workers who would want to go home are stranded in their construction sites. Hopefully, through the Balik Probinsya Program, Filipinos will find hope that they can rise again after getting through this crisis. Let’ all help each other.”

“Together, let us heal as one and give Filipinos hope for a better tomorrow,” Go ended.

Read more: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1269569/senate-adopts-go-sponsored-resolution-pushing-for-balik-probinsya-program#ixzz6LW4JRvr1>

Health care a priority in 'Balik Probinsiya'

Published 4 hours ago
on May 5, 2020 03:10 AM
By **Manny Angeles**



Senator Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go on Monday reiterated the importance of ensuring quick and responsive healthcare to the people in the countryside under his proposed 'Balik Probinsiya' program.

Accessible and affordable quality healthcare services will provide the people with added security and will eliminate the need for them to travel to metropolitan areas just to seek proper health care, according to the Senator.

While much work needs to be done to address the requirements of the program in terms of health care, Go assured that the Department of Health (DoH) is doing its best to enhance its programs and promote the well-being of all Filipino citizens, wherever they are in the country.

Go cited DoH programs that can be further enhanced, such as the Health Facilities Enhancement Program (HFEP) and the Botika ng Barangay Program which address other healthcare needs of the Filipinos in terms of infrastructure and medicine.

To bolster the efforts of the health department, Go suggested the need to provide additional funding for the HFEP program, improve health emergency services by providing ambulances for all towns, ensure proper health care and improve health capacity by building more hospitals and clinics, among others.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III has expressed support to 'Balik Probinsiya', saying that congestion in urban centers does increase the risk of an outbreak of a disease.

Go proposed the implementation of the "Balik Probinsiya" program to solve decongestion in Metro Manila which has been found to exacerbate the impact of pandemics, such as the current COVID-19 emergency.

ECQ extension in NCR eyed

Infections in Metro Manila still rising, lockdown effect under review

posted May 05, 2020 at 02:10 am

by [Vito Barcelo and Joel E. Zurbano, Willie Casas](#)

Malacañang on Monday said the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) in the National Capital Region (NCR) could be extended after the May 15 deadline as the number of coronavirus disease (COVID 19) cases continues to rise in Metro Manila.



TOUGHER MEASURES. Members of the Manila Police District patrol Ylaya Street in the Divisoria district as the city government enforced a 48-hour lockdown of Tondo and its environs to stem the spread of the coronavirus amid the enhanced community quarantine in Luzon. Norman Cruz

Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque made this observation in a televised press briefing, saying science would be the key factor for the President to decide whether to extend the ECQ in Metro Manila or not.

However, Roque said it is still too early to say whether the lockdown should be extended since it is only four days after the general community quarantine (GCQ) was declared in some parts of Luzon.

“We still have to see any developments. There are still many people being infected,” he said.

He said the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) is still studying how effective the ECQ has been in containing the spread of COVID-19.

Luzon was placed on lockdown from March 15 until April 15 but the ECQ was extended to May 1 to control the spread of COVID-19.

Before the May 1 deadline, Duterte announced another extension of ECQ in high-risk areas, including NCR, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Cebu, and Davao while downgrading the ECQ to GCQ in areas with no reports on COVID 19 infections.

Meanwhile, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) said local government units (LGUs) may impose ECQs in smaller areas such as towns or barangays, but need the concurrence of their regional inter-agency task force on COVID-19.

On Monday, the NCR Police Office deployed 294 more policemen to help enforcers implement the ECQ in Metro Manila.

NCRPO chief Maj. Gen. Debold Sinas said the 294 uniformed police personnel are members of the National Standby Support Force (NSSF) who are prepared to augment the NCRPO's mobile force battalion.

“These men will assist our deployment of personnel from the District Mobile Force Battalion to different quarantine control points regionwide. Our men have been deployed for 48 days straight already. We need to replace them and give them some rest,” Sinas said.

Sinas said more security forces in Metro Manila would be deployed following the government's decision to extend the enhanced community quarantine in the Metro Manila and other high-risk areas until May 15.

He added that he plans to meet with the Army and the Philippine National Police's Special Action Force to ask for assistance in the additional deployment of security forces.

"As always, we plead cooperation from the people of the Metro to please stay at home to make our common sacrifices worthwhile," Sinas said.

On Sunday, 250 SAF police personnel were deployed in Tondo, Manila after Mayor Francisco Domagoso placed the entire District 1 under "hard lockdown."

But former Anakpawis party-list representative Ariel Casilao on Monday criticized the "overkill implementation" of the 48-hour hard lockdown in Tondo, Manila, where 1,000 policemen and 250 PNP SAF commandos were deployed to help carry out stricter lockdown measures.

The 48-hour lockdown in Tondo's District 1, started Monday at 5 a.m. and will last until 5 a.m. Tuesday. Under the hard lockdown, residents of Tondo 1 District will not be allowed to leave their houses except those who are listed as authorized persons outside residence.

The local government is expected to conduct rapid testing for COVID-19 similar to what was done in Sampaloc during its 48-hour lockdown from April 23 to 25.

The measure was imposed by Domagoso to prevent the further spread of COVID-19 and allow for disease surveillance, verification, and rapid risk assessment. Manila's District I is one of the densely-populated areas in the city and home to many urban poor communities including Baseco, Parola Compound, Isla Puting Bato, Delpan, Vitas, and houses buildings in the former Smokey Mountain dumpsite.

"We completely understand the need for mass testing. The government should have started COVID mass testing weeks ago, but the deployment of 1,200 fully-armed police and special forces to secure Tondo is just too much and overkill," Casilao said.

The ongoing hard lockdown already resulted in the apprehension of more than 100 quarantine violators, mostly poor people who went out of their cramped homes.

Instead of speeding up the distribution of the social amelioration program or SAP, the government went on an arresting spree, Casilao said.

He added that poor people need speedy distribution of relief goods and financial aid.

"We can't make the people stay inside their respective homes if they are hungry. The hard lockdown in fact is worsening their suffering. It further limits not only their movement but also restrains them from conducting any economic work that could help them at this time when their food stocks already ran out and relief goods from the barangay are lacking," the lawmaker said.

Metro Manila to be under GCQ after May 15?

Palace says it's too early to tell

Published May 4, 2020 2:26pm

Malacañang on Monday said it's too early to make a conclusion on the fate of the enhanced community quarantine in Metro Manila after May 15.

“Ispekulasyon pa po ‘yan. Pang-apat na araw pa lang ng two weeks extension,” presidential spokesperson Harry Roque said in a televised briefing.

Roque issued the statement after Interior Undersecretary Jonathan Malaya on Sunday said that Metro Manila could qualify for looser restrictions under the general community quarantine based on available data.

Malaya said the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases considers the critical care infrastructure of hospitals and the case doubling time in the region.

“Titignan po natin ang datos. Siyensiya, ekonomiya, ‘yan po ang titignan,” Roque said.

Aside from Metro Manila, the other areas under ECQ are Central Luzon (except Aurora), CALABARZON, Pangasinan, Benguet, Iloilo province, Bacolod City, Iloilo City, Cebu City, Cebu province and Davao City.

The IATF has recommended an extension of the ECQ in Albay province and Zamboanga City but President Rodrigo Duterte has yet to make a decision on the matter.

The task force also authorized Albay to implement the ECQ extension in its capital Legazpi City. — **Virgil Lopez/RSJ, GMA News**

Coronavirus has difficulty in hot weather, Duterte claims

Published May 5, 2020 1:23am

By JULIA MARI ORNEDO, GMA News

Cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) in the Philippines are relatively low because the virus has a “hard time” surviving in high temperatures, President Rodrigo Duterte claimed on Monday.

“Come to think of it really, mababa ang ano (cases) natin,” Duterte said in a televised address.

“They said that itong coronang ito has a hard time surviving in a high temperature. So pagka gano’n, maybe that explains the reason why na hindi naman masyadong marami,” he added.

The Department of Health (DOH) has [recorded](#) 9,485 cases with 1,315 recoveries and 623 deaths as of Monday afternoon.

The Philippines has the third-highest number of COVID-19 cases across Southeast Asia, trailing behind Singapore and Indonesia which have reported over 18,000 and 11,000 infections, respectively, as of Monday.

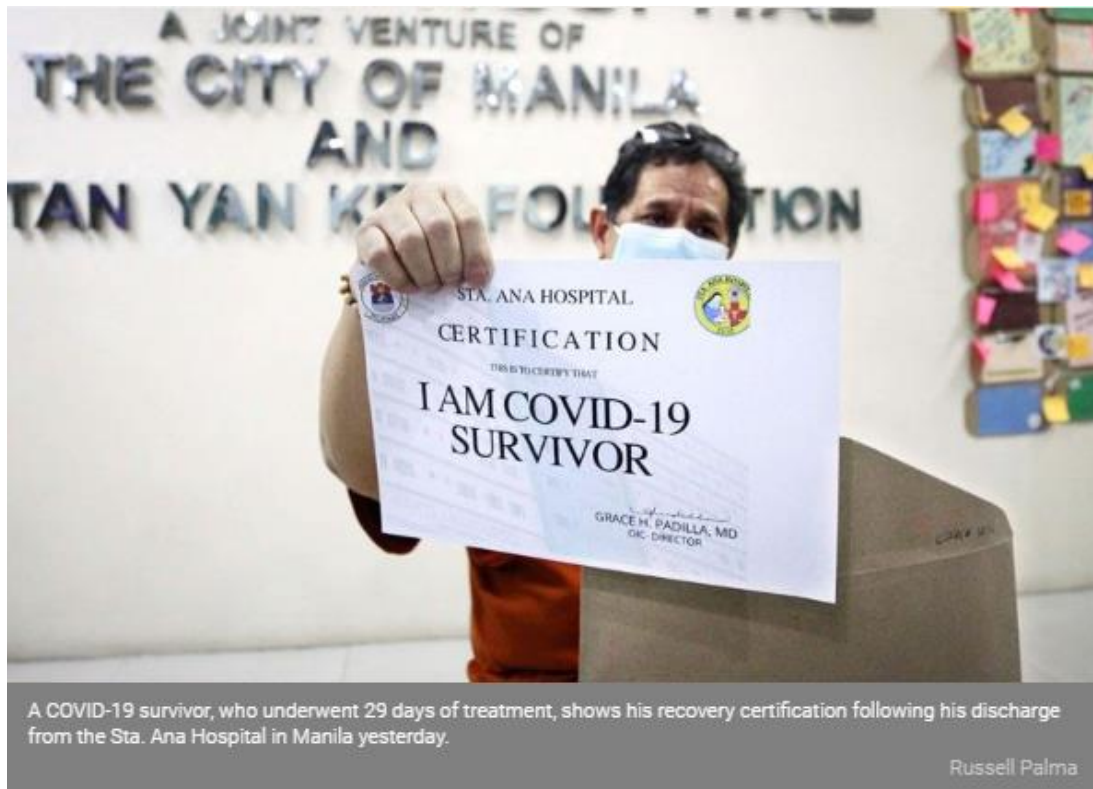
The DOH has previously said that there is [no sufficient evidence](#) yet proving that the weather affects COVID-19 transmission.

“Sa ngayon po wala tayong ginagamit na ganiyang pamantayan,” Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire explained.

Meanwhile, Duterte repeatedly urged the public to wear face masks when leaving their homes.

“Wear a mask because if not, kung magsabay-sabay, then we will have an overload... So just cooperate kasi wala naman kaming hangarin dito na pahirapan kayo,” he said.

“We are trying to figure out how we can ease up the miseries that have been imposed on us,” Duterte added. —LDF, GMA News



Philippine posts highest single-day COVID recoveries at 101

[Sheila Crisostomo](#) (The Philippine Star) - May 5, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The Department of Health (DOH) reported yesterday that 101 more coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) patients have recovered – the highest ever recorded – bringing the total number of survivors to 1,315 as of May 4.

At a press conference, DOH Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said, however, that 16 patients died, raising the death toll to 623.

She noted that the total number of confirmed cases rose to 9,485 after 262 new cases were reported to the DOH. Of these new cases, 122 came from the National Capital Region (NCR) while 88 were from Region 7.

As this developed, Vergeire said the COVID-19 cases in the country could have come from Japan, Australia, and Shanghai in China, based on initial results of the genome sequencing conducted by the Philippine Genome Center (PGC).

But the official clarified more sequencing of samples must be performed to concretely establish the “source, spread and evolution or changes” of the virus in the Philippines.

On April 30, the PCG, through its Core Facility for Bioinformatics, released six “viral genome sequences” of SARS-CoV-2 from COVID-19 cases in Metro Manila between March 22 and 28.

The PGC posted on its website that all of the cases had no history of travel abroad.

However, two of the sequences showed that the “community-acquired infections cluster closely with samples collected from Japan and Australia from February 15 to March 14, 2020.”

On the other hand, four cases “cluster closely with a sample collected from Shanghai, China on February 4, 2020.”

Vergeire also announced that the Bases Conversion and Development Authority will open four “mega-swabbing centers” in Metro Manila and Bulacan next week to strengthen the country’s testing capacity.

They will be located at the Philippine Sports Stadium inside the Philippine Arena, for northern sector; Mall of Asia Arena in Pasay City, for southern sector; Enderun Colleges in Taguig City, for eastern sector and Palacio de Maynila Tent on Roxas Boulevard, for western sector.

She added that with the centers capable of performing some 5,000 tests per day, they are hopeful of reaching the target of 30,000 per day by May 30.

To protect health care workers from the virus, she said the Department of Science and Technology has manufactured 132 specimen collection booths distributed among 80 health care facilities nationwide.

She added they have also dispatched more laboratory encoders to speed up the processing and documentation of test results. – **Jose Rodel Clapano**

Duterte makes OFW PhilHealth fee voluntary

Published 7 hours ago
on May 5, 2020 12:05 AM
By **MJ Blancaflor**



PRE-PANDEMIC line at a PhilHealth office was light. Tribune file photograph

Malacañang said Monday that President Rodrigo Duterte has ordered the Philippine Health Insurance Corp. (PhilHealth) to make payment of premiums of overseas Filipino workers (OFW) voluntary.

In a virtual press briefing at Malacañang Monday, presidential spokesman Harry Roque said the President's action was prompted by criticisms that followed PhilHealth's announcement to increase the contributions of OFW earning between P10,000 and P60,000 to 3 percent of their monthly salary starting this year — a hike of .25 percent from last year.

At the same time, Roque said Health Secretary Francisco Duque III suspended the implementation of the increase while the country is reeling from the coronavirus pandemic.

According to Roque, the Philippine Overseas Employment Agency and Overseas Workers Welfare Association would no longer require OFW to pay the premiums before they can be issued with Overseas Employment Certificates in order to leave the country.

Roque made it clear that the Universal Health Care Law that he introduced in the 17th Congress doesn't require additional premiums that are being implemented by PhilHealth.

"The increase was included in the implementing rules and regulations, so that everyone knows," Roque said.

Senator Bong Go, chairman of the Senate Committee on Health, urged PhilHealth to consider the possibility of delaying the payment of premium contributions.

"Most of our OFW are relying on help from the government apart from the P10,000 one-time assistance given by DoLE (Department of Labor Employment) to all those who lost their jobs or their livelihood affected overseas," Go said. "It would not be right that at a time they are expecting help from government, we can still collect additional contributions from them."

Secondly, Go appealed to PhilHealth to amend its circular and waive the collection of contributions from repatriated OFW whom he labeled as "overseas Filipinos in distress."

"If possible, let us not include the repatriated OFW and those gravely affected by the crisis," he added.

He called on the PhilHealth to improve its delivery of information so that Filipinos will realize where their contributions are going.

Go said the objective of the law is to improve and widen the health care benefits of Filipinos, including OFW and their families.

“In fact, PhilHealth said the amount of benefits claimed by OFW last year is more than the premiums they paid,” he said.

For its part, PhilHealth said the increase is mandated by law.

“PhilHealth is only implementing what is said in the law,” said PhilHealth president and chief executive officer BGen. Ricardo Morales, adding that the OFW are not the only ones affected, but all members, including those who are self-employed.

During the Laging Handa briefing, Morales said only 3.9 million of the estimated 10 million OFW are registered in the database of PhilHealth.

“So, a big part of membership is still uncovered and we need to cover this because our OFW have families here, as a matter of fact, 70 percent of the benefits are claimed by their dependents here in the Philippines,” he said.

In the spirit of the Bayanihan Law, Morales said PhilHealth has adopted a flexible payment scheme which will allow OFW — and all other directly paying self-employed members — to pay their contributions within the year.

MIAA sets guidelines on 'new normal'

Published 14 hours ago
on May 4, 2020 06:10 PM
By **Anthony Ching**



Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) general manager Ed Monreal on Monday that new measures are now being put in place at the premier terminals of the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA) in preparation for the possible normalization of flights in mid-May and the so-called 'new normal.'

The MIAA chief said that the check-in counters of all airline companies will be sporting a new look as he had ordered the installation of acrylic barriers that would separate the passengers from the counter staff and better ensure distancing.

There are about 300 check-in counters at the NAIA Terminals 1, 2, 3 and 4.

The boarding and disembarkation gates will also be arranged to ensure compliance with the new protocols and seats will also be arranged in such a way as to ensure that social distancing is constantly observed.

The floors will also be marked to designate where people are required to stand during queueing even as the wearing of face masks is now mandatory inside the airport terminals.

Monreal said that the washable face masks are slated to be distributed to all MIAA personnel, owing to the shortage of disposable ones.

The airport management has so far distributed 15,000 face masks to the MIAA personnel based on their inventory and the procurement continues along with the distribution as soon as supplies arrive.

Monreal also directed all third party operators at the NAIA terminals, such as those companies who provide the manpower for ground handling, security guards and utility workers or building attendants, to ensure that their staff are provided with all the necessary protection while they are on duty, such as face masks.

Duterte orders additional 10% import duty on crude, refined petroleum products to fund SAP

By [Ma. Reina Leanne Tolentino, TMT](#)

May 4, 2020

PRESIDENT Rodrigo Duterte signed an executive order imposing temporary additional import duty of 10 percent on crude petroleum oil and refined petroleum products to fund social amelioration programs, among others, for those affected by the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic.

“The articles specifically listed in Annex A hereof, as classified under Section 1611 of RA No. 10863, shall be subject to a temporary additional import duty of ten percent (10%), on top of their existing Most Favored Nation (MFN) and preferential import duties, in accordance with the schedule indicated opposite each article,” Executive Order (EO) 113 said in part.

Republic Act (RA) is the Customs Modernization and Tariff Act.

Under EO 113, the Department of Budget and Management “is directed to study, propose and/or take such measures as may be appropriate, to ensure that the proceeds derived from the temporary additional import duty shall be used to fund measures that address and respond to the effects of the Covid-19 situation, including social amelioration programs and such other forms of assistance for all those affected.”

“This Order shall take effect immediately after its publication in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation, and shall remain enforceable until such time that RA No. 11469 ceases to take effect, or upon the reversion of the modified rates of import duty to 0% pursuant to Section 3 hereof, whichever is earlier,” EO 113 said.

RA 11469 is the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act.

Duterte hikes levies on crude oil, petroleum products

By [Ma. Reina Leanne Tolentino, TMT](#)

May 5, 2020

President Rodrigo Duterte has imposed an additional 10-percent import duty on crude oil and refined petroleum products to fund the Social Amelioration Program for those affected by the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic.



Liquified Petroleum Gas (LPG) tanker lines up at the Liquigaz depot in Mariveles, Bataan to refill and deliver LPG for distribution to retailers all over Metro Manila, PHOTO BY RENE DILAN

The President signed Executive Order (EO) 113, which cited the need to augment government resources to sufficiently finance the programs and measures to mitigate the effects of the health crisis and launch the country towards “recovery and rehabilitation.”

The collection of extra levies will be temporary.

The executive order directed the Department of Budget and Management “to study, propose and/or take such measures as may be appropriate, to ensure that the proceeds derived from the temporary additional import duty shall be used to fund measures that address and respond to the effects of the Covid-19 situation, including social amelioration programs and such other forms of assistance for all those affected.”

The EO will take effect immediately after its publication in the Official Gazette or a newspaper of general circulation, and shall remain enforceable until Republic Act 11469 or the “Bayanihan to Heal As One Act” ceases to take effect.

As of Monday, the Philippines had 9,485 Covid-19 cases, up by 262 cases from a day earlier.

The Department of Health said 101 patients recovered, the highest to be recorded. The death toll reached 623.

With a reports from JOHN ERIC MENDOZA

Source: <https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/05/05/news/top-stories/duterte-hikes-levies-on-crude-oil-petroleum-products/722701/>

Church leaders ask gov't to lift ban on religious gatherings

Published May 5, 2020 12:51am

There is an increase in the number of Catholics seeking a reconsideration of the government ban on religious activities, particularly mass celebration in churches, according to a post on the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) website.

Churches have been closed to discourage gatherings of a crowds as part of government efforts to curb the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

The administrator of the Archdiocese of Manila, Bishop Broderick Pabillo said “religious services are also essential services.”

“So when the decision makers consider the essential services to be allowed, they should also consider the opening of the churches and its services as important,” he said.

“Of course, necessary precautions should be taken, like the proper social distancing and the sanitation practices to be done in the churches,” he added.

Pabillo said religion is a significant part of the lives of Filipinos especially in times of hardships, trials. He pointed out that in time of disasters the Filipinos save religious images and bible first and begin a new life by restoring the community chapel.

“The signs of God in their lives are very important for the people,” Pabillo said, adding that allowing public Masses “will uplift their spirits to a great extent”.

“Allowing people to go back to Church to thank the Lord, to ask for his protection and implore his help, are deemed very important by the people,” he added.

The head of the Claretian congregation, Fr. Elias Ayuban called for the reopening of churches in areas that do not have COVID-19 cases.

He said people are allowed to buy from the market where physical distancing is difficult to implement, adding that the same can be done in churches.

“I see no prevailing reason why an organized Sunday gathering in a cathedral or spacious parish church, where physical separation can easily be executed, not permitted,” said Ayuban.

“It is about time to reopen the doors of our churches for people to pray. While it is true that we can pray anywhere, there is no place like the church and no celebration like the Mass,” he added.

The Council of the Laity of the Philippines asked the government to allow people to uplift their spiritual well-being, “which are both humane and essential”.

The Council is willing to submit its plans to assure authorities that religious gatherings will be done according to quarantine protocols implemented by the government.

“With strict compliance to Government Guidelines on Social Distancing and Sanitation, the lay faithful requests for Religious Gatherings to be allowed in the GCQ areas,” said Rouquel Ponte, Laiko President.

“We demand that our right to religious worship be not curtailed when the necessary safeguards are followed,” he also said. -- **BAP, GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/metro/736822/church-leaders-seek-ask-gov-t-to-lift-ban-on-religious-gatherings/story/>

Manila can no longer afford ECQ extension

Published 4 hours ago
on May 5, 2020 02:50 AM
By **Pat C. Santos**



The extension of the enhanced community quarantine in Metro Manila has affected the means of livelihood of many daily wage earners. Eight weeks into the lockdown, many residents are reduced to begging for alms for their daily meals. Photograph by Bob Dungo Jr. for the Daily Tribune @tribunephil_bob

“We are running out of blood. It is already infected.”

This was the descriptive statement Mayor Francisco “Isko Moreno” Domagoso used to explain that the City of Manila can no longer support any further extension to the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) presently enforced throughout Luzon until 15 May.

In a virtual press briefing sponsored by Project ARK last Sunday, the mayor said any extension to the lockdown will be financially disastrous to the city, since it had spent a lot to support the food needs of 1.9 million residents who were affected by the measure, coming mostly from low-income wage earners and the poorest of the poor.

“Manila can no longer financially bear another ECQ extension, and people must work and the economy must start to walk, but not sacrificing the safety and risk the people who will go out their homes and work. There is no longer any money. It is already pus-filled and no longer has blood,” Domagoso expressed.

In spite of this, the mayor assured his constituents the city will abide with the national government’s decision.

He said since the start of the COVID-19 crisis, the city came out with creative ideas to move aggressively to fight the spread of the dreaded virus.

The Manila city government allocated about P2 billion in response to COVID-19 issues, including P1,000 cash assistance per family, two waves of food assistance, another P1,000 cash assistance per family should the ECQ be extended beyond 15 May, advanced cash pensions to senior citizens, and cash allowances for students and public school teachers.

Joey Concepcion, Presidential Adviser for Entrepreneurship, who spearheads Project ARK, said rapid tests for the virus are being undertaken free of charge in selected areas in Metro Manila.

Of the one million test kits Project ARK has, 800,000 will be used on workers in private businesses, while the rest will be allocated to some local governments in Metro Manila.

Manila is continuing with its plan to put up more quarantine areas for COVID-19 persons under investigation (PUI) after the Del Pan Quarantine Facility has been overwhelmed by the influx of new patients.

The mayor said new quarantine sites, such as the newly-built Araullo High School facility that could house around 64 PUI, and three more schools could be used after the lockdown when the “new normal” is expected to commence.

“After lifting ECQ, a new order or the ‘new normal’ will begin. Everything is new and there is no playbook or formula, and the city will begin to adjust to this so-called ‘new normal.’ But let us not forget the virus is still there, unseen, and there will be continuity of strict order, like the wearing of face masks and distancing. We must observe this until the antidote to this virus has not been discovered. Economy and life must be in proportional balance and this is what the city should always focus on,” Domagoso explained.

QC government sets up mobile morgue for cremation

posted May 04, 2020 at 10:40 pm

by [Rio N. Araja](#)

The Quezon City government has set up a mobile morgue to accommodate at least 40 cadavers awaiting cremation.

QC Deputy administrator Alberto Kimpo said they have retrofitted a 40-foot refrigerated container van as a temporary storage facility of those who have died of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) or other illnesses.

"We have maximized the space inside so we could give a decent place for the deceased residents of Quezon City," he said.

The bodies would then be turned over to the city-run Baesa Crematorium on Quirino Highway.

"The storage facility is free as well as the cremation for the indigents identified by the social services and development department. Those indigents have been prioritized. If there are others who are not, we could also extend our services," Kimpo said.

Senate honors ex-Senator Alvarez in ‘hybrid’ session

By: [Christia Marie Ramos](#) - Reporter / [@CMRamosINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 06:07 PM May 04, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — The Senate on Monday adopted a resolution commending and honoring former Senator [Heherson Alvarez](#), who succumbed to coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in late April.

Senate Resolution 363 was adopted during a “hybrid” session where 15 senators were physically present while seven others participated through a teleconference.

The Senate had adopted a skeleton workforce scheme and limited the entry of officials and employees inside its premises.

[Sotto and Senate Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri](#) earlier lamented that the Senate would not be able to accord Alvarez the proper recognition due him as a former member of the institution.

Traditionally, the Senate would hold a necrological service for the deceased senator and present his or her family with a resolution honoring him or her.

“I join the rest of the nation in mourning the passing of a respectable leader and a good friend... I had the great opportunity to learn from this reasonable and hardworking lawmaker as a neophyte senator in 1992 when I first joined this august body,” Sotto said in his sponsorship speech.

“Sonny Alvarez will always be remembered as a freedom fighter, a land reform champion, an environmental warrior, a human rights advocate, an exemplary lawmaker, an exceptional statesman, a fearless leader a dedicated public servant, a patriot and a respectable Filipino,” he added.

EDV

Senate honors ex-Senator Heherson Alvarez

Published May 4, 2020 5:43pm

By DONA MAGSINO, GMA News

Senators on Monday honored the life and contribution of the late lawmaker Heherson "Sonny" Alvarez who recently died due to coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

The advocacies and exemplary work ethics of Alvarez were remembered by his former colleagues during their sponsorship speeches as the session resumed.

"Even if he no longer was a member of the Senate, no longer a member of Congress, he was still very active in issues on human rights, anti-hazing, and environmental issues," Senate Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri said.

P.S. Resolution No. 363 was adopted, taking into consideration P.S. Resolution Nos. 366, 371 and 382, to formalize such recognition and expression of condolences to the loved ones of Alvarez. All senators were made authors.

Alvarez, 80, died last month after battling COVID-19. His wife Cecile, on the other hand, survived the same disease.

Prior to entering Congress, Alvarez had a short stint as Secretary of Agrarian Reform in 1986.

He was a senator for 12 years and also became part of the House of Representatives.

Aside from authoring the Comprehensive Agrarian Reform Act during the Cory Aquino administration, Alvarez was also known for advocating solutions to environmental issues during his tenure as a lawmaker.

The former statesman from Isabela has also been at the helm of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources. — **RSJ, GMA News**



MANILA, GSIS TULARAN SA AYUDA SA COVID-19

May 4, 2020 @ 6:33 PM

Ayon sa batas na Republic Act 11469 o Bayanihan to Heal as One Act na binuo ng Kongreso, katuwang ang Malakanyang, nitong Marso 23, 2020 at naging epektibo noong Marso 25, itinakda ang P1 milyong ayuda sa pamilyang maiiwan ng mga mamamatay na health worker na aktuwal na lumalaban sa nakamamatay na Corona Virus Disease-19.

Saklaw ng batas ang lahat na health worker, pampubliko man o pribado.

Ang mga magkakasakit naman ngunit hindi masasawi ay makatatanggap din ng P100,000 at saklaw rin ang mga pampubliko at pribado.

Babalikatin naman ng Philippine Insurance Health Corporation ang gastos sa ospital ng mga magkakasakit na maaaring maka-survive o masawi.

Ngayon nga ay may naitala nang 1,772 health worker ang naimpeksyon na naospital o isinailim sa quarantine habang may 34 nang nasawi.

Sa mga hindi nasawi, 452 ang asymptomatic o walang sintomas, 958 ang mild o hindi gaanong seryoso samantalang 9 ang nasa kritikal na kalagayan.

Sa kabuuan, may kaso na sa mahal kong Pinas na 9,485 at magandang balita na may 1,315 nang gumaling habang 623 na ang namatay, kabilang na ang nasabing 34 health worker.

MAGANDANG BALITA PA

Bukod sa magandang balita na idinating ng nasabing batas ukol sa pagkakaroon ng P1M para sa mga naulila ng mga nasawi at P100,000 para sa mga nagkakasakit, kumilos na rin ang iba pang ahensya ng pamahalaan at Local Government Unit para madagdagan ang ayuda, lalo na ang mga nauulila.

At sana, magpatuloy na dumami ang ganitong ahensya at LGU na maglaan ng mga karagandang benepisyo sa mga health worker.

ANG GSIS

Itong Government Service Insurance System ay naglaan ng P500,000 na dagdag na ayuda sa mga naulila ng mga namamatay na health worker na miyembro nito.

Iniulat mismo ng GSIS na may P13 milyong ibibigay na nito sa ilang nasawi nang miyembro na health worker.

Hinihintay na lang ang pag-apruba ng Department of Budget and Management dito para maisagawa ng ahensya ang ayuda.

Saludo ang ULTIMATUM sa inyo, riyang sa GSIS na pinamumunuan ni President and General Manager Rolando L. Macasaet.

ANG LUNGSOD NG MAYNILA

Nitong katapusan naman ng Abril, mabilis na ipinasa ng konseho ng Lungsod ng Maynila, katuwang si Mayor Isko Moreno, ang ordinansang magbibigay ng P1M ding ayuda sa mga nasasawing health worker ng lungsod.

Kabilang sa mga mabibigyan ng benepisyo ang nagtatrabaho sa mga ospital ng lungsod at barangay health worker na aktibo ring lumalaban sa Covid-19.

Bukod sa nasabing halaga, bibigyan din ng pamahalaang lungsod ng buong scholarship ang mga anak ng mga nasasawi sa lahat ng eskwelang kontrolado o pagmamay-ari ng Maynila.

Ano pa nga ba ang masasabi natin dito kundi ibigay ang ating pagpupugay kina Mayor Kois at bise nitong si Dra. Honey Lacuna at mga konsehal nang lungsod na mabilis na nagdesisyon para sa mga health worker na nag-aalay ng kanilang buhay para lang isalba ang mga Manilenyo sa tiyak na kamatayan at iba pang kapahamakang dulot ng Covid-19.

New normal

posted May 05, 2020 at 02:00 am

by [Macon Ramos-Araneta and Willie Casas](#)

No aircon in clinics

Telemed consultancy

Only 5 patients daily

Patients should consult doctors first through telemedicine and physicians should limit their patients to five a day, observe physical distancing, wear personal protective equipment and change gowns after every other patient, the Philippine Medical Association said Monday.

In an interview with the ANC news channel, Dr. Benito Atienza, PMA vice president, also said clinics must no air-conditioning or electric fans and windows and doors must be opened. The clinic's staff should also be limited to one to two people, he added.

Patients should also wear face masks, but should first consult a doctor online on <https://docph.org>, Atienza said. "This is aimed to decrease the patients going to the hospital's emergency room," he said, noting that patients could request for medicine or prescriptions.

Atienza also called for the testing of doctors for COVID-19 as they are prepare to open their clinics. The Department of Health reported 262 new cases as of May 4, bringing total COVID-19 cases to 9,485. Metro Manila accounted for 122 of the new cases.

The DOH said 101 patients recovered Monday, bringing total recoveries to 1,315. Sixteen new deaths were reported, bringing total fatalities to 623.

On Monday, 14 Senate personnel tested using rapid test kits tested positive for antibodies and would need to be subjected to real-time Reverse Transcription-Polymerase Chain Reaction (rRT-PCR) tests to validate if they are COVID-19 positive.

Senate President Vicente Sotto III confirmed that out of the 500 subjected to the mandatory rapid testing, 12 tested positive. They were sent to hospitals for the swab testing for confirmatory testing. Two more positive cases were reported in the afternoon of the same day.

Sotto said two of those who yielded positive results are staff members of senators, as well as a waiter and a page, while the rest came from the Office of the Sergeant-at-Arms.

At least three senators--Majority Leader Juan Miguel Zubiri, Aquilino Pimentel III, and Juan Edgardo Angara, had tested positive for the new coronavirus.

Angara, who recovered, tested positive again for the virus weeks after he was declared COVID-free. He was supposed to donate his blood for the government's plasma infusion to help cure severe and critical cases of the coronavirus diseases when it was discovered he was infected again.

But health officials said what was detected in the senator's system could be dead viruses or remnants of COVID-19 that are no longer infectious.

Four other staff members working for senators Pia Cayetano, Ramon Revilla Jr., and Risa Hontiveros were also infected with COVID-19.

Although the threat of the coronavirus remains, the Senate opted to open the sessions.

Zubiri said they would conduct hearings and sessions online to ensure the safety of senators, most of whom are in the vulnerable age group.

Senator Sherwin Gatchalian said one of his staff members yielded a positive result from the rapid test.

Senator Panfilo Lacson brought several rapid test kits for senators and staff who would physically attend the session.

Zubiri said they expect Philippine Red Cross, chaired by Senator Richard Gordon, to conduct confirmatory tests using RT-PCR for those who tested positive using the rapid test kits.

"We also requested Red Cross to test senators who want to be tested," he said.

At the same time, Sotto, Lacson, and Revilla said the distribution of food and cash aid to families affected by the lockdown would not have been delayed had a national ID been in place. They called for a full-blown and immediate implementation of the National ID System.

The lockdown did not deter the House of Representatives from resuming sessions on Monday after its break for Lent but the session hall was almost empty and most of the legislators attended through electronic means.

Majority Leader Ferdinand Martin Romualdez in his welcome remarks said that the session done through teleconferencing was in line with Speaker Alan Peter Cateyano's policy that the chamber should resume working to rush needed legislation needed in the fight against the spread of the virus.

Due to physical distancing, only 25 of some 300 congressmen were allowed to attend physically. The rest attended through electronic means.

A motion to adopt that in the Rules of the House of Representatives was introduced, seconded, approved and adopted during the start of Monday's session. Deputy speaker and Batangas Rep. Raneo Abu seconded Romualdez's motions.

The House is expected to pass the proposed P700 billion economic stimulus package to restart the economy following the damage wrought by the extended lockdown on Metro Manila and other provinces in Luzon.

The Philippine Economic Recovery Act (PERA), the COVID-19 Unemployment Reduction Economic Stimulus (CURES) Act of 2020 or the social amelioration program, a new normal bill, and other similar measures are all expected to breeze through the chamber, which worked with the executive department in the weeks before the resumption of sessions.

Also on Monday, the UST Varsitarian reported that UST Hospital has cut its "non-crucial" manpower amid heavy financial losses amounting to about P180 million since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Quoting hospital medical director Dr. Marcellus Francis Ramirez, the Varsitarian said that state-run Philippine Health Insurance Corp. also owed the hospital more than P180 million in expenses for patients in 2019.

"[P]ainful decisions needed to be made. While the news around significantly highlights the health and medical impact of the pandemic, the huge economic and financial impact brought about by this crisis to all business establishments, most especially to health care institutions, is often overlooked," Ramirez said.

Ramirez also said some patients were discharged on promissory notes.

The medical director said that retrenchment is a "recognized valid and legal management measure and it remains as such even during the COVID-19 crisis."

Ramirez said employees affected by the retrenchment measures would receive a 150-percent separation pay based on the hospital's CBA, which was 50 percent higher than what the Labor Code provides.

But the Ugnayang Nagkakaisang Manggagawa–University of Santo Tomas (UNM–UST) protested what it said was the "wrongful termination" being implemented by the hospital management, supposedly in the guise of business losses.

The group said USTH hospital workers remained committed to their work even after their pleas for additional benefits during the pandemic "fell on deaf ears."

An employee from the hospital affected by the retrenchment measures said he pleaded with the hospital administrators to keep his job, as looking for another job would not be possible amid the pandemic.

Worst time for red tape

By: [Cielito F. Habito](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:05 AM May 05, 2020

My daughter told me that her American in-laws received their government's COVID-19 cash assistance in their US bank accounts without doing anything. Her husband, who has been working and living here with her, received a check mailed to his permanent US address, as he did not register a bank account with the US Social Security System. The Philippines is not America, of course, but suffering Filipinos who are made to go through various hurdles to apply for (with no guarantee of receiving) whatever cash assistance government will give them, would be even more agitated to know this. Last week, our occasional carpenter Dondon (I mentioned him here a month ago) texted to ask if I could issue him a certificate of employment (COE). "But I'm really not your employer," I initially reasoned, as we actually hire him only on an average of every 3-4 months for odd jobs. But he said the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) person who interviewed them asked him to produce a COE to receive the social amelioration program (SAP) "ayuda." So I agreed to write him a COE that truthfully affirmed that I hire him only occasionally, that he's on a "no work-no pay basis" (as must be explicitly stated in the COE, I was told), and that I know him to be dependent on construction projects and odd jobs when they come, as is indeed the case. He had to defy the lockdown and sneak past checkpoints to come to our house to pick it up. A neighbor advised him to file it at their barangay office. He had also filed his COE a few days before, but was told to wait until May 7 for his SAP cash, if approved. I could only pray that poor Dondon gets his, which he desperately needed since over a month ago.

If we want to truly help those hard-hit by the virtual lockdown, why put in their way so many obstacles that even defy the very idea of quarantine? I know of someone who couldn't get the COE prepared by his employer because his neighbor is COVID-19-positive, and they're under heavy guard against leaving home. Why even force someone who's required to stay home to obtain a COE from his employer? Don't they know that about a third—around 13 million—of our total labor force of some 43 million are either individually self-employed or unpaid family workers, thus don't have an employer who can certify to their employment? The Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) would know this, as these numbers are from the quarterly Labor Force Survey of the Philippine Statistics Authority, done by the former DOLE Bureau of Labor and Employment Statistics. Such workers are actually a prominent part of those who lost their incomes from the forced quarantine, and need the SAP the most. Asking them to produce a COE is outright brainless.

And then there's DOLE's CAMP (COVID-19 Adjustment Measures Program), which to four frustrated small business owners I know, sounds like a cruel joke. As soon as DOLE announced the program, they dutifully prepared and emailed the required application form, signed "Establishment Report," and signed payroll to get help for their idled employees. At least one of them had a few email exchanges as the DOLE regional office confusingly used two different email addresses. To cut the story short, he finally got a template reply, like the other three, 34 days after sending the application, that "your CAMP application will no longer be accommodated as the allocated budget has already been exhausted."

DOLE referred them to the Department of Finance's small business wage subsidy program, with an April 30 deadline, just days later. The online application process turned out to be yet another nightmare, with a repeatedly freezing server (necessitating re-entry of previously typed information many times over)—when it was accessible at all. They all have mouthfuls (screens full of Viber messages, actually) to say about government giving workers false hopes, etc. etc., and ask a legitimate question: Why are three government departments offering separate assistance programs? Why not just unify them into one, so people don't have to make repeated applications, and government need not worry about double-dipping applicants?

Why not, indeed?

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EDITORIAL - Higpitan, mga pasahero sa train at bus

(Pilipino Star Ngayon) - May 5, 2020 - 12:00am

KAPAG naisailalim na sa general community quarantine (GCQ) ang Metro Manila, maaari nang ibalik ang operasyon ng train at ganundin ang mga pampasaherong bus. Matatapos ang enhanced community quarantine sa Luzon sa Mayo 15 at maaari nang mailagay sa GCQ depende sa rekomendasyon ng government task force on COVID-19.

Sinabi ng Department of Transportation (DOTr) noong Linggo na posible nang maibalik sa Mayo 16 ang operasyon ng Light Rail Transit-1, LRT-2, Metro Rail Transit-3 at Philippine National Railways (PNR) at maging ang ilang pampasaherong bus. Pero nilinaw ng DOTr na mahigpit nilang ipatutupad ang social distancing kaya may limit ang capacity ng mga train at bus. Hindi pupuwede ang dikit-dikit na mga pasahero.

Sabi pa ng DOTr, patuloy na ipatutupad ang dati nang guidelines gaya nang pagdidistansiya sa mga pasahero at ganundin ang iba pang health and safety measures batay sa itinakda ng Inter-Agency Task Force on the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases at Department of Health (DOH).

Sabi ni DOTr Sec. Arthur Tugade, mahigpit na ipatutupad sa train ang isang metrong agwat ng pasahero at ganundin sa mga station. Magkakaroon ng palatandaan sa agwat ng bawat pasahero at kailangang sundin ito. Ipatutupad din ang regular na pag-disinfect at sanitation sa mga train, premises at pasilidad ng mga ito.

Ayon pa sa DOTr secretary, maglalagay ng hand washing o mga disinfectant stations para masiguro na hindi kakalat ang virus. Mahigpit pa ring ipatutupad ang pagsusuot ng facemask. Hindi papapasukin sa stations ang pasaherong walang facemask.

Sa mga matataong lugar madalas makuha ang virus at kung mag-o-operate na ang LRT, MRT, PNR at bus, dapat lamang ipatupad nang husto ang pag-iingat. Hindi dapat dikit-dikit ang mga pasahero para hindi magkahawahan. Maipatupad sana ito nang maayos para matapos na ang problema sa COVID-19.

Nararapat naman ang pakikiisa ng mga pasahero. Hindi dapat maging pasaway. Habang may pasaway o matigas ang ulo, lalong tatagal ang problema. Kailangang sumunod sa batas sapagkat ito ay para sa kaligtasan ng lahat.

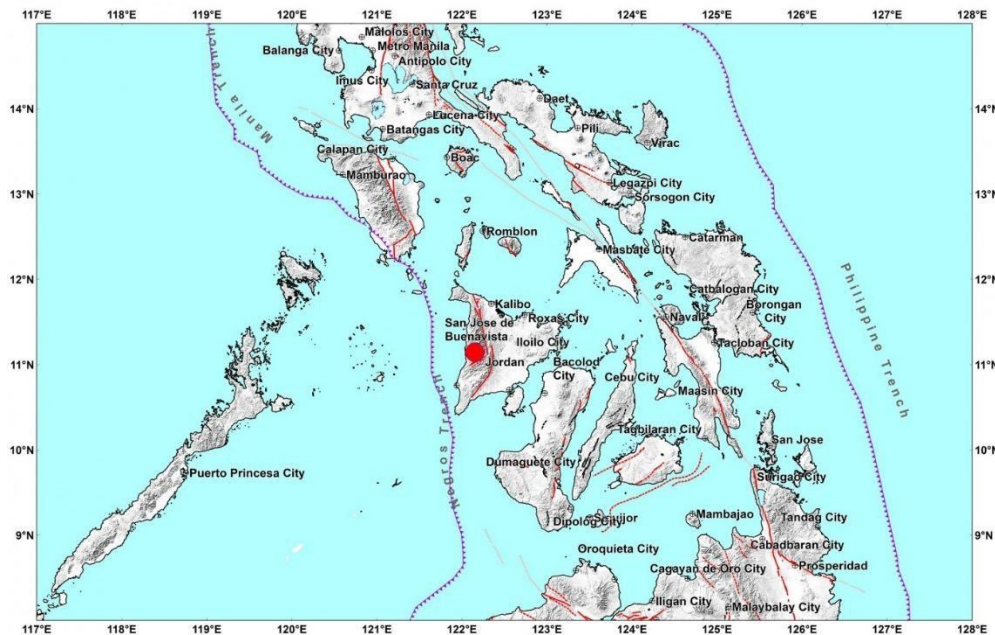


4.8 quake jolts Antique

Updated May 4, 2020, 11:17 PM

By MB Online

A 4.8-magnitude earthquake jolted Antique on Monday night (May 4), the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) reported.



(PHIVOLCS/ MANILA BULLETIN)

The earthquake, which occurred at 10:12 p.m., was tectonic in origin and was traced to 14 kilometers southeast of Barbaza, Antique.

The quake had a depth of 16 km., with the following registered intensities:

Intensity III- San Jose de Buenavista, Antique

Intensity I- Lezo, Aklan

Instrumental Intensities:

Intensity III- Malay and Malinao, Aklan; Culasi and San Jose de Buenavista, Antique

Intensity II – Bago City, Negros Occidental

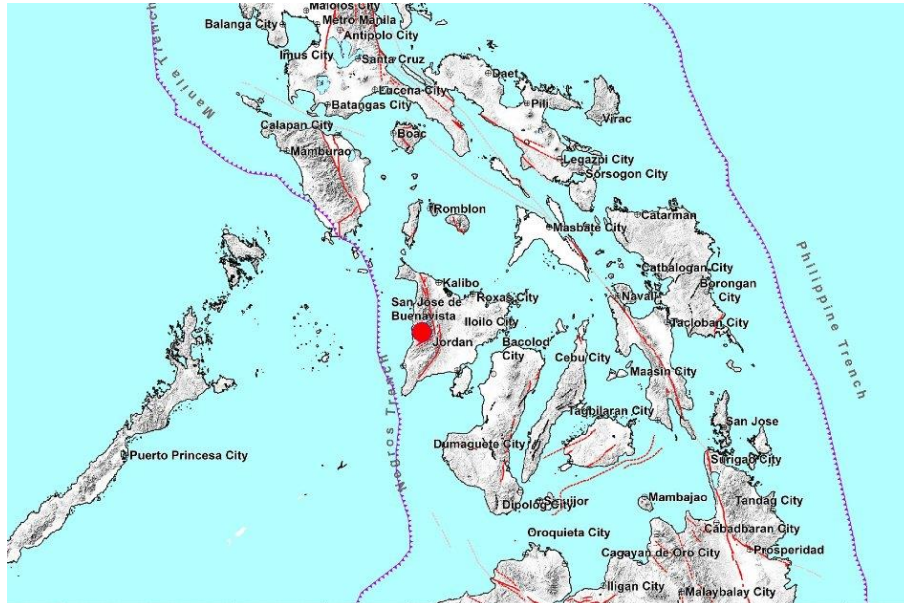
Intensity I – La Carlota City, Negros Occidental; Iloilo City

No aftershocks and damages are expected from the tremor.

Magnitude 4.8 quake jolts Antique

ABS-CBN News

Posted at May 04 2020 11:36 PM



MANILA—A magnitude-4.8 earthquake jolted Antique Monday night, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said.

The tremor happened at 10:12 p.m., 14 kilometers southeast of Barbaza town.

It was tectonic in origin and struck a depth of 16 kilometers, according to Phivolcs.

Intensity III was recorded in San Jose de Buenavista town in Antique, while Intensity I was recorded in Lezo town in Aklan.

Meanwhile, instrumental intensities were recorded in the following areas:

Intensity III - Malay, and Malinao, Aklan; Culasi, San Jose de Buenavista, Antique

Intensity II - Bago City, Negros Occidental

Intensity I - La Carlota City, Negros Occidental; Iloilo City

The tremor is not expected to cause aftershocks. No damage has been reported so far.

Metro Manila heat index sizzles to 41 degrees-Pagasa

By [Franz Lewin Embudo](#)

May 4, 2020

Metro Manila has sizzled to a heat index temperature of 41 degrees Celsius on Monday, its second highest for the year, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa).

The weather bureau registered a temperature of 36.5°C and a relative humidity of 43 percent at the Pagasa Science Garden weather station in Diliman, Quezon City at 3:45 p.m.

High heat indexes were also felt in other areas of the country, with Dagupan City and Sangley Point, Cavite at 50°C, Ambulong, Tanauan City at 48°C and at Science City of Muñoz and Tuguegarao City at 47°C.

Pagasa classifies heat index, which is the temperature felt by the human body, between 32°C and 41°C as “extreme caution” and 41°C to 54°C as “dangerous” because it could lead to heat cramps, heat exhaustion and heat stroke with continuous activity.

The bureau has advised the public to avoid the outdoor heat from 12 noon to 4 p.m., use sun protection for outdoor activities and stay hydrated.

The highest heat index in Metro Manila was at 42°C last April 22.

PAGASA records hottest day in NCR, 50-degree heat
index in Dagupan, Sangley

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May 5, 2020
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PAGASA records hottest day in NCR, 50-degree heat index in Dagupan, Sangley

Published May 4, 2020 5:44pm

PAGASA on Monday reported the highest temperature in Metro Manila during the dry season after the Science Garden in Quezon City recorded 36.5 degrees celsius at 3:45 p.m.

The heat index at the Science Garden was at 41 degrees celsius.

PAGASA-DOST @dost_pagasa

Naitala ang pinakamataas na temperatura ng Science Garden, Quezon City ngayong tag-init so far (36.5°C) kaninang 3:45 PM ngayong Lunes, 4 Mayo.

Nasa 41°C naman ang heat index o alinsangang naramdaman sa parehong oras.

Stay home stay hydrated, at stay safe po!

HEAT INDEX TODAY
41°C
3:45 PM 4 MAY
Computed from 36.5°C air temperature and 42% relative humidity

**MAXIMUM TEMPERATURE IN THE PAST FIVE DAYS
SCIENCE GARDEN, QUEZON CITY**

Date	Maximum Temperature (°C)
30 April	34.8
1 May	34.6
2 May	34.6
3 May	32.0
4 May	36.5

121 4:17 PM - May 4, 2020

44 people are talking about this

PAGASA's stations in Dagupan in Pangasinan and Sangley Point in Cavite both recorded a heat index of 50 degrees celsius at 2 p.m. on Monday afternoon.

The heat index was 48 degrees celsius in Tanauan City while stations in Munoz, Nueva Ecija and Tuguegarao, Cagayan both recorded 46 degrees celsius.

PAGASA issued a warning on the danger of a heat index between 41 and 54 degrees celsius.

"Posible ang heat cramps at heat exhaustion na maaariing mauwi sa heat stroke kapag tuluy-tuloy ang physical activity," PAGASA said.

PAGASA records hottest day in NCR, 50-degree heat index in Dagupan, Sangley

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PAGASA-DOST @dost_pagasa

TINGNAN: Top 5 PAGASA Synoptic Stations na nakapagtala ng pinakamaalinsangang panahon ngayong Lunes, 4 Mayo.

Panganib ang dulot ng 41 - 54°C na heat index. Posible ang heat cramps at heat exhaustion na maaaring mauwi sa heat stroke kapag tuluy-tuloy ang physical activity.

PAGASA STATIONS WITH THE HIGHEST RECORDED HEAT INDEX MONDAY, 4 MAY 2020		
DAGUPAN CITY	50°C	2:00 PM
SANGLEY POINT, CAVITE CITY	50°C	2:00 PM
AMBULONG, TANAUAN CITY	48°C	2:00 PM
SCIENCE CITY OF MUÑOZ	47°C	2:00 PM
TUGUEGARAO CITY	47°C	2:00 PM

117 4:38 PM - May 4, 2020

55 people are talking about this

-NB, GMA News

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/scitech/weather/736758/pagasa-records-hottest-day-in-ncr-50-degree-heat-index-in-dagupan-sanglely/story/>

Group to Duterte admin: Defy, protest China fishing 'ban' in disputed waters

By [Jonathan L. Mavuga](#)

May 5, 2020



The Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya) is urging the Duterte administration to protest and defy China's "fishing ban" as a fish conservation measure in the West Philippine Sea (South China Sea).

In a news statement denouncing and rejecting the Chinese fishing ban in the disputed territory from May 1 to August 16, Pamalakaya National Chairman Fernando Hicap said China has no right and moral ascendancy to declare a fishing ban in the area considering the damage of its overfishing it has already caused.

During the said fishing ban, Beijing threatened to "arrest illegal fishers from Vietnam and the Philippines."

The three-and-a-half-month fishing ban covers the Paracel Islands and Scarborough Shoal—parts of the South China Sea that Vietnam and Philippines also claim.

Hicap insisted on the ruling of the international tribunal based in The Hague which favors the country's claim over the Scarborough Shoal and other parts of the Spratly Islands being occupied by China.

"The audacity of China to accuse Filipinos and Vietnamese fishermen as 'illegal fishers,' when they are actually the ones engaged in massive illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing in our seas," Hicap lamented.

According to Hicap, the Duterte administration should not waste time and wait until Filipino fishermen are apprehended by Chinese maritime enforcers.

"It should publicly condemn and protest this another Chinese bullying straight away. We have international and local fisheries laws with us that can be enforced to counter China's aggression," Hicap said.

Hicap said Section 3 of the Republic Act 8550, otherwise known as the Fisheries Code of 1998, clearly states that the disputed territory is within the exclusive economic zone (EEZ) and extended continental shelf and falls within the mandate of the Department of Agriculture, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources (BFAR) and other law-enforcement agencies.

"The DA and BFAR have long neglected their duty in enforcing the fisheries law that would protect our marine resources and the livelihood of our fisherfolk in the West Philippine Sea," added Hicap.

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/05/05/group-to-duterte-admin-defy-protest-china-fishing-ban-in-disputed-waters/>

Fishers group rejects Chinese ban at WPS

posted May 04, 2020 at 11:10 pm

by [Willie Casas](#)

The militant national fishers group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (PAMALAKAYA) on Monday denounced and rejected the Chinese fishing ban in the South China Sea that will run from May 1 to August 16, 2020.

“They have no right and moral ascendancy to declare a fishing ban in the guise of conserving fish stocks in marine waters that they have no any legal claim, and they have massively destroyed through reclamation activities,” said PAMALAKAYA in a statement.

Part of its annual summer fishing ban to “conserve fish stocks,” Beijing vows to “arrest illegal fishers from Vietnam and Philippines.”

The three-and-a-half-month fishing ban covers the Paracel Islands and Scarborough Shoal—parts of the South China Sea that Vietnam and Philippines also claim, they said.

PAMALAKAYA said the international tribunal based in The Hague has already favored Philippines’ claim over the Scarborough Shoal, and other parts of the Spratly Islands being occupied by China. “The audacity of China to accuse Filipinos and Vietnamese fishermen as ‘illegal fishers’, when they are actually the ones engaged in massive illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing in our seas,” Fernando Hicap, PAMALAKAYA national chairperson, said.

“The Philippine government should not waste time and wait until our own fishermen are apprehended by Chinese maritime enforcers. It should publicly condemn and protest this another Chinese bullying straight away. We have international and local fisheries laws with us that can be enforced to counter China’s aggression,” added Hicap.

Trump vows vaccine ready by year-end

Published 4 hours ago

on May 5, 2020 03:40 AM

By **Agence France-Presse**



US President Donald Trump is confident that a working vaccine will be ready by end of the year. AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — President Donald Trump on Sunday said the United States will have a coronavirus vaccine by the end of this year.

“We are very confident that we’re going to have a vaccine by the end of the year,” Trump said in a Fox News “town hall” show broadcast from the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC.

He also said he would urge the reopening of schools and universities in September, saying “I want them to go back.”

The vaccine prediction moves up the timeline that has been discussed as the United States and other countries race to be the first to bring out a way to prevent COVID-19.

Trump insisted he would be happy for another country to beat US researchers to the medicine, saying “if it’s another country I’ll take my hat off.”

“I don’t care, I just want to get a vaccine that works.”

Asked about risks during human trials in a research process that is going unusually quickly, Trump said “they’re volunteers. They know what they’re getting into.”

Trump relaunched his election campaign with a live television event inside the iconic Lincoln Memorial, promising an early coronavirus vaccine and urging Americans to put the pandemic behind them to embrace an “incredible” future.

As lockdowns ease, some countries report new
infection peaks

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As lockdowns ease, some countries report new infection peaks

Associated Press / 06:37 AM May 04, 2020



Marina and Andrea enjoy the sun with their daughter Sara at Islands Brygge in Copenhagen on Sunday. Marked areas on the grassland help people keep distance from each other, with about 40 m² area marked out for a maximum of 10 people, to limit the spread of coronavirus infection, seen with 24 mm telephoto lens. (Scanpix via AP)

ROME — While millions of people took advantage of easing coronavirus lockdowns to enjoy spring weather, some of the world's most populous countries reported worrisome new peaks in infections Sunday, including India, which saw its biggest single-day jump yet.

Second in population only to China, India reported more than 2,600 new infections. In Russia, new cases exceeded 10,000 for the first time. The confirmed death toll in Britain climbed near that of Italy, the epicenter of Europe's outbreak, even though the U.K. population is younger than Italy's and Britain had more time to prepare before the pandemic hit.

The United States continues to see tens of thousands of new infections each day, with more than 1,400 additional deaths reported Saturday.

Health experts have warned of a potential second wave of infections unless testing is expanded dramatically once the lockdowns are relaxed. But pressure to reopen keeps building after the weeks-long shutdown of businesses worldwide plunged the global economy into its deepest slump since the 1930s and wiped out millions of jobs.

China, which reported only two new cases, saw a surge in visitors to newly reopened tourist spots after domestic travel restrictions were loosened ahead of a five-day holiday that runs through Tuesday. Nearly 1.7 million people visited Beijing parks on the first two days of the holiday, and Shanghai's main tourist spots welcomed more than 1 million visitors, according to Chinese media. Many spots limited daily visitors to 30% of capacity.

On the eve of Italy's first steps toward easing restrictions, the Health Ministry reported 174 COVID deaths in the 24-hour period ending Sunday evening — the lowest day-to-day number since the national lockdown began on March 10. Parks and public gardens were set to reopen on Monday.

In Spain, many ventured outside for the first time since the country's lockdown began March 14, but social distancing rules remained in place. Masks are mandatory starting Monday on public transit.

In Britain, Prime Minister Boris Johnson is under pressure to reveal how the country will lift its lockdown. The restrictions are due to last through Thursday, but with hundreds of deaths still being reported daily — twice as many recently as Italy or Spain — it's unclear how the country can safely loosen the restrictions.

The 55-year-old Johnson, who spent three nights in intensive care while being treated for COVID-19, told The Sun newspaper that he knew his doctors were preparing for the worst.

"It was a tough old moment, I won't deny it," he said. "They had a strategy to deal with a 'death of Stalin'-type scenario" if he succumbed to the virus.

As lockdowns ease, some countries report new
infection peaks

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Another potentially troubling sign emerged in Afghanistan's capital city of Kabul, where a third of the 500 people selected in random test came up positive for the virus.

In the U.S., New Jersey reopened state parks, though several had to turn people away after reaching a 50% limit in their parking lots. Margie Roebuck and her husband were among the first on the sand at Island Beach State Park.

"Forty-six days in the house was enough," she said.

Speaking on "Fox News Sunday," White House coronavirus coordinator Deborah Birx expressed concern about protests by armed and mostly maskless crowds demanding an end to stay-at-home orders and a full reboot of the economy. President Donald Trump has encouraged people to "liberate" their states.

"It's devastatingly worrisome to me personally, because if they go home and infect their grandmother or their grandfather ... they will feel guilty for the rest of our lives," she said. "So we need to protect each other at the same time we're voicing our discontent."

If restrictions are lifted too soon, the virus could come back in "small waves in various places around the country," said Dr. Tom Inglesby, director of the Center for Health Security of the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

"Nothing has changed in the underlying dynamics of this virus," he said on NBC's "Meet the Press." New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo announced that his state would join with six others to create a regional supply chain for masks, gowns, ventilators, testing supplies and other equipment for fighting the disease.

"It will make us more competitive in the international marketplace, and I believe it will save taxpayers money," Cuomo said.

Meanwhile, the divide in the United States between those who want lockdowns to end and those who want to move more cautiously extended to Congress.

The Republican-majority Senate will reopen Monday in Washington. The Democrat-controlled House of Representatives is staying shuttered. Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell's decision to convene 100 senators gives Trump, a Republican, the imagery he wants of America getting back to work, despite the risks.

Elsewhere, Russia's latest tally of infections was nearly double the new cases reported a week ago. More than half of Russia's new cases were in Moscow, where concern is rising about whether the capital's medical facilities will be overwhelmed.

Indian air force helicopters showered flower petals on hospitals in several cities to thank doctors, nurses and police at the forefront of the battle against the pandemic.

The country's number of confirmed cases neared 40,000 as the population of 1.3 billion marked the 40th day of a nationwide lockdown. The official death toll reached 1,323.

And in Mexico City, where authorities expect infections to peak next week, workers will turn the Hernandez Rodriguez Formula 1 racecourse into a temporary hospital for COVID-19 patients. The paddocks and suites along the front straightaway will have eight hospital modules with 24 beds each. The pits will be used as offices for consultations.

The virus has infected 3.5 million people and killed more than 246,000 worldwide, including more than 66,000 dead in the United States, according to a count by Johns Hopkins University.

All the numbers are considered to be undercounts, due to testing issues, the problems of counting deaths in a pandemic and deliberate concealment by some governments.

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1269043/as-lockdowns-ease-some-countries-report-new-infection-peaks#ixzz6LVnLYvT6>

Germany warns vaccine could take 'years'

posted May 04, 2020 at 04:00 pm

by [AFP](#)

Germany's health minister said developing a vaccine for the coronavirus could take "years" after Donald Trump predicted it could be achieved by the end of 2020.



German Health Minister Jens Spahn gestures as he holds a press conference, on April 29, 2020 at his ministry in Berlin, amid the novel coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic. AFP

"I would be delighted if it was possible to achieve this in a few months," Jens Spahn said late Sunday on ARD television.

"But it can also take years as there can of course be setbacks, as we have seen some with other vaccines," he said.

"The development of vaccines is one of the most challenging and difficult tasks in medicine.

Trump, relaunching his re-election campaign on Sunday, was more optimistic.

"We are very confident that we're going to have a vaccine at the end of the year, by the end of the year," he said in a Fox News "town hall" show broadcast from the Lincoln Memorial in Washington, DC.

"The doctors would say 'well, you shouldn't say that.' I'll say what I think," he said.

Kambing at maging papaya, nagpositibo sa COVID-19 sa Tanzania?

Mayo 4, 2020 7:22pm GMT+08:00

Ilang hayop na ang napabalitang nagpositibo sa COVID-19 tulad ng aso at pusa. Pero ang pangulo ng Tanzania, nagduda sa nakuha nilang imported test kits dahil bukod daw sa kambing, pati ang papaya, nagpositibo sa virus.

Sa ulat ng Reuters, hinihinala ni Tanzanian President John Magufuli na palpak ang nakuha nilang test kits dahil sa resulta ng ginawang pagsusuri sa kambing, tupa at papaya.

Sa isang pagtitipon sa Chato, sinabi ni Magufuli na imported ang nakuha nilang COVID-19 testing kits pero hindi na siya nagbigay ng iba pang detalye tulad kung saan bansa ito nagmula.

Iniutos niya security forces ng bansa na suriin ang kalidad ng test kits. Kumuha sila ng "sample" ng mga susuriin pero na hindi galing sa tao, kung hindi sa kambing, tupa at pawpaw o papaya, at nilagyan nila ng pangalan ng tao at edad.

Ipinadala umano ang naturang mga sample sa laboratoryo para suriin at hindi alam ng lab technicians ang pinagkunan ng mga ito.

Nang lumabas umano ang resulta, positibo sa virus ang pawpaw at kambing.

Dahil dito, hinala ni Magufuli, baka may mga kababayan siyang nagpositibo pero negatibo naman talaga. Hindi raw talaga mapagkakatiwalaan ang mga test kit.

“There is something happening. I said before we should not accept that every aid is meant to be good for this nation,” ayon kay Magufuli, na pinupuna ang liderato dahil sa pagiging masakreto tungkol sa impormasyon ng COVID-19 outbreak sa kaniyang bansa.

Sinabi ni Magufuli na kailangang magkaroon ng imbestigasyon tungkol sa test kits.

Hanggang nitong Linggo, mayroon umanong 480 COVID-19 cases sa Tanzania, at 17 sa mga pasyente ang nasawi.

Samantala, sinabi ni Magufuli na magpapadala siya ng emisaryo sa Madagascar para makakuha ng gamot doon na ibinibida ng pangulo ng naturang bansa.

Gayunman, ang sinasabing gamot na herbal mix ay hindi pa sumasailalim sa pandaigdigang pagsusuri sa medisina.

“I’m communicating with Madagascar,” ayon kay Magufuli. "They have got a medicine. We will send a flight there and the medicine will be brought in the country so that Tanzanians too can benefit.” --

Reuters/FRJ, GMA News

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/balitambayan/umg/736768/kambing-at-maging-papaya-nagpositibo-sa-covid-19-sa-tanzania/story/>

Invasive ‘murder hornets’ spotted in US for the first time

Updated May 4, 2020, 4:41 PM

By Gabriela Baron

Asian giant hornets have been spotted in the United States for the first time.

Researchers nicknamed the species “murder hornet” because of its venomous sting that can kill a person if stung several times. The two-inch long hornets are also strong enough to puncture a beekeeper’s suit.

“They’re like something out of a monster cartoon, with this huge yellow-orange face,” Susan Cobey, a bee breeder at the Washington State University’s (WSU) Department of Entomology, said.

Beekeepers have reported piles of dead bees with their heads ripped off, an alarming sight in a country with a rapidly declining bee population.

Murder hornets target hives of honeybees, according to the Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA).

WSDA said that a few hornets can destroy a hive in a matter of hours and kill bees by decapitating them.

While it is still not clear how the giant hornets have ended up in the US, a WSU scientist suspects that they may have been transported in international cargo.

Scientists at the WSDA have since embarked on a full-scale hunt for the Asian hornets. State officials have also set up traps and launched an app to quickly report sightings.

“This is our window to keep it from establishing. If we can’t do it in the next couple of years, it probably can’t be done,” Chris Looney, an entomologist at the WSDA, said.