



Cimatu pinuri ang mga nakasagip sa ibong endemic sa gitna ng ECQ

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Manila, Philippines – Dahil sa pagkakasagip sa tinaguriang endemic bird sa gitna ng quarantine pinuri ni Environment Secretary Roy A. Cimatu ang mga wildlife officers na nakasagip sa blue-naped parrot sa Manila habang ipinatutupad ang enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) sa Luzon at iba pang lugar sa bansa upang mapigilan ang pagkalat ng COVID-19.

“Our wildlife enforcers deserve a salute for their efforts to recover a national treasure – the blue-naped parrot that is endemic to Luzon and classified as ‘near threatened’ or may be considered threatened with extinction in the near future,” sabi ni Cimatu.

Ayon sa DENR ang mga wildlife officers na tinutukoy ni Cimatu ay ang mga tauhan ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)-National Capital Region na pinangunahan ni Special Investigator Rey Florano.

Magugunitang noong Abril 29, 2020 nang magtungo ang grupo ni Florano sa condominium building sa San Andres Bukid matapos makatanggap ng tawag sa telepono mula sa isang residente na nagngangalang Athena Parado dahil sa pagkakakita sa ibon sa kanilang lugar.

Matapos mailigtas ang ibon ay agad itong dinala ng grupo sa Wildlife Rescue Center ng DENR’s Biodiversity Management Bureau sa Quezon City kung saan ito mananatili at aalagaan.

Ayon kay Cimatu, patuloy ang DENR sa pagtupad sa kanilang mandato na protektahan ang ating “flora at fauna” kahit na mayroong COVID-19 crisis.

Ang blue-naped parrot (*Tanygnathus lucionensis*) ay kasama sa International Union for Conservation of Nature’s Red List of Threatened Species na may status na “near threatened”. Ibig sabihin nito, nanganganib nang maubos ang naturang uri ng ibon dahil na rin sa pagliit ng bilang ng kanilang populasyon. Santi Celario

DENR conducts wildlife confiscation amid ECQ

By [BusinessMirror](#)

May 10, 2020



Shown in the photo are (from left) BMB resident veterinarian Dr. Esteven Toledo, Penro Rizal technical Services Division Chief Forester Ernesto Diso Jr., Penro Rizal Chief Isidro Mercado and BMB Senior ecosystems Management Specialist Dr. Rogelio Demelletes Jr.

Amid the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) to contain the spread of Covid-19, enforcement officers from the Department of Environment and Natural Resources Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (DENR Penro) and the Biodiversity Management Bureau's Task Force Philippine Operations Group on Ivory and Illegal Wildlife Trade held an operation on May 5 to confiscate a serval cat (inset) after it escaped from the care of its owner in Antipolo City, Rizal.



Environment Undersecretary Benny D. Antiporda (right), for Solid Waste Management and local Government Units Concerns, checks on two serval cats in cages and a blue-and-gold macaw brought to the BMB in Quezon City after they were seized on May 5. Also in photo is BMB veterinarian Dr. Esteven Toledo.

Serval cat is a threatened exotic species under the endangered category of the CITES Appendix II listing.

The owner's neighbors filed a complaint on the incident which led to the confiscation of two serval cats, one Ducorp's Cockatoo and one blue-and-gold macaw after the owner failed to immediately present the necessary permits to justify his possession of the exotic pets.

DENR asked: Initiate 'humane' control of Romblon macaques

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

May 10, 2020



Mother and baby long-tailed macaque

The Philippine Animal Welfare Society (PAWS) added its voice to the clamor to protect the Philippine long-tailed macaques on the island-municipality of Banton in Romblon, where the increasing number of the primate is reportedly starting to threaten farming communities.

In a joint statement, PAWS and Action for Primates (AP) called on the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) to deny permits to capture monkeys on the island.

Their action came following a BusinessMirror earlier report, which quoted Assistant Secretary Ricardo Calderon, concurrent director of DENR-Biodiversity Management Bureau, of the plan to allow harvesting of macaques on Banton Island as he sees the revival of native monkey farming amid the contagion.

Native monkey farms operate a captive-breeding program to export offsprings for research and development purposes.

The report has caught the attention of Action for Primates, which, through a letter to the DENR official, appealed to disallow the export of native monkeys.

In his response, Calderon gave the assurance that the DENR is addressing human-primate conflicts on a case-by-case basis.

He also assured animal-rights groups that the DENR will not allow harmful means in capturing the native monkeys, while wild monkey-farm operators will be strictly monitored during captive-breeding operations.

The groups insisted that the long-tailed macaques is listed as Near Threatened with a population that is decreasing based on the most recent assessment by the International Union for Conservation of Nature's (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species.

Among the threats identified for the decline in the number are hunting and habitat loss, the group said in a news statement.

The Philippine long-tailed macaques is listed under Appendix II of Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora. Being a signatory to CITES, the country has a responsibility to safeguard the conservation status of the primate, they said.

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“The trapping of wild primates inflicts immense suffering. Primates are intelligent and social animals. Capturing and removing them from their native habitat, family and social groups are cruel, and can result in injuries and even death. It also causes substantial suffering in the families left behind. Several official bodies and organizations recognize the suffering involved in the capturing of wild nonhuman primates,” they said.

The group quoted the International Primatological Society, which states that “the capture of nonhuman primates from the wild is stressful for the animals and increases the suffering, risk of injuries, spread of disease and even death during capture, storage and transport.”

According to PAWS and AP, one of the reasons given by the DENR for considering an application for the capture of the wild monkeys is the conflict arising between people and the monkeys.

However, they said conflict issues are usually due to human activities, such as the destruction and fragmentation of the natural habitat, forcing primates to compete with people over land and resources.

One scientific report has stated that “unsustainable human activities are now the major force driving primate species to extinction.”

The authors of the report estimate that “about 60 percent of nonhuman primate species are threatened with extinction and populations of 75 percent of nonhuman primate species are decreasing globally because of unsustainable human activities,” they said.

The two groups insisted that there are effective and humane methods that can be used to resolve conflicts between monkeys and people.

These include reproduction control, relocation and, most important, educating communities to modify their behavior that do not encourage monkeys to rely on humans for food. Among them are not feeding the monkeys and only using monkey-proof refuse containers.

“There are humane approaches to population control that can be adopted to resolve conflict, without resorting to the capture and removal of wild macaques for research,” they said.

At a time when there is increasing awareness of the devastating consequences that human activity is having on the natural world, including nonhuman primates, “it is imperative that we learn to coexist with other species rather than just eliminate them when conflicts arise,” said Dr. Nedim Buyukmihci, emeritus professor of Veterinary Medicine and representative of Action for Primates.

PAWS Executive Director Anna Cabrera said the proposed capture of Romblon macaques is inimical to animal welfare and is a direct violation of the Philippines’s Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act (RA 9147), which strictly prohibits the collection and capture of wildlife in the absence of scientific research on wildlife populations.

She also said that contrary to the DENR statement that macaques have been “introduced” to the area, locals have confirmed that these primates have been in Banton, Romblon, long before human activities like farming started there.

The question on who encroached on whose land now arises. Activities seen as acts of “nuisance” by animals are a direct result of humans’ collective failure to protect these primates’ habitats.

According to Cabrera, the DENR can set things right by taking immediate steps to establish a protected area for macaques and to develop eco-friendly systems within human communities to allow them to live in harmony with wildlife.

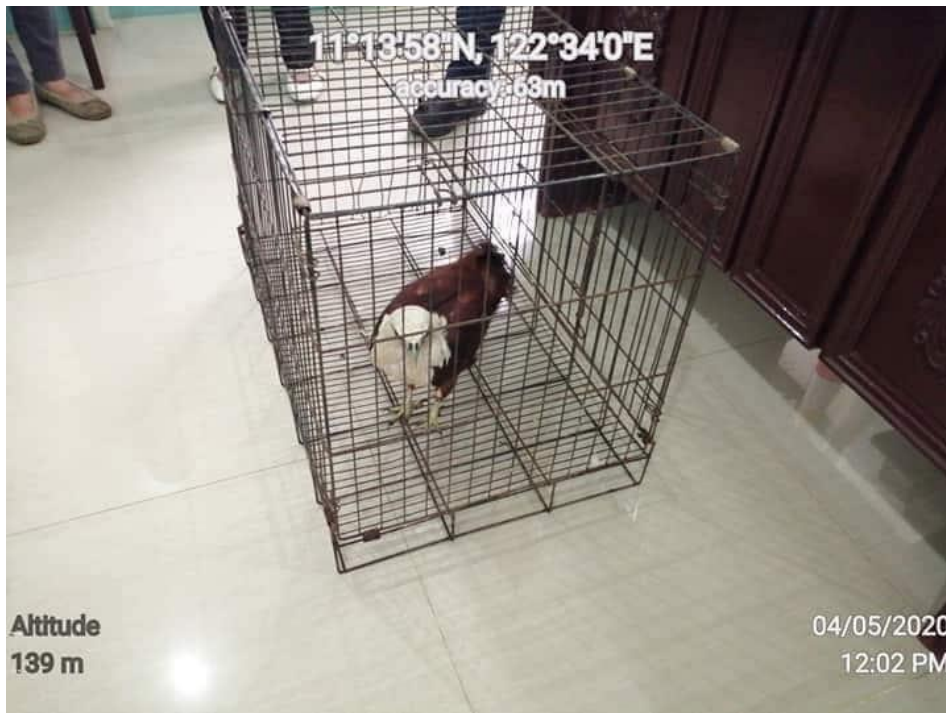
Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/05/10/denr-asked-initiate-humane-control-of-romblon-macaques/>

Juvenile eagle rescued in Iloilo

Published May 10, 2020, 10:51 AM

By Tara Yap

ILOILO CITY – A juvenile eagle, locally known as “Dapaya”, was recently rescued in Bingawan town, Iloilo province.



The Brahminy Kite (formerly known as red-backed sea-eagle) that has been rescued in Bingawan town, Iloilo province. (DENR's CENRO/ MANILA BULLETIN)

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) reported that a man, known only as “Boknoy”, turned over the Brahminy Kite, or a red-backed sea-eagle, to the local government of Bingawan.

“In this time of crisis when communities are in lockdown, these birds freely savor the clean air as they fly around,” said Francisco Milla Jr., DENR regional director for Western Visayas.

Mayor Mark Palabrica and the Bingawan Municipal Environment and Natural Office then turned it over to the DENR’s Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) in Barotac Nuevo town.

“We commend the vigilance of our communities who readily reported to the DENR any rescue they make of our wild animals. This is a big support to our biodiversity conservation efforts,” Milla added. DENR’s CENRO said the Brahminy Kite can soon be released back to its natural habitat as it “healthy and aggressive.”

Dead whale found

Published 7 hours ago
on May 11, 2020 12:40 AM
By **Trina Ibarle Orquiza**



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF SDSPPPO Dead whale A floating dead whale was discovered by local fishermen in Barangay Baculin, Hinatuan, Surigao del Sur on Saturday morning. The cause of the death of the sea mammal is still being investigated by authorities.

A dead whale was discovered by residents of a fishing village in Hinatuan town, Surigao del Sur on Saturday morning.

The whale, which is estimated to be 17 meters long, was discovered by fishermen at around 6:10 a.m. in Sitio Gacubay, Barangay Baculin. They then alerted personnel of the Hinatuan Municipal Police Office of the floating carcass.

The recovered dead whale is now under the custody of the Municipal Fisheries Office of Hinatuan town for proper disposition, while Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Caraga regional executive director Felix Alicer said he has already instructed the provincial office in Surigao del Sur to look into the matter.

‘Kaingin’ farming in Angat, Ipo watersheds

By [Frederick Silverio](#)

May 11, 2020

Kaingin, or slash-and-burn farming, has risen in the Angat and Ipo watersheds in Bulacan with the onset of the rainy season.

The Angat and Ipo watersheds are the primary sources of raw water for Metro Manila residents and their water elevation is fast receding, as the summer month led to bigger consumption of water coupled by the big demand to fend of the coronavirus pandemic.

Emelita Lingat, provincial environment and natural resources officer in Bulacan, confirmed that 23.7 hectares of kaingin lots have been monitored in Barangay San Lorenzo and 2.57 hectares in Barangay San Mateo, both in Norzagaray town.

To prevent kaingin from continuing, especially in watersheds, Lingat said they have been involving farmers in the National Greening Program (NGP) of the government.

For the kaingin lots that have already been cleared, kaingeros are being persuaded to intercrop with agro-forestry trees, besides providing them with information, education and campaign materials and training, Lingat added.

She said that they have also requested the Department of Agriculture for vegetable seeds to be given to people’s organizations involved in the NGP during this time of the enhanced community quarantine .

Meanwhile, Martin Francisco, chairman of the Sagip Sierra Madre Environmental Society Inc. based in the Pundahan ng mga Dumagat in Sitio Suha, Barangay San Mateo in Norzagaray noted that slash-and-burn farming might have been the option of some informal settlers, who have taken refuge at the watershed areas.

A minority of these informal settlers are from the indigenous Dumagat tribe, who have been engaged in these farming activities since the watersheds are considered as their ancestral lands.

DENR donates lumber to benefit frontliners, build
TITLE: quarantine facilities in Mindoro

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DENR donates lumber to benefit frontliners, build quarantine facilities in Mindoro

By DENR Mimaropa Published on May 10, 2020



DENR Mimaropa extends its full support to Occidental and Oriental Mindoro's efforts to ease the burden of medical frontliners and further prevent the spread of the disease in the provinces. (Photo by PENRO Oriental and Occidental Mindoro)

Amid the country's battle against COVID-19, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Mimaropa Region extends its full support to Occidental and Oriental Mindoro's efforts to ease the burden of medical frontliners and further prevent the spread of the disease in the provinces.

On April 22, the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) in Oriental Mindoro donated to the Provincial Government, 109 pieces (1,589.32 bd ft) of assorted lumber which shall be used by the provincial hospital to expand and improve its services for COVID-19 patients. The PENRO also sent out 20 pieces (344.66 bd ft) of hardwood to the Philippine Coast Guard to help them construct a quarantine facility at the port. The total market value of the donated lumber is P96,699.

Meanwhile, PENRO Occidental Mindoro, together with CENRO Sablayan Coordinating Office also donated lumber to the Provincial Hospital to help furnish its newly constructed dormitory for medical staff and COVID-19 frontliners.

On April 17, the team facilitated the signing of Deed of Donation and handed over to the hospital 78 pieces of lumber which have a total volume of 2,018.49 bd. ft. and an estimated market value of P70,000.

According to Chief of Hospital Dr. Reynaldo Feratero, the hard wood shall be used to make beds, cabinets, tables and chairs for the dormitory that is expected to house around 16-20 doctors and ancillary staff.

As of this writing, the Department of Health reported that Occidental Mindoro has five confirmed cases of COVID-19, and 21 suspect cases.

"We understand that some of our doctors and nurses need to stay at the dorm to attend to these patients. That is more than enough reason for us to mobilize our team and help the hospital furnish its dormitory," PENR Officer Ernesto Tañada said

DENR donates lumber to benefit frontliners, build
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DENR Mimaropa Executive Director Henry Adornado expressed that the agency recognizes the role of the frontliners in fighting the disease and helping not only the patients but the whole community to recover from it. It is but apt for the DENR to extend all possible help to support them.

"We hope that through the donated forest products, we are able to provide our doctors and nurses sturdy beds to sleep on; and other furnishings that could give them some respite after an exhausting day of work," the Director noted.

"Besides staying at home, it (donation of lumber) is perhaps the least that we could do in exchange for all the sacrifices that our frontliners have made in this very difficult time," he concluded. (DENR Mimaropa)



EDITORIAL - Sarap nang malinis na hangin

(Pang-masa) - May 11, 2020 - 12:00am

MALINIS na ang hangin sa Metro Manila mula nang mag-lockdown. Walang pumapasadang sasakyan, tigil pati train, eroplano at mga barko. At wala ring usok na nagmumula sa mga factory. Ang resulta, nawala ang air pollution sa Metro Manila. Nakikita na sa umaga ang kagandahan ng kapaligiran na walang smog (smoke at fog). Matatanaw na ang Antipolo at ang bulubundukin ng Sierra Madre. Napakagandang tingnan. Masarap ding damhin ang masarap na hangin.

Gumanda ang kalidad ng hangin sa loob ng dalawang buwan na pagpapatupad na enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) dahil sa COVID-19. Sa Mayo 15 ito magtatapos. Pag-uusapan pa kung magkakaroon ng extension sa Metro Manila.

Anuman ang maging pasya, may naibigay na kabutihan ang ECQ sa kalidad ng hangin sa Metro Manila. Ang tanong ngayon ay kapag tuluyan nang inalis ang lockdown at nagbalik na sa normal ang pamumuhay ng mamamayan, balik din kaya ang air pollution. Sa pagbabalik ng mga pribado at pampublikong sasakyan sa kalsada, muli na namang bubulwak sa mga tambutso ang maruming usok na lalason muli sa kapaligiran at unti-unting papatay sa mga tao. Sana, makaisip ng paraan kung paano mapapanatili ang malinis na hangin.

Ayon sa Department of Health (DOH), ang maruming hangin ay nagdudulot ng noncommunicable diseases (NCDs) gaya ng allergies, acute respiratory infections, chronic obstructive pulmonary diseases, cancer at cardiovascular diseases. Unang tinatamaan ng sakit ang mga pasahero at pedestrians dahil sila ang nakalantad sa maruming hangin. Bukod sa usok ng mga sasakyan, nalalanghap din ang usok ng mga sinunog na basura, goma, plastic at iba pang harmful wastes.

Maraming napatunayan habang ang bansa ay nasa ilalim ng quarantine. Isa rito ang katotohanang kapag nabawasan ang mga sasakyan, tiyak na magiging malinis ang hangin. Subukang mag-eksperimento na kahit isang linggo ay walang sasakyan sa MM. Malaking tulong ito para mabawasan ang air pollution at makalanghap ng sariwang hangin.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/pang-masa/punto-mo/2020/05/11/2013237/editorial-sarap-nang-malinis-na-hangin>

Balik-Probinsya mechanism being readied

Published 16 hours ago
on May 10, 2020 04:00 PM
By **Francis Wakefield**



SUSTAINABLE jobs are needed in the provinces if the Balik-Probinsya program is to succeed. W. Commons

Presidential spokesperson Secretary Harry Roque assured over the weekend that mechanisms will be put in place to ensure that those who will avail of the government's "Balik-Probinsya" program will have little motivation to go back to Metro Manila.

During the Laging Handa public briefing aired over government station PTV-4, Roque said guidelines will be put in place to ensure a smooth implementation of the program.

For his part, Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO) Secretary Martin Andanar acknowledged the assistance being provided by local government units (LGU) in preparing for the implementation of the program.

Andanar said Senator Christopher "Bong" Go was pleased to find out that a number of provinces are ready to become pilot testing areas of the BPP, including Leyte, Zamboanga del Norte, Lanao del Norte, Bukidnon, North Cotabato and Camarines Sur.

He said the Department of Social Welfare and Development has identified over 3,000 persons who are qualified and who are willing to try the program with the help of the Department of Labor.

Go pushed the program, his brainchild, to decongest Metro Manila and bring about economic prosperity in the countryside.

Under Go's proposal, the government will shoulder the transportation of families who would want to be relocated to provinces. There will also be livelihood assistance.

Go, who is from Mindanao, believes the implementation of the program would result to a more efficient delivery of public goods and services that can benefit all regions.

Last 6 May, President Rodrigo Duterte issued Executive Order 114 institutionalizing the Balik-Probinsya, Balik-Pag-asa Program and creating a council to oversee its implementation.

Post-crisis model

The intent of the program is to encourage city residents to relocate to the provinces for good.

Published 8 hours ago
on May 11, 2020 12:07 AM

By [Francis Wakefield](#)



The Balik Probinsya Program (BPP), which is an idea of Sen. Christopher Lawrence “Bong” Go, will be the standard in the post coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) terrain which the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said will be backed by incentives to participants of the scheme.

The program seeks to decongest Metro Manila by offering financial packages to transients or even permanent residents who will opt to relocate to their home provinces.

DTI Secretary Ramon Lopez said the provision of employment will be addressed through incentives to businesses which would choose greenfield areas for their base of operations.

Lopez said the 2020 Investment Priorities Plan (IPP) will feature the dispersal scheme as a priority primarily due to the nation’s experience during the pandemic where the virus epicenter are mostly in densely populated portions of the metropolis.

“The intent of the program is to encourage city residents to relocate to the provinces for good,” according to Lopez.

“And the way to do that is to invigorate infrastructure in most parts of the country to convince more people and businesses to settle outside Metro Manila,” he explained to *Daily Tribune* during a recent “Straight Talk” online forum.

The government is also working out a scheme under the Department of Agrarian Reform in which those willing to relocate out of the cities will be offered a parcel of land.

All should contribute

“Implementation of the Balik Probinsya program should be undertaken through a whole of government approach,” according to Lopez.

He added the government is reviewing proposals to reduce the disparity in the minimum wages among cities and provinces.

The Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) also indicated plans to offer housing units to beneficiaries of the program.

DHSUD Secretary Eduardo del Rosario said the department, through the National Housing Authority (NHA), has an inventory of housing units that can be made available to those who decide to return to their home provinces.

According to NHA, it has “unoccupied and unawarded” housing units that can be offered under the program institutionalized by President Rodrigo Duterte’s Executive Order (EO) 114.

The available units, located in various parts of the country, were originally intended for members of the uniformed services, particularly the Armed Forces of the Philippines.

“The DHSUD is all-out in supporting the Balik Probinsya program not only to decongest highly-urbanized cities but more importantly to make distribution of resources and opportunities equitable,” Del Rosario said.

Relocation should be permanent

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said mechanisms will be put in place to ensure that those who will avail of the program will no longer return or go back to Metro Manila.

“We are preparing the guidelines for the program, while we have an immediate implementation by helping those willing to return to the provinces due to the difficulties under the enhanced community quarantine. We have provinces where we will pilot the program,” Roque said.

Presidential Communications Operations Office (PCOO) Secretary Martin Andanar, also acknowledged the assistance being provided by local government units (LGU) in preparing for the implementation of the “Balik-Probinsya” program.

He said Go was pleased to find out that a number of provinces are ready to become pilot testing areas of the BPP which are Leyte, Zamboanga del Norte, Lanao del Norte, Bukidnon, North Cotabato at Camarines Sur.

Initial 3,000 qualified

“Aside from that, the government through the DSWD (Department of Social Welfare and Development) has identified more than 3,000 individuals who can qualify under the basic criteria of the program,” Andanar added.

Under Go’s proposal, the government will shoulder the transportation of families who would want to be relocated to provinces. There will also be livelihood assistance.

The Senator, who is from Mindanao, believes the implementation of the program would result to a more efficient delivery of public goods and services that can benefit all regions.

EO 114 issued on 6 May 2020, created the Balik Probinsya, Balik Pag-asa Program and created a council to implement it.

Go emphasized that the need to develop the countryside should be consistent with the policy direction of the Chief Executive to create robust economic activities and wealth generation outside Metro Manila or other urban centers.

“Under the ‘Balik Probinsya’ program, we will not only prevent the swift spread of diseases. This program is also about equitable distribution of the gains of our fast developing economy, balanced development of the urban and rural areas and poverty alleviation,” Go said.

with Hananeel Bordey
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Towards success of 'Balik Probinsya'

"We cannot force Filipinos to return to their provinces. We are only preparing this for those who are willing to start anew in the countryside.

Published 8 hours ago
on May 11, 2020 12:22 AM

By [Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go](#)

We cannot help but feel elated over the good reception we have received for our proposal of Balik Probinsya Program (BPP) from the members of the Cabinet, leaders of our local government units (LGU) and, most especially, from President Rodrigo Duterte himself who said that it would give Filipinos hope.

In fact, concerned national agencies and LGU have already initiated their preparations for the implementation of the program. Just recently, President Duterte has signed Executive Order 114, "Institutionalizing the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program as a Pillar of Balanced Regional Development, Creating a Council Therefor, and for Other Purposes," which will instruct concerned agencies to prepare and implement the "Balik Probinsya" program.

According to the EO, the BPP will bring "balanced regional development and equitable distribution of wealth, resources and opportunities through policies and programs that boost countryside development and inclusive growth." The program will also provide adequate social services to its people, promote employment and focus on key areas, such as empowerment of local industries, food security and infrastructure development in rural areas.

My well-wishes to Executive Secretary Salvador Medialdea on his designation as Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Council chairperson. He and the Council will be assisted by a Secretariat, which will be headed by National Housing Authority General Manager Jun Escalada as executive director.

As early as now, BPP executive director and NHA GM Jun Escalada and Mindanao Development Authority Secretary Manny Piñol have stated that provinces are ready to participate in the pilot testing phase of BPP. These provinces that have expressed their readiness include Leyte, Zamboanga del Norte, Lanao del Norte, Bukidnon, North Cotabato, Tawi-Tawi, Eastern Samar, Misamis Occidental and Camarines Sur.

I cannot express my gratitude enough to the leaders of these provinces. Through their efforts, we are now a step closer towards achieving our goals for the BPP. I would also like to urge other LGU to start conducting inventory of their idle lands, so they can be developed and used as sites for returning individuals and families who wish to settle in their provinces. I also urge concerned government agencies to closely coordinate with these local leaders to plan and craft protocols and processes ensuring the seamless implementation of the program.

Speaking of coordination, this will be an important element in the success of BPP. As I have mentioned before, this should be a whole-of-government approach which must involve all governance levels, down to the barangay. Without this element, the entire program could unravel and all our efforts will go to waste. It is for this reason that I call close coordination among concerned government agencies more than ever.

We are also happy that several government agencies already have programs and initiatives in place that can be integrated to the immediate phase of the program. For one, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) is already providing transportation assistance to stranded individuals and volunteers of the BPP under its Assistance to Individuals in Crisis Situation program. The department also provides a transitory package which includes food packs, hygiene kits, family kits and other non-food items from the Quick Response Fund.

Under its Negosyo sa Barangay Program, the Department of Trade and Industry will provide P8,000 to P10,000 startup capital for returnees who would like to start their own businesses. Other relevant programs of the Trade department include Pondo sa Pagbabago at Pag-asenso (P3) Program, Negosyo Centers, and the Shared Service Facilities Program.

As for those who want to undergo technical education and skills training, the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority will also offer free technical education and skills training for the beneficiaries. The Department of Agrarian Reform has also identified government lands which may be used to build socialized housing for the returnees and beneficiaries.

Aside from these departments, the Departments of Agriculture, Budget and Management, Labor and Employment, Health (DoH), Education, Environment and Natural Resources, Public Works and Highways and Transportation, Commission on Higher Education, National Housing Authority and National Economic and Development Authority have also provided lists of their efforts for the short-term phase of the BPP.

To ensure that jobs are waiting for Filipinos who will populate these settlements, I have urged the government to attract even more foreign businesses to invest in the country, particularly in less developed regions. Key to this is ensuring the grant of incentives to investments in the provinces such as those proposed under the Corporate Income Tax and Incentives Rationalization Act (CITIRA) bill of Sen. Pia Cayetano.

I have also reiterated the importance of ensuring quick and responsive health care to the people in the countryside, eliminating the need for them to travel to metropolitan areas just to seek medical attention. As the chairman of the Senate Committee on Health, the DoH can rest assured that I will support them in enhancing their initiatives such as the Health Facilities Enhancement Program and the Botika ng Barangay Program.

As for individuals and families who wish to be part of the BPP, the government has already launched a website where they can inquire and enrol in the program. The DSWD has said that 3,000 individuals have already signified their interest to take part in the program. They also added that workers stranded in Metro Manila will also be assisted. However, let me also clarify that the Balik Probinsya Program is voluntary. We cannot force Filipinos to return to their provinces. We are only preparing this for those who are willing to start anew in the countryside.

To our detractors: This is the time for us to find solutions that will help our people. This is not a time for bashing nor nitpicking an otherwise good and well-meaning initiative. Those who say that the BPP is redundant or a repackage of previous or existing programs miss the point. We are doing this now because this is the best time for it.

We are doing this now because there is political will to do this ambitious initiative and because there are many Filipinos who want to go back to the provinces, because they are already fed up with the quality of life in Metro Manila.

Again, I am merely a proponent of the Balik Probinsya Program. It is the Executive department's job to implement the EO. But as a proponent, I will continue to help and work with our national agencies. I will also continue to remind them to implement the program immediately to benefit all affected Filipinos who wish to go back to their home provinces.

At the same time, as a Senator of the Republic, I will recommend necessary measures that can support the objectives of giving Filipinos hope for a better future after the COVID-19 crisis.



The government's task force on the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic is scheduled to meet to discuss whether to retain or relax the restrictions in ECQ areas after May 15.

Presidential Photo/Karl Norman Alonzo

Duterte to decide on ECQ today

[Alexis Romero](#) (The Philippine Star) - May 11, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — President Duterte is expected to decide today on the fate of Metro Manila and other coronavirus high-risk areas still under enhanced community quarantine or ECQ.

The government's task force on the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic is scheduled to meet to discuss whether to retain or relax the restrictions in ECQ areas after May 15.

Metro Manila, home to more than 12 million people and contributor of more than a third of the country's gross domestic product, has been under ECQ since March 17. The ECQ has been extended twice and is supposed to last until May 15.

Aside from Metro Manila, other areas under ECQ until Friday are Central Luzon except Aurora province, Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon), Pangasinan, Benguet, Albay, Iloilo including Iloilo City, Cebu including Cebu City, Bacolod City, Zamboanga City and Davao City.

"On Monday, we expect the President's approval on what will happen to us on May 16," presidential spokesman Harry Roque said at a televised press briefing over the weekend.

Roque said members of the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) on Emerging Infectious Diseases are expected to meet this morning to come up with a final recommendation to Duterte.

"So it's not true that all places in Metro Manila will shift to GCQ (general community quarantine) and it's also not true that the entire Metro Manila will remain under ECQ. Let's wait... we expect the IATF to have a special meeting in the morning," the Palace spokesman said.

"In the afternoon, they will submit to the President the recommendation on what will happen to the areas that are still under ECQ," he added.

The government imposed ECQ in some areas to prevent further spread of the coronavirus, which has infected more than 10,000 people in the country.

Under ECQ, only essential businesses and services, including those related to food production and health services, are allowed to operate and public transportation is suspended. In GCQ areas, selected businesses may reopen but they should observe social distancing and health standards like temperature checks and disinfection of facilities. Some forms of public transportation are also allowed to operate but at reduced capacity.

Officials previously said the government is leaning toward relaxing quarantine restrictions in Metro Manila areas that have exhibited a slowdown in the growth of coronavirus cases.

“While there is no final decision yet, I can say that the decision on the areas that will remain under ECQ will be gradual and will also be surgical,” Roque said.

Despite no final word yet, Philippine National Police (PNP) deputy chief for operations Lt. Gen. Guillermo Lorenzo Eleazar said they will strengthen police visibility on the streets once Metro Manila, Central Luzon, Calabarzon and other areas transition to a GCQ from an ECQ.

This includes the deployment of police personnel near commercial establishments and the conduct of mobile checkpoints to inspect private vehicles. The Highway Patrol Group will also be doing random inspections on major roads.

Eleazar suggests that local government units should retain their curfew to deter non-workers from loitering in the evening.

More testing facilities

Also yesterday, Vice President Leni Robredo pushed for the establishment of additional COVID-19 testing facilities in the country.

Robredo said the country’s health system must be prepared should there be a resurgence in COVID cases once the ECQ is lifted.

“The good thing about Singapore and Japan is that their health system is prepared to test many people,” the Vice President said over dzXL.

Robredo has been pushing for mass testing so that health officials can get a clearer picture of the extent of COVID-19 transmission and infection in the country.

She said the country has a testing capacity of 12,000 a day, which is still far from the government’s target of 30,000 tests per day.

Robredo also noted that most of the tests were conducted at the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine and other accredited hospitals.

“If you look at the results, it appears that all of those who tested positive were tested at the hospitals or RITM,” she said.

Robredo said the government should come up with more accessible testing facilities, similar to the drive-through testing stations in South Korea.

The Vice President also called for the resumption of work in the construction industry as well as reopening of services such as clinics and salons.

“Maybe we could do this in phases,” she suggested.

Mass testing

Senate President Vicente Sotto III said yesterday that mass testing coverage nationwide must be widened quickly, and expressed concern that most workers will soon be allowed to go back to their workplaces even as the rate of SARS-CoV-2 infections – which lead to COVID-19 – remains high, especially in Metro Manila, local epicenter of the pandemic.

He cited the case of the Senate, where 20 employees tested positive during a rapid testing conducted on staffers who reported for work when session resumed last May 4.

Sotto warned the Senate experience should serve as an eye opener to government leaders and the general population who have been pushing for the relaxation of quarantine rules even while the threat of infection remains high.

He said while the Department of Health is now conducting mass testing in all provinces, this should be expanded to cover more persons so health officials can get a clearer picture of the extent of COVID-19 transmission and infection.

Resuming public transport

Meanwhile, the Senate committee on public services will start today its hearings on the reopening of the transportation sector.

The committee, chaired by Sen. Grace Poe, will look into the steps to be taken by the government to allow public transportation while also implementing precautions to prevent the spread of the virus.

“A data-driven, evidenced-based, and more lasting institutional post pandemic mobility plan must immediately be crafted in consultation with experts and stakeholders to lay down and converge important insights, concerns and issues as regards the use of mass transportation in the new normal,” Poe said. – **Manny Tupas, Helen Flores, Paolo Romero**

Duterte to give decision on ECQ on Monday

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published May 10, 2020 10:39:01 PM



(FILE PHOTO)

Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, May 10) — President Rodrigo Duterte is set to decide on Monday whether or not to extend the enhanced community quarantine in Metro Manila and other areas with a large number of COVID-19 cases.

Duterte is expected to address the issue during his weekly televised briefing, as he reports to the nation his administration's efforts in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic.

It will be the President's third time to render a decision on the extension or lifting of the ECQ.

Over the weekend, all 17 Metro Manila mayors have [agreed to make no specific recommendation](#) to the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) regarding the ECQ, saying they will abide with the President's decision.

Metropolitan Manila Development Authority General Manager Jojo Garcia said the mayors agreed that there should only be one policy for all of Metro Manila. He said having different quarantine rules for every area is not an option, citing the difficulty in implementing them considering the contiguous and porous nature of their borders.

The Metro Manila Council, composed of NCR mayors and the MMDA, was expected to come up with its proposal to the IATF on whether to ease or maintain strict quarantine measures.

Garcia said the mayors instead presented to the task force three possible scenarios: extend the ECQ for two weeks, place Metro Manila under a more relaxed general community quarantine, or opt for a hybrid of both.

Earlier, Interior Secretary Eduardo Año said the mayors' pitch [will be a "big factor"](#) in the final recommendation the task force will submit to Duterte. The IATF-EID will discuss and evaluate the situation also on Monday, ahead of the final recommendation to the President.

Duterte will have the final say on whether to extend or ease the quarantine measures placed on Metro Manila and several provinces beyond May 15. He first placed Metro Manila under enhanced community quarantine on March 15, but it was expanded the next day to cover all of Luzon until April 12.

The Luzon lockdown was then extended until April 30. Metro Manila and several "high-risk" provinces have remained under strict quarantine.

As of [4 p.m. on Sunday](#), the Department of Health has recorded 10,794 COVID-19 cases in the country.

The DOH reported 77 of the new infections in the National Capital Region, 75 in Central Visayas, and 32 more in other regions nationwide.

Meanwhile, recoveries have reached 1,924 after 82 more patients survived the viral disease. Fifteen more patients have died, raising the death toll to 719.

Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/5/10/duterte-ecq-decision-may11-iatf.html>

Selective ECQ lifting eyed

Palace: Task force to rule on 'granular and surgical' easing in certain barangays in Metro

posted May 11, 2020 at 01:20 am

by [Joyce Pangco Panares and Vito Barcelo, Joel E. Zurbano, Rio N. Araja, Maricel V. Cruz](#)

A "granular" and "surgical" lifting of the Metro Manila-wide lockdown after May 15 will likely be implemented at the barangay level and not per city, a well-placed Palace source said as the country continues to struggle to curb the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic.



LAST-DITCH BID. Several housewives commemorate Mother's Day by queuing up as early as 5 a.m. outside the Bagong Pag-Asa Elementary School in Quezon City and join other residents in a last-ditch effort to obtain cash aid under the government's Social Amelioration Program whose first tranche ends May 10, 2020. CNN Facebook page

This after Metro Manila mayors were split on the possible lifting of the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ), with most local executives favoring another 15-day extension.

"We will make our decision based on data. If we do it per barangay, it is easier to implement ECQ measures," the source said in a phone interview.

On Saturday, the 17 mayors, who comprise the Metro Manila Council along with the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority, failed to reach a consensus on whether to recommend a lockdown extension or a shift to a general community quarantine (GCQ).

"What they (mayors) want is for us to decide as one. Meaning, if you choose GCQ, it should be for the entire Metro Manila. If you choose ECQ, again it should be for the entire Metro Manila," MMDA General Manager Jojo Garcia said in a television interview.

San Juan Mayor Francis Zamora, for one, wanted a two-week extension of the ECQ even if his city is being considered by the Interior department as among the two cities that can already shift to GCQ, along with Valenzuela.

"I am thankful that San Juan is among the two cities in Metro Manila that are being eyed for possible GCQ by May 15...But I do not want to waste the sacrifices of my constituents for the past two months and gamble on their lives. Whatever economic losses we are suffering now, we can recover from that eventually," Zamora said.

Mayor Joy Belmonte of Quezon City, which has the highest number of COVID-19 cases among Metro Manila's 16 cities and one municipality, backed the lifting of the lockdown during the MMC meeting.

On Friday, Belmonte called for a "transition period" that would allow local businesses in Quezon City to resume operations while following strict health protocols under a "new normal setting."

"While the health of our residents remains our primary priority, we also need to look after the local economy, which has been affected severely by the dreaded virus," Belmonte said in a statement ahead of the Saturday meeting of Metro Manila local executives.

Last week, Health Undersecretary Rosario Vergeire claimed the country has already begun to “flatten the curve” after achieving a 10 percent COVID-19 test positivity rate, the benchmark of the World Health Organization.

The positivity rate is the percentage of people who tested positive for the infection out of the total number of persons tested.

At present, however, the government’s “mass testing” only covers severe to critical cases. The National Task Force COVID-19 said the number of tests will only reach the 30,000 daily mark by May 30.



In another barangay in Dagat-Dagatan, Navotas City, SAP beneficiaries observe social distancing and take turns claiming the promised aid. Norman Cruz

Ateneo de Manila University mathematics professor Felix Muga II, for his part, contested claims that the country has already succeeded in flattening the curve.

“We are still seeing increases, even if these are slow. If we have flattened the curve, the case graph should look like a table top,” he said in a virtual forum Friday.

Muga also warned the real number of cases will increase once the Department of Health processes its backlogs.

Last week, the country breached the 300-mark for new cases for two consecutive days, posting record-high figures in the last month.

On Wednesday, the Department of Health recorded 320 new cases. A day after, the number of new cases reached 339.

From April 7 to May 5, the number of new cases only ranged from 102 to 295.

Palace spokesman Harry Roque said the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) will decide today (Monday) the areas in Metro Manila that would be placed under the GCQ.

There’s no final decision, but the whole of Metro Manila would not be under GCQ and the whole of Metro Manila would not remain under ECQ after May 15, Roque said.

At least five to six areas will be downgraded from the ECQ to GCQ, Roque said during a briefing.

Quezon City has the most number of COVID-19 cases with 1,518, followed by Manila, with 749; Caloocan City, with 236; Las Piñas City, with 201; Makati City, with 472; Malabon City, with 58; Mandaluyong City, with 404; Marikina City, with 135; Muntinlupa City, with 176; Parañaque City, with 499; Pasig City, with 307; Taguig City, with 283; Pasay City, with 227; San Juan City, with 252; Valenzuela City with 122; Pateros with 24; and Navotas City with three.

He said decision to the transition from ECQ to GCQ by the IATF-EID would depend on the severity of the contagion in specific localities.

Meanwhile, Roque said the IATF-EID also agreed to amend quarantine guidelines to allow construction and infrastructure projects even in areas under ECQ.

He said construction personnel performing emergency work, disaster risk reduction, and rehabilitation works, sewerage projects, water service facility projects, and digital works are now allowed to report for work in ECQ areas.

Roque said the IATF-EID also allowed the priority public and private infrastructure projects for food production, agriculture, fishery, fish port development, energy, housing, communication, water facilities, manufacturing, and business process outsourcing.

He said allowing the implementation of projects in areas under ECQ should be in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Department of Public Works and Highways (DWPH).

In Saturday's meeting, Parañaque City Mayor Edwin Olivarez, Navotas City Mayor Toby Tiangco, Mandaluyong City Mayor Carmelita Abalos, San Juan City's Zamora, Pasig City Mayor Vico Sotto, Valenzuela City Mayor Rex Gatchalian, Pateros Mayor Miguel Ponce III, Caloocan City Mayor Oscar Malapitan, and Taguig City Mayor Lino Edgardo Cayetano supported a two-week extension of the ECQ. Pasay City Mayor Imelda Calixto-Rubiano favored a week-long extension of ECQ.

But mayors of three major cities -- Abigail Binay of Makati, Francisco Domagoso of Manila, and Belmonte of Quezon City -- and of the cities of Malabon (Mayor Antolin Oreta) and Las Piñas (Mayor Imelda Aguilar) were in favor of shifting to a GCQ.

Meanwhile, the National Capital Region Police Office said it would deploy about 100 policemen at LRT and MRT stations to ensure commuters observe physical distancing and other rules once urban trains start running again.

Police desks will also be set up in bus and jeepney terminals to assist commuters, said Metro Manila police director Maj. Gen. Debold Sinas.
In other developments:

- Senator Joel Villanueva on Sunday urged the IATF-MEID to first look the situation carefully before coming up with the decision whether to extend the enhanced community quarantine in Metro Manila.

"As we have seen in the experience of other countries, premature lifting of stay-at-home orders almost always resulted to more infections and overwhelmed health care systems. We're not sure if we are even done with the first wave," said Villanueva.

- Deputy Speaker and Camarines Sur Rep. Luis Raymund Villafuerte pushed for the passage of a bill designed to gear up Filipinos for the "new normal" way of life with the continued threat of COVID-19. "We want Covid-19 to go away sooner than later, of course," Villafuerte said, "But that scenario doesn't seem likely to happen. Hence, it behooves us lawmakers in both chambers to help our people prepare for, and adapt, to the new normal life of continued physical distancing plus other stringent safety and health protocols in order to keep us safe, save lives and prevent the further spread of this deadly virus in our communities." The proposed New Normal for the Workplace and Public Spaces Act of 2020, as outlined in HB 6623, aims to prepare and educate Filipinos for life after the lifting of the quarantine or containment restrictions that were imposed separately by the national government and local government units in March, through new norms of social or physical distancing and safety measures in government and private offices, schools, commercial establishments and other public spaces.

- Senate President Vicente Sotto III on Sunday urged the government to increase or widen the coverage of the COVID-19 mass testing activities as areas under the ECQ anticipate their transition to GCQ. Sotto also expressed concern that most workers will soon be allowed to go back to their workplaces even as the rate of infections remain high, especially in Metro Manila, which is the local epicenter of the pandemic.

- The police said the crime rate went down 61 percent during the ECQ—and batted for a curfew to be instituted even after the ECQ is lifted.

‘Strict measures are the new normal’ under General

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Photo shows members of the Highway Patrol Group, which is part of the enforcement arm of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases, enforcing quarantine rules.

Release / JTF CV Shield

'Strict measures are the new normal' under General Community Quarantine

[Franco Luna](#) (Philstar.com) - May 10, 2020 - 6:44pm

MANILA, Philippines — The enforcement arm of the country's COVID-19 task force is gearing up for stricter implementation of quarantine rules even after enhanced community quarantine is lifted in some areas.

The Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) is set to convene on Monday to discuss possible scenarios post-May 15.

In a statement sent to reporters, Police Lt. Gen. Guillermo Eleazar, who heads the Joint Task Force Corona Virus Shield (JTF CV Shield), said that should the shift to GCQ in some areas still under the enhanced quarantine take place, that would mean heightened police visibility.

While all quarantine control points would likely remain under GCQ, Eleazar said, the procedure to pass through them will likely be eased to avoid traffic buildup.

“Under GCQ, more establishments will be allowed to operate because our economy will be partially opened. This means that more people would be allowed to go out so our police visibility must be in these areas in order to strictly implement the basic rules such as wearing of face masks and physical distancing,” said Eleazar.

According to Eleazar, the JTF CV Shield was looking at intensifying mobile checkpoints and random checking of private vehicles by personnel of the Highway Patrol Group (HPG) along with the deployment of motorcycle-riding patrolmen.

Metro Manila and some parts of mainland Luzon have breached 50 days or 7 weeks of enhanced community quarantine.

‘Strict measures are the new normal’ under General

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Lower crime incidence

As it stands, the national police is already carrying out what it called a tighter enforcement of quarantine rules that they likened to martial law, where quarantine violators would no longer receive warning before arrest.

This has not been without its lapses: during this time, police have [shot a man](#) despite onlookers telling them that he had mental health issues and was not armed, [attempted to arrest](#) a man in his own driveway, and barged into a private condominium after threatening to arrest members of its security detail.

Police leadership, along with the Department of Interior and Local Government, continue to defend these actions.

Eleazar said in his statement that crime had been trending downwards in the days since enhanced community quarantine was declared, but that the resumption of economic activities could possibly embolden criminal elements to act.

In view of this, Eleazar said personnel of the Philippine National Police and Armed Forces of the Philippines would also be tapped for visibility to be on the lookout for criminal elements.

According to the JTF CV Shield's daily report on Sunday morning, 167,278 violators have been recorded since March 17, the first day of the enhanced community quarantine. Of this number, 47,257, or 28%, were arrested.

President Rodrigo Duterte's last May 4 report to Congress also said that over 1,200 cases of violence against women and children were reported to the police in that same span of time.

“The challenge now is how to sustain it. So our kababayan should expect continuous stricter measures such as curfew during nighttime because this measure is not only to prevent the spread of COVID-19 but also as our preventive measure against criminal elements,” said Eleazar.

“We ask the public to gradually accept the fact that these strict measures are the new normal in terms of peace and order under the time of this pandemic,” he added.

Harder to enforce quarantine rules under GCQ – Eleazar

By [Victor Reyes](#)

-May 11, 2020



POLICE deputy chief for operations and concurrent Joint Task Force COVID Shield chief Lt. Gen. Guillermo Eleazar on Sunday said enforcing quarantine rules will be more difficult once Metro Manila transitions to general community quarantine (GCQ) from its current enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) status.

The Inter-Agency Task Force on the management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) is expected to discuss today if the ECQ will be extended beyond May 15. Interior Secretary Eduardo Año has said some cities may transition to GCQ already due to improved condition.

The 17 Metro Manila mayors have recommended three scenarios to the task force on the fate of the isolation period. These are: extension of the ECQ for two more weeks, from May 16-30; GCQ will be imposed in the entire Metro Manila; and a modified GCQ, wherein LGUs are allowed to impose a lockdown on a specific barangay or zone if needed.

Eleazar said under a GCQ, there will be more people and vehicles in the streets as quarantine rules will be relaxed, employees are allowed to go back to work, and businesses can partially resume.

“Insofar as the police is concerned, this GCQ will be more challenging for us because it’s not yet back to normal. I mean, there will be more people, more vehicles out in the streets,” said Eleazar. “What we are saying is we cannot just inspect all vehicles passing through our checkpoints, especially in NCR.”

Eleazar said the PNP did not face a similar problem when some provinces were downgraded to GCQ starting May 1 because there were fewer vehicles and because the areas were less populated compared to Metro Manila.

Eleazar said the police will have to resort to random checking only, owing to the large number of people and vehicles that will be in the streets when GCQ is adopted in Metro Manila. “In reality, we cannot strictly enforce checkpoint operations especially in urbanized areas like Metro Manila. So what we’re going to do (under GCQ in Metro Manila) is random or staggered (checking only),” he said.

TOTAL LOCKDOWN

After the one-week total lockdown imposition at the Welfareville Compound in Barangay Addition Hills in Mandaluyong City, which started last Thursday, Mayor Menchie Abalos said Barangay Mauway will be under a three-day total lockdown beginning today, Monday.

Barangay Mauway has 71 confirmed COVID-19 cases, 102 suspected cases and three deaths.

Harder to enforce quarantine rules under GCQ -

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Abalos said residents will be subjected to rapid testing. Those who will test positive will be subjected to RT-PCR testing and housed in a government isolation facility to avoid infecting family members.

All quarantine passes are canceled while the total lockdown regulation is enforced. Residents can leave their homes only for emergency medical purposes.

All establishments including wet markets and sari-sari stores will be closed and unauthorized vehicles are forbidden to enter or leave the barangay.

Abalos said she has likewise asked business establishments to have their workers tested before they are allowed to return to work.

The government has already released the guidelines for malls and other establishments that will be allowed to partially reopen once Metro Manila's status is downgraded to GCQ. – *With Christian Oineza*

LTFRB to allow only one bus route on EDSA once

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LTFRB to allow only one bus route on EDSA once ECQ is lifted

Published May 10, 2020 8:35pm

By ERWIN COLCOL, GMA News

From the previous 61, the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) will provide only a single bus route dedicated to EDSA once the enhanced community quarantine is lifted.

During the virtual hearing of the House Committee on Transportation on Saturday, it was also revealed that out of the 96 bus routes in Metro Manila, including those that ply through EDSA, only 29 bus routes will be given a special franchise.

LTFRB chair Martin Delgra, in the hearing, said they decided to use the COVID-19 health crisis as an opportunity to rationalize all land-based transportation systems and shorten routes to allow for a faster turnaround of buses and other public utility vehicles.

Delgra said only one bus route will be dedicated to EDSA, while all other trips that were previously served by buses that also traverse EDSA will have to be served by separate and dedicated bus routes.

Under this new scheme, a commuter traveling from Fairview to Makati would have to get on a bus at Fairview and get off at EDSA. He would then get on a bus on the EDSA route and get off at Ayala, from where he may get on another bus to reach his destination in Makati.

These "rationalized" routes will replace the old ones not only during the general community quarantine but even beyond that as part of the Department of Transportation's effort to reform Metro Manila's outdated land-based transport system, he added.

According to Delgra, acquiring franchises for buses and other modes of transport is initiated by operators. Therefore, when these franchises are applied and issued, they are mostly from the perspective of the operators.

"The longer the route, the more expected commuters they will get and therefore in terms of profit, they would be able to be assured of the economic fundamentals of their operation. That model is no longer relevant today," he said.

Sarmiento supported the move of the LTFRB, noting that this was similar to his proposed "centralized and synchronized bus dispatch system."

"For me it is really the right time to reform the land sector. I will be supporting you but I'm hoping that you will plan it well and execute it well. The most important here is for the public to have the transportation system that they need come GCQ," he said.

"The public transport system, and I'm referring to the land-based public transport system, is in dire need of reform, even pre-COVID scenario. Part of that is having to improve the efficiency of our public transport system. What has happened in the last 30 or 40 years, the model of bus franchises is no longer relevant today and we have been saying that even at the start of this administration," he added.

LTFRB to allow only one bus route on EDSA once

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During the virtual hearing, the Department of Transportation said they are fully ready to lift the ban on public transportation in Metro Manila once the ECQ is lifted, except for jeepney and motorcycle taxis as they failed to comply with the parameters set by the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases on social distancing.

Meanwhile, jeepneys will be allowed subject to the approval of the IATF, the department added.

The ECQ in Metro Manila and in other areas of the country is in effect until May 15. — **BM, GMA News**

LRT 1 sanitizes trains ahead of reopening

posted May 10, 2020 at 08:10 pm

by [Darwin G. Amojelar](#)

Light Rail Manila Corp., the operator of Light Rail Transit Line 1, said it is implementing health and safety measures to fight the spread of Covid-19 once the line reopens to the public.

LRMC said it was working with partners to develop innovative sanitation technologies and methods to be more efficient and effective in keeping the railway safe for passengers.



Train disinfection. Light Rail Manila Corp. will implement health and safety measures such as disinfection activities to fight the spread of coronavirus disease 2019 once the line reopens its trains to the public. The Department of Transportation released new safety guidelines for mass public transportation once the enhanced community quarantine in Metro Manila is lifted.

It said it would provide employees with face masks, hygiene supplies, regular health checks and modified work arrangements. “We look forward to serving once again our passengers who rely on the LRT-1 for their daily commute. We are committed to keeping you safe and giving you peace of mind as you ride our trains and return to your routine,” said LRMC president and chief executive Juan F. Alfonso.

“Now more than ever, we appeal for your cooperation as we all face this new normal,” he said.

The company said it would leverage on the use of technology and encouraged passengers to go digital and use the ikotMNL mobile app to easily get updates and announcements, plan their trips, check the LRT-1’s schedule and crowd status at the stations ahead of time.

New infections surge ahead of lockdown expiry

posted May 11, 2020 at 01:00 am

by [Rio N. Araja and Jess Malabanan](#)

Patients reported to have recovered from the deadly novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) now number 1,924, after health authorities registered 82 new recoveries.



TWO-WHEEL RIDE. In this era of mandatory social distancing, a rider-only vehicle becomes the favored mode of transportation, like the electric scooter driven by a youngster along Padre Faura St. in Manila. The government encourages the use of two-wheeled vehicles such as motorcycles and bicycles whose specs and safety features suit the 'new normal'.

The number of cases nationwide also climbed up to 10,794 with 184 new infections, only five days before the enhanced community quarantine over Metro Manila and other high-risk areas expires on May 15.

Of these new cases, 77 or 42 percent were from Metro Manila, 75 or 41 percent were from Region VII, while the remaining 32 or 17 percent were from other parts of the country, the Department of Health said.

Meanwhile, the death toll climbed to 719 after 15 more patients succumbed to the respiratory illness.

In the country's former capital of Quezon City, the local government reported 1,524 confirmed cases of COVID-19. In its statement, the city government said the number of COVID-19 cases reached 1,524 as of May 9, 7 p.m.

Meanwhile, the Department of Foreign Affairs said there were no reported new cases of COVID-19 among Filipinos abroad.

This is the first time there were no new cases nor fatalities since the agency started issuing reports on COVID-19 affected Filipinos abroad.

The number of confirmed COVID-19 cases among Filipinos abroad remains at 2,178, with 253 deaths.

As of Sunday, 1,283 of the identified cases are undergoing treatment for the disease, broken down regionally as follows: 147 in the Asia-Pacific, 412 in Europe, 531 in the Middle East and Africa, and 193 in the Americas. This coincided with a statement from the Bases Conversion Development Authority in New Clark City that 50 OFWs diagnosed as carriers of the virus disease were undergoing treatment at a makeshift clinic of the National Government Administrative Center building since Thursday.

The patients, according to the statement, were transported to NCC to isolate them and for extensive treatment. The BCDA did not mention the origin of OFWs and the specific place where they were picked up before they were transported straight to NCC in Capas, Tarlac.

BCDA president Vince Dizon said: "NGAC is one of the We Heal As One Centers put up by the government to reduce the community spread of the disease and decongest hospitals. "In the quarantine center, COVID-positive patients are provided with 24/7 medical care, free meals, and free Internet connection."

NGAC currently has 688 cubicles but the facility, manned by BCDA and CDC under the supervision of the DOH, can still be expanded to accommodate up to 1,000 patients.

Source: <https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/323443>



DOST looking into anti-viral properties of lagundi, tawa-tawa

[Rainier Allan Ronda](#) (The Philippine Star) - May 11, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Aside from virgin coconut oil (VCO), the Department of Science and Technology will fund the research and development for the recognition and approval of lagundi and tawa-tawa as potential treatments for the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), Secretary Fortunato dela Peña revealed.

In an interview with “The Chiefs” on Signal TV’s One News Wednesday last week, Dela Peña said the agency was not limiting its R&D support to VCO because “all three have already shown antiviral properties.”

He pointed out that studies have also been conducted on the antiviral properties of lagundi and tawa-tawa, which yielded promising results.

“In the case of... lagundi and tawa-tawa, each of these has gone through first stages of clinical trials but for different diseases, like lagundi is really for the respiratory ailments, ubo (cough) and tawa-tawa has been tried for dengue,” Dela Peña said.

He added that the R&D is fast depleting DOST resources.

“This year, we’re practically using up all our funds, all of our R&D budget for health, on COVID-19. And probably, by end of May, we don’t have any more money for other research in the area of health. But fortunately, the DBM told us ‘If you run out of money and you are still doing researches on COVID-19, just approach us and we will help you’,” Dela Peña said.

The DOST chief said the department has issued calls for proposals for R&D studies on lagundi and tawa-tawa.

“We are waiting for the proposals to be completed. The first part would be the in-vitro trials of the formulations. These have to be done abroad. Only when the in-vitro trials show promising results will the clinical trials be undertaken,” Dela Peña told The STAR in a phone interview yesterday.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/05/11/2013200/dost-looking-anti-viral-properties-lagundi-tawa-tawa>

CSC sets alternative work arrangements for gov't agencies

By: [Patricia Denise M. Chiu](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:18 AM May 10, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — The Civil Service Commission (CSC) has set alternative work arrangements for government employees amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

In a resolution, CSC suggested work-from-home arrangements, skeleton workforce, four-day or compressed workweek, and staggered working hours that agencies could adopt during the pandemic.

“These interim guidelines would ensure that government agencies continue to fulfill their mandate amid the pandemic, while protecting the health and safety of their workers,” CSC chair Alicia de la Rosa-Bala said.

Under the resolution, the CSC said employees designated as skeleton workforce should be entitled to hazard pay on top of the compensatory time off, or overtime pay granted for authorized services rendered outside of an employee’s regular work hours.

Under a four-day compressed workweek arrangement, the employees’ workweek will be compressed to four days each week.

“This may be adopted by agencies in areas placed under general community quarantine,” the CSC said, adding that agencies could also adopt staggered working hours, particularly in offices, or agencies that observe work shifting or flexible working time.

The CSC also said government agencies could use a combination of two or more of the listed alternative working arrangements to suit their respective needs. However, agencies need to formulate their internal rules and regulations to effectively implement their chosen work arrangements.

Test. Test. Test.

posted May 11, 2020 at 12:15 am

by [Jude Acidre](#)

A few weeks ago, the Department of Health and the IATF National Task Force convened the Task Force T3, which stands for test, trace and treat, in an effort to expand the government's testing capability for COVID-19 to at least 30,000 tests per day by May 30, 2020. Early on the COVID-19 pandemic, there were already calls to accelerate massive testing. Sadly, the seeming dearth in resources has diverted much of the attention on the clinical management of those already infected with the coronavirus disease, and on efforts to "flatten the curve" to overwhelming the already limited capacity of our hospital system.

But for the authorities and policymakers to determine a calibrated public health response, having an accurate and updated baseline data is of critical importance. Unless we can identify and confirm how individuals many are actually infected with the disease, it would be difficult to craft and implement an effective and sustained strategy in preventing the spread of COVID-19. In fact, a COVID-19 response strategy without massive testing would be like going to fight blindfolded.

This was exactly the reason why as early as the second week of March, Tingog Party-List began exploring the need to establish a COVID-19 testing center that will cater to suspected COVID-19 cases in Eastern Visayas. At that time, not much attention was given to COVID-19 testing. There was even an impression at that time that the Department of Health was limited to the designation of the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine as the primary testing center and the establishment of only three subnational laboratories in Baguio, Cebu and Davao.

Eastern Visayas had every reason to worry. With its population of more than four million, it has a limited hospital capacity of fewer than two thousand beds and worse, fewer than a hundred ICU units and fewer than ten ventilators. God forbid, an outbreak could easily overwhelmed our hospital system in the region.

Fortunately, the local chapter of the Philippine Association of Medical Technologists shared Tingog Party-List's concern about the need for our own testing center in Tacloban City. Although by then, DOH has not yet issued the guidelines for the accreditation of COVID-19 testing centers, PAMET and Tingog partnered with the local DOH regional office to form a technical working group that will plan and spearhead the establishment of a COVID-19 testing center for Eastern Visayas.

Admittedly at first, it seemed to be quite an ambitious plan. A COVID-19 test center required a biosafety level III molecular laboratory – there was none in Tacloban. Even local hospitals were not too confident about the feasibility of having one in the region – considering the huge financial and manpower requirement, not only in starting but more so in operating one. But given the exigency, the technical working group was left with only one choice – to do whatever it takes to start a biosafety level III molecular laboratory from scratch. With the lives and health of the people at stake, the tall order was to make it happen.

Rolling their sleeves, the technical working group began to work on setting up the laboratory. PAMET and EVRMC focused on finalizing the laboratory's standard protocols and operating procedures. The regional DOH coordinated with RITM and DOH central office on complying with the accreditation process and loaned laboratory equipment from other facilities to complete the requirements. Tingog Party-List, on the other hand, took charge of retrofitting and renovating the laboratory facility, which for years was left unused ever since the hospital was relocated to the northern area of Tacloban.

The restrictions due to the community quarantine in effect in Tacloban posed a lot of challenges. With most of the hardware stores closed, it was difficult to source out construction supplies. Trainings had to be done with social distancing, and many of the medical technologists and laboratory staff had to deal with the limited transport available when going to meetings and trainings. But with a lot of determination and a little ingenuity, the technical working group was able to overcome all these challenges.

The biggest hurdle to the project was procuring a reverse transcription polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) machine for the laboratory. The group initially thought of loaning the machine from a nearby university, but there were compatibility issues. When Leyte First District Rep. Ferdinand Martin G. Romualdez learned about the predicament, he and his wife Tingog Party-List Rep. Yedda Marie K. Romualdez readily purchased the P2.7-million worth machine out of their personal funds. This is such a generous gesture in a time of need will surely never be forgotten.

The preparation of the COVID-19 test center was in full swing when DOH finally released the accreditation guidelines for COVID-19 test centers. The TWG had to take a step back to align itself with then new guidelines, but with everything almost in place, it was immediately assessed to be on Stage III as soon as the guidelines came to effect. After the on-site assessment conducted by the composite team from DOH, RITM and the World Health Organization, the final proficiency training of the laboratory staff followed. In less than two weeks, the proposed test center successfully completed Stage IV of the accreditation process.

The final requirements were submitted morning of May 8, and the TWG was hoping to receive the results of the proficiency assessment. However, they were surprised to learn that DOH has already announced the accreditation of the Eastern Visayas Regional COVID-19 Test Center and has certified that the test center was now ready to conduct independent COVID-19 RT PCR detection tests.

The Eastern Visayas Regional COVID-19 Testing Center has significantly increased the region's capability to address COVID-19. Massive testing of suspected cases can now be done more effectively. With the right and accurate baseline information, our government and health authorities are now more capable of preventing the further spread of COVID-19 and of carrying out a more calibrated and responsive public health care strategy for the region.

Credit is due to everyone who worked together to help realize this project – Majority Leader Rep. Ferdinand Martin Romualdez and Tingog Party-List Rep. Yedda Marie Romualdez, DOH Eastern Visayas led by regional director Dr. Minerva Molon, TWG chair Dr. Exu Sabalbarino and overall coordinator Lila Ballila; PAMET represented by Clive Ivan Mercado and Carlo Chris Apurillo; Tingog Party-List chair Mark Gimenez, president Glenn Capucion and secretary-general Rachel Rodeles-Santiago; EVRMC pathology unit led by Dr. Kae Parilla and the laboratory staff; the City Government of Tacloban under Mayor Alfred Romualdez and city health officer Dr. Gloria Fabrigas.

Special thanks to our partners Health Secretary Francisco Duque, the Research Institute for Tropical Medicine, OPAV Secretary Mike Dino, the Office of Civil Defense, the Philippine Air Force, the Philippine Coast Guard, RTR Hospital, St. Scholastica's College, Manila Realtek, DPWH Eastern Visayas Regional Office, Tacloban Host Lions Club, Dr. Raul Destura of UP Institute of Health and Dr. Aileen Riel-Espina of the Philippine Academy of Family Physicians.

From the very start, it was clear to us that we cannot win this fight against this invisible enemy without knowing who is infected – that is why the objective has always been to test, test, test. As the Eastern Visayas Regional COVID-19 Test Center starts operation on May 11, it is now possible to ramp up testing, trace, isolate and treat those infected, and to save many more lives in the region.

If there is any lesson learned from the successful realization of the project is that there is no mission impossible when people work together to make the right things happen. This is not a time to point fingers and assign blame, nor it is the moment to be complacent and to wait for others to do the task already in front of us. We must be ready to help ourselves and the only way out and moving forward is to lock our arms and pull each other out of the danger zone. Once more, this experience reaffirms that to fully control and defeat this pandemic, cooperation and solidarity is absolutely essential.

Life after ECQ

Published May 11, 2020, 12:23 AM

SPEAKING OUT

By IGNACIO R. BUNYE



Ignacio R. Bunye

Regardless of when ECQ is lifted, we can not become BAU (business as usual) immediately. BAU will be possible only when a vaccine against COVID-19 is discovered, tested, and approved. Guesstimates of when that will happen range anywhere from 12 to 18 months. Then the vaccine will still have to be mass-produced (another 6 months?) and then distributed. Recall that a premature return to BAU after the Spanish flu of 1918 triggered a “second wave” and a “third wave” which caused more fatalities than the “first wave.” So expect the “new normal” to be anything but normal. Physical distancing, proper respiratory etiquette, and disinfection protocols must continue to be observed at all times.

Just imagine how physical distancing will affect the operations of public transports. Buses, jeepneys, airplanes will have to operate, carrying only 1/3 their normal capacities. Operators will definitely lose and may probably opt not to operate at all unless they receive some form of subsidy. Those riding the MRTs will probably have to wait in line 3x as long. The physical movement of people will definitely be strictly limited.

In the work place, the Department of Trade and the Department of Labor and Employment recently came out with interim guidelines on workplace prevention and control measures. For instance, “Eating in communal areas is also discouraged, and if this is not possible, the employer shall ensure a one-worker-per-table and one-meter distance per worker scheme.” Under these circumstances, it may be wise for a worker to bring to work his/her own packed lunch. The guidelines further mandated, “Workers are also discouraged to engage in conversation, as well as prolonged face-to-face interaction with workers and clients.”

Time and again, the Filipino has proven to be resilient. I am confident that these days of COVID 19 will not be an exception.

How is business preparing for a post-ECQ scenario? Without any doubt, most businesses – and the economy as well – have already taken huge hits because of COVID 19. Obviously, each business group will have its own way of responding to the situation. Let me just cite one possible response.

In this respect, allow me to re-play the message of Jaime Augusto Zobel de Ayala (JAZA), chairman of Ayala Corporation, to Ayala shareholders a few weeks ago. Ayala’s businesses span several industries – banking, telecommunications, real estate, power, infrastructure, manufacturing, health, and education.

Here is JAZA in his own words: “It is very difficult to plan long-term in an environment like this. We have always thought long-term. We have always focused on the future but when you get a crisis like this that affects everyone, both nationally and globally, there is no existing playbook for this kind of situation. So we find ourselves in a situation where we’ve had to shorten our cycle of planning and really look at the situation from a much shorter point of view.

“Let me just divide our new planning mode into three segments. The first phase of this much shorter oriented planning cycle is really preparing for the re-entry of the work force. The safety and health of our employees has been a primary concern, both pre ECQ and post ECQ, and the same will be as well for re-entry. We are worrying a great deal and thinking through how do we get our employee force back to be productive but at the same time healthy and safe in this new environment. That is something very much at the top of our thinking in this next period.

“Phase 2 would be ensuring our resiliency over the few months after the ECQ and really figuring out how to remain productive at a time like this. There is no playbook and we will be spending a lot of time readjusting to a new work environment as the ECQ lifts. We will be monitoring consumer behavior, market behavior, industry and regulatory shifts during this period of time and just make an assessment of how the world has changed for us and how we will need to work in this environment.

“There will be so many changes that will take place. One that is clear to all of us is the renewed role of technology in this new world where we can not move as freely as we can and as we wanted to.

“And finally, Phase 3 (Q3-Q4) of our planning will involve what we call the “new normal”, as we start to understand the situation a little better and then adjust our work force and our market tactics to this new reality. In the case of employees we will have to see how we balance their well being and productivity, keeping them safe and productive as well. We need to figure how to retain our customers over the long term in this new environment and how to handle our operations and financial stability in a productive, innovative and intelligent way as we move along.”

Note: You may wish to share the foregoing via FB, Twitter or Linked-In.

Miss Earth beauties' appeal on Mother's Day: Take care of Mother Earth

By: [Armin P. Adina](#) [Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:23 PM May 10, 2020

MAKATI CITY, PHILIPPINES—As the world celebrates Mother's Day, two queens whose advocacy is environmental awareness made an appeal: Honor Mother Earth.

"Mother's Day should be celebrated everyday for all the mothers of our life, and Mother Earth is a part of it," reigning Miss Philippines Earth Janelle Tee told the Inquirer.

"Mother Earth provides us everything we need. Most especially during this pandemic, she provides for us the fresh air to breathe, and cleans it by the tress she grows," she added.



Reigning Miss Philippines Earth Janelle Tee shows off her locally-made jacket adorned with the colors of the Philippine flag, and Sampaguita flower paillettes./ARMIN P. ADINA

Karen Ibasco, the fourth Filipino woman to be crowned Miss Earth, shared Tee's sentiments.

"We are dependent on nature. Not only is this planet our home, but humanity will not survive without her," said Ibasco, who bested 84 other international delegates for the Miss Earth title in 2017.

The medical physicist also said the planet cares for the people the same way a mother showers love for her children.

Tee added: "Mother Earth loves us unconditionally. If we truly take care of her, she can provide for us abundantly."

Ibasco's and Tee's titles come with the responsibility of pushing environmental programs and promoting campaigns that aim to protect the planet.

And to make Mother's Day celebrations more environmentally-friendly, Tee asked the people to prepare locally produced food, or grow their own vegetables and fruits.

"At a time when everything is uncertain, most especially because it is very risky for everyone to go out, have your own supply at home," she continued.

Miss Earth beauties' appeal on Mother's Day: Take
care of Mother Earth

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2017 Miss Earth Karen Ibasco/ARMIN P. ADINA

Ibasco added: "Refrain from using single-use plastic when ordering food, and conserve water and energy while staying at home."

Tee will relinquish her title to her successor, who will be determined through a "virtual competition" on May 24 because of the COVID-19 pandemic, pageant organizer Carousel Productions said in a statement posted online.

Carousel Production Executive Vice President Lorraine Schuck also said "the pageant is holding a series of Facebook forums featuring current titleholders and delegates on environmental issues and their uses to fight COVID-19."

No cyclone signals from Ambo seen in next 48 hours, says PAGASA

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No cyclone signals from Ambo seen in next 48 hours, says PAGASA

Published May 10, 2020 6:25pm

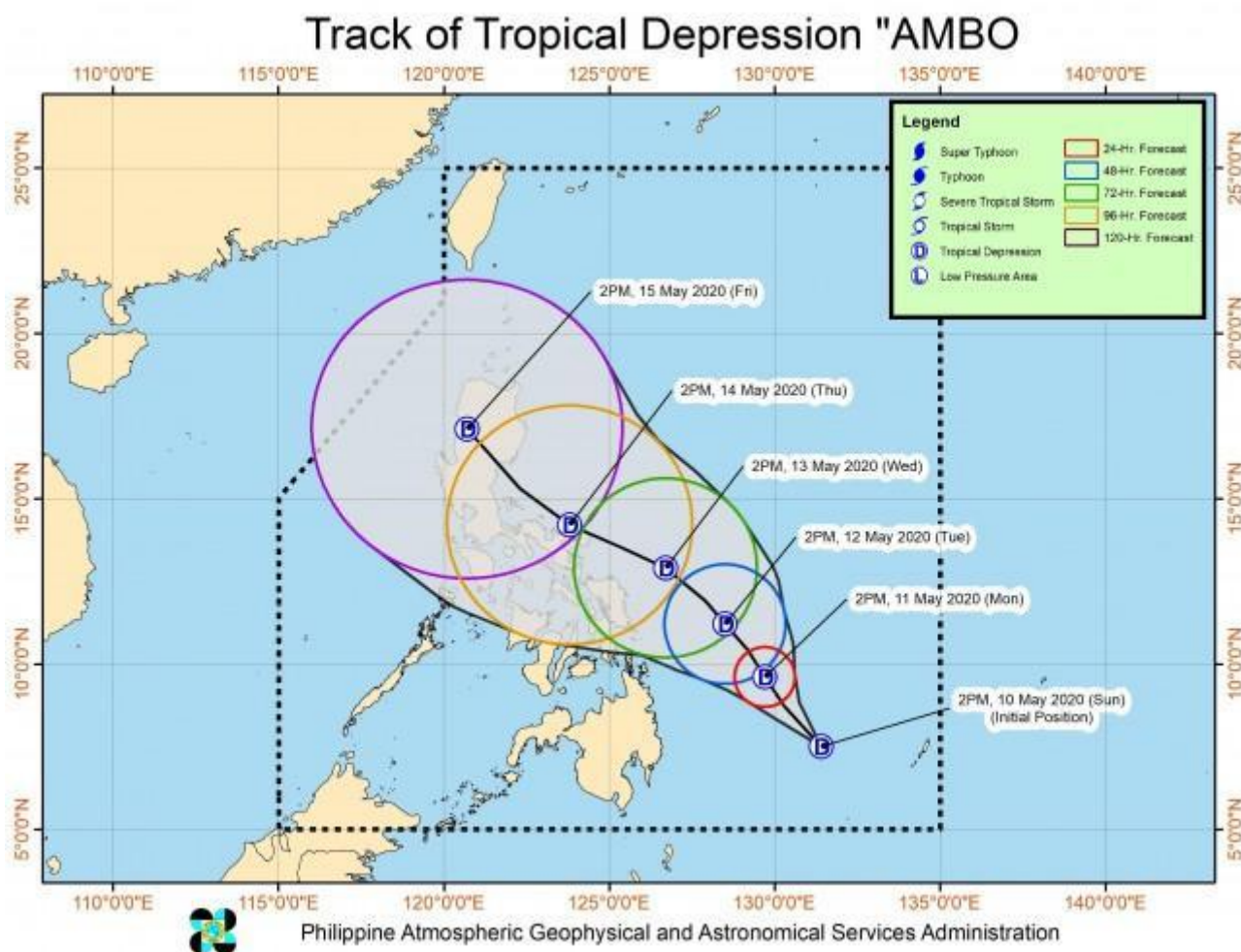
Philippine state weather bureau PAGASA on Sunday afternoon said Tropical Depression Ambo is unlikely to cause hoisting of wind signals over any area in the country within the next 48 hours.

In its 5 p.m. severe weather bulletin, PAGASA said Ambo was last estimated to be 545 kilometers east of Hinatuan, Surigao del Sur moving west-northwest at 15 kilometers per hour (kph).

Ambo brings maximum sustained winds of up to 45 kph and gustiness of up to 55 kph.

PAGASA said [the cyclone will bring scattered light to moderate with isolated heavy rains during thunderstorms over](#) Caraga, Davao Region, SOCCSKSARGEN, and Maguindanao.

Projected movement



No cyclone signals from Ambo seen in next 48 hours,

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PAGASA said Ambo will be 460 kilometers east of Surigao City, Surigao del Sur by Monday afternoon.

By Tuesday afternoon, it will be 305 kilometers East of Guiuan, Eastern Samar.

By Wednesday afternoon, it will move to 325 kilometers East of Legazpi City, Albay.

By Thursday afternoon, it will be 85 kilometers northwest of Virac, Catanduanes or 90 km East of Daet, Camarines Norte.

By Friday afternoon, it is expected to be in the vicinity of Quirino, Ilocos Sur. —**Julia Mari Ornedo/LBG, GMA News**

2020's first storm blows in

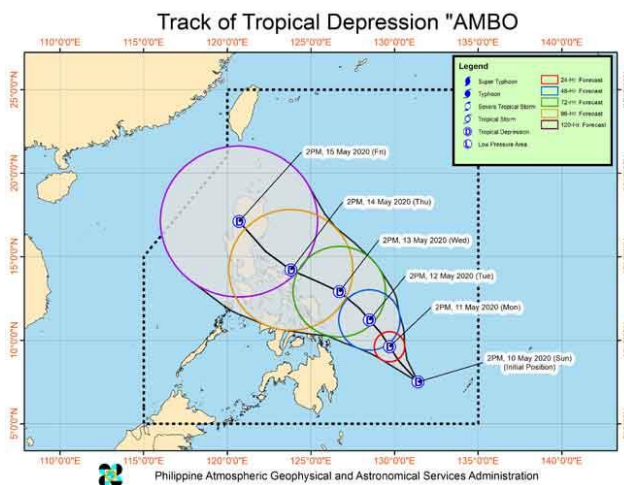
By [Divina Nova Joy Dela Cruz](#)

May 11, 2020

A low-pressure area (LPA) in the Philippine area of responsibility has grown into a tropical depression, the first storm to hit the country this year.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) named the depression "Ambo."

As of 4 p.m. on Sunday, it was 545 kilometers east of Hinatuan, Surigao del Sur, moving on a west-northwest track at 15 km per hour (kph) and packing winds of 45 kph gusting to 55 kph.



Track of Tropical Depression "AMBO" Source: <http://bagong.pagasa.dost.gov.ph/>

No storm signal had been raised, but Pagasa said the trough of Ambo would bring scattered rains with isolated heavy rains in the regions of Caraga, Davao, Soccsksargen and Maguindanao within the next 24 hours.

Pagasa said Ambo could skirt the shoreline of Virac, Catanduanes, and Daet, Camarines Norte, by Thursday, and could hit land near Quirino, Ilocos Sur, by Friday.

Pagasa weather specialist Samuel Duran told The Manila Times that Ambo could help raise water levels in dams.

On Sunday, the level at Angat Dam, the main water source of Metro Manila, was 188.65, a 0.21-meter drop from the previous day.

Duran said rainfall might help ease the sweltering heat. Steaming heat indices have been recorded in parts of the country during the past weeks because of the combined effects of high temperature and relative humidity. Pagasa attributed this to the persisting ridge of a high pressure area and the easterlies during the dry season.

The highest heat index was recorded at 58 degrees Celsius in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro, on April 20. The highest temperature was 40 C in Tuguegarao and Isabela on May 4 and 5, respectively.

In Metro Manila, the highest heat index was 43 C last May 6.

The highest temperature in Metro Manila was 37.4 C on May 5.

On Sunday, the highest heat index was 49 C at Pagasa's Nueva Ecija and Cavite stations, 48 C at the Batangas station, 47 C at the Occidental Mindoro station, and 45 C at the Albay and Pasay City stations.

A heat index of 41 C to 54 C carries a danger warning, and 32 C to 41 C an extreme caution, which could lead to cramps and heat stroke.

Pagasa advised the public to avoid going outdoors from 12 noon to 4 p.m. and to keep properly hydrated.

Duran said the late storm was unusual. In previous years, three typhoons had been recorded by May.

Pagasa's Climate Monitoring and Prediction arm predicted one to two typhoons in May.

Duran said that in previous months, typhoons have curved away from the Philippine area of responsibility, due to such factors as a high-pressure area and the intertropical convergence zone.

Quake jolts Occ. Mindoro, Metro

May 10, 2020

[People's Tonight](#)



An earthquake with a magnitude 5.4 rocked Occidental Mindoro in the early hours of Sunday.

According to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs), the quake struck at 3:18 a.m., 35 kilometers northeast of Lubang Island with a depth of 76 kilometers.

The tectonic quake was also felt in some parts of Luzon including Metro Manila.

Phivolcs reported intensities in the following areas:

-- Intensity IV in Makati, Manila and Parañaque.

-- Intensity III in Malabon; Mandaluyong; Pasay; Pateros; Quezon City; Taguig; Tagaytay City, Cavite; Calapan and Puerto

Galera, Oriental Mindoro; and Calatagan and Lipa City, Batangas.

Instrumental intensities:

-- Intensity IV in Malolos City, and San Ildefonso, Bulacan; Navotas City

-- Intensity III in Talisay, Batangas; Bacoor City, and Tagaytay City, Cavite; Muntinlupa City; Guagua, Pampanga

-- Intensity II in Magalang, Pampanga; San Juan City

-- Intensity I in San Jose, Occidental Mindoro; Palayan City, and San Jose City, Nueva Ecija; Gumaca, Quezon; Baler, Aurora.

While damages are not expected, Phivolcs warned against aftershocks. PNA

Occidental Mindoro binulabog ng magnitude 5.4 na lindol

ABS-CBN News

Posted at May 10 2020 05:27 PM | Updated as of May 10 2020 06:50 PM

Niyanig ng magnitude 5.4 na lindol ang Lubang Island, Occidental Mindoro nitong madaling araw ng Linggo, sabi ng Phivolcs.

Sa unang abiso ng Phivolcs, sinabi nitong magnitude 5.5 ang lakas ng lindol pero kalaunan ay na-downgrade ito sa magnitude 5.4.

Sa lakas ng lindol, naramdaman ito sa ilang lugar sa Metro Manila, Central Luzon region, Calabarzon region, at Mindoro.

Tectonic umano ang lindol na may lalim na 85 kilometro. Ang lokasyon nito ay nasa 31 kilometro hilagang silangan ng Lubang.

Ayon kay Lubang Mayor Michael Orayani, hindi nagtagal ang nasabing lindol pero nangamba ang mga residente na baka magdulot ang pagyanig ng mga tsunami.

"Noong naramdaman ko po 'yong lindol, ako po'y agad na lumabas at pumunta po ako sa tabi ng dagat," ani Orayani.

Kahit walang inilabas ng tsunami warning ang Phivolcs, inalerto ng lokal na pamahalaan ang mga taga-Lubang lalo at posible ang aftershocks.

"Kahit nasaan man kayo dobleng pag-iingat po," ani Orayani sa kaniyang mga constituent.

Wala naman nakitang na-damage na gusali at bahay sa inspeksyong isinagawa ng mga lokal na opisyal. -- **Ulat ni Andrew Bernardo, ABS-CBN News**

Science City of Muñoz, Sangley Point record day's hottest index at 49°C

Published May 10, 2020 5:54pm

PAGASA's weather stations in Science City of Muñoz in Nueva Ecija and Sangley Point in Cavite City recorded the highest heat index in the country on Sunday afternoon with 49°C.

According to [the state weather bureau](#), these are followed by Ambulong in Tanauan City with 48°C, San Jose Occidental Mindoro with 47°C, and Legazpi City and the Ninoy Aquino International Airport in Pasay City with 45°C.

PAGASA reiterated the dangers brought by a heat index (or the human-perceived temperature) ranging from 41 to 54°C such as heat cramps and heat exhaustion. Heat stroke is also possible amid continuous physical activity.

EFFECTS OF HEAT INDEX IN OUR BODY		
T in Celsius	T in Fahrenheit	Heat Index (Human Discomfort Index)
27 – 32°C	80 – 90°F	Caution Fatigue is possible with prolonged exposure and activity. Continuing activity could result heat cramps.
32 – 41°C	90 – 105°F	Extreme Caution Heat Cramps and Heat exhaustion are possible. Continuing activity could result heat stroke.
41 – 54°C	105 -130°F	Danger Heat Cramps and Heat exhaustion are likely; Heat stroke is probable with continued activity.
Over 54°C	Over 130°F	Extreme Danger Heat Stroke is imminent.

Meanwhile, the heat index reached 43°C at the Science Garden in Quezon City at 2:50 p.m. on Sunday.

PAGASA also recorded a maximum temperature of 36.5°C in the area.

Moreover, PAGASA said [the top five stations that recorded the highest temperature in the country on Saturday were in northern and Central Luzon.](#)

Echague in Isabela recorded the highest temperature so far in the dry season at 40.1°C; Tuguegarao City recorded 39.0°C; Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac recorded 38.7°C; Camiling, Tarlac recorded 38.6°C; and Science City of Muñoz recorded 38.5°C.

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/scitech/weather/737602/science-city-of-munoz-sangley-point-record-day-s-hottest-index-at-49-deg-c/story/>

Pinakamataas na temperatura ngayong taon naitala sa Isabela

Balita

By Leifbilly BegasMay 10,2020

NAITALA sa 40.1 degrees Celsius ang temperatura sa Echague, Isabela kahapon. Ayon sa Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration ito ang pinakamataas na temperatura na naitala ngayong tag-init.

Umabot naman sa 39.0 °C ang temperatura sa Tuguegarao City kahapon (Mayo 9).

Sa Hacienda Luisita, 38.7 °C ang naitala at 38.6 °C naman sa Camiling, Tarlac.

Sa Science City of Muñoz ay 38.5 °C.

Sa Science Garden sa Quezon City ang naitalang temperatura ay 36.5 °C.

Sa Metro Manila ang pinakamataas na temperatura na naitala ngayong taon ay 37.4 °C sa NAIA, Pasay City noong Mayo 5.

Sa kasaysayan ng Metro Manila ang pinakamataas na temperatura ay 38.6 °C na naitala sa Port Area, Manila noong Mayo 17, 1915.

Sa kasaysayan ng bansa ang pinakamataas na temperatura ay 42.2 °C na naitala sa Tuguegarao City noong Abril 22, 1912 at Mayo 11, 1969.

PH, rest of the world, feeling deadly heat not expected
until end of century

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PH, rest of the world, feeling deadly heat not expected until end of century

By: [Tony S. Bergonia](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 02:19 PM May 10, 2020

The Philippines, along with much of the rest of the world, is experiencing unprecedented levels of heat and humidity that came decades earlier than scientists predicted these to be the new normal at the end of the century yet, according to a new science report.

Extreme heat and humidity rarely experienced by humans are becoming normal now, tens of years ahead of predictions by scientists that such phenomena would be regular occurrence by the end of the century, said the report in The Earth Institute of Columbia University.

These are sending heat indexes, or the heat that a human body feels, soaring past records around the globe, said the report.

The report, released last May 8, said thousands of previously rare or unprecedented bouts of extreme heat and humidity had been found in Asia, Africa, Australia, South America and North America.

“Most everyone knows that humid heat is harder to handle than the ‘dry’ kind,” the report said. “And recently, some scientists have projected that later in the century in parts of the tropics and subtropics, warming climate could cause combined heat and humidity to reach levels rarely, if ever, experienced before by humans,” said the report.

“The projections are wrong: Such conditions are already appearing,” the report by The Earth Institute said.

In the Philippines, monitoring by the weather bureau showed heat index averaging 40 degrees Celsius almost daily for the past several weeks already.

An INQUIRER.net report said just last Saturday (May 9), the Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) recorded a heat index of 50 degrees Celsius, half the boiling point of water, at Sangle Point in Cavite province.

In 2019, still according to an INQUIRER.net report, Pagasa recorded a heat index of 52.2 degrees Celsius in the province of Catanduanes.

Last April 6, according to multiple media reports, Pagasa recorded a heat index of 53 degrees Celsius in Butuan City.

The study being cited by The Earth Institute report from the journal “Science Advances” said temperatures across the globe had been measured by scientists using a method called “wet bulb,” or a method akin to thermometers wrapped in moist cloth that are able to measure temperature of the air and the moisture in it.

A wet bulb measurement in a country or region that reaches 35 meant the place is near lethal or uninhabitable for human beings. The measurement in the Philippines, according to an interactive map in The Earth Institute report, ranged from 29 to 30, which is in “dangerous” territory.

PH, rest of the world, feeling deadly heat not expected
until end of century

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The report cited past climate studies as saying “even the strongest, best adapted people cannot carry out normal outdoor activities when the wet bulb hits 32 C.”

“Most others would crumble well before that. A reading of 35 is considered the theoretical survivability limit,” the report said.

It said wet bulb readings of 31, which had been believed to be rare, reached 1,000 during the study period. “Readings of 33, previously thought to be almost nonexistent, totalled around 80,” said the report.

Citing the Science Advances study, the report by The Earth Institute said “extreme, sometimes potentially fatal, mixtures of heat and humidity are emerging across the globe.”

It said in the Persian Gulf, scientists saw more than a dozen outbreaks of heat “surpassing the theoretical human survivability limit.”

The report said while the outbreaks had been confined to specific areas and lasted just hours, “they are increasing in frequency and intensity.”

“Previous studies projected that this would happen several decades from now, but this shows it’s happening now,” the report by The Earth Institute cited Colin Raymond, lead author of the study.

“The times these events last will increase, and the areas they affect will grow in direct correlation with global warming,” Raymond said, according to The Earth Institute report.

It said the scientists who worked on the study analyzed data from more than 7,000 weather stations around the world between 1979 and 2017 and “found that extreme heat and humidity combinations doubled over the study period.”

“Not surprisingly, incidents tend to cluster on coastlines along confined seas, gulfs and straits where evaporating seawater provides abundant moisture to be sucked up by hot air,” the report said.

“In some areas further inland, moisture-laden monsoon winds or wide areas of crop irrigation appear to play the same role,” it said.

Earlier climate studies, it added, failed to quickly detect the emergence of deadly heat-humidity combinations “because climate researchers usually look at averages of heat and humidity measured over large areas and over several hours at a time.”

Raymond, the lead author of the study, and his fellow scientists “drilled directly into hourly data from 7,877 individual weather stations.”

This, the report said, allowed them “to pinpoint shorter-lived bouts affecting smaller areas.” “Humidity worsens the effects of heat because humans cool their bodies by sweating,” the report said.

“Water expelled through the skin removes excess body heat, and when it evaporates, it carries that heat away,” it said.

“The process works nicely in deserts, but less well in humid regions, where the air is already too laden with moisture to take on much more,” it added.

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In already humid areas, the report said, “evaporation of sweat slows” and “in the most extreme instances, it could stop.”

“In that case, unless one can retreat to an air-conditioned room, the body’s core heats beyond its narrow survivable range, and organs begin to fail,” the report said.

“Even a strong, physically fit person resting in the shade with no clothes and unlimited access to drinking water would die within hours,” it added.

“We may be closer to a real tipping point on this than we think,” said the report, citing Radley Horton, research scientist and coauthor of the heat-humidity report.

Horton had co-authored a 2017 paper that projected current levels of heat and humidity taking place later in the century yet, according to The Earth Institute report.

It cited Horton as saying if people were forced indoors by the heat for prolonged periods of time, agriculture, trade and other human activity could grind to a halt.

It would be “a lesson already brought home by the collapse of economies in the face of the novel coronavirus.”

“In any case, many people in poorer countries most at risk do not have electricity, never mind air conditioning,” the report said, still citing Horton.

“There, many rely on subsistence farming requiring daily outdoor heavy labor. These facts could make some of the most affected areas basically uninhabitable,” Horton said as cited by the report.

“These measurements imply that some areas of Earth are much closer than expected to attaining sustained intolerable heat,” Steven Sherwood, climatologist at University of South Wales, was cited as saying in the report.

“It was previously believed we had a much larger margin of safety,” Sherwood’s comment went on.

“Such conditions would ravage economies, and possibly even surpass the physiological limits of human survival,” said the report by The Earth Institute.

Wuhan reports first new case in more than a month

By Alexandra Lin

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Medical personnel work at a coronavirus testing site on April 16 in Wuhan, China. Hector Retamal/AFP/Getty Images

(CNN) — The city of Wuhan, the original epicenter of the coronavirus crisis, on Sunday reported its first new coronavirus case since April 3, according to local health officials.

The patient is currently in a critical condition, and his wife has also tested positive and was reported as an asymptomatic case. The patient lives in a neighborhood that has recorded 20 confirmed cases overall.

The new case is lined to "past community infection," according to the Wuhan Health Commission, citing medical experts. Five patients from the community showing no symptoms, including the new case's wife, have been sent to hospitals for observation. China's national and local health commissions do not include asymptomatic cases in their confirmed case counts.

China reopened Wuhan's borders after a 76-day lockdown on April 8. As of Saturday, 50,334 total cases have been confirmed in the city, according to the commission.

With fewer humans to fear, flamingos flock to

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With fewer humans to fear, flamingos flock to Albania lagoon

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In this Saturday May 2, 2020 photo flamingos fly in Narta Lagoon, about 140 kilometers (90 miles) southwest of the Albanian capital of Tirana. Home confinement rules have angered and anguished some people in Albania, but humans getting their wings clipped during the coronavirus pandemic is allowing flamingos and other birds to flourish in a coastal lagoon by the Adriatic Sea. (AP Photo/Hektor Pustina)

NARTA, Albania — Home confinement rules have upset some people in Albania, but humans getting their wings clipped during the coronavirus pandemic has allowed flamingos and other birds to flourish in a coastal lagoon by the Adriatic Sea.

Local officials and residents say the flamingo population is up to about 3,000 at Narta Lagoon, an important waterfowl habitat that greater flamingos returned to in recent years after a long absence. Bird watchers also have noticed more pelicans, herons, and other species this spring at the 28-square-kilometer (10-square-mile) lagoon, which is 145 kilometers (90 miles) south of Tirana, the capital.

“Isn’t that beautiful to see fearless flamingos all around?” Dhimiter Konomi, part of a local group that manages commercial fishing in Narta Lagoon, said as the big, long-necked birds stood in the shallow water.

Operations halting at a nearby saltworks and reduced human activity of all types during the pandemic explains why birds are flocking to the lagoon, said Nexhip Hysolokaj, a regional biodiversity expert. Flamingos are “a very delicate species,” and not having vehicles or visitors around suits them, he said.

“They have found food and calmness, and that has likely helped them increase the numbers,” Hysolokaj said.

Researchers plan to study the flamingos to see if the coronavirus-induced calm is conducive to establishing the lagoon as a place where they can nest and breed.

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Konomi says a lagoon crowded with feathered life is a treasure that could boost tourism. But Hysolokaj is less keen to attract conventional tourists to the lagoon, which is part of a protected landscape of sand dunes, wetlands, islands, and beaches that supports diverse fauna as well as birds. He described it as the “lung” of Vlora, the nearest city. “There should be stable but alternative tourism, naturally letting campers come, beaches used, with environmental biking, educational paths, and more because it’s so close to Vlora,” Hysolokaj said.

/MUF