

DENR's 'ComPassion' Project donates relief goods to QC folks

By Ma. Elaine P. AllaniguePublished on May 13, 2020

QUEZON CITY, May 13 (PIA –The Department of Environment & Natural Resources (DENR) through the Association of Career Executives (ACE) and the DENR Employees Union and in collaboration with the Career Executive Service (CES) Board donated a total of 300 relief goods residents of Quezon City who were deeply affected by the enhanced community quarantine due to the coronavirus pandemic.

The relief goods were turned over by the agency to three Catholic parishes namely Kristong Hari and Mabuting Pastol, both in Barangay Commonwealth, and Good Shepherd Cathedral in Barangay Fairview, for distribution to the first set of beneficiaries of 'ComPassion Project'.

According to DENR Undersecretary for Priority Programs and ACE president Jonas R. Leones, the three-phase COVID-19 community outreach initiative was designed to help marginalized families in Quezon City who have no access to assistance programs of the national and local governments.

"Since there are still families who have not received support from the government, the DENR under the leadership of Secretary Roy A. Cimatu decided to provide assistance to communities affected by the enhanced community quarantine due to COVID-19 pandemic, through our ComPassion Project," Leones said.

"We thank everyone in the DENR community for their contribution and support for this worthy cause. Together, we make sure that no one is left behind in the COVID-19 response," Leones said.

Aside from Leones, also present during the turn-over of the relief goods were DENR Undersecretaries Ernesto D. Adobo, Jr and Benny D. Antiporda, Assistant Secretaries Joselin Marcus Fragada and Nonita Caguioa, DENR Environmental Protection and Enforcement Task Force Executive Director Nilo Tamoria, and CES Board Secretariat Executive Director Officer-in-Charge Hiro Masuda. (DENR/PIA-NCR)

DENR records increased sightings of wild animals in Calabarzon

Published May 13, 2020, 9:19 PM

By *Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz*

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has received reports of increased sightings of wild animals in Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon) since the region was on lockdown to contain the coronavirus outbreak.

The latest of the sightings were two juvenile species of Brahminy kite (*Haliastur indus*) spotted in Mabini, Batangas. A team from the head office of the DENR's Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) retrieved the animals last May 10.

The raptors were brought to the Wildlife Rescue Center in Quezon City where they will stay until they are ready to be released back into the wild.

DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu pointed out that the restraint in human activities resulting from the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) appears to have helped nature and biodiversity rediscover their natural spaces.

"According to our wildlife experts, animals feel much more comfortable going around because there are lesser people in the streets and public spaces because of the continuing ECQ," he said.

He asked the public to leave the wild animals alone, "unless they are sick, orphaned, or injured as we have wildlife experts who can take care of them."

Cimatu explained that human interference with wildlife could result in disease or injury, and taking the animal out of the wild limits its chances of surviving.

Where an animal is in need of help, the DENR chief said it requires specialized care to recover and return to the wild, that is why it is important to report cases of sick, injured, and orphaned wildlife to the BMB.

He cited that possession, transportation, and importation of wild animals are regulated under Republic Act No. 9147 or the Wildlife Conservation and Protection Act of 2001.

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PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF DENR

Rescued eagles Two juvenile Brahminy kites (*Haliastur indus*) were turned over to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources Biodiversity Management by Christian Atienza of Mabini, Batangas, who took care of the raptors after these were retrieved from a forest.

DENR Bicol releases endemic eagle in Catanduanes

Published May 13, 2020, 3:42 PM

By Richa Noriega

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Bicol released an endemic Philippine Serpent Eagle last May 7 in San Andres, Catanduanes. In a Facebook post on Monday, the department said the eagle fell on the roof of a certain household at Tubaon, Virac, Catanduanes.

DENR Bicol
May 11 at 2:54 PM · 🌐

PHILIPPINE SERPENT EAGLE RELEASED IN CATANDUANES

A Philippine Serpent Eagle (*Spilornis holospilus*) was released by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Bicol through the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO) Catanduanes headed by PENR Officer Engr. Jerry R. Arena on May 7, 2020 at Lictin, San Andres, Catanduanes.

The eagle was said to fell on the roof of a certain household at Tubaon, Virac, Catanduanes and was turned-over to the PENR Office by Mr. Eliezer Vargas.

Upon assessment, the eagle was observed to be in good condition and was subsequently released to the wild. The Philippine Serpent Eagle is endemic in the Philippines. They are relatively small raptors and live in riparian forests, foothills, open country including cultivated areas and along forest edges.

The DENR Bicol is seeking the support and cooperation of the public to report any incidents alike to help save more wildlife species and strengthen the conservation and protection of the environment and natural resources. Preventing wildlife exploitation and their habitats is mandated under the Republic Act 9147 otherwise known as the "Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act".

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The Philippine Serpent Eagle, scientific name *Spilornis holospilus*, is endemic in the Philippines. They are relatively small raptors and live in riparian forests, foothills, open country, and other cultivated areas, the department said.

DENR Bicol asked for support and cooperation of the public to report such incidents to help save more wildlife species in order to strengthen the conservation and protection of the environment and natural resources.

Another sea turtle trapped in fish cage, rescued in Negros town

Published May 13, 2020, 4:07 PM

By *Glazyl Masculino*

BACOLOD CITY – Another sea turtle was rescued after it got trapped in a fish cage in Barangay Gahit, E.B. Magalona, Negros Occidental on Wednesday.



Some barangay officials release the sea turtle into the water after it got trapped in a fish cage at Gahit, E.B. Magalona, Negros Occidental Wednesday. (Photo courtesy Jojo Vargas via Facebook / MANILA BULLETIN)

According to Environment Management Specialist II (EMS II) Jojo Vargas, the turtle was 24 inches long and 16 inches wide.

It was found to be healthy enough to be released back to the sea.

The town has many coastal villages, and some dolphins and turtles were even sighted in these areas.

Vargas thanked the barangay officials for making an initiative to conserve marine life.

Last week, a sea turtle also got trapped in a fish cage at Barangay Pasil, and was freed back to the waters

LGU disposes of whale carcass found in Surigao Sur

By Alexander Lopez May 13, 2020, 4:34 pm



WHALE CARCASS. Personnel from the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources in Caraga Region launched an onsite investigation on the dead whale found by fishermen in Sitio Sitio Gakubay, Barangay Baculin, Hinatuan, Surigao del Sur, on Saturday, May 9. Local officials decided to dispose of the carcass following the residents' fears that it may cause possible diseases. *(Photo courtesy of Dennis Brylle Balambao, DA-BFAR Caraga Fisheries Laboratory)*

BUTUAN CITY – Officials of the Surigao del Sur town of Hinatuan disposed of the carcass of a whale following residents' fears that it may cause possible diseases.

Herzon Gallego, Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Caraga Region (DENR-13) information officer, said Wednesday Hinatuan Mayor Shem Garay ordered the carcass to be chopped into pieces and burned down to prevent the possible spread of bacteria and other harmful organisms.

Local fishermen found the carcass off the waters near Barangay Baculin in Hinatuan last May 9.

Gallego said DENR-13 executive director Felix Alicer has instructed the Community Environment and Natural Resources (CENRO) in Bislig City to look into the possible causes of the whale's death.

However, after a meeting with personnel of the municipal fisheries office and Garay on the facts presented by some fishermen in the area, the CENRO officer failed to establish the cause of the whale's death of the whale, Gallego said.

Meanwhile, the Bureau of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources in the Caraga Region (BFAR-13) said Tuesday that an onsite investigation on May 9 showed that the carcass belongs to a Sperm Whale (*Physeter macrocephalus*). It has a length of 55.97 feet and weighed an estimated 40 tons.

BFAR-13 said the carcass was already rotting when it was found, indicated by its missing skin, soft blubber, bloating, and strong foul odor that limited the laboratory personnel to do a necropsy.

It said the tissue and teeth samples were collected by the laboratory personnel and will be sent to the University of the Philippines-Institute of Environmental Science and Meteorology for biological and molecular tests and age identification. *(PNA)*

Mining firms can start full operations under GCQ

May 14, 2020 | 12:30 am

MINING COMPANIES will be allowed to resume operations at full capacity as long as they follow strict safety guidelines, after the national government began relaxing quarantine restrictions around the country.

The Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) on Wednesday released the guidelines for the resumption of mining and mineral processing operations under a general community quarantine (GCQ).

“A workforce anywhere between 50% up to full operational capacity at the mine shall be allowed, without prejudice to work from home and other alternative work arrangements. Entry and exit of employees and personnel to and from the enhanced community quarantine zone (ECQ) shall be prohibited,” Acting MGB Director Wilfredo G. Moncano said in the circular.

The Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases has allowed mining operations to resume in areas under the GCQ.

Caraga, which is considered the main ore-producing region, will be downgraded to a GCQ starting May 16.

The MGB said mining firms should enforce a “no face mask, no entry” policy and physical distancing in all work areas.

Mining firms are also required to provide medical equipment, thermal scanners, personal protective equipment (PPE), sanitizers and disinfectants at its mine sites and plants.

Employees and personnel reporting for work will be subjected to health procedures such as thermal scanning and monitoring. Those who register a temperature reading above 37.5 degrees Celsius, even after a five-minute rest will not be allowed to enter the site.

The MGB also said all cargo vessels carrying minerals will be quarantined for 14 days, starting from its departure from the last port of call.

“No disembarkation of any vessel crew policy shall be strictly implemented,” the circular said.

One of the biggest mining companies in the country, Nickel Asia Corp. has already resumed operations.

In a disclosure to the stock exchange last week, Nickel Asia said that its Taganito and Taganaan mines have resumed partial operations after almost a month of voluntary suspension. — **Revin Mikhael D. Ochave**

Over P8-M hot logs seized in Caraga in Q1 2020

By Alexander Lopez May 13, 2020, 7:49 pm



INTENSIFIED DRIVE. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Caraga Region says intensified campaigns against illegal logging in the area during the first four months of 2020 resulted in the confiscation of over PHP8.4 million of illegally-cut logs and lumber products. Twenty-three cases have also been filed against 40 individuals for violating the country's forestry laws. *(Photo courtesy of DENR-13 Information Office)*

BUTUAN CITY – Intensified anti-illegal logging drives during the first quarter of 2020 conducted by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources in the Caraga Region (DENR-13) resulted in the confiscation of some 294,069 board feet of illegal logs and lumber products worth over PHP8.4 million.

DENR-13 Executive Director Felix S. Alicer said Wednesday (May 13) a number of anti-timber poaching operations were conducted within the months when lockdowns were imposed in different provinces in the region to contain the spread of the 2019 coronavirus disease (Covid-19).

"We noted pockets of illegal cutting activities by poachers who took advantage of the existing health crisis situation in the region," Alicer said.

He warned violators that that DENR-13 and its provincial and municipal enforcers have never relaxed the monitoring on the movements of illegal forest products in the area.

"Most of these illegal products were transported in closed vans and in single motorcycles locally known as habal-habal," he said.

Aside from illegally-obtained forest products, Alicer also bared the confiscation of 73 units of conveyances used in the transport of illegal forest products, 64 implements and equipment, and paraphernalia utilized in the processing of illegal forest products with a total value of PHP468,700.

During the period, 23 cases have already been filed in court against 40 individuals for violating the forestry laws in the country. Of the total persons charged, 24 have already posted bail while 16 continue to remain in detention.

Alicer commended the efforts of provincial officers Joey Flavio Concha in Agusan del Sur, Rosendo Asunto in Agusan del Norte, Maritess Ocampo in Surigao del Norte, Achilles Anthony Ebron in Surigao del Sur, and Agapito Patubo in the Province of Dinagat Islands.

The officials, he said, showed dedication in performing their tasks for the protection of the government timberlands in the region. "These officers and their personnel continued their watch to our timberlands while at the same time provided support to the unified efforts of local government units (LGUs) in the fight against Covid-19," he said.

He also expressed gratitude to the Philippine Army and the Philippine National Police (PNP) in the area for the support they provided during the series of anti-poaching operations. *(PNA)*

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1102720>

10,000 apply for Balik Probinsya program

[Elizabeth Marcelo](#) (The Philippine Star) - May 14, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — At least 10,000 individuals have applied for relocation under the government's Balik Probinsya program.

In an interview over dzBB yesterday, Marcelino Escalada Jr., National Housing Authority (NHA) general manager and Balik Probinsya program executive director, said the number of applicants increased by 10 to 12 percent since the online application was launched last week.

Escalada said they expect more applicants in the next six months.

The government expects around one million residents of Metro Manila to avail themselves of the program.

Escalada said about 80 percent of the applicants are college graduates and work in food and beverage and related services.

He said Leyte is the most preferred province, with 1,000 applicants.

Samar, Negros Oriental, Negros Occidental, Bohol, Zamboanga del Norte, Zamboanga del Sur, Lanao del Norte, Camarines Sur and Pangasinan are the other top choices.

Escalada gave assurance that qualified applicants would be provided jobs, noting that there are around 400 economic zones across the country.

He said 1.5 million jobs would be provided under the Balik Probinsya program.

“We will pinpoint their specific interests. We will match those interests,” Escalada said.

He said qualified beneficiaries would be issued identification cards to ensure that they will be given priority in livelihood projects of the Department of Labor and Employment and Department of Public Works and Highways.

To ensure that the beneficiaries will remain in the provinces, teams from the NHA would regularly check on their situation.

Escalada said the NHA would coordinate with the Commission on Elections for the registration of the beneficiaries in the area where they are relocated.

President Duterte issued Executive Order 114 institutionalizing the Balik Probinsya program to decongest Metro Manila amid the coronavirus disease 2019 and balance regional development.

Go cites need to invest more in agri, ensure household

May 14, 2020

TITLE: food security

PAGE 1/ 1/2

DATE

Go cites need to invest more in agri, ensure household food security

May 13, 2020

[People's Tonight](#)



IN view of the implementation of the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program (BP2), Senator Christopher Lawrence “Bong” Go emphasized the need to invest more in the agriculture sector and promote household food security in the countryside, ensuring that the basic needs of BP2 beneficiaries are sustained once they have relocated to their home provinces.

“This is an opportune time to decongest Metro Manila by creating opportunities outside this over populated metropolis, especially for our urban poor who wish to relocate to the countryside. There are still hundreds of hectares of agricultural lands and unlimited water resources that can be utilized for livelihood in the provinces. Agriculture and food security play a big role in regional development,” Go explained.

“Let us provide the urban poor the needed opportunities to have a sustainable livelihood in the provinces if they decide to relocate since they are one of the most vulnerable sectors of our society amid this COVID-19 pandemic as well as in times of other calamities,” he added.

To accomplish this task, the Senator urged the agriculture department to further develop food security programs---this time, focused on household food security---as the government prepares for more Filipinos who may opt to move back to the countryside as a way to decongest Metro Manila and spread economic development nationwide.

"Dahil sa COVID-19, nakita po natin kung gaano ka-vulnerable ang Metro Manila sa mga sakit dahil sa congestion dito. Isa sa mga nakita nating solusyon dito ang BP2. Ngunit para mas mahikayat natin ang mga Pilipino na bumalik sa kanilang probinsya, dapat nating masigurado ang food security sa bansa, lalo na sa ating mga probinsya," Go said.

"Kaya naman hinikayat ko ang Department of Agriculture na patuloy na maglatag at mag-implementa ng mga programa para masiguro natin na may sapat na pagkain para sa mga Pilipino, lalo na sa mga BP2 beneficiaries, sa kanilang hapag kainan, may health crisis man o wala," he also said.

“More specifically, dapat mas pagtuunan ng pansin ng DA ang ‘household food security’ ng mga magbabalik-probinsya,” he added, noting that there is a significant number of families in Metro Manila who already signified intentions to avail of the BP2 benefits.

Go cites need to invest more in agri, ensure household

May 14, 2020

TITLE: food security

PAGE 1/ 2/2

DATE

To fund DA's various food security programs, Go said that the Department of Budget and Management could consider allowing DA to realign the funds of the agriculture department in so far as the law permits, to ensure ample funds to implement DA's existing programs supportive of BP2.

Some of these programs of the DA include the giving of seeds and support for backyard poultry raising; contribution of various inputs, such as machineries, tools and equipment to agricultural workers; and the provision of low- or zero-interest credit and establishment of credit facilities, such as Sikat Saka Program for rice and corn farmers, Survival and Recovery Loan for victims of calamities, and Production Loan Easy Access for crops, livestock, fisheries projects.

The agriculture department also provides free trainings on rice production, modern rice farming techniques, seed production and farm mechanization to farmers, and implements the Kadiwa ni Ani at Kita Marketing Program which establishes a direct link between the farmers/fisherfolk and the consuming public, ensuring that farmers get the best prices for their goods, while providing affordable, safe, and nutritious produce to Filipino consumers.

Meanwhile, Go also said that equally vital in ensuring household food security in the country is the close coordination and partnership between local government units and the agriculture department. Therefore, Go urged LGUs nationwide to implement their own programs that would be applicable to their localities which should be aligned with the DA's food security plans and programs.

"Mahalaga rin po ang role ng LGUs sa food security ng bansa. Kaya dapat lamang po na magkaroon din sila ng sarili nilang mga programang pang-food security ayon po sa guidelines ng DA," Go said.

With the help of these programs, Go said that Filipinos will be able to plant or do backyard poultry farming, paving the way for agripreneurs to start their own food enterprises.

"We have seen how the pandemic broke the global supply chains of the food sector. Now is the time to ensure that we are food self-reliant and to reduce our dependence on global trade when it comes to food. Now, more than ever, we need to promote and support food security and agriculture in the country," he emphasized.

As the proponent of the BP2, Go added that ensuring food security will also be crucial in its success, reminding national agencies to implement the program immediately to benefit all affected Filipinos who wish to go back to their home provinces.

"Importante po na mabigyan ng sapat na suporta mula gobyerno ang mga magbabalik probinsya lalo na pagdating sa pagkain, pabahay, at kabuhayan. Kasama rin dito ang pagsigurado na handa ang health, education at local government institutions para sa mga pangangailangan ng komunidad," he stressed.

At the same time, the Senator said that he will also recommend to the Executive branch other necessary measures that can support the objectives of giving Filipinos a better future after the COVID-19 crisis.

"Bilang proponent ng programang ito, patuloy akong makikipagtulungan sa Executive branch. Sila naman ang may mandatong mag-execute at mag-implemanta nito," Go said.

"Now is the time to act. Marami nang gustong umuwi. Pero walang pilitan po ito. Layunin po ng programang ito na mabigyan ng bagong pag-asa ang mga Pilipino na may hinaharap silang maayos na kinabukasan at tutulungan sila ng gobyerno kung sakaling gusto nilang bumalik sa kanilang mga probinsya," he added.

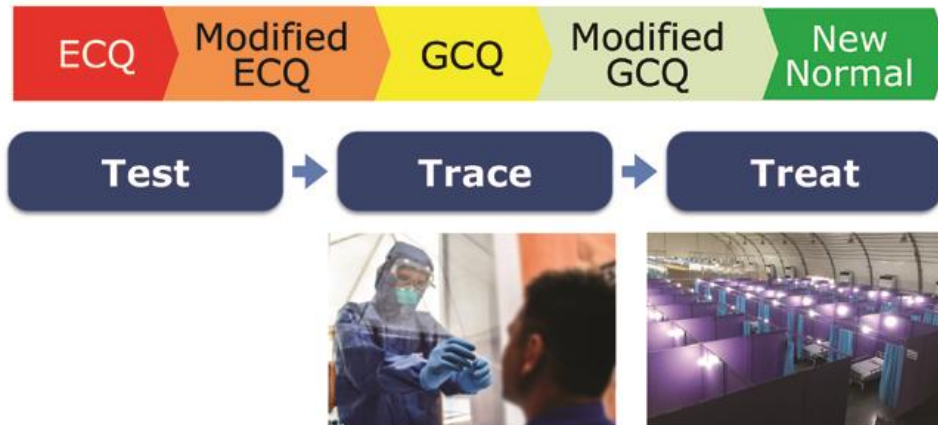
Palace issues new protocols nationwide

posted May 14, 2020 at 01:20 am

by [Vito Barcelo and Maricel V. Cruz, Willie Casas](#)

Malacañang on Wednesday released fresh guidelines for the implementation of quarantine protocols nationwide amid the fight against the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

National, LGU and Private sector monitoring and enforcement



MINIMUM STANDARDS AT EVERY STEP

TAKOT AKO SA COVID - NATIONAL COMMUNICATIONS CAMPAIGN AGAINST COVID-19

Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said “minimum standards” should be observed in places where enhanced community quarantine (ECQ), modified ECQ, and general community quarantine (GCQ) would be implemented beginning May 16.

Roque reminded Filipinos that they must use face masks, practice frequent sanitation and hand washing, and avoid touching their face and other surfaces to protect themselves against Covid-19.

He added that the practice of strict social distancing of at least one meter, reconfiguration of workspaces, and the putting of markers in public places must be done across the country.

On public movement, Roque said people residing in places where ECQ and modified ECQ will be enforced must “100 percent” stay at home.

Vulnerable individuals, such as senior citizens, and transmitters, such as youths, are not allowed to go outside of their homes while GCQ is being implemented, he said.

Roque noted that outdoor exercise is not allowed during the ECQ period, while people from areas placed under modified ECQ can walk, jog, run, and bike so long as they observe safety protocols, such as wearing of face mask and practicing social distancing of at least two meters.

He said limited sports, such as golf and tennis, are allowed in places under GCQ.

Roque said mass gatherings are still prohibited in areas under ECQ.

However, he said, a gathering of a maximum of five people is allowed in areas where modified ECQ will be implemented.

Roque said a maximum of 10 people could hold a meeting in areas placed under GCQ.

On transportation, Roque said the temporary stoppage of mass public transport is still in effect in areas where ECQ is imposed.

The government, however, would allow the use of shuttles for front-line workers and private vehicles for persons allowed to leave homes in areas under ECQ, he said.

“There is no public transportation in areas under ECQ,” Roque said.

For areas under modified ECQ, the government would permit the use of government company shuttle, personal vehicle, bicycle, motorcycle, electric scooter, and public shuttle, he said.

Meanwhile, all public and private transportation are allowed in areas under GCQ, but strict safe distancing and safety protocols must be followed.

Roque also said domestic flights are prohibited and international flights are limited in areas under ECQ and modified ECQ.

As for work in public and private sector offices, he said there should be stricter protocols for higher risk occupations, industries, and spaces.

Roque said workers in the private sector must undergo Covid-19 tests and must be provided shuttle services.

Skeleton workforce in government would be allowed during the imposition of ECQ and modified ECQ, he said.

Alternative work arrangements for government employees, Roque said, would be practiced in areas under GCQ.

“There will be alternative work arrangements in areas under GCQ. Employees may render 40 hours of work or avail of the four-day workweek,” he said.

Roque said school premises are still closed in areas under ECQ and GCQ.

Skeleton workforce may be adopted in areas under GCQ to process students’ requirements and make preparations for graduation activities and class opening, he said.

Under Resolution 35 of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID), Roque said the government would also declare “zoning” guidelines based on the number of COVID-19 positive cases and rate of transmission in the affected areas.

The National Capital Region, Laguna and Cebu City are under the red or critical zone, with more than 20 cases per 100,000 population. The orange or containment zone has one to 19 cases while the yellow or buffer zone has no cases but contiguous to areas with cases. The green or outside of buffer zone has no confirmed cases.

Meanwhile, an economist of the House of Representatives on Wednesday said the administration should remain vigilant despite the easing of the lockdown to be done through the determination of “risk classifications.”

“This should not lead to complacency. Exhaustive testing and tracing remains a matter of life and death since as many as 17,000 new infections are still possible if there were no mass testing and active case isolation in place,” said Albay Rep. Joey Salceda, Committee on Ways and Means chairman and one of President Rodrigo Duterte's trusted advisers on the pandemic issue.

Salceda warned in a preliminary impact analysis of the IATF directive, that the classification of provinces “should be understood not as cues for proportionate complacency, but as varying stages of infectivity demand evolving emphases on key interventions such as testing and tracing.”

“Our initial analysis, subject to evolving data, shows that infectivity rates in low and medium risk areas remain higher than in the high risk areas. That probably means infection has just began in those areas. On the one hand, that’s a threat because that means if you don’t prevent transmission, there’s more to come. On the other hand, that’s an opportunity to test and trace exhaustively, while it is still starting,” Salceda said.

Salceda’s analysis, based on figures from the Department of Health, also shows that as many as 17,800 infections could still take place given current infectivity rates, “without tracing, testing, and isolation.”

Meanwhile, a party-list legislator appealed to the IATF to amend its guidelines on physical distancing to allow private motorists, including motorcycle riders, to ferry passengers who are members of their household.

Rep. Ronnie Ong of the Ang Probinsyano party-list group said "it doesn't make sense" that people who were living, eating and sleeping together in the same house should be apprehended for being in the same vehicle or for riding together in a motorcycle for supposed violation of the rules on physical distancing set by the IATF.

"People living in the same house don't obviously observe physical distancing when they are in their own house so it really makes no sense at all that they would be prevented from riding together in a private car or in a motorcycle," Ong, vice chairman of the House Committee on Rural Development, said.

Ong particularly cited several cases where policemen manning checkpoints had forced motorcycle riders to turn around and leave their own relatives behind who were also working as medical frontliners.

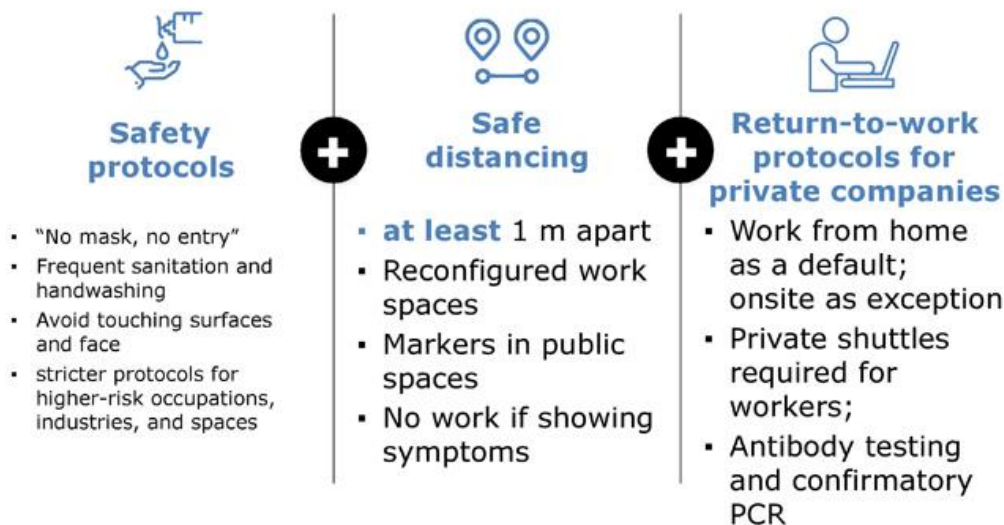
At the same time, the Kilusang Mayo Uno labor center called for safer workplaces as the government eased restrictions on its lockdown of Metro Manila and allowed a certain freedom of movement amid the COVID-19 crisis, mainly to enable return-to-work conditions.

President Rodrigo Duterte aired the decision in a public announcement Tuesday after meeting with the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases.

“We cannot allow this government to risk the lives of workers in favor of business. We realize the decision was a concession to the industry but the real mover of the economy is human labor,” KMU Secretary-General Jerome Adonis said.

KMU pointed out, that without mass testing, the workers would be exposed in workplaces, and in transit going to and from work.

Minimum standards at every step



“Workers returning to work should be cared for not only with face masks, sanitation, and distancing. As part of occupational health and safety, they should be prioritized for PCR testing—not antibodies or rapid testing that cannot precisely detect COVID-19 infection,” Adonis said.



Government releases MECQ guidelines

[Alexis Romero](#) (The Philippine Star) - May 14, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Book stores as well as shops selling clothing, toys and office supplies can reopen, but not barber shops, salons and massage parlors.

Golf and tennis can resume, but not contact sports.

These are some of the guidelines released by the government yesterday for Metro Manila and other "highrisk" areas that will be placed under a modified enhanced community quarantine or MECQ by May 16.

The MECQ is in line with the World Health Organization's warning against rushing the lifting of lockdowns in areas with high cases of coronavirus disease 2019 or COVID-19.

The MECQ is more relaxed than ECQ, but has more restrictions compared with the general community quarantine (GCQ).

Some forms of private transportation will also be allowed under MECQ as long as they comply with safety protocols.

"We have to be flexible. We have to do it gradually, slowly. If the number of cases increase, we would go back to ECQ," presidential spokesman Harry Roque said at a press briefing yesterday.

"We started with ECQ, we will shift to modified ECQ before going to GCQ. After that, we will go to modified GCQ before moving to the new normal. We won't experience the normal we knew before COVID-19 until there is no vaccine or medicine," he added.

Everyone should stay home under the MECQ, except frontliners and those who are buying essentials.

Limited outdoor exercise will be allowed such as outdoor walk, jogging, running and biking but safety protocols should be observed like wearing of masks and two-meter distancing.

Limited contact sports like golf and tennis are allowed in GCQ areas. Small gatherings, including religious ones, are allowed in areas under MECQ if they have five participants or less.

In GCQ areas, the maximum number of participants is ten.

No inter-island travel and domestic flights will be permitted under MECQ, but biking and non-motorized transport are encouraged. International flights are limited to those carrying overseas Filipino workers or returning Filipinos.

In GCQ areas, public transport and inter-island travel to places under GCQ are allowed as long as health protocols and strict safe distancing are observed.

School premises will remain closed in MECQ areas.

For places that have shifted to GCQ, schools can employ a skeleton work force to process requirements of students and to prepare for graduation and for next semester.

A skeleton onsite staff will man government agencies while other personnel will work from home in MECQ areas.

For GCQ areas, government offices will adopt alternative arrangements like 40-hour or four-day work week.

Public shuttle will be the only mode of public transportation under MECQ.

Private transportation permitted under MECQ are company shuttles (50 percent capacity only), personal vehicles for workers in permitted sectors and activities (two persons per row), bicycle (one person only), motorcycle (one person only) and e-scooter (one person only).

All modes of public transport will be permitted in GCQ areas, but in a reduced capacity to observe safe physical distancing.

All private transportation are also permitted in places that have shifted to GCQ. The government also issued guidelines for public and private construction works in MECQ areas.

Only workers aged 21 to 59 years old and without pre-existing health conditions are allowed to work. They will have to undergo medical tests funded by contractors before they are deployed to construction sites.

Workers will be housed in barracks during the duration of the project. There should also be segregated facilities to ensure social distancing.

Workers should be transported using private shuttles while onsite employees should be given quarantine passes.

Supervisors should ensure safe distancing in and daily disinfection of construction sites.

Errands outside the construction site should be minimized while all personnel returning from the outside should undergo quarantine.

Deliveries and disposal of materials should be handled by separate teams.

All employees should also wear personal protective equipment.

A safety officer should be tapped to ensure compliance of health protocols.

All Category I sectors – agriculture, forestry and fisheries; manufacturing of essential goods such as food, hygiene, medicines, medical products and pet food; hospitals and clinics; essential retail such as groceries and drugstores; laundry shops; food preparation, water refilling, logistics service providers; delivery services; utilities such as power and water; repair and installation of machinery and equipment; telecommunications, energy companies, gasoline stations, construction workers accredited to work on health facilities; manufacturing firms and suppliers of construction products and media establishments – are allowed in all quarantine scenarios, including MECQ.

Category II sectors that are allowed under MECQ are cement and steel, mining and quarrying, electronic commerce companies, postal, courier and delivery services, export-oriented companies (point-to-point shuttles); repair of computers and personal and household goods; housing services activities; special purpose accommodation for healthcare workers, overseas Filipino workers, workers in permitted sectors and other people required to undergo quarantine; business process outsourcing (work-from-home, on-site, or near site accommodation or point-to-point shuttles); banks, money transfer services, microfinance institutions, pawnshops and credit cooperatives and capital markets. (For partial operations under category 2, see table)? Category III sectors allowed under MECQ are rental and leasing other than real estate (e.g. vehicles, equipment for permitted sectors); employment activities. (See table for those allowed to operate partially) ?The only Category III sector not allowed under MECQ are barbershops and salons.?

Sectors that fall under Category IV cannot operate in any quarantine scenario because they are considered non-essential.

Businesses that belong to this category are gym, fitness studios and sports facilities; entertainment industries like cinemas, theaters and karaoke bars; kid amusement industries, libraries, archives, museums and cultural centers; tourist destinations like water parks, resorts and beaches; travel agencies, tour operators, reservation service and related activities and personal care services like massage parlors, sauna, facial care and waxing.

No loitering in malls

People will not be allowed to loiter in shopping malls in Metro Manila even as restrictions are gradually eased under MECQ, a police official said yesterday.

“Mallgoers will be barred from staying in shopping centers for long periods of time,” Maj. Gen. Debold Sinas, National Capital Region Police Office director, said in an interview with The Chiefs aired over Cignal TV’s OneNews on Tuesday night.

Sinas said seats in the malls’ common areas will be removed to ensure that patrons will only visit to buy food and other necessities.

Theaters and other entertainment establishments will also be closed to discourage people from loitering.

Sinas said shopping malls will only accommodate at 50 percent of their capacity, wherein only one person is allowed every two square meters.

Meanwhile, senior citizens can now go out and exercise under the MECQ.

National Task Force against coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) response chief implementer Carlito Galvez Jr. said the government has to implement measures that would protect the health of the elderly.

“Seniors can go out to exercise like biking. I believed this is what we can allow them in the meantime because they are vulnerable,” Galvez said.

He urged senior citizens to wear face masks and observe social distancing. – **Emmanuel Tupas, Jose Rodel Clapano**

BREAKING: Govt recalls lifting of coronavirus

May 14, 2020

TITLE: lockdown in low-risk area

PAGE 1/ 1/2

DATE

BREAKING: Govt recalls lifting of coronavirus lockdown in low-risk areas

By: [Darryl John Esguerra](#) - Reporter / [@DJEsguerraINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 12:39 PM May 13, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — The government has recalled the lifting of community quarantines in several areas across the country that have “low risk” to coronavirus infection.

According to Interior Secretary Eduardo Año, an amendment on the resolution of the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) enforcing different types of lockdown in all areas in the county would be made on Wednesday.

Año said the so-called “low-risk” areas would be placed under modified general community quarantine (GCQ).

“Wala na po tayong areas sa buong Pilipinas na hindi under ng community quarantine. Iba-iba lang po ng level,” Año said in a televised press briefing.

Malacañang announced Tuesday that President Duterte has approved the proposal of the IATF to lift the [movement restrictions](#) in 40 provinces and 11 cities nationwide starting May 16.

Areas under moderate risk would be placed under a general community quarantine, while Metro Manila, Cebu City, and Laguna province, which are considered high-risk areas due to the high concentration of COVID-19 cases, would be placed under modified enhanced community quarantine (ECQ).

Año, vice-chair of the government’s National Task Force in charge of implementing measures to contain the novel coronavirus, said that the decision was made after some local chief executives appealed that they are not yet ready to lift the lockdown in their jurisdictions.

However, Health Secretary Francisco Duque said the signing of the resolution was an “honest mistake” and that he agreed to affix his signature as he was told that the resolution will not identify the areas where the community quarantines would be lifted.

Duque, chair of the IATF, signed the resolution together with Cabinet Secretary Karlo Nograles, the task force’s co-chair.

The following are the areas the government earlier classified as “low-risk”:

REGION I

Ilocos Norte*

Ilocos Sur

La Union*

Pangasinan*

Region IV-B

Marinduque

Occidental Mindoro

Oriental Mindoro

Romblon

Palawan

Puerto Princesa City

BREAKING: Govt recalls lifting of coronavirus

May 14, 2020

DATE

TITLE: lockdown in low-risk area

PAGE 1/ 2/2

Region V

Albay*

Camarines Norte

Camarines Sur

Catanduanes

Masbate

Sorsogon

Legazpi City*

Naga City

Region VI

Aklan

Antique

Capiz

Guimaras

Iloilo

Negros Occidental

Iloilo City

Bacolod City

Region VIII

Biliran

Eastern Samar

Leyte Northern Samar

Western Samar

Southern Leyte

Ormoc City

Tacloban City

Region X

Bukidnon

Camiguin

Lanao del Norte

Misamis Occidental

Misamis Oriental

Cagayan de Oro City

Region XII

North Cotabato

South Cotabato

Sarangani

Sultan Kudarat

General Santos City

BARMM

Basilan

Lanao del Sur

Maguindanao

Sulu

Tawi-Tawi

Cotabato City

(*Recommendations assuming similar risk classification prevails on May 14, 2020.)

EDV

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1274231/fwd-breaking-govt-recalls-lifting-of-coronavirus-lockdown-in-low-risk-areas-2#ixzz6MMT3sJLJ>

Areas declared as no longer under community quarantine to shift to modified GCQ — Año

Published May 13, 2020 1:04pm

By VIRGIL LOPEZ, GMA News

The national government on Wednesday reversed its decision to lift the community quarantine in provinces and cities considered with low risk in the spread of COVID-19.

Speaking at a Palace press conference, Interior Secretary Eduardo Año said the decision stemmed from the appeals of governors and mayors who expressed apprehension about further easing of restrictions.

“Marami pong governors, mayors na nagsagawa ng petitions, requests at sinasabi nila na hindi pa sila handa para tanggalin ang community quarantine,” he said.

Año said the new policy will cover 37 provinces and 11 cities, which will be placed under modified general community quarantine after May 15. These low-risk provinces and cities are in Region I, Region IV-B, Region V, Region VI, Region VIII, Region X Region XII and the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao.

“Wala na po tayong areas sa buong Pilipinas na hindi under community quarantine. Iba iba lang pong level,” he said.

Under modified GCQ, socio-economic activities will be allowed but minimum public health standards must be followed.

Año said the government will issue guidelines on the matter. — **RSJ, GMA News**

Source: https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/738039/areas-declared-as-no-longer-under-community-quarantine-to-shift-to-modified-gcq-ano/story/?utm_source=GMANews&utm_medium=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR2Tmt1ZhW_3M12VQAZqV3miSLXd-KOLErQfdRG6ti8s7xQdICd6HD5RHWg

ECQ extension in Metro Manila draws mixed reaction from residents

Published May 13, 2020 11:13am

The extension of enhanced community quarantine in Metro Manila drew some mixed reactions from the public on Wednesday.

In a report on “Unang Balita,” motorcycle rider Armando Villerma told GMA News that he was in favor of the extension, considering the risk of contracting the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

“Pabor ako dahil wala pang naimbentong gamot na pamuksa doon sa COVID,” the rider said.

A vendor named Lisa Lazaro, who still gets by with some daily earnings, said she couldn’t fully support the lockdown on account of her peers, who totally lost their source of income.

“Ayaw ko sa lockdown, walang mga trabaho ang mga kasama namin,” Lisa said.

“Okay din ako kasi nagtitinda ako, pero hindi ako pabor sa lockdown talaga kasi hindi ka makauwi,” she added.

Another vendor Arnando Villerma has simply thrown up his hands, hoping the government would do its best to help affected residents like himself.

“Magtitiis talaga tayo. Gano’n lang. Sana makapagbigay ng ayuda ang gobyerno.”

[#ECQSeason4 trended early on Twitter Tuesday morning](#), as Filipinos anticipated an extension announcement during President Rodrigo Duterte's morning briefing.

It was presidential spokesperson Harry Roque in his press briefing at noon, who said the President had ordered the implementation of a “modified” ECQ in Metro Manila, along with Laguna and Cebu City, that continue to be considered “high-risk” in the spread of COVID-19.

According to Roque, the modified ECQ will run from May 16 to 31.

[Click here to find out more about the guidelines of modified ECQ](#), and how it’s different from the current ECQ.

[The Philippines has so far recorded 11,086 COVID-19 cases](#), with 1,999 recoveries and 726 deaths, according to government data. — **Margaret Claire Layug/LA, GMA News**

Source: https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/hashtag/content/738015/ecq-extension-in-metro-manila-draws-mixed-reaction-from-residents/story/?utm_source=GMAnews&utm_medium=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR3Z5PwbMnQPIPXLANisJXOXHZDDaieTfO3ZXCMtPvTZ2UGRuIYWfuHYZik

LIST: Businesses allowed to resume operations in MECQ areas

By: [Krissy Aguilar](#) - Reporter / [@KAguilarINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 03:25 PM May 13, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — Select businesses will be allowed to resume operations in areas under modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) starting May 16, Malacañang announced Wednesday.

Presidential spokesperson Harry Roque, however, noted that some businesses may only employ half of its workforce on site while the other half must work from home.

[Metro Manila, Laguna, and Cebu City](#) were the three areas eased to MECQ from May 16 to 31. As presented by the Palace official, the following are allowed to reopen businesses in areas under MECQ provided that safety protocols are observed:

Category 1:

- Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries
- Manufacturing of essential goods (food and beverages), hygiene (soap, detergent, disinfectant), medicines and vitamins, medical products (masks), pet food, feeds, and fertilizers
- Hospitals and clinics
- Essential retail (groceries, markets, drugs stores)
- Laundry shops
- Food preparation and water refilling (take out and delivery)
- Logistics service providers (cargo, warehousing, trucking, shipping line)
- Delivery services
- Utilities: power, energy, water, telecom, aircon, water collection/supply, waste management, sewerage (except septic tank emptying but including pest control, garbage control, etc.)
- Repair and installation of machinery and equipment
- Telecommunication companies
- Energy companies
- Gasoline stations
- Construction workers accredited by the DPWH to work on facilities for healthcare and risk reduction
- Manufacturing companies and suppliers of products necessary for construction
- Media establishments

Category 2:

- Manufacturing (beverage, electrical machinery, wood, non-metallic products, textiles, tobacco products, paper products, rubber and plastic products, refined petroleum products, computer, electronics, and optical products electrical equipment, machinery, motor vehicles, trailers, semi-trailers, other transport equipment) – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home
- Cement and steel

LIST: Businesses allowed to resume operations in

May 14, 2020

TITLE: MECQ areas

PAGE 1/ 2/3

DATE

- Mining and quarrying
- Electronic commerce companies
- Export-oriented companies
- Real estate activities – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home
- Essential public and private construction projects (sewerage, water services facilities, health facilities) and priority (food production, agriculture, energy, housing, communication, water utilities, manufacturing, and BPO) – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home; small scale projects prohibited
- Repair of computers and personal household goods
- Housing Services activities
- Office administrative and office support (photocopying, billing) – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home
- Special purpose accommodation for healthcare workers, OFWs, workers in permitted sectors and non-OFWs with mandated quarantine
- Accommodation for guests – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home; Only for existing long-term booking as of May 1 in Luzon
- Funeral and embalming services = Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home; excluding funeral parlors
- Veterinary clinics – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home
- Security and investigation activities – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home
- Banks, money transfer, services, microfinance institutions, pawnshop, and credit cooperatives
- Capital markets
- Money exchange, insurance, reinsurance, and non-compulsory pension fund – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home
- Legal and accounting -Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home
- Management consultancy activities – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home
- Architecture and engineering activities – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home
- Scientific research and development – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home
- Category 3:
- Advertising and market research – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home
- Computer programming – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home
- Publishing and printing activities – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home
- Film, music and TV production – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home
- Rental, leasing other than real estate (vehicles, equipment for permitted sectors)
- Employment activities (Recruitment)
- Photography, fashion, industrial, graphic and interior design – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home
- Wholesale and retail trade of motor vehicles, motorcycles, bicycles including parts – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home

LIST: Businesses allowed to resume operations in

May 14, 2020

TITLE: MECQ areas

PAGE 1/ 3/3

DATE

- Repair of motor vehicles (vulcanizing, battery, auto repair) – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home
- Malls and commercial centers (non-leisure) – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home
- Restaurants – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home, delivery and take out
- Hardware stores – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home
- Clothing and accessories – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home
- Mall-based government frontline services – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home
- Bookstores and school and office supplies stores – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home
- Baby care supplies store – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home
- Pet food and care supplies – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home
- IT, communications and electronic equipment – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home
- Flower, jewelry, novelty, antique, perfume shops – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home
- Toy stores (playgroups, amusement areas closed) – Partially allowed / 50% onsite, 50% work from home
- The following activities, meanwhile, will remain prohibited even in areas under MECQ:
 - Barbershops and salons
 - Gyms/fitness studios and sports facilities
 - Entertainment industries (cinema, theaters, karaoke bars)
 - Kid amusement industries (playrooms, rides)
 - Libraries, archives, museums, and cultural centers
 - Tourist destinations (water parks, beaches, resorts)
 - Travel agencies, tour operators, reservation service and related services
 - Personal care services (massage parlors, sauna, facial care, waxing, etc.)

KGA

Gyms, resorts, personal care services not allowed to operate in all quarantine areas

Published May 13, 2020 3:04pm

Gyms, resorts and personal care services are among the establishments that will remain closed due to the community quarantine aimed at curbing the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

The following sectors will not be allowed to operate in areas under enhanced community quarantine, modified enhanced community quarantine and general community quarantine, according to Malacañang.

- Gyms/fitness studios and sports facilities
- Entertainment industries (cinemas, theaters, karaoke bars, etc.)
- Kid amusement industries (e.g., playrooms, rides)
- Libraries, archives, museums and cultural centers
- Tourist destinations (e.g. water parks, beaches, resorts)
- Travel agencies, tour operators, reservation service and related activities
- Personal care services (e.g. massage parlors, sauna, facial care, waxing, etc.)

The country will still be under community quarantine until May 31. — **Virgil Lopez/RSJ, GMA News**

Source: https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/738060/gyms-resorts-personal-care-services-not-allowed-to-operate-in-all-quarantine-areas/story/?utm_source=GMANews&utm_medium=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR3WLZcX1WcvRT9SC-RKkfKAcaUOplx7W-cDBCK-g8_4xGV9JPWdZ1gfWs

Manila prepares for 'new normal'

Published 5 hours ago
on May 14, 2020 01:00 AM
By **Pat C. Santos**



Even if the Inter-Agency Task Force has placed Metro Manila under modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) until 31 May, Manila Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso said this will allow the city to slowly get back on its feet as it prepares for the "new normal."

In a public address to Manileños via social media, the mayor said there is still no reason to let down their guards against the dreaded coronavirus.

He said residents still need to be extra careful and remain cautious since they expect the number of COVID-19 cases in the city to spike in the next two weeks.

"Its effect would mean businesses will slowly reopen, which is good for our city," Domagoso said. "I don't want you to be afraid or scared. It is true that COVID-19 is fatal, but there is hope. I don't like hibernation. I don't like starvation. We must move on and confront and face this challenge."

"Even as businesses and jobs are slowly coming back, COVID-19 will still be there. That's why we need to be careful," he added.

The mayor noted that a report from the Department of Health said over 12 percent of asymptomatic cases on its list come from Manila.

"We cannot be complacent," Domagoso stressed. "It doesn't mean that because the ECQ has been modified, that the ECQ has been lifted, or that there is now GCQ, there is no longer a quarantine and everything will be ok. That's not true. As long as there is no cure, we are always at risk, including our families and our communities. So, be very extra careful."

As of 12 May, there were 20 additional COVID-19 cases in the city raising the total of those confirmed to be infected to more than 700. An additional 76 new persons under investigation raises the total PUI to 1,009.

Meanwhile, big jeepney groups yesterday denounced the government's decision not to allow them to operate their regular routes when the MECQ takes effect on 16 May.

Zenaida Maranan, president of Federation of Jeepney Operators and Drivers Association of the Philippines, said during the virtual forum "Roundtable Discussion at Lido Rrestaurant" the government is being unfair and this move will send many families of drivers to starve.

Maranan said jeepney groups are willing to abide by the government regulation of putting in health safeguards to protect against COVID-19 protection.

She added they are willing to talk with government on policies such as limiting by half the capacity load of jeepney units to observe physical distancing, placing plastic barriers and disinfecting vehicles, with no additional fare increase.

The jeepney leader said drivers and operators cannot just rely on the help of the government, and that they should work to feed their families.

Admitting that the jeepney is still the poor man's means of transportation, she said they are willing to cooperate with government on every regulation it will impose.

"It seems what the government will do is to ease us out to take advantage of the situation by implementing a jeepney phase-out, and this will cause chaos," Maranan said.

On the other hand, Alex Yague, president of the Federation of Provincial Bus Owners, said the strict safety regulation dictated by the government will mean losses for their group, citing the 50 percent reduction on passenger load to meet the distancing protocol.

Yague suggested government should subsidize transport systems while the COVID-19 situation exists.

Subsidies will cover their loses in terms of revenue on passengers, transport fees and their monthly amortization on new bus units.

Meanwhile, Transportation Undersecretary Alberto Suansing clarified that the Land Transport Franchising and Regulatory Board will only allow a limited fleet of buses to ply EDSA and all other routes in Metro Manila, and that they each need to apply for a permit.

Biggest economic decline since waning years of

May 14, 2020

TITLE: Marcos regime seen

PAGE 1/ 1/3

DATE

ECONOMY

Biggest economic decline since waning years of Marcos regime seen

By: [Ben O. de Vera](#) - Reporter / [@bendeveraINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:34 AM May 14, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine economy’s contraction this year could be greater than earlier predicted as measures to contain the coronavirus outbreak weigh on domestic demand and investments, and the budget deficit is expected to rise sharply in 2020.

Gross domestic product (GDP) was expected to decline 2 percent to 3.4 percent this year, the first contraction in 22 years since the Asian financial crisis and the biggest decline since the waning years of the dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos, and worse than the government’s forecast of -1.0 percent to zero growth in March.

The further downgrade was decided on Tuesday during a meeting of the Cabinet-level Development Budget Coordination Committee (DBCC) chaired by Budget Secretary Wendel Avisado. The DBCC is an interagency body in charge of setting the government’s macroeconomic goals and policies.

While full-year 2020 GDP may slide at a faster pace, acting Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Karl Kendrick Chua told the Inquirer on Wednesday that he was hopeful of a quick, “V-shaped” recovery before the end of the year.

“Probably more negative in the second quarter before positive growth in the second half,” said Chua, who heads the state planning agency National Economic and Development Authority (Neda).

In March, at the onset of the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) imposed on Luzon and other parts of the country to halt the spread of the coronavirus, the DBCC projected GDP to post zero growth or contract by 0.8 percent to 1 percent.

But the GDP already shrank by 0.2 percent year-on-year during the first quarter— ending 84 quarters of growth since 1999 — no thanks to Taal Volcano’s eruption and the coronavirus pandemic, which not only slowed global trade and tourism but also forced lockdowns.

Possible recession

The first-quarter print made the possibility of a recession or two consecutive quarters of economic contraction earlier than expected, as the ECQ that started mid-March had already been extended four times in areas with high COVID-19 cases, the latest until May 31.

At the most optimistic end of the latest DBCC projection, 2020 will be the first time since 1998’s 3-percent annual decline that the Philippines will experience a recession.

This year’s budget deficit is estimated to reach P1.56 trillion (\$31.04 billion) or 8.1 percent of GDP, a far bigger shortfall than the government’s forecast of 5.3 percent in March, and more than double its original estimate of 3.2 percent.

“These revised assumptions will also allow the government to operate with a more realistic and prudent fiscal stance as it flags the downside risks to the economy and the fiscal program for the rest of the year,” the DBCC said in a statement on Wednesday.

Biggest economic decline since waning years of

May 14, 2020

TITLE: Marcos regime seen

PAGE 1/ 2/3

DATE

The Philippines, which was one of Asia's fastest-growing economies before the pandemic, is on the edge of a recession after growth unexpectedly shrank 0.2 percent in the first quarter, dashing forecasts for a 3.1 percent growth.

Extended lockdown

Economists believe GDP will see a steeper drop ahead as an extended lockdown in the capital takes a heavier toll on domestic demand, building the case for more monetary policy easing in the coming months.

On Tuesday, President Duterte announced that Metro Manila, Laguna province and Cebu City would remain under lockdown up to the end of May, extending one of the world's strictest and longest community quarantines to try to contain the outbreak.

The government is implementing a P1.4-trillion relief program to mitigate the economic impact of the coronavirus outbreak, which has infected more than 11,000 people in the country and killed more than 700.

According to the DBCC, Neda has estimated output losses due to the pandemic hitting P2 trillion this year, equivalent to 9.4 percent of the economy worth P19.5 trillion as of last year.

Recovery program "Timely implementation of a well-targeted recovery program, alongside efforts of the private sector, will mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. Such a program will help the country regain confidence, attain higher economic growth, and restore employment rates to precrisis levels," the DBCC said.

Once the recovery program being prepared with Congress is put in place, the government's economic team sees GDP rebounding by 7.1-8.1 percent in 2021.

Foreign trade, however, will likely struggle this year, partly as the bigger global economy also took a bad hit. Exports of Philippine-made goods were projected to drop by 4 percent, while imports—including raw materials and capital equipment needed for big-ticket infrastructure projects—would decline by a faster 5.5 percent in 2020, DBCC projections showed.

In March, the DBCC was expecting meager growth in external trade but downscaled its updated outlook "in anticipation of the global economy's sharp contraction as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic."

The pandemic has also put pressure on the government's fiscal program as it will have to spend more, especially on COVID-19 response, despite weaker tax and nontax revenues as a result of an economic recession.

Expenditures on public goods and services were now estimated at P4.18 trillion for the entire year, higher by P12 billion from the programmed P4.16 trillion in March.

"The emerging disbursement program takes into account the releases for COVID-19 initiatives charged to savings coming from austerity measures, among others," the DBCC said.

Spending vs revenue

At 21.7 percent of GDP, government spending as a share of the economy was poised to be a record-high in 2020.

Biggest economic decline since waning years of

May 14, 2020

TITLE: Marcos regime seen

PAGE 1/ 3/3

DATE

The 2020 revenue target, however, was slashed by 17.7 percent to P2.61 trillion from the March projection of P3.17 trillion as tax collections were expected to be weak amid a bad economy.

The bigger expenditures and weaker revenues will inflate the budget deficit to P1.56 trillion or 8.1 percent of GDP, wider than the programmed 5.3 percent of GDP or P990.1 billion last March.

“Despite increased deficit spending, the national government’s deficit-to-GDP ratio will remain in the median of comparable countries in Asean and in East Asia, among peers with similar credit ratings, and among other emerging market economies, as long as the ratio does not exceed 9 percent,” the DBCC said.

But at the worst case of 3.4-percent economic contraction in 2020, the Philippines’ GDP would fall at its fastest pace since 1985’s 6.9 percent.

The share of debt to GDP, meanwhile, will climb to about 50 percent this year from 39.6 percent last year, higher than the previous projection of 44.9 percent.

Under the Duterte administration’s socioeconomic strategy against COVID-19, the government planned to borrow an additional P310 billion from foreign multilateral and bilateral lenders to augment funds.

Under the 2020 national budget and before the pandemic, borrowings were supposed to hit a record P1.4 trillion, with 75 percent to be sourced locally mainly through the sale of treasury bills and bonds.

—*WITH REPORTS FROM THE WIRES*

Legal implications of closure and suspension of business due to COVID-19

Published May 14, 2020, 12:07 AM

By AL WHILAN A. BALJON



Over the past few days, there has been a rapid increase of COVID-19 infections in the country. In an attempt to contain the pandemic, the government suspended various business operations and implemented strict community quarantine procedures. Several countries have imposed similar lockdown measures to avoid the spread of the virus.

Due to the substantial reduction of economic activity, the International Monetary Fund has declared a global recession. For an average man, this means that businesses will start downsizing, laying off workers, and/or closing a facility or business.

Big businesses may be able to withstand a brief suspension of operations – but micro, small, and medium enterprises will be severely affected. This is further aggravated by the uncertainty of the quarantine's duration.

Considering the foregoing, business owners are contemplating on whether to continue, suspend, or close their business. Establishments that wish to close or suspend operations should be aware of their responsibilities to the government and their employees. Notices must be submitted to the government's skeletal workforce or by electronic means, if any. Employees must receive a written notice given personally or thru electronic mail.

Permanent closure

Businesses choosing to close permanently must cancel their registration with the (1) Department of Trade and Industry (for sole proprietorship) or the Securities and Exchange Commission (for corporations and partnerships), (2) Bureau of Internal Revenue, and (3) their local government office.

Notices must be given to social welfare agencies, such as Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (Philhealth), Home Development Mutual Fund (Pag-IBIG Fund), and Social Security System (SSS). Their employees must receive at least a 30-day written notice before the closure. An Establishment Termination Report must also be filed with the Department of Labor and Employment (DoLE).

A business may still be considered as active if they failed to comply with these steps. Unpaid taxes and contributions may be assessed plus any corresponding penalties and interest.

Suspension of business operations

Businesses may either suspend their whole operations or a specific component.

There is no termination of employment during a valid suspension of business operations. There is only a "temporary displacement of employees."

A business choosing to temporarily suspend operations must notify the above-mentioned government agencies as well. In the absence of any directive instructing otherwise, tax returns should still be filed, and government reports must still be submitted. Additionally, the employees must be notified and a report must still be filed at DoLE.

Remittance of mandatory contributions will be suspended for social welfare agencies but shall resume upon the continuance of operations.

Legal implications of closure and suspension of
business due to COVID-19

TITLE:

PAGE 1/ 2/2

May 14, 2020

DATE

Businesses will be assessed for the unpaid contributions for failure to notify the social welfare institutions. Penalties are also imposed for non-filing of tax returns and government reports.

Reduction of workforce

Alternatively, businesses may choose to downsize or lay-off some of its employees to avoid further losses. In this regard, a fair and reasonable criteria must be used by the employers in determining which employees will be retrenched or retained. Proof of actual or imminent financial losses must also be proven.

Both the employee and DoLE must be notified at least one month before the intended date of retrenchment. Social welfare agencies must also be notified of the employee's termination.

Failure to comply with the mandatory procedural notifications may expose businesses to lawsuits by employees for damages, indemnities, and penalties.

Employees

In cases of retrenchment, closures, or cessation of business not due to financial losses, employers are required to provide a separation pay equivalent to at least one month pay or one-half-month pay for every year of service, whichever is higher. A fraction of six months of work or service is equivalent to a whole year of employment.

Involuntary separation of employees covered by the SSS unemployment insurance may be granted a cash benefit assistance for a maximum period of two months. Affected employees may also avail of the various loan assistance and financial assistance provided by the government.

On the other hand, businesses temporary suspending operations are not required to pay their employees' salaries under the principle of "no work, no pay." However, after the resumption of normal business operations, the affected employees should either be recalled back to work or, if not possible, permanently separated and paid the appropriate separation pay.

Lastly, businesses allowed to operate during the enhanced community quarantine cannot impose disciplinary actions on employees refusing to work due to compelling health and safety concerns. The principle of "no work, no pay" shall apply. Nevertheless, employees may use their existing leave credits under their company's policy or as stipulated in their collective bargaining agreement, if any.

Final word

A longer suspension of business operation means deeper economic loss — but an increase in lives saved. The government will have to choose between lives and economics. Businesses will have to decide between taking a hit or sacrificing their employees.

(Al Whilan A. Baljon is a lawyer at M & Associates, a full-service firm located at Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City.)



ISKAM SA SAP, BALIK-CQ AT BANTA KINA PANG. DIGONG

May 13, 2020 @ 7:00 PM 13 hours ago

Views: 94

MAY idinemanda nang opisyal ng barangay at kasama nito dahil sa pangiangkil kaugnay ng Social Amelioration Program.

Nanghihingi umano ng P500 ang kasama ng kagawad na namimigay ng SAP form samantalang dapat na libre ang papel dito na roon mag-aplay ng SAP ang isang mamamayan.

Dapat lang na gawin ito upang maging halimbawa sa iba na gumawa rin ng mga kaaliwaswasan sa SAP.

Sabi ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte, nang binubuo ang programa, nagkaroon na siya ng takot na baka pagmulan ng mga kawatan ito.

Bilyon-bilyong piso nga naman ang pinakawalan at pinakakawalan ng pamahalaan para rito at hindi maiwasang may maruruming kamay na sumawsaw sa pondo.

Maghintay-hintay lang tayo at baka tataas pa ang ranggo ng mga masasangkot.

‘Yun bang === maaaring kapitan o mayor at mas mataas pa na may kaugnayan sa pagdaloy ng pondo mula sa pambansang pamahalaan hanggang sa lebel ng mga barangay.

Walang dapat patawarin sa mga kumita at kumikita sa gitna ng kalamidad nang wala sa ayos, lalo na ang mga korap.

Kung gaano sinampahan ng kaso at inaresto ang mga pribadong tao na nagsamantala sa mga overpricing, halimbawa, sa mga medical supply mula face mask hanggang personal protective equipment, dapat ganito rin ang gawin sa mga kumokorap sa SAP.

BALIK-COMMUNITY QUARANTINE

Ibinalik sa ilalim ng Enhanced Community Quarantine o General Community Quarantine ang lahat ng lalawigan, lungsod at bayan na unang inalis ng mga nasabing quarantine.

Kahilingan na rin mismo ito sa Inter-Agency Task Force ng mga gobernador at mayor dahil hindi umano nila kayang isugal ang kalagayan nila sa banta ng Corona Virus Disease-19. Kinatatakutan ng lahat ng lokal na lider ang muling pagbangon at pagkalat ng Covid-19.

Pero ang ginawa ng IATF, isinubo sa kanila ang Modified ECQ at Modified GCQ.

Kabilang sa mga kapuna-punang katangian ng MECQ o MGCQ ang pagluluwag ng konti ng paglabas sa bahay at pagbiyahe ng ng mas maraming tao upang makapatrabaho o maghanapbuhay.

Katangian din nito ang paglalagay sa lockdown pa rin bagaman bara-barangay o cluster ng mga barangay na lamang ang lockdown.

'Yun bang === may lockdown na lamang kung saang mga barangay at nakapaligid na lugar may atake ang Covid-19 at hindi na sakop ang buong munisipyo, lungsod o lalawigan o rehiyon. Isa pang katangian, mananatili ang mga checkpoint sa mga highway o sariling checkpoint ng mga lalawigan, lungsod, bayan at b arangay.

Kapag MECQ, bawal pa rin ang mga pampublikong sasakyan samantalang sa MGCQ, papayagan nang bumiyaha ang mga ito pero hanggang 50 porsyento lang ang pasahero dahil sa social distancing.

Napurnada man tayo lahat, tama naman ang ganitong kalagayan dahil wala pa naman talagang bakuna o gamot laban sa Covid-19.

Mahirap nang bumalik tayo lahat sa purong ECQ o GCQ na halos lahat ay bawal, maliban sa iilang mahahalagang bagay.

BANTA SA BUHAY MAY KATAPAT

Dalawa na ang nahuli ng National Bureau of Investigation kaugnay ng pagbabanta sa buhay ni Pangulong Digong.

Isang guro sa isang pampublikong high school sa Zambales at isang habal-habal driver sa Boracay, Aklan.

Delikado ang pagbabanta sa buhay ng Pangulo ng bansa, Pangalawang Pangulo, Senate President, House Speaker at Chief Justice.

Maituturing itong sedisyon, partikular ang Inciting to Sedition.

Nang sabihin ni Ronnel Mas, ang titser, na magbibigay siya ng P50 milyon, at ni Ronal Quiboyen na magbibigay naman ng P100M sa sinomang makapapatay sa Pangulo, itinuturing ang kanilang krimen na Inciting to Sedition.

At ang parusa rito ay prison correctional maximum na 5-6 taon ang pagkakabilanggo at P400,000 ang multa.

O kayong meron pang mga banta sa Pangulo at kay Vice President Leni Robredo, magtago-tagong kayo dahil matutulad kayo kina Mas at Quiboyen.

Kung patatawarin kayo ora mismo ni Pang. Digong o ni VP Leni, magpasalamat kayo.

Pero paano kung hindi?

COLUMNISTS

LIKE IT IS

EODE

By: [Peter Wallace](#) - [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:05 AM May 14, 2020

Red tape is the bane of our existence, so it's good to know that the Ease of Doing Business (EODB) program is progressing well. Jeremiah Belgica at the Anti-Red Tape Authority (Arta) has done an amazing job in taking control of government processes when it comes to doing business, and improvement is happening. He's cracking the whip and government agencies are, with a few exceptions that are being dealt with, complying. He and his team are looking into areas of inefficiency and fixing them.

In his State of the Nation Address, President Duterte complained of five agencies that weren't doing their job. In response, Arta issued Notices to Explain to the agencies, and reforms have been initiated. The LTFRB had 3,120 pending applications, the FDA had 3,125, the SEC had four for accreditation. All agreed to give the automatic approval the law commands. All other government agencies have been told to give automatic approval of applications pending beyond the mandated deadlines of three, seven, and 20 days. Where they haven't, cases have been filed against erring officials with the Office of the Ombudsman and the Civil Service Commission. So it's now up to them as Arta can't prosecute itself.

Arta has submitted policy recommendations to the different government agencies on how to streamline their business. It has launched a National Business One-Stop Shop (NBOSS), initially for single proprietorships, but soon for all businesses. It has also started a program for all agencies to reduce procedures and to reduce required documents by a whopping 52 percent. In a recent board meeting, we agreed to create a rapid regulatory impact assessment support group to ensure that proposed regulations are not redundant, burdensome, or in conflict with national policies.

Some agencies can't comply with Arta orders not because of reluctance, but because of lack of manpower and budget constraints. The Department of Budget and Management should issue an order to all agencies to allot 5 percent of their budget to implement EODB plans and programs—the same as they have done for gender and development programs.

To assist in the COVID-19 ECQ, Arta created a Bayanihan One Stop Shop for importation of critical COVID-19 commodities. On the urging of Arta, the FDA launched one document — electronic License to Operate (eLTO) — which allows the Bureau of Customs to immediately release goods. Some 71 eLTOs have been released so far. It also gave emergency extension for all permits, licenses, etc. that are expiring during the lockdown.

As this COVID-19 crisis highlights, what we really need now is an EODE — Ease of Doing Everything. The inability of the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) to get its act together in the first weeks of the lockdown due to overly strict and inessential bureaucracy led to millions not getting the money promised to them—or getting it much delayed. As of May 9, 2020, some 3 million of the 18 million beneficiaries have yet to receive their subsidy under the social amelioration program. And this is just the first tranche.

Mind you, one of the problems the DSWD faced wasn't of its making. It was due to the inability of the Philippine Statistics Authority to give everyone, or, at least the family head, an ID. The government's lack of experience in such a complex task meant that understandably government workers were learning as they went. And the solutions they were concluding were not the ideal ones. What they should do is tap the private sector under a PPP arrangement.

But the DSWD is not the only department or agency that needs streamlining, they all do. And in all actions they take, not just registering a business or processing licenses for it, but in all transactions involving both government dealing with the public and dealing with itself — agency to agency, department to department.

We need an Ease of Doing Everything Authority. And the simplest, most effective, and quickest way is to just amend the EODB law with a new title and put its operations under Arta, which has more than proved itself capable. It can still be called Arta because it's all the red tape that hinders us from getting service.

Supporting this effort should be the Department of Information and Communications Technology. One of its principal tasks is to design, plan, and assist in implementing the computerization of all government services. All paper forms have to go; that includes signatures on paper, which are still required even for online transactions.

Time to computerize government and streamline it.

Email: wallace_likeitis@wbf.ph

Garbage collectors unsung heroes sa panahon ng pandemic!

[STARTALK - Lolit Solis](#) (Pang-masa) - May 14, 2020 - 12:00am

Tuwang-tuwa ako sa kuwento ni Mel na sinabi ng mga garbage collector na happy sila ngayon dahil ibang-iba na raw ang trato sa kanila ng tao.

Noon daw, basta kukunin lang nila ang basura at aalis na nang hindi napapansin. Pero ngayon daw, merong mga nagbibigay sa kanila ng pangbili ng merienda, pagkain, at kung anu-anong mga bagay tulad ng maliit na alcohol, sabon, mask, at 'yung iba shirts pa.

Masaya sila dahil para bang ngayon naa-appreciate na ng tao ang trabaho nila.

Kung alam lang nila na mga hero natin sila, na very much appreciated ang trabaho nila, dahil without them, baka mas lalo pang lumala ang pandemic.

They deserve all the love and care we can give now, more than anything, sila talaga ang unsung heroes sa panahon na ito.

Salute to our garbage collectors!

'Ayokong maging judgmental '

Hindi ako puwedeng maging judgmental doon sa teacher na nag-post ng hindi maganda at hinuli ng NBI. Sa naging karanasan ko, ewan ko ba kung bakit meron kang moment of madness na biglang mame-mental black out ka at basta gagawin mo na lang ang isang bagay nang hindi iniisip ang magiging consequences.

Sana maging life lesson lang ito doon sa teacher dahil bata pa siya at mahaba pa ang daan na tatahakin niya sa buhay.

Sana rin hindi maging masyadong mabigat ang kabayaran sa nagawa niya, dahil hindi naman siguro ganoon ka-dark ang utak niya para hangarin na mamatay si Papa Digong.

Sayang ang future niya dahil teacher na siya at masisira pa dahil sa nagawa. My heart goes for his pain right now, 'yung embarrassing moment, takot, at guilt niya. At dahil kasama naman niya ang parents niya, kahit paano may comfort siyang nadarama.

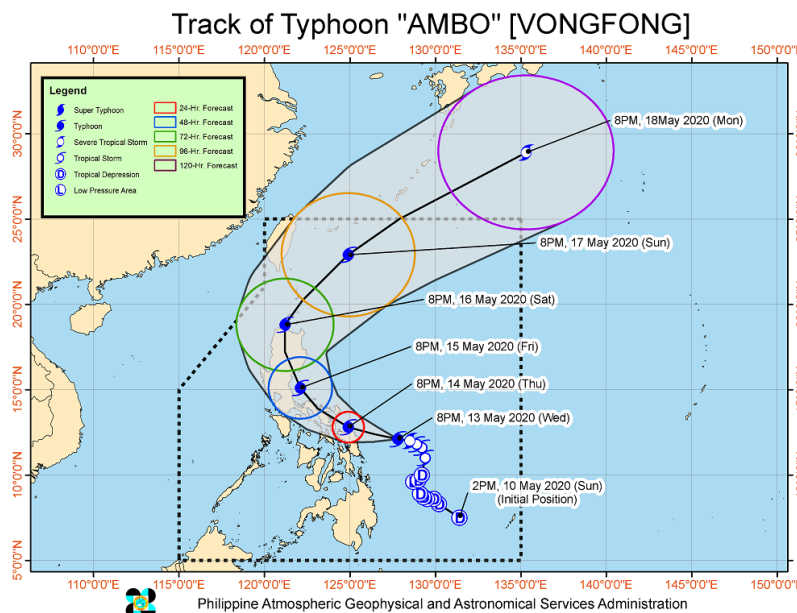
Isa lang lesson, na ingatan ang social media dahil hindi ito laruan, hindi rin ito blackboard na puwedeng burahin agad ang masamang post mo, at lalong hindi ito tool para makasakit ka ng loob ng ibang tao. Lesson learned ito para sa lahat.

HEADLINES

Año: LGU ready for 'Ambo'

Published 6 hours ago
on May 13, 2020 11:54 PM

By [Francis Wakefield](#)



Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Secretary Eduardo Año on Wednesday said local government units (LGU) are very much ready to respond to the possible effects of Typhoon Ambo (International name: Vongfong) while facing the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

“Yes, matagal na nating pinaghahandaan iyan. Sa mga pagpupulong na ginawa natin sa local government units, mayroon tayong tinatawag na Operation Listo na kung saan nandito iyong ating protocols kung papano haharapin ang anumang sakuna lalo na iyong bagyo,” Año said in a virtual press briefing in Malacañang Palace.

Año said protocols under Operation Listo has been adopted by LGU to ensure that it can respond properly when typhoons hit the country.

“Every year ay ginagawa naman natin ito katulong ang NDRRMC (National Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council (NDRRMC) at local DRMMC. Nakahanda na po tayo diyan, pati iyong ating relief goods na ipamimigay pag dumating iyong disaster o bagyo,” he added.

Año said despite the possibility of LGU and disaster officials being busy for the preparation and eventual relocation of families who are expected to be affected by Ambo, minimum health standards such as physical distancing and wearing of face mask should be always practiced.

“So, ang mangyayari lang naman, kasama sa ginagawa nating paglaban sa COVID, nakahanda rin iyong ating LGUs at siyempre kailangan kahit sa ating pag-atubang sa ating mga disaster ay i-observe pa rin natin iyong minimum health standards – physical distancing, wearing of mask at ano pang mga panuntunan,” Año said.

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) reclassified Ambo as a typhoon in its 11 p.m. bulletin Wednesday as the weather disturbance continues to intensify and threatens Samar and Bicol regions.

PAGASA said Ambo is expected to affect the area beginning Thursday, 14 May. Meanwhile, Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque is hopeful that people who will be affected by Ambo once it makes landfall in the country will still practice minimum health distance to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

“Well, kinakailangang po talagang subukan pa rin iyong minimum health standards lalung-lalo na iyong social distancing dahil ito pa lang ngayon po ang puwede nating gawin para mapabagal iyong pagkalat ng sakit. Alam ko po napakahirap na mayroon tayong COVID-19, mayroon na naman darating na sakuna, na bagyo pero sama-sama, tulong-tulong, kaya po natin ito,” Roque said.

“Ang intindihin lang po natin na hindi normal ang mga pagkakataon. Bagamat mahirap iyong mga magre-relocate, kinakailangan po mayroon pa rin kahit papaanong effort na magkaroon ng one meter distance sa isa't-isa,” he added.

p: wjg

Dengue, rainy season may 'burden' Philippines during COVID-19 fight: health chief

ABS-CBN News

Posted at May 13 2020 04:05 PM

The expected spike in [dengue](#) cases during the rainy season may stretch Philippine resources as it struggles to contain the coronavirus pandemic, the health department said Wednesday.

The risk from dengue "is a permanent one" due to the country's climate, said Health Secretary Francisco Duque III.

"The confluence of the rainy season and the expected rise in dengue cases will certainly pose a burden to the health system's capacity," he told reporters.

Duque made the statement as the [Philippines' first storm in 2020](#) threatened to bring rains over vast swaths of Luzon this week.

Authorities, he said, were keeping tabs on the potential spike in dengue cases and other infectious diseases like polio and measles.

The DOH has "no scientific data" supporting the hypothesis that the novel coronavirus and dengue virus can interact and create worse symptoms.

However, Duque said dengue leads to respiratory complications while [COVID-19 attacks the lungs](#).

"Kung mayroong COVID threat, talagang magiging critical o malubhang-malubha ang kakalabasan ng kaniyang clinical course at kailangan po talagang tutukan ito," he said.

(When there is COVID threat, a patient's clinical course will be very serious and needs to be monitored.)

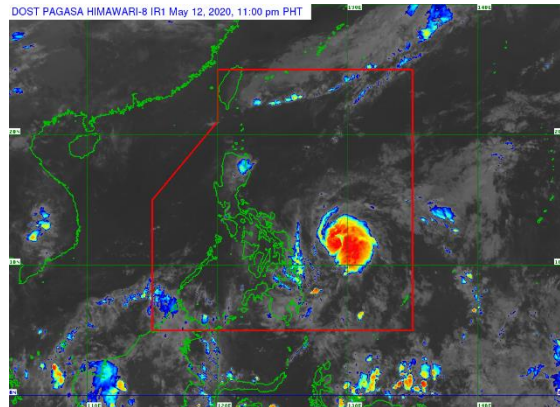
Ambo' intensifies into tropical storm; heavy rains expected in many areas of PH

Published May 13, 2020, 12:00 AM

By *Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz*

Tropical cyclone "Ambo" intensified into a tropical storm with international name "Vongfong" on Tuesday evening (May 12).

The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said Ambo was packing maximum sustained winds of 65 kilometers per hour (kph) and gustiness up to 80 kph.



It may still further intensify into a severe tropical storm as it approaches the Eastern Visayas-Bicol Region area. A cyclone is classified by PAGASA as a severe tropical storm when it reaches maximum wind speed of 89 kph to 117 kph.

From being almost stationary in the past few days, Ambo picked up pace late Tuesday, moving north at 20 kph.

Its location was estimated at 455 kilometers (km) east-northeast of Surigao City, Surigao del Norte or 400 km east of Guiuan, Eastern Samar around 10 p.m.

Between Tuesday evening and Wednesday evening, PAGASA said the trough or extension of Ambo may bring scattered light to moderate, with at times heavy, rains during thunderstorms over Mindanao and Eastern Visayas.

By Wednesday evening until Thursday evening, the weather bureau noted that the storm may bring moderate to heavy rains over Biliran, Eastern Samar, Leyte, Northern Samar, Samar, Southern Leyte, Catanduanes, Albay, Sorsogon, and Masbate.

PAGASA warned of rains that may cause flooding and landslides in highly susceptible areas during heavy or prolonged rainfall.

Tropical cyclone wind signal No. 1 will likely be hoisted over Eastern Samar and the eastern portion of Northern Samar in the next six to 12 hours in anticipation of strong winds associated with the approaching cyclone.

Maritime travel will be automatically suspended in areas where wind signals are in effect.

PAGASA earlier advised the public to brace for stormy weather in Metro Manila, Southern and Central Luzon, Bicol Region, Eastern Visayas, and some other areas in Visayas toward the weekend due to the direct impact of the storm Ambo.

Source: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/05/13/ambo-intensifies-into-tropical-storm-heavy-rains-expected-in-many-areas-of-ph/>

‘Ambo’ may develop into a typhoon by Friday, says Pagasa

By: [Cathrine Gonzales](#) - Reporter / [@cgonzalesINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 01:16 PM May 13, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — Tropical storm Ambo may develop into a typhoon by Friday, according to the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa). “Pagdating ng Friday morning, itong sentro ng bagyong Ambo nasa vicinity na ng Ocampo, Camarines Sur (On Friday morning, the center of Ambo will be in the vicinity of Ocampo, Camarines Sur),” Pagasa weather specialist Aldczar Aurelio said in a public briefing on Wednesday.

“Inaasahan po natin na lalakas ang bagyo at posibleng maging typhoon ang bagyong Ambo (We expect that tropical storm Ambo will develop into a typhoon),” he added. The eye or center of Ambo was located 360 kilometers east of Borongan City, Eastern Samar. Moving slowly in the northwest direction, the tropical storm is packing maximum sustained winds of 85 kilometers per hour (kph) near the center and gustiness of up to 105 kph.

Based on Pagasa’s severe weather bulletin issued at 11 a.m., Ambo is forecast to be located 190 km east northeast of Borongan City, Eastern Samar on Thursday morning; in the vicinity of Ocampo, Camarines Sur on Friday morning; in the vicinity of Banaue, Ifugao on Saturday morning; 20 km west northwest of Basco, Batanes on Sunday; and 935 km northeast of Basco, Batanes on Monday morning.

Aurelio said that on Saturday, Ambo will weaken from a typhoon into a severe tropical storm, and on Sunday will further revert into a tropical storm.

It is expected to exit the Philippine Area of Responsibility on Monday morning.

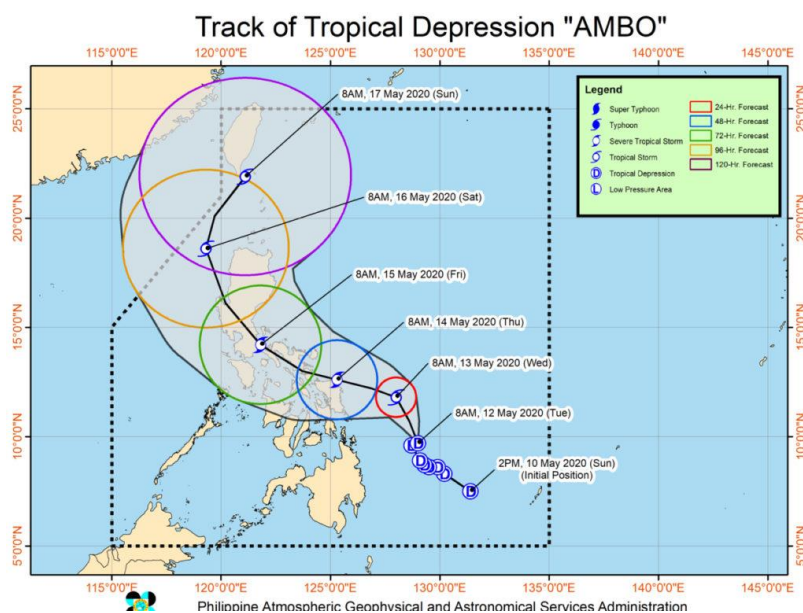
[Tropical Cyclone Wind Signal No. 1](#) is raised over the towns and cities of Calbayog, Sta. Margarita, Gandara, Matuguinao, Pagsanghan, San Jorge, San Jose De Buan, Tarangnan, Catbalogan City, Jiabong, Motiong, San Sebastian, Paranas, and Hinabangan in Northern Samar; as well as Jipapad, Arteche, Maslog, Oras, San Policarpio, Dolores, Can-avid, Taft, Sulat, San Julian, Borongan in the northern portion of Eastern Samar.

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1274268/ambo-may-develop-into-a-typhoon-by-friday#ixzz6MMOsQ9r6>

PAGASA itinaas ang signal no 1 sa ilang lugar sa Luzon at Visayas

Balita

By Leifbilly BegasMay 13,2020



ITINAAS ng Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration ang tropical cyclone warning signal no. 1 sa maraming lugar sa Luzon at Visayas.

Itinaas ang TCWS sa:

Luzon

Sorsogon, Ticao Island, Catanduanes, at katimugang bahagi ng Albay (Oas, Tabaco, Ligao City, Pio Duran, Guinobatan, Malilipot, Jovellar, Camalig, Santo Domingo, Bacacay, Rapu-rapu, Daraga, Legazpi, at Manito)

Visayas

Northern Samar, hilagang bahagi ng Samar (Calbayog, Sta. Margarita, Gandara, Matuguinao, Pagsanhan, San Jorge, San Jose De Buan, Tarangnan, Catbalogan City, Jiabong, Motiong, San Sebastian, Paranas, Hinabangan), at hilagang bahagi ng Eastern Samar (Jipapad, Arteche, Maslog, Oras, San Policarpio, Dolores, Can-avid, Taft, Sulat, San Julian, at Borongan City).

Ang bagyo ay umuusad sa bilis na 10 kilometro bawat oras patungong kanluran-hilagang kanluran.

Kanilang alas-4 ng hapon ang bagyo ay nasa layong 315 kilometro sa silangan ng Borongan City. Ang hangin ng bagyo ay umaabot sa 95 kilometro bawat oras ang bilis at may pagbugsong 115 kilometro bawat oras.

Bukas ng hapon ang bagyo ay inaasahang nasa layong 160 kilometro sa silangan ng Catarman, Northern Samar.

Source: <https://bandera.inquirer.net/252956/pagasa-itinaas-ang-signal-no-1-sa-ilang-lugar-sa-luzon-at-visayas#ixzz6MMccZCvH>

Phivolcs warns vs. Mayon lahar flows due to 'Ambo'

Published May 13, 2020, 5:40 PM

By *Alexandria San Juan*

Torrential heavy rains due to Tropical Storm "Ambo" could generate post-eruption lahars along the slopes of Mayon Volcano threatening nearby communities, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) warned.



(Czar Dancel / Manila Bulletin File Photo)

In its lahar advisory issued on Wednesday, the Phivolcs said it strongly recommends "increased vigilance and readiness of communities in pre-determined zones of lahar hazards in Mayon Volcano."

"Prolonged and heavy rainfall may generate post-eruption lahars on major channels draining the Mayon Volcano edifice by incorporating loose material from thick pyroclastic density current (PDC) deposits and remnant ashfall from the January to March 2018 eruption," the agency explained.

According to Phivolcs, the bulk of erodible PDC deposits occupy the watershed areas of the Miisi, Mabinit, Buyuan and Basud Channels, while older and erodible eruption deposits occupy the watershed areas on the eastern and western slopes of the edifice.

Phivolcs said these can be remobilized as non-eruption lahars by the erosion of banks and channel beds and can threaten communities along the middle and lower slopes and downstream of these channels with inundation, burial and wash away.

The state volcanology bureau also warned of potential lahars and sediment-laden streamflows on all river channels draining the slopes of Mayon Volcano, particularly the Miisi, Binaan, Anoling, Quirangay, Maninila, Masarawag, Muladbucad, Nasisi, Mabinit, Matan-ag, and Basud Channels, that may be generated by heavy rainfall brought about by the tropical storm.

Communities and local government units beside these drainages are advised to be additionally vigilant and to move residents to high ground should heavy rains occur, the Phivolcs added.

Sangley Point reports day's highest heat index at 50°C

Published May 13, 2020 5:33pm

A heat index of 50°C, the day's highest, was recorded at PAGASA's synoptic station in Sangley Point, Cavite City, the state weather bureau said Wednesday.

This high point is followed by Ambong, Tanauan City with 49°C, Dagupan City with 48°C, the Science City of Munoz with 46°C and Calapan City, Roxas City, and San Jose, Occidental Mindoro with 45°C.

The [heat index](#) is the measure of the temperature that a person feels in contrast to the actual air temperature.

Essentially, it measures "human discomfort" and is computed by factoring in the humidity as well as the air temperature.

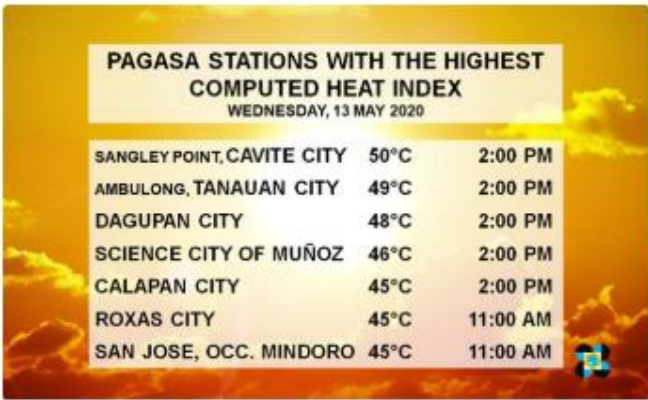
PAGASA again warned of dangers associated with a heat index between 41 to 54°C such as heat cramps and heat exhaustion which may lead to heat stroke amid continued physical activity.

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.

PAGASA-DOST @dost_pagasa

TINGNAN: Top 7 PAGASA Synoptic Stations na may pinakamataas na kalkuladong heat index ngayong Miyerkules, 13 Mayo.

PANGANIB (41-54°C na heat index): Posible ang heat cramps at heat exhaustion na maaaring mauwi sa heat stroke kapag tuluy-tuloy ang physical activity.



80 4:47 PM - May 13, 2020

29 people are talking about this

Meanwhile, the PAGASA station at the Science Garden, Quezon City recorded a 42°C heat index at 3 p.m.

The weather agency also recorded a 34.8°C air temperature at 1 p.m. before raining.

PAGASA-DOST @dost_pagasa

Bago umulan, nasa 34.8°C ang air temperature sa Science Garden, Quezon City kaninang 1PM ngayong Miyerkules, 13 Mayo.

Bumaba ang temperatura pagkatapos ng ulan pero nanatiling mataas ang moisture content ng hangin kaya umabot pa rin ng 42°C ang nakalkulang heat index ng 3PM.

Date	Maximum Temperature (°C)
8 May	36.5
9 May	35.6
10 May	35.8
11 May	36.2
12 May	34.8

HEAT INDEX TODAY
42°C
3:00 PM 13 MAY

43 3:57 PM - May 13, 2020

23 people are talking about this

As Isabela sizzles, governor warns elderlies against heat stroke

Published May 13, 2020 4:52pm

Isabela Governor Rodito Albano on Wednesday said the hot weather in the province makes their elderlies vulnerable to heat stroke.

Interviewed on Dobol B sa News TV, Albano said the residents are discouraged from walking under the sun because of the rising temperatures.

“Hindi ka makakalakad sa labas. Kapag lumakad ka sa labas parang makakaluto ng itlog sa sobrang init...May heat stoke talagang nangyayari sa mga matatanda,” Albano said.

State weather bureau PAGASA on Monday recorded a 41.2°C heat index in Echague, Isabela, which was the highest temperature in the province so far this dry season.

According to Alabano, some residents in Isabela beat the heat by swimming in the Cagayan River.

Tuguegarao City followed with 39.7°C, San Jose in Occidental Mindoro with 38.5°C, Camiling in Tarlac with 38.3°C, and Hacienda Luisita in Tarlac with 37.2°C.

On Tuesday, PAGASA recorded the highest heat index, or human-perceived temperature, in the country at 49°C in Dagupan City and at Sangley Point in Cavite City.

It warned that a heat index ranging from 41°C to 54°C may lead to heat cramps and exhaustion. Heat stroke is also possible amid continuous physical activity.

PAGASA reminded the public to drink water and refrain from physical activities in the afternoon to avoid heat stress. —**Joviland Rita/LDF, GMA News**

Top expert: Dangerous to reopen too fast

Published 3 hours ago
on May 14, 2020 03:50 AM
By **Agence France-Presse**



WASHINGTON, United States (AFP) — The US government's top infectious diseases expert warned Congress Tuesday that ending lockdowns too soon could trigger fresh and uncontrollable outbreaks of COVID-19.

In his first appearance on Capitol Hill in two months, Anthony Fauci delivered a cautionary message at odds with the rhetoric of President Donald Trump, who has pressed for rapid steps to rekindle the devastated economy.

The respected scientist told a Senate panel that federal authorities had developed guidelines on how to safely reopen activities, with a sustained 14-day decrease in cases as a vital first step.

"If a community or a state or region doesn't go by those guidelines and reopens... the consequences could be really serious," Fauci said.

"There is a real risk that you will trigger an outbreak that you may not be able to control," he later added, warning that would not only cost lives "but could even set you back on the road to trying to get economic recovery."

Responding to a question from Senator Bernie Sanders, Fauci acknowledged that US coronavirus deaths are likely higher than the official toll of roughly 80,000.

This, he said, was because many people — particularly in hardest-hit New York — died at home before they could be admitted to a hospital.

Some colleges meanwhile have begun announcing plans to restart classes in fall, but Fauci argued it was "a bridge too far" to expect vaccines or treatments might be ready in time to assuage student fears.

Canada zoo to send pandas home after bamboo shortage

Agence France-Presse / 04:44 PM May 13, 2020

What's so special about pandas?

The highly specialised bear has been taken off the endangered list, but still faces serious challenges

Anti-social with a highly developed sense of smell

Used by males to avoid each other, and to find females in mating season



Insatiable appetite for bamboo

- Eats 12 hours a day
- Adult requires 12.5 kg of bamboo daily
- Sometimes eats birds and rodents

A "sixth finger" used for holding bamboo stalks

Developed from an adapted wrist bone



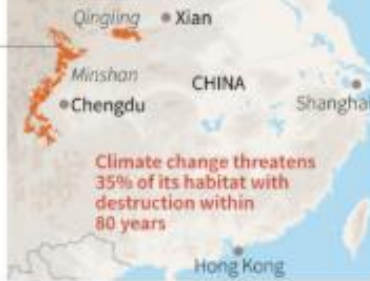
Thumb

"False thumb"

Excellent mountain climbers

Known to climb up to 3,900 m. They are also skilled swimmers and good tree climbers

Panda habitat



Appeal of the panda

Why conservationists WWF chose the panda for its logo:

- Beauty and universal appeal
- Endangered status
- Good impact in black and white, thus saving on printing costs

Source: IUCN/National Geographic/Evolution/Berkeley.edu/WWF

© AFP

OTTAWA, Canada — A Canadian zoo is shipping two pandas home to China after the coronavirus pandemic left it struggling to source the massive bamboo stockpiles needed to feed the giant creatures.

Er Shun and her mate Da Mao have lived in the country since 2013 as part of a 10-year loan agreement with a breeding facility in Chengdu.

The arrival of the cute and furry animals was a huge spectacle that was broadcast live on all major Canadian television networks.

Er Shun later mothered two twin cubs — the first pandas born on Canadian soil.

But Calgary Zoo said it was cutting short the pair's stay because the COVID-19 outbreak had disrupted transport links and made it harder to supply the 40 kilograms (90 pounds) of bamboo a typical adult panda eats each day.

Staff had worked to find alternative bamboo providers but there were concerns that supplies could be disrupted without warning and leave the animals hungry, the zoo said in a statement.

"Knowing a second wave of COVID-19 is likely... the Calgary Zoo feels it's critical to move the beloved giant pandas back to China where there are abundant local sources of bamboo," the statement said.

The zoo is currently closed due to the pandemic and said it would not be able to allow the public to bid farewell to the animals.

Er Shun and Da Mao's cubs have already been relocated to China, according to national broadcaster CBC.

/MUF

Canada's Calgary Zoo to return two pandas to China because it can't get enough bamboo to feed them

By Joshua Berlinger, CNN

Published May 13, 2020 3:41:11 PM



(CNN)— The Calgary Zoo in Canada is sending two giant pandas back to China due to a shortage of bamboo.

The zoo [said in a statement](#) that it usually flies in bamboo from China to feed the animals, but the Covid-19 pandemic had disrupted flights and caused delays in supplies.

The duo, named Er Shun and Da Mao, were supposed to stay in Canada until 2023 as part of a 10-year agreement with China, but the zoo decided to send them back early out of concern that delays could worsen if there's a second wave of coronavirus cases.

A panda's diet consists almost entirely of fresh bamboo, the Calgary Zoo said, and the animals typically eat about 40 kilograms (88 pounds) of it each day.

Much of the bamboo Er Shun and Da Mao ate before the pandemic was flown in directly to Calgary from China, but those flights have been canceled.

The zoo said it tried to find new bamboo suppliers to keep the pandas fed, but encountered several logistical issues. They also worry that these new supply lines could be disrupted at a moment's notice, leaving the pandas completely without food.

"We believe the best and safest place for Er Shun and Da Mao to be during these challenging and unprecedented times is where bamboo is abundant and easy to access," the president and CEO of the Calgary Zoo, Dr. Clément Lanthier, said in a statement. "This was an incredibly difficult decision to make but the health and well-being of the animals we love and care for always comes first."

Er Shun and Da Mao arrived in Canada in 2014 and spent five years at the Toronto Zoo before moving to Calgary in March 2018 with cubs Jia Panpan and Jia Yueyue, the Calgary Zoo said. Those cubs have been moved to China, CNN media partner CBC reported.

Lanthier told CBC that the zoo began the process to move the pandas a few weeks ago and hopes to have permits approved this week, though he would like to see the process expedited.

Giant pandas are among some of the rarest animals on the planet, though efforts to preserve the species have shown some success in recent years. In 2016, the giant panda's status was upgraded from "endangered" to "vulnerable" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature. There are only an estimated 1,864 of them living in the wild, according to the World Wildlife Fund.

China has for years sent giant pandas abroad as a sign of friendship and cooperation between Beijing and other countries as part of a campaign known as "panda diplomacy," offering foreigners a chance to see these animals in person while also fostering ties between governments.

Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/world/2020/5/13/Calgary-Zoo-Canada-returns-pandas-China.html>