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DENR Press Release publish today at Daily Tribune

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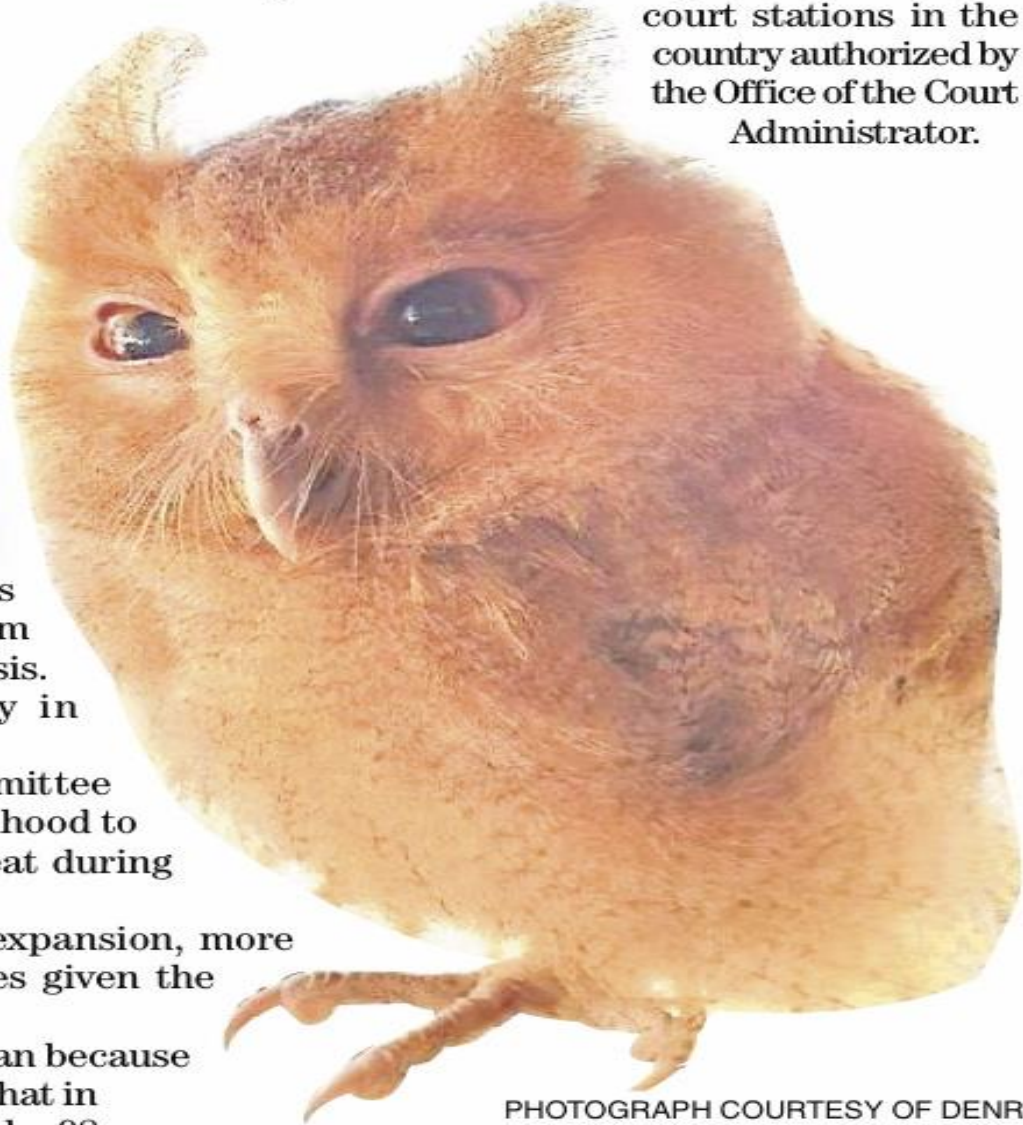
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the Office of the Court
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PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF DENR

Wide-eyed rescue The Department of Environment and Natural Resources received a young Scops owl (*Otus megalotis*) from Irma Diaz of Barangay Tagpos, Binangonan, Rizal. Tamoria said the bird could have been a victim of habitat loss and abandoned by its parents when the area was cleared recently for resettlement. The owl will be nursed and treated at the Biodiversity Management Bureau until it grows at an age when it can be released back into the wild.

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Tagalog News: Higit P100,000 halaga ng smuggled na kahoy, nakumpiska sa Rosario, AgSur

By Jennifer P. Gaitano Published on May 19, 2020
<https://pia.gov.ph/news/articles/1042094>



LUNGSOD NG BUTUAN, Mayo 19 (PIA) - Sa isang retrieval operation kasama ang militar at Philippine National Police (PNP), nakumpiska ng mga kawani ng Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) ang 42 piraso ng illegally-cut lauan fitches o kahoy na nagkakahalaga ng P118,625.

Natuntun ito sa libilib ng Sitio Kosep, Barangay Bayugan 3 sa Bayan ng Rosario, Agusan del Sur.

Ayon kay CENRO Jerome Albia ng Bunawan, Agusan del Sur, ang mga nakompiskang lauan na kahoy ay nasa kanilang kustodiya na ngayon sa barangay kalingayan sa bayan ng bunawan.

Pinasalamatan din ni Albia ang kawani ng Municipal Environment Office dahil sa kanilang aktibong partisipasyon sa isinagawang retrieval operation.

Binigyang-diin din niya ang suportang ipinakita ng mga mamamayan sa nasabing komunidad na may malaking kontribusyon sa matagumpay na operasyon.



Tagalog News: Higit P100,000 halaga ng smuggled na kahoy, nakumpiska sa Rosario, AgSur



Samantala, ayon naman kay Regional Executive Director Atty. Felix Alicer ng Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Caraga, inutos na niya ang agarang imbistigasyon dito at nang makasohan ang nasa likod ng ilegal na gawaing ito.

Dagdag ng opisyal, mula Enero hanggang Abril ngayong taon, nasa mahigit 200,000 board feet ng illegally-cut logs at lumber products na ang kanilang nakumpiska at ito ay aabot na sa mahigit P8-milyong halaga.

Kasabay nito, may 23 kaso na ang nai-file sa korte kung saan 40 na indibidwal ang humaharap sa mga kasong ito dahil sa paglabag nila sa forest protection laws ng bansa. (JPG/DENR-13/PIA-Agusan del Sur)



CARAGA POLICE SEIZE P120-K ILLEGAL LOGS

By Asangan T. Madale

May 20, 2020

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/05/20/news/regions/caraga-police-seize-p120-k-illegal-logs/725885/>

ILIGAN CITY, Lanao del Norte: More than P120,000 worth of illegal logs were confiscated and a suspect was arrested in separate operations conducted by members of the Caraga police, 75th Infantry Battalion of the Philippine Army and personnel of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on May 14. The police and soldiers confiscated 117 board feet of doyok-doyok lumber with a market value of P4,693 in the possession of Edwin Pasacan Purisima, 20, in Purok 8, Barangay Melgar, Basilisa, Dinagat Islands. Purisima could not present any legal document that resulted in his arrest. A case for violation of Presidential Decree 705, or the “Forestry Reform Code of the Philippines,” is being prepared for filing in court against him. In Sitio Cusip, Barangay Bayugan-3, Rosario in Agusan del Sur, 42 pieces of abandoned lauan lumber with total volume of 4,745 board feet and with a market value of P118,625 were also confiscated. The identified owner, Ondo Pauas, is at large and the seized forest products are in the custody of the DENR. BGen. Joselito Esquivel Jr. said the operation was part of a continuing campaign against illegal logging by the Philippine National Police in coordination with the DENR. He called for active collaboration of the community and stakeholders by providing information to the police.



MisOr villagers hatch, release 437 turtles

It was also considered one of the largest and most successful hatchlings in a single month over the past six years.

May 20, 2020 04:30 AM

By Erwin M. Mascariñas

<https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/05/20/misor-villagers-hatch-release-437-turtles/>



PHOTOGRAPH BY ERWIN M. MASCARIÑAS FOR THE DAILY TRIBUNE Swim free A hawksbill sea turtle hatchling crawls towards the open waters of Gingoog Bay after it was released by villagers on a beach in Barangay Candiis, Misamis Oriental Province.

BUTUAN CITY — While under community quarantine, villagers from a coastal community in Magsaysay, Misamis Oriental province protected three nesting grounds of the endangered hawksbill sea turtle (*Eretmochelys imbricate*) and successfully released a total of 437 turtle hatchlings into the waters of Gingoog Bay in early May.

The release was documented by villagers of Barangay Candiis, Magsaysay town as they released around 144 hawksbill turtle hatchlings on 1 May, 155 hatchlings on 12 May and 138 hatchlings on 16 May.

It was also considered one of the largest and most successful hatchlings in a single month over the past six years. In 2019, only a total of 315 turtle hatchlings from the five nesting sites were recorded to have been released in Magsaysay town while only six were recorded in 2018 and three in 2017.

Rolando Pagara, a village council member and lead turtle conservationist in Magsaysay, reiterated that amid the community quarantine measures being imposed due to the coronavirus disease outbreak, they were still able to monitor and protect the turtle nesting grounds.



MisOr villagers hatch, release 437 turtles

“As fishermen in the area, we are still able to go out and fish and also continue our work in protecting our marine protected area here in Candiis. That’s also why we would immediately notice if there are turtles nesting on the beach as their trail or marks will be seen in the morning, as mothers will lay their eggs in the evening or early dawn,” he said.

Pagara, who has been spearheading the turtle conservation in the area for more than a decade, pointed out that the incubation of the hatched turtle eggs was shorter than the usual 60 to 65 days incubation period.

He surmised that the intense heat recorded over Misamis Oriental could be a factor in the eggs hatching earlier than expected.

In 2012, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources has designated a 612-hectare area in the town of Magsaysay, Misamis Oriental as a critical habitat for the hawksbill sea turtles along the coastal barangays of Candiis, San Isidro and Damayohan where several nesting sites were found.



When in Rizal
4 hrs · 🌐

👍 Like Page

? BAKIT NATIN KAILANGAN PROTEKTAHAN AT INGATAN ANG MASUNGI?

"Masungi has 47 recorded species of snails (highest in the country). And it has 72 species of birds."

👤 Billie Dumaliang, Trustee and Advocacy Officer of Masungi Georeserve

"Hindi natin pwede i-conserve lang yung mga nakatira. Kailangan din natin i-conserve yung tinitirhan nila which is the earth, the geology, the landscape. And in Masungi, it's the limestone."

👤 Lea Bron, Hydrocologist

"Sana mawala na ang agam-agam na mayroong mga nagma-mining dito kasi dapat wala talaga eh. Because it is a watershed, it is also a protected area."

👤 Roy Cimatu, DENR Secretary

"It is one of the integral parts of the whole water supply chain of Metro Manila. If you lose high portion of it in Rizal which becomes denuded then may effect sya sa Metro Manila din."

👤 Anthony Arbias, Native Plants Conservationist

👉 Help us save and protect Masungi, 🍌 sign the #NotoQuarryinMasungi Petition
Link: bit.ly/savemasungi

Or be a VOLUNTEER 🙋👤!

We are looking for volunteers to join the movement for awareness, appreciation, vigilance and protection of pristine environmental spots in the province of Rizal. Just sign up through our online form.

Online Form Link: bit.ly/2Aj29m9

TAGS:

#WheninRizal #MasungiGeoreserve #Mountains #Rizal #SaveMasungi #TreePlanting #Reforestration #TreeNurturing #NotoQuarrying #StopForestFires #ForestFire #Quarrying #Baras #Tanay #Trail #Terrain #Hiking #Trekking #SeaOfClouds #MountainView #NotoQuarryinMasungi #SaveMasungi

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Beyond lockdown: Will Philippines be able to sustain low air-pollution levels?

Kristine Sabillo, ABS-CBN News

Posted at May 19 2020 12:01 PM | Updated as of May 19 2020 01:32 PM

https://news.abs-cbn.com/spotlight/multimedia/slideshow/05/19/20/beyond-lockdown-will-philippines-be-able-to-sustain-low-air-pollution-levels?fbclid=IwAR19phQnRWFvbAx7BcV4OXftjNvTTtdHJkyZDV_khUT-MG6K_udXsx6SAsw

MANILA — On some rainy days, thick haze would blanket the sprawling metropolis of the Philippine’s national capital region, leaving the city skyline barely visible.

Unfortunately, Filipinos have become used to Metro Manila’s visible air pollution. So much so that when air quality improved during the COVID-19 lockdown in March, many were surprised to learn that the majestic mountain range of Sierra Madre was visible from the heart of the metropolis.

Photos of clear skies, breathtaking sunsets and Sierra Madre as a backdrop of the sprawling metropolis went viral just a week after the government suspended public transportation and non-essential businesses in an effort to curb the spread of the virus. By following in the footsteps of other nations battling the COVID-19 pandemic, the Philippine government inadvertently helped reduce air pollution in Metro Manila.

Just two weeks after the government’s so-called enhanced community quarantine, or ECQ, was imposed on March 16, various groups released data showing just how drastic the improvement in air quality was.

CANCER-CAUSING POLLUTION

Dr. Mylene Cayetano of the University of the Philippines’ Institute of Environmental Science and Meteorology (IESM) said that during the first 6 weeks of the ECQ, fine particulate matter or PM2.5 levels decreased by 40% to 66% compared to the month of January, based on Airtoday.ph’s monitoring station in Quezon City in the northern part of Metro Manila.

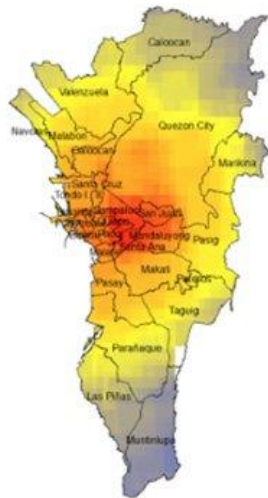
PM2.5 and PM10, particulate matter that have a diameter of less than 2.5 micrometers and 10 micrometers, respectively, are two kinds of pollutants that are measured by air monitors. Both have negative health impacts but PM2.5 is more dangerous, according to Cayetano, because its size allows it to reach the lungs.

PM2.5 has been linked to cardiovascular and respiratory diseases. “The International Agency for Research on Cancer considers PM2.5 a major cause of lung cancer worldwide,” Cayetano said.

Compared to February, the average PM2.5 levels during the first 6 weeks of the ECQ saw a 19% to 54% decrease, explained Cayetano, who is also the technical adviser of Airtoday.ph, an air monitoring project of the Rotary Club of Makati and the Lung Center of the Philippines.

Beyond lockdown: Will Philippines be able to sustain low air-pollution levels?

FIGURES



2 weeks before ECQ
Mar 2-8



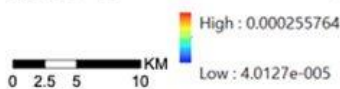
1 week before ECQ
Mar 9-15



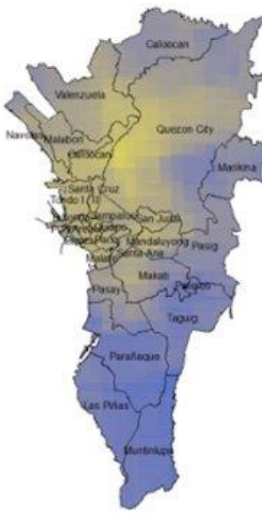
ECQ Week 1
Mar 16-22



ECQ Week 2
Mar 23-29



ECQ Week 3
Mar 30 - Apr 5



ECQ Week 4
Apr 6-12



ECQ Week 5
Apr 13-19



ECQ Week 6
Apr 20-26

Data from Airtoday.ph showed PM2.5 levels fell to 7.1 ug/m³ during the first week of the lockdown, much lower than the 20 ug/m³ recorded two weeks earlier and below the World Health Organization's long-term safety guideline of 10 ug/m³.

Similar outcomes were monitored by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), which recorded a decline of PM2.5 levels in the southern part of Metro Manila from 28.75 ug/m³ (Muntinlupa) and 27.23 ug/m³ (Parañaque) on March 10 to only 10.78 ug/m³ (Muntinlupa) and 14.29 ug/m³ (Parañaque) on March 22.



Beyond lockdown: Will Philippines be able to sustain low air-pollution levels?

Clean Air Asia, which started monitoring air pollution in the capital city this year, also monitored a 51% to 71% decrease in PM2.5 levels in three areas of Manila for the last week of April when compared to the period before the lockdown.

MORE THAN CARS

All monitoring groups attributed most of the improvement in air quality to the decrease in motor vehicles plying the roads.

According to the DENR in 2016, 80 percent of the country's air pollution came from motor vehicles while 20 percent came from stationary sources, such as factories and open burning.

But UP IESM professors Cayetano and Dr. Gerry Bagtasa both pointed out that there are other factors causing and affecting pollution: one is weather and the other is open burning.

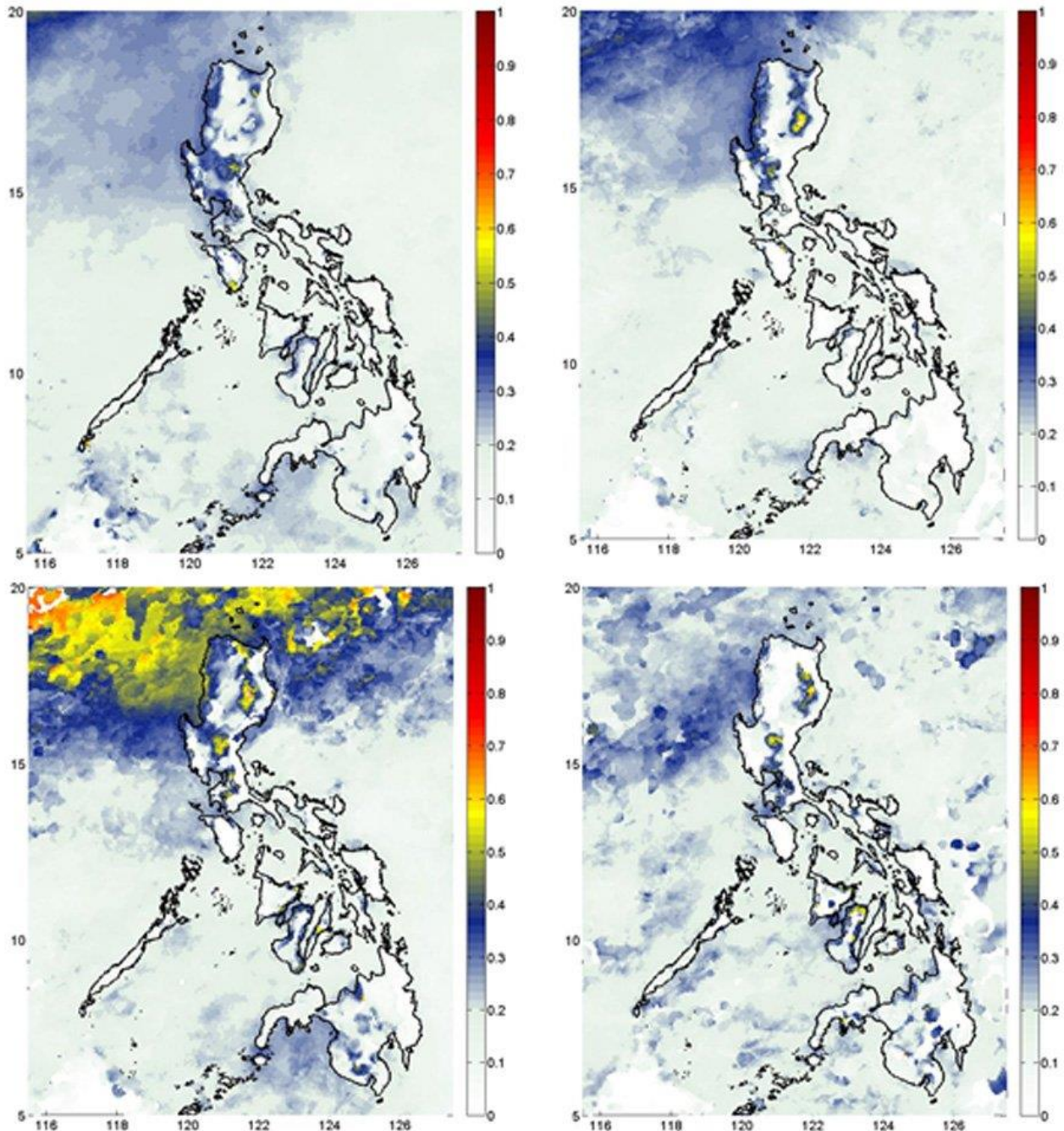
Bagtasa, who monitors pollution in the Philippines through aerosol optical depth (AOD) recorded by the Himawari satellite, observed a "significant drop" in the pollution in the National Capital Region and its neighboring province of Bulacan for the second half of March or the start of the enhanced community quarantine in Luzon compared to the same period in previous years.

"However, parts of Pampanga, Tarlac, and Cagayan Valley actually had higher pollution due to burning," he said.

AOD measures how much sunlight is reflected or is able to reach the ground due to aerosol particles such as dust, smoke and pollution. Bagtasa said that while instruments used by Airtoday and DENR are more accurate, satellite AOD measurements are able to capture a much bigger area - in this case, the whole Philippines - and not just a specific location.



Beyond lockdown: Will Philippines be able to sustain low air-pollution levels?



Comparing the current AOD measurements and satellite images with the same period in previous years, Bagtasa said the improvement in air quality is evident. He said comparing the data with previous years is more accurate because the seasons also affect air pollution. Dry periods like summer bring about better air quality, he said.

“During the first week of March, we were actually in a different season,” he said, adding that the summer season arrived the same time that the lockdown was enacted in the latter half of March.

During the first half of April, higher pollution was detected because of the haze coming from biomass burning in the Indochina region but the second half of April showed “overall lower pollution in most of Luzon.”



Beyond lockdown: Will Philippines be able to sustain low air-pollution levels?

“So obviously may pagbabago (sa air pollution) especially in Metro Manila. And the reason for that is because ang estimated na contribution ng automobiles sa pollution ng Metro Manila is around 60 to 80 percent,” Bagtasa told ABS-CBN News.

(So definitely there was a change especially in Metro Manila. And the reason for that is because the estimated contribution of automobiles in the pollution of Metro Manila is around 60 to 80 percent.)

However, Bagtasa said that there might be more occurrences of biomass burning outside Metro Manila during the lockdown.

“It looks like there’s more burning in parts of Central Luzon and Cagayan Valley,” he said. While motor vehicle pollution dominates cities, in rural areas his previous studies showed that open burning causes a third of the pollution.

Bagtasa said this is something that the DENR should look into.

NO LASTING CHANGE?

The atmospheric physicist said that people should not rejoice because of the temporary lowering of air pollution around the world.

“Kasi essentially wala tayong ginawa to reduce the pollution (Because we essentially did nothing to reduce the pollution). It’s just an unintended consequence of a totally different problem (COVID-19),” Bagtasa said.

“Pero tandaan natin, yung emission ng carbon dioxide, once we emit carbon dioxide it stays there for a century. In the grand scheme of things, itong few months of reduced emission, wala syang contribution in the mitigation of climate change,” he said.

(We should remember that when it comes to carbon dioxide emissions, once we emit carbon dioxide it stays there for a century. In the grand scheme of things, these few months of reduced emission, it still won’t have any contribution in the mitigation of climate change.)

Air pollution also includes other harmful gases that accumulate in excessive quantities in the atmosphere such as carbon monoxide, sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides, methane and chlorofluorocarbons.

Khevin Yu, Greenpeace Southeast Asia’s climate and energy campaigner, said it is alarming that people think that the environment is really recovering because of the lockdown of cities all over the world.



Beyond lockdown: Will Philippines be able to sustain low air-pollution levels?

“What’s happening right now, it’s like an old engine na pag pinatay mo sya so ngayon wala syang usok (What’s happening right now is that it’s like an old engine that when you shut it down it won’t create any smoke). But eventually, when everything goes back and you turn on the engine again, you’re still using the same dirty old engine that will still pollute the earth,” he said.

“Yung nakikita natin ngayon is just temporary (What we’re seeing now is just temporary). It’s just an illusion, a glimpse of what a better society that we can have,” he added.

Yu said it’s important for people to remember the state of air quality that the Philippines will go back to after the lockdown is lifted unless changes are made at the national and local levels.

Air pollution has long been a problem for the Philippines. In 2018, a study by the World Health Organization said there were 45.3 air pollution-related deaths for every 100,000 people in the Philippines. It was the third highest in the world, after China’s 81.5 pollution-related deaths and Mongolia’s 48.8 deaths per 100,000 people.

And it appeared to be worsening. Before the lockdown, the Philippines ranked 57th out of 98 countries in IQAir’s “World most polluted countries” as PM2.5 was recorded at an average of 17.6 micrograms per cubic meter ($\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$) in 2019, an increase from 14.6 $\mu\text{g}/\text{m}^3$ in 2018.

Despite this, Yu said Filipinos tend to dismiss the problem of air pollution.

“It’s an issue that is usually ignored,” he said, because Filipinos don’t see its immediate impact.

“Sa mga jeepney nagtatakip na lang ng bibig. Exposed ang mga bata (sa usok). Tinitiis lang,” Yu said, pointing out that the health impact is often long term and is not directly related to air pollution. “That’s why we say it’s a silent killer.”

(In jeepneys we just cover our mouths and faces. Children are exposed. But we just bear it.)

In February, Greenpeace came out with a **report** estimating air pollution-related premature deaths in the Philippines reaching 11,000 to 27,000 in 2018 alone. These so-called premature deaths are attributed to cardiovascular diseases, respiratory diseases and lung cancer through exposure to PM2.5 air pollution from fossil fuels and other sources.

Atty. Glynda Bathan-Baterina, Deputy Executive Director of Clean Air Asia, cited the State of Global Air report where the Philippines ranked 10th among countries with the highest mortality burden linked to air pollution.



Beyond lockdown: Will Philippines be able to sustain low air-pollution levels?

“They estimated that in 2017, close to 70,000 died prematurely due to ambient air pollution,” Bathan-Baterina said.

Yu said air pollution also has a big impact on the Philippines’ gross domestic product (GDP).

“In terms of economic loss, ang laki din ng impact. So 0.8 percent to 1.9 percent of GDP loss is due to air pollution. Dahil yan sa mga health cost and dun sa impact sa workers. If you get sick, of course you don’t go to work,” he explained.

(In terms of economic loss, the impact is huge. So 0.8 percent to 1.9 percent of GDP loss is due to air pollution. That’s because of the health cost and the impact on workers. If you get sick, of course you don’t go to work.)

WAKE-UP CALL

But experts say, the Philippines can use the lockdown as an opportunity to assess the problem of pollution in Metro Manila and other places.

“Hopefully, makita ng tao yung very good air quality today na maisip natin somehow na importante ito,” Bagtasa said.

(Hopefully, people notice the very good air quality we have now and they realize that it is important.)

Bagtasa believes that it is still possible to turn the situation around over the long-term but it will require a lot of investment on the part of the government.

He said cities like Tokyo and Taipei had similar problems before but were able to improve the situation with the help of research and technology.

“I think it’s the role of the environmental groups like us and the government to really change the course of the discussion,” Yu said.

He said Greenpeace has been pushing for the Philippine government to declare air pollution as a national issue and to strengthen the DENR.

“Right now they (DENR) are the only agency addressing the air pollution problem,” Yu said. “The LGUs (local government units) should be empowered to monitor air pollution in their cities.

“We have to really think about our choices, our policies and our programs that have a direct or indirect impact to clean air,” Cayetano said.



Beyond lockdown: Will Philippines be able to sustain low air-pollution levels?

She said the Philippines should phase out the use of dirty fuel and use only Euro 4 or even Euro 6 emission standards. Euro emission standards are meant to regulate carbon monoxide and other toxic gases being emitted by vehicles. Euro level 6, the highest level, allows emissions of 0.5 gram of carbon dioxide per kilometer of diesel.

“The DOTr (Department of Transportation) wanted to promote non-motorized transport systems like bike. But we need to prepare the infrastructure,” she said, explaining the need to ensure the safety of cyclists on roads.

Cayetano said the government should designate green spaces and allocate areas for businesses that generate more emissions such as grill restaurants and crematoriums, making sure they are far from residential areas.

“My last suggestion would be the strict implementation of the Clean Air Act and the Solid Waste Management Act and their provisions against open burning,” she said.

She claimed that open burning is rooted in Filipino tradition as agricultural areas are cleared for the next planting season.

“It’s not just localized pollution, it can travel from one place to another,” she pointed out. “Hopefully, we’ll have a next generation (of Filipinos) who are more aware of their harmful impacts.”

Bathan-Baterina said Clean Air Asia will be working closely with the Manila City government as part of their current project. After collecting data from their air sensors around the city, they will craft recommendations to address air pollution.

“Moving forward, we hope that we do not go back to our polluted past,” she said, adding that there are already solutions available that would allow the country to shift towards low-emitting vehicles.

“It is not hard to imagine if there is strong political will in the face of crisis,” she said.

NEW NORMAL

While there is much talk in the Philippines about the “new normal” — from wearing face masks to physical distancing — as people around the world adjust to the COVID-19 pandemic, the experts said countries should also take this opportunity to promote more environment-friendly practices.

Matthias Gelber, an environmental sustainability consultant, said businesses should seriously consider telecommuting or allowing their employees to work from home now that physical distancing is a must to slow down the spread of the COVID-19 disease.



Beyond lockdown: Will Philippines be able to sustain low air-pollution levels?

“We need large companies in the Philippines to change their mindset,” said Gelber, who is based in Laguna, a province south of Metro Manila. “You don’t need your employees in your office all the time and keep an eye on them. You need to keep an eye on their output.”

He said employees coming from their province spend 4 to 5 hours a day to travel to their offices in Metro Manila, leaving them little time to spend with their families. By allowing remote work, companies can save their employees from the long commute, help lessen the vehicles on the road, and at the same time prevent the spread of COVID-19 in the workplace.

“The Philippines is the capital of outsourced resource. So we need large Filipino companies to start outsourcing more of the work that is currently being done in offices in Manila to remote working,” he said.

He suggested more flexible or staggered work shifts can also help reduce traffic and carbon emissions.

Gelber, who was once voted “Greenest Person on the Planet,” said he has been using public transportation for the last 20 years to reduce his carbon footprint. But because of the lockdown and the suspension of mass transportation vehicles, he realized that he needed a car to get to the nearest supermarket. His family has also asked him to stop riding the bus for fears of being infected by the virus. He said other people may have the same realization and it will result in more vehicles on the road.

“If we are not able to continue the remote working and after lockdown force people to come into the office again, we will have a disaster scenario,” he said.

“We have taken this drastic action to protect people from getting infected with the coronavirus,” Gelber said. “We’ve got to take drastic action to prevent so many people from losing their health (from air pollution).”

This story is supported by Internews Earth Journalism Network.

- Photos of Sierra Madre range by Johair Siscar Addang

- Photos of Metro Manila skies, then and now, by Jonathan Cellona and Mark Demayo, ABS-CBN News



BIG BATH

By The Manila Times
May 20, 2020

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/05/20/todays-headline-photos/big-bath/725947/>



BIG BATH Mali, the 46-year-old elephant resident of Manila Zoo, gets a bath from Noel Co, a worker, on May 19, 2020. While Avilon and Malabon have appealed for help to feed their animals amid the Covid pandemic, Manila Zoo Director Alipio S. Morabe Jr. said there were enough funds for the upkeep of the animals, thanks to Mayor Francicso 'Isko Moreno' Domagoso, who continues to allocate P25 million even after the place was closed to the public on January 2019 due to environmental issues. PHOTO BY MIKE ALQUINTO



Duterte: NEDA and local governments to work on 'new normal' recovery programs

Alexis Romero (Philstar.com) - May 19, 2020 - 5:57pm

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/05/19/2015103/duterte-neda-and-local-governments-work-new-normal-recovery-programs>



This photo taken on April 2, 2020 shows returning overseas Filipino workers.

The STAR/Edd Gumban

MANILA, Philippines — The National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) will work with local governments to craft regional recovery programs as the Philippines prepares for the "new normal."

In his eighth report to Congress on the government's response to the coronavirus, President Rodrigo Duterte said the regional recovery programs would clearly define the role of local government units (LGUs) in the recovery process and provide a description of their activities under each sector.

"The NEDA Regional Development Group directed all NEDA regional offices to engage LGUs, particularly those represented in regional development councils to formulate regional recovery programs for their respective jurisdictions," Duterte said in his report.

"The approach shall be bottom-up, responsive to the needs of the community," he added.

Duterte said the technical working group on anticipatory forward planning led by NEDA would engage the Senate's committee on sustainable development goals, innovations, and futures thinking to propose bills for the "new normal."



Duterte: NEDA and local governments to work on 'new normal' recovery programs

The government defines "new normal" as the emerging behaviors, situations, and minimum public health standards that will be institutionalized in common or routine practices and remain even after the pandemic while the disease is not totally eradicated through means such as widespread immunization.

The Philippine economy shrank by 0.2% in the first quarter—the first time since 1998 when the Philippines dealt with El Niño and the Asian Financial Crisis—as several businesses were forced to suspend operations because of quarantine restrictions.

Duterte said continuing efforts are being undertaken to increase the country's readiness to adapt to the new and emerging realities brought about by the pandemic like conduct of studies, engagement of various stakeholders, and revisiting development plans.

"As the country prepares for the 'new normal' scenario, the national government has implemented strategies not just to pump prime the economy but also to assist sectors in coping with this challenging transition," the President said.

Duterte said NEDA is finalizing the working discussion paper "We Recover as One" on the proposed social, economic, and governance strategies to enable the country to adapt to the new normal. The paper will also contain initiatives to rebuild consumer and business confidence.

Duterte said NEDA would also reconvene the different Philippine Development Plan 2017-2022 midterm update planning committees to incorporate "new normal" strategies.

"The NEDA is also spearheading discussions on formulating an economic recovery program to cover the period after the lifting of the community quarantine until the end of 2020 as well as an economic resiliency plan to be implemented in 2021," the president said.

The science department will also launch the PLANADES—or the UP Planning and Development Research Foundation, Inc.—settlements model in support of the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa program on May 29.

Duterte said the model provides a mechanism for estimating new housing requirements in suitable areas and an estimation of projected housing finance requirements in the new growth areas.

"The model enables LGU users to forecast or simulate future urban expansion and land uses at the LGU level, as well as to identify or plan on how settlements develop in relation to new growth areas, and can be integrated into the local planning process to guide spatial and development strategies and investment programming," the president said.

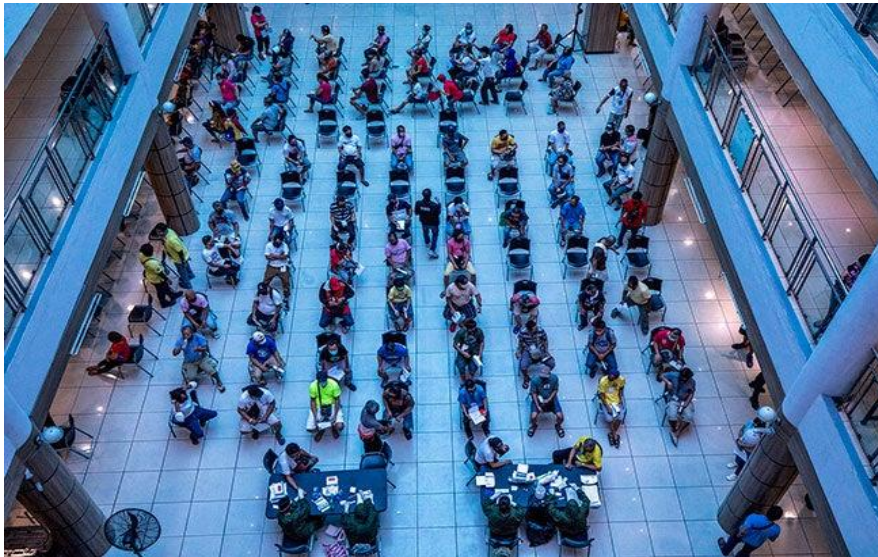
PH to test 2% of population

By Catherine S. Valente, TMT

May 20, 2020

<https://www.manilatimes.net/2020/05/20/news/top-stories/ph-to-test-2-of-population/725834/>

The Philippines aims to test 1.5 to 2 percent of its almost 110 million population under its expanded testing for the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19), Malacañang said on Tuesday.



Tricycle drivers observed physical distancing during the local government of Mandaluyong City COVID-19 'Rapid' testing to seven thousands drivers of the city on Monday, before drivers allowed on the streets. "Drivers who will be reactive in the test will undergo a confirmatory polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test in compliance with the protocols of the Department of Health (DOH)," Photo by RUY L. MARTINEZ

Palace spokesman Harry Roque Jr. said the Philippines was working on a "global benchmark," which is set to test 1 to 2 percent of the entire population, or higher than that in the epicenter.

"Siguro po kasi mali 'yung ginagamit nating term na 'mass testing;' ang tawag po dapat ay 'expanded targeted testing.' Wala pong bansa sa buong mundo na tinetest ang lahat ng kanilang mamamayan (Perhaps we used the term 'mass testing' incorrectly. We should call it 'expanded targeted testing.' There's no country that tests all of its citizens)," Roque said.

"Ang susi sa testing ay work on benchmarks. Ibig pong sabihin, 1 to 2 percent of the population of the entire country or in the case of an epicenter, even higher, up to 10 percent. 'Yan po ang ninanais natin sa Metro Manila (The key in testing is to work on benchmarks or target 1 to 2 percent of the population of the entire country or in the case of an epicenter, even higher, up to 10 percent. That's what we're aiming for in Metro Manila)," he added.

The government drew flak online after Roque admitted that there was no program for mass testing yet because resources were limited.



PH to test 2% of population

But he clarified that the government's expanded testing initiative would be aided by the private sector.

"From the very beginning, it has really been a public-private partnership as far as testing is concerned," Roque said.

"Businesses know that the economy cannot reopen without a significant number of our population being subjected to testing," he added.

As of May 15, Roque said the government had conducted 11,127 coronavirus tests daily from the usual 5,000 tests in earlier May.

He said those who needed to undergo testing were citizens with symptoms of the disease, those coming from abroad, all close contacts of said persons, and those who tested positive in rapid antibody tests.

The government has so far distributed 275,000 test kits to areas that do not yet have PCR — polymerase chain reaction — laboratories.

"We plan to be able to reach the capacity of doing 30,000 tests a day [by the end of the month]," he said.

So far, the Philippines has tested 207,823 individuals — a measly 0.19 percent of the country's total population of almost 110 million.

As of Tuesday, the country had 12,942 cases, up by 224 cases from Monday's tally of 12,718.

The Department of Health said there were 114 new recoveries and six deaths, bringing the toll to 837.

With reports from John Eric Mendoza



“Back-to-work” guidelines, inilabas ng DOH

May 19, 2020 @ 5:32 PM

<https://remate.ph/back-to-work-guidelines-inilabas-ng-doh/>

Manila, Philippines – Naglabas ng guidelines ang Department of Health (DOH) para sa mga empleyadong magbabalik-trabaho sa mga lugar na niluwagan na ang quarantine measures, ayon sa Malacañang ngayong Martes.

Sa ilalim ng guidelines, kailangan sundin ng mga employer sa mga sumusunod:

Pagsigurong na-disinfect ang wokspace, at mayroon itong maayos na bentilasyon

Kailangan na i-monitor at i-rekord ang temperature ng mga empleyado, tignan din kung may mga sintomas ito ng sakit

Kailangang mag-adopt at magpatupad din ng alternative working arrangements

Magpatupad ng infection control procedures (pagsusuot ng face masks, hand hygiene, cough etiquette)

Gumawa ng referral network para sa mga empleyadong magkakaroon ng sintomas

Pag-promote ng physical at mental resilience sa mga empleyado

Ang mga empleyadong symptomatic, o nagpapakita ng mga sintomas, na may history ng travel o exposure sa sakit, sa araw ng pagbabalik ng trabaho ay hindi maaring pumasok sa opisina, at kinakailangang komunsulta sa hospital, ayon sa DOH.

Ang mga empleyado namang nagkaroon ng sintomas sa nakalipas na 14 araw bago magbalik-trabaho ay kinakailangan na magpakita ng certification of quarantine completion, ayon pa sa guidelines.

Ang pagsasagawa naman ng coronavirus testing ay kinakailangan naman sa mga indibiduwal na nagpapakita ng sintomas ng virus.

Maari namang isalang sa COVID-19 test ang mga empleyado na pasok sa high-risk o mga madadaling mahawaan ng sakit.

Maari ring gamitin ang rapid anti-body test kits na inaprubahan ng Food and Drug Administration kada-14 araw, ayon pa sa guidelines.

Sasagutin naman ng Philippine Health Insurance Corporation (PhilHealth) ang gastos sa coronavirus testing gamit ang polymerase chain reaction (PCR) tests, habang ang mga empleyado naman ang sasagot sa rapid anti-body test kits, ani Roque. RNT



Duterte hindi mag-aatubiling ibalik sa mahigpit na lockdown ang ilang lugar

Joyce Balancio, ABS-CBN News

Posted at May 20 2020 03:59 AM

<https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/05/20/20/duterte-hindi-mag-aatubiling-ibalik-sa-mahigpit-na-lockdown-ang-ilang-lugar>

Hindi mag-aatubiling ibalik ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte sa “original program” ang mga lugar na nagluwag na sa quarantine protocols sa oras na dumami muli ang bilang ng magpositibo sa coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Partikular na binanggit ng Pangulo ang mga nasa modified enhanced community quarantine kung saan ilang industriya na ang pinayagang magbukas.

“Itong mga lugar na hindi pa hindi pa nabuksan na tinatawag naming ... which are under the modified lockdown. Ito ay para makita namin na talagang kailangan para hindi lalala ang sitwasyon. Since there is already a gradual opening titingnan natin kung pupwede ba ito, kasi kung babalik tayo sa dati, if the contamination will be as fast as before, and it will continue to infect iyong mga nakalabas na, then we will just go back to the original program,” sabi ng Pangulo.

Matatandandaang bago ma-modified enhanced community quarantine (MEQC), mas mahigpit na quarantine o enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) ang ipinairal ng gobyerno sa buong Luzon.

Paalala ni Duterte, hindi ibig sabihin na nagluwag na ng ekonomiya ay wala nang COVID-19.

Aniya, nandiyan pa rin ang banta ng virus hangga’t wala pang bakuna.

Sabi ng Pangulo, may nakarating sa kanyang balita na may dinedevelop na sa ibang bansa na mabisang bakuna sa COVID-19, pero posibleng January 2021 pa ito.

Naghahanda na aniya siya ng pondo sakaling dumating na para agad mabili ito.

“I am looking for money, na may pambili ako ng vaccine just in case somebody would bid Moderna. I think China has already one, I am just waiting for the announcement. Many countries are on the verge, malapit na sila sa vaccine,” sabi ng Pangulo.

Pagdating naman sa social amelioration program (SAP), sinabi ng Pangulo na uunahin bigyang sa ikalawang bugso ng SAP ang nasa limang milyong pamilya na hindi nabigyan sa 1st tranche.

Ipinaliwanag naman ng Pangulo na kapos na sa pondo ang gobyero kaya hindi lahat ay mabibigyan ng ayuda sa ikalawang tranche ng social amelioration.

“Magtipid tayo. Gusto natin na bigyan lahat, eh ang problema ho wala na tayong kita, walang nagbabayad ng buwis for all of the months that we are under a lockdown or quarantine so remember that we short of tax collections and kayo na po ang umintindi dahil lahat naman tayo ay nagdudusa,” sabi ng Pangulo.

Ipinangako naman ni Duterte na well-accounted for ang pondo ng gobyerno na nagagamit sa COVID response.

Sa report naman ni DILG Sec. Eduardo Año sa Pangulo, sinabi niyang 97% na tapos na ang pamamahagi ng SAP.

Ipinagutos na rin niya sa mga lokal na pamahalaan na magsumite ng listahan ng mga limang milyon na pamilyang masasama sa 2nd tranche.

Sabi naman ni Department of Social Welfare and Development Sec. Rolando Baustita, gumawa na rin aniya ng paraan ang kanyang departamento para makagamit ng digital payment scheme sa pamamahagi ng 2nd tranche.

Ito ay para maiwasan ang person to person contact para hindi magkahawaan ng virus.

Samantala, nilinaw rin ng Pangulo na hindi requirement sa employers ang mass testing sa kanilang mga magbabalik-trabaho.



Duterte hindi mag-aatubiling ibalik sa mahigpit na lockdown ang ilang lugar

Pero gayunman kailangan pa rin sumunod sa minimum health standards gaya ng physical distancing, pagsusuot ng masks, palaging paghuhugas ng kamay at iba pa.

May bilin rin si Duterte sa mga employer.

“Then iyong mga employer, you must provide an ideal working conditions. For example, well ventilated. May hanging pumapasok at lumalabasna presko. At i-disinfect ninyo,” sabi ng Pangulo.

Samantala, ilang Cabinet members naman ang nagbigay rin ng report kay Pangulong Duterte.

Kagaya ni Trade Sec. Ramon Lopez na nagbigay ng karagdagang detalye sa return to work policy ng gobyerno at maging ang loans na inaalok ng Department of Trade and Industry para sa mga negosyante.

Si COVID-19 national policy chief implementer Carlito Galvez naman, inireport din sa Pangulo ang pagtaas ng bed capacity ng mga hospital at medical centers at ang nagimprove umano na testing capacity.

Sinabi rin niya na marami nang naipapamahaging personal protective equipment sa frontliners, kaya protektado sila sa sakit at wala nang namamatay na doktor nitong Mayo.

Inihayag naman niya kay Pangulong Duterte na malaking problema ang pag-uwi ng marami pang overseas Filipino Workers (OFW).

“Sa ngayon po nasa 27,000 na po ang naririto sa Manila, at may dadating pa po na 42,000 this coming May and June, so maooverwhelm po ang ating mga hotels,” paliwanag ni Galvez.

Aniya, nasa 465 na mga OFW na rin aniya ang nagpositibo sa COVID-19.

Sa ngayon aniya ay nakikipaguganyan na rin aniya si Defense Sec. Delfin Lorenzana sa maritime industry at iba't ibang ahensya para matugunan ang problema.

Ipinag-utos na rin aniya ni Sec. Lorenzana na agad nang mapauwi ang mga OFW na nagnegatigo na rin sa sakit.

Samantala, nirerekomenda naman ni Sec Galvez sa Pangulo ang pagpapatupad ng localized lockdown.

“Ang ginagawa po natin Mr. President baka hindi na tayo magdeklara ng lockdown per region, pero ang lockdown natin ay per barangay. Ang ibig sabihin papaliitin natin. Gagawin natin na per barangay. Iyong may cases iyon ang ilo-lockdown,” sabi ni Sec Galvez.

Bibigyan aniya ang mga lokal na pamahalaan ng guidance ng inter-agency task force kung paaano ito gagawin.



Sa first phase ng Balik Probinsya: Mga Pinoy na stranded, pinabibigyan ni Go ng agarang tulong

May 19, 2020 @ 9:30 AM

<https://remate.ph/sa-first-phase-ng-balik-probinsya-mga-pinoy-na-stranded-pinabibigyan-ni-go-ng-agarang-tulong/>

Manila, Philippines – Pinaalalahanan ni Senador Bong Go ang pamahalaan na bilisan ang pagtulong sa lahat ng mga na-stranded na indibidwal at pamilya sa Metro Manila at iba pang urban centers at pangalagaan ang kanilang kapakanan at kagalingan sa gitna ng COVID-19 situation.

“Marami po sa ating mga kababayan mula probinsya at nagpunta rito sa Metro Manila ang nais na ngayong umuwi. Tulungan po natin silang makabalik lahat sa tulong nitong BP2 program at iba pang inisyatibo ng gobyerno,” ani Go.

“Nadala na po sila sa Metro Manila. Takot sila dahil sa virus at nais na nilang makauwi sa kanila. Siguraduhin po natin na makababalik sila sa kanilang probinsya na ligtas,” dagdag na pahayag ni Go.

Kabilang sa first batch ng mga indibiduwal na tutulungan na makabalik sa mga lalawigan sa ilalim ng BP2 program ay ang 112 katao na ang biyahe ay patungo sa Leyte.

Ang first batch ay bahagi ng ‘immediate-phase implementation’ ng BP2 program, ayon kay National Housing Authority General Manager at BP2 Program Council Executive Director Marcelino Escalada, Jr.

Ang first batch ay nakatakda na umalis ngayong linggo.

“Our target is 100 to 300 leaving for the provinces depending upon the capacity of the local government units to undertake health protocols,” ayon kay Escalada.

Base sa update na inihayag ni Escalada, ang kakailanganing transportasyon ay ipopropina o ipa-facilitate ng Department of Transportation habang ang cash allowances ay ibibigay naman sa kanila ng Department of Social Welfare and Development.

Ihahanda naman ng Department of Health (DoH) ang dispatch protocol upang masiguro na masusunod ang strict COVID-19 precautionary measures sa kanilang pagbabalik-probinsya.

Ang lahat na magbabalik-probinsya ay subject pa rin sa polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test ng DOH.

Sinabi ni Escalada, ang NHA ay naghahanda na ng dispatch site para sa mga returnees.

Para sa initial batch, ginagamit na ng NHA ang pag-aari nito malapit sa Vertis North sa Quezon City kung saan itatayo ang temporary terminal.

Ang Department of the Interior and Local Government ay makikipag-ugnayan sa LGUs para tanggapin ang mga ito at tiyakin na ang iba pa nilang pangangailangan ay maibibigay.



Sa first phase ng Balik Probinsya: Mga Pinoy na stranded, pinabibigyan ni Go ng agarang tulong

Ang lahat ng kinauukulang ahensya ng pamahalaan ay marapat na tulungan ang mga returnees sa kanilang pagbabalik-probinsya base sa kanilang profile at assessment.

Sa kabilang dako, ang mga returnees sa Leyte ang prayoridad lalo pa't ang mga lalawigan ay nakapagrehistro ng pinakamataas na indibiduwal na nagpahayag ng kagustuhan na makauwi na, pumalo ito sa 2,300 katao.

Sa oras na matagumpay na nakauwi na ang mga ito sa Leyte, ang programa ay mayroong simultaneous trips sa mga lalawigan sa buong Luzon, Visayas at Mindanao.

Samantala, may 55 indibidwal sa Cebu ang inaasahan naman na babalik sa Davao City sa susunod na linggo sa ilalim ng BP2 program.

Kabilang dito ang 18 estudyante, 21 persons with disability, dalawang senior citizens, isang buntis at 13 iba pa.

Isinailalim ang mga ito ng DOH sa COVID-19 test at bibigyan ng pagkain ng DSWD habang naghihintay ng kanilang departure schedule.

Samantala, tumulong na ang Office of Senator Bong Go sa pakikipag-ugnayan sa tamang ahensya ng pamahalaan sa pag-identify ng mga benepisaryo at probisyon ng pangangailangan ng returnees gaya ng pagkain at transportasyon.

Ang pagpapalabas ng clearance sa kanilang port of destination ay minamadali na rin.

Habang tumutulong ang BP2 program sa maraming Filipino na makabalik sa kanilang lalawigan ay binigyang-diin ni Go na ang buong bansa ay marapat lamang na matuto sa naging karanasan na panahon ng COVID-19 crisis, partikular na ang paghihirap na kontrolin ang paglaganap ng pagbibigay ng serbisyo at ayuda ng pamahalaan sa overpopulated urban centers.

“Sa Bisaya, ‘natagam’, o nadala na tayo. Let this be a learning experience for us all,” ayon kay Go.

Binigyang diin nito ang pangangailangan na makapagbigay ng long-term solutions para matugunan ang iba't ibang social, economic, at health issues sa hinaharap.

Ani Go, kabilang dito ang mga apektadong indibidwal na nais lamang na makahanap ng magandang oportunidad sa Metro Manila at ilang estudyante mula sa lalawigan naman ang nais na makapag-aral sa MM na naipit sa travel restrictions sa ilalim ng enhanced community quarantine.

“We have to act now. Marami nang gustong umuwi pagkatapos ng naranasan nila dahil sa COVID-19. Kaya inilunsad ang programang ito ngayon para matulungan sila ng gobyerno at mabigyan sila ng mas maayos na buhay kung pipiliin nilang bumalik sa kanilang mga probinsya,” ayon kay Go.



Sa first phase ng Balik Probinsya: Mga Pinoy na stranded, pinabibigyan ni Go ng agarang tulong

Ito aniya ang tamang panahon para ipatupad ang BP2 program dahil na rin sa socio-economic impact ng COVID-19 crisis sa buhay ng lahat ng mga Filipino.

Binigyang diin ni Go na ang inisyatiba ay isang ‘long-term, holistic program’ para tugunan ang pangmatagalang problema sa urban at rural areas at hindi bilang agarang tugon sa krisis.

“Hindi po natin basta ililipat lang ang mga tao from urban to rural areas. Wala po itong pilitan. Sinisiguro ng gobyerno na magiging maayos ang kabuhayan ng mga taong lilipat. Kaya po nagtayo ng inter-agency council. Para masigurong lahat ng aspeto ng buhay ng mga Pilipino ay mapaghandaan,” paliwanag ni Go.

“Sa short-term, nais po ng programang ito na tulungan bumangon muli ang kabuhayan ng mga gusto na bumalik sa kanilang probinsya. Sa mid- to long-term phase naman, holistic ang approach pagdating sa pagsasaayos ng mga essential public services sa iba’t ibang parte ng bansa, tulad ng education, housing, livelihood and health. Kasama rito ang pagpapalago ng ekonomiya sa mga probinsya,” dagdag na pahayag ni Go. **KRIS JOSE**



Cycling chiefs push use of bicycle in the 'new normal'

posted May 19, 2020 at 07:00 pm by Manila Standard Sports

<https://manilastandard.net/sports/active/324068/-cycling-chiefs-push-use-of-bicycle-in-the-new-normal-.html>

The kingpins of Philippine cycling started putting their act together to instill a culture of cycling come the “new normal” brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Lina Group of Companies’ Bert Lina (AIR21), Ronda Pilipinas’s Moe Chulani (LBC) and Go For Gold’s Jeremy Go kicked off the virtual organizational meeting via Zoom on Tuesday morning, aiming to chart the route that would make the bicycle a major mode of transportation during and after the quarantine.

Le Tour de Filipinas President Donna Lina and race project manager Sunshine Joy Mendoza, 7-Eleven Cliqq Roadbike Philippines AIR21’s Ric Rodriguez, Lina’s chief of staff Titus Reyes and national team coaches Ednilyn Hualda (Go For Gold) and Reinhard Gorantes, also of Philippine Navy-Standard Insurance, joined the initiative that also seeks to assist government in the establishment of regulation bike lanes in national, city and municipal roads.

Lina, in his capacity as chairman, and Chulani along with Jun Lomibao, as members of the board of directors, represented PhilCycling in the meeting.

This marks the first time in Philippine cycling history that the sport’s major stakeholders, race organizers and team managers banded together amid government’s effort to curb the spread of the Covid-19 virus by making public transportation safe.

“There is a need to develop a proof-of-concept (POC) design adopting the bike lanes that have already been launched,” Lina said. “The group could come up with a proposal to fix the existing bike lanes.”

Chulani said bike lanes have already been established in Antipolo City, Iloilo City, Quezon City, Marikina City, Pasig City, among others, and stressed Ronda Pilipinas’s full support to the endeavor.

“Ronda Pilipinas launched two cycling lanes in Iloilo and Antipolo two years ago,” Chulani said. “The bike lanes are maintained by private groups.”

Go concurred but stressed the configuration of bicycle lanes should prioritize the safety of riders. “A separate bike lane must be created and cyclists must also learn to follow the traffic regulations,” he said.

The concern regarding bicycle lanes is one of several objectives the group aims to accomplish. The other major concern is on how to instill a cycling culture in the community.

Rodriguez, citing the Indonesian model, said cities and municipalities should be encouraged to observe a regular cycling holiday when all motorized vehicles are banned in a particular area in favor of the bicycle at least one day each week.



Cycling chiefs push use of bicycle in the 'new normal'

The group said it will be supporting congress's efforts favoring the use of bicycles. Representatives Karlo Nograles and Jericho Jonas Nograles filed in 2016 House Bill No. 174 that seeks the creation of the Local Bikeways Office while Senator Pia Cayetano filed last week Senate Bill 1518 that aims to establish a network of pop-up bicycle lanes and pathways during the pandemic.

The stakeholders said they also hope that Senator Francis Tolentino revive the cycling advocacy he established when he was the chairman of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority.

Lina also pinpointed the Central Luzon State University as a potential pilot venue for the advocacy.

The group would be creating a data base of cycling clubs and organizations to expand the advocacy's reach, as well as connect the effort with the Philippine Olympic Committee and the Philippine Sports Commission.



Velasco sees biking as COVID-19 new mode of transport

By Romeo A. Mataac, Jr. Published on May 19, 2020

<https://pia.gov.ph/news/articles/1042225>



Fun Bike Ride, one of the activities during the Marinduque centennial celebration happened in February 2020. (File photo of Romeo Mataac, Jr/PIA-Marinduque)

Marinduque Rep. Lord Allan Velasco is pushing for the creation of bike-friendly communities across the country through a national bike program to be spearheaded by the transportation and public works department in order to promote biking as a new way to travel for a safer and healthier lifestyle under the “new normal” scenario.

Dubbed as “Bisikleta Para sa Kinabukasan,” House Bill No. 4493 introduced by Velasco seeks the establishment of proper infrastructures to make biking in Philippine roads safe for all cyclists.

“Post quarantine-scenario, we see biking as the primary mode of transportation of our people owing to the limited public transport aimed at ensuring social distancing. The public health emergency is an eye-opener on the importance of a healthy lifestyle, and biking is one way of achieving this.” Velasco said.

Citing various studies, Velasco outlined the benefits of biking, whether used for transport, recreation or sport - from reduction of noise and air pollution, road decongestion to relaxation and exercise.

Aside from providing an alternative mode to increase mobility, the measure will address clamor to cut back consumption of gas and diesel and promote a cleaner environment.



Velasco sees biking as COVID-19 new mode of transport

According to Velasco, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) and the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH), in coordination with local government units, will play a crucial role in crafting a comprehensive plan and in disseminating information to ensure the safety of cyclists and the commuting public and to educate the public on the advantages of riding bicycles.

“In order for the program to be established and properly supported, infrastructures for biking must be constructed. Without them, biking in Philippine roads, dominated by motor vehicles, would still be dangerous for cyclists and will only deter the sustained operation of the national biking program,” the Marinduque congressman explained in his proposal filed recently.

Under House Bill 4493, lanes exclusive for bicycles shall be established in all primary and secondary roads to allow cyclists to traverse across all towns and cities nationwide. Designated bike lanes shall also be separated by a physical barrier and pavements shall bear visible markings.

“In cases where the installation of a physical barrier or elevated path is not feasible, the lane for bicycles shall be identified through reflectorized yellow painted lines. However, bicycle lanes must never compromise the mobility and safety of pedestrians,” it added.

Cyclists, on the other hand, shall be required to bike within the designated lanes, unless no bike lane has been established yet, as well as obey all traffic rules and regulations, except those which are not applicable to bicycles.

If approved into law, Velasco’s bill mandates all public places, government offices, schools, malls, banks, restaurants and hospitals, among others, to provide bicycle racks for parking, which should be visible, secure and accessible without obstructing the way devoted for pedestrians or motor vehicles. (RAMJR/PIA-MIMAROPA)



Pinoy-made disinfection cubicles

May 20, 2020 03:40 AM

By Jun Vallecera

<https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/05/20/pinoy-made-disinfection-cubicles/>



Filipino researchers are developing a disinfection technology called SaniPod, a self-containing cubicle similar to air showers, meant for sanitizing front liners as they exit COVID-19 patient wards.

With over 2,000 healthcare workers now infected with COVID-19, the Philippines faces a shortage of medical personnel amidst the pandemic. While nurses work long shifts to respond to the rising cases, numbers reveal there are only six doctors for every 10,000 Filipinos. The infection has made it harder for the country's health infrastructure as nearly 650 doctors are already infected with COVID-19 as of 12 May this year.

Aside from wearing personal protective equipment (PPE), disinfection cubicles such as SaniPod will ensure the medical personnel are given an extra layer of protection from COVID-19 as SaniPod cubicles are more efficient than existing sanitation tents in terms of disinfection success.

Funded by the Department of Science and Technology-Philippine Council for Health Research and Development (DoST-PCHRD), the technology uses advanced features such as acrylic walls for easy cleaning and disinfection of external and internal surfaces when placed in highly contagious and dense areas in the hospital. SaniPod cubicles are also installed with automatic motion sensors to activate the entrance and exit doors with different disinfectants plus a UV light and uses a foot sanitation unit to disinfect the undersurface of shoes. This will decrease contact with the surfaces of the cubicle, leading to lesser chances of microbes staying on the surfaces.



Pinoy-made disinfection cubicles

The technology will be distributed to some 100 local hospitals, provide psychological assurance to healthcare workers and a means of disinfection for Filipinos if placed in highly dense areas where people congregate, such as public markets.

Developed by a team from the University of the Philippines, Diliman College of Engineering, Prof. Eduardo Magdaluyo, Jr., Engr. Jason Pechardo and Precision/Instrumentation Technician Edgar Argote, in collaboration with UPD Chemistry (Dr. Fe Carino and Eiza Yu-Roberto), Microbiology (Joyce Ibarra), UP Manila College of Medicine (Dr. Cathy Co and Dr. E Wang) and College of Public Health (Dr. Maita Lota and Ms. Mary Ann Sison), SaniPod is one of the efforts under the Surgical Innovation and Biotechnology Laboratory or SIBOL, a UP Manila College of Medicine program which collaborates with scientists and engineers from UP Diliman.

SIBOL is supported by DoST-PCHR and it aims to use locally sourced material and technology to produce much needed surgical and medical devices in the country.



Ambo leaves at least P1.26 billion in agriculture, infrastructure damage

Rose Carmelle Lacuata, ABS-CBN News

Posted at May 19 2020 09:00 PM

<https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/05/19/20/ambo-leaves-at-least-p126-billion-in-agriculture-infrastructure-damage>

MANILA - The first typhoon to hit the country this year left at least P1.26 billion worth of damage to agriculture and infrastructure, the disaster management agency said Tuesday, just as the nation grappled with the COVID-19 pandemic that has set back the economy.

In a report released 12 noon Tuesday, the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) said Typhoon Ambo (international name: Vongfong) caused P121 million worth of damage on infrastructure, mainly in Cagayan Valley, Calabarzon, the Bicol Region, Eastern Visayas and the Cordillera Administrative Region.

Cagayan Valley reported the biggest cost of damage to infrastructure at P97.5 million, followed by Eastern Visayas at P11 million.

NDRRMC also reported that a total of 96,335 families or 366,434 persons in 259 municipalities were affected by the typhoon. There were also 54 persons injured in Central Luzon and Central Visayas.

Eastern Visayas was the most affected, with 95,272 families stricken by the typhoon. Of this number, 41,866 families were from Eastern Samar while 53,406 were from Northern Samar.

NDRRMC reported no fatalities due to the typhoon, but local authorities earlier reported 3 dead in Eastern Visayas and 1 in Quezon.

Ambo leaves 4 dead, dozens hurt in Eastern Visayas, Quezon

Meanwhile, the Department of Agriculture reported P1.14 billion worth of damage in crops, Agriculture Assistant Secretary Noel Reyes said in a press briefing Tuesday.

High value crops such as abaca, banana, cacao, calamansi, cassava, coconut, coffee, corn, mango, oil palm, onion, pineapple, rice, rubber, seaweeds, and sugar were mostly affected, with damage amounting to P793.15 million.

But the damage is not significant, the agency said, as they were able to prepare for the onslaught of the typhoon ahead of time by advising farmers to harvest mature crops early.

“Sa oras na makakuha tayo ng datos hinggil sa bagyo, agad tayong nagpapalabas ng bulletin sa regional field offices na agad ding nagpapalabas ng advisory sa kanilang nasasakupan,” Reyes said.



Ambo leaves at least P1.26 billion in agriculture, infrastructure damage

(The moment we get data on a typhoon, we immediately release a bulletin in regional field offices, which also urgently release an advisory in their areas.)

The farmers are now preparing for the wet season planting, and the agency is in the process of assessing affected farmers.

A total of P700 million has been prepared for the rehabilitation of affected areas. The program includes giving away rice seeds and farm supplies to those affected.

Ambo struck with tens of millions of Filipinos cooped up in their homes because of the coronavirus, but at least 140,000 had to flee because of the powerful storm, disaster officials said. Ambo toppled trees, knocked out power lines and destroyed houses in its wake.



4.3-magnitude quake jolts Davao Occidental

Published May 19, 2020, 8:40 AM

By Mike Crismundo

<https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/05/19/4-3-magnitude-quake-jolts-davao-occidental-4/>

BUTUAN CITY – A 4.3-magnitude earthquake jolted Davao Occidental province early Tuesday morning, May 19, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said.

In its bulletin, Phivolcs said the tremor was recorded at 3:14 a.m., with the epicenter plotted 307 kilometers (kms) southeast of Sarangani, Davao Occidental province.

The tremor had a depth of only one km, Phivolcs said.

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

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

Earlier, earlier May 19, a 3.2-magnitude tremor was also registered at 3:02 a.m. and its epicenter was traced 341 kms. southeast of the same town and province, with a depth of 47 kms, Phivolcs also said.

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

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



For the first time, Navy transport ship docks at Pagasa island

By Victor Reyes
May 20, 2020

https://malaya.com.ph/index/index.php/news_news/for-the-first-time-navy-transport-ship-docks-at-pagasa-island/



A NAVY transport ship docked at Pagasa island in the West Philippine Sea last week, the first vessel to berth at the contested island since it was occupied by Philippines in the 1980s.

Lt. Maivi Neri, acting public affairs officer of the Naval Forces West based in Puerto Princesa City, said the BRP Ivatan docked at Pagasa island early morning of Wednesday last week and stayed there for about a day.

Neri said the ship brought troops to replace those who have been posted at the island for several months, along with food provisions. She said the ship also performed troop rotation and re-provisioning mission at other Philippine-occupied areas in the WPS.

Neri said the berthing of BRP Ivatan at the island was made possible by the near-completion of a port or beaching ramp in the area. The port has been under construction for the past few years.

Once completed, the beaching ramp will be used to bring in construction materials needed to repair the runway and improve other facilities at the island.

Neri said the port, 90 percent complete, can already accommodate a ship.

“This is the first ever,” Neri said, referring to the docking of a Navy ship at the island.

Navy ships had to anchor far from the island while doing troop rotation and re-provisioning in the past.

“We do ship-to-shore movement, using our rubber boats,” Neri said.

“Navy ships have been there before but they didn’t dock, they can’t get near the island,” Neri added.

Neri said the ship, skippered by Cdr. Bennie Demetillo, returned to Puerto Princesa City on Sunday after the successful mission.



EDITORIAL - Preventing a second wave

May 20, 2020 - 12:00am

<https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2020/05/20/2015204/editorial-preventing-second-wave>

The government believes it did not make a mistake in easing anti-COVID restrictions all over the country to restart the contracting economy. Metro Manila and other areas under enhanced community quarantine have shifted to a modified ECQ, while nearly the entire country is transitioning from ECQ to GCQ or general community quarantine.

Government officials, however, are dismayed by the scenes of crowds ignoring physical distancing as they flocked to the malls after two months of being largely cooped up at home. Last Monday – the first working day under MECQ in Metro Manila, Laguna and Cebu City – presidential spokesman Harry Roque said the country should brace for a spike in cases of coronavirus disease 2019 as a result of the crowd exuberance during the weekend.

Health experts are warning of a second COVID-19 wave, which is being manifested in other countries that are reopening for business. Among the common sources of new infections, according to foreign news reports, are barbershops and salons, where human contact is often inevitable.

Such reports prompted the Inter-Agency Task Force on the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases to order barbershops and salons to remain shuttered. Yet several of these shops have been seen openly resuming operations. These are just some of the examples of public discipline weakening as quarantine restrictions are relaxed.

Public discipline can be more difficult to impose after the police chief of Metro Manila himself, Debold Sinas, together with other police generals and lower ranking personnel ignored quarantine protocols so he could celebrate his 55th birthday.

Officials have since warned that the ECQ could be reimposed if blatant violations of public health measures persist. Those who are prepared to risk COVID infection have surely seen the catastrophic consequences of quarantines and lockdowns on livelihoods. With the easing of quarantine measures, everyone must avoid at all costs a second COVID wave and a return to tighter restrictions.



'World War C' still raging

Carelessness, ignorance or lack of true understanding and complacency can bring the full force of the virus on us all.

May 20, 2020 12:50 AM

By Dinah S. Ventura

<https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/05/20/world-war-c-still-raging/>

How long does it take for a person to adjust to new conditions or circumstances? Some say it takes three weeks; others think six weeks are enough.

In an article by James Clear, author of the New York Times bestseller *Atomic Habits*, the same question is asked and answers given with a little grain of salt.

Clear begins his article by citing a story about Maxwell Maltz, a plastic surgeon in the '50s, who noticed a pattern among his patients that got him curious enough to begin a more in-depth study into the matter.

"When Dr. Maltz would perform an operation — like a nose job, for example — he found that it would take the patient about 21 days to get used to seeing their new face. Similarly, when a patient had an arm or a leg amputated, Maxwell Maltz noticed that the patient would sense a phantom limb for about 21 days before adjusting to the new situation," he said in the article.

Then Dr. Maltz went on to write a multimillion-selling book about changing behaviors bearing his famous quote: "These, and many other commonly observed phenomena, tend to show that it requires a minimum of about 21 days for an old mental image to dissolve and a new one to jell."

In the ensuing decades, people took that quote, repeated countless even by psychology experts, without question, that it became almost carved in stone: habits are formed in 21 days.

Unfortunately, here's the plain, hard fact — It's not true.

You see, Dr. Maltz said "minimum of" — a detail that got shoved out of the equation along the way.

In other words — or in the real world such as the very surreal one we now live in — people can be holed up at home for eight weeks but when finally allowed to go out, they go a little bit crazy.

Well, that is an exaggeration, yes — but judging from the mall crowds last weekend, during the first couple of days of the modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ), many appeared to have not absorbed the rules of social distancing at all.

As quarantine rules were relaxed, those who were able to go around began crowding the roads and in shopping malls.

Parts of EDSA and some major highways began to look like it used to with vehicles all in a row.

Checkpoints may have had something to do with the slowdown of traffic, but it was obvious that an increased volume of vehicles had plenty to do with it.



'World War C' still raging

Now here's the deal: there is a very good point behind the frustrated outcry over careless crowding and the seeming dismissal of health warnings that could cause "not just a second wave, but a tsunami," as Makati Mayor Abby Binay exclaimed in the news.

If there is a second wave, our country would certainly be stretched over the limit of its resources.

Part of the reason quarantine rules were relaxed was to help get the economy rolling again, a reasonable and urgent concern that needed addressing.

As Minguita Padilla, medical team chief of Project Antibody Rapid Test Kits or ARK, said last Monday after critics slammed government for veritably opening the gates of hell, "We cannot hide from the virus forever. It will take a while before we have a vaccine," Padilla said in a press briefing. "We have guidelines. The DoH (Department of Health) has guidelines. The DoLE (Department of Labor and Employment) has guidelines on how to go back to work," apparently urging people to follow the health protocols, strictly, of their own volition.

She added, "We have to always remember the virus is there. But we cannot forever hide, because forever hiding and avoiding may be more deadly than the disease... We have to just protect our vulnerables, the vulnerables we have to protect."

Meanwhile, the DoH reiterated its call for the public to stay at home — the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) is still out there, it said. "World War C is not yet over," its spokesman Ma. Rosario Vergeire stressed.

The same message is being spread by local government units, some of whom are enforcing local ordinances to continue staving off COVID infections in spite of the nationally imposed MECQ or GCQ.

This leads us back to that little thing called habits.

Carelessness, ignorance or lack of true understanding and complacency can bring the full force of the virus on us all — a scary prospect not just because it is a lonely, painful and potentially tragic experience, but also because our government realistically cannot take care of each one of us all of the time.

Much as it tries, it does not have an endless well of resources. Sooner than we are prepared for, we must move forward — into a new kind of normal, indeed.

For a while it may feel like you have lost a limb and had it replaced. It may seem like looking at yourself in the mirror and wondering what in the world happened to the old you.

You can't grow back a leg, the same way you can't ever forget those three simple lifestyle changes you need to do all the time from now on: physical distancing, wearing of face masks and frequent handwashing.

If eight weeks wasn't enough, experts say your habits should change at some point if you just keep on going with the changes that are already there.



Calculating the Philippine economy's negative 2020 growth

posted May 20, 2020 at 12:10 am by Rudy Romero

<https://manilastandard.net/opinion/columns/business-class-by-rudy-romero/324074/calculating-the-philippine-economy-s-negative-2020-growth.html>

"We have been dealt an enormous blow by the COVID-19 crisis"

In economics school, students are taught how to go about calculating changes in an economy's output. Since the end of World War II, Philippine economists have had to apply their calculation skills in a major downward direction on only four occasions. One of those occasions, obviously is the downturn currently being experienced by this country's economy. The other occasions were the economic crises of 1949-1950, 1969-1970 and 1983-1984.

The current downturn is unquestionably the most severe of the four. The severity of the current downturn was assured by the placement of Luzon – the source of approximately 45 percent of this country's GDP (gross domestic product) – under either total or partial lockdown and the total ban on incoming and outgoing international airline flights. The economy of the nation's largest island has been moving in the direction of free fall since March 15, when the lockdown went into effect. Especially damaging to Philippine GDP has been the loss of virtually the entire output of Metro Manila, which accounts for an estimated 20 percent of the national total.

Calculation of the impact of various phenomena on economics is rendered more accurate by the specialized field of econometrics, which introduces mathematical concepts into economic analysis. But even without resort to econometrics, it is possible to (1) determine which parts of the Philippine economy have suffered the greatest damage from the coronavirus pandemic and (2) on the basis of the damaged sectors' individual contributions thereto, calculate the overall reduction experienced by this country's GDP. Estimates of the negative growth in 2020 range from the 2.0-3.5 percent of a number of domestic banks to the 5.1 percent of a foreign investment advisory firm.

Four sectors stand out among the sectors of the economy that have been badly hit by the COVID-19 downturn. These are tourism, services, manufacturing and retailing. The severity of the downturn becomes understandable when it is realized that these sectors are four of the largest contributors to Philippine GDP.

The international component of Philippine tourism has been clobbered by the lethal combination of the ban on international flights and the Luzon-wide lockdown. Reservations have gone down to practically nil and hotel and resort occupancy rates have declined precipitously. The smaller hospitality establishments are close to shutting down permanently. Tourism accounts for approximately 15 percent of this country's GDP.



Calculating the Philippine economy's negative 2020 growth

The services sector, which has become the Philippine economy's largest sector – close to 40 percent of GDP – has likewise been clobbered by the current crisis. Only the BPO (business process outsourcing) sub-sector has gone unscathed. Restaurants, entertainment and recreation establishments and businesses providing all sorts of personal services have been hit very hard by the COVID-19 crisis. A massive loss of revenues, jobs and incomes has been the result.

The manufacturing sector, which has been accounting for around 21 percent of Philippine GDP, has been brought to a virtual standstill by the Luzon-wide lockdown. Only manufacturing industries categorized as essential – mainly food and health-related products – have been allowed to operate during the lockdown. The output of a steadily shrinking segment of the economy was further reduced by the lockdown. The inclusion of public transport in the lockdown rendered difficult the operation of the permitted manufacturing industries.

The retailing sector has likewise taken a big hit from the current crisis. The temporary closure of establishments selling all sorts of non-essential goods – from the giant malls to the small neighborhood stores – has meant the loss of hundreds of thousands of jobs and family incomes across the land. The socioeconomic character of this adverse development becomes evident when citation is made of the fact that an estimated 96 percent of all business enterprises in this country are MSMEs (micro, small and medium-sized enterprises).

This brings me back to the matter of calculation to the loss of output incurred by the Philippine economy as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. By what percentage has this country's GDP shrunk during the effectivity of the ECQ (enhanced community quarantine) in Metro Manila and the GCQ (general community quarantine) elsewhere in the nation? Considering the output loss sustained by the largest sectors, is the Philippine economy's full-year GDP shrinkage likely to be closer to 2.0-3.5 percent than to 5.1 percent? That depends on the degree of success attained by this country's COVID-19 mitigation program during the remainder of 2020. If strict social distancing will be maintained – and that is not the likelihood – production of goods and services will not be capable of rebounding strongly.

The Philippine economy has been dealt an enormous blow by the COVID-19 crisis. Today's Filipinos have never experienced anything like it and are unlikely, with God's mercy, to re-experience something like it in the rest of their lives. A realistic analysis of the entire situation suggests that the negative growth of the economy in 2020 will be of a magnitude greater than the upper end of the 2000 3.5 percent forecast



To give or not to give SAP tranche 2

May 20, 2020

By Xandra Liza C. Bisenio

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/05/20/to-give-or-not-to-give-sap-tranche-2/>

How many mothers have been forced to leave their little ones at home, walk far, and stand in long lines for ayuda only to go home empty-handed? How many senior citizens and persons with disability (PWDs), despite their frailty and limits, still tried to get support but in vain?

What can government say to people asking: “Paano na kami, ano nang kakainin namin sa susunod? Kung ano-ano nang ginagawa sa itlog—nilalaga, sinisigang, inaadobo” or “Itinutulog na lang ng mga anak ko ang agahan at tanghalian, kasi pang-isang kain na lang ang meron kami.” There are countless, grimmer accounts of such despair.

As of May 16, exactly two months after the lockdown to contain Covid-19, the official count of beneficiaries that have not received the first tranche of social amelioration was still quite a number—811,193 families or some 4 million people. Even if everyone gets served eventually, the point is that millions of Filipinos were made to wait that long for the much-needed aid to come. Yet the Duterte administration dilly-dallies about distributing the second tranche of the social amelioration program (SAP), as if it is an option to give or not to give.

Those who are in modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) areas unarguably need continued support from government. The lockdown has caused two months of difficulty in terms of jobs, livelihood and incomes.

But the over 13 million families who now fall in the category of general community quarantine also still need continued support. They were also under lockdown for six to eight weeks and, at best, only got a small amount of support under the first tranche. Moreover, data as of the exact second month of the lockdown showed that there were even 659,850 households in GCQ areas who have actually not yet received their first tranche. This included 189,467 households in the new GCQ areas.

There should be no question that the second tranche needs to be distributed not just in the remaining MECQ areas but in the GCQ areas as well.

‘Bayanihan’ is explicit about it

The SAP targets 17.7 million beneficiaries. The National Capital Region, Region III except Aurora and Tarlac, Laguna, Mandaue City and Cebu City are under MECQ until the end of the month, covering about 4 million beneficiaries. Erstwhile ECQ areas Benguet, Pangasinan, Calabarzon except Laguna, Iloilo, Cebu, Davao City and Bacolod City now join the rest of the country under GCQ—bringing the number of SAP beneficiaries in GCQ areas up to 13.7 million.



To give or not to give SAP tranche 2

The usual economic activities can resume in GCQ areas. There are still minimum health requirements such as physical distancing, frequent handwashing, and bodily protection because the battle against the coronavirus continues. MECQ areas, meanwhile, maintain restrictions on mobility outside the home, as well as on nonessential activities.

Malacañang initially announced that only MECQ areas will get the second tranche of social amelioration. Soon after, the President gave orders to not just give it all 18 million families but to actually add 5 million more, earning him additional popularity points. Yet is this really something for the President to give or not give according to how generous he is feeling?

The Bayanihan to Heal as One Law or Republic Act 11469 is actually clear. Section 4 (c) explicitly states that the government shall “Provide an emergency subsidy to around 18 million low income households: Provided, That the subsidy shall amount to a minimum of P5,000 to a maximum of P8,000 a month for two months.”

Making the people wait

AT the onset of the Bayanihan law, the government promised P250 billion for social amelioration and health response. It acknowledged the huge task of strengthening the country’s health system to contain the coronavirus and to save lives. It also recognized that the lockdown would result in widespread displacement of jobs and disruption of livelihoods, badly hitting the majority of the country’s low-income households.

Two months later, there is still no consensus among scientists and medical professionals on whether or not the pandemic curve is flattening. The number of confirmed cases continues to rise, now exceeding 12,700, and also deaths at over 830 already. Our health workers and frontliners are holding the line as best as they can. But they are also the first to take the brunt amid a private sector-dominated health system that is itself ailing from a gross lack of equipment, facilities, infrastructure and manpower to deal with the pandemic.

The government owes the health sector a grand boost, in the same way that it owes the people in the GCQ areas the second tranche of SAP.

To what end

IS the administration’s dilly-dallying part of a script where, to be able to give help to now 23 million SAP beneficiaries, the government will now be forced to sell public assets to fund social amelioration? Who is buying—China?



To give or not to give SAP tranche 2

Time and again, Malacañang has said that it doesn't have enough funds, and that it's only thanks to the President's prudence that the government has found money to spend. Still, resources are limited so the people have to wait. Or even sacrifice—social welfare Secretary Rolando Bautista even said that not receiving the second tranche is perhaps actually in the spirit of Bayanihan, in freeing up resources for others.

Yet there are funds that can be tapped without the government selling off its assets. IBON estimates a universe of P3 trillion worth of funds that can be explored and tapped. This includes: realigning "Build, Build, Build" and confidential and intelligence funds; realigning debt service payments by pushing for a debt moratorium, restructuring or even cancellation; and raising new revenues from issuing Covid-19 solidarity bonds and higher income taxes and wealth taxes on the super-rich.

This would indeed mean a big shift for the Duterte administration whose economic managers already have their minds set on a recovery program that pushes instead of thwarts those business-biased measures, for example, big-ticket infrastructure, tied debts, lower corporate income taxes, and tax incentives for investors. But there should be no second thoughts either about doing everything necessary to help the people survive the crisis.

Some Metro Manila local government units (LGUs) did not make people trapped in the lockdown wait for too long. They defied the apparent limitations of the bureaucracy by tapping internal funds to distribute assistance to their constituents early in the ECQ. They combined technology and people's volunteerism to deliver help as expediently as they could.

The people have been at the center of these LGUs' emergency relief operations. This does not seem to be the case with the Duterte administration or even its predecessors. Because, if they were, why is our health system still at a loss with Covid-19? Why can't the government drop everything to make sure that all vulnerable households get the first and second tranche of social amelioration immediately?

Why are more hapless citizens arrested than are tested? Also, why are relief volunteers, community leaders, mobile kitchens, and even journalists—who are merely trying to fill in gaps in emergency assistance—being harassed, arrested, or even killed by law enforcers?

The huge health and economic crisis that the country is facing now can only be hurdled, humanely and effectively, if the people were heeded and not hindered from actively participating.

Ms. Bisenio works for IBON Foundation Inc., an independent development institution established in 1978 that provides research, education, publications, information work and advocacy support on socioeconomic issues.



DOBLE O TRIPLE MALAS SA ABS-CBN

May 20, 2020 @ 12:07 AM

<https://remate.ph/doble-o-triple-malas-sa-abs-cbn/>



Hindi na nag-isyu ang Supreme Court ng temporary restraining order o TRO laban sa National Telecommunications Commission na nagpatigil sa ABS-CBN na umere sa bisa ng Cease and Desist Order o CDO, sinibak pa ng Kamara ang mabilisan sanang pagbibigay ng NTC ng kapangyarihan na bigyan ang network ng provisional authority to operate.

Ang epekto?

Maaaring matagal bago muling umere ang nasabing telebisyon at iba pang sangay nito, kasama ang ilang radyo.

Mukhang tugma ito sa tantiya mismo ng ABS-CBN na maaaring hanggang Agosto ang problema sa pag-eere o hindi o maaaring lalagpas pa.

Ang pangatlong malas na magaganap?

Magtatanggal ng mga empleyado ang network at mga empleyado naman ang mamalasin.

Rason ng network, nalulugi ito ng mahigit P30 milyong araw-araw at kung magtatagal na walang kita ito, wala itong magagawa kundi magbawas ng trabaho.

WALANG TRO SA CDO

Noong Mayo 5, 2020, naglabas ang National Telecommunications Commission ng CDO o kautusang nagpapatigil ng operasyon ng network dahil pumasong na ang prangkisa nito noong Mayo 4.

Mayo 7 o tatlong araw makaraan, hiniling ng ABS-CBN sa SC na mag-isyu ng TRO ngunit dumating na ang Mayo 19, wala pa ring aksyon ang hukuman, kaya hiniling ng network na umaksyon na ito.

Sumagot ang Mataas na Hukuman at iniutos sa NTC na sumagot sa loob ng 10 araw makaraang matanggap nito ang kanyang kautusan at sinabihan din ang Kamara at Senado na gawin ito.

Kalakip ng kautusan ang pagsasabing maaaring sumagot ang NTC sa loob ng limang araw sa petisyon ng ABS-CBN.

Kung iiisipin, hindi ganon kadali ang magkwenta ng araw ukol sa kautusan ng Mataas na Hukuman, halimbawa kung makiusap ang NTC na bigyan sila ng “extension of time” na sumagot.



DOBLE O TRIPLE MALAS SA ABS-CBN

Sa huli, gaano katagal maglabas ng desisyon ang SC kung maglalabas ito ng TRO o hindi?

SC HINTAYING MAGDESIYON

Mungkahi ni dating Senate President Manong Johnny Enrile na dapat hintayin ng Kamara at Senado ang nakabinbin na kasong Quo Warranto na isinampa ni Solicitor General Jose Calida laban sa ABS-CBN.

Isinampa ang Quo Warranto sa rami ng paglabag umano ng ABS-CBN at ABS-CBN Convergence, Inc. sa iba't ibang batas at sa Konstitusyon.

Kasama sa mga alegasyon ng Solgen ang pang-aabuso umano ng network sa paniningil sa mga manonood sa mga show nito na dumaaan sa ABS-CBN Tv Plus at KBO nang walang kaukulang permiso mula sa NTC samantalang isa itong "free tv."

Nilabag din umano nito ang takda ng Konstitusyon na dapat 100 porsyentong pag-aari ng Filipino ang network bilang media company sa pag-iisyu ng Philippine Depositary Receipts sa mga dayuhan, gaya ng kaso ng Rappler.

Nagmaniobra din umano ang ABS-CBN para hindi mamamalayang inililipat nito ang kanyang prangkisa nang walang pag-apruba ang Kongreso.

Hindi rin umano nagbenta ng bahagi ng outstanding capital stock nito sa loob ng limang taon matapos maitatag ito gaya ng kautusan ng batas sa prangkisa nito.

Paano na lang umano kung panigan ng SC ang Solgen at basta na lamang din magbigay ang Kongreso ng prangkisa?

Bukod sa matagal magdesisyon ang SC, paano nga naman kung mangyari ang magkataliwas na posisyon?

LABAN-BAWI NG KAMARA

Kahapon ng hapon, anak ng tokwa, nagulat ang lahat nang biglang talikuran ng Kamara ang pagsusulong nito ng paglikha ng batas para sa pagkakaroon ng pansamantalang prangkisa ang ABS-CBN hanggang Oktubre 21, 2020.

Sa halip, ipinasakamay ng liderato ng Kamara sa Committee on Legislative Franchise ang pagtalakay sa aplikasyon para sa renewal o pagkakaroon ng bagong prangkisa ang network upang mabigyan ang lahat ng anti at pro-ABS-CBN sa usapin na maglabas ng kani-kanilang posisyon.

Gusto ng mga anti-ABS-CBN na huwag nang bigyan ng prangkisa ang network samantalang habang taliwas dito, siyempre, ang posisyon ng mga pro.

Nangangahulugan ito ng pagtatagal ng pagtigil sa ere ang network dahil wala nang sapat na panahon para sa mabilisang pagbabalik nito sa ere.



DOBLE O TRIPLE MALAS SA ABS-CBN

Isipin na lang, malapit nang mag-recess ang Kamara at Senado simula sa Enero 3, 2020 at babalik na lang sa sesyon ang mga kongresman at senador sa araw ng State of the Nation Address ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte sa Hulyo 27, 2020.

Tiyak na magiging madugo ang bakbakan ng mga pro at anti at posibleng hindi sapat ang mga sesyon ng mga kongresman mula sa araw na ito hanggang Hulyo 27, 2020.

Sakaling mabuo ang pro-ABS-CBN na posisyon sa Kamara, isusumite pa ito sa Senado na maaari ring magkakaroon ng bakbakan sa pagitan ng anti at pro.

Sakaling papabor din ang Senado, gaano katagal ang pagbuo ng panukalang batas na pinal na isusumite sa Malakanyang para sa pag-apruba o pag-veto ng Pangulo?

Siyam-siyam?

APRUB O VETO

Isa pang bubunuing panahon ng pagkuha ng prangkisa ang pag-apruba o pag-veto ng Pangulo rito.

Sakali ngang aprubado ng Kamara at Senado ang prangkisa at isinumite ito sa Malakanyang para aprubahan din, maaaring aabutin ito ng 30 araw.

Kapag hindi umaksyon ang Pangulo sa loob ng 30 araw, matik na magiging batas ang panukala at balik-ere na ang ABS-CBN.

Pero kung vineto ito ng Pangulog, kailangan pang ipunin ng Kamara at Senado ang two-thirds majority ng kani-kanilang mga miyembro para baligtarin ang veto ng Pangulo.

Paano kung hindi magtagumpay ang Kamara at Senado rito?

Maaaring tatakbo ang lahat sa Mataas na Hukuman at ang tanong, gaano katagal magbaba ng desisyon ito?

Siyam-siyam?

KALAYAAN SA PAMAMAHAYAG HINDI HINAHARANG

Batay sa mga nagaganap sa Kongreso at Korte Suprema, pangunahing problemang ligal at Konstitusyonal ang pagkamatay at pagbuhay sa prangkisa ng ABS-CBN.

Nakatali rito ang freedom of expression and of the press ng mga taga-ABS-CBN dito.

‘Yun bang === kung wala silang prangkisa, wala silang kalayaan sa pamamahayag sa pamamagitan ng ABS-CBN at ABS-CBN Convergence, Inc.



DOBLE O TRIPLE MALAS SA ABS-CBN

Sa ABS-CBN Convergence, Inc. umano nabubuhay mismo ang TVPlus na sinasakyan ng TV Patrol para makaere.

Sa ibang salita, mga Bro, hindi pupwedeng isama ang problema sa ABS-CBN at ABS-CBN Convergence, Inc. sa kontrobersya sa kung may kalayaan sa pamamahayag o wala sa loob ng bansa.

Lalo na kung sasabihin mong nabubuhay at namamatay ang kalayaan sa pamamahayag sa buhay o kamatayan ng prangkisa ng ABS-CBN.

Kahit saan mo tingnan, buhay na buhay ang kalayaan sa pamamahayag at saksi mismo rito ang TV Patrol na umeere sa pamamagitan ng TVPlus at Sky Cable na pag-aari ng may-ari ng ABS-CBN.

Walang isinasarang istasyon ng telebisyon at radyo, diaryo at maging online na TV, radyo at pahayagan.

Naririyang din ang sari-saring anyo ng social media at iba pang sinasakyan para sa malayang pamamahayag.



EDITORIAL - Mga sakit na lumulutang sa panahon ng tag-ulan

May 20, 2020

<https://www.philstar.com/pilipino-star-ngayon/opinyon/2020/05/20/2015130/editorial-mga-sakit-na-lumulutang-sa-panahon-ng-tag-ulan>



Paparating na ang tag-ulan ayon sa PAGASA. Mga huling linggo ng Mayo o unang linggo ng Hunyo at idedeklara na ang pagpasok ng tag-ulan. Kahapon, maraming lugar sa Metro Manila ang inulan at sinabayan pa ng mga pagkidlat at pagkulong.

Sa kasalukuyan, nakatutok ang pamahalaan sa pananalasa ng COVID-19 na sa huling tala ng Department of Health (DOH) ay 12,942 na ang kaso. Mahigpit ang pagpapatupad sa social distancing, pagsusuot ng face mask at ang madalas na paghuhugas ng kamay.

Ngayong papasok na nga ang tag-ulan, hindi lamang COVID ang dapat tutukan kundi pati na rin ang iba pang sakit na nakukuha sa panahong ito. Tiyak na sa pagbuhos ng ulan, baha ang kasunod at dito maraming sakit na nakukuha. Dapat maging alerto ang lahat hindi lang sa COVID.

Isa sa mga dapat bantayan ang leptospirosis na nananalasa kapag baha. Ang leptospirosis ay nakukuha sa baha na kontaminado ng ihi ng daga. Kapag ang virus ay pumasok sa sugat na nasa paa o binti ng taong lumusong sa baha, dito na magsisimula ang leptospirosis.



EDITORIAL - Mga sakit na lumulutang sa panahon ng tag-ulan

Nakamamatay ang leptospirosis kaya huwag lumusong sa baha ang may sugat sa paa at binti. O kung lulusong, magsuot ng bota para may proteksiyon sa baha na may ihi ng daga. Noong nakaraang taon, 1,030 kaso ng leptospirosis at 93 ang namatay. Payo sa mga magulang, huwag hayaang maglaro o maligo sa baha ang mga anak.

Ang mga sintomas ng leptospirosis ay lagnat, nahihirapang umihi, naninilaw ang balat at namumula ang mga mata. Ayon sa mga doctor, lumalabas ang mga sintomas makaraan ang pitong araw pagkalusong sa baha na kontaminado ng ihi.

Marumi ang Metro Manila. Maraming basura sapagkat maraming residente ang walang disiplina sa pagtatapon. Sa mga basurang ito nabubuhay ang mga daga. Kapag bumaha, hindi lang basura ang inaanod kundi pati ihi ng daga.

Hindi lamang lepto ang lumulutang kundi pati na rin ang dengue. Kaya panatilihin ang kalinisan sa kapaligiran at sa loob ng bahay. Kung malinis, walang mabubuhay na daga o lamok. Ipagpatuloy ang nakasanayan nang paglilinis na iminulat ng COVID-19 para hindi kumalat ang sakit at epidemya.



'Ambo' caused damage but also brought welcome rains

EDITORIAL

Published May 19, 2020, 11:00 PM

<https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/05/19/ambo-caused-damage-but-also-brought-welcome-rains/>



Storms and typhoons are very much a part of our weather in the Philippines. We even choose to give Philippine names to those that affect our country, different from the international names recognized by the rest of the world.

Thus “Yolanda” which hit us in November, 2013, is known to the world as “Haiyan.” With its 300-kilometers-per-hour winds, it was the most powerful typhoon to hit land in recorded history. It killed 6,300 in the Philippines.

In the first four months of this year, we have not had any storms coming our way. Typhoon “Ambo” — known to every other country as

“Vongfong” — was the first and it is already May. It first hit land in San Policarpio, Eastern Samar, last Thursday. It continued over our interisland waters, hit Dalupiri Island, then Capul Island, both in Northern Samar. It then crossed over to Ticao Island, then Buaias Island, both in Masbate. It finally landed on San Andres, Quezon, and stayed in Luzon all the way north to Isabela, Cagayan, and Ilocos Norte. At 4 p.m. Saturday, it was located 110 kilometers north-northwest of Laoag City, Ilocos Norte, well on the way to the South China Sea.

“Ambo” killed at least two persons in Eastern Samar and Quezon and left the usual damage to the areas it hit, mostly to agriculture. The Department of Agriculture estimated the damage in Bicol at R79.9 million, with big losses in corn, rice, coconut, fruits and vegetables, and livestock. The typhoon caused the usual damage to roads, homes, and other buildings.

The rains brought by typhoon “Ambo” have, however, improved the water levels in our dams at a time of the year when they are at the lowest. The water level on Angat Dam which supplies most of Metro Manila’s water needs rose by 2.76 meters to 190.28 meters. The new level is 10.28 meters above the minimum operating level of 180 meters.

In two more weeks, we should see the start of the rainy season. That is when the “habagat” winds start blowing from the southwest, dumping rains on the western part of the country, including Metro Manila. The southwest monsoon season often is accompanied by storms and typhoons blowing from the east.

We expect many more storms and typhoons to come after “Ambo” in the coming months. There are so many letters of the alphabet before the powerful “X-Y-Z” typhoons such as “Yolanda” come around November.

They can cause considerable destruction, but we have come to accept them as part of the natural order of things in our country. We specially welcome them when we have hot summer seasons like the one we had last year and the one we are now having.



Vatican ties virus rethink to pope’s environmental appeal

Associated Press / 07:02 AM May 19, 2020

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1277217/vatican-ties-virus-rethink-to-popes-environmental-appeal>

VATICAN CITY — The Vatican is marking the 5th anniversary of Pope Francis’ environmental encyclical by calling for the world to map out a sustainable post-coronavirus future that considers the plight of the hungry and poor.



Pope Francis gives his blessing from his studio’s window, overlooking St. Peter square, at the Vatican Sunday, May 17, 2020. During his weekly Sunday blessing, Pope Francis welcomed the fact that from Monday Holy Mass can be celebrated in Italy with the congregation present — but he urged the faithful to follow the rules. “Please, let’s go ahead with the norms, the prescriptions, that they give us to safeguard the health of each of us, and of the people.” (AP Photo/Alessandra Tarantino)

To kick off the week, 42 faith organizations from 14 countries announced they were divesting from fossil fuels. Among them are a handful of Catholic dioceses and religious orders in Britain, Ireland and the developing world, as well as some individual Methodist, Baptist and Quaker churches.

Francis has made protecting the planet one of the hallmarks of his papacy, and in 2015 issued a landmark encyclical, “Praised Be,” to lay out his appeal in the most authoritative teaching document a pope can pen. In it, Francis denounced the “perverse” economic model that had allowed the wealthy to exploit the poor and turn the Earth into an “immense pile of filth.”

Its main idea is that the world is interconnected, and that climate change, hunger, poverty and migratory flows should not be considered in isolation but as interdisciplinary problems that require global solidarity to resolve.



Vatican ties virus rethink to pope's environmental appeal

Top Vatican officials say the coronavirus had proved the point, with a virus outbreak that started in one place quickly turning into a global pandemic and economic crisis that is driving hunger and poverty around the world.

“Although COVID has highlighted the fragility of our food systems, it is still an opportunity to change, both in production and consumption patterns and in private and public actions,” said the Rev. Augusto Zampini, one of Francis’ top environmental advisers. “It is time for a deep and global ecological conversion.”

He spoke at a weekend briefing at the start of a week-long promotion of the encyclical’s teachings, which are being promoted at the Vatican and in local churches via Zoom calls and other campaigns.

“In these times of pandemic, in which we realize the importance of caring for our common home, I hope all reflection and commitment can help create and strengthen constructive attitudes to care for creation,” Francis said Sunday.



China offers farmers cash to give up wildlife trade

Agence France-Presse / May 19, 2020

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1277541/china-offers-farmers-cash-to-give-up-wildlife-trade>

<https://manilastandard.net/news/world-news/324055/china-offers-farmers-cash-to-give-up-wildlife-trade.html>

<https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/05/19/china-offers-farmers-cash-to-give-up-wildlife-trade/>



A security guard stands outside the Huanan Seafood Wholesale Market where the coronavirus was detected in Wuhan on January 24, 2020. (Photo by Hector RETAMAL / AFP)

Farmers in China are being offered cash to quit breeding exotic animals as pressure grows to crack down on the illegal wildlife trade that has been blamed for the coronavirus outbreak.

Authorities have for the first time pledged to buy out breeders in an attempt to curb the practice, animal rights activists say.

China has in recent months banned the sale of wild animals for food, citing the risk of diseases spreading to humans, but the trade remains legal for other purposes including research and traditional medicine.

The deadly coronavirus — first reported in the central Chinese city of Wuhan — is widely believed to have passed from bats to people before spreading worldwide.

Two central provinces have outlined details of a buyout program to help farmers transition to alternative livelihoods.

Hunan on Friday set out a compensation scheme to persuade breeders to rear other livestock or produce tea and herbal medicines.

Authorities are offering to pay 120 yuan (\$16) per kilogram of cobra, king rattlesnake or rat snake, while a kilogram of bamboo rat will fetch 75 yuan.



China offers farmers cash to give up wildlife trade

A civet cat — the animal believed to have carried Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) to humans in another coronavirus outbreak nearly two decades ago — is worth 600 yuan.

Neighboring Jiangxi province has also released documents on plans to help farmers dispose of animals and financial aid.

The state-run Jiangxi Daily newspaper reported last week that the province has more than 2,300 licensed breeders, mostly rearing wild animals for food.

Their animals are worth about 1.6 billion yuan (\$225 million), the report said.

Both Jiangxi and Hunan border Hubei, the province where the coronavirus first emerged in December.

Animal rights group Humane Society International (HSI) said Hunan and Jiangxi are “major wildlife breeding provinces”, with Jiangxi seeing a rapid expansion of the trade over the last decade.

Revenues from breeding reached 10 billion yuan in 2018, it said.

HSI China policy specialist Peter Li told AFP that similar plans should be rolled out across the country.

But he cautioned that Hunan’s proposals leave room for farmers to continue breeding exotic creatures as long as the animals are not sent to food markets.

The province’s plan also does not include many wild animals bred for fur, traditional Chinese medicine or entertainment.

Li said Chinese authorities are nevertheless moving in the right direction.

“In the past 20 years, a lot of people have been telling the Chinese government to buy out certain wildlife breeding operations, for example bear farming,” he said.

“This is the first time that the Chinese government actually decided to do it, which opens a precedent... (for when) other production needs to be phased out.”



Court rules US environment agency must protect states from upwind air pollution

Published May 20, 2020 3:52am

<https://cnnphilippines.com/world/2020/5/20/who-chief-affirms-commitment-transparency.html?fbclid=IwAR2>

WASHINGTON - A federal appeals court on Tuesday ruled that the US Environmental Protection Agency violated the law when it denied a request from Maryland and Delaware to tighten air pollution controls at power plants in upwind neighboring states.

The decision by the three-judge panel of the United States Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit could force the EPA to impose new curbs on some coal-fired power plants, even as the administration of President Donald Trump seeks to help the industry by slashing environmental regulations.

The EPA is reviewing the decision, said spokeswoman Enesta Jones.

Maryland and Delaware had filed their petition to the EPA in 2018 asking for tougher pollution limits on some 36 coal-fired power plant units in Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

The states had argued that those power plants were in violation of the Clean Air Act's "good neighbor provision" for the release of nitrogen oxides into the air. The majority of Maryland's ozone pollution originates from upwind states.

The EPA rejected the petition, arguing that requiring upwind power plants to add more pollution controls to protect downwind states was not cost-effective for the plant owners.

Richard Revesz of NYU's School of Law and director of the Institute for Policy Integrity filed the amicus brief on behalf of Maryland and Delaware.

He said the ruling made clear the EPA is obligated to prevent states from harming the air quality of their neighboring states when emissions travel downwind and "can't cite cost as a reason to ignore the law altogether." – Reuters



Summer unlikely to curb coronavirus pandemic growth - study

Published May 19, 2020 6:49am

<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/scitech/science/738772/summer-unlikely-to-curb-coronavirus-pandemic-growth-study/story/>

WASHINGTON - The higher summer temperatures in the Northern Hemisphere are unlikely to significantly limit the growth of the coronavirus pandemic, according to a Princeton University study published Monday in the journal Science.

Several statistical studies conducted over the past few months have shown a slight correlation between climate and the novel coronavirus -- the hotter and more humid it is, the less likely the virus is to spread.

But the findings remain preliminary, and much remains unknown about the exact relationship between climate and COVID-19.

The Princeton study does not rule out the correlation entirely but concludes that the impact of climate on the spread of the virus is "modest."

"Our findings suggest, without effective control measures, strong outbreaks are likely in more humid climates and summer weather will not substantially limit pandemic growth," the study said.

"We project that warmer or more humid climates will not slow the virus at the early stage of the pandemic," said Rachel Baker, a postdoctoral research associate in the Princeton Environmental Institute (PEI).

While climate, particularly humidity, plays a role in the spread of other coronaviruses and the flu, the study said a more important factor is the absence of widespread immunity to COVID-19.

"We do see some influence of climate on the size and timing of the pandemic, but, in general, because there's so much susceptibility in the population, the virus will spread quickly no matter the climate conditions," Baker said.

Baker said the spread of the virus seen in countries such as Brazil, Ecuador and Australia indicates that warmer conditions do little to halt the pandemic.

"It doesn't seem that climate is regulating spread right now," Baker said.

Without strong containment measures or a vaccine, the coronavirus may continue to infect a large proportion of the world's population, the researchers said, and only become seasonal later, "after the supply of unexposed hosts is reduced."

"Previously circulating human coronaviruses such as the common cold depend strongly on seasonal factors, peaking in the winter outside of the tropics," said co-author Bryan Grenfell, professor of ecology and evolutionary biology at PEI.



Summer unlikely to curb coronavirus pandemic growth - study

"If, as seems likely, the novel coronavirus is similarly seasonal, we might expect it to settle down to become a winter virus as it becomes endemic in the population," Grenfell said.

For the study, the researchers conducted simulations on how the pandemic would respond to various climates. They ran scenarios based on what is known about the effect seasonal variations have on similar viruses.

In all three scenarios, climate only became a mitigating factor when large portions of the human population were immune or resistant to the virus.

"The more that immunity builds up in the population, the more we expect the sensitivity to climate to increase," Baker said. "If you run the model long enough, you have a big pandemic and the outbreak settles into seasonal infection." -- Agence France-Presse



WHO will continue to lead global fight against pandemic, Tedros vows

Published May 20, 2020, 12:18 AM

By Reuters

<https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/05/20/who-will-continue-to-lead-global-fight-against-pandemic-tedros-vows/>

The World Health Organization will continue to lead the global fight against the coronavirus pandemic which “threatens to tear at the fabric of international cooperation”, its chief said on Tuesday.

Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO director-general, thanked “the many member states who have expressed their support and solidarity” at its two-day annual ministerial assembly.

He welcomed a European Union (EU) resolution, adopted by consensus by WHO’s 194 member states, that calls for an independent evaluation of the international response, “including, but not limited to, WHO’s performance”.

“We want accountability more than anyone,” Tedros said. “We will continue providing strategic leadership to coordinate the global response” to the pandemic.

He made no reference to a threat by U.S. President Donald Trump, contained in Trump’s letter to WHO tweeted overnight, to permanently halt funding for the WHO if it did not commitment to improvements within 30 days and to reconsider U.S. membership.



WHO chief affirms commitment to 'transparency, accountability and continuous improvement'

By Amanda Watts, CNN

Published May 20, 2020 1:09:54 AM

<https://cnnphilippines.com/world/2020/5/20/who-chief-affirms-commitment-transparency.html?fbclid=IwAR2>



(CNN) - World Health Organization (WHO) Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus affirmed his commitment to “transparency, accountability and continuous improvement,” as he addressed the 73rd World Health Assembly (WHA).

Speaking on Tuesday at the virtual summit, Tedros said, “WHO's focus now is fighting the pandemic, with every tool at our disposal.”

On Monday, Tedros said he would “initiate an independent evaluation” of WHO’s response to the global pandemic. “As always, WHO remains fully committed to transparency, accountability and continuous improvement. We want accountability, more than anyone,” he said.

“Checking and learning our lessons is in WHO's DNA,” Tedros said Tuesday. “I hope the recommendations of the independent committee will be taken seriously by all member states.”

“At the end of the day what matters is life - that should be at the center of everything we do and everything we say,” Tedros added.

During the Tuesday speech, Tedros wore an unusually casual short-sleeved blue and teal button-down shirt to honor a Tongan choir of nurses who were supposed to perform at the WHA, before it was moved to a virtual event.