



Leader News Philippines

13 hrs · 🌐

DENR namahagi ng PPEs at grocery packs sa QC medical frontliners

Bilang tugon sa panawagan ng pamahalaan na tumulong sa ating mga kababayan na apektado ng pandemya ay namahagi ang Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) ng personal protective equipment (PPE) at grocery packs na nagkakahalagang P218,000 samga doctor, nurses at iba pang medical staff sa limang government hospital noong Mayo 18 sa Quezon City napatuloy nalumalabansa COVID-19.

Kabilang sa mga pagamutanna nabigyan ng ayuda ay ang East Avenue Medical Center, Lung Center of the Philippines, National Kidney and Transplant Institute, Philippine Heart Center at Philippine Children's Medical Center. Anghakbangnaito ay ikalawang bahagi ng inisyatiba ng mga opisyal at empleyado ng DENR sapakikipagtulungannarin ng Career Executive Service Board.

Ayon kay DENR Undersecretary for Priority Projects Jonas R. Leones nasiya ring pangulo ng DENR Association of Career Executives, ang "ComPassion" Project ay nabu dahil na rin sa kagustuhan nilang matulungan ang mga naapektuhan ng COVID-19 partikular na ang mga nasa Quezon City nanakapagtala ng pinakamataas na bilang ng coronavirus infections sa Metro Manila.

"ComPassion was derived from the words compassion and passion. As a government agency, we thought of a campaign where we can help those who are affected by the COVID-19 pandemic," sabi pa ni Leones.

Angbawatpagamutan ay nabigyanng 30 sets ng complete overall suit at face shields para samga doctors at nurses at 30 sets na laboratory suit kabilang pa ditoangpantakipsaulo at sapatosbukod pa sa face shield para namansa support staff. Nabiyayaan din angmga medical frontliners ng grocery packs nakinabibilangan ng alcohol at washable face masks.

Sa ginanap na "launching" ng ComPassion Project noong Mayo 11 ay nakapagbigayang DENR ng grocery items nanagkakahalagang P300,000 sa 300 low-income families satatlong Catholic communities sa Quezon City nakinabibilangan ng Parokya ng Kristong Hari, Parokya ng Mabuting Paskol nakapwamatatagpuansa Barangay Commonwealth at Good Shepherd Cathedral sa Barangay Fairview.

Sinabi pa ni Leones, patuloy na magbibigay ng tulongang DENR sa mga komunidad at sektor na tinamaan ng pandemya. "We are planning to help the administration by continuing our donation drive. This is not a one-time, big-time effort. We will still be requesting donations from our senior officials and employees, so that we could continue to aid the needy," dagdag pa nito.

Ang DENR ComPassion Project ay nabuo dahil narin sapakikipagtulungan ng Career Executive Service Board na pinamumunuan ni OIC-Executive Director Hiro Masuda.

Like and share our page Leader News Philippines



👍 3

1 Share

DENR-8 rescues, releases PH scops owl in Leyte town

Published May 20, 2020, 12:17 PM

By *Restituto Cayubit*

TACLOBAN CITY – The Department of Environment and Natural Resources in Region 8 (DENR-8) has rescued and released to the wild a juvenile Philippine scops owl (*Otus megalotis*) in Tolosa, Leyte town, a report from DENR-8, based in this city said here today.



Photo caption:

The Scops Owl rescued by the DENR-8 in Leyte town. (DENR-8 via Restituto A. Cayubit / MANILA BULLETIN)

DENR 8 Regional Executive Director Tirso P. Parian, Jr. told reporters Wednesday that the bird was rescued by DENR-8 personnel in Barangay Burak, Tolosa, Leyte.

Parian said that local resident Rachel Costiniano informed his office that the scops owl was given to her husband by some children who found the wildlife species earlier this May. They kept the owl under their care to ensure that it will not be harmed by the children or other animals.

Parian said Costiniano told the DENR-8 personnel that they also observed an adult owl bringing in food for the juvenile at night.

“We think it was the mother of the owl bringing feeds to the juvenile owl. We really intend to free the bird, but we want to make sure it is safe and in good shape,” Costiniano said.

The director said that, through radio reporter, Justin Grace Traya, the incident was reported to the DENR-8 office. A team from the office checked and observed that the bird was in good physical condition and released right away back to the wild, Parian added.

The Philippine scops owl is endemic to the Philippines and is listed under the category of Other Wildlife Species per DENR Administrative Order No. 2019-09.

Parian lauded the efforts of the concerned citizens in saving the wildlife species.

“It is important that the community understands how wildlife species maintain the ecological balance of nature”, he said.

“Owls, for instance, provide natural pest control to the environment. They eat insects and pests that are usually bothersome to homes and agricultural areas”, he added.

Parian urged the public to immediately turn over, and report to the nearest DENR office rescued or captured wildlife species.

He also warned the public against inflicting harm or keeping wildlife species as pets, since this is in violation of Republic Act 9147, An Act Providing for the Conservation and Protection of Wildlife Resources and their Habitats.

Source: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/05/20/denr-8-rescues-releases-ph-scops-owl-in-leyte-town/>

Mysterious white bat spotted in Samal Island, Davao del Norte explained

Published May 20, 2020, 4:50 PM

By *Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz*

Samal Island in Davao del Norte recently made headlines on social media due to the rare sighting of a “white” bat with pinkish eyes, nose, mouth, and bones.



(Photo courtesy of Didi Gigi Senajonon DS)

According to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Davao Region, the bat is a *Cynopterus brachyotis* or also known as the lesser short-nosed fruit bat.

“Like all the other bats, these species are usually brown and black. But due to a genetic anomaly called albinism, its melanin production is altered causing [its] white appearance. This is due to a series of genetic mutations most likely passed from its parents,” the DENR-Davao Region said in a Facebook post.

Despite their rare color aberration, the agency said that albino fruit bats are among the thousands of bat species around the world that hold a significant ecological role.

“In fact, they are one of the key players in the restoration of our forests that have gone through destruction. Through their affinity for several plants and ability to disperse seeds in the vast land of our forests, trees can grow again. No wonder they are tagged as the ‘farmers of the forest,’” the DENR regional office said.

It further explained that these bats rely on plants’ fruits and flowers to survive, while around 500 plant species also depend on them to pollinate their flowers.

These include bananas, mangoes, peaches, guava, agave, and many other fruit trees.

“In Davao, there is no durian... if not for these fruit-eating bats,” the region’s DENR pointed out. These species of bat is not endemic to the Philippines. They are also found in Sri Lanka, Thailand, the southern part of China, Sulawesi, and Borneo.

The DENR-Davao Region said Samal Island is among the areas in the region that has a diverse ecosystem and is rich in natural resources, making it the “home” of choice to various wildlife species, including bats.

Bats are among the wildlife species protected under Republic Act 9147 or the Wildlife Resources Conservation and Protection Act, which means that harming or killing them is punishable by law.

Source: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/05/20/mysterious-white-bat-spotted-in-samal-island-davao-del-norte-explained/>

 GMA News ✓
10 hrs · 🌐

YouScoop: Puting paniki, namataan sa Samal, Davao del Norte! 😱

Sa salaysay ni YouScooper Gigi Delos Santos, tinangay ang paniki ng uwak, at ni-rescue ito ng tito niya sa paligid ng bahay noong May 10 —nabutas umano ang pakpak ng paniki pero nakakalipad kahit paano. Pinakain ng tito niya ang paniki sa pamamagitan ng pagsabit ng hinog na saging sa puno kung saan ito tumagal.

Kinaumagahan ng May 13 ay nadatnan na wala na ang puting paniki sa puno. Maaari raw na lumipad na ito paalis.

Ayon sa pahayag ng DENR Davao ngayong araw, ang nasabing puting paniki ay isang Lesser Short-nosed Fruit Bat o *Cynopterus brachyotis*. Karaniwan daw na itim at brown ang kulay ng mga ito, ngunit dahil daw sa genetic anomaly na tinatawag na albinism, ay naging puti ang nakitang paniki. Dagdag ng DENR, ang mga fruit bats tulad nito ay may mahalagang papel sa pagbalik ng mga gubat na nakalbo na— ang mga fruit bats tulad nito ay nagkakatag ng mga buto ng maraming halaman na tumutulong magpatubo muli ng gubat.

👤: Senajonon Family

Panoorin ang iba pang mga balita ngayong araw sa aming livestream ng 24 Oras: <https://bit.ly/36df6dl>



   Gemmz Robles and 27K others · 1.9K Comments · 2.5K Shares

DENR NCR sets health and safety protocols against COVID-19

By Ma. Alaine P. AllaniguePublished on May 20, 2020

QUEZON CITY, May 20 (PIA) -- The Department of Environment and Natural Resources- National Capital Region (DENR NCR) has set health and safety precautionary measures against COVID-19 in the event that the modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) is lifted in Metro Manila.

According to the Environment and Natural Resources regional office in Metro Manila, the following health and safety precautionary measures will be implemented to reduce the risk of infection for both its skeleton workforce and their clients as well.

DENR NCR will implement a 'No Face Mask, No Entry' policy. The Regional Office will also subject its employees and walk-in clients to hand sanitation and temperature reading procedures at the guard station.

Those with above normal body temperature will not be allowed to enter the premises and instead will be advised to go home and seek medical attention.

To avoid crowding in the office, DENR NCR will require all physical transactions and requests to be made by appointment. Assigned officers of the day will attend to clients at queueing counters located at the lobby and physical distancing shall be observed at all times.

All frontline office personnel will be issued Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) which include face mask/face shield, gloves and shall be worn at all times while inside the office. Field workers will also be issued with coveralls for protection outside of the office premises.

Alcohol and hand sanitizer dispensers will also be placed at the office lobby and in strategic areas within the regional office.

The DENR NCR also advises its personnel and clients to regularly clean and sanitize their hands and to avoid touching their faces. Frequently touched fixtures such as door knobs and handle bars will be regularly disinfected by utility personnel. (DENR NCR/PIA-NCR)

Waste segregation more crucial amid pandemic

By: [Jhesset O. Enano](#) - Reporter / [@JhessetEnanoINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:54 AM May 20, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — Waste segregation at source has become more critical amid the pandemic as the volume of potentially infectious waste from household sources is growing, an official of the National Solid Waste Management Commission (NSWMC) said on Tuesday.

Given these circumstances under the “new normal,” reduction in waste generation must be given priority, while garbage collection systems must quickly respond to this growing concern, said Crispian Lao, NSWMC vice chair who represents the private sector in the commission.

As the lockdown has radically changed lifestyle and habits, consumption patterns in the country have also shifted. For instance, deliveries, ranging from food to other essentials, have slowly become the norm as people hunkered down in their homes during the quarantine.

Increase in health-care wastes

“This led to increased waste from household sources, and reduced waste from commercial and industrial sources,” Lao said in an online discussion on plastics in food packaging in the country.

Due to lockdown restrictions, recycling activities have been put on hold.

As COVID-19 is still spreading in the country, there is a sharp increase in medical waste, according to Lao.

These need to be treated, disinfected and disposed of in dedicated cells in sanitary landfills in line with regulations set by the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) and the Department of Health.

“There is also another category of waste coming from households, which includes masks, that may be potentially infectious,” said Lao, who is also president of the Philippine Alliance for Recycling and Materials Sustainability.

Since the threat of cross-contamination is very high, disposable masks and other similar materials must be separated and placed into yellow bins or bags to avoid the possible spread of infection.

“We need to have personal protective equipment for haulers and separate containers for infectious waste,” Lao said.

Segregation of waste at source is mandatory under Republic Act No. 9003, or the Ecological Solid Waste Management Act, with local governments supposedly in charge.

Despite penalties for violations, the 20-year-old law remains poorly implemented.

During the COVID-19 outbreak in Hubei in China, infectious medical waste reportedly shot up 600 percent, from 40 tons per day to 240 daily, overwhelming medical transport and disposal infrastructure around hospitals.

Based on this data, Manila may face an additional 280 tons of medical waste per day, among the highest in major Asian cities, according to a briefer from Asian Development Bank released in April.

Still handling it

Environment Undersecretary Benny Antiporda, who oversees solid waste and local government concerns, said the hazardous waste in the country had yet to reach alarming levels. “We have ample facilities that can take care of this. We are still handling it,” he said in an interview.

But he noted that some hospitals were already improvising their garbage collection, as their vaults for these types of waste began to fill.

In a letter to the Department of the Interior and Local Government in April, the DENR endorsed stricter measures in the collection and management of solid waste from quarantine and health-care facilities nationwide, including the repeated disinfection of garbage bags, garbage trucks and disposal areas.


Worst-case option

Antiporda also said the proposal for incinerating potentially infectious waste through the use of crematoriums remained on the table, but only as a worst-case option.

Calling this an “exploratory action,” he said the advisory issued by the Environmental Management Bureau in April was not a direct order. “If we are left with no choice, then we will do this,” he said.

Environment and health watchdog EcoWaste Coalition earlier called the move “highly unacceptable,” citing violations in the Clean Air Act and the Code of Sanitation, as well as a cause for potential delays in the use of crematoria for human remains.



 **Palawan Council for Sustainable Development** 9 hrs · 🌐

DALAWANG CHAINSAW UNITS, KUMPISKADO SA BROOKE'S POINT PALAWAN

Kumpiskado ng PCSDS Enforcement Team at PNP MPS- Brooke's Point ang dalawang chainsaw units sa Bgy. Mainit, Brooke's Point, Palawan, ngayong araw, ika-20 ng Mayo, 2020, bandang ala-una ng hapon.

Nakumpiska ang chainsaw units habang ginagamit sa pagputol ng puno nang walang kaukulang permit mula sa PCSD.

Ang mga violators ay nakilalang sina Floro Latube Jr. (may-ari ng chainsaw units), Edwin R. Alatiit, at Joseph Valdez, pawang mga residente ng Bgy. Aribungos, Brooke's Point, Palawan.

Sa pangunguna ng PNP-MPS Brooke's Point, ang mga violators ay kasalukuyang isinasailalim sa inquest proceedings para sa paglabag ng RA 9175 (Chainsaw Act).

Nakahanda rin ang PCSDS sa paghain ng kaso para sa paglabag PCSD Administrative Order No. 07, as amended.

#NoToUnlawfulUseOfChainsaw

👍❤️😬 18 1 Comment 1 Share

Unang batch ng mga sumali sa ‘Balik-probinsiya, Bagong pagasa’ program, bumiyaha na

Robie de Guzman • May 20, 2020



MANILA, Philippines – Bumiyaha na ngayong hapon, Mayo 20, ang unang batch ng mga sumailalim sa ‘Balik-probinsya, Bagong pagasa’ program ng pamahalaan.

Mula sa Quezon City, sumakay ng bus ang nasa 112 indibidwal na nag-avail ng programa pabalik sa kani-kanilang bayan sa Palo, Leyte sa tulong ng mga kinauukulang ahensiya ng gobyerno.

Bago umalis, pinabaunan sila ng mga ayuda gaya ng P5,000 cash assistance mula sa Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) at P10,000 halaga ng mga produkto at kasangkapang magagamit nila sa paghahanap-buhay pagdating sa kanilang lalawigan.

Binigyan rin sila ng Health Certificate mula sa Department of Health (DOH) at pinayuhang sumailalim sa 14-day quarantine pagdating sa probinsiya.

Ang ‘Balik-probinsya, Bagong pagasa’ program ay ipinatupad ng pamahalaan sa layuning mabawasan ang populasyon sa Metro Manila at palakasin pa ang development sa mga rehiyon.

Isinakatuparan ang programa matapos maglabas ng kautusan si Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na nag-aatas sa iba’t ibang ahensiya ng pamahalaan at local government units na magtulungan sa paggawa ng mga polisiya at ayuda para sa pagbabalik-probinsiya ng mga dati nilang residente.

Sinabi ng National Housing Authority (NHA) na aabot na sa mahigit 20,000 ang natanggap nilang online application mula nang ilunsad ang programa noong Mayo 6.

Ayon sa NHA, patuloy na ang ginagawang validation sa mga aplikasyon at maaaring umalis na sa mga susunod na araw ang ikalawang batch ng mga benepisyaryo.

Para sa mga interesadong sumali sa programa, maaaring bumisita o magsumite ng aplikasyon sa website na balikprobinsya.ph.

Para sa iba pang katanungan, maaaring tumawag sa hotline numbers 0919 0692 530 at 0919 0657 896.

Kung nais magpadala mensahe sa text, kailangang gamitin ang format na BP2<SPACE>(Mensahe o Katanungan) at ipadala sa 0919 0692 531 o sa 0951 1521 666. – **RRD (mula sa ulat ni Correspondent Asher Cadapan Jr.)**

Source: <https://www.untvweb.com/news/unang-batch-ng-mga-sumali-sa-balik-probinsiya-bagong-pagasa-program-bumiyaha-na/>

Gov't warns of another lockdown if there's spike in COVID-19 cases

May 20, 2020 | 7:39 pm



PHILSTAR/EDD GUMBAN

PRESIDENT Rodrigo R. Duterte has threatened to reimpose a lockdown if coronavirus cases spike, as his Health chief said the pandemic entered a “second wave” in the Philippines as early as March.

“We’ll have to just go back to the original program,” the President, who relaxed quarantine rules for some areas outside Metro Manila starting May 16, said in a taped address on Tuesday night.

He said the government would monitor cases in regions where the lockdown had been eased.

Health Secretary Francisco T. Duque III on Wednesday said the country entered a second wave of COVID-19 infections in March, when the Department of Health reported a spike in cases.

“We’re now on the second wave and we’re doing everything to flatten the curve,” he told senators at a hearing.

Mr. Duque said the first wave started in January when local Health authorities confirmed the infection of three Chinese travelers from China’s Wuhan City, where the virus was first detected.

Meanwhile, he said Chinese pharmaceutical company Sinopharm Group Co. Ltd. had offered to include the Philippines in the clinical trial of a newly developed vaccine.

Mr. Duterte locked down the entire Luzon island in mid-March, suspending work, classes and public transportation to contain the pandemic.

People should stay home except to buy food and other basic goods, he said. The President extended the so-called enhanced community quarantine twice for the island and thrice for the capital region where novel coronavirus infections are concentrated.

Gov't warns of another lockdown if there's spike in

May 21, 2020

TITLE: COVID-19 cases

PAGE 1/ 2/2

DATE

Metro Manila and key cities and regions were kept under a modified lockdown from May 16 to 30, while some businesses were allowed to reopen with a skeletal workforce.

The Department of Health (DoH) reported 279 new infections yesterday, bringing the total to 13,221.

The death toll rose to 842 after five more patients died, it said in a bulletin. Eighty-nine more patients have gotten well, bringing the total recoveries to 2,932, it added.

Of the 279 new cases, 150 came from Metro Manila, 14 from Central Visayas and 115 from the other regions, DoH said.

Carlito G. Galvez, Jr., chief enforcer of the government's anti-coronavirus disease 2019 efforts, said the national action plan could be localized.

"Villages with cases will be locked down to preserve our economy," he said at the same televised address on Tuesday.

Mr. Duterte said that the virus remains a threat in the absence of a vaccine. He said he would raise enough money so the government could buy vaccines once one is developed by next year.

Also yesterday, John Wong, a professor at the Ateneo de Manila University's School of Medicine and Public Health, said the "wave" in cases refers to the rise and fall in the number of infections.

The first wave happened in January even if there were few coronavirus cases, he said at a news briefing. The second wave, he added, started in the first week of March.

Mr. Wong earlier this month cited "flattening of the curve" after coronavirus infections slowed, which means fewer people need to seek treatment.

Countries worldwide including the Philippine have imposed lockdowns and asked people to observe social distancing to slow the virus spread.

The curve researchers are talking about refers to the projected number of people who will get infected over time.

"A curve that is flattened means instead of going straight up it, plateaus," Mr. Wong said "The important thing is it never reaches or exceeds the capacity of the health system." —

Gillian M. Cortez, Charmaine A. Tadalán and Vann Marlo M. Villegas



Government to enforce localized lockdown

[Alexis Romero](#) (The Philippine Star) - May 21, 2020 - 12:00am

Duque: Philippines on 2nd wave

MANILA, Philippines — The government may limit lockdowns to barangays or villages with coronavirus cases instead of resorting to widespread community quarantines, to minimize the impact of the pandemic on the economy.

Carlito Galvez Jr., chief implementer of the national policy on the coronavirus, said the interior department is now coordinating with local government units (LGUs) to implement a localized lockdown.

Yesterday, the city government of Parañaque placed 10 streets in Barangay Baclaran under “calibrated lockdown” for three days until Saturday due to a high number of COVID-19 cases.

“Our way forward is we will localize the national action plan through the LGUs. This is being done by (Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo) Año. He is talking to all LGUs,” Galvez told President Duterte during a meeting on the coronavirus pandemic last Tuesday.

“What we are doing now, Mr. President, is we may no longer declare a lockdown per region, but the lockdown will be imposed by barangay. That means we will narrow the scope. What we will do is we will place barangays with (coronavirus) cases under lockdown to preserve our economic (corridors),” he said.

Duterte reminded the public not to be complacent even if quarantine measures have been eased.

“We are in the process of a gradual opening of the movement of people from their place of residence to the place of work under the general community quarantine,” the President said.

“Since there is already the opening, a gradual opening, we will see if it is doable... If the contamination will be as fast as before and it will continue to infect people allowed to go out, then we’ll have to just go back to the original (quarantine restriction),” he added.

The entire Philippines is under quarantine, with the cities of Cebu and Mandaue under the strictest enhanced community quarantine (ECQ).

Metro Manila, Laguna, Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Zambales and Angeles City have been placed under a modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) while the rest of the country are under the more relaxed general community quarantine (GCQ).

The Philippine economy contracted by 0.2 percent in the first quarter – the first since 1998 during the combined El Niño and Asian financial crisis – as several industries suspended operations to comply with the quarantine measures imposed by the government.

The pandemic has also forced the government to spend billions in aid to low-income households and workers whose livelihood sources were affected by the lockdown.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said under existing guidelines, local governments have the authority to enforce lockdowns.

“LGUs may declare critical areas (barangays or zones) as ECQ,” Roque told The STAR.

Galvez said the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) on Emerging Infectious Diseases is set to issue guidelines on the localized lockdowns.

“For example, if a barangay has a compound with four affected families, it will be placed under a lockdown. We won’t allow infections in our economic corridor. We have to preserve our economic corridor,” he said.

Galvez said the localized action plan will be implemented with the help LGUs.

He said the IATF will issue guidelines to be followed by the barangays.

Latest report showed that the country has a total of 12,942 confirmed COVID-19 cases, 2,843 recoveries and 837 fatalities.

The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) ordered mayors to close shopping malls that are not strictly implementing social distancing and other health and safety protocols.

DILG’s Año issued the directive after several malls in Metro Manila were flooded with customers over the weekend when the region transitioned to MECQ after two months of strict lockdown measures to contain the spread of COVID-19.

“The secretary informed all of the mayors that they have the authority to close the malls if needed,” DILG spokesman Jonathan Malaya told The Chiefs on Cignal TV’s One News on Tuesday night.

Bishops' complaint

Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines (CBCP) president and Davao Bishop Romulo Valles urged bishops to stay calm and heed the quarantine rules of the government after some church leaders criticized the IATF for restricting religious activities due to the pandemic.

Valles said he understands that the IATF guidelines may look "impractical or without sense" to them, but they should be reminded that the quarantine guidelines are not meant only for the Catholic Church, but also for other religious groups that were also affected by the two-month lockdown caused by COVID-19.

"During these days, we may hear some guidelines from the government and health authorities regarding our conduct of worship. They may first come across as impractical or without sense to us," Valle said.

"In this scenario, I believe that the way forward is to patiently ask and seek clarification from the source of these guidelines. It is good to remind ourselves that these guidelines are meant not only for the Catholic Church, but for all men and women and communities of faith who practice different modes of worship and prayer," he added.

Valle's statement came a few days after Manila Auxiliary Bishop and apostolic administrator of the Archdiocese of Manila Broderick Pabillo took a swipe at the IATF's "unreasonable" guidelines for religious activities under MECQ and modified general community quarantine (MGCQ) areas.

Pabillo said that the government seemed to have just implied that religious activities are still not allowed when it limited the number of persons to only five in churches under MECQ and 10 for MGCQ areas.

"In the church, we are happy that in both, religious activities are allowed. But at the same time, the limitations they give to religious activities are unreasonable. Five persons for MECQ and 10 persons for MGCQ! It's just another way of saying that you do not have religious activities," Pabillo said.

Valles said Church officials should hear Pope Francis in his homily at Casa Santa Marta on April 28 where he asked the public to pray for the grace of prudence and obedience so that the pandemic will be contained even as people are already allowed to go out.

"My sincere thought is, may we try to take the lead in showing the spirit of patience, calmness, understanding, open communication and cooperation in these very trying times as we continue to patiently present our particular concerns to the proper authority," he said.

Cubao Bishop Honesto Ongtioco said they have not yet started to open their churches for physical masses as they are still waiting for clear guidelines from the government.

Ongtioco said they are ready to abide by the government's protocol and comply with health measures of the Department of Health (DOH) such as wearing of face masks and observing social distancing should they be allowed to resume masses.

Legazpi Bishop Joel Zamudio Baylon echoed Ongtioco's sentiments, saying that they have not started opening their churches for physical masses except for clean-up and preparations. **Jose Rodel Clapano, Emmanuel Tupas, Robertzon Ramirez**

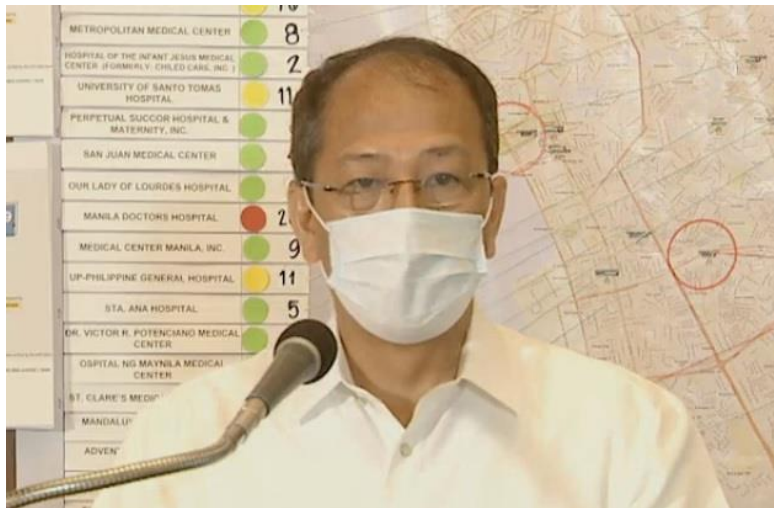
HEADLINES

'Second wave' here now?

I'm looking for money to buy vaccines in case somebody else would beat Moderna to their development.

Published 8 hours ago
on May 21, 2020 12:40 AM

By [Francis Wakefield](#)



The National Task Force (NTF) on COVID-19 is not discounting the possibility of pinpointed lockdowns in the barangays affected by the new coronavirus, which the Department of Health (DoH) on Wednesday claimed is now in a “second-wave” outbreak while the country crawls back into normality.

Presidential Peace Adviser Secretary Carlito Galvez Jr., also the NTF-COVID-19 Chief Implementer, disclosed that targeted barangay quarantine is being looked at for implementation in regions as part of efforts to contain or prevent the spread of the virus.

Galvez said localizing the National Action Plan (NAP) through the help of the local government units (LGU) would be the next step in helping curb the curve as he relayed his report to President Rodrigo Duterte at the meeting of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) in Malacañang on Tuesday night.

“It’s our way forward,” Galvez said. “DILG (Department of the Interior and Local Government) Secretary (Eduardo) Año is in touch with the LGU, so that we will no longer need to lock down per region, just the barangays (villages).”

“We’ll control the virus management, and at the same time ensure that the general economy will move,” he added.

Galvez said he is hopeful that with the guidance of the IATF, local governments can follow such a directive.

Metro Manila is currently under a modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) while many parts of the country are placed under a modified general community quarantine (MGCQ).

The quarantine was first implemented on 17 March when COVID-19 cases spiked.

He vowed to increase the country’s virus testing capacity to 30,000 per day so that carriers would be isolated from the public. Galvez also vowed to address issues concerning stranded and returning overseas Filipino workers (OFW).

“And then, we will strengthen contact tracing effort by the DILG and DoH, with the support the AFP and the PNP. Also, we will address concerns with the stranded/returning OFW. That was the guidance we received from Defense Secretary Delfin Lorenzana,” he stated.

“Next, we’ll accelerate the implementation of the Social Amelioration Program in coordination with the LGU. And then prepare the opening of business and economic recovery plan and the food security while sustaining the gains of the 60-day ECQ,” he added.

Health Secretary Francisco Duque III claimed that the Philippines is already facing the second wave of the COVID-19, citing the brief period of having few victims as the origin of the outbreak. He made the declaration during the continuation of the Senate Committee of the Whole’s hearing on the government’s overall strategies against COVID-19 on Wednesday.

“We’re now in a ‘second wave’ of infections,” Duque announced. “The first was when we (had) three cases of Chinese nationals from Wuhan (China). It was a small wave, but it was recognized as the first wave.”

“We’re doing our best to flatten the curve,” he added.

Duque has been receiving flak for what is generally viewed as the DoH’s poor response to the spread of the virus. The agency struggled for weeks before it managed to stock up on personal protection gears and masks needed by the physicians and medical frontline workers, quite a number of whom died while attending to patients without the proper protective equipment.

It also took the DoH more weeks before it managed to put up COVID-19 testing centers, yet it still failed to meet the government’s target of at least 10,000 daily tests. Local number of cases has breached 13,000 with 279 new infections as of Wednesday afternoon.

President Rodrigo Duterte, also on Tuesday night, disclosed that he is now looking towards purchasing a vaccine once it becomes available.

He reported that a pharmaceutical company — Moderna — has done clinicals tests for a potential vaccine for the virus.

“I’m looking for money to buy vaccines in case somebody else would beat Moderna to (their development).”

He said an option for the government is to borrow money for the purchase of anti-COVID-19 vaccine.

The experimental vaccine is the first to be tested in the United States, which is the new epicenter of the virus.

with Hananeel Bordey
@tribunephil_hana

Second wave? Epidemiologist clarifies what
constitutes a 'wave' in pandemic

PAGE 1/ 1/2

May 21, 2020
DATE

Second wave? Epidemiologist clarifies what constitutes a 'wave' in pandemic

Published 12 hours ago
on May 20, 2020 08:57 PM
By **MJ Blancaflor**



Several Filipinos took to social media on Wednesday to express confusion on Health Secretary Francisco Duque III's remark that the Philippines is now experiencing a "second wave" of coronavirus infections.

Netizens asked: How come it was the second wave if the number of confirmed cases ballooned to 13,000 four months after the first infection was recorded in the country? When was the first wave?

Epidemiologist John Wong, who also serves as a member of data analytics technical working group of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID), explained later that day what a "wave" means in the context of epidemiology.

In a briefing, Wong said a "wave" refers to a rise in cases followed by a decrease. A rise-and-drop of cases would still be a considered a wave even if it's just a few infections, he added.

He said the first wave in the country — which he called a "minor one" — occurred in the latter part of January, at a time when the Philippines recorded its first few infections.

"We have a very small wave in the last few days of January, about three cases," he said.

Wong said it was followed by a lull in February, since there were no recorded coronavirus infections. "The problem, however, is that the country struggled to conduct coronavirus tests with limited number of laboratories equipped to process results," said Wong.

The second wave, he added, began in March and reached its peak on the last day of the month when the country recorded 538 new cases of COVID-19.

The second wave continues up to the present now that the Philippines has 13,221 virus cases, he said.

Wong explained the country is now in the trough or the lower part of the wave since the country has been reporting about 200 new cases a day for the 10th straight day.

TITLE: Second wave? Epidemiologist clarifies what
constitutes a 'wave' in pandemic

PAGE 1/ 2/2

May 21, 2020
DATE

“What we want to avoid is when we shift to GCQ, we would have another peak or several more peaks. So we have to try to postpone subsequent waves,” Wong said.

In the briefing, Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire urged Filipinos to practice minimum health standards such as physical distancing and cough etiquette to avoid another surge of cases.

“And of course, if we have no reason to go out, we should stay inside our homes,” she said. “We cannot be complacent. We like to end this transmission. We like to end this pandemic,” Vergeire added.



5M+ NA ANG MAY COVID-19; 3RD WAVE KUMAKAWAY NA?

May 21, 2020 @ 6:18 AM 2 hours ago

Views: 65

HABANG tinitipa natin ito, may 5,058,698 kumpirmado nang kaso ng Corona Virus Disease-19 sa 213 bansa at ilang teritoryo at 328,257 na ang patay mula rito.

Ang magandang balita, sa 2,729,482 na lamang ang aktibong kaso at 2,683,713 (98%) ang mild o hindi seryoso habang 45,769 (2%) lang ang nasa kritikal na kalagayan na pinagmumulan ng mga patay.

Sa closed cases o tapos nang kaso, mula sa bilang na 2,329,216, 2,000,959 (86%) ang gumaling habang minalas ngang mamatay ang 328,257 (14%).

Kasama na rito ang rekord ng mahal kong Pinas na may kabuuang biktima na 13,221 na 9,447 ang aktibo habang 2,932 ang gumaling at 5 ang patay kahapon.

MAGHANDA SA THIRD WAVE

Ayon kay Health Secretary Duque, matagal nang natapos ang First Wave o unang sigwada na nagsimula sa pagdating ng tatlong Chinese national noong Enero 2020 na nagpositibo ngunit maliit lang na sigwada iyon na humawa ng ilang daan.

Nang magsimula na ang mabilis na hawaan sa susunod na mga buwan, iyon na ang tinatawag ng Department of Health na Second Wave at umiiral ito ngayon.

Ang magandang balita, naglalaro na lang ang bilang ng may impeksyon sa nasa 200 kada araw at maganda kung maibaba umano ito sa nasa 100 kada araw.

Magandang balita namang kulang-kulang na sa 10 ang namamatay sa nagdaang mga araw.

Pero higit na maganda kung maghanda-handa natayo sa Third Wave na maaaring nagsisimula na.

Ito'y sa gitna ng kontrobersya kung nasa First Wave pa rin tayo gaya ng paniniwala ng iba o nasa Second Wave na gaya ng sinasabi ni Health Secretary Enrique Duque.

Ang mahalaga, binabanggit na ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte ang delikadong kalagayan ng bansa sa ilalim ng Second o Third Wave na doon maaari tayong hindi maka-survive.

Sabi nga ni Pang. Digong, kung pwedeng murahin ang virus na huwag umatake, gawin natin.

KARAMBOLA SA THIRD WAVE

Noong simulang luwagan ng pamahalaan ang kilos ng mga mamamayan sa bisa ng Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine sa para sa Metro Manila, Calabarzon, Central Luzon at Cebu City at sa bisa rin ng Modified General Community Quarantine para sa higit na bahagi ng mahal kong Pinas, dito na rin nagsimulang kabahan ang lahat, kasama na si Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte, sa maaaring pagdating ng Second o Third Wave ng Covid-19.

Sabi ni Pang. Digong, hindi na natin makakayanang harapin ang Second o Third wave.

At nasa dulo ng kaisipan nito ang dapat na mahigpit na pagtutulungan ng pamahalaan at mamamayan laban sa malalang anyo ng Covid-19.

Ang pinakamahalaga na punto sa kalusugan, wala pang masasabing saktong gamot sa sakit kaya ang ibayong pag-iingat para mapigil ang paglaganap nito nang todo ang kailangan.

Kung hindi, mamamatay at mamamatay ang dadapuan nito...kung mamalasin.

Kakambal ng bigat ng masamang kalusugan ang posibleng tuluyang pagbagsak ng ekonomiya ng Pinas kung darating nga ang mga wave na ito.

Ano nga ang mangyayari kung muling ibalik ang lahat sa ECQ at may 24 oras na curfew, bawal na bawal ang lumabas ng tahanan, magtrabaho at maghanapbuhay, magbukas ng mga pabrika, sakahan at karagatan, kasama na ang bawal na pagtakbo ng mga pampublikong sasakyan sa lupa, dagat at himpapawid bilang tugon sa Third Wave?

Tiyak na mauubusan na rin ang pamahalaan ng pantulong sa mga mamamayan na mahaharap sa gutom at kahirapan.

Suma total, babagsak ang ekonomiya ng bansa at lalong lalala ang masama nang kalagayan natin sa kalusugan.

SUMUNOD SA BATAS

Kauna-unahang dapat isipin ng lahat ang pagsunod sa batas kung paano pigilin at iwasan ang Covid-19 sa gitna ng MECQ at MGCQ.

Sumunod sa patakaran sa social distancing, palagiang maging malinis sa kamay at katawan, pagsusuot ng face mask, pananatili sa bahay ng mga walang mahalagang gagawin sa labas, pananatili sa bahay ng mga bata at matanda at kahit nasa katamtamang edad na may karamdaman at iba pa.

May patakaran din na dapat sundin at ipatupad ng mga frontliner na health worker, sundalo, pulis, lokal na opisyal, kasama na ang mga barangay tanod.

Ang mga ahensyang nasyunal na bumubuo ng Inter-Agency Task Force at mga local government unit, may mga nakaatang ding mga tungkulin na dapat nilang tupdin mula sa pagtaya ng kalusugan at epekto ng Covid-19 sa ekonomiya hanggang sa paggawa ng mga patakarang pambansa na dapat sundin at ipatupad ng lahat para sa kaligtasan sa sakit at pagpapaandar ng ekonomiya ng bansa.

Kung mahigpit na magagawa nating lahat ang dapat na gawin, lalo na ang pagsunod sa mga batas na umiiral laban sa sakit at para sa ating kaligtasan at pagbubukas ng hanapbuhay, makakayanan natin ang umiiral na Second Wave at ang dumarating nang Third Wave.

BALIK-KALAYAAN

Sa ilalim ng mga MECQ at MGCQ, kitang-kita ang pagbabalik ng maraming anyo ng kalayaan bagama't istriktong ipinatutupad ang mga lockdown, curfew, stay at home at iba pang anyo ng disiplina kung kinakailangan ng isang lugar.

May laya na tayong lumabas ng bahay para mag-ehersisyo, at lumanghap ng sariwang hangin, magtrabaho, magnegosyo, bumiyahe nang may kontrol sa mga pampasaherong sasakyan, magsimba, magdaos ng pagtitipon, mamalengke, magkaangkas sa motorsiklo, bumili, maglako at uminom ng alak at iba pa.

Nariryan na rin ang mga trapik, pagdagsa sa mga mall at iba pa.

Bagama't hindi buo at sinasabing hanggang 50-75 porsyento lamang ang lahat, talaga namang mas malaya na tayo ngayon kaysa noon.

At dito umano magsisimula ang Second o Third Wave ng Covid-19 dahil darami ang magkakahawaan, magkakasakit at mamamatay.

Kaya naman, dapat natin laging tatandaan, mga Bro, huwag nating abusuhin ang ating kalayaan.

'Yun bang === balewalain ang mga umiiral na batas at mga inisyatiba natin para sa kabutihan ng lahat.

Kung hindi, anak ng tokwa, mahuhulog tayo sa bangin ng lalong paghihirap at gutom, tuluyang pagkabangkrap at kamatayan.

President Duterte to officials: Follow the law in releasing cash aid

May 20, 2020

Local officials should not mess up with the law in the grant of emergency subsidy to the needy, President Rodrigo Roa Duterte said Tuesday, issuing a new warning against unscrupulous officials.

“Nakita ho naman ninyo mga kababayan ko sa panahong ito lalo na sa umpisa pa lang nagsabi na ako nang prangkahan na huwag na huwag na huwag ninyong haluan ng kalokohang mga programa na ito sa COVID kasi kailangan ito at marami talaga ang nangangailangan ng tulong,” the President said during his address to the nation on the pandemic.

“At sinabi ko sa inyo hindi kayo papatawarin ‘pag nagkamali kayo dito. So the law is the law is the law. A rule is a rule is a rule and you — when you begin to mess up with the law, talagang ginagarantiya ko sa inyo na makukulong talaga kayo.”

During a meeting with the President, Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año said the department has filed 12 corruption cases against local officials in connection with the grant of social amelioration program (SAP).

There are also four cases for filing and 58 cases under investigation. Two officials were arrested and currently in detention, Año said.

To ensure transparency, Año said he directed local government units (LGUs) to post the names of those who received the cash aid as well as those who got government support twice.

“At hinihimok natin na hangga’t maaga ay isauli nila itong mga natanggap nilang dobleng benepisyo para naman ang ibang mga kababayan natin na hindi pa nakatanggap na siya nating bibigyan ng priority para sa second tranche,” he said.

The LGUs were also required to submit the list of the additional five million low-income households who are eligible to receive the second tranche of the emergency support.

To stop the abuses in the release of cash aid, the President has previously offered a reward to those who can provide information regarding officials pocketing money intended for poor families. (Press Release – PCOO Presidential News Desk)

Sale of gov't assets not enough to boost funds for

TITLE: SAP: Palace

PAGE 1/ 1/2

May 21, 2020
DATE

Sale of gov't assets not enough to boost funds for SAP: Palace

By Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos [May 20, 2020, 3:29 pm](#)



SAP BENEFICIARIES. Social amelioration program (SAP) beneficiaries wait for their turn to receive the emergency cash aid amid the Covid-19 crisis. Malacañang said on Wednesday (May 20, 2020) that the sale of government assets would not be enough to boost funds for the second tranche of SAP distribution for 23 million low-income households. *(File photo)*

MANILA – President Rodrigo Duterte has realized that selling public properties would not be enough to boost the funding for the implementation of the social amelioration program (SAP), Malacañang said on Wednesday.

Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said Duterte had initially sought to sell one government asset to make sure that all the 23 million low-income households would receive the second tranche of cash aid.

The President, however, learned that the cost of the property was only about PHP20 billion, Roque said.

“That’s not even enough because we need even PHP50 billion more if we were to give first and second tranches to the five million additional beneficiaries,” he said in an interview with ABS-CBN News Channel.

Under the national government’s SAP, beneficiaries are entitled to receive monthly emergency subsidies ranging from PHP5,000 to PHP8,000 for April and May.

The original number of SAP beneficiaries was 18 million, but it rose to 23 million after Duterte sought to give cash aid to five million more low-income families.

The 23 million poor families will receive the first tranche of emergency subsidies.

However, Malacañang earlier disclosed that only 18 million families are qualified to benefit from the implementation of the second phase of the SAP.

The Palace also said the government needs to ask Congress for a PHP50-billion supplemental budget if it wants to extend financial assistance to all the 23 million SAP beneficiaries.

Roque said Duterte was once “dead serious” about selling state-owned properties to augment the funding for the implementation of the second phase of the SAP.

The President, he said, was even ready to sell one government property to help more Filipino poor families cope with the impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic.

“He (Duterte) was very serious. When I talked to him the time when he said I want to give SAP to all the additional five million families, he mentioned one property (to sell). I’d rather not mention (it). But that’s why I knew he was dead serious about it,” Roque said.

Sale of gov't assets not enough to boost funds for

May 21, 2020

TITLE: SAP: Palace

PAGE 1/ 2/2

DATE

He noted that Duterte later conceded that the government could not afford to grant the second wave of cash aid to all the low-income households.

"Maybe the President also realized that even if he were to sell that particular asset, it would not be enough to pay for the two tranches of 23 million families," he said.

In a public address delivered Tuesday night, Duterte admitted that the depleting Covid-19 budget is stalling his plan to grant cash aid to all indigent families affected by the health crisis.

Finance Secretary Carlos Dominguez III earlier said there was no need to sell public properties to finance the Covid-19 response efforts of the government.

Dominguez ensured that the government is currently in a "very good financial position" to meet the financial requirements of the pandemic's impact. **(PNA)**

Source:

<https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1103420?fbclid=IwAR35QI0cJ7FppmqZCOP9sieDkz2ufowLdVRIFEp7IdIaJfpa-86sL1Vw8>

Rody looking for funds to buy COVID vaccine

May 20, 2020 | Filed under: [News](#) | Posted by: [Tempo Desk](#)

President Duterte announced Tuesday he is looking for funds to purchase the coronavirus vaccine amid hopes it will be available in the market early next year.

The President said Moderna pharmaceutical firm has developed the vaccine that may become available by January 2021, adding that people should avoid dying until then.



He admitted that the government has limited resources since it is “short of tax collection” amid the coronavirus lockdown.

The President welcomed the latest milestone in the global race for the coronavirus vaccine, citing that clinical trial of Moderna’s drug yielded “positive results.”

He admitted that this was the “good news” he has been hoping for.

“Mayroon nang vaccine but ang problema it will be ready, according to them, by 2021 pa. January at the very – at the earliest. So kung ganoon ‘wag ka sanang mamatay hanggang January, hintayin mo ‘yung vaccine,” he said.

Duterte admitted that he wanted to place an early order of the coronavirus vaccine but Finance Secretary Carlo Dominguez III advised against it.

He said Dominguez opposed such vaccine procurement at this time since the government might end up with a “bad deal” since the supplier, not the buyer, will dictate the price. Duterte agreed with Dominguez’s advice.

While waiting for the coronavirus vaccine, the President has appealed anew to the public to follow the government’s quarantine regulations to contain the spread of the disease.

He reminded people to wear face masks whenever they leave their homes as well as use alcohol to sanitize their hands. (Genalyn Kabiling)

Prez Duterte tells public ‘refrain from dying’ as he hopes for COVID-19 vaccine in 2021

May 20, 2020 12:21 PM by [Christhel Cuazon](#)



President Rodrigo Roa Duterte updates the nation on the government’s efforts in addressing the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) at the Malago Clubhouse in Malacañang on May 19, 2020. KARL NORMAN ALONZO/PRESIDENTIAL PHOTO

President Rodrigo Roa Duterte has one wish for Filipinos amid the COVID-19 pandemic, it is to “refrain from dying” as he hopes that a vaccine for the outbreak will soon be available to the market by January 2021.

In an address aired Wednesday morning, Duterte cited US biotech firm Moderna whose first clinical test of an experimental vaccine against COVID-19 showed promising results.

“So kung ganoon, ‘wag ka sanang mamatay hanggang January. Hintayin mo ‘yung vaccine. ‘Pag tinawag ka ng kamatayan, sabihin mo p*****ina ka umalis ka diyan, may hinihintay ako na vaccine. Hindi ko pa panahon mamatay,” the President said.

The Chief Executive is hopeful that the vaccine may become available as early as January 2021, saying “kailangan may pera ako niyan kasi bili kaagad tayo.”

“Many countries are on the verge of, malapit na sila sa vaccine, naghahabulan. Judging from the time COVID started up to now, I’m sure that they have made a lot of progress in finding the vaccine. Nakahanap na sila,” he added.

Aside from the Moderna news, Duterte also mentioned the successes of Chinese researchers in developing a vaccine.

“Yan ang good news talaga. That is what I was really hoping for, the vaccine. Because ang kalaban ng COVID isa lang talaga, it’s the vaccine that can really fight the infection. Wala nang iba. ‘Yung sariling katawan mo lang. Walang medisina, walang antibiotic,” he said.

Duterte earlier offered a PHP 50 million reward to those who would discover a vaccine for COVID-19. He also reminded the public to follow the quarantine protocols such as social distancing, the use of mask, and handwashing.

“COVID will remain with us until such time na nabakunahan tayong lahat. Hindi sabihin na may bakuna na at successful na at okay na. Hanggat hindi ka matusukan ng vaccine. You are still in danger,” Duterte said.

Source: https://dzhnews.com.ph/prez-duterte-tells-public-refrain-from-dying-as-he-hopes-of-covid-19-vaccine-in-2021/?fbclid=IwAR1x5Sm4aZpkb_k2koAu6qiL7ntXjnvOmdBVXk_afDaH8ANQjEDTunOqLyE

Vaccines may still be on trial stage come 2021, says

TITLE: DOH

PAGE 1/ 1/2

May 21, 2020

DATE

Vaccines may still be on trial stage come 2021, says DOH

By [Gerard Naval](#)

-May 21, 2020



THE Department of Health on Wednesday said vaccines being developed for the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) will likely still be on the trial stage by January 2021.

Currently, there are at least 70 vaccines for COVID-19 under development around the world, with only eight having reached the clinical trial stages.

Health Undersecretary Maria Rosario Vergeire said all vaccines for COVID-19 will unlikely be for commercial use by early next year. She issued the statement when asked President Duterte's statement Tuesday night about a vaccine that will supposedly be "ready" by January 2021 "at the earliest."

"The one mentioned by President Duterte (that will be ready) by January 2021 are the vaccines that will be used in the Solidarity Trial of the World Health Organization (WHO) by that time, where the country has also expressed its intent to participate," said Vergeire.

She said all vaccines being developed by different pharmaceutical companies will still have to reach Stage II-B or III of clinical trials of their candidate vaccine product before they are tapped for the WHO Solidarity Trial.

"As of now, we are still waiting for the vaccines that will reach Stage II-B or III of their clinical trials, which is the required stage of the WHO, before we can start with the WHO Solidarity Trial for vaccines," she explained.

Vergeire also said three medical facilities in the Philippines have been tapped to host the clinical trial of the Japanese flu drug, Avigan.

Vergeire said these are the Philippine General Hospital, Sta. Ana Hospital, and Dr. Jose N. Rodriguez Memorial Hospital.

"As of May 11, three sites have been identified for the conduct of this trial in the Philippines," said Vergeire.

She related that the DOH is already coordinating with Japan for the delivery of Avigan or favipiravir.

The protocol, she added, is undergoing review and approval by the Single Joint Research Ethics Board.

"Once the trial has been registered with the Food and Drug Administration, and the medications are delivered, the Avigan trial may start in the country," said Vergeire.

Vaccines may still be on trial stage come 2021, says

May 21, 2020

TITLE: DOH

PAGE 1/ 2/2

DATE

Japan has started using Avigan to treat COVID-19 patients, with no less than Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe pushing for it to be part of treatment guidelines.

There has been a slight setback, however, on the Avigan trial after Kyodo news on Tuesday reported that so far there has been no clear evidence of efficacy for Avigan in treating the novel coronavirus in some clinical trials.

President Duterte on Tuesday night said he is prepared to borrow, if needed, to be able to procure vaccines for COVID-19, once these become available in the market.

The President, in a televised address, said he is looking for fund sources to purchase vaccines. He said tests being conducted by biotech company Moderna is yielding positive results. Duterte said if the positive developments continue, these may lead to the commercial manufacturing of the vaccine by January 2021.

Moderna Inc.'s experimental COVID-19 vaccine, which produces protective antibodies in a small group of healthy volunteers, is now being tested in the United States. The tests are showing positive results. Moderna began testing its vaccine on 45 healthy adults last March.

“Kailangan may pera ako niyan kasi bili kaagad tayo... ewan ko kung saan tayo magkuha pa. Madali na siguro. Basta may vaccine na, puwede na tayong makahiram (I need money so we can buy immediately... I don't know where we would get it. But that would probably be easy. Once there is already a vaccine, maybe we can borrow),” he said.

Making sense of 'new normal' back-to-work guidelines

[BIZLINKS](#) - [Rey Gamboa](#) (The Philippine Star) - May 21, 2020 - 12:00am

Businesses allowed to reopen in these “new normal” times are slowly inching their way through the whole exercise, especially in areas where there are inadequate or insufficient guidelines from government bodies.

Many of those starting up, for example, are asked to limit their activities to 50 percent capacity, which could be interpreted in many ways, like through production output or input, or number of staff or operating hours.

It can get very confusing, and leads into different interpretations by those charged with implementing or enforcing the rules. The situation paves the way for abuse, petty corruption, and unnecessary bureaucracy. In resolving gray areas, very probably the guiding consideration should be the need to impose and maintain social distancing among work staff.

Some local governments, like Makati's, have issued guidelines for businesses that want to resume operations with the usual bureaucratic procedures, like filing for a notice of re-opening with the city's Business Permits and Licensing Office.

For most businesses resuming operations, the health and safety guidelines imposed by the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) and supplemented by what the local government or appropriate national agency may impose, would be the overarching guidelines.

Everything else within the gray areas is fair game. In resolving gray areas, very probably the guiding consideration would be the need to impose and maintain social distancing among work staff.

Fine-tuning policies and rules encompassing the “new normal” of business operations is the challenge faced both by the government and private sectors. In the meantime, in this “experimentation” stage, let's hope that economy starts moving with less risk of recurrence of new coronavirus infections.

Until when

Until a cure or a vaccine is found, the coronavirus will continue to be a threat to the old life we knew before the “new normal” came. This is something we as social beings will have to accept. Just until when this enforced lifestyle will end is the big question.

In the meantime, businesses related to travel and tourism, entertainment, dining, and leisure, and retailing are going to take the biggest hits.

Not only are airlines hobbled by restrictions to keep middle row seats empty in compliance with social distancing rules, but most people would rather refrain from travelling by air or even by any transportation that would mean getting cooped up with strangers in a confined space, even with the mandatory use of masks and sanitizers, and compliance to social distancing.

For workers and employees who do not have their own four-wheel vehicles to travel, the new norm would likely see the increase in the use of motorcycles and bicycles, especially if their own employers are not able to provide shuttles.

Many jobs will likely disappear until the economy can start to grind again at its pre-coronavirus rhythm. Weaker consumer demand, the 50-percent capacity rule, and the higher cost of manufactured goods all conspire for businesses to cut employment numbers.

For restaurant and mall owners, confining rules on dining out and socializing will dampen patronage, and ultimately the bottom line. Many service stations have been shuttered, and some of these may not open up until travel bans are fully lifted.

Contact tracing instead of prolonged lockdowns

Like many countries caught flat-footed by this pandemic, government response has not always been swift or effective enough. Just as with reopening procedures, a lot of fine-tuning is also needed in response to general guidelines issued by the World Health Organization (WHO).

One thing we're definitely not getting right is taking a more serious stance on contact tracing, which has been an integral part of the plan of more successful countries in mitigating the virus spread.

We need to be able to immediately and quickly know the people who had been in contact with an infected individual and those that these people may have passed on the virus in order to carry out isolation measures to contain any possible infection.

WHO, as well as successful countries like South Korea, China, and Vietnam, can provide the training templates to prepare contact tracers to do a good job. Our government just has to decide to do it and allot the funds to maintain it.

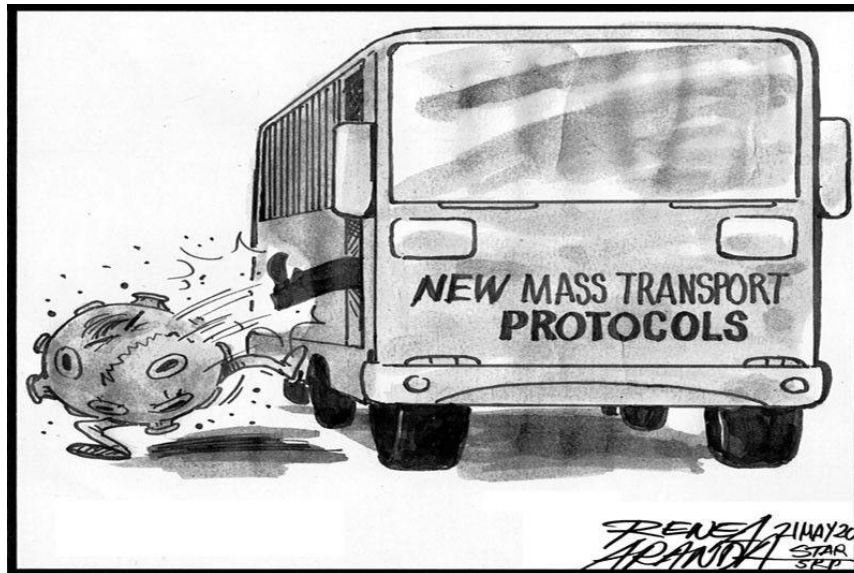
Investing in tracers and the technology to do tracing are more cost-effective than imposing wide lockdowns that paralyze the movement of people who are not affected. We've gone into two months of quarantine, and are still surprised at where the deadly virus crops up.

Let this be a lesson well learned. Our government must appropriate the necessary funds to prepare our health system for the current as well as any future, pandemic.

Facebook and Twitter

We are actively using two social networking websites to reach out more often and even interact with and engage our readers, friends and colleagues in the various areas of interest that I tackle in my column. Please like us on www.facebook.com/ReyGamboa and follow us on www.twitter.com/ReyGamboa.

Should you wish to share any insights, write me at Link Edge, 25th Floor, 139 Corporate Center, Valero Street, Salcedo Village, 1227 Makati City. Or e-mail me at reydgamboa@yahoo.com. For a compilation of previous articles, visit www.BizlinksPhilippines.net.



EDITORIAL - Mass transport reforms

(The Philippine Star) - May 21, 2020 - 12:00am

Never let a good crisis go to waste. The origin of this quote is still in dispute, but it underpins proposals for reform opportunities as the country continues to reel from the impact of the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic.

Among the hardest hit are mass transport drivers and operators. With the gradual reopening of the economy particularly in crowded Metro Manila, many of those who are glad to be able to return to work are dismayed that they can't get to their workplace for lack of mass transport.

A coalition of commuter welfare advocates, economists and barangay personnel, called Move As One, believes that amid the woes of workers in the mass transport sector, the pandemic offers an opportunity for implementing long overdue reforms.

The main objective is to improve mass transport facilities sufficiently to persuade people to commute rather than use private vehicles. This entails making public transport services efficient, comfortable and – a key concern in this pandemic – hygienic and safe.

Private car owners are shunning public transport services due to concerns about coronavirus infection, and physical distancing requirements will cut earnings in public transport units. There is greater urgency for reforms in mass transport.

Efficient deployment of buses and jeepneys can help operators survive. Intermodal transport hubs need a stronger and more efficient push. It's time to fully implement fixed wages for drivers of public utility vehicles. This measure aims to end the system wherein a driver's daily earnings depend on the number of passengers. Operators, however, found a loophole and gave drivers a bonus based on the number of passengers picked up.

Amid the pandemic, people are discovering the usefulness of bicycles. Cycling advocates are hoping that this will pave the way for the creation of dedicated bicycle lanes and installation of infrastructure such as cycling stations where bikes can be parked safely even in private establishments. Greater use of bicycles can contribute to better air quality and boost health through exercise.

This can be complemented by the development of wider sidewalks for pedestrian welfare as well as green areas in urban centers. The pandemic has opened up opportunities for reforms. For the public transport sector, this could boil down to just two choices: reform or perish.

LOOK: Pinoy father-daughter scientists discover 3 new jumping spider species in Luzon

Kristine Sabillo, ABS-CBN News

Posted at May 20 2020 11:25 AM

MANILA — As one of the most diverse countries in the world, the Philippines continues to surprise scientists with the discovery of new plant and animal species.

A father-daughter tandem of scientists discovered three new species of jumping spiders described in a recently published journal article of the Philippine Journal of Systematic Biology.

Dr. Aimee Lynn Barrion-Dupo of University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB) and Dr. Albert Barrion of De La Salle University found *Lepidemathis cavinti* from a forest in Cavinti town, Laguna, *Lepidemathis dogmai* near a dry river in Mauban town, Quezon and *Lepidemathis lipa* near a young cacao orchard in Lipa City, Batangas.



Figure 3. *Lepidemathis cavinti* n. sp. cephalothorax, frontal view: male (left); female (right).
<scale bar: 1mm>.

Courtesy of Dr. Aimee Lynn B. Dupo

“Jumping spiders are arthropods that do not make the typical orb webs we know most spiders make. They're hunting spiders that have very good eye sight,” said Dupo, who is also the UPLB Museum of Natural History curator for spiders and moths.

These spiders, as their name implies, use their jumping ability to catch prey, Dupo explained.

“They make up the largest and most diverse family of spiders, i.e. Salticidae. They are common in the country but very few study them. So far, there are four *Lepidemathis* (a genus of Salticidae) recorded in the Philippines; now we have a total of seven with these new species,” she said.

Dupo explained that the three species they discovered are unique because of their reproductive organs. The journal article can be read here: https://asbp.org.ph/wp-content/uploads/2020/05/PJSB_S01-2019-009.pdf.

She said local scientists have long been doing field collections and it was only recently when their “schedules lightened up a bit” that they had time to sort through their collections.

“Sorting collected materials can be likened to mining for treasures. There is always a sense of excitement when you know something in the batch of spiders you're looking at does not look like anything else that has been described,” she said.

In an earlier interview with ABS-CBN News, Dupo explained the challenge faced by the country's researchers as many try to juggle academic and teaching jobs with research and field work.



Figure 2. *Lepidemathis cavinti* n. sp. habitus; dorsal and ventral views of the male (A); dorsal and ventral views of the female (B). <scale bars: 5mm>.



Figure 5. *Lepidemathis dogmai* n. sp. habitus; dorsal (left) and ventral (right) views. <scale bar: 5mm>.



Figure 6. *Lepidemathis dogmai* n. sp. cephalothorax, frontal view. <scale bar: 1 mm>.



Figure 7. *Lepidemathis dogmai* n. sp. right pedipalp in retrolateral (left) and prolateral (right) views. <scale bar: 1 mm>.

LOOK: Pinoy father-daughter scientists discover 3 new jumping spider species in Luzon

May 21, 2020
DATE

PAGE 1/ 3/3

Studying spiders is actually the family legacy for the Barrions. Dupo's father, Albert Barrion, is a spider taxonomist and the UPLB museum's curator for spiders, parasitic hymenoptera and rice arthropods, while her mother, the late Adelina Barrion, was a spider geneticist.

After her mother's death, Dupo and her father have been wanting to co-write a pictorial guide on Philippine spiders. They are among the few who study spiders in the country.

"Due to budget constraints, my dad and I had to take turns joining field expeditions but we work together in writing about and describing these spiders," Dupo said.

"There is no escaping anything when it comes to working with family. Talking about spiders is a constant thing with us. It's like sharing a language only you two can understand (which is both fun and stressful)."



Figure 8. *Lepidemathis lipa* n. sp. habitus; dorsal (left) and ventral (right) views. <scale bar: 5mm>.



Figure 9. *Lepidemathis lipa* n. sp. cephalothorax, frontal view. <scale bar: 1 mm>.



Figure 10. *Lepidemathis lipa* n. sp. left pedipalp in frontal (left) and retrolateral (right) views. <scale bar: 1 mm>.

Despite the difficulty and the risks of doing field work, she said they continue to study spiders and their other interests.

"Even if basic sciences receive little appreciation or support, scientists should never stop exploring the country for its rich biodiversity. Most of the time we afford protection for species we can relate to and species we know we derive direct benefit from," she said.

Dupo explained that taxonomy, or the science of classifying organisms, is "critical in the improvement of our understanding of the natural world."

"The more we know about what we have, the better the policies we can make in protecting their existence and the ecosystem services they provide to us (e.g. control of insect pests and food for vertebrates)," she said.

Dupo has expressed concern that, with the limited funding for research, the country might lose undiscovered insects and animals to climate change.

"Contributing to our national biodiversity inventories are also vital in monitoring the effects of climate change. And it is always a race to document species before they go extinct," she said.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/05/20/20/look-pinoy-father-daughter-scientists-discover-3-new-jumping-spider-species-in-luzon>

Ban Toxics praises DOH's order to ban mercury in dental procedures

Published May 20, 2020, 4:29 PM

By *Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz*

An environmental group on May 20, Wednesday, lauded the Department of Health's (DOH) order to phase out mercury use in dental procedures.

The said group, Ban Toxics, said the landmark regulation will protect vulnerable populations, such as women, children, and those with compromised immune systems.

Citing the World Health Organization, the group said mercury is listed as one of their top chemicals of major health concern.

Mercury and mercury compounds are toxic chemicals with negative effects on human health and the environment.

Dental amalgam, which is a silver-colored material, is used to fill teeth with cavities and is made up of 50 percent mercury and other materials including silver and tin.

"This is a landmark regulation coming from the DOH, amidst our collective struggle against COVID-19, and affirms the Department's continued focus in protecting and nurturing the health of Filipinos," said Ban Toxics executive director Reynaldo San Juan Jr.

"The order is also a recognition of other threats from toxic chemicals Filipinos are facing, and that the DOH is taking decisive action against toxins, such as mercury," he added.

The administrative order provides a comprehensive policy in the elimination of dental amalgam in the country and sets forth guidelines governing the importation, manufacture, distribution and sale of dental amalgam, and establishes health and safety guidelines in the handling, use, storage and disposal of dental amalgams among dental workers, students, and patients.

The order also aims to raise awareness on alternative dental restorative materials and identify several measures to strengthen the advocacy on dental caries prevention and oral health. In 2014, Ban Toxics conducted a study on the mercury vapor levels in dental institutions.

Mercury emission in five dental institutions and three dental clinics that were tested exceeded the generally accepted human exposure limits and provided proof that mercury vapors can be emitted by amalgam fillings.

On May 29, 2020, 15 days from the effectiveness of the order, the importation of elemental mercury for use in dental restorative procedures and dental amalgam capsules is banned in the Philippines. The order also immediately puts a stop to the use of dental amalgam for children fourteen years old and below, pregnant women and nursing mothers.

Recto bats for assistance to small water districts amid pandemic

Published May 20, 2020 9:32pm

Local water districts, especially those servicing small towns and rural areas, shall be granted relief measures to ensure that water supply will not be impeded by financial constraints amid the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Senate President Pro Tempore Ralph Recto on Wednesday.

"Kung walang tubig, paano maghuhugas ng kamay? If water is essential to the anti-pandemic fight, then we must see to it that those who supply it are financially buoyant," Recto said in a statement.

The senator pointed out that these firms do not have the same "reservoir of resources" as that of big water servicing companies like Maynilad and Manila Water to help them survive the period of deferred payment of bills during the health emergency.

"Itong mga water district, walang malalim na balon ng pondo," he said.

"Although they are required to keep a financial reserve that can meet three months of operations, most of them do not have this cushion," he said.

There are around 600 water districts, or local water producers, in the country on which 20 million household consumers rely, and bulk of these companies are under Category D with fewer than 3,000 connections, according to Recto.

He underscored that the continued operations of these water districts have to be ensured so that Filipino families may also observe frequent hand-washing amid the pandemic.

"If internet is treated like a vital utility during the lockdown, then all the more should water be. We can survive without broadband, even without electricity—but water, like food, is essential for man's existence," Recto said. — **BM, GMA News**

MWSS sets guidelines on water bills

May 20, 2020

The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) regulatory office has issued guidelines on the billing system for the quarantine period.

MWSS Chief Regulator Patrick Ty said the water bills for almost three months will be issued at once, and assured there will be no irregularities in the computation of water charges.

“We are doing some computations and simulations to check what will happen and we want to assure the public there will be no bill shock,” Ty said.

The MWSS has also given customers enough time to settle their bills. All lifeline users of the two water concessionaires or those using up to 10 cubic meters monthly have until August 31 to pay, while non-lifeline users have until July 31.

“They can pay that bill “pautay-utay”, staggered payment, and pay that for every month,” Ty said.

The MWSS has currently disallowed disconnection of water services to customers of Maynilad and Manila Water. It added that customers may ask for an extension through a promissory note in case they go past the deadline. Water meter reading and issuance of water bills are expected to resume in June.

MWSS sets deadline for water bill payments

By [Jordeene B. Lagare](#)

May 20, 2020

CUSTOMERS of Manila Water Co. Inc. and Maynilad Water Services Inc. have until the end of August to pay their bills, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS).

The MWSS Regulatory Office said that non-lifeline accounts or those whose consumption does not exceed 10 cubic meters (cu.m.) may settle their water bills not later than July 31.

On the other hand, lifeline accounts — those who consume 10 cu.m. or less — may pay their water bills until August 31.

The MWSS also gave a grace period for the payment of bills whose due date falls within the coronavirus quarantine, which can also be settled on an installment basis.

Meter reading and bills delivery to customers will begin on June 1.

Starting August 1, the two water firms may begin the disconnection of supply for non-payment of ECQ bills of non-lifeline accounts and September 1 for lifeline customers.

Manila Water, Maynilad to begin meter reading, bill
TITLE: delivery on June 1

PAGE 1/ 1/2

May 21, 2020
DATE

Manila Water, Maynilad to begin meter reading, bill delivery on June 1

Published May 20, 2020 7:31pm

By TED CORDERO, GMA News

Water concessionaires Manila Water Co. Inc. and Maynilad Water Services Inc. will begin meter reading and bills delivery next month.

In a statement, the Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) Regulatory Office announced a schedule for both lifeline and non-lifeline consumers of water concessionaires.

Lifeline customers are those who consume 10 cubic meters or less in a month, while non-lifeline consumers are those with consumption exceeding 10 cubic meters.

Based on the MWSS RO's schedule, meter reading and bills delivery for water concessionaires' customers will start on June 1.

To recall, Manila Water and Maynilad [temporarily suspended](#) meter readings and onsite billing activities due to the enhanced community quarantine over Luzon in March.

Water consumption during the ECQ - from March 17 to May 31 - will be computed based on consumers' average consumption for the past three months prior to the lockdown.

In a separate statement, Manila Water said that if pre-ECQ bills or those with due date prior to March 16 remain unpaid, disconnection may begin July 1.

For post-ECQ bills or those with due dates from May 16 onwards, the normal 60-day lead time before disconnection applies, "so disconnection may begin July 16," Manila Water said, noting that this applies for both regular and lifeline customers.

For ECQ bills, or those that have due dates from March 16 to May 15, the water firm said due dates have all been reset to May 16.

"For non-lifeline customers, the 60-day lead time before disconnection will also be observed," it said.

"However, since we will begin our normal read and bill activity on June 1, notices and reminders will be sent beginning July 16 and disconnection may begin August 1," it added.

Manila Water, Maynilad to begin meter reading, bill
delivery on June 1

PAGE 1/ 2/2

May 21, 2020
DATE

Lifeline customers will be offered a three-month or June to August installment plan only for ECQ bills and disconnection related to ECQ bills may begin September 1.

“Their billing statement will reflect the installment amount in a separate line apart from current billing and past due, if any,” Manila Water said.

Maynilad, for its part, said it is giving a longer grace period—or until August 31—to settle bills that have accumulated from March to May 2020, including any arrears from February that might have been left unpaid prior to ECQ.

Beyond this period, it said “Notice of Disconnections” will start appearing in September 2020 bills.

“For non-lifeline customers, they have until July 31, and ‘Notice of Disconnections’ in their case would start appearing in August 2020 bills,” Maynilad said.

It said the June 2020 bills will already reflect actual consumption, as well as adjustments from when the bills were averaged during ECQ. —LDF, GMA News

Promissory notes for unpaid water bills accepted

By [Jed Macapagal](#)

-May 21, 2020



THE Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System-Regulatory Office (MWSS-RO) said Metro Manila water concessionaires are authorized to serve disconnection notices starting August.

The regulatory body said consumers who are unable to pay their bills by August can use promissory notes to the companies.

MWSS-RO chief regulator Patrick Ty, said for non-lifeline customers, service disconnection can be served starting August while lifeline customers will be served by September.

Ty said the regulatory body as well as the water concessionaires “will be compassionate and understanding” as those who will use promissory notes will not be slapped with additional penalties for the delayed payment.

Both Maynilad and Manila Water has offered several channels and platforms for consumers to check and settle their current bills.

Manila Water, Maynilad start serving service disconnection notice by September

May 20, 2020 | Filed under: [News, News Roundup](#) | Posted by: [Tempo Desk](#)

Customers of Manila Water Co. Inc. and Maynilad Water Services Inc. will have until September to settle all their water bills, even those accumulated during the enhanced community quarantine period.

Based on press slides released by Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System Regulatory Office, Maynilad and Manila Water will resume meter reading by June and will be allowed to serve disconnection notices by August and September.

To be specific, non-lifeline accounts will be given until August to settle their bills before they will be given service disconnection notice, while lifeline consumers, or those with way lower consumption, will have until September to settle their bills.

Asked if the bills accumulated during ECQ (from March to May) should already be settled by August (for non-lifeline) and September (for lifeline), MWSS Chief Regulator Patrick Ty said: “yes, they have to settle the ECQ water bills by then.”

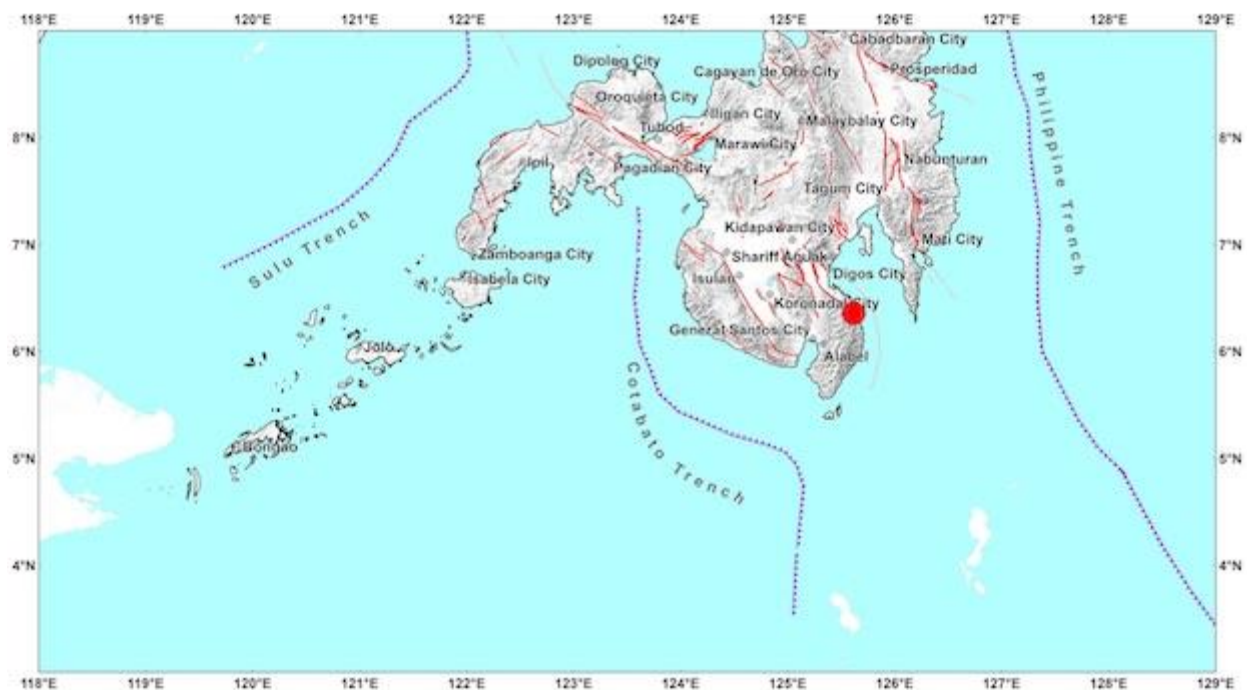
Ty added that customers who couldn't pay during that period could sign a promissory note and no penalty shall be imposed on them.

MWSS-RO also assured that there will be no water disconnections during this time. (Madeleine Miraflor)

Another earthquake hits Mindanao, felt at intensity III in GenSan

By: [Gabriel Pabico Lulu](#) - Reporter / [@GabrielLuluINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 10:36 PM May 20, 2020



MANILA, Philippines – Another earthquake, measured at magnitude 4.3, struck the Mindanao province of Davao Occidental on Wednesday night, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said.

The earthquake was located 7 km southeast of Malita town of Davao Occidental, at a depth of 174 km. Intensity III was recorded in General Santos City.

This earthquake comes an hour after a [magnitude 5.0 quake](#) off the seas of Sarangani province, which was felt at Intensity II in General Santos.

Phivolcs recorded instrumental intensities in General Santos and Malugon in Sarangani at intensity III, in Alabel, Sarangani at intensity II, and in Tupi, South Cotabato at intensity I. No aftershocks and no damage are expected as of now.

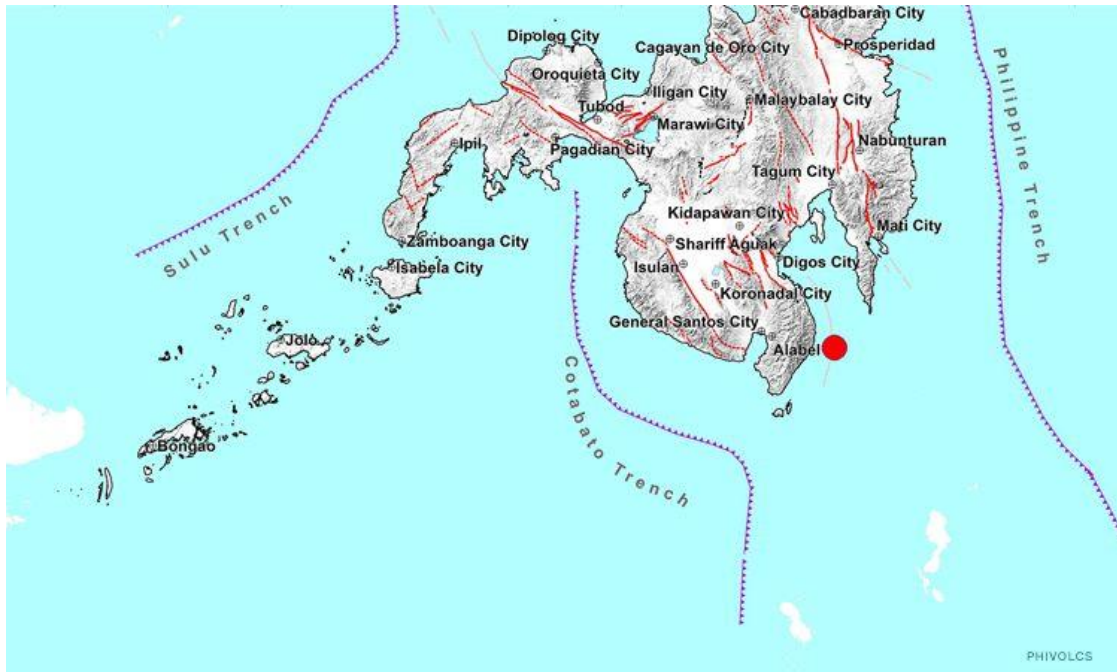
/atm

Read more: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1278451/another-earthquake-hits-mindanao-intensity-iii-in-gensan#ixzz6N1egCxIR>

Magnitude 5.0 quake rocks Davao Occidental

By [CNN Philippines Staff](#)

Published May 20, 2020 9:24:17 PM



Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, May 20) — A magnitude 5.0 quake rocked parts of Mindanao Wednesday evening, state seismologists reported.

The quake struck 31 kilometers northeast of Jose Abad Santos in Davao Occidental, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology.

PHIVOLCS initially reported that the quake was a magnitude 5.6 but later downgraded this to magnitude 5.0.

PHIVOLCS said the quake will not cause damage, but there may be aftershocks.

Intensity IV was recorded in Malungon town in Sarangani, while Intensity III was recorded in Alabel town in Sarangani. Intensity II was recorded in Kiamba town in Sarangani, in General Santos City, and in Tupi town in South Cotabato.

Multiple quakes jolt Davao Occidental

ABS-CBN News

Posted at May 20 2020 09:32 PM | Updated as of May 20 2020 11:38 PM



MANILA (2nd UPDATE) - Several earthquakes struck off the province of Davao Occidental Wednesday night, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said.

A magnitude-5.0 tremor first hit at 8:45 p.m., with its epicenter recorded 96 kilometers southeast of Sarangani town.

It was first recorded at magnitude-5.6, with the epicenter at Jose Abad Santos town.

It was tectonic in origin and struck at a depth of 73 kilometers, according to Phivolcs.

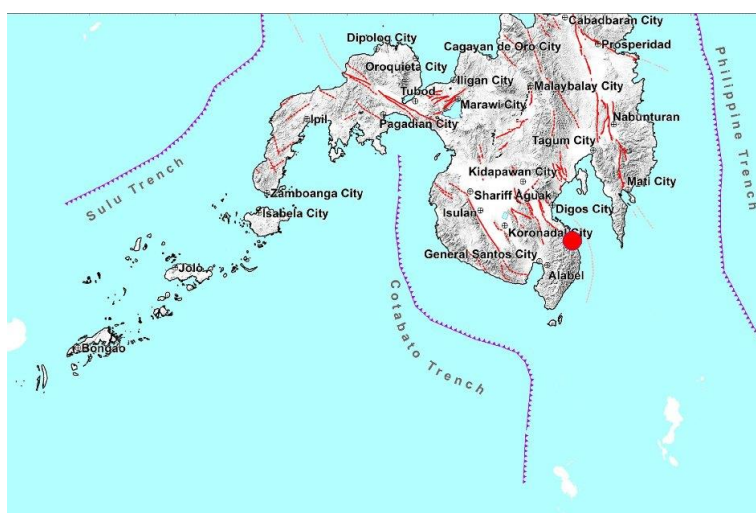
Intensity III was recorded in Glan, Sarangani, while Intensity II was recorded in General Santos City, Davao City, and in Malapatan and Alabel towns in Sarangani province.

Instrumental intensities were also recorded in the following areas:

- Intensity IV - Malungon, Sarangani
- Intensity III - Alabel, Sarangani
- Intensity II - Kiamba, Sarangani; General Santos City; Tupi, South Cotabato

Five other [earthquakes](#), with magnitudes ranging from 2.0 to 3.4, also struck Sarangani town within the next hour.

Phivolcs said 4 of the 5 quakes are aftershocks of the magnitude-5.0 offshore tremor.



Another magnitude 4.3 earthquake happened an hour later at 9:56 p.m., with the epicenter recorded 7 kilometers southeast of Malita town.

It was tectonic in origin and struck at a depth of 174 kilometers, according to Phivolcs.

Intensity III was recorded in General Santos City, with instrumental intensities recorded in the following areas:

- Intensity III - General Santos City; Malungon, Sarangani
- Intensity II - Alabel, Sarangani
- Intensity I - Tupi, South Cotabato

Phivolcs said the magnitude-4.3 earthquake is not expected to spawn aftershocks.

No damage has been reported so far due to the tremors.



4.5-magnitude quake jolts Sarangani

Published May 20, 2020, 8:30 AM

By *Mike Crismundo*

BUTUAN CITY – A 4.5-magnitude earthquake jolted Sarangani in Southern Mindanao region on early Wednesday morning, May 20, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said.

In its bulletin, Phivolcs said the tremor was recorded at 3:38 a.m. with the epicenter plotted 35 kilometers (kms) southwest of Glan (Sarangani). The tremor had a depth of 21 kms, Phivolcs said.

In its instrumental intensities, Phivolcs also said Intensity 1 was registered in Alabel and Malungon, Sarangani and General Santos City.

The earthquake was tectonic in origin and no aftershock or tsunami alert was raised by the agency. The regional office of the Southern Mindanao Office of Civil Defense and provincial disaster risk reduction and management council there reported no damage or injury.

Earlier on the same day (May 20), a 2.4 magnitude tremor was also registered at 2:28 a.m. and its epicenter was traced 14 kms. southeast of Columbio, Sultan Kudarat province, with a depth of 30 kms, Phivolcs also said.

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



4.3-magnitude earthquake jolts Malita, Davao

Published May 20, 2020, 11:52 PM

By **Antonio L. Colina IV**

DAVAO CITY — A magnitude 4.3 earthquake jolted Malita, Davao Occidental at 9:56 p.m. on Wednesday (May 20), reported the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS). In its advisory released at 10:10 p.m., the epicenter of the earthquake, which was of tectonic origin, was reported at 7 kilometers (kms.) southeast of Malita.

The tremor occurred at a depth of 174 kms.

According to the agency, intensity 3 was felt in General Santos City. Meanwhile, instrumental intensity 3 was also felt General Santos City and Malungon in Sarangani province; instrumental intensity 2 in Alabel, Sarangani; and instrumental intensity 1 in Tupi, South Cotabato. No damage was reported.

PHIVOLCS said no aftershocks were expected.



PAGASA records high heat indices across parts of PH

Published May 20, 2020, 8:48 PM

By *Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz*

Warm and humid weather conditions persisted on Wednesday (May 20) as the heat index in Port Area, Manila reached 45 degrees Celsius at around 2 p.m., based on the monitoring of the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA).

Five other PAGASA monitoring stations also recorded high heat indices between 45 and 50 degrees Celsius on Wednesday afternoon.

PAGASA said the highest heat indices registered on Wednesday were in Legazpi City (50 degrees), Sangley Point, Cavite City (47 degrees), Ambulong, Tanauan City (46 degrees), Science City of Muñoz (46 degrees), Port Area in Manila (45 degrees), and Roxas City (45 degrees).

Meanwhile, PAGASA's Science Garden monitoring station in Quezon City registered a heat index of 43 degrees around 3 p.m.

Heat index is the measurement of how hot it really feels when relative humidity is factored in with the actual air temperature.

The highest heat index so far this year was recorded in San Jose last April 20 at 58 degrees Celsius.

The warm and humid weather across most parts of country can be attributed to the prevailing easterly winds originating from the Pacific. (Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz)

Heat index sa Legaspi City umabot sa 50°C

By: [Leifbilly Begas](#) - 05/20/2020



UMABOT sa 50 degrees Celsius ang heat index na naitala sa Legaspi City kanina.

Ayon sa Philippine Atmospheric Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration naramdaman ang alinsangan na ito alas-2 ng hapon.

Naitala naman sa 47°C ang heat index sa Sangley Point, Cavite.

Sa Ambulong, Tanauan City at Science City of Muñoz sa Nueva Ecija ay 46°C ang naitalang alinsangan.

Sa Port Area sa Maynila at Roxas City ay 45°C ang naitala.

Power co-ops incur P170M damage from Typhoon Ambo —NEA

Published May 20, 2020 6:52pm

Electric cooperatives have incurred an initial damage of P170 million due to the onslaught of Typhoon Ambo, the National Electrification Administration (NEA) said Wednesday.

Citing reports from its Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Department (DRRMD) as of May 19, NEA said the typhoon caused an initial estimate of P170.215 million in damage to power cooperatives operating in the provinces of Quezon, Marinduque, Sorsogon, Masbate, Western Samar, Eastern Samar, and Northern Samar.

The Northern Samar Electric Cooperative Inc. (NORSAMELCO) suffered the most with an estimated damage at P72.944 million, followed by Eastern Samar Electric Cooperative Inc. (ESAMELCO) at P55 million, Quezon I Electric Cooperative, Inc. (QUEZELCO I) at P23.729 million, and Samar I Electric Cooperative, Inc. (SAMELCO I) at P6.476 million, the NEA said in a statement.

Meanwhile, initial cost of damage to Masbate Electric Cooperative Inc. (MASELCO) was pegged at P6.379 million, Quezon II Electric Cooperative Inc. (QUEZELCO II) at P3.375 million, Sorsogon I Electric Cooperative, Inc. (SORECO I) at P1.340 million, Marinduque Electric Cooperative, Inc. (MARELCO) at P614,383, and Samar II Electric Cooperative Inc. (SAMELCO II) at P356,199.

The NEA DRRMD said 11 of the 18 electric cooperatives affected by the typhoon have already returned to normal operations as of Tuesday, May 19.

Meanwhile, work to restore power continues across the respective service areas of Camarines Sur I Electric Cooperative Inc. (CASURECO I), SORECO I, QUEZELCO I, QUEZELCO II, SAMELCO I, ESAMELCO, and NORSAMELCO.

“Helping out ESAMELCO and NORSAMELCO in the ongoing restoration activities is the ‘power restoration rapid deployment’ task force, which is composed of 67 line workers and support personnel equipped with boom trucks and utility vehicles from nine participating power co-ops in Leyte, Southern Leyte, Samar and Biliran Island,” the NEA said.

The members of the task force, which have been deployed earlier this week, are expected to stay in Eastern and Northern Samar for at least two weeks, it said. — **Ted Cordero/BM, GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/money/companies/739062/power-co-ops-incur-p170m-damage-from-typhoon-ambo-nea/story/>

China exploits WPS lull; Meralco's billing 'shock'

posted May 20, 2020 at 10:40 pm

by [Ray S. Eñano](#)

The COVID-19 pandemic has diverted the attention of members of the Southeast Asian Nations away from the contentious West Philippine Sea. It is not so with China, which has taken advantage of the relative tranquility.

Vietnam, the chairman of the 2020 Association of Southeast Nations (ASEAN), ironically saw China's persistent aggression in the disputed waters firsthand.

It is, thus, no surprising for Vietnam to fume over the repeated incursions of China into the West Philippine Sea given ASEAN's responsibility to sustain regional peace, security and stability in this part of Asia.

In early April, a Chinese coast guard ship sank a Vietnamese fishing vessel off the Paracel Islands and in mid-April, Beijing re-assigned the controversial Haiyang Dizhi 8 geological survey ship to an area close to Vietnam's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). China used the same ship in the previous year to pressure international drilling operations near the Vanguard Bank.

Towards the end of April, Beijing stepped up its control over the Paracel and Spratly by establishing administrative units—Xisha and Nansha—as part of Hainan province.

The US is naturally monitoring China's aggression. The Diplomat publication quoted US State Department spokeswoman **Morgan Ortagus** as saying that “China has continued to deploy maritime militia around Spratly Islands, and amid the pandemic, has even announced new research stations on its military bases it has built on Fiery Cross Reef and Subi Reef.”

Asian nations with similar claims on the WPS believe the Chinese vessels assaulting fishermen boats were part of the maritime militia.

Vietnam, meanwhile, has been wary of China's intrusion into its industries, like infrastructure as in the case of Beijing's Belt and Road Initiative. Hanoi is inclined to withdraw its participation in the infrastructure initiative of China, which includes neighboring countries and ASEAN members Laos and Cambodia. Anti-Chinese sentiment, as a result, is rising in Vietnam that threatens China's business interests in the Southeast Asian country.

The same anti-Chinese sentiment is growing in the Philippines. China is very much perceived here as an aggressor that seeks to control outlying areas in the WPS as well as critical industries serving consumers from power—National Grid Corporation of the Philippines is partly owned by State Grid of China Corporation—to telecommunications through State of China's ChinaTel and joint venture partner partner DITO Telecoms.

The Chinese control of industries is raising suspicions of espionage and underground cyberattack. Philippine offshore gaming operations are suspected as fronts for prostitution, drugs and anti-money laundering activities.

China's dominance of Philippine infrastructure will also create a greater impact on the economy. A Chinese partner is joining a consortium that will operate Sangley US Naval base in Cavite province. Former Supreme Court Associate Justice Antonio Carpio has questioned the bidding for the Kaliwa Dam on alleged rigging to favor China Energy Engineering Corp. of China.

Rising power consumption

Customers of Manila Electric Co. were naturally taken aback by their compounded three-month billings, which the utility could not collect on due the restrictions of the enhanced community quarantine imposed in Metro Manila and the rest of Luzon.

Many customers will actually realize that they were consuming more electricity in the dry months of March, April and May when they locked themselves up at home.

Energy Assistant Secretary **Redentor Delola** has conceded that residential consumption rose (compared with the decline in the commercial and industrial sectors) during the lockdown period. He added the consumption of the residential sector would likely continue to increase as people opted to remain indoors to avoid being infected by COVID-19.

Meralco, meanwhile, asserted that its meter readings were fairly accurate. Meralco spokesperson **Joe Zaldarriaga** said "as part of the ECQ period, some March and all April bills were estimated based on the past 3 months' average daily consumption, following the distribution services and open access rules (DSOAR) issued by the ERC."

The electricity distributor noted that the three months used as basis—December 2019, January 2020 and February 2020—were considered 'low consumption' months compared with the dry months of March, April and May.

"This puts things in perspective. Because of the ECQ... and because of the high temperatures and always staying at home... why are we still surprised that our consumption has gone higher?" Zaldarriaga asked.

The Meralco official explained with most residents at home, appliances like fans and air-conditioners were likely switched on most of the time throughout the day.

"Air-conditioners, which most households would use 6 to 8 hours per day before ECQ, could be used for 12 to 24 hours per day during the ECQ. Also, temperatures are currently at a record high, leading to higher use of cooling devices. Before consumers complain, maybe we should look first at our power consumption habits... our energy use... and maybe that will give us more understanding why there was a rise," said Zaldarriaga.

"Cooling devices are the heaviest power users... which is a likely reason why our consumption went up recently. It would also help if we all practice energy efficiency," he added.

Meralco has offered to ease the burden on customers by converting unpaid bills with due date from March 1 to May 15, 2020 (bill date from Feb 21 to May 6) into four equal monthly installments. "Meralco promises to provide all the possible options for the utmost convenience of the consumer, bringing back a sense of normalcy and security in this time of uncertainty and turmoil, with the pandemic still affecting us all," he said.

"This is a very good option for consumers who may be struggling somewhat in the ECQ. This gives us a lot of time to prepare and manage our budgets, since there is an installment scheme. Basically, we don't need to pay for our power in the past few months, and the DU is still giving us more time in order to prepare to pay June onwards. We have all the possible options at hand," he said.

Climate change is turning Antarctica green with algae,
study finds

PAGE 1/ 1/2

May 21, 2020
DATE

Climate change is turning Antarctica green with algae, study finds

Published May 20, 2020 8:47pm

By PATRICK GALEY, Agence France-Presse



Handout picture taken in 2018 and released by the University of Cambridge on May 20, 2020 showing green snow algae near Rothera Research Station, at Rothera Point, in Antarctica. Dr. Matt Davey/University of Cambridge/SAMS/AFP

PARIS — Parts of the Antarctic Peninsula will change color as "green snow" caused by blooming algae is expected to spread with increases in global temperatures, research showed Wednesday.

Although often considered devoid of plant life, Antarctica is home to several types of algae, which grow on slushy snow and suck carbon dioxide from the air.

Researchers from the University of Cambridge and the British Antarctic Survey combined satellite imagery with on-the-ground observations to detect the current extent of green algae in the world's most barren continent.

They identified more than 1,600 separate green algae blooms on snow across the peninsula, with a combined surface area of 1.9 square kilometres.

"Even though the numbers are relatively small on a global scale, in Antarctica where you have such a small amount of plant life, that amount of biomass is highly significant," Matt Davey from Cambridge's Department of Plant Sciences, told AFP.

"A lot of people think Antarctica is just snow and penguins. In fact when you look around the fringe there is a lot of plant life."

Climate change is turning Antarctica green with algae,
study finds

PAGE 1 / 2/2

May 21, 2020
DATE

The team calculated that algae on the peninsula currently absorb levels of CO₂ equivalent to 875,000 average car journeys.

They also found that the majority of algae blooms were within five kilometres (three miles) of a penguin colony, as the birds' excrement is an excellent fertilizer.

'More carbon absorbed'

The polar regions are warming far faster than other parts of the planet and the team predicted that low-lying coastal areas of Antarctica would soon be free from algae as they experience snow-free summers.

But that loss will probably be offset by a preponderance of large algae blooms as temperatures rise and snow at higher altitudes softens.

"As Antarctica continues to warm on small low-lying islands, at some point you will stop getting snow coverings on those in the summer," said Andrew Gray, lead author and researcher at the University of Cambridge and NERC Field Spectroscopy Facility, Edinburgh.

"Conversely, in the north of the peninsula we saw some really large blooms and we hypothesize that we are likely to see more of these larger blooms."

Gray told AFP that the green snow blooms on higher ground would "more than offset" the effect of sea-level algae losses.

While more algae means more CO₂ is absorbed, the plants could have a small but adverse impact on local albedo—how much of the Sun's heat is reflected back from Earth's surface.

Whereas white snow reflects 80 percent of radiation that hits it, for green snow that figure is closer to 45 percent.

The team however said the reduced albedo is unlikely to impact Antarctica's climate on any meaningful scale.

"There will be more carbon locked up in future just because you need snow to be in a slushier state for algae to bloom," said Evans.

"We expect there to be more suitable habitat and overall more carbon sequestration." —
AFP

Climate change turning Antarctica's snow green

Martyn Herman, Reuters

Posted at May 20 2020 06:03 PM



Paleontologists working at the site on Antarctica's Seymour Island where fossils of an Eocene frog were discovered are seen in this photo released on April 24, 2020 in Stockholm, Sweden. *Jonas Hagstrom/Swedish Museum of Natural History/Handout via Reuters*

LONDON - Antarctica conjures images of an unbroken white wilderness, but blooms of algae are giving parts of the frozen continent an increasingly green tinge.

Warming temperatures due to climate change are helping the formation and spread of "green snow" and it is becoming so prolific in places that it is even visible from space, according to new research published on Wednesday.

While the presence of algae in Antarctica was noted by long-ago expeditions, such as the one undertaken by British explorer Ernest Shackleton, its full extent was unknown.

Now, using data collected over two years by the European Space Agency's Sentinel 2 satellite, together with on-the-ground observations, a research team from the University of Cambridge and the British Antarctic Survey have created the first map of the algae blooms on the Antarctic Peninsula coast.

"We now have a baseline of where the algal blooms are and we can see whether the blooms will start increasing as the models suggest in the future," Matt Davey of the University of Cambridge's Department of Plant Sciences told Reuters.

Mosses and lichens are considered the dominant photosynthetic organisms in Antarctica - but the new mapping found 1,679 separate algal blooms that are a key component in the continent's ability to capture carbon dioxide from the atmosphere.

"The algal blooms in Antarctica are equivalent to about the amount of carbon that's being omitted by 875,000 average UK petrol car journeys," Davey said. "That seems a lot but in terms of the global carbon budget, it's insignificant.

"It does take up carbon from the atmosphere but it won't make any serious dent in the amount of carbon dioxide being put in the atmosphere at the moment."

Green is not the only splash of color in Antarctica. Researchers are now planning similar studies on red and orange algae, although that is proving harder to map from space.

Source: <https://news.abs-cbn.com/overseas/05/20/20/climate-change-turning-antarctic-snow-green?fbclid=IwAR0Ftux5Qf927EkOaUtWd6SqFX01EXQbilcOyI5PK8KGHjFFxQ3GbIRCfbl>

Study: World carbon pollution falls 17% during
TITLE: pandemic peak

PAGE 1/ 1/2

May 21, 2020
DATE

Study: World carbon pollution falls 17% during pandemic peak

[Associated Press](#) / 05:48 AM May 21, 2020



BETHESDA, Maryland — The world cut its daily carbon dioxide emissions by 17 percent at the peak of the pandemic shutdown last month, a new study found.

But with life and heat-trapping gas levels inching back toward normal, the brief pollution break will likely be “a drop in the ocean” when it comes to climate change, scientists said.

In their study of carbon dioxide emissions during the coronavirus pandemic, an international team of scientists calculated that pollution levels are heading back up—and for the year will end up between 4 percent and 7 percent lower than 2019 levels. That’s still the biggest annual drop in carbon emissions since World War II.

US, China reductions

It’ll be 7 percent if the strictest lockdown rules remain all year long across much of the globe, 4 percent if they are lifted soon.

For a week in April, the United States cut its carbon dioxide levels by about one-third. China, the world’s biggest emitter of heat-trapping gases, sliced its carbon pollution by nearly a quarter in February, according to a study on Tuesday in the journal *Nature Climate Change*. India and Europe cut emissions by 26 percent and 27 percent respectively.

The biggest global drop was from April 4 through April 9 when the world was spewing 18.7 million tons of carbon pollution a day less than it was doing on New Year’s Day.

Such low global emission levels haven’t been recorded since 2006. But if the world returns to its slowly increasing pollution levels next year, the temporary reduction amounts to “a drop in the ocean,” said study lead author Corinne LeQuere, a climate scientist at the University of East Anglia.

“It’s like you have a bath filled with water and you’re turning off the tap for 10 seconds,” she said.

Study: World carbon pollution falls 17% during
TITLE: pandemic peak

PAGE 1/ 2/2

May 21, 2020
DATE

By April 30, the world carbon pollution levels had grown by 3.3 million tons a day from its low point earlier in the month. Carbon dioxide stays in the air for about a century.

'A simple truth'

Outside experts praised the study as the most comprehensive yet, saying it shows how much effort is needed to prevent dangerous levels of further global warming.

“That underscores a simple truth: Individual behavior alone ... won't get us there,” Pennsylvania State University climate scientist Michael Mann, who wasn't part of the study, said in an email. “We need fundamental structural change.”

If the world could keep up annual emission cuts like this without a pandemic for a couple of decades, there's a decent chance Earth can avoid warming another 1.8 degrees (1 degree Celsius) of warming from now, study authors said. But getting the type of yearly cuts to reach that international goal is unlikely, they said.

If next year returns to 2019 pollution levels, it means the world has only bought about a year's delay in hitting the extra 1.8 degrees (1 degree Celsius) of warming that leaders are trying to avoid, LeQuere said. That level could still occur anywhere from 2050 to 2070, the authors said.

Authoritative estimate

The study was carried out by Global Carbon Project, a consortium of international scientists that produces the authoritative annual estimate of carbon dioxide emissions.

They looked at 450 databases showing daily energy use and introduced a measurement scale for pandemic-related societal “confinement” in its estimates.

Nearly half the emission reductions came from less transportation pollution, mostly involving cars and trucks, the authors said. By contrast, the study found that drastic reductions in air travel only accounted for 10 percent of the overall pollution drop.

In the United States, the biggest pollution declines were seen in California and Washington with plunges of more than 40 percent.

Global CO2 emissions to drop 4-7% in 2020, but will it matter?

Published May 20, 2020, 2:19 PM

By *Agence France-Presse*

Global CO2 emissions from fossil fuels are set to drop by up to seven percent in 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic, but even this dramatic decline — the sharpest since WWII — would barely dent longterm global warming, researchers reported Tuesday.



Population confinement has led to drastic changes in energy use and CO2 emissions. (AFP/File / INA FASSBENDER / MANILA BULLETIN)

In early April, coronavirus lockdowns led to a 17 percent reduction worldwide in carbon pollution compared to the same period last year, according to the first peer-reviewed assessment of the pandemic's impact on CO2 emissions, published in *Nature Climate Change*.

Four countries or blocs — China, the United States, the European Union and India — accounted for two-thirds of the downturn across the first four months of 2020, equivalent to more than one billion tonnes of CO2.

Total emissions from industry and energy last year came to a record 37 billion tonnes.

“Population confinement has led to drastic changes in energy use and CO2 emissions,” said lead author Corinne Le Quere, a professor at the Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research at the University of East Anglia.

“These extreme decreases are likely to be temporary, however, as they do not reflect structural changes in the economic, transport or energy systems.”

If the global economy recovers to pre-pandemic conditions by mid-June — an unlikely scenario — CO2 emissions in 2020 are projected to drop only four percent, Le Quere and her team calculated.

But if lockdown restrictions persist throughout the year, the decline will be around seven percent.

With nearly five million confirmed infections and 320,000 deaths, the COVID-19 pandemic has deflected attention from the climate crisis that dominated global concerns in 2019.

But the climate threat remains, other experts warn.

“This will make barely a dent in the ongoing build-up of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere,” said Richard Betts, head of climate impacts research at Britain's Met Office Hadley Centre.

Source: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/05/20/global-co2-emissions-to-drop-4-7-in-2020-but-will-it-matter/>

Global CO2 emissions will drop 7%



Published 6 hours ago
on May 21, 2020 02:20 AM
By **Agence France-Presse**



A coal power plant of German energy giant RWE in Weisweiler, western Germany, on January 29, 2020. © Ina Fassbender, AFP

PARIS, France (AFP) — Global CO2 emissions from fossil fuels are set to drop by up to seven percent in 2020 because of the coronavirus pandemic, but even this dramatic decline — the sharpest since WWII — would barely dent longterm global warming, researchers reported Tuesday.

In early April, coronavirus lockdowns led to a 17-percent reduction worldwide in carbon pollution compared to the same period last year, according to the first peer-reviewed assessment of the pandemic's impact on CO2 emissions, published in Nature Climate Change.

Four countries or blocs — China, the United States, the European Union and India — accounted for two-thirds of the downturn across the first four months of 2020, equivalent to more than one billion tonnes of CO2.

Feared to be extinct, blue bee spotted in Florida

Published May 20, 2020, 2:00 PM

By **Gabriela Baron**

An ultra-rare blue calamitha bee, researchers feared to be extinct, was spotted in Florida, United States.



(Photo courtesy of Chase Kimmel/Florida Museum)

The metallic navy insect was last seen four years ago and had only been recorded in four locations. The blue bee was rediscovered by a researcher from the Florida Museum of Natural History.

“I was open to the possibility that we may not find the bee at all so that first moment we spotted it in the field was really exciting,” Chase Kimmel, a postdoctoral researcher, said in a news release.

Kimmel is working on a two-year research project to determine the blue calamitha bee’s current population status and distribution, as well as nesting and feeding habits.

Kimmel’s initial goal was to find the bee, which was last seen in 2016. He recorded it in three of its previously known locations and six additional places up to 50 miles away. The objective over the next year is to record the bee in as many locations as possible to determine its range and increase understanding of its biology.

The blue calamintha is a solitary bee, creating individual nests instead of hives like honeybees.

Rare, endangered animals increasing in Cambodia



By [KHMER TIMES](#)

May 21, 2020

PHNOM PEHN: Cambodia had observed noticeable increase of wildlife presence, including rare and endangered species, at Virachey National Park in the last five years, according to the Ministry of Environment.

The observation has been scientifically confirmed over 13 months, from April 2019 to April 2020, camera trapping by the ministry's park rangers whose results were revealed recently.

Virachey National Park lies in north-eastern Cambodia encompassing an area of about 3,380 kilometres of Ratanakiri and Stung Treng provinces, and is considered as one of only two Cambodian Association of Southeast Asian Nations heritage parks.

Secretary of State and spokesman at the Ministry of Environment Neth Pheaktra shared that the 12 trapping cameras installed had identified vulnerable animal species with high risk of endangerment in the wild globally such as cloud tiger, bear, serow, gaur and hornbill.

They also captured the near threatened ones including mouse deer, fallow deer, boar and silver pheasant.

The existence of wild animals is crucial ecologically, genetically, socially, economically, scientifically, educationally and culturally, and in connection to human livelihood and sustainable development, underlined Pheaktra.

The Royal Government of Cambodia has been taking tough measures to promote wildlife conservation and prevention of forest hunting and trafficking.

Country wide, rangers have been stationed in all sanctuaries, and as affirmed by the ministry's spokesman, they are carrying out their duty and demonstrated honourable sacrifice in a highly responsible manner.

Their work was ensuring biological balance not only for Cambodia, but also the whole world, he added.

Cambodia's national biodiversity report indicates the attendance of 123 mammals, 545 birds, 88 reptiles, and 2,308 fish species.

Monkeys develop virus immunity after infection, vaccine: studies

Published May 21, 2020, 5:41 AM

By *Agence France-Presse*

Two studies on monkeys published on Wednesday offer hope that humans can develop protective immunity to the novel coronavirus.

The studies, published in the journal *Science*, looked at a prototype vaccine and whether infection with SARS-CoV-2 provides immunity against re-exposure.

Both questions are critical as researchers tackle the virus, which has infected nearly five million people around the world and caused more than 325,000 deaths.

The studies were carried out on rhesus macaque monkeys to see whether they develop protective virus immunity from natural infection or from a vaccine.

“The global COVID-19 pandemic has made the development of a vaccine a top biomedical priority, but very little is currently known about protective immunity to the SARS-CoV-2 virus,” said senior author Dan Barouch, director of the Center for Virology and Vaccine Research at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston.

“In these two studies, we demonstrate in rhesus macaques that prototype vaccines protected against SARS-CoV-2 infection and that SARS-CoV-2 infection protected against re-exposure,” Barouch said.

In one study carried out by Barouch and other researchers, nine adult rhesus macaque monkeys were infected with the virus.

The monkeys developed COVID-19 symptoms but created protective antibodies and recovered after a few days.

To test their immunity, they were exposed to SARS-CoV-2 again 35 days later for what is called a “re-challenge”, and they showed few to no symptoms.

The authors of the study cautioned that further research will be needed because of the “important differences” between SARS-CoV-2 infection in monkeys and humans.

“Rigorous clinical studies will be required to determine whether SARS-CoV-2 infection effectively protects against SARS-CoV-2 re-exposure in humans,” they said.

The second study, involving many of the same researchers and led by Jingyou Yu, involved vaccinating 35 adult macaques with DNA vaccine candidates designed to generate protective antibodies.

They were exposed to the coronavirus six weeks later and had developed levels of antibodies in the blood sufficient to neutralize it, the study found.

The levels of antibodies, it said, were similar to those seen in humans recovering from the virus, providing hope that an effective human vaccine can be developed.

“Further research will need to address the important questions of the durability of protective immunity and the optimal vaccine platforms for a SARS-CoV-2 vaccine for humans,” the authors of the study said.

Source: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/05/21/monkeys-develop-virus-immunity-after-infection-vaccine-studies/>

Thailand says it expects coronavirus vaccine next year after tests in mice

Published May 20, 2020 4:25pm

BANGKOK - Thailand expects to have a vaccine for the novel coronavirus ready next year, a senior official said on Wednesday, after finding positive trial results in mice.

Thailand will begin testing the mRNA (messenger RNA) vaccine in monkeys next week after successful trials in mice, said Taweessin Wisanuyothin, spokesman for the government's Centre for COVID-19 Situation Administration.

"The Thai vaccine is expected to be used next year," he said.

More than 100 potential vaccines for COVID-19, the disease caused by the novel coronavirus, are being developed, including several in clinical trials, but the World Health Organization in April had warned that a vaccine would take at least 12 months.

The Thai vaccine is being developed by the National Vaccine Institute, the Department of Medical Science and Chulalongkorn University's vaccine research center.

Messenger RNA prompts body cells to produce so-called antigens, molecules on the surface of viruses, that spur the immune system into action.

Thailand was ranked fifth globally, just ahead of South Korea, for rapid response to and mitigation of the spread of an epidemic in the Johns Hopkins Global Health Security Index report in 2019.

U.S. drugmaker Moderna Inc's experimental COVID-19 vaccine, the first to be tested in the United States, produced protective antibodies in a small group of healthy volunteers, according to very early data released by the company on Monday.

Drugmakers such as Johnson & Johnson and Pfizer Inc , which is working with Germany's BioNTech SE, are also working to develop vaccines for the novel coronavirus.

Thailand, the first country outside China to detect a case of the coronavirus in January, wants to be one of the first to have a vaccine ready for use, Taweessin said.

Thailand has reported a total of 3,034 cases of the coronavirus and 56 deaths. **-Reuters**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/world/739034/thailand-says-it-expects-coronavirus-vaccine-next-year-after-tests-in-mice/story/>