

# DENR execs, staff undertake COVID-19 aid project

May 21, 2020

By Joel dela Torre

People's Journal

**THE Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) has distributed P218,000 worth of personal protective equipment (PPE) and grocery packs to doctors, nurses and medical staff of five government hospitals in Quezon City.**

According to Undersecretary for Priority Projects Jonas Leones, the aid was part of the second phase of ComPassion Project, a community outreach initiative of DENR career officials and employees for government hospitals fighting the deadly COVID-19 pandemic.

Recipients were medical frontliners at the East Avenue Medical Center, Lung Center of the Philippines, National Kidney and Transplant Institute, Philippine Heart Center and Philippine Children's Medical Center.

Leones said each hospital was provided with 30 sets of complete overall suit and face shields for doctors and nurses, and 30 sets of laboratory suit with hair and shoe covers and face shields for the support staff.

The medical frontliners were also given grocery packs, which included alcohol and washable face masks.

Leones, who is also the president of DENR Association of Career Executives, said that the Compassion Project was established out of their desire to help those affected by the pandemic.

QC so far has recorded the highest number of corona virus infections in 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," he said.

During the launch of the ComPassion Project on May 11, the DENR donated P300,000 worth of grocery items to 300 low-income families in three Catholic communities in Quezon City—Parokya ng Kristong Hari and Parokya ng MabutingPastol, both in Barangay Commonwealth, and Good Shepherd Cathedral in Barangay Fairview.

Leones said the DENR will continue to provide assistance to pandemic-hit communities and sectors. "We are planning to help the administration by continuing our donation drive," he said.

The DENR ComPassion Project is in coordination with Career Executive Service Board, headed by OIC-Executive Director Hiro Masuda.

Source: <https://journal.com.ph/news/nation/denr-execs-staff-undertake-covid-19-aid-project>

TITLE: Pambihirang panicking puti, nakita sa Samal; unang inakalang sisiw na dinagit ng uwak

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# Pambihirang paniking puti, nakita sa Samal; unang inakalang sisiw na dinagit ng uwak

Mayo 21, 2020 11:22pm GMT+08:00



Pambihirang panicking puti, nakita sa Samal; unang  
inakalang sisiw na dinagit ng uwak

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Sa pag-aakalang sisiw ng alagang manok ang dinagit ng isang uwak, binato at nasagip ng isang residente sa Samal, Davao del Norte ang isang pambihirang paniki na puti ang kulay.

Sa ulat ni Oscar Oida sa GMA News "24 Oras" nitong Huwebes, sinabi ni Gigi Senajonon, na Mayo 10 nang masagip ng kaniyang tiyuhin ang naturang paniki.

"Nakita niya po na may tinangay yung uwak kaya binato niya po yung uwak. Akala niya po yung sisiw ng alagang manok niya po yung tinangay ng uwak," ayon kay Senajonon.

Tinamaan ang uwak ang nabitawan nito ang tinangay na maliit na hayop na puti.

"Nung nilapitan niya po yung (ang inakalang sisiw) doon niya na po nakita yung puting paniki po. Sa tanang buhay po niya ngayon lang po siya nakakita ng puting paniki," patuloy ni Senajonon.

Sugatan umano ang paniki at nagkabutas din ang pakpak nito. Sa isang puno na malapit daw sa kanilang bahay pansamantalang namalagi ang paniki.

Pero nitong Mayo 13, nawala na raw sa puno ang paniki.

Ayon kay Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) undersecretary Benny Antiporda, hindi dapat katakutan ang naturang paniki na isa umanong uri ng fruit bat.

Posible umanong nagkaroon ng genitic abnormality ang paniki kaya ito naging puti o "albino."

Hindi rin daw dapat ituring na malas ang paniki dahil ang katotohanan ay may naitutulong umano sila sa kalikasan dahil naipakakalat nila ang binhi ng mga prutas na kanilang kinakain.--**FRJ, GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/balitambayan/umg/739266/pambihirang-paniking-puti-nakita-sa-samal-unang-inakalang-sisiw-na-dinagit-ng-uwak/story/>





### Palawan Council for Sustainable Development

14 hrs · 🌐

#### ISANG AHAS, NA-RESCUE SA BRGY. STA. LOURDES, PUERTO PRINCESA CITY

Nasagip ang isang reticulated python kahapon, May 20, 2020 bandang 9:00 Ng umaga sa Purok Matahimik, Bgy. Sta. Lourdes, Lungsod Ng Puerto Princesa.

Dahil sa agarang pag-report ni G. Boy Bontogon sa mga kinauukulan, ang nabanggit na ahas na may bigat na 2.5 kilograms at umaabot sa 1.18 metro ang haba ay naisalba ng PCSDS Enforcement Team. Ayon kay Gng. Sarah Alfaro, ang nasabing python ay kumain na ng manok na panabong kaya nakita nila ito.

Agad din dinala ang ahas sa Palawan Wildlife Rescue and Conservation Center (PWRCC) Ng DENR para sa agarang inspekyon at tamang disposisyon.

Ang mga reticulated python o "Sawa" ay natural na nakikita sa timog-silangang Asya. Ito ay naitala na kabilang sa mga endangered species sa ilalim ng PCSD Resolution No.15-521 " 2014 Updated List of Terrestrial and Marine Wildlife in Palawan and their Categories Pursuant to RA 9147 otherwise known as the Wildlife Act") at nararapat na protektahan at pangalagaan.



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# Baguio's water quality improves amid quarantine

By Pigeon Lobien May 21, 2020, 6:32 pm



**BAGUIO CITY** – Baguio's water quality has improved during the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) and now compliant with the standards of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), the City Environments and Parks Management Office (CEPMO) said on Thursday.

CEPMO officer in charge Rhenan Diwas said not only the air but water quality of the city has improved the past eight weeks with a marked improvement that has been observed in the waste-water influent and effluent at the Baguio Sewerage Treatment Plant (BSTP).

The CEPMO-Wastewater, Water and Air Monitoring Division (WAMD) report showed the waste-water influent (raw) in February 2020 reached almost the maximum level at 8,557.18 cubic meters a day, but tests last March showed a drop to 4,369.97 m<sup>3</sup>/day.

The report said that waste-water quality has also improved and now falls within the standards set under DENR Administrative Order 1990-35 (Effluent Standards for Different Water Quality Parameter) and DAO 2016-08 (Water Quality Guidelines and General Effluent Standards), when it failed laboratory results from January to February 2020.

The waste-water improvement is attributable to the decrease in population with the suspension of classes as well as a drop in tourist arrivals, Diwas said.

Another reason is the cancelation of the 25th Panagbenga and the various activities under the Summer Vacation (SumVac) in Baguio that follows the month-long flower festival due to the threat of the coronavirus disease (Covid-19).

"Likewise, the closure of the majority of the commercial activities (restaurants) and limited operation of public market and slaughterhouse was seen as contributory to the less turbid waste-water discharges," Diwas said.

The City Tourism Office record shows that some 540,000 tourists flocked to the city from February to May last year and said the office was hoping that this will be topped as more events were lined up, but were canceled when the ECQ was declared last March 17.

Diwas said that while population and economic activities are the major factors of environmental pollution, these are recognized forces that boost the city's economy.

He suggested that the city should pursue the rehabilitation and upgrading of the 34-year-old BSTP and expand its coverage to other barangays, continue the rehabilitation of sewer lines, improve the septage management system, which includes more septage facility, among others. **(PNA)**

# Angat Dam sets June 1 to irrigate Bulacan farms

By: [Carmela Reyes-Estrope](#) - Correspondent / [@inquirerdotnet](#)

[Inquirer Central Luzon](#) / 04:58 PM May 21, 2020

BUSTOS, Bulacan — Angat Dam will allocate irrigation water for 11 southern Bulacan towns on June 1, according to an official of the National Irrigation Administration.

The National Water Resources Board allowed Angat's operators to discharge 15 cubic-meter-per-second of water for 6,488 hectares of 7,500 farmers in the towns of Angat, Pandi, Bustos, Bocaue, Balagtas, Plaridel, Guiguinto, Bulakan, Calumpit, and Paombong, and the City of Malolos, said Francisco Clara, acting chief of the NIA Water Control and Coordination Unit.

These towns were deprived of irrigation water when the northern farms in Bulacan and Pampanga towns were prioritized, as the dam grappled with its dwindling reservoir.

But NIA stopped sending water to the farms on April 30 to maintain the potable water supply for Metro Manila.

On Thursday, Angat's reservoir level rose to 190.77 meters above sea level (masl) due to rains brought by Typhoon "Ambo" last week. The dam needs more rainwater to reach its high-spilling level of 212 masl.

LZB

Source: <https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1278912/ang-at-dam-sets-june-1-to-irrigate-bulacan-farms#ixzz6N7t5d2ET>

# Duterte extends life of Boracay task force until May, 2021

Updated May 21, 2020, 12:40 PM

By Genalyn Kabiling

The life of the inter-agency task force on the rehabilitation of Boracay Island has been extended until May, 2021 based on an order of President Duterte.



(Tara Yap/ MANILA BULLETIN FILE PHOTO)

In Executive Order No. 115, the President directed the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force to ensure the completion of critical rehabilitation projects in the popular beach destination as well as implement its carrying capacity regulations.

The government task force, formed via Executive Order No. 53 in 2018 to clean up and rehabilitate Boracay, was supposed to be dissolved last May 8, 2020. The latest executive order from the President amended EO 53 to extend the task force's mandate to facilitate rehabilitation and ensure the ecological sustainability of the island.

“There is a need to complete critical projects in pursuant to the Boracay Action Plan such as but not limited to the water drainage system, demolition of remaining establishments situated in forest land and wetland areas, enforcement of beach and road easements, as well as the rehabilitation of the Boracay circumferential Road, and extend the life of the Task Force so it may ensure the implementation of carrying capacity regulations, and continue to carry out its mandate under EO No. 53,” the order read.

“The Task Force shall deemed dissolved on 08 May 2021 unless extended or sooner terminated by the President,” it added.

The Boracay Action Plan includes national and local interventions to ensure the island's rehabilitation over the medium term and sustainable management over the long term towards a world-class tourism destination with a productive, inclusive and climate-resilient economy.

The President said the task force must publish a final accomplishment report, including the implementation of Boracay Action Plan and the total budget use, within 30 days prior to its dissolution.

In EO 115, the President noted that 33 percent of establishments in Boracay have not yet complied with the 25 meter plus 5 meters beach easement as of March 31. At least 27 percent of establishments are also not compliant with the road easement required under existing laws.



Duterte extends life of Boracay task force until May,

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Despite the demolition of 111 structures on wetlands, 227 structures on the beach easement and 896 on the road since the inception of the Task Force in 2018, there are still 723 structures built on forestland blocks, 112 on the beach easement, and 334 on the road easement,” the order read.

The President’s order noted that based on a government study in 2018, the Boracay Island surpassed its carrying capacity by 109.95 hectares for residential structures, 194.90 hectares for businesses with lodging or accommodation services, and 16.95 hectares for other business establishments. The total population carrying capacity also exceeded by 15,836 persons per day.

EO 115, signed by the President last May 11, takes effect immediately.

The popular tourist island was shut down for six months in 2018 to pave the way for massive rehabilitation amid pollution woes. The temporary closure was ordered by the President who claimed the island has become a “cesspool.”



Many Boracay establishments continue to violate

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# Many Boracay establishments continue to violate government's easement rules

By [Ma. Stella F. Arnaldo](#)

May 22, 2020



*File photo: Boracay beach*

TWO years after the closure of Boracay Island, many establishments continue to be noncompliant with easement regulations promulgated by the government.

This was revealed as President Duterte extended the life of the Boracay Inter-Agency Task Force (BIATF) for another year, or until May 8, 2021, through Executive Order (EO) 115, signed by Executive Secretary Salvador C. Medialdea on May 11, 2020, for the President. Duterte's signature was also on the margin of the last page of the document.

On April 26, 2018, the crown jewel of Philippine tourism was closed for six months ostensibly to allow government to rehabilitate the island, world famous for its fine white-sand beach. The BIATF, created through EO 53 in 2018, was supposed to have been dissolved on May 8, 2020.

According to EO 115, "a state of calamity continues to be in full force and effect in the barangays of Balabag, Manoc-Manoc and Yapak [Boracay Island]," in Malay, Aklan.

It added, as of March 31, 2020, as validated by the Task Force, 33 percent of establishments on Boracay Island are not yet compliant with the 25 meters plus 5 meters beach easement.

Also, the Task Force found that "27 percent of establishments have not complied with the road easement," as prescribed by law.

According to the EO, "despite the demolition of 111 structures on wetlands, 227 structures on the beach easement and 896 on the road easement since the inception of the Task Force in 2018, there are still 723 structures built on forestland blocks, 112 on the beach easement, and 334 on the road easement."

The rehabilitation of the wetlands, forestlands and implementation of the easement regulations has been the primary task of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, whose head, Secretary Roy A. Cimatu, chairs the BIATF. The heads of the Department of the Interior and Local Government, and Department of Tourism, are his co-chairs.

DILG primarily oversees the issuance of business permits and licensing aspects of commercial establishments on the island, while the DOT oversees the accreditation of the resorts, as well as the completion of the island's drainage facilities through its infrastructure arm, the Tourism Infrastructure and Enterprise Zone Authority.

Many Boracay establishments continue to violate

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The DOT also monitors the arrivals and departures of tourists on the island to ensure that its carrying capacity is not exceeded. As per a DENR study, the island can only accommodate 17,125 tourists at any given time, per day.

The same study published in 2018 also found that Boracay had exceeded its physical carrying capacity by 109.95 hectares (has) for residences, 194.90 has for hotels and resorts, and 16.95 has for other business establishments. Its total population carrying capacity was similarly breached by 15,736 persons per day.

As per EO 115, there is still “a need to complete critical projects in Boracay Island pursuant to the Boracay Action Plan, such as but not limited to the improvement of the water drainage system, demolition of remaining establishments situated in forest land and wetland areas, enforcement of beach and road easements, as well as the rehabilitation of the Boracay Circumferential Road, and extend the life of the Task Force, so it may ensure implementation of carrying capacity regulations, and continue to carry out its mandate under EO 53.”

The rehabilitation of the island’s circumferential road is the responsibility of the Department of Public Works and Highways.

Boracay residents and businesses have barely recovered from the six-month closure of the island in 2018, but now faces even greater challenges with the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19). Although the island continues to be Covid-free, its tourism industry has been greatly affected by travel restrictions of its key markets abroad.

# Outstanding Environmental Educator Bags 2020 NAST Environmental Science Award

By NAST PHL Published on May 21, 2020

TAGUIG CITY, May 21 -- Her outstanding and significant contributions and research projects in environmental conservation and protection led to Dr. Emilyn Q. Espiritu of Ateneo De Manila University (ADMU) winning this year's NAST Environmental Science Award (NESA) given by the National Academy of Science and Technology, Philippines (NAST PHL), in partnership with the Department of Science and Technology (DOST) and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

Among a number of other outstanding finalists, Dr. Espiritu was chosen with her winning entry entitled "Assessment of quantity and quality of microplastics in the sediments, waters, oysters, and selected fish species in key site along the Bombong Estuary and coastal waters of Ticalan in San Juan, Batangas".

Dr. Espiritu, a pioneer in the field of Ecotoxicology in the country, is a known expert in water quality and water pollution, and for her studies on different environment pollutants, particularly microplastics. Her works have raise awareness and insights on environment pollutants and its effect to the environment.

Dr. Espiritu is currently a Professor at the Environmental Science Department, School of Science & Engineering, ADMU and has been teaching since 1995. She was awarded the Metrobank Outstanding Teachers (Higher Education Category) by Metrobank Foundation in 2013.

As NESA winner, Dr. Espiritu will receive a plaque and Php150,000 cash incentive from NAST and Php 2 Million research grant from the Department of Science and Technology for an approved proposal.

Also to be awarded are the NESA special citation awardees, Dr. Ian Navarrete and Dr. Anthony S.F. Chiu. Dr. Navarrete is recognized for his research entry entitled "The role of reactive iron in long-term carbon sequestration in mangrove sediments: Implications on blue carbon estimates in Philippine mangroves", while Dr. Chiu is recognized for his entry entitled "Resource efficiency of the Philippine economy: A material flow accounting perspective (1955-2016)". They will both receive a plaque and Php 10,000 cash incentive.

The awarding ceremony will be held on July 2020 during the NAST Annual Scientific Meeting together with other NAST Awards. (Dhan Michael L. dela Peña/NAST PHL)

# 50% ang nabawas na polusyon sa hangin sa Maynila

[Danilo Garcia](#) (Pang-masa ) - May 22, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Bumaba ng higit 50 porsyento ang ibinabang polusyon sa hangin sa Maynila matapos mahigit sa dalawang buwang lockdown.

Ito ang lumalabas sa datos ng Asia Blue Skies Program, isang partnership sa pagitan ng Pamahalaan ng Maynila, 3M at Clean Air Asia.

Base sa datos, may average na PM2.5 level ng polusyon sa may Freedom Triangle sa tabi ng Manila City Hall ang naitala mula Mayo 11 hanggang 18 na mas mababa umano ito ng 56% kumpara sa datos mula Enero 21 hanggang Marso 6 bago ideklara ang ECQ.

Sa Rizal Park, nakapagtala rin ng PM2.5 levels na mas mababa naman ng 21% kumpara sa naitala bago ang umpisa ng lockdown.

Lahat umano ng datos ay gagamiting basehan sa pagdeblop ng Manila City's Clean Air Action Plan na inaasahang makukumpleto sa pagtatapos ng taong 2020.





News5

13 hrs ·

"Puro tayo reklamo sa baha pero wala pa din tayong disiplina sa pagtatapon ng basura sa mga kanal at daluyan ng tubig."

'Yan ang paalala ni Taytay Mayor Joric Gacula sa mga residente kasabay ng paghahanda ng kanilang LGU sa tag-ulan. Sinimulan na rin nila ngayong araw ang declogging ng mga ilog, estero at kanal sa kanilang bayan.

📍: FB/Joric Gacula



👍👎👏 870

123 Comments 58 Shares

# Balik Probinsiya Program

[ROSES AND THORNS](#) - [Pia Roces Morato](#) (The Philippine Star) - May 22, 2020 - 12:00am

Everybody is talking about the Balik Probinsiya Program nowadays and I am personally excited to see this come to life. Exciting as this may be, and in such trying times at that, the aim of the program is something that we ought to be communicating as many ask “how” they can take part in such an initiative.

The Balik Probinsiya focuses on creating new sustainable and productive communities and provide safe and decent housing through the promotion of sustainable management of resources while uplifting the community’s social and economic status.

The program consists phases that include the identification of settlers, site preparation, masterplan development, resource mobilization, implementation and monitoring as well as evaluation. It also includes the people’s organization which will be responsible in both management and intervention.

The people’s organization within this program is strengthened and equipped to face the challenges that may arise. We have been talking about sustainable communities for a very long time, and perhaps a pandemic such as COVID-19 is pushing us to actually move toward such a program and, whether the timing is right (or not), I look forward to seeing more locals invest in their hometowns as this is what sustainable communities require.

In the very first place, what exactly do we mean by sustainable communities? Such communities are planned, built or adjusted in order to promote supportable living. Such living conditions include environmental and social issues that are necessary not just for the present but also for the future.

Long term agendas are seen fit in order to manage and maintain the quality of life. In order to have healthy communities with clean air, water and natural resources, long term plans are imperative in ensuring sustainable communities.

The main focus therefore is being able to meet the needs of the present without compromising future generations in meeting their own. Simply put, profit, environmental concerns and social obligations are three main factors that compose a sustainable community and by doing so, people feel safe while every group has a seat at the decision making table.

It is about time and as a people living in a nation that is so wildly rich in resources that we learn to take part in the human, natural and financial aspects in developing sustainable communities.

If we are to talk about investment, it is time we invest in educating ourselves further on how we can take part in such a program.

A good government initiative has been put into place – pandemic or no pandemic. Having said this, more focus will be placed on our local governments nationwide because then, it will be their business to ensure their constituents also participate in growing their communities.

Government alone cannot do this. Civic society must be activated in order to reap the benefits (as well as the tools) that will be passed on for the generations to come. Everyone is accountable. It will take the whole of nation.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2020/05/22/2015620/balik-probinsiya-program>

# Nationwide GCQ possible by August: Palace

By Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos **May 21, 2020, 6:24 pm**

**MANILA** – Malacañang on Thursday floated the possibility that the entire country might be placed under general community quarantine (GCQ) by August.

Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said it is likely possible to impose GCQ nationwide by August, so long as all Filipinos heed the national government's quarantine protocols that have been enforced to arrest the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19).

*"Pero sa ngayon po (For now), for purposes of planning, we're assuming that with (the) cooperation of everyone, pupwede na po na buong Pilipinas ay mag-GCQ (it is possible that the entire Philippines may be under GCQ) by August,"* Roque said in a virtual presser aired on state-run PTV-4.

He broached the idea as he assured the public that the Philippines remains in the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, contradicting Health Secretary Francisco Duque's recent pronouncement that the country is now facing the second wave of the outbreak.

*"We're hoping that by August 24, which is the mandated day para mag-simula ang mga public school, ay nasa GCQ na po ang buong Pilipinas (We're hoping that by August 24, which is the mandated day for public schools to resume classes, the entire Philippines would already be under GCQ),"* Roque said.

In a press statement, the Alliance of Concerned Teachers (ACT) - Philippines said there has been apprehension among parents, teachers, and learners "due to the threat of acquiring or passing onto others the virus."

Roque guaranteed that the government would not jeopardize the life of students amid the Covid-19 crisis.

*"Hinding-hindi po natin ilalagay sa aberya ang ating mga kabataan. Kung kinakailangan pong huwag buksan dahil mataas pa ang mga kaso o nagkaroon ng second wave, eh siguro po magkakaroon ng ganiyang desisyon (We will never put our youth at risk. If it is necessary to suspend school opening due to high cases or a possible second wave, we will do it),"* he said.

Roque said the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID), which makes recommendations to President Rodrigo Duterte on the fate of the nationwide community quarantine, is scheduled to meet on Friday.

He did not mention the IATF-EID's agenda for its next meeting.

Roque, nevertheless, ensured that the government would come up with necessary measures, should the task force decide not to impose GCQ in the entire country by August.

*"Kung hindi po (If [imposing nationwide GCQ] is not possible), we will take the appropriate action,"* he said.

Community quarantine has been implemented in all areas nationwide to stop the further transmission of Covid-19.

Enhanced community quarantine (ECQ), the most stringent community quarantine, has been imposed in Cebu and Mandaue cities until May 31.

Metro Manila Laguna, Bataan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Zambales, and Angeles City have been placed under modified ECQ (MECQ).

The rest of the areas in the country are under GCQ.

The IATF-EID has 10 days to decide on the fate of the ECQ, MECQ, and GCQ nationwide, subject to Duterte's approval. **(PNA)**

Source: <https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1103560>

## Palace: No COVID 2nd wave

May 21, 2020 | Filed under: [Headlines, News](#) | Posted by: [Tempo Desk](#)

By GENALYN D. KABILING

The Philippines continues to deal with the first wave of COVID-19 cases and will take measures to prevent a second wave or another sharp surge of infections, Malacañang declared yesterday, following a different assessment made by Health Secretary Francisco Duque III.

Presidential spokesman Harry Roque made a clarification on the country's coronavirus situation and asked for public apology and understanding if any conflicting statement from some officials caused undue alarm. He assured that the country has actually started to "flatten the curve" of the coronavirus infections this month.

Duque had earlier claimed that the country was actually now on the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic, an announcement that surprised some lawmakers and other concerned groups.

"Tama ang ating Presidente dapat gumawa ng mga hakbang para makaiwas sa second wave. Tayo po ngayon ay nasa first wave...Ang alon tumataas, bumababa," Roque said. "Pasensiya na kayo mga kababayan. Nagsalita na ang Presidente. Kinakailangan na gumawa pa rin tayo hakbang para maiwasan ang second wave. Nagpapaumanhin kami kung kayo ay naalarma pero ang katunayan po ang syiyensya naman po at importante ang pagbasa sa mga waves para alam natin ang gagawin na response. Whether be it a wavelet or a first wave, ang katunayan naman po ang importante na maiwasan ang second wave na mas maraming kaso ang magkakasakit," he added.

Roque, however, clarified that Duque was not necessarily wrong but only gave a "different opinion" of the coronavirus data in the country. He said like in the practice of law, medicine may have one science and data but yield differing interpretations.

"Bakit nasabi ng ilang tao sa gobyerno na tayo ay nasa second wave? Alam ninyo ang medisina para ring abogado 'yan. Iisa lang ang batas namin, iba-iba ang interpretasyon. Ganyan din po siguro sa medisina. Iisa ang siyensya, iisa ang datos, iba ang basa," he said.

Roque explained that the country's first wave of COVID infections started with the arrival of three Chinese infected with the illness last January.

He said the COVID-19 cases ballooned in succeeding few months but started to decrease this May. A wave, he said, is defined as the number of cases over a period of time of community acquired cases.

"Bagamat hindi pa po fully flattened curve, nagsisimula ang pag-flatten ang curve," he said.

Roque said he consulted three health experts – Doctors Esperanza Cabral, Ernesto Domingo, and Minguita Padilla on the matter.

Also rejecting that there is a COVID-19 second wave is Department of Interior and Local Government Secretary Eduardo Año.

He explained that the COVID-19 cases being recorded are still included in the first wave.

Año said the Inter-Agency Task Force will deliberate on the authenticity of the reported second wave of COVID-19 cases in their meeting. **(with a report from Chito Chavez)**



# New checkpoint rules will ease heavy traffic

Published 5 hours ago  
on May 22, 2020 03:40 AM  
By **Kristina Maralit**



The police-led Joint Task Force COVID Shield announced Thursday it will begin implementing tweaks to checkpoints around Metro Manila and other nearby areas where a high volume of vehicles converge as a result of the reopening of the economy.

Philippine National Police deputy chief for operations Lt. Gen. Guillermo Eleazar said adjustments had to be made to ease the congestion at quarantine control points now that more vehicles and people are allowed out following the lifting of some restrictions under the modified enhanced community quarantine and the general community quarantine.

“Modified checkpoints or random checking can be implemented to minimize traffic congestion and public inconvenience,” said Eleazar, who also serves as commander of the task force.

“There are times where we cannot check all vehicles passing thru our fixed checkpoints since this could create monstrous traffic congestion, which will defeat the purpose of partially reopening the economy,” he added.

## Med cert needed for return home — DILG

The requirement that is needed for stranded individuals is a medical certification issued by the city municipal health office.

Published 5 hours ago  
on May 22, 2020 03:50 AM

By [Elmer N. Manuel @tribunephil](#)



A stranded individual should first acquire a medical certification stating that he or she does not pose a health risk before returning home, the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) explained on Thursday.

In a radio interview, DILG Undersecretary and spokesman Jonathan Malaya stressed that the medical certificate should indicate that the concerned individual is free from coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

If the stranded person tested positive for the disease before, the individual must already be negative for COVID-19 after being subjected to two tests before the local government unit (LGU) can allow their return.

“The requirement that is needed for stranded individuals is a medical certification issued by the city municipal health office,” Malaya said. “It should state that the person is not COVID-19 positive and had undergone quarantine.”

The DILG official also noted that the medical certificate is the number one requirement of the “receiving” LGU and it would depend upon the “receiving” LGU if the individual will still be placed under home quarantine upon arriving to a certain locality.

“The medical certification is needed by the receiving LGU and stranded persons should have that or else they will be barred from entering their respective provinces,” he said.

After acquiring a medical certificate, Malaya explained that the individual must also obtain a travel authority from the police so that he or she could pass through certain quarantine control points.

The DILG Undersecretary said if an individual will travel from one town to another, the provincial director will issue the travel authority while the regional director will be the one to issue it if a person will go from one province to another.

For region-to-region travel, the Philippine National Police in Camp Crame must issue the travel authority. Malaya noted that the LGU could process the travel authority but the individual also has the option to process his or her own travel pass by going to local police stations.

According to Malaya, the purpose of travel will be assessed by the police and noted that the said rules are intended for the following locally stranded individuals — students, Filipino local workers, local and foreign tourists and individuals stranded in various localities while in transit.

Source: <https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/05/22/med-cert-needed-for-return-home-dilg/>

**COVID-19 WATCH**

# Palace: COVID test for returning workers voluntary

Published 11 hours ago  
on May 21, 2020 09:15 PM  
By [TDI](#)



Malacanang reiterated on Thursday that local government units (LGU) have no right to require business establishments to have all returning employees undergo coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) rapid testing as a precondition before they are allowed to operate.

In a briefing, Presidential spokesman Harry Roque said that it will be in complete defiance or contradiction to the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE) interim guidelines issued on 30 April stated that testing for returning employees is not mandatory.

This comes after reports said that some LGU are issuing executive orders requiring testing as precondition for employment and for business to operate in their areas.

“We are already in touch with the Department of Interior and Local Government (DILG) because rapid testing should be done voluntarily,” said Roque. “Let me clarify again, employers who wish to have their workers undergo rapid test or PCR test can do so, but to have it as a requirement is prohibited.”

At present, Roque said the DILG is currently communicating with LGU who are imposing the rapid test.

“So nakikipag-ugnayan po ang DILG doon sa mga LGU na nag-i-impose ng rapid test at sinasabi na po nila, hindi kayo dapat mag-require ng ganiyan, unless voluntarily iyong employer ay magbibigay at magbabayad ng ganiyang test,” Roque said.

“Hindi po nire-require ng IATF (Inter-Agency Task Force). At ang DILG ay makikipag-ugnayan na po sa mga LGUs na nagri-require ng testing as a precondition for employment,” he added.

Roque also noted that personnel and employees who are working on businesses already authorized to open or operate in areas under modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) or general community quarantine (GCQ) should not be prevented or restricted by barangay officials to enter their localities in order to serve costumers of sari-sari stores, mini-groceries and households.

“Ang mga nagtatrabaho po sa mga authorized businesses to open be it ECQ or MECQ or GCQ are authorized persons outside of residence. Dapat po huwag silang bawalan dahil kung hindi naman po sila magtatrabaho, sino ang magpapakain sa ating lahat, so dapat po payagan sila.,” Roque said.

He said such order is contained under the IATF Omnibus Guidelines issued on 15 May 2020, which allows most manufacturing distributions and delivery services to resume operations.

On the issue concerning the inability of a number of workers to go to work due to transportation issues, Roque insisted that employers should not yet open for business if they cannot provide shuttle service to their workers.

“Well, alam ninyo po, parang mapagbigyan na nga ang mga employers na hinayaan silang magbukas doon sa ilang mga industriya dahil alam nating napakasakit sa kanila ang nangyayari. Pero ang aming assumption po ay gagawa rin sila ng hakbang para matulungan iyong kanilang mga empleyado na makapasok,” Roque said.

“Alam ko po may mga ilang LGU na nagbibigay din ng shuttle. Pero hindi pupuwede nating obligahin ang gobyerno na magbigay ng ganiyang transportasyon. The rule is po, kung talagang hindi kaya magbigay ng shuttle, huwag na po tayong magbukas ‘no dahil iniwasan pa rin naman natin ang pagkalat ng COVID-19,” he added.



# Service transpo for workers mulled

Published 9 hours ago  
on May 22, 2020 12:05 AM  
By [Michelle R. Guillang](#)



In order to help workers return to their jobs, Senator Richard Gordon proposed that they be provided with service vehicles through the Department of Transportation (DoTr).

He said the government must help companies who cannot provide transportation for their own employees by shouldering half of the transportation expenses.

The other half, Gordon said, should be paid by private companies. He also suggested that the workers should follow a trip schedule.

Furthermore, special passes must be provided to workers coming from places under the general community quarantine who will enter areas under the modified enhanced community quarantine.

Gordon noted that the country's gross domestic product will grow once the workers return to work.

## Infrastructures

The senator urged the Department of Public Works and Highways and DoTr to start implementing contracts for construction under the "Build, Build, Build" program. Gordon believes that Metro Manila can be decongested if the government will begin building industrial parks in the provinces that will also provide numerous employment.

The senator, who is also the chairman of the Philippine Red Cross (PRC), shared that around 70,000 overseas Filipino workers (OFW) have already been tested in the testing centers of PRC.

However, due to countless erroneously encoded data, processing of test results becomes delayed.

Gordon wanted the government to bring in more individuals to help in the encoding and barcoding of samples to quicken the process of tests and results as it is expected that more OFW will be arriving in the country soon.

The senator bared that by next week, PRC will be able to conduct 20,000 tests a day as more labs in different places around the country are almost ready to operate and by next month, they will be able to conduct 44,000 tests a day.

Gordon also mentioned Vietnam's ability to test 27,000 samples per day which contributes to its low number of COVID-19 cases.

"This clearly shows the need for a systematic, well-ordered, and fast testing system to flatten the curve," the senator stated.

They should also be provided with medicines and food good for 14 days, he said.

Gordon further suggested concentrating testing the barangays where there are high numbers of COVID-19 cases.

“There is a need to go house to house in order to identify which households have sick family members, and also to identify whether they already received the cash aid coming from the government, or whether they have other issues that the government can address,” he added.

### **Honda donation**

Meantime, Gordon commended Honda Philippines for donating 104 units of motorcycles, adding that the donation would be very useful for the Red Cross’ COVID-19 operations, blood services and other humanitarian operations.

# PH cannot afford 2nd wave of infections

posted May 22, 2020 at 12:30 am

**"The road to normalization will not be easy."**

It's the Filipino people in general who will decide if the economy can quickly recover from the debilitating effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

If the public immediately shed the protective armor that they consciously wore and used during the lockdown period and proceed with their old habits in reckless abandon, the economy will then have to bear with the second or third wave of infections, where the recovery will be difficult.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas Governor Benjamin Diokno agreed with New York Governor Andrew Cuomo, who earlier noted that flattening the virus curve would depend on how the public would behave during the reopening of the economy.

"A lot of things depend on the behavior of the Filipino people. If we can avoid a second wave or a third wave, the forecast will be steady. That means a U-shaped recovery..., says Diokno said. "But in case there is a second wave, that could mean a W-shaped recovery. That will be much worse than the revised forecast," he said.

The BSP chief, along with the rest of the country's economic team, has been cautiously optimistic on the economic rebound, suggesting certain COVID-19 hotspots can be contained to pave the way for normalization.

The initial reaction of some Filipinos to the modified enhanced community quarantine restrictions, however, is not encouraging. Cavite Governor Jonvic Remulla had to order the temporary closure of all shopping malls in the province following violation of the physical distancing guidelines. The local government official ordered the reopening in the next day after discussing new guidelines with mall owners.

The public must be reminded that they should strictly abide by the strict health protocols imposed by authorities at the start of the lockdown period and consistently practice them under the modified ECQ. The road to normalization will not be easy and may take longer than what the public expect. The economy has already suffered a lot. With millions of Filipinos raring to reclaim their jobs and earnings, the rest of the public should do their share in the road to normalcy.

# Quarantine facilities

May 21, 2020

People's Tonight

**THE raging COVID-19 pandemic is, without doubt, a wake-up call to the government to finally establish fully-equipped quarantine facilities in all the regions across the country.**

Thus, the two-chamber Congress should waste no time in approving a proposed landmark legislation mandating the government to be more proactive in preparing for future pandemics.

In the view of many, our lawmakers can recover lost ground if they speed up the passage of Senate Bill (SB) No. 1259, otherwise known as the “Mandatory Quarantine Facilities Act of 2020.”

Authored by Sen. Bong Go, the proposed measure provides that a regional quarantine facility should be strategically located and easily accessible to a Department of Health-run hospital.

“Let us learn from this COVID-19 experience, ngayon pa lang...ihanda na rin natin ang bansa sa anumang krisis na maaaring dumating,” said Go, a former Special Assistant to the President (SAP).

As proposed by Senator Go in SB No. 1259, the regional quarantine facilities will house high-risk individuals suspected of having infectious diseases, like COVID-19, which originated from China.

Construction of the facilities will be handled by the Department of Public Works and Highways, while the Department of Health will be primarily responsible for their operation, supervision and management.

We share Go’s view that there’s a need to be proactive “at umpisahan nang maglatag ng mga measure na magsisiguro sa ating kahandaan sa mga darating pang krisis na gaya nito.”

The World Health Organization had earlier said that isolating persons who have been exposed to an infectious disease is a long-established public health strategy in order to prevent transmission.

In our view, hastening the approval of the proposed law is not too much of a problem in Congress because our lawmakers – senators and congressmen – are well-meaning leaders.



# House OKs Corporate Social Responsibility Act

May 21, 2020

By Ryan Ponce Pacpaco

People's Tonight

**WITH an overwhelming 209 votes, the House of Representatives on Wednesday, approved the proposed “Corporate Social Responsibility Act”, which seeks to foster sustainable economic development and environmental protection by encouraging corporations to inculcate the value of social responsibility in community development in their organization’s operations and activities.**

Principal author, House Deputy Majority Leader and Pampanga Rep. Juan Miguel “Mikey” Arroyo, said House Bill (HB) No. 6137 defines corporate social responsibility (CSR) as the commitment of a business corporation to contribute on a voluntary basis to sustainable economic development by working with relevant stakeholders to improve their lives in ways that are good for business and society at large.

The bill provides that CSR-related activities include: (a) charitable programs and projects; (b) scientific research; (c) youth and sports development; (d) cultural or education promotion; (e) services to veterans and senior citizens; (f) social welfare; (g) environmental sustainability; (h) health development; (i) disaster relief and assistance; and (j) employee and worker welfare CSR-related activities, among others.

In Arroyo’s explanatory note on the measure, he raised that many corporations and business organizations have shown very little care for the welfare of society, the community where they operate, and the natural environment around them. “Their sole purpose is to maximize their respective returns on investment, totally disregarding the impact of their activities on customers, employees, shareholders, communities and the environment,” he said.

To encourage companies to engage in CSR activities, the bill seeks to amend Section 42 of Republic Act No. 11232 or the “Revised Corporation Code of the Philippines,” by allowing stock corporations to retain profits in excess of the 100 percent of their paid-in capital stock so that it can now be used not only for definite corporate expansion but also for CSR projects and programs.

Moreover, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) shall be mandated to recognize and reward all business organizations for outstanding, innovative, and world-class CSR-related services, projects, and programs. All local government units, where the CSR-related activities are conducted, shall also be directed to provide the necessary assistance to the business organizations to help accomplish these CSR initiatives.

Business organizations shall then submit the list of their CSR activities as part of their periodic report to DTI, Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC), and Department of Finance (DoF).

Affected by the COVID-19 crisis, Malabon Zoo

May 22, 2020

TITLE: struggles to provide food for animals

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# Affected by the COVID-19 crisis, Malabon Zoo struggles to provide food for animals

Published May 21, 2020 12:06pm

Even zoo animals are not spared by the effects of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Under the modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ), parks and zoos are still not allowed to operate, resulting in struggles of owners to provide food and needs of the animals.

In a report on Stand For Truth, Atom Araullo interviewed Malabon Zoo Owner Manny Tangco who shared the challenges they are facing to care for the animals inside amid the pandemic.

"When this lockdown began, we thought that two months lang 'to kaya ko ito sa savings ko tsaka makakahiram ako sa mga kamag-anak ko; nang ma-realize namin na magtatagal pa pala ito."

He continued, "Maski na GCQ na o Modified ECQ, hindi pa rin pwede raw magbukas mga katulad namin."

Malabon Zoo is currently on lockdown to prevent their animals from getting infected with COVID-19.

"Total lockdown po kami, talagang wala po kaming pinapapasok na ibang tao dito sa loob po and all my staff naman po and their families are stay-in. We're always very vigilant to make sure na no illness come in to us," Tangco said.

The Malabon Zoo management is taking extra measures to keep their animals safe, especially after news of animals getting infected with COVID-19 in other countries.

The report said in Hong Kong a dog died after getting a low-level infection of the coronavirus, while a cat contracted the virus in Belgium.

Meanwhile, four tigers and three lions were infected by COVID-19 in a zoo in the U.S.

According to Veterinarian Dr. Rizalina Zunio, the chances of animals getting infected with COVID-19 is very low.

"Yung incident, hindi pa proven na nangyayari nga yun kasi very low yung incident [ng infection] may mga reasons kung pwede mangyari 'yun — talagang sakitin 'yung hayop, mahina yung resistensya nila, originally meron na talagang coronavirus sa aso at pusa."

Citing the World Health Organization, the report said there's no enough evidence that prove COVID-19 can be transmitted to animals.

Affected by the COVID-19 crisis, Malabon Zoo

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Aside from the fear of their animals getting infected with the virus, Malabon Zoo is also struggling to feed the animals, which had led to them calling for donations amid the pandemic.

"Panic mode na kami, so I placed in my gate, 'Please help with your cash donations for the food of zoo animals.'" Tangco said.

Some netizens, like Christian Dale, saw the signage and posted on social media.

As an animal lover himself, he understood the difficult situation the Malabon Zoo management is facing.

"Napadaan ako doon that time, umuulaan pa. Naawa naman ako sa mga hayop paano 'yung mga kakainin nila? Alam ko din naman 'yung cause nun kung wala akong pagkukuhaan ng pera diba?" he said.

"Siyempre po may buhay sila eh, kailangan din nilang kumain," he added.

Tangco said he immediately got calls from so many people after their call for help was posted online.

"There was somebody who told me, 'Manny, I cannot talk much because I'm in tears right now,'" he narrated.

"There are people who are telling me, 'we apologize that we have forgotten about the animals during this time of the COVID-19 virus. We were focusing on the people, the poor people, the hungry people,'" he continued.

As of this writing, Tangco said the animals in Malabon Zoo are being well fed but he said they need to sustain the donations coming in.

"So in the long run for the coming months na we're not allowed to open, they will still provide and be very healthy po," he said.

[The Avilon Zoo in Rizal has also called](#) for help in providing food and veterinary services for its animals. — **Jannielyn Ann Bigtas/LA, GMA News**



## Frontal system at localized thunderstorm, mananaig sa bansa ngayong Biyernes, May 22

May 22, 2020 @ 7:21 AM 2 hours ago

*Manila, Philippines – Makaaapekto ang frontal system sa bahagi ng hilagang Luzon ngayong Biyernes, ayon sa PAGASA.*

*Makararanas ng pag-ulan at maulap na kalangitan ang Batanes, Cagayan kasama na ang Babuyan Islands, Apayao, at Ilocos Norte.*

*Iral naman ang localized thunderstorms sa Metro Manila at nalalabing bahagi ng bansa na magdudulot ng maulap na kalangitan at panaka-nakang pag-ulan.*

*Samantala, nagbabala naman ang PAGASA sa posibilidad ng pagbaha o pagguho ng lupa sa kasagsagan ng buhos ng ulan, kulog, at kidlat. **RNT/FGDC***

Source: <https://remate.ph/frontal-system-at-localized-thunderstorm-mananaig-sa-bansa-ngayong-biyernes-may-22/>



Bills payment, disconnection will depend on ECQ,

TITLE: MECO lifting

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# Bills payment, disconnection will depend on ECQ, MECQ lifting

By [Jonathan L. Mavuga](#)

May 22, 2020



THE Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) Regulatory Office on Thursday said the scheduled payment of water bills, as well as possible disconnection of water service in Metro Manila, depends on the government's decision to lift or further extend the Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ) or Modified ECQ.

Patrick Ty, chief of the MWSS Regulatory Office, said the decision allowing private water contractors, Manila Water Company, Inc. and Maynilad Water Services, Inc., to start billing and collecting payments by June 1, 2020 was based on the assumption that the lockdown in Metro Manila and nearby areas covered by their service contracts has been lifted.

Disconnection notices will be issued mid-July and actual disconnections will be done only in August and September, depending on the type of customer.

Nevertheless, Ty assured the public no disconnection will happen while the lockdown is in effect.

He said the MWSS Regulatory Office will reassess the situation should the government further extend the ECQ or MECQ in Metro Manila.

'3-Gives' bill

The MWSS chief regulator is also not keen on supporting the "Three-Gives Payment" bill that will cover water utilities during emergency situations like a public health emergency or the onslaught of typhoons and other natural calamities. The proposed measure aims to break down the unpaid bills during the emergency situation to three equal payments so that the utility service, such as the case of water utility, will not be interrupted.

He said their proposal is to resume reading and billing operation by June 1 upon the lifting of ECQ, and proceed with service disconnection upon failure to pay, under the current Covid-19 ECQ situation. This, he said, will be the recommendation to be submitted to the Senate Committee on Trade and Commerce, which opened hearings on the "3-Gives" bill of Sen. Francis Tolentino on Thursday. The bill mandates utilities to break into three monthly installments the bills of customers that pile up during a national emergency such as the Covid-19 pandemic.

Ty believes water consumers can pay their water bills because unlike electricity, water bills are a lot cheaper or affordable.

Bills payment, disconnection will depend on ECQ,

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Besides, he said water consumers, upon the lifting of the ECQ which is projected to happen on June 1, will be able to resume work and earn.

He added that while read-and-bill operations of both concessionaires will resume in June, service disconnections for lifeline accounts will resume only on August 1 for non-lifeline accounts, and on September 1, for lifeline accounts.

“By that time, I believe the customers will be able to cope with the challenge of paying their bills,” he said in Filipino.

## ERC's move

The Energy Regulatory Commission (ERC) will extend by six months the suspension of bill payments for consumers with a monthly consumption of 200 kilowatt hour (kWh).

At the virtual Senate hearing Thursday, ERC Agnes Devanadera said her office would issue an order to all distribution utilities (DUs) and retail electricity suppliers (RES) Friday.

“We are issuing another one to cover MECQ (modified ECQ) areas,” Devanadera said. “The advisory we are issuing will state that the four-month moratorium will remain applicable to all, but for those residential clients consuming 200 kilowatt per month in MECQ areas, we are extending the suspension of payment dues for six months, to be paid in six months in equal installment upon the lifting of the MECQ,” she added.

The ERC earlier issued an advisory suspending payment in four months, with bills where due dates fall within the ECQ to be paid in four equal installments upon the lifting of the ECQ.

The areas under MCQ include Metro Manila and Laguna. “When we compare, the ECQ and MECQ actually are very little difference. Under both situations, there is no access to public transportation so in the mind of the commission, the daily wage earners, the informal sector, still are not able to be gainfully employed,” Devanadera said.

The Senate Committee on Trade, Commerce, and Entrepreneurship on Thursday began hearing Senate Bill No. 1473 or An Act Institutionalizing an Installment Payment Scheme on Basic Utility Bills During Calamities or the Three-Gives Law.

Committee Chairman Koko Pimentel said, “the idea behind the bill is noble and very relevant.”

The hearing was attended by representatives from the Local Water Utilities Administration (LWUA), National Electrification Administration (NEA), the ERC, National Telecommunications Commission (NTC) and rural electric cooperatives.

The Tolentino bill institutionalizes the response of the government and the private corporations, especially during this pandemic period, by placing a moratorium on electric, water and telephone bills during the entire duration of a state of calamity or emergency.

It proposes that unpaid bills during the state of calamity or emergency be settled in three equal installments.

*With Lenie Lectura*

Source: <https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/05/22/bills-payment-disconnection-will-depend-on-ecq-mecq-lifting/>

Illegal wildlife trade encourages spread of zoonotic

May 22, 2020

TITLE: diseases in Southeast Asia

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# Illegal wildlife trade encourages spread of zoonotic diseases in Southeast Asia

Published May 21, 2020, 10:03 AM

By *Ellalyn de Vera Ruiz*

The Southeast Asian's rich biodiversity and increasing demand from outside are making illegal wildlife trade a "lucrative" business, but is allowing the region to be more vulnerable to "zoonotic" diseases, an international biodiversity expert said.

Around two-thirds of known human infectious diseases globally are "zoonotic," arising from viruses and other pathogens in wild or domestic animals then transmitted to humans. Zoonotic diseases, which include coronavirus disease (COVID-19), also represent 75 percent of new and emerging diseases, ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity (ACB) Executive Director Dr. Theresa Mundita Lim said during a webinar on "Biodiversity and Preventing Future Pandemics" on Wednesday.

Citing an Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) report, Lim said that around 1.7 million of unidentified viruses may still exist in mammals and water birds that can be potentially passed on to humans.

"COVID-19 may not be the last of our pandemics," she said.

She cited that one of the worst pandemics in history was the Black Plague, caused by a bacteria *Yersinia pestis*, in the 14th century. "In the last few decades, however, there has been an increase in diseases that are of viral origin," Lim said.

Diseases that affected the Southeast Asian region like the Nipah (1999), Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome or SARS (2002), Avian Influenza (2003), Reston Ebola Virus (2008), and COVID-19 (2019) all originated from viruses in animals.

## SOUTHEAST ASIA INCREASINGLY VULNERABLE TO ZOONOTIC DISEASES

"Although wild animals have been suggested as the origin of species, most of the zoonotic diseases have been coming from domestic animals. Domestic animals usually act as mixing vessels or disease bridges for otherwise latent or dormant pathogens in wild animal reservoirs. Clearly there is a link to wildlife species," Lim explained.

Humans are at risk from being infected through illegal wildlife trade—an opportunity for contact between humans and wildlife, she said.

"Some of these diseases no longer use domestic species to be transmitted to humans but we are already seeing a possible direct transmission from wildlife, such as civet cats and pangolins, (then) possibly to humans.

Lim cited that the ASEAN Region is only 3 percent of the earth's surface area but 18 percent of all known plants and animals are found in this region. It also has 173,000 kilometers of shoreline that supports a variety of coastal and marine species as well as habitats.

"ASEAN's rich biodiversity and increasing demand from outside the region make illegal wildlife trade a lucrative business. ASEAN is not just a source, but a destination as well and transit point for illegally traded wildlife," she pointed out.

"From poaching, hunting, there are also direct contact with wildlife keeping them as pets, touching/handling them, and consuming them as wild meat," she said.

Lim added that biodiversity is not just about being in contact with the species, but also through management of habitats.

The pressure on ecosystems and habitats, such as encroachment and land use conversion to farms and residential areas, makes people more at risk from being at close contact with wild animals.

Illegal wildlife trade encourages spread of zoonotic

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Lim noted that at the current rate of deforestation at 40 percent, supposedly untouched primary forest maybe lost by 2022.

Through these pressures, she explained that the “roosting area of animals are being disturbed triggering them to move to human populated areas.”

“Coasts and marine pollution, and poorly planned coastal and marine development also increase interaction of human habitation with wildlife, such as waterbirds.

“We are now seeing that the depletion of population may eventually impact on the built up of resistance of these population from emerging infectious diseases that may affect them. Therefore it decreases their capacity to withstand infectious diseases pathogens in the future that may affect humans,” Lim said.

“The decline in the number of species can trigger spillover of viruses that are dormant or inactive leading to their transmission to both domestic animals and humans. This grim data should serve as a warning to all of us that the depletion of our wildlife population increases that possibility of virus spilling over to humans,” she added.



# Wuhan forbids eating wild animals

Published 7 hours ago  
on May 22, 2020 02:10 AM  
By GLOBALTIME



Photo taken in April, 2020 shows vendors at the Baishazhou market, the biggest farm produce market in Wuhan, Central China's Hubei Province. Photo: Li Hao/GT

WUHAN, China (Global Times) — Wuhan bans eating and hunting wild animals as well as illegal wildlife trade, according to a new regulation released on the official website of Wuhan government on Wednesday.

The regulation stipulated that wild animals and their products that are banned from consumption include all terrestrial wildlife — animals that are on the national and Hubei provincial preservation lists, as well as animals that naturally grow and reproduce in the wild environment and artificially bred and propagated wild animals.

The regulation includes precious aquatic wild animals under national key protection and endangered aquatic wild animals. It also includes other wild animals that are prohibited from consumption by laws and regulations.

# Turtles get boost as Malaysian state to ban egg trade

posted May 21, 2020 at 05:45 pm

by [AFP](#)

A Malaysian state that is a major nesting site for turtles will ban the trade in their eggs, authorities said Thursday, in a boost for the threatened creatures.



*A vendor poses with turtle eggs for sale at a market in Kuala Terengganu on May 21, 2020. - A Malaysian state that is a major turtles nesting site will ban the trade in their eggs, authorities said May 21, 2020, in a major boost for the rare creatures. STR / AFP*

Turtles regularly crawl ashore to lay their eggs on beaches in northeastern Terengganu state, and the spectacle of babies hatching and scurrying into the sea is a major draw for tourists.

But numbers have declined rapidly over the decades as they are hunted for their meat and shells, while rampant poaching of their eggs is also a major threat.

Despite pressure from conservation groups, Terengganu continued to allow the trade in some species' eggs, which are a popular local delicacy and are sold openly in markets.

But authorities have decided to ban all egg trade by the end of the year due to a "sharp decline in arrivals of all types of turtle species in Terengganu," Azman Ibrahim, a senior politician in the state, told AFP.

"It is hoped that we can save marine life, protect the environment and help boost tourism revenue for the state."

He gave no indication of the proposed penalties for breaking the ban.

Terengganu, with a long coastline along the South China Sea, is the biggest nesting centre for turtles in peninsular Malaysia.

But it has seen a sharp fall in arrivals of Hawksbill and Olive Ridley turtles -- two of the main species -- said Azman.

The sale of critically endangered Leatherback turtles' eggs had already been banned after massive declines in the number of creatures coming ashore to nest.

Elizabeth John, a spokeswoman for wildlife trade watchdog Traffic, hailed the proposed ban as "a critical move to safeguard marine turtles".

Mohamad Uzair Rusli, a biologist working on saving sea turtles, also welcomed the "bold move" but warned that the rules must be strictly implemented.

Enforcing a ban may be difficult -- selling and eating eggs is part of local culture in Terengganu, where some consider them aphrodisiacs.

Malaysia's states make their own laws relating to turtles and others, including Sabah and Sarawak on Borneo island, had already banned the sale of eggs.

Source: <https://www.manilastandard.net/index.php/news/world-news/324225/turtles-get-boost-as-malaysian-state-to-ban-egg-trade.html>

# Turtles get boost as Malaysian state to ban egg trade

Published 16 hours ago  
on May 21, 2020 04:54 PM  
By **Agence France-Presse**



A Malaysian state that is a major nesting site for turtles will ban the trade in their eggs, authorities said Thursday, in a boost for the threatened creatures.

Turtles regularly crawl ashore to lay their eggs on beaches in northeastern Terengganu state, and the spectacle of babies hatching and scurrying into the sea is a major draw for tourists.

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Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia | AFP | Thursday 5/21/2020 – 16:15 UTC+8 | 347 words

A Malaysian state that is a major nesting site for turtles will ban the trade in their eggs, authorities said Thursday, in a boost for the threatened creatures.

Turtles regularly crawl ashore to lay their eggs on beaches in northeastern Terengganu state, and the spectacle of babies hatching and scurrying into the sea is a major draw for tourists.

But numbers have declined rapidly over the decades as they are hunted for their meat and shells, while rampant poaching of their eggs is also a major threat.

Despite pressure from conservation groups, Terengganu continued to allow the trade in some species' eggs, which are a popular local delicacy and are sold openly in markets.

But authorities have decided to ban all egg trade by the end of the year due to a "sharp decline in arrivals of all types of turtle species in Terengganu," Azman Ibrahim, a senior politician in the state, told AFP.

"It is hoped that we can save marine life, protect the environment and help boost tourism revenue for the state."

He gave no indication of the proposed penalties for breaking the ban.

Terengganu, with a long coastline along the South China Sea, is the biggest nesting centre for turtles in peninsular Malaysia.

But it has seen a sharp fall in arrivals of Hawksbill and Olive Ridley turtles — two of the main species — said Azman.

The sale of critically endangered Leatherback turtles' eggs had already been banned after massive declines in the number of creatures coming ashore to nest.

Elizabeth John, a spokeswoman for wildlife trade watchdog Traffic, hailed the proposed ban as “a critical move to safeguard marine turtles”.

Mohamad Uzair Rusli, a biologist working on saving sea turtles, also welcomed the “bold move” but warned that the rules must be strictly implemented.

Enforcing a ban may be difficult — selling and eating eggs is part of local culture in Terengganu, where some consider them aphrodisiacs.

Malaysia's states make their own laws relating to turtles and others, including Sabah and Sarawak on Borneo island, had already banned the sale of eggs.



Snow is turning green in Antarctica –and climate

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# Snow is turning green in Antarctica -- and climate change will make it worse

By Amy Woodyatt, CNN

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(CNN) - Green snow created by blooming algae in the Antarctic Peninsula is likely to spread as temperatures increase as a result of climate change, researchers have said, after creating the first large-scale map of the organisms and their movements.

Satellite data gathered between 2017 and 2019, combined with on-the-ground measurements over two summers in Antarctica, allowed scientists to map the microscopic algae as they bloomed across the snow of the Antarctic Peninsula.

Warming temperatures could create more "habitable" environments for the algae, which need wet snow to grow in, researchers told CNN.

Green snow alga is microscopic when measured individually, but when the organisms grow simultaneously, they turn the snow bright green, and can even be spotted from space, researchers said in a study published in the Nature Communications journal on Wednesday.

Researchers from the University of Cambridge and the British Antarctic Survey used European Space Agency satellite data with measurements from Antarctica's Ryder Bay, Adelaide Island, the Fildes Peninsula and King George Island.

Patches of green snow algae can be found along the Antarctic coastline, usually in "warmer" areas, where average temperatures are a little above zero degrees Celsius during the Southern Hemisphere's summer months of November to February.

The Antarctic Peninsula is the part of the region that has experienced the most rapid warming in the latter part of the last century, researchers say.

Unusually high temperatures were recorded in February, while a nine-day heatwave scorched the continent's northern tip earlier this year.

Scientists identified 1,679 separate blooms of green algae on the snow surface, covering an area of 1.9 km<sup>2</sup> -- which equates to a carbon sink of around 479 tons per year. A carbon sink is a reservoir that absorbs more carbon than it releases.

Researchers believe the organisms will expand as global temperatures increase.

"As Antarctica warms, we predict the overall mass of snow algae will increase, as the spread to higher ground will significantly outweigh the loss of small island patches of algae," Dr Andrew Gray, lead author of the paper, and a researcher at the University of Cambridge, said in a statement.

He told CNN that rising temperatures would create more "habitable" environments for the algae.

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However, while an increase in snow melt could lead to more algae growing, Gray told CNN that the distribution of the organisms is heavily linked to bird populations, whose excrement acts as a fertilizer to accelerate growth.

As bird -- particularly penguin -- populations are affected by warming temperatures, "the snow algae could lose sources of nutrients to grow," he said.

An increase in the blooms could also lead to further snow melt, he said.

"It's very dark -- a green snow algal bloom will reflect about 45% of light hitting it whereas fresh snow will reflect about 80% of the light hitting it, so it will increase the rate of snow melt in a localized area," he explained.

Researchers found that almost two thirds of the blooms were on small, low lying islands, and said that as the Antarctic Peninsula warms due to rising global temperatures, these islands could lose their summer snow cover and algae -- although in terms of mass the majority of snow algae is found in areas where they can spread to higher ground when snow melts.