

# DENR: Environment Month celebrations to be held online

Published May 30, 2020, 6:08 PM

By *Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz*

For the first time in three decades, the Philippines will be shifting to an all-digital celebration of Environment Month in light of the continuing threat posed by coronavirus disease (COVID-19). The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) on Saturday (May 30) said it has decided to move all its activities online for the annual event held in June in adherence to physical distancing and quarantine measures.

DENR Secretary Roy Cimatu said the month-long celebration should serve as an opportunity to reflect on the importance of a cleaner environment as people around the world start adapting to the so-called “new normal” amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cimatu pointed out that the coronavirus restrictions resulted in positive environmental changes, such as improved air and water quality, resurgence of wildlife, and renewed interest in urban gardening for food security and sustainability.

“The stay-at-home orders and other restrictions have somehow allowed our environment to quietly return to its natural pristine state, and we hope these positive environmental changes will form part of the new normal,” Cimatu said.

By virtue of Proclamation No. 237 signed in 1988 by then-President Corazon Aquino, June was declared Philippine Environment Month to raise environmental consciousness among Filipinos. The celebration coincides with World Environment Day, which is observed on June 5.

DENR’s Environmental Management Bureau has lined up a number of virtual activities to mark the 32nd Philippine Environment Month, with the theme: “Protect Nature. Sustain our Future. #HealNature4Our Future.”

Among these are the “Greenviro Games” or online learning games like trivia quizzes, crossword puzzles, word searches, and bingo; online storytelling for kids on June 12, featuring stories on environmental awareness and the protection of nature; and “Sing for the Earth,” a “Kantakalikasan” jam session, as well as “Envileague,” an environmental comic hero design contest.

# Illegal logging items seized in Region 4-A

Published May 30, 2020, 3:18 PM

By *Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz*

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Region 4-A has seized illegally sourced lumber, charcoal, and other illegal logging equipment that were found in a protected area in Rizal.



Department of Environment and Natural Resources (MANILA BULLETIN)

Through the Rizal Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office (PENRO), 350 board feet of lumber, 104 sacks of charcoal, and five units of illegal logging equipment, with an estimated value of P102,370 have been recently confiscated.

The forest products and equipment found within a protected area were proclaimed as abandoned and are currently in the custody of the PENRO Rizal for safekeeping. An administrative confiscation proceeding headed by PENRO Rizal will be conducted for appropriate storage and disposal of the seized items.

DENR-Regional Executive Director Gilbert Gonzales has called on the PENROs and City Environment and Natural Resources Offices to strictly monitor the protected areas in their jurisdiction especially during the community quarantine.

Anyone who will be caught cutting and transporting forest products without the necessary permits will be charged for violation of Section 77 of the Republic Act (RA) 7161, formerly Section 68, Presidential Decree 705 or the Revised Forestry Code of the Philippines. The use of unregistered chainsaws will also be charged for violation of RA 9175, also known as the Chain Saw Act of 2002. In a related report, the DENR-National Capital Region has donated assorted logs with an equivalent volume of 2,198.40 board feet and estimated value of P114,316.80 to the Regional Mobile Force Battalion of the Philippine National Police-NCR Police Office

The logs will be used to renovate police barracks at Camp Bagong Diwa in Bicutan, Taguig City, and in creating double-deck bunk beds for police frontliners stationed at quarantine checkpoints set up in the boundaries of Metro Manila.

DENR-Regional Executive Director Jacqueline Caanca said the donation is but a small expression of appreciation to the frontliners who work round-the-clock to keep the community safe in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

# Sea otters spotted in Tawi-Tawi

By Albashir Saiden **May 30, 2020, 6:41 pm**



**SEA OTTERS.**

Two sea otters, the first-ever seen in the seashores of Taganak Island, a cluster-component of Turtle Islands, in Tawi-Tawi seem to enjoy the sands in their newly found habitat. Several groups of sea otters were recently seen in different spots of the island. *(Photo courtesy of Lorenzo Maria de Guzman, MD. in Turtle Islands)*

**COTABATO CITY** – At least six small sea otters, a never before seen species in the Philippines, were spotted in the coasts of Taganak Island, a cluster-component of Turtle Islands, in Tawi-Tawi.

Tawi-Tawi's District-1 Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) chief Abdulmukim Maruji said the otters, spotted on the island on May 15, 17, and 20, were identified as smooth-coated otters (*Lutrogale perspicillata*).

"So far, we don't have a record of this species in the Philippines, this is the first time we saw such kind in the country," Maruji said in a report to the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Energy-BARMM here on Saturday.

He added that the particular otter species are existing in Sarawak, Malaysia.

"They (sea otters) might be drifted in the island, they might also be exploring for new habitat because they were disturbed, or looking for food," Maruji said.

He said the newly seen otters play a vital role and adds to the rich biodiversity of Tawi-Tawi but are vulnerable to being endangered.

"If we would not protect them, they might put in danger," Maruji said.

At present, the CENRO is coordinating with the Turtle Islands' Protected Area Supervisor Office under Region 9 and to other concerned agencies to ensure the protection of the creatures.

"While they are in Tawi-Tawi, or whether they stay here for good, we will ensure they will be protected," Maruji said. **(PNA)**

# New otter species in PH seen in Tawi-Tawi

Published May 30, 2020, 8:31 PM

By *Gabriela Baron*

At least six small sea otters of a never-before seen species in the Philippines were spotted on the coasts of Taganak Island, a component island of Turtle Islands in Tawi-tawi.



(DENR Zamboanga Peninsula)

The otters were initially thought to be Asian small-clawed otters, a species endemic to Palawan.

**READ MORE:** [Two Asian small-clawed otters spotted in Tawi-Tawi](#)

However, District 1 Community Environment and Natural Resources Office chief (CENRO) Abdulmukim Maruji ruled this out.

“So far, we don’t have a record of this species in the Philippines, this is the first time we saw such kind in the country,” Maruji said.

He added that the new species can be found in Malaysia.

“They might be drifted in the island, they might also be exploring for new habitat because they were disturbed, or looking for food,” Maruji explained.

The CENRO officer said that otters add to rich biodiversity of Tawi-Tawi, but are vulnerable to being endangered.

He added that CENRO has already coordinated with Turtle Island’s Protected Area Supervisor Office (PASO) under Region IX and other law enforcers to ensure the protection of the sea animals.

“Whether they stay here for good, we will ensure they will be protected,” Maruji said.

Turtle Islands Wildlife Sanctuary said the otters were seen on several occasions on May 15 to 22 at the Taganak seashore.

# Rare sea otters seen in Tawi-Tawi

By [Asangan T. Madale](#)

May 31, 2020

**COTABATO CITY:** At least six small sea otters, a never before seen species in the Philippines, were spotted in the coasts of Taganak Island, a component island of Turtle Islands in Tawi-Tawi. According to the province’s District-1 Community Environment and Natural Resources Officer (Cenro) Abdulmukim Maruji, the otters, spotted on the island on May 15, 17 and 20, were identified as smooth-coated otters (*Lutrogale perspicillata*). “So far, we don’t have a record of this species in the Philippines, this is the first time we saw such a kind in the country,” Maruji said. Maruji said otter species normally exists in nearby Sarawak, Malaysia. “They might have drifted in the island; they might also be exploring for new habitat because they were disturbed, or [they were] looking for food,” Maruji explained. The Cenro officer said otters play a vital role and add up to the rich biodiversity of Tawi-Tawi but are vulnerable to being endangered. The Cenro has coordinated with Turtle Islands’ Protected Area Supervisor Office under Region 9 Zamboanga peninsula) and with other law enforcers to ensure protection of the otters. “Habang nasa Tawi-Tawi sila (While they are in Tawi-Tawi), or whether they stay here for good, we will ensure they will be protected,” Maruji said.

## Two Asian small-clawed otters spotted in Tawi-Tawi

Published May 30, 2020 2:57pm

Two Asian small-clawed otters have been spotted on Turtle Islands in Tawi-Tawi for the very first time!

Sharing on Facebook a video clip of the animals swimming in the waters on Friday, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Region IX said that it was able to document the otters in the vicinity of Taganak Island, a part of the Turtle Islands Wildlife Sanctuary (TIWS) in Tawi-Tawi.

According to TIWS protected area superintendent Minda Bairula, this was the first time the presence of these otter species was recorded in the area.

In Bairula's report, the Asian small-clawed otters, locally known as "hanjing laut," were seen on several occasions between May 15 and



Resident Adzmie Herera told the DENR this was his first time seeing the creatures on their island since he would often see them in Pulau Berhala, an island between Sandakan and Taganak.

Regional Executive Director Crisanta Marlene P. Rodriguez said that since this was the first time these otters were spotted in Taganak, DENR IX will be consulting with the Biodiversity Management Bureau (BMB) to better understand how the species could be protected.

Currently, DENR IX said they are conducting an information campaign among the residents to make sure no one will catch or harm the species.

The agency also teamed up with the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG), Philippine National Police–Taganak and the local government unit to help monitor and protect the otters. – **Kaela Malig/RC, GMA News**

Source: [https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/hashtag/content/740466/two-asian-small-clawed-otters-spotted-in-tawi-tawi/story/?fbclid=IwAR1TrQ-MeQbTjURRuUGbIYNIQKFXOYI00tkI\\_mYEPhHHzp7GBCsZmq1ODAI](https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/hashtag/content/740466/two-asian-small-clawed-otters-spotted-in-tawi-tawi/story/?fbclid=IwAR1TrQ-MeQbTjURRuUGbIYNIQKFXOYI00tkI_mYEPhHHzp7GBCsZmq1ODAI)



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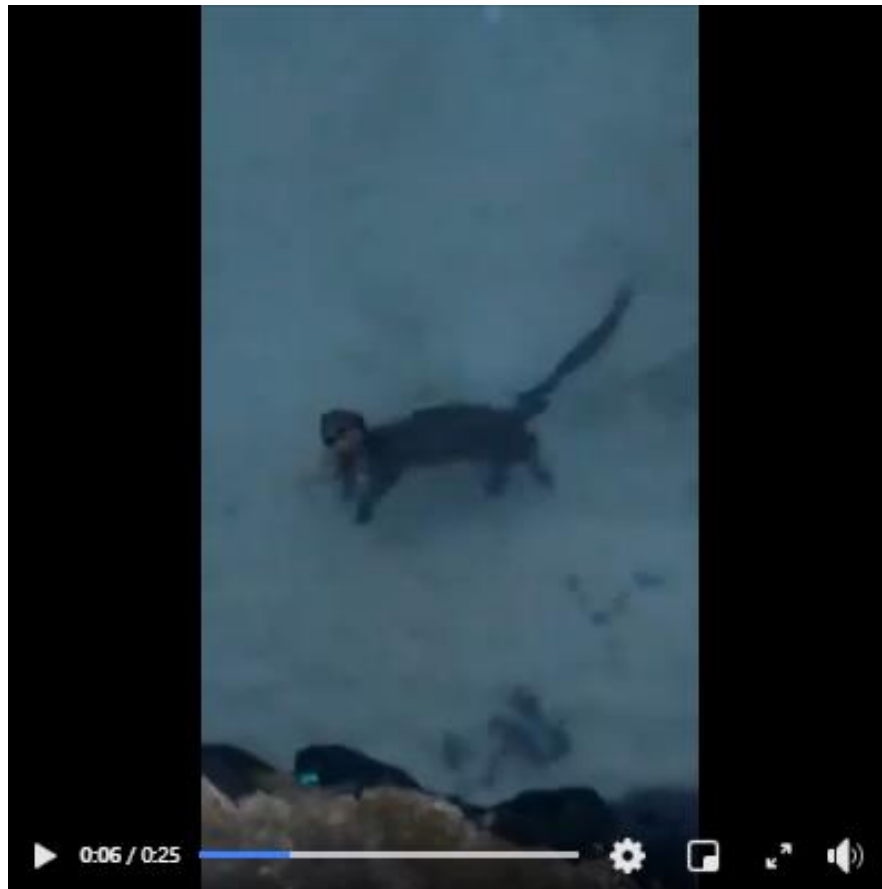
10 hrs · 🌐



Two Asian small-clawed otters were spotted in Taganak Island, a part of the Turtle Islands Wildlife Sanctuary (TIWS) in Tawi-Tawi, for the first time.

According to a report submitted by TIWS Protected Area Superintendent Minda Bairula, the otters were spotted on several occasions between May 15 and 22, 2020. However, it was believed that this was the first time that these species were recorded present in the Turtle Island Wildlife Sanctuary.

The DENR IX will coordinate with the Biodiversity Management Bureau to study the new species and how they can be protected. (Video courtesy of Adzmie Herera and DENR Zamboanga Peninsula)



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### Mga alitaptap sa Masungi Georeserve; Otter, namataan sa Tawi-Tawi

Dumagdag sa ganda ng Masungi Georeserve sa Rizal ang liwanag na dala ng napakaraming alitaptap. Sa Tawi-Tawi naman, namataan sa unang pagkakataon ang isang uri ng otter.

Bisitahin ang [www.gmanews.tv](http://www.gmanews.tv) para sa iba pang mga balita. See Less

COURTESY: MASUNGI GEORESERVE

GMA

“Yung fireflies kasi isa siyang bioindicator species. Ibig sabihin, kung 'yung mga sensitive species na katulad ng fireflies ay nasa isang lugar, all the more 'yung iba pang wildlife na puwedeng tumira doon sa lugar na 'yun.”

**24 WEEKEND** BILLIE DUMALIANG  
ADVOCACY OFFICER AND TRUSTEE, MASUNGI GEORESERVE FOUNDATION

1:03 / 2:29

SA INSTALLATION, PILIIN ANG FACTORY DEFAULT AT PINDUTIN ANG OK SA REMOTE CONTR

COURTESY: ADZMIE HERERA, TURTLE ISLANDS MUNICIPAL POLICE STATION

GMA

"We have been coordinating with the doctors in the Biodiversity Management Bureau unang-una sa pag-identify when it what spotted. Nagkonsulta rin 'yung ating mga kasamahan sa BMB with the experts."

**24 WEEKEND** CRISANTA MARLENE P. RODRIGUEZ  
REGIONAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DENR- ZAMBOANGA PENINSULA

1:39 / 2:29

PIN ANG GMA AT GMA NEWS TV GAMIT ANG UP AND DOWN BUTTONS. HINDI NA PO NINYO KA

COURTESY: ADZMIE HERERA, TURTLE ISLANDS MUNICIPAL POLICE STATION

GMA

"So it was found out nga na it's not the Asian Small-Clawed Otters but it's actually Smooth Coated Otters. So sabi nila this is the first sighting, I think, in the Philippines."

**24 WEEKEND** CRISANTA MARLENE P. RODRIGUEZ  
REGIONAL EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR DENR- ZAMBOANGA PENINSULA

1:58 / 2:29

52-8177 FROM 6AM TO 10 PM. MAAARING MAG-EMAIL SA [signalreception@gmanetwork.com](mailto:signalreception@gmanetwork.com). PUP



# Palace announces updated quarantine classifications, new IATF guidelines

May 30, 2020

Malacañang has announced the updated quarantine classifications in various areas of the country effective June 1 to 15.

Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque disclosed that Metro Manila, Pangasinan, Region 2, Region 3, Region 4A, Region 7, Cebu City, Mandaue City, Zamboanga City, and Davao City will be placed under general community quarantine (GCQ).

A modified general community quarantine (MGCQ) will be imposed on the remaining parts of the country.

“Ang GCQ po ay iyong pagpapatupad ng mga temporary measures kasama na po ‘yung paglilimita sa galaw at transportasyon, pag-re-regulate po ng ilang mga industriya (The GCQ is the implementation of temporary measures including limiting movement in transportation and regulation of industries),” Roque explained.

“Ang MGCQ naman po, ito po ‘yung transition between GCQ at iyong tinatawag nating new normal. Ang mangyayari po diyan magiging mas relaxed po ang ating mga limitasyon (The MGCQ is the transition between GCQ and new normal. Limitations will be more relaxed),” Roque added.

Roque also said they are now studying the social distancing measures to be observed in jeepneys amid the partial operations of public transportation.

Meanwhile, Roque stated President Duterte has temporarily gone back to his home in Davao City.

“Ang alam ko po ay iyong huling talumpati niya sa bayan ay magaganap po sa Davao. At umaasa rin po ako na isang press briefing natin ay doon po sa Malacanang sa susunod na linggo (What I know is his last public address will be held in Davao. I am hoping that one press briefing will be in Malacañang next week),” he shared.

Report from Mela Lesmoras

## HEADLINES

# IATF eases up on restrictions

The IATF is still studying the Department of Transportation guidelines for the road transport sector for the shift to GCQ.

Published 6 hours ago  
on May 31, 2020 01:05 AM  
By [Tribune reportorial team](#)



Hairy times In spite of continued fears of infection, people may just get brave enough to make their way to barber shops and salons starting 1 June, and the neighborhood cutting crew on Kamuning Road in Quezon City is getting spiffed up in preparation for the resumption of business under the general community quarantine.

Personal grooming, long the concern of residents confined to their homes on account of the lockdown, gets a much-needed reprieve in the shift to a more relaxed restrictive level starting Monday as the Inter-Agency Task Force (IATF) on the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) approved the gradual reopening of barbershops and salons in areas under general community quarantine (GCQ).

Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) Secretary Ramon Lopez revealed that the IATF finally gave the go signal on Friday, pointing out that these establishments would start operating at 30 percent capacity beginning 7 June in GCQ areas and at 50 percent capacity in areas under modified GCQ, which cover most of the country.

Lopez stressed that these establishments should follow first the minimum health protocol standards set by the government to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and to streamline the reopening process, the government will do away with accreditation.

However, Lopez disclosed that the establishments will be checked for compliance with COVID-19 prevention protocol.

“There will be no need for accreditation to remove any bureaucracy in opening, but there will operations audit to be done, and non-compliant shops will be closed down until they correct the deficiencies,” Lopez said.

Under a 30 percent capacity arrangement, Lopez noted that only one of three seats in the barbershops and salons will be initially allowed to be occupied by customers.

In a separate statement, presidential spokesman Harry Roque said that salons and barbershops in GCQ areas will be allowed to increase operations to 50 percent after two weeks from resumption, and those in MGCQ areas to 100 percent after three weeks.

“Earlier opening was reconsidered in recognition of the very strict health protocol that was developed and to be adopted before they can be allowed to operate, to prevent any risk of COVID-19 transmission, as well as the need to start bringing back the jobs of the estimated 400,000 workers in the industry working in over 35,000 shops,” Roque said.



Photograph by Analy Labor/DT

The Palace official also stressed that services allowed will be limited to haircuts.

“Don’t get too excited because services are limited to haircuts. There’s no facial, no nail services, no trimming eyebrows,” he said.

The government earlier eyed an accreditation system for barbershops and salons so that these could reopen in GCQ areas.

Salons and barbershops are prohibited from operating in GCQ areas under the prevailing community quarantine guidelines of the IATF.

Metro Manila will transition to a more relaxed GCQ on 1 June after a 2-month lockdown.

Other areas that will be placed under GCQ from 1 June are regions 2, 3, 4A, Pangasinan, Albay and Davao City. All other areas in the country are expected to transition to MGCQ.



### **DoTr guidelines**

Roque said the IATF is still studying the Department of Transportation (DoTr) guidelines for the road transport sector for the shift to GCQ.

Under the guidelines, from 1 to 21 June, under phase one, only trains, bus augmentation, taxis, TNV, shuttle services, point to point buses, tricycles with LGU clearance and bicycles are allowed. During the phase one, no provincial buses will be allowed in Metro Manila, according to Roque.

Under phase two which will be implemented from 22 to 30 June, PUV buses, modern jeepneys and UV express will be allowed to operate.

Under the guidelines, a one-meter social distance rule between passengers will strictly be enforced inside all mass transport units and PUV. Frequent disinfection of vehicles and the mandatory use of face masks are also required.

Roque also said the DoTr is eyeing transformation of EDSA and plans to dedicate lanes for buses and bikes in EDSA.



TRADITIONAL cuisine is served in this lumad-themed restaurant.

### **Seniors, too**

In another development, the Laban Konsyumer Inc. (LKI) is pushing to allow senior citizens to eat in dine-in food establishments as the government moves to reopen the sector in areas under looser lockdowns.

LKI president Vic Dimagiba stressed that senior citizens can significantly contribute to the recovery of dine-in restaurant businesses.

The consumer group's recommendation stems from the government's directive that those aged 60 years old and above are not allowed to leave their homes since they are vulnerable from contracting COVID-19.

"Why is it that senior citizens are prohibited to go out on all quarantine classifications?" Dimagiba said.

The government, however, allows the elderly to go out if they are working or if they are going to buy essentials, but Dimagiba stressed that the government should carefully consider allowing senior citizens in dine-in establishments since it will not be impossible for them not to comply with the strict protocols set by the DTI.

The DTI has recommended some protocols for dine-in establishments to follow, including the enforcement of a no mask, no entry policy, social distancing protocols of the establishment, regular sanitation schedule and procedures with a 10-minute interval for sanitation in between customers dining-in.

It also includes availability of alternative methods of ordering and picking-up of orders like online or texts, client-personnel interaction protocols, enforcement measures for clients who refuse to comply with the protocols in a manner consistent with the law, floor mat or foot bath with disinfectant and mandatory use of thermal scanner.

### **Religious gatherings**

Justice Secretary Menardo Guevarra, meantime said religious gatherings will be allowed provided proper protocol is observed.

Guevarra said gatherings of religious groups will be allowed up to 50 percent of the capacity of the church.



“Religious gatherings will be allowed up to 50 percent of the capacity of the church or venue in MGCQ areas by 1 June,” Guevarra said.

“As to those in GCQ areas like the NCR, the IATF will host a dialogue between the religious sector and representatives of the LGU on Monday morning,” the justice chief added.

Guevarra said from there the IATF will make a final resolution on the same day.

On Monday the restrictions will somewhat be softened though social distancing will be maintained and the wearing of masks will also be imposed on people.

Malls and other people frequented areas will open though protocols will be in place while public transport will also roll out on a limited basis.

The religious groups have presented the numerous health protocols and other stringent measures that they intend to implement once greater attendance in public worship or religious service is allowed in GCQ areas (at present, only a maximum of 10 persons is allowed).

However, some local govt officials have expressed concern that increasing the number of participants in religious gatherings may spark an upsurge in COVID-19 infections and derail their advancement to a more relaxed MGCQ level.

**Elmer N. Manuel, Keith Calayag, AJ Bajo and Alvin Murcia**  
**@tribuneph1\_lmer @tribuneph1\_kit @tribuneph1\_aj @tribuneph1\_alvi**

# Palace echoes DOH reason on rise in reported cases

May 30, 2020

Malacañang has addressed public concern on the increase of reported COVID-19 cases in the country for the past two days.

Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said that based on the explanation of the Department of Health (DOH), a large percentage of the new data are from backlogs and are not fresh cases.

Roque also made it clear that the use of Fabunan antiviral injections has not yet been approved.

“Importante po kasi na bago maibigay sa publiko ang kahit anong gamot, kasama na po diyan ang Fabunan, ay rehistrado sa FDA (It is necessary that before any medicine is prescribed to the public, including Fabunan, it must be registered with the FDA),” he explained.

“At ngayon po, mayroong cease and desist order ang Fabunan galing po sa FDA, kasi wala pa pong tinatawag na clinical studies (There is now a cease and desist order on Fabunan from the FDA because there are no clinical studies yet),” he added.



# COVID-19 cases in Philippines soar past 17,000

[Ratziel San Juan](#) (Philstar.com) - May 30, 2020 - 8:50pm

MANILA, Philippines (**Update 1, 9:08 p.m.**) — The Department of Health on Saturday announced 590 new cases of coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19), raising the local infection tally to 17,224.

Of which, only 252 cases were classified “fresh” while the remaining 338 were positive results returned “late.”

This week saw 3,447 additional COVID-19 cases on top of the 13,777 recorded as of last Saturday — the most reported in a single week so far.

This comes after the single-day new case record was broken twice this week on Thursday with 539 cases and on Friday with 1,046 cases.

The mean case count for this week is also at a new daily high of 492 on average.

Meanwhile, the country’s recovery count stands at 3,808 after the Health department confirmed 88 more survivors.

A total of 8 new mortalities were also reported, bringing the death toll to 950.

Accounting for the total deaths and total recoveries, the number of active COVID-19 cases in the Philippines is now 12,466.

More than 5.7 million cases of the coronavirus, including around 357,000 deaths, have been logged globally by the World Health Organization in its latest situation report.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/05/30/2017597/covid-19-cases-philippines-soar-past-17000>

# Want to slow down COVID-19 infections? People must behave in the pandemic — former Health chief

By [Vince Ferreras, CNN Philippines](#)

Published May 30, 2020 12:06:24 AM



**Metro Manila (CNN Philippines, May 30)** - Apart from targeted testing, former Health Secretary Manuel Dayrit said the people should understand the consequences of getting infected with COVID-19 to slow down the number of cases.

“Regardless if you are tested or not, you should behave accordingly and not be careless and spread the infection and get yourself infected,” Dayrit told CNN Philippines. “It’s very important for citizens to understand that because you never know how you will get infected.”

During his stint in the Health department in 2003, Dayrit also faced a similar outbreak caused by coronavirus: severe acute respiratory syndrome (SARS).

They only relied during that time to clinical and x-ray check-ups, and isolation of patients, he shared. However, despite the tests being done on COVID-19 patients today, Dayrit said that these are not effective to track the infections.

“Whereas for COVID-19 we have PCR (polymerase chain reaction) and antibody[rapid] tests but even when we have these, they are not perfect. You can have false positive and false negative results,” he said.

Currently, there are 48 laboratories in the country conducting COVID-19 testing.

But unlike SARS patients, Dayrit said people should be more careful because some COVID-19 patients could be asymptomatic.

“One of the things that we want to prevent are super spreading events, where people come together and there is an infected person, perhaps asymptomatic or perhaps symptomatic,” he said. “In that event, a number of cases could actually occur because the transmission spread to them.”

The country has now recorded [more than 16,000 cases](#) with around 3,700 recoveries and 900 deaths.

He said that the government or the private sector could make a way to convince people to act with extra precaution during the pandemic.

“We can only keep persuading people. We can only get them to understand that if they get infected that they would be lucky if it’s only a mild infection and they can walk away from it,” he said.

“This is the only way I think we can slow down the infection and not spend so much money doing what we have to do to test as many people as we can,” added Dayrit.

Source: <https://cnnphilippines.com/news/2020/5/30/Slowdown-COVID-19-cases-people-behave-pandemic-.html>



## HEADLINES

# 'Gradual, calculated, partial transpo'



Resumption of public land transport in the megacity will be done in two phases.

Published 7 hours ago  
on May 31, 2020 12:05 AM  
By [Maria Romero](#)



Photograph by Rio Deluvio/DT

With more people now allowed to work and a reduction in the capacity of transportation systems, commuters may be forced to wait in long lines.

The Department of Transportation (DoTr), thus, vowed to deploy additional train sets in the Metro Manila railroads as it shifts to the less restrictive general community quarantine (GCQ) tomorrow.

In a virtual presser over the weekend, Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade underscored that the resumption of mass transportation in the megacity "will be gradual, calculated and partial" following strict health protocols.

Tugade said all lines of the Light Rail Transit (LRT) and Manila Metro Rail Transit (MRT) will only serve 12 to 14 percent of its normal capacity but additional trains and faster speed make up for the reduced capacity of trains.

"We now have additional trains and we will serve more passengers even with limited capacity to provide mobility and connectivity in the service of convenience," Tugade said.

He said MRT-3 will run with 19 trains after Japanese firm Sumitomo Corp. approved the use of three additional Dalian trains.

The government has tapped Sumitomo for the rehabilitation of the overstretched MRT-3, the busiest train system in the Philippine capital that carries around 500,000 passengers a day.

"On Monday passengers can also expect that the MRT-3 will run at 40 kilometers per hour, faster than the usual 25 to 30 kilometers per hour," Tugade said.

According to him, the completion of rail replacement has paved way for better train rides.

For LRT Line 1, 28 trains will serve passengers traversing the Roosevelt to Baclaran route.

LRT Line 2 will only have five trains but the DoTr will provide bus augmentation along Anonas, Katipunan and Santolan routes. These three stations are still not operational after a fire incident in October last year.

Meanwhile, Philippine National Railway general manager Junn Magno said PNR will serve 25 to 30 percent of its full capacity using eight new trains acquired from Indonesia.

Railroad officials likewise said that there will be no fare increase in the transportation sector to ease the burden of commuters.

The resumption of public land transport in the megacity will be done in two phases.

Phase 1 from 1 to 21 June allows for train and bus augmentation, taxis, transport network vehicle services (TNVS), shuttle services, point-to-point buses and bicycles may operate but with limited passenger capacity.

Tricycles will also be allowed subject to prior approval by local government units although no provincial buses are allowed entry into Metro Manila.

Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board chairman Martin Delgra said provincial buses may be allowed to enter Metro Manila during Phase 2 beginning 22 June depending on how the first phase will go.

All lines of the Light Rail Transit and Manila Metro Rail Transit will only serve 12 to 14 percent of its normal capacity.

Phase 2 will allow public utility buses, modern PUV and UV Express to operate but with limited passenger capacity.

To avoid the spread of the virus, public transportation in the region must enforce stringent sanitary measures.

As the country braces for the "new normal" due to the coronavirus pandemic, the DoTr is preparing for the opportunity to modernize the country's transportation systems.

The "new normal" for the transportation sector will involve technology-driven, integrated and sustainable initiatives that will not only address disease transmission but will also revolutionize road transport to become efficient, reliable, environment-friendly and safe.



Trains, taxis, transport network vehicle service, shuttle services and point-to-point buses will be allowed to operate with limited passenger capacity starting tomorrow. Jeepneys are still not allowed to ferry commuters.

The STAR/Edd Gumban, file

## Public transport shortfall feared

[Richmond Mercurio](#) (The Philippine Star) - May 31, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Commuters should brace for a possible shortfall in transport services beginning tomorrow as more businesses reopen and more people are expected to go out with the easing of quarantine restrictions in Metro Manila and several other areas, Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade said at a virtual press briefing yesterday.

He said that with Metro Manila and some urban centers being placed under general community quarantine (GCQ) starting tomorrow, the Department of Transportation (DOTr) would have to strike a balance between providing relief to commuters and helping prevent the spread of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

“Although we know that the mandate of the Department of Transportation is to provide mobility and connectivity in the spirit of convenience to passengers, we are also aware of our responsibility at present to help in preventing the spread of COVID-19. That is why we need to balance the need for transportation and taking care of our health and safety,” Tugade explained.

Trains, taxis, transport network vehicle service, shuttle services and point-to-point buses will be allowed to operate with limited passenger capacity starting tomorrow. Jeepneys are still not allowed to ferry commuters.

“Definitely there will be a discrepancy, that is why what we are telling the public is if you are not a person allowed to travel, do not travel. We should really expect that our public transportation will be limited,” DOTr assistant secretary Mark de Leon said.

Undersecretary for administrative service Artemio Tuazon, DOTr’s official representative to the Inter Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF), said employers or businesses are not advised to open if they cannot provide shuttle services or housing for their workers.

“The IATF encourages all employers who will operate to provide either shuttle to their employees or house them in a site near their offices so they will not have to travel far,” Tuazon said.

“Now, if they cannot do that, if they cannot provide these to their employees, then IATF is saying that they should not open yet,” he said.

The DOTr, however, is putting in place a more efficient system to address the demand for public transportation while the GCQ is in place, according to De Leon.

He said these include putting dedicated lanes along EDSA and rationalizing routes for more effective traffic management, among others.

### **Rail capacity cut**

By tomorrow, Tugade said the LRT-1, LRT-2, MRT-3 and Philippine National Railways (PNR) trains would be operational with limited passenger capacity.

He said PNR would operate at 25 to 30 percent capacity, while MRT-3, LRT-1 and LRT-2 would have a limited capacity of between 12 and 14 percent.

The number of trains servicing MRT-3, however, will increase to 19 from the normal 14 or 15, with the addition of China-made Dalian trains.

“This is because Sumitomo has agreed to include three Dalian trains that is why by Monday, expect that the trains that will run for the MRT-3 are 19,” Tugade said.

Tugade said passengers should also expect faster train speed of 40 kilometers per hour on several parts of the MRT-3 line with the recent completion of some of the rail replacement activities.

“In that way, we will be able to increase rides and those who can ride despite the limited capacity,” the transport chief said.

For LRT-1, 28 trains will be running, while a total of five trains will be servicing LRT-2.

As for the PNR, eight trains will be running, all of which are the new units manufactured in Indonesia.

To help address the limited capacities of the trains, a bus augmentation system would be put in place.

“According to the DOTr rail sector, they need 90 buses. Since we are helping the rail sector of DOTr and they said that is the requirement, so we will provide that,” Land Transportation Franchising Regulatory Board chairman Martin Delgra said.

There will be no change in the operating schedule of MRT-3, with its first departure from North Ave. station at 5 a.m. and from Taft Ave. at 5:24 a.m. Last departure from North Ave. is 9:10 p.m. and from Taft Ave. station at 10:04 p.m.

PNR, however, will expand its operating hours with an earlier start of 3 a.m. to accommodate those who want to come to work early. Last trip will be at 8:20 p.m.

Tugade said the agency has deployed marshals who, together with police and traffic personnel, would enforce health and safety protocols.

For the rail sector, DOTr undersecretary for railways Timothy John Batan said a technology based solution would be rolled out for contact tracing.

“For contact tracing, the approach we are looking at for the rail sector is to use the app which has been approved by the IATF, which is StaySafe. We have an ongoing discussion with StaySafe and eventually that is what we will roll out,” Batan said.

Construction of bus stops and pedestrian overpasses along EDSA would support the EDSA bus program.

Don't require all workers to physically report, govt  
offices told

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May 31, 2020  
DATE

# Don't require all workers to physically report, govt offices told

By Joyce Ann L. Rocamora [May 30, 2020, 8:15 am](#)



**MANILA** – The Civil Service Commission (CSC) on Friday discouraged government agencies from requiring all employees to physically report for work once their areas shift to general community quarantine (GCQ) starting June 1.

During the Laging Handa virtual briefing, CSC Commissioner Aileen Lizada noted that GCQ and modified GCQ (MGCQ) do not equate to a "full" workforce in government offices.

Citing CSC Memorandum Circular 10, series of 2020, Lizada said government agencies may still adopt alternative working arrangements, such as the work-from-home scheme, skeleton workforce, four-day or compressed workweek, and staggered working hours.

"These are still in place. *Huwag po ninyong ipa-100 percent ang mga empleyado sa darating na June 1* (Don't ask 100 percent of your workforce to report for duty starting June 1)," she said.

Under the memorandum, an agency may adopt other applicable work arrangements considering the prevailing community quarantine in the area where it is located.

Lizada said government workers who are senior citizens, pregnant, and with health conditions must be allowed to work from home.

"To all head of agencies, *hindi po ibig sabihin na GCQ or modified GCQ wala nang virus. Mayroon pa rin* (To all heads of agencies, having GCQ or MGCQ does not mean that the coronavirus disease 2019 [Covid-19] is no longer there. It is still there). It is just the limitation/leniency on the movement and leniency on transportation. But the virus is still there," she said. "Senior citizens, pregnant women, those with co-morbidities, *kailangan pong work from home sila. Hindi po tayo in full force pag nag-GCQ or MGCQ po tayo. Still, mayroon din po tayong alternative work arrangements* (they should work from home. We are still not in full force during GCQ or MGCQ. Still, there are alternative work arrangements)."

In considering work arrangement, Lizada said the "formula" must still be based on safe physical distancing.

## Hazard pay

At the same time, she clarified that government workers physically reporting to the office will no longer be entitled to hazard pay during GCQ.

"*Pag nag-GCQ na po tayo, wala na pong hazard pay* (Once we are under GCQ, there will be no more hazard pay)," Lizada said, adding it is only given during enhanced community quarantine (ECQ).

President Rodrigo Duterte, through Administrative Order 26 signed last March, granted a Covid-19 daily hazard pay of PHP500 to civil servants reporting as part of the skeleton workforce during ECQ.

Don't require all workers to physically report, govt  
offices told

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In an earlier address, the chief executive announced the [shift to GCQ](#) of Metro Manila, Davao City, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Pangasinan, and Albay starting June 1.

As government offices resume work in GCQ areas, the CSC in a previous statement called on agencies to undertake the "necessary preparations."

"While the government's efficiency and responsiveness remain inviolable in the middle of this Covid-19 pandemic, this must be balanced with the need to protect the safety and health of the public sector workforce," it said.

Support mechanisms, such as health/psychosocial interventions, provision of personal protective equipment to employees, and reasonable transportation facilities and housing quarters, should be made available to government workers, it added.

### No automatic passing marks

Meanwhile, Lizada belied posts circulating on social media claiming all civil service examinees, both professional level and sub-professional level, will automatically get passing grades.

"*Ito po ay 101 percent fake news, kasi kinakailangan po ang pagpasok po sa gobyerno ay* (because entering government service) must be based on merit and fitness. What kind of government servant will you become if, at this early stage, you do not verify (such fake news)?" she said.

Lizada advised all government workers and the public to verify before sharing any information.

"You have a corresponding responsibility and duty to check your resources, verify your resources," she said.

On the next Civil Service examination, Lizada said the CSC is currently working on practical ways to file applications instead of the usual physical handling of paper.

"We are thinking of online filing, online *na lahat* (everything is online) – not the exam proper but the process of applying for the exam. Please bear with us. We are restructuring the how many years of pen and paper exam *na* twice a year *po* (that is given twice a year)," she said. **(PNA)**

# CSC:100% workforce not required

May 30, 2020

People's Tonight



CSC Commissioner Aileen Lizada

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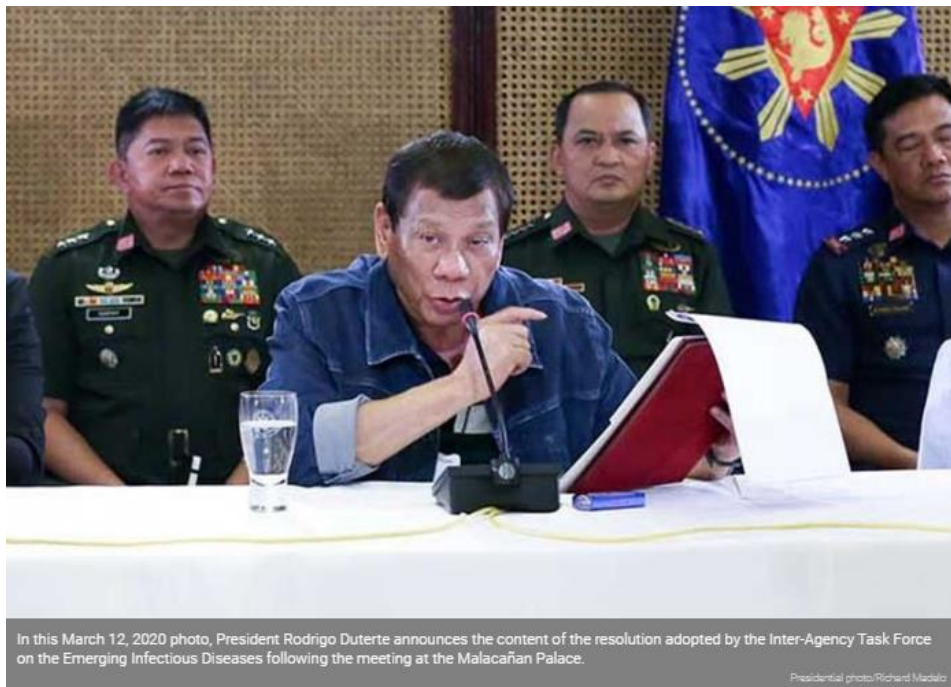
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## Commentary: Good governance is good investment

[Paco Pangalangan](#) (Philstar.com) - May 30, 2020 - 2:17pm

The Duterte administration is hoping it has all its bases covered when it comes to its economic recovery plan. The plan is hinged on new business-friendly policies and a revitalized infrastructure development program meant to attract investment. Ultimately, the government hopes that these policies and plans lead to job creation and the rebooting of the country's economy.

However, though business-friendly economic policies and openness to private sector partnership are indeed essential to attracting investment, investors similarly evaluate other factors, such as governance, political and regulatory stability, and other risk factors such as infrastructure, power and energy, and peace and order.

The question is, are these new economic policies and plans enough to overcome the government's obvious shortcomings when it comes to these other factors?

In line with its economic recovery plan, the Department of Finance has expanded its list of flagship projects under the "Build, Build, Build" program. It now includes 100 flagship projects worth a total of P4.4 trillion. Also, more public-private partnership (PPP) funded projects have been added to its prized "Build, Build, Build" list.

The shift in policy towards PPP surely has some investors excited. After all, if you recall, back when President Rodrigo Duterte assumed office in 2016, he had a distaste for the PPP program and instead preferred increasing infrastructure spending in the national budget and turning to official development assistance funding from countries like China and Japan.

Experts repeatedly warned that loans from China could bury the country in heavy debts because of higher interests rates and collateral guarantees compared to offers from other countries.

After so many pledges from China and concomitant delays, the government finally realized it had to push forward with better and ready-to-go options. Current records show that the number of PPP-funded flagship projects on the list has now increased to 29 and have a collective value of P1.8 trillion.

This punctuates the increasingly important role that the private sector plays in driving economic growth and creating jobs. Thus, the government must work on creating economic policies that provide a business-friendly environment that enables investors to recover from the effects of the pandemic and gain the confidence to bring in big investments.

The government is now responding with the proposed Philippine Economic Stimulus Act, a P1.3 trillion economic stimulus package for businesses that suffered during the pandemic, and the Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises, which will immediately cut corporate income tax from 30% to 25%. The DOF is even considering asking Congress to give the president the power to grant “flexible” tax incentives to attract more investments.

These economic policies are being put in place to support the business community and incentivize investors. Competitive fiscal Incentives are an attraction, but other factors like political stability, corruption, the rule of law, and the regulatory and bureaucratic environments will be compared with other economies competing for foreign capital.

How the country is perceived in terms of good governance, predictability, accountability and transparency will either make or break the deal. After all, we are asking them to commit billions of US dollars into our economy.

Understandably, investors would look for transparency in their dealings with government, the availability of information, and openness to the public about investment policies to check corruption.

It is also obvious why they would be concerned about the clarity of Philippine policy, the stability of its legal system, predictability of its rules and the fairness of their application. And it only makes sense that investors would want to know the performance standard of the government and its justice system in anticipation of the need for legal remedies.

Unfortunately for us, some recent developments might make it difficult for investors to have confidence in our governance system.

For instance, the government’s recent political maneuver to push ABS-CBN off the air despite the lack of any well-defined regulatory violations could be interpreted by some investors as unpredictable and unfair.

Some investors might also look back at the president’s threats of a military takeover of water concessionaires when the government lost its arbitration case and note the skewed enforcement of the rule of law.

Others might consider the fact that, to date, a complete list of beneficiaries of the P200 billion in pandemic-related cash aide remains undetermined. A red flag for the lack of transparency, if not corruption.

Similarly, other investors might consider the president’s brushing off of Major General Debold Sinas’ clear violation of social distancing and mass gathering rules by holding a birthday bash amidst the lockdown as an unabashed absence of accountability by government officials.

Where does this leave us? Many businesses now struggling to survive and millions who have lost their jobs are pinning their hopes on a government economic recovery plan that will spark a rebound of economic activities.

But how can our economy recover if our government’s economic policy is not matched by good governance practices? The Duterte government may have its economic bases covered, but is sorely lacking in predictability, transparency and accountability. All these need to converge for a secure and sustainable economic recovery.

***Paco Pangalangan is executive director of think tank Stratbase ADR Institute.***

# Hawa

[\(AGHAM AT TEKNOLOHIYA\) PANDAYAN](#) - [Ramon M. Bernardo](#) (Pang-masa) - May 31, 2020 - 12:00am

BATID na natin na pangunahing dahilan ng pagpapatupad ng community quarantine ang pagpigil sa pagkalat ng COVID-19.

Hanggang noong Mayo 28, 2020, mahigit nang 5.69 milyong ang naitalang kaso ng COVID sa 188 bansa na nagresulta sa pagkamatay ng mahigit 355,000 tao habang 2.34 milyong pasyente ang gumaling. Sa Pilipinas, umabot na sa 15,588 ang kaso, 3,598 ang gumaling at 921 ang namatay.

Pangunahing kumakalat ang virus kapag ang may COVID ay bumabahin, umuubo, nagsasalita at nagpapalabas ng tinatawag na small droplet at nasasagap ang mga ito ng tao na sa layong isang metro. Isa itong dahilan kaya ang mga pasyenteng may COVID iyong mga nagkaroon ng kontak sa mga ganitong pasyente o mga hinihinalang may sintomas ng sakit na ito ay isinasailalim sa kuwarantina.

Kakabit naman ng community quarantine na mas kilala bilang lockdown ang ang physical/social distancing, pagsusuot ng face mask o face shield, madalas na paghuhugas ng kamay (sa tulong man ng tubig at sabon o alcohol o hand sanitizer) at pag-iwas sa matataong lugar at pananatili sa bahay. Kaya nga sinuspinde ang mga klase sa mga paaralan; pinahinto ang biyahe ng mga pampublikong sasakyan; sarado ang mga opisina ng gobyerno at maraming pribadong establisimiyento; ipinagbawal o ipinasara ang mga aktibidad na pinagtitipunan ng maraming tao tulad ng sa mga live concert/shows; sinehan, parke, palaruan, palakasan, pasyalan, misa sa simbahan, nightclub, beerhouse; pagbabawal ng dine-in sa mga restawran at iba pa para hindi mahawa sa virus ang higit na nakakaraming mamamayan.

Kahit sumailalim na sa general community quarantine ang Metro Manila at ang buong bansa man, tila mananatili pa rin ang mga physical distancing at magpapatuloy ang pagsusuot ng face mask o face shield dahil patuloy pa rin ang banta ng COVID lalo na at wala pang natutuklasang bakuna at gamot laban dito. Kung meron mang mga gumaling sa sakit na ito, batay na rin sa mga ulat, lumalabas na mga eksperimento pa lang ang anumang ipinanglunas sa pasyente. Ipinalalagay na aabutin pa ng susunod na taon bago makatuklas ng bakuna.

Kaya mas makakabuting sumunod na lang sa mga ipinapatupad na mga pag-iingat na pangkaligtasan tulad ng pagsusuot ng face mask/face shield, physical distancing, paghuhugas ng kamay at laging malinis na katawan at pananatili sa bahay hangga't maaari dahil hindi nakikita ang virus na ito. Kasama na rito ang payo ng mga health expert na kumain ng masusustansiyang pagkain tulad ng gulay at prutas para mapalakas ang immunity ng katawan laban sa sakit.

Mabuti na nga lang at marami nang negosyo ang unti-unti nang nagbubukas at may mga empleyadong nakakapasok na sa trabaho para makabangon na ang ekonomiyang nalugmok sa virus na ito. Malaking tulong ang internet at ibang teknolohiya para maging posible ang work from home at ang mga estudyante halimbawa ay patuloy na makakapag-aral.

Nasa paligid pa natin ang bantang mahawa tayo sa COVID kaya baka lalo pang matatagalan ang community quarantine (modified man o general o enhanced). Ang esensiya nito ay para hindi mahawa ang higit na nakakarami sa ating populasyon sa virus na ito.

Email: [rbernardo2001@hotmail.com](mailto:rbernardo2001@hotmail.com)

# Surviving in this period of uncertainty

EDITORIAL

Published May 30, 2020, 11:00 PM



Today is the last day of the month of May. Around the world, May has been a notable month for various reasons related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The United States death toll reached and exceeded 100,000 Thursday, the most among all countries in the world.

In South America, Brazil became the latest epicenter of COVID-19 with over 25,000 deaths. From Mexico to Peru to Chile, health officials reported rising cases. Latin America has now overtaken Europe and the US in the number of new daily infections.

In the news in Asia this week was India as it reported a record 6,387 new cases in one day. Early this month, South Korea had been cited for its success in containing COVID-19, but this week, it reported 79 new cases to raise its total to 11,344, the largest increase in new cases.

As of May 28, there were 5,803,416 cases confirmed in over 227 countries and 26 cruise ships. Of this total, 359,791 died and 3,044,378 remain active cases.

The top ten in COVID-19 cases and deaths as of May 28 were: US, 1,758,422 cases, 102,917 deaths; Brazil, 438,812, and 26,764; Russia, 379,051, 4,142; United Kingdom, 269,127, 37,837; Spain, 237,906, 27,119; Italy, 231,732, 33,142; Germany, 182,445, 8,570; Turkey, 160,979, 4,461; India, 158,333, 4,531; and France, 149,071, 28,662.

The Philippines is No. 43 in the list, with 15,558 cases and 921 deaths. In our part of the world, Southeast Asia (SEA), we are next to Indonesia, which has 24,538 cases and 1,496 deaths. Below as in SEA are Malaysia, Thailand, Vietnam, Myanmar, Brunei, Cambodia, East Timor, and Laos.

These statistics are bound to change in the coming weeks and months, as various countries make their respective decisions on how and when to lift the restrictions on the movements of their people, so that business and government can slowly return to normal.

The virus will cease to be a danger when the vaccine and cure are discovered by scientists working around the world today. Until then, every person will have to rely on his own resources and actions to avoid infection — through social distancing, face masks, and personal hygiene. Each person will have to make his own decision on such matters as working close to another in an office or factory, taking mass transportation, going to church and attending other mass gatherings, or opting to continue staying at home.

We pray that we will survive this period of uncertainty which could last months or even years.

Tags: [PAUL ROCA](#)

Source: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/05/30/surviving-in-this-period-of-uncertainty/>



ABS-CBN News

11 hrs ·

"Handa na ba ang Boracay sa pagdagsa ng tao? Dapat ba silang masabik o mabahala?"

'Yan ang tanong ni Malay, Aklan Sangguniang Bayan Member Nenette Aguirre Graf nang magbahagi ng mga larawan ng payapang beachfront ng isla Biyernes.

Bago payagang makapasok ang mga taga-ibang probinsya sa Boracay, magsasagawa muna ng dry run sa mga taga-Aklan ang lokal na pamahalaan.

Ayon kay Malay Acting Mayor Frolibar Bautista, pinag-uusapan na ang pagbubukas ng mga establisimyento sa isla oras na makapagtakda ng patakaran kontra #COVID19, bukod pa sa authority to operate mula sa Department of Tourism.

Nilinaw ng alkalde na kahit napagkasunduan na ng mga gobernador sa Western Visayas ang muling pagbukas ng borders ng mga probinsiya, mananatiling sarado ang Boracay sa mga dayuhan, lokal man o banyaga.

Magbibigay naman ng abiso ang pamahalaang lokal ng Malay kung kailan sisimulan ang dry run sa pagbukas ng Boracay sa mga Aklanon. | ulat ni Cherry Palma, ABS-CBN News



3.2K

181 Comments 174 Shares

# LOOK: Multiple waterspouts spotted in Laguna de Bay

Updated May 30, 2020, 8:56 PM

By Gabriela Baron

Four waterspouts were spotted hovering over the waters of Laguna de Bay Saturday afternoon (May 30).



(Photo courtesy of Carol Pasquin)

In a video captured by Joanne Jabagat, the waterspouts (ipo-ipo) were seen hovering near Manila de Bay around 6:10 p.m.

According to netizens, the waterspouts were also seen in parts of Rizal and Muntinlupa.

The main distinction between a tornado and a waterspout is that a tornado occurs over land, while a waterspout occurs over water.

Earth sciences organization EarthShakerPH said a waterspout is a weather system that descends from a cumulus cloud.

“The water inside a waterspout is formed from the condensation in the cloud. It is often associated with severe thunderstorms,” it added.

# Water firms told to reflect actual consumption in bills

By [Jordeene B. Lagare](#)

May 31, 2020

THE Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System-Regulatory Office (MWSS-RO) has directed the Manila Water Co. Inc. and Maynilad Water Services Inc. to bill their customers based on the actual consumption during the quarantine periods.

In a statement on Friday, MWSS chief regulator Patrick Lester Ty said the statements of accounts (SOAs) of customers shall reflect the actual water consumption and corresponding charges based on the meter reading.

The two concessionaires were also ordered to “[d]ivide the accumulated consumption by the number of months covered by the ECQ (enhanced community quarantine) and MECQ (modified enhanced community quarantine).”

It can be recalled that Manila Water and Maynilad suspended their meter reading and billing in light of the lockdown imposed on Metro Manila to curb the spread of the coronavirus.

Starting June 1, meter reading and billing operations will resume as Metro Manila and other parts of the country go into general community quarantine.

In addition, Ty told concessionaires to “[v]erify the consumption patterns of customers, check for irregularities, and automatically withhold any SOA with observed significant deviation from these patters for further investigation and necessary adjustment.”

In a separate statement, Manila Water said pre-ECQ bills, or those with due dates prior to March 16, disconnection might begin July 1.

For post-ECQ bills, or those with due dates from May 16 onward, the normal 60-day lead time before disconnection applies and that disconnection may begin on July 16, the Ayala-led utility said, adding these apply for both regular and lifeline customers.

For ECQ bills, or those that would have had due dates from March 16 to May 15, due dates have all been reset to May 16.

In the case of non-lifeline customers, the 60-day lead time before disconnection will also be observed.

Manila Water also said notices and reminders would be sent beginning July 16 and disconnection may begin by August 1.

Lifeline customers would be offered three-month (June to August) installment plan only for ECQ bills and the disconnection related to ECQ bills may begin September 1.

For its part, Maynilad said a longer grace period would be given to settle bills that had accumulated from March to May 2020, including any arrears from February that might have been left unpaid prior to ECQ.

Beyond this period, Maynilad said notice of disconnections would start appearing in September 2020 billing statements.

For non-lifeline customers, they have until July 31, and notice of disconnections in their case will start appearing in August 2020 bills.

The June 2020 bills would already reflect actual consumption, as well as adjustments from when the bills were averaged during ECQ.





Ito ay makaraang ipag- utos ng Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) sa dalawang water concessionaires na magsagawa ng meter reading sa aktuwal na nagamit na suplay ng tubig ng mga kostumer upang masingil lamang ay ang kaukulang bayad batay sa meter reading.

## Meter reading ng tubig, simula sa June 1

[Angie dela Cruz](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon) - May 31, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Simula June 1 ay magsasagawa na ng meter reading sa mga kostumer ng Maynilad Water Services Inc. at Manila Water Company Inc. sa Metro Manila at karatig lalawigan.

Ito ay makaraang ipag- utos ng Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) sa dalawang water concessionaires na magsagawa ng meter reading sa aktuwal na nagamit na suplay ng tubig ng mga kostumer upang masingil lamang ay ang kaukulang bayad batay sa meter reading.

Nais matiyak ng MWSS Regulatory Office na ang actual water consumption lamang sa tubig ang babayaran ng publiko sa panahon ng quarantine.

Inabisuhan din ng MWSS ang Maynilad at Manila Water na hatiin ang accumulated consumption sa tubig ng mga customer base sa bilang ng buwan na naisailalim sa lockdown.

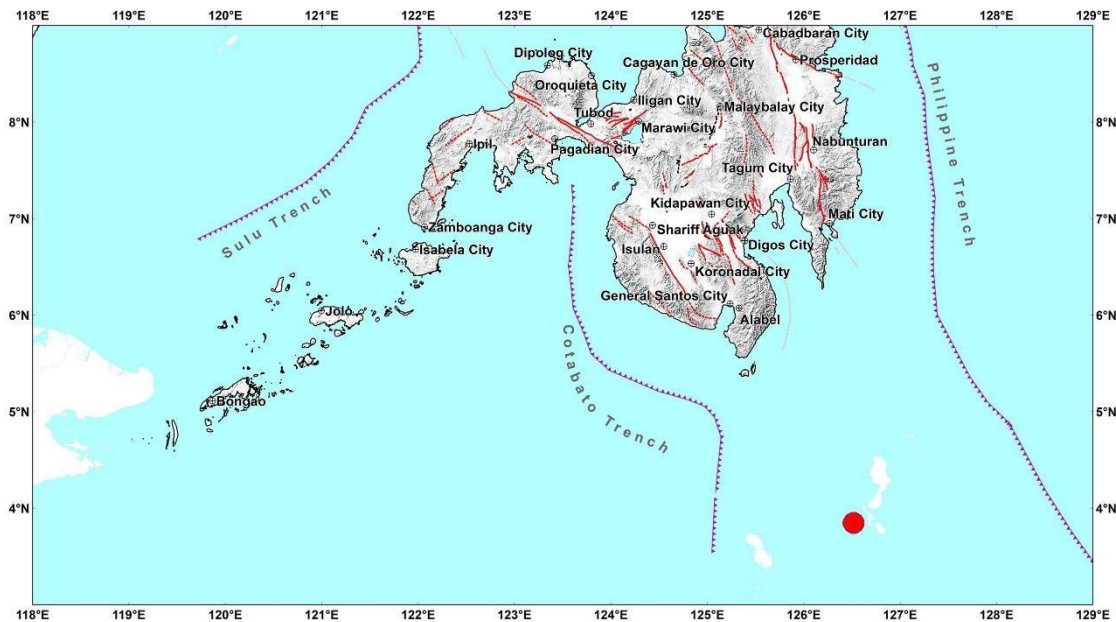
Bago mag-August 1 ang huling araw ng pagbabayad sa singil sa tubig para hindi maputulan.

# Magnitude 5.6 quake strikes near Sarangani, Davao Occ

Published May 30, 2020, 10:41 PM

By MB Online

A magnitude 5.6 earthquake struck near Sarangani town, Davao Occidental at 9:06 p.m. Saturday (May 30), the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) reported.



(PHIVOLCS/MANILA BULLETIN)

The earthquake was tectonic in origin and its epicenter was traced to 211 kilometers southeast of Sarangani, Davao Occidental at a depth of 68 kilometers.

Instrumental Intensity I was felt in Alabel, Malungon, and Kiamba, Sarangani; and Tupi, South Cotabato.

Phivolcs said it was not expected to cause any damage to property, but aftershocks are likely to occur.

Source: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/05/30/magnitude-5-6-quake-strikes-near-sarangani-davao-occ/>

# Magnitude-5.6 quake hits waters off Davao Occidental

ABS-CBN News

Posted at May 30 2020 11:40 PM



*Courtesy of the Phivolcs website*

MANILA—A 5.6-magnitude earthquake hit the waters off Davao Occidental on Saturday night, according to the Philvolcs.

The tectonic tremor struck at 9:06 p.m., approximately 211 kilometers southeast of Sarangani town with a depth of 68 km.

Instrumental Intensity 1 was felt in the towns of Alabel, Malungon and Kiamba in Sarangani, and Tupi town in South Cotabato.

The Phivolcs said it is expecting aftershocks, although no damage to structure was recorded.

Source: [https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/05/30/20/magnitude-56-quake-hits-waters-off-davao-occidental?fbclid=IwAR1eXXA21GHkpvBtW8yFohcEWRMCzdHUyN9n10oMMUI\\_zNnmsHRHQnWAjc](https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/05/30/20/magnitude-56-quake-hits-waters-off-davao-occidental?fbclid=IwAR1eXXA21GHkpvBtW8yFohcEWRMCzdHUyN9n10oMMUI_zNnmsHRHQnWAjc)

# Magnitude 5.6 quake strikes southeast of Davao Occidental

Published May 30, 2020 10:05pm

A magnitude 5.6 earthquake struck 211 kilometers southeast of Davao Occidental's Sarangani town on Saturday night, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) reported

The quake struck at 9:06 p.m., was tectonic in origin, and had a 68-kilometer depth of focus.

The tremor was measured at an Instrumental Intensity I in Alabel, Malungon and Kiamba, Sarangani; and in Tupi, South Cotabato.

While no damage was expected from the quake, aftershocks were likely. — **DVM, GMA News**

Source: <https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/regions/740496/magnitude-5-4-quake-strikes-southeast-of-davao-occidental-phivolcs/story/?fbclid=IwAR2-Er9Q6oP-MPYPDpNnFoFYtWm8DRA3a5RBEA8YraQ73eXhHnMTSu3t55c>

# 4.0-magnitude quake jolts Central Mindanao

Published May 30, 2020, 9:20 AM

By *Mike Crismundo*

**BUTUAN CITY** – A 4.0-magnitude earthquake jolted Central Mindanao region Friday afternoon, May 29, the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (Phivolcs) said.

In its bulletin, Phivolcs said the tremor was recorded at 4:05 p.m.

The epicenter was plotted 58 kilometers (km) southwest of Palimbang town, Sultan Kudarat province, in Central Mindanao region.

The tremor had a depth of 30 km, Phivolcs said.

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

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

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

Meanwhile, a 2.9-magnitude tectonic earthquake was also recorded at 2:43 a.m. on Saturday, May 30, Phivolcs also said, in its latest bulletin.

The epicenter was traced 19 km northeast of Burgos town, Siargao Island, Surigao del Norte province, with a depth of 18 km.

No aftershock or tsunami alert was raised by the state agency.

The Surigao del Norte provincial disaster risk reduction and management council there reported no damage or injury.

# Singapore otters' lockdown antics spark backlash

Agence France-Presse / 05:13 PM May 30, 2020



There are estimated to be about 90 otters in Singapore and appearances at popular tourist sites around the city-state's downtown waterfront had transformed them into local celebrities. Image: AFP/Roslan Rahman

Singapore's otters, long adored by the city-state's nature lovers, are popping up in unexpected places during the coronavirus lockdown but their antics have angered some and even sparked calls for a cull.

With the streets empty, the creatures have been spotted hanging out by a shopping center, scampering through the lobby of a hospital and even feasting on pricey fish stolen from a pond.

While many think of tiny Singapore as a densely populated concrete jungle, it is also relatively green for a busy Asian city and has patches of rainforest, fairly clean waterways and abundant wildlife.

There are estimated to be about 90 otters in Singapore, making up 10 families, and appearances at popular tourist sites around the city-state's downtown waterfront have transformed them into local celebrities.

They featured in a documentary narrated by David Attenborough, are tracked avidly by the local media, and have been spotted more frequently since people were asked to stay home and workplaces closed in April to fight the virus.

"When there's restriction of movement, there's less vehicles and there's less people, so the urban space opens up," said N. Sivasothi, a biologist at the National University of Singapore (NUS) known as "Otterman" due to his work on the animals.

But their newfound freedoms appear to have emboldened the otters, and they are now facing a backlash.

## 'More daring'

The most high-profile incident was a raid on a pond at a spa shuttered due to the pandemic. The creatures gobbled several fish including an arowana, a prized species that can sell for tens of thousands of dollars.

Actress-turned-entrepreneur Jazreel Low, who owns the spa, posted pictures on Facebook of fish parts scattered around the pond and lamented a “massacre.”

“They probably realized that there was nobody there and became more daring,” Low told entertainment news website 8 DAYS.

The case sparked a debate about whether more should be done to stop otters rampaging through the city, with a widely discussed letter in a local newspaper calling for air horns and rubber bullets to be used as deterrents.

“Wild boars have never been encouraged to enter urban areas, neither should otters be just because they look cute,” wrote Ong Junkai in the correspondence to the *Straits Times*, which triggered calls from some for a cull.

In other incidents, a video showed a group charging into the lobby of a children’s hospital before being shoed away, and the creatures were also filmed frolicking in the empty streets outside a popular shopping center.

The otters’ more frequent forays onto the streets of Singapore are part of a global trend triggered by virus lockdowns, with animals increasingly slipping cover to explore the streets of some of the world’s biggest cities.

#### ‘Coexist and thrive’

Still, otter experts believe the anger is an overreaction and that the creatures are likely just enjoying the extra freedom to venture to new places.

NUS’s Sivasothi criticized calls for a cull as “quite an uneducated response,” and said such a move would be ineffective.

He also said many recent sightings were likely of the same family of smooth-coated otters, which have been searching for a new home along the city’s rivers. Most of Singapore’s otters are the smooth-coated variety, classified as “vulnerable.”

Fans believe people should be celebrating the return of an animal that was driven out of Singapore by coastal development and water pollution around the 1970s, and only started reappearing in the 1990s as waterways were cleaned.

“I simply don’t understand anyone who could not like them. They are really cute,” said Pam Wong, a 35-year-old Singaporean.

Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loong weighed in on the debate Friday, posting a photo he took of otters before the lockdown on his Facebook account.

“Rather than being focused on protecting ‘territory’, we must find ways to coexist and thrive with our local flora and fauna,” he wrote. **CL**

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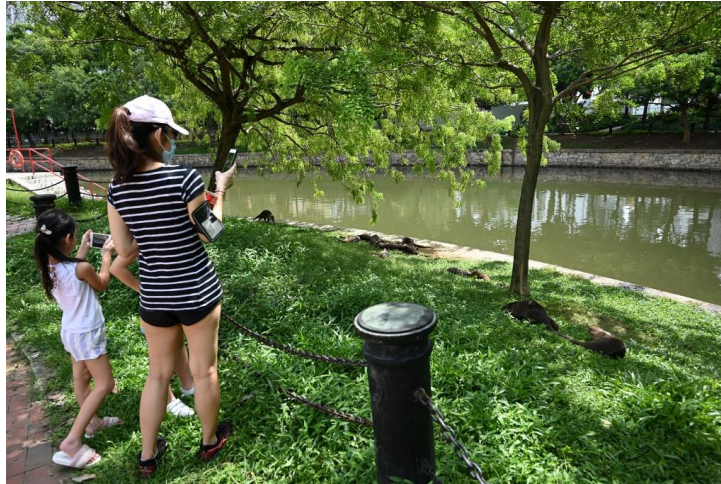


# Singapore otters' lockdown antics spark backlash

posted May 30, 2020 at 02:28 pm

by [AFP and atherine Lai](#)

Singapore's otters, long adored by the city-state's nature lovers, are popping up in unexpected places during the coronavirus lockdown but their antics have angered some and even sparked calls for a cull.



*This photograph taken on May 29, 2020 shows people taking pictures of a bevy of smooth-coated otters along a canal in Singapore. - Singapore's otters, long adored by the city-state's nature lovers, are popping up in unexpected places during the coronavirus lockdown but their antics have angered some and even sparked calls for a cull. (Photo by Roslan RAHMAN / AFP)*

With the streets empty, the creatures have been spotted hanging out by a shopping centre, scampering through the lobby of a hospital and even feasting on pricey fish stolen from a pond.

While many think of tiny Singapore as a densely populated concrete jungle, it is also relatively green for a busy Asian city, and has patches of rainforest, fairly clean waterways and abundant wildlife.

There are estimated to be about 90 otters in Singapore, making up 10 families, and appearances at popular tourist sites around the city-state's downtown waterfront have transformed them into local celebrities.

They featured in a documentary narrated by David Attenborough, are tracked avidly by the local media -- and have been spotted more frequently since people were asked to stay home and workplaces closed in April to fight the virus.

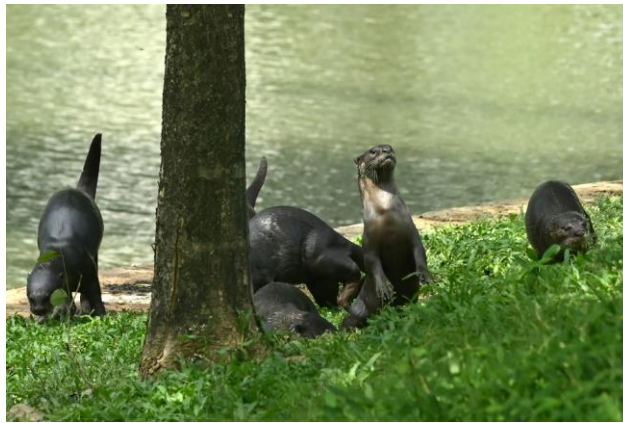
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But their newfound freedoms appear to have emboldened the otters, and they are now facing a backlash.

- 'More daring' -

The most high-profile incident was a raid on a pond at a spa shuttered due to the pandemic. The creatures gobbled several fish including an arowana, a prized species that can sell for tens of thousands of dollars.

Actress-turned-entrepreneur Jazreel Low, who owns the spa, posted pictures on Facebook of fish parts scattered around the pond and lamented a "massacre".



*This photograph taken on May 29, 2020 shows a bevy of smooth-coated otters next to a canal in Singapore. - Singapore's otters, long adored by the city-state's nature lovers, are popping up in unexpected places during the coronavirus lockdown but their antics have angered some and even sparked calls for a cull. (Photo by Roslan RAHMAN / AFP)*

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"Rather than being focused on protecting 'territory', we must find ways to coexist and thrive with our local flora and fauna," he wrote.

# Pangolins may have incubated the novel coronavirus, genetic study shows

From CNN Health's Maggie Fox



A white-bellied pangolin in Kampala, Uganda, on April 9. Isaac Kasamani/AFP via Getty Images

A deep dive into the genetics of the novel coronavirus shows it seems to have spent some time infecting both bats and pangolins before it jumped into humans, researchers said Friday.

Pangolins, also known as scaly anteaters, are sold as food in China and have been a prime suspect as a possible source of the pandemic.

Yet the researchers said it's too soon to blame pangolins for the pandemic and a third animal species may have played host to the virus before it spilled over to people.

What is clear is that the coronavirus has swapped genes repeatedly with similar strains infecting bats, pangolins and a possible third species, a team at Duke University, Los Alamos National Laboratory and elsewhere reported in the journal *Science Advances*.

What's also clear is that people need to reduce contact with wild animals that can transmit new infections, they concluded.

The team analyzed 43 complete genomes from three strains of coronaviruses that infect bats and pangolins and that resemble the new Covid-19 virus.

"In our study, we demonstrated that indeed SARS-CoV-2 has a rich evolutionary history that included a reshuffling of genetic material between bat and pangolin coronavirus before it acquired its ability to jump to humans," said Elena Giorgi, a staff scientist at Los Alamos National Laboratory who worked on the study.

But their findings may let pangolins off the hook.

"The currently sampled pangolin coronaviruses are too divergent from SARS-CoV-2 to be its recent progenitors," the researchers wrote.

# Monkeys steal coronavirus blood samples in India

Published May 30, 2020, 8:42 AM

By Reuters

LUCKNOW, India (Reuters) – A troop of monkeys in India attacked a medical official and snatched away blood samples of patients who had tested positive for the novel coronavirus, authorities said on Friday.



FILE PHOTO: A monkey crosses the road near India's Presidential Palace during a 14-hour long curfew to limit the spreading of coronavirus disease (COVID-19) in New Delhi, India, March 22, 2020. REUTERS/Anushree Fadnavis/File Photo

The attack occurred this week when a laboratory technician was walking in the campus of a state-run medical college in Meerut, 460 km (285 miles) north of Lucknow, capital of Uttar Pradesh state.

"Monkeys grabbed and fled with the blood samples of four COVID-19 patients who are undergoing treatment ... we had to take their blood samples again," said Dr S. K. Garg, a top official at the college.

Authorities said they were not clear if the monkeys had spilled the blood samples, but people living near the leafy campus feared further spread of the virus if the monkeys carried the samples into residential areas.

Garg said it was not clear if the monkeys could contract the coronavirus if they came into contact with infected blood.

"No evidence has been found that monkeys can contract the infection," Garg told Reuters.

The virus is believed to have jumped from animals into people in a wildlife market in the Chinese city of Wuhan late last year.

India has had 165,799 cases of the coronavirus and 4,706 deaths.

Monkeys have been increasingly straying into human settlements in India and causing disturbances, even attacking people. Environmentalists say the destruction of natural habitat is the main reason the animals move into urban areas in search of food.