



## Sea otters, spotted sa Tawi-Tawi

May 31, 2020 @ 4:06 PM 13 hours ago

Cotabato City – Namataan ang anim na maliliit na sea otters sa coast ng Taganak Island sa Tawi-Tawi.

Ayon kay District-1 Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO) chief Abdulmukim Maruji ng Tawi-Tawi, namataan sa isla ang mga otter noong Mayo 15. 17 at 20 at kinilala bilang 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,” ayon kay Maruji sa isang ulat sa Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Energy-BARMM.

Aniya, nabubuhay ang mga ito sa 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,” ayon kay Maruji.

Sinabi pa nitong malaki ang papel ng mga bagong namataang otters at nakakadagdag sa mayamang biodiversity ng Tawi-Tawi ngunit nanganganib na ma-endangered.

“If we would not protect them, they might put in danger,” saad ni Maruji.

Sa kasalukuyan, nakikipagtulungan ang CENRO sa Turtle Islands’ Protected Area Supervisor Office sa ilalim ng Region 9 at sa iba pang concerned agencies upang masiguro ang proteksyon ng mga ito.

“While they are in Tawi-Tawi, or whether they stay here for good, we will ensure they will be protected,” ani Maruji. **RNT/MM**

# New sea otter species sighted

The particular otter species, which were spotted on the island from 15 to 20 May, are said to exist in nearby Sarawak, Malaysia

At least six small sea otters from a species not endemic to the country were spotted in the coasts of Taganak Island, a cluster-component of Turtle Islands, in Tawi-Tawi.

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

The particular otter species, which were spotted on the island from 15 to 20 May, are said

to exist in nearby Sarawak, Malaysia.

"They (sea otters) might (have) drifted in the island, they might also be exploring for new habitat because they were disturbed, or looking for food," Maruji said in a report to the Ministry of Environment, Natural Resources and Energy-BARMM on Saturday.

"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," he added.

While the newly-spotted otters play a

vital role and adds to the rich biodiversity of Tawi-Tawi, Maruji said they are vulnerable to being endangered.

The CENRO is currently 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 declared.



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF LORENZO MARIA DE GUZMAN/PNA

**Sea otter sightings** A pair of smooth-coated otters (*Lutrogale perspicillata*), said to be from Sarawak, Malaysia, were among the new species sighted in the seashores of the Turtle Islands in Tawi-Tawi.

# Palit-Basura: San Nicolas turns plastic wastes into food packs

By Ma. Joreina Therese A. Blanco Published on May 31, 2020

SAN NICOLAS, Ilocos Norte, May 31 (PIA) – The municipal government of San Nicolas, through the Municipal Environment and Natural Resources Office (MENRO), has rolled out an environmental initiative in an effort to address the increasing plastic trash while the country is still under the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic crisis.

This environmental program is called “Palit-Basura” which encourages locals in the municipality to exchange their plastic wrappers to food packs.

This includes empty wrappers of powdered juice, milk, coffee, creamer, instant noodles, and other plastic wastes.

As a reward, those who join in this initiative will receive food packs containing canned goods, instant noodles, and coffee.



**PALIT-BASURA.** Mayor Alfredo Valdez Jr. shows the Palit-Basura booth, an environmental initiative of San Nicolas, Ilocos Norte. (Photo by RJ Ribao)

This program is open to the residents in San Nicolas.

In the municipal government’s official Facebook page, they explained that “only clean pastic wastes are allowed to be exchanged. These wastes must be classified as foil and non-foil to further recover recyclable waste materials. Then, these are to be submitted to the MENRO for issuance of a claim stub and release of a food pack.”

In compliance with the mandatory health standards, schedules of barangays for the program are clustered to strictly observe physical distancing.

Mayor Alfredo Valdez Jr. said, there’s a need to maintain solid waste management as residual wastes have become a major concern since community quarantine.

*“Kasi itong pagdating ng COVID-19 pandemic, may mga ayudang binibigay sa mga tao -- food packs and all these things. So I called the attention of our MENRO and said, mukhang masyadong dadami ang basura natin dito. Then for another thing, we’ve been managing our solid wastes properly and efficiently, sayang naman kung because of the COVID-19 pandemic eh titigil na tayo,” Valdez said.*

Palit-Basura: San Nicolas turns plastic wastes into

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Moreover, he cites this program as a great avenue to strengthen the municipality's solid waste management program and educate the importance of proper waste segregation to residents by turning their junk to goodies.

*"We encourage the people to collect their plastic food wrapper. Pagkatapos, iipunin nila syempre iyon para mapakinabangan. Not only will we be able to serve our people, but also they will learn to appreciate the value of their garbage," the mayor added.*

While face-to-face learning is not yet encouraged for the kids, Valdez further stated that the Palit-Basura program will also help the youth to practice proper waste collection and segregation at home.

*"Ang sabi ko, magandang pagawa 'to sa mga bata and the youth lalo na walang pasok sa eskwela. I think this is one form of eye-opener for them para ma-appreciate nila na, oo nga, may pakinabang pala sa basura," the local chief executive encouraged.*

On the other hand, Marilyn Tolentino, MENRO chief, explained that collected wastes will be converted into useful items while some are up for recycling.

*"Yung makukuhang mga plastic na may foil ay mapupunta sa aming shredding facility habang ang iba ay mare-recycle. Ang mga shredded materials ay gagawing mga unan, bayong, bags, at iba pang useful items na maaaring ibenta at pagkakitaan," Tolentino shared.*

San Nicolas is known to be a heritage town and an environment champion for its notable awards in terms of solid waste management and environmental management. (JCR/AMB/MJTAB/PIA Ilocos Norte)

# ECQ reduces Baguio waste by 25%

Published 22 hours ago  
on May 31, 2020 10:18 AM  
By **Aldwin Quitasol**



Fitness and wellness enthusiasts in a park enjoy the cool Baguio morning. (Baguio PIO)

**BAGUIO CITY**—The volume of garbage generated by households and essential business establishments during the nearly 11-week Luzon enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) dropped by approximately 25 percent here.

Baguio City General Services Office (GSO) chief Eugene Buyucan said the volume of residual waste hauled in March averaged 175 to 180 tons daily but in April, the volume dropped to approximately 140 tons.

It was reduced further to 133 tons on 1 to 15 May.

“The significant reduction can be attributed to the closure of numerous business establishments and the return of stranded individuals to their hometowns,” said Buyucan, adding that garbage collectors here worked round the clock during the ECQ implementation.

Buyucan urged residents to continue segregation of waste.

TITLE: Masangsang na amoy sa East Avenue area, nagmula sa basura ng Philippine Heart Center

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## Masangsang na amoy sa East Avenue area, nagmula sa basura ng Philippine Heart Center

May 31, 2020 @ 4:14 PM 13 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Nagmula sa mga basura ng Philippine Heart Center (PHC) ang nirereklamo ng mga residente na masangsang at mabahong amoy.

Ito ang siyang napag-alaman na Remate News Team (RNT) nang magsagawa ng imbestigasyon sa lugar at kausapin ang mga naninirahan malapit sa nasabing hospital.

Kasama ang mga tauhan ni Deputy Commander P/Major Ferdinand Duren mula sa Kamuning Police Station 10, unang pinuntahan ng RNT ay ang East Avenue Medical Center (EAMC).



Ayon sa duty officer of the day na si Celso Kapangpangan, hindi sa kanila nagmula ang mabahong amoy kagabi at kailanman ay hindi mabaho ang kanilang mga basura.

Sinabi pa nito na sa umaga sila nagpapahakot ng basura at hindi sa gabi kung saan ang kanilang mga basura ang nakabalot sa iba't ibang kulay ng plastic na kinabibilangan ng itim na nakapaloob ang non hazardous waste, berde habang ang dilaw naman ay naroon ang mga hazardous waste na ginamit ng ospital.

Nang mag-imbestiga sa lugar ang RNT, napag-alaman na sa waste pala ng PHC nagmula ang masangsang na amoy kagabi.

Masangsang na amoy sa East Avenue area, nagmula  
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Ayon kay Cora Padilla, nakatira malapit sa PHC, kagabi ay nagpahakot ng basura kagabi ang nasabing hospital ay muling naamoy nila ang mabaho na umaalingasaw.



Sa pahayag naman ni Dario Bugaong, matagal na naka-stock ang waste ng PHC bago ito hakutin ng trak ng basura dahil na upang bumaho ito.

Sinubukan ng RNT na kunin ang panig ng pamunuan ng PHC subalit ayon sa duty guard hindi raw pumasok ngayon araw ang mga matataas na opisyal nila kung kaya't walang makakasagot sa aming mga katanungan.

Samantala sinabi naman ni Weng Makatao, Chief of Staff ni Quezon City Mayor Joy Belmonte na kanya na itong pinaiimbestigahan kay Mike Marasigan, pinuno ng Quezon City Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Office (QCDRRMO).

Sa isang text message na pinadala sa RNT ni Marasigan on going pa raw ang kanilang validation kung saan nagmula ang masangsang na amoy. **Jan Sinocruz/Erwin Monroy**



## Overlooking the Metro, silipin!

May 31, 2020 @ 4:36 PM 13 hours ago

*Maaliwas na tanawin ng Metro Manila ang makikita sa paanan ng Valley Golf Antipolo, kung saan nabawasan na ang mga usok dahil sa enhanced community quarantine. **Crismon Heramis***





# New helmet orchid species discovered in Palawan

Latest find a testament to the island's rich biodiversity, says botany researcher

By: [Romar Miranda](#) - Correspondent / [@RVMirandaINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:19 AM June 01, 2020



**ENDEMIC BLOOM** The new species of helmet orchid discovered in Palawan can be seen under the shades of stunted trees and shrubs, particularly on moss-covered clay embankments. —JEHSON CERVANCIA/CONTRIBUTOR

**PUERTO PRINCESA CITY, Palawan, Philippines** —A new species of helmet orchid was discovered in Palawan province, a team of scientists has reported.

Identified as *Corybas circinatus*, the wild orchid is the second of its species found on the island province.

Phytotaxa, a global scientific journal, published on May 27 the discovery made by a team of researchers composed of Danilo Tandang, Ulysses Ferreras, Annalee Hadsall, Stephanie Pymlyon, Alastair Robinson and Rene Alfred Anton Bustamante.

The latest recorded discovery is a testament to Palawan's thick biodiversity that remains "poorly documented," said Bustamante, a botany researcher for more than ten years of the Philippine Taxonomic Initiative Inc., a nongovernmental organization based in Barangay Maligaya of El Nido town.

"Each discovery of this kind shows us how much we still don't know about Palawan's biodiversity," Bustamante said in an email interview. "In this day and age, when it seems that we've discovered everything, *Corybas circinatus* reminds us of how much our environment can still surprise us."

*Corybas circinatus*, which is yet to be given a local name, was described as a distinct species from all its known genus. It has a four-lobed labellum, with two of its longer upper lobes curved over two shorter lobes. It has a cucullate dorsal sepal with a retuse apex, and a small glandular proturbance at the front of its pedicel.

## Endemic

The new endemic helmet orchid was recorded in five locations in Palawan, namely, Mt. Bloomfield and Mt. Bahile in Puerto Princesa City; Mt. Mantalingahan in Rizal town; and Mt. Victoria and Sultan Peak in the municipality of Narra.

The new species was immediately distinguished based on the team's existing knowledge of the genus. However, Bustamante said that other subject matter experts had to peer-review their findings for proper documentation.

“A review of all known *Corybas* species was carried out as part of our research to document it properly. Our findings were summarized and submitted to a peer-reviewed journal, who suggested improvements and, importantly, confirmed our findings,” Bustamante said.

The first helmet orchid discovered in the province was first photographed at Mt. Victoria in June 2007 by Robinson, an Australian botanist who was also part of the research team that discovered the new species. Though categorically recognized as a new species at that time, the helmet orchid remained scientifically undescribed, as permits to collect samples were not secured until such a time that there were locally led expeditions. Later on, several other scientific excursions were held throughout Palawan by the Philippine Taxonomic Initiative Inc.

Usually found on mineral-rich or “ultramafic” soil, *Corybas circinatus* is associated with extremely high levels of endemic biodiversity, or plants that are specialized to grow on challenging soil that are found nowhere else.

#### Threat

Helmet orchids are usually found in India and Australia where it grows among mosses and leaf litters on the forest floor.

According to the Philippine Biodiversity Conservation Foundation, the country held four other known *Corybas* species, including the two discovered in Palawan.

“Unfortunately, since this soil is rich in minerals, it is under constant threat from mineral prospectors,” said Bustamante.

Bustamante also hoped that the recent discovery of *Corybas circinatus* could inspire the younger generations to preserve and conserve the natural wonders of Palawan.

“My hope is that the publication of this species helps to highlight the incredible and still poorly documented biodiversity of Palawan, and demonstrates how we, as stakeholders in this land, should protect our natural habitats so that species such as this one will continue to thrive for future generations to treasure,” Bustamante said. INQ

# Palace calls for cooperation as PH shifts to GCQ, MGCQ

By Azer Parrocha [May 31, 2020, 2:28 pm](#)



**QUARANTINE PROTOCOL.** Traffic enforcer checks the body temperature of a tricycle driver using thermal scanner at the Agora Terminal in San Juan City, Metro Manila on Thursday (May 28, 2020). Malacañang urged the public to cooperate with government authorities as Metro Manila and other areas shift to more relaxed community quarantine against coronavirus on Monday (June 1). (PNA photo by Joey O. Razon)

**MANILA** – Malacañang is urging the public to cooperate with the government authorities by following quarantine protocols as parts of the country, including Metro Manila, transition to more relaxed community quarantines on Monday (June 1).

Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said that since there is still no cure or vaccine for the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19), the public, especially those who physically report for work, should observe minimum public health standards that apply to workplaces, employers and workers.

Roque pointed out that the government cannot fight Covid-19 alone, it needs “the concerted effort of everyone.”

“As more sectors and industries begin to operate, let us continue cooperating with authorities in enforcing quarantine protocols,” Roque said in a statement on Sunday.

He lauded the sacrifices of Filipinos in more than two months and enjoined them to keep practicing quarantine guidelines particularly physical distancing and wearing of face masks.

“The sacrifices of our people in the past 70 or so days are laudable and we must not put these to naught. It maybe difficult for some, especially those who will physically report, but we live in extraordinary times and situation,” he said.

He also reminded the public to practice precautionary measures to minimize the risk of catching and spreading the deadly virus.

“Let us take care of each other by wearing face masks/face shields, maintaining physical/social distancing, staying at home if/when need be and avoiding crowded places, and the like. Only then we can heal and rise as one,” he said.

Metro Manila as well as Pangasinan, Cagayan Valley, Central Luzon, Calabarzon, Central Visayas, Zamboanga City, Davao City, Cebu City and Mandaue City will be placed from modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) to less strict general community quarantine (GQQ) from June 1 to 15.

Palace calls for cooperation as PH shifts to GCQ,

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People's movement, public transportation, and the operations of some industries are still limited in places where GCQ is imposed.

Police presence remains necessary in areas under GCQ to enforce community quarantine protocols.

The rest of the country will be under modified GCQ (MGCQ).

MGCQ refers to the transition phase between GCQ and the so-called "new normal," which the public can only experience once quarantine restrictions are lifted.

There are currently 17,224 confirmed cases of Covid-19 in the country, of which 950 are deaths and 3,808 are recoveries as of Saturday (May 30). **(PNA)**

# Palasyo sa publiko: 'Makipagtulungan sa quarantine protocols'

[Gemma Garcia](#) (Pilipino Star Ngayon

) - June 1, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Umapela ang Malacañang sa publiko na makipagtulungan sa pamahalaan ngayong ilalagay na sa general community quarantine (GCQ) at modified general community quarantine (MGCQ) ang bansa simula ngayong araw.

Sinabi ni Presidential Spokesman Harry Roque, na inilatag na ng gobyerno ang lahat ng pamamaraan para masigurong ligtas ang lahat sa COVID-19 kabilang dito ang pag-iisyu ng guidelines na ipapatupad sa mga lugar ng trabaho, employers at mga manggagawa.

Iginiit ni Roque na alam naman ng lahat na hindi nakikita ang kalaban na COVID-19 at hindi pa ligtas ang Pilipinas sa masamang dulot nito.

Kaya ngayong maraming sector at industriya na umano ang magbubukas ay kailangan ang kooperasyon sa mga otoridad sa pagpapatupad ng quarantine protocols kabilang na rito ang pagsusuot ng face mask/face shields, pagpapatupad ng physical/social distancing, pananatili sa bahay kung hindi kinakailangang lumabas at pag-iwas sa maraming tao.

Paliwanag pa ni Roque, hindi kakayanin ng pamahalaan na mag-isang labanan ang COVID kaya kailangan ang pakikipagtulungan ng taumbayan dito.

# The road to GCQ

We must always be truthful in our health declarations. We must always be cooperative with health authorities. We must abide by what health authorities prescribe.

Published 8 hours ago  
on June 1, 2020 12:25 AM  
By [Eduardo Martinez](#)

After more than two months of lockdown, restrictions are slowly being eased. I remember how difficult it was to step out of the house during the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) days. There would be several checkpoints. Without the proper pass, people manning the checkpoints would not allow you to go through. Screening was quite rigid, too. It was not just a matter of taking your temperature. You would be asked what your business was in going to your destination. If not essential, again you would be asked to turn back. That really instilled the discipline in us to just stay put in the house. Besides, everything, save for supermarkets and pharmacies, was closed anyway. There was nowhere else to go to. I guess the government's efforts to make all of us stay home and shut down establishments were worth it.

While the virus problem is far from being eradicated, I believe the measures installed controlled the spread. Of course, we still see cases every day, but probably there would be a lot more if we were not put on ECQ. And one thing noticeable now is that there are far more recoveries than there are fatalities.

These circumstances, coupled with our ailing economy, have led the government on 16 May 2020 to downgrade the ECQ to modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) in Metro Manila and in some parts of the country; while general community quarantine (GCQ) in other regions. Under these types of quarantine, there is now more freedom. Here in Metro Manila's MECQ, I noticed more people out now. Many businesses have resumed operations.

Our office in fact has opened, although with a 30 percent work force only. There are noticeably more cars on the road. You meet some congestion in fact in some parts of the metropolis. Things are more normal now.

From what I heard, it seems that the National Capital Region (NCR) and other regions on MECQ will be put on GCQ come 1 June. As of this writing, the mayors of the cities comprising the NCR have already recommended GCQ. What in much simpler terms does GCQ mean? In a nutshell, we can already go out, except those 20 years old and below and those 60 years old and above. Offices, both public and private, will open already. We will see more and more business establishments operating. Public transportation will resume, although on a limited level. Travelling by land from one region to another will be much easier. Seaports and airports may open their doors already, again on a limited basis. If this is so, it seems that everything will be up and running. No, not yet. While there are more entities open now, there are still some that remain shuttered. Those disallowed are gyms, fitness studios, bars, pubs, theaters, cinemas, libraries and museums, to name a few. If you noticed, these entities cater more to entertainment and leisure activities. While the entertainment sector contributes much to the economy, these are those which the government deems best suspended at the moment. Also, religious and work-related gatherings, conventions and workshops are still a no-no. They, which call for large gatherings, are not given the green light.

Now here is my two cents. While things may seem to be getting back to a more normal state, let this not be a license for us to throw caution to the wind.

Remember, we are just as vulnerable today as we were prior to the lockdown. So, as we obtain this new-found freedom, we should still be as careful as we were prior to and during the ECQ. As they say, it is better to have that mindset that the person you are dealing with is infected. That way, you do not put your guard down. Better to be overly cautious in fact. Always wear face masks, and if possible, face shields when you go out. Avoid touching your face, especially your mouth, nose and eyes. Always have a disinfectant in your pocket. That way, after touching something, you have a way of cleaning your hands. When you get home, bathe first before interacting with family. The clothes you wore should go straight to the laundry. The shoes you used should be disinfected and left outside for the moment.

And remember what the law — Republic Act 11332 (Mandatory Reporting of Notifiable Diseases and Health Events of Public Health Concern Act) — requires. We must always be truthful in our health declarations.

We must always be cooperative with health authorities. We must abide by what health authorities prescribe. Failure to do so will result in sanctions both penal and civil in nature. Try disobeying an order of the Department of Health, you either pay a hefty fine or go behind bars; or worse, both.

So, let us not take things lightly just because we are placed on GCQ. It is not license to be carefree and reckless. Yes, we can enjoy our freedom. But we should always be mindful of the problem. Let us be compliant with all the health rules. And live to fight the spread of the virus.



## EDITORIAL - GCQ in Metro

(The Philippine Star) - June 1, 2020 - 12:00am

Doomsayers are expecting pandemonium as Metro Manila, epicenter of the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic and center of economic activity in the country, eases into general community quarantine amid the continuing COVID-19 contagion.

After 11 weeks of enhanced community quarantine, mass transportation services will resume today, but with a much reduced capacity. These include the light railway and regular train services, taxis and transport network vehicle service units, shuttles and point-to-point buses, with the resumption of tricycle operations up to the local government executives. A new bus scheme is being launched along EDSA, with passenger boarding and unloading no longer from the sidewalk but from the inner lane.

Amid the expected confusion, and with more businesses allowed to reopen, the nation is shifting to the new normal. Government offices will resume, although many employees will still be working from home, and enrollment for the 2020-2021 school year also starts today. This means millions of people back in the streets. People could be lulled into believing that the situation is returning to pre-pandemic normal.

In fact this is a critical period during which people should leave no room for carelessness and complacency. The highly infectious killer coronavirus is still very much around – as is evident in the continuing increase in the number of confirmed COVID-19 cases as well as deaths.

Everyone must remember that the country – like the rest of the world – is shifting into the new normal, with health safety protocols here to stay. These include observing physical distancing and avoiding large gatherings, wearing face masks in public, regular handwashing and disinfection, thermal checks and foot baths where appropriate.

Philippine National Police officials are warning that people who violate quarantine protocols would still be arrested. The PNP should stop its commander for Metro Manila, Debold Sinas, from talking about acts that breach quarantine protocols and the corresponding sanctions, considering that he himself is under investigation for violating the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act. Credibility is needed for getting full public cooperation, which is indispensable as we all move toward the new normal. If the nation can't adopt to this new environment, we could face a fresh wave of infections.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2020/06/01/2017918/editorial-gcq-metro>



‘Government should uphold law on quarantine

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## ‘Government should uphold law on quarantine breaches’

[Louella Desiderio](#) (The Philippine Star) - June 1, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — Eight business groups are calling on government leaders to uphold the rule of law during the coronavirus disease 2019 or COVID-19 pandemic as some public officials violate quarantine rules without facing punishment while thousands have been arrested for committing violations.

“As the country rides this tide of uncertainty, we trust that our leaders at the national and local levels, will demonstrate beyond doubt, the highest standards in observing and enforcing the rule of law, and serve as role models in discipline and moral ascendancy,” read their joint statement yesterday.

The statement was issued by the American Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, Canadian Chamber of Commerce of the Philippines, Financial Executives Institute of the Philippines, Institute for Solidarity in Asia Inc., Institute of Corporate Directors, Judicial Reform Initiative, Makati Business Club, and Management Association of the Philippines.

“We are therefore greatly disappointed – even appalled and dismayed – about news reports of public officials violating with impunity the IATF (Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases) and DOH (Department of Health) protocols intended to protect public health,” they said.

The groups noted that when the government imposed the enhanced community quarantine in Metro Manila in March, National Capital Region Police Office (NCRPO) chief Maj. Gen. Debold Sinas declared: “We will arrest those who will not follow the guidelines.”

‘Government should uphold law on quarantine

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Last month, Sinas drew flak after photos posted online showed he had a large gathering for his birthday even when the ECQ was in place. While the PNP filed charges against him and several others for violation of protocols under the ECQ rules, Sinas remains head of NCRPO.

The business groups said the quarantine rules have affected the livelihood and freedom of movement of millions and that the impact has been greater on those near or below the poverty line even with the government-provided financial support.

“Additionally, the seeming confusion and different interpretations of rules led to numerous quarantine violations,” they also said.

The groups noted that from March 17 to April 17, almost 30,000 violators had been arrested; 6,616 underwent inquest, while 23,016 cases were for filing.

As of May 1, the number of violators totaled 41,000.

Many of those arrested have suffered detention, costs, humiliation, inconveniences, and even jail time.

Bail, however, could not be processed with limited bank branches open, and courts and government offices closed.

The groups said all these happened even as the Supreme Court recently issued administrative circulars reducing bail and allowing recognizance for the release of the accused.

“The compounding economic hardships and unfamiliarity with new rules resulted in many people languishing in detention centers for many days, thus risking exposure to the virus in overcrowded facilities,” they pointed out.

“Upholding the law and ensuring faith in our justice system stand as the bedrock of our democracy, and will enable the economy to survive and recover from these most trying times. The sacrifice of our people deserves nothing less,” the groups stressed.

# Metro Manila commuters face manic Monday

By: [Krixia Subingsubing](#) - Reporter / [@KrixiasINO](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 05:32 AM May 31, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — Hundreds of thousands of employees in Metro Manila who plan to take public transportation when they return to work on Monday should prepare for a possibly longer trip than what they were used to before the COVID-19 pandemic, especially on Edsa.

If they don't take a taxi or book a car through Grab, the only rides available would be the Metro Rail Transit 3 (MRT 3) and several hundred buses running at reduced capacities.

The Department of Transportation (DOTr) hastily rewrote transport regulations to maintain health measures to prevent the spread of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, when Metro Manila goes into general community quarantine (GCQ) on June 1 after the more strict enhanced community quarantine.

Commuters should expect long queues before getting on the MRT 3 or a bus as authorities will strictly impose physical distancing even at the train stations and bus stops.

MRT 3 will be allowed to carry only 12 percent of its regular passenger load and the buses 50 percent.

## Jeepney challenge

Passengers of Light Rail Transit 1 (LRT 1) along Taft Avenue and LRT 2 which runs above Aurora Boulevard in Quezon City and Magsaysay Avenue and CM Recto Avenue in Manila should also expect extended waiting time as they also will run at 12 percent capacity. Buses along those routes will be allowed, but also at 50 percent capacity.

The jeepneys will not be allowed anywhere in the metropolis and motorcycle-hailing rides like Angkas will also be banned.

Officials are still studying how physical distancing could be enforced in jeepneys before they are allowed back on the road, according to presidential spokesperson Harry Roque.

“That will be studied because there are jeepney prototypes where passengers can only occupy every other seat. If all jeepneys could change their seats to allow this, the IATF (Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases) would study it,” he said at the Laging Handa briefing on Saturday.

About 300 to 500 buses would be allowed on Edsa, down from around 3,000 before the pandemic prompted authorities to stop all public transportation in the national capital on March 17.

These buses will be moved from the outer lane to the inner lane alongside the MRT 3 line and will make only four stops for the next three weeks—at North Avenue, Quezon Avenue, Ayala Avenue and Taft Avenue.

Passengers will have to cross Edsa to get to the sidewalk from the bus stop.

## Crossings on Edsa

Other motorists on Edsa should expect traffic to halt or slow down at these pedestrian crossings. “Our strategy here is gradual, calculated and partial,” Transportation Secretary Arthur Tugade said on Friday. “We are not rushing [to revive the system all at once]. We have to balance the safety and health of the people.”

One Edsa commuter is leery about the new transport setup.

Before the pandemic, Christelle Lyn Peralta, 22, took a point-to-point bus from her home in Plaridel, Bulacan, to North Avenue where she'd ride the MRT 3 to Shaw Boulevard, where she works at a drug store.

"Our operations didn't actually stop during [the enhanced community quarantine period]," Peralta said. "But a lot of us, including myself, weren't able to go to work because we had no means of transportation."

Now that Manila is reopening its borders again, Peralta is anxious about commuting as provincial buses are still not allowed to enter Metro Manila.

She told the Inquirer that she may request her parents to drive her to work on Monday. She then plans to stay with a friend in a dorm or join some of her fellow employees who had taken quarters in the drugstore to avoid being late for work.



BACK TO WORK Edsa, Metro Manila's main road, will be reconfigured to move passenger buses to the inner lane as part of new measures as hundreds of thousands head back to work on Monday. Transport officials say physical distancing will be maintained in all public transport vehicles, including this taxi whose driver hopes to be protected from any coronavirus infection from his passenger. —NIÑO JESUS ORBETA AND MARIANNE BERMUDEZ

### Cashless payments

"I don't think a lot of the plans of DOTr is feasible. Many commuters are bracing for an even harder commute on June 1," she said.

To further avoid any physical contact between passenger and driver, the Land Transportation Franchising and Regulatory Board (LTFRB) advised the public to adopt cashless fare payments.

## Digital wallet

According to the board's Memorandum Circular No. 2020-18, which set guidelines for public utility vehicles during GCQ, only taxis, buses or jeepneys capable of cashless transactions would be given a special permit to operate during this period, said LTFRB chair Martin Delgra.

Fares could be paid with the digital wallet apps GCash, Paymaya and Squidpay and AF Payments, the concessionaire for the beep cards used for the three commuter trains.

Passengers must enroll with any of these apps. Taxis and transport network vehicle services like Grab are already capable of implementing this on the first day of GCQ.

Passengers should expect to be asked for their contact details during their commute as PUVs are required to keep daily record to aid contact tracing.

But going cashless does not necessarily mean life would be easier for taxi drivers, who shared their concerns in a Facebook group.

## Only 2,025 Grab drivers

One driver named Arthur lamented that using digital wallets would mean having no cash to buy food or other needs for a week as it takes that long for an app to disburse actual cash to the users. Grab, which will resume operation on Monday, said it was prepared to mobilize 20,000 drivers but was allowed only 2,025 by the LTFRB.

The company requested the LTFRB to increase the number "on behalf of both the drivers and the commuting public who are working to deliver much-needed services to our kababayans amidst the pandemic and an embattled economy." There was no immediate response from the board.

On Friday, the DOTr gave the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) P33 million to fund the "transformation" of Edsa.

The money will be spent to construct bus stops and pedestrian overpasses, said MMDA spokesperson Celine Pialago.

## More bus stops needed

The plan was to erect 11 bus stops initially, but only four could be completed in time for Monday. Fifteen more stops are to be built starting June 21.

Construction of the 1.5-meter-wide bike lane on the former bus lane of Edsa will start on Monday and is expected to be finished on June 21.

"All these plans will be long-term projects," said MMDA general manager Jojo Garcia. "Still, don't expect that once we wake up on Monday everything would have been changed. This is a slow and gradual process. Let us remember that the general community quarantine means we're still under quarantine, so we urge everyone not to forget what we are dealing with."

—*With a report from Leila B. Salaverria*

Jeepney makakabiyaha sa mga lugar na limitado ang  
modern PUVs

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June 1, 2020  
DATE

# Jeepney makakabiyaha sa mga lugar na limitado ang modern PUVs

By: [Leifbilly Begas](#) - 05/31/2020



HINDI umano isyu ng transportasyon kundi usapin ng kalusugan ang ginawang pagbabago sa sektor ng pampublikong sasakyan.

Ito ang tugon ng Department of Transportation matapos lumabas ang pahayag ni Bayan Muna Rep. Carlos Isagani Zarate na ginagamit ng ahensya ang coronavirus pandemic upang ma-phase out ang pampasaherong jeepney.

Sinabi ng DoTr na iginagalang nito ang pananaw ni Zarate pero “sa panahon ng pandemya, mas mahalaga ang kaligtasan at kalusugan kaysa ginhawa at magaan na pagbiyahe.”

Gaya umano ng sinabi ni Transportation Sec. Arthur Tugade, bagamat ang mandato ng DOTr ay siguruhin ang maayos na pagbiyahe ng publiko, “responsibilidad din namin sa sambayanan na tumulong sa pagpigil ng pagkalat ng COVID-19.”

Pinag-iisipan umano ang dahan-dahang panunumbalik ng mga biyahe upang “hindi (ito maging) instrumento ng kamatayan.”

Sinusunod umano ang hierarchy sa pagbabalik ng mga pampublikong sasakyan at ang uunahing ibalik ay ang may malaking kapasidad kung saan mas masusunod ang social distancing, cashless payment at may platform na magagamit sa contact tracing.

Inaprubahan ang Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-MEID), ang pagbiyahe ng tren, bus augmentation, taxi at TNVS (transport network vehicle service), shuttle service, point-to-point (P2P) bus, at ibang personal mobility device, at non-motorized transport gaya ng bisikleta simula sa Hunyo 1-21.

Sa Hunyo 22 naman ay daragdag ang pampasaherong bus, modern public utility vehicles at UV Express.

“Sa mga lugar na limitado ang modernong units, papayagang bumiyaha ang mga tradisyonal na jeepney.”

Jeepney makakabiyaha sa mga lugar na limitado ang  
TITLE: modern PUVs

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June 1, 2020  
DATE

Naiintindihan umano ng DoTr ang kalagayan ng mga driver ng jeepney kaya nakikipag-ugnayan ito sa Land Transportation and Regulatory Franchising Board (LTRFB), Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD), at Landbank of the Philippines (LBP) para mapabilis ang pagbibigay ng ayuda sa mga ito.

Naghain umano ng DoTr ng panukala sa Kongreso at Department of Budget and Management (DBM) upang matulungan ang mga driver.

Kabilang sa mga panukalang ito ang 30 porsyentong fuel subsidy para matulungan ang mga driver at operator kapag sila ay bibiyaha na.

Bahagi naman ng economic stimulus package sa Kongreso ang pagpapautang na ipagpapaliban muna ang pagbabayad ng interes at dagdag na interes sa utang na hindi nababayaran.

Pinalawig na rin ng DoTr ang aplikasyon ng renewal ng PUV franchises, licenses, at PUV registration nang 60 araw na walang mula mula sa pagtanggap ng ECQ/MECQ.

“Ang DOTr, sa ilalim ng matibay na pamumuno ni Kalihim Tugade, ay patuloy na isusulong ang transportasyon sa pampublikong transportasyon na moderno, napapanahon, mas maayos ang pamumuno, at mas makakalikasan. Higit sa lahat, itinataguyod nito ang interes ng lahat ng mga nasa sektor lalo na ang mga komyuter at pasahero.”

Ikinatuwa naman ng DoTr ang pagtulong ni Zarate sa mga driver na nais din ng ahensya na mapabuti ang kalagayan.

“Bukas po kami sa pagsama ni Cong. Zarate sa aming mga adhikaing mapabuti ang sektor ng transportasyon sa buong bansa, at maliwanagan siya na sa amin sa DOTr ang “Tunay na Serbisyo.”



The Senate committees on finance and on economic affairs were still rushing over the weekend a final report on the proposed extension as senators put in amendments to the law as some of its provisions were criticized or considered to be inadequate.

Boy Santos, file

## Senate to pass Bayanihan, CITIRA bills this week

[Paolo Romero](#) (The Philippine Star) - June 1, 2020 - 12:00am

MANILA, Philippines — The Senate may be able to pass the proposed extension of Republic Act 11469 or the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act and other measures aimed at jumpstarting the economy and assisting sectors severely affected by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic before Congress adjourns session this week.

RA 11469, enacted last March 25, declared a state of national emergency and gave President Duterte broad “authorized powers” to address the crisis including realigning funds, imposing harsher penalties on certain crimes, and taking over private hospitals, telecommunications facilities and transportation.

The Senate committees on finance and on economic affairs were still rushing over the weekend a final report on the proposed extension as senators put in amendments to the law as some of its provisions were criticized or considered to be inadequate.

Sen. Sonny Angara, who chairs the finance committee, said the extension of the law might be approved if Duterte certifies it urgent.

Among the possible amendments if RA 11469 is extended is the expansion of the emergency financial assistance to the poor and distressed sectors and the scrapping of Section 6, which enumerated several acts considered illegal and punishable with imprisonment of two months or a fine not less than P10,000 but not more than P1 million, or both.

These include local officials disobeying national government policies; hospital owners who refuse to operate in accordance with the directive of the President; hoarding, profiteering, price manipulation, product deceptions, cartels, etc.; refusal to prioritize and accept essential contracts for materials and services; refusal to provide grace periods to loan payments; spread of fake news, and failure to comply with reasonable limitations on the operation of certain transportation sector.



Senate Minority Leader Franklin Drilon sought the repeal Section 6 as he expressed alarm over abuses in the implementation of the law.

He stressed the principal purpose of RA 11469 is “to address an emergency and protect the health of our people” and “not to punish a crime per se.”

The Senate is also aiming to pass this week a revised revenue measure that aims to attract investors leaving China by lowering the country’s corporate income tax (CIT) rate and help the economy recover from the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

Senators reportedly met with economic managers to come up with a final version of the bill—Corporate Recovery and Tax Incentives for Enterprises (CREATE) Act—for the chamber’s approval.

Senate President Vicente Sotto III told reporters during a video conference last week that CREATE might be sponsored on the floor today and possibly passed by Wednesday, the last day of session.

CREATE, submitted by the Department of Finance to Congress last week, was a repackaging of the original Corporate Income Tax and Incentives Reform Act (CITIRA) to make it more of an economic stimulus measure.

CITIRA seeks to gradually lower the corporate income tax from 30 percent to 20 percent by 2030. CREATE accelerates the reduction by five percent or to 25 percent starting as early as July if Congress approves the bill before it adjourns by the end of the week.

President Duterte has certified CITIRA as urgent and Sotto said the certification can be carried to CREATE. If not, Malacañang can issue another one as CREATE is being pushed by the executive branch.



## Mga senador kabado sa COVID new wave sa NCR

Last updated May 31, 2020

Malabo nang mangyari ang mass testing kaya kailangan na ng bawat isa na proteksiyonan ang kanilang sarili ngayon sisimulan na ang general community quarantine sa Metro Manila at iba pang lugar sa bansa, ayon kay Senador Sherwin Gatchalian.

“Tomorrow (Monday) is the beginning of the GCQ in MM. Let’s be realistic, the intended testing capacities will not happen as scheduled,” pahayag ni Gatchalian sa kanyang Twitter post.

“It’s up to us to protect ourselves and our families: avoid gatherings, wear mask, social distance and go home immediately. Nasa atin na ang responsibilidad,” dagdag pa nito.

Nangangamba naman Senador Risa Hontiveros na maaring ma-expose ang sinuman ngayong pinaluwag na ang quarantine measure sa Metro Manila.

“My fear is that the easing of the quarantine may expose thousands of Metro Manila workers and residents to a new wave of community transmission,” sabi ni Hontiveros.

“However, moving forward, and even with the GCQ, we need to ensure that safety nets are in place, including more tests and personal protective equipment for workers and frontliners, work-from-home arrangements for those who are able, safe and sufficient transportation options for the public, and better support for and coordination with local government units,” dagdag nito.

Dismayado naman si Senador Francis Pangilinan sa tugon ng gobyerno sa pandemya nitong nakalipas na tatlong buwan.

“Sadly, the government’s response thus far, 3 months into the pandemic, and the continued rise in Covid cases, the absence of mass testing and the allegations of corruption and overpricing altogether do not inspire confidence,” ayon kay Pangilinan. (Dindo Matining)

# Return home, get a house

Go welcomes Pag-IBIG Fund support for BP2.

Published 8 hours ago on June 1, 2020 12:40 AM

By **TDT**



The success of the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program (BP2) has received a strong boost from support of various agencies such as the Home Development Mutual Fund's (Pag-IBIG Fund) commitment to cover mortgages of low-income members who are participants in the program.

Senator Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go, BP2 proponent, welcomed Pag-IBIG Fund Acmad Rizaldy Moti's recent remarks expressing full support for the scheme which targets the decongestion of Metro Manila.

At an online forum, Moti said the agency would include housing programs as long as their private developer partners provide good quality low-cost housing especially in the provinces.

"We will fully support the Balik Probinsya Program of the government. As we have assured our private developer partners, we will cover the mortgages taken by members (in the low income bracket) so long as they provide good quality low-cost housing especially in the provinces," Moti said.

## **Better future scheme**

The BP2 aims to give Filipinos new hope for a better future. Last 6 May 2020, President Rodrigo Duterte issued Executive Order 114 institutionalizing the program. The issuance also created an inter-agency council that would craft and oversee the implementation of policies and programs. The BP2 aims in the long run to encourage residents of Metro Manila and businesses to settle and invest in regions outside the capital.

"I would like to thank Pag-IBIG for supporting the BP2 Program and their continuing commitment to the poorest members of our society," Go noted.

"With decent housing, many Filipino families and communities can live and prosper with dignity," he added.

## **Crucial to war on poverty**

BP2 is also crucial in tackling the worsening conditions of the urban poor who are greatly affected during a pandemic. Go has repeatedly called attention to the plight of informal settler families who he believes can be provided better opportunities outside Metro Manila.

"The government is ready with protocols to ensure that the program will not be a cause in spreading the virus. There will be transportation assistance at transitory package that will be provided the beneficiaries," the Senator said.

A survey conducted by the Presidential Commission for the Urban Poor showed that many informal settlers are willing to return to the provinces. As of 30 May 2020, almost 74,000 Filipinos have applied for BP2. The Commission foresees more ISF applying once the program is fully implemented.



Philippine News

17 hrs · 🌐

BALIK PROBINSYA, BAGONG PAG-ASA: Aboard BRP Malapascua (MRRV-4403), the Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) safely ferried 82 passengers composed of overseas Filipino workers, stranded students, civilians, as well as PNP and BFP personnel for deployment from Sta. Ana, Cagayan to Basco, Batanes.

Also transported were 20 boxes of COVID-19 test kits, PPE, medicines, coconut and pomelo seedlings, live farm chickens, animal vaccines, irrigation materials, farming equipment, and provisions for the personnel of PCG unit in Batanes.

#BeatCOVID19  
#WeHealAsOne

👤 Christopher Meniado



👍❤️ 36

2 Comments 6 Shares

# United Nations to allocate \$96.2 million for PHL's battle against Covid

By [Cai Ordinario](#)

June 1, 2020

The United Nations will be allocating a total of \$96.2 million for the Philippines under its revised Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) response plan in light of the coronavirus 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic.

In a statement, the UN said bulk of the amount, worth \$33.5 million, will be allocated to the food security and agriculture cluster.

The other large appropriations will be for health worth \$23.2 million, and water, sanitation and hygiene worth \$15.5 million.

“The overall objective of the revised HCT response plan is to support the government in containing the spread of the outbreak and decrease deterioration of living conditions of those most vulnerable or at risk in the affected areas,” the UN said.

## Most vulnerable

According to the UN, the response plan targets 5 million of the most vulnerable people living in Covid-19 hot spot areas as well as those displaced in Mindanao that will require multisectoral humanitarian assistance.

The response plan includes interventions to earthquake-affected people in North Cotabato and Davao del Sur and to conflict-affected population in Mindanao to address their specific needs due to the pandemic.

The response approach, the UN said, will frontload humanitarian interventions in the first few months and then transition in the early recovery mode until the end of the year.

## June 1, 2020

posted June 01, 2020 at 12:25 am

by [Jonathan Dela Cruz](#)

Mark this date: June 1, 2020. Save for the cities of Cebu and Mandaue in Central Visayas and a few barangays in Metro Manila, this will be the first day of the easing of the nationwide lockdown as the President has declared that the country will now be under General Community Quarantine (GCQ).

After 75 days under the strict Enhanced Community Quarantine (ECQ), we will now have more activities. From very limited, essential movements of transport, goods and people, we will now have more sectors and areas opened up, more offices and workers up and about and, as all medical workers and, yes, parents, are worried about, greater possibility of COVID-19 transmissions.

Hopefully, the latter scene may not be as problematic as projected. But we will have to grin and bear it as we await the data, troubling as these may have been for most of the last two and a half months.

For now, what matters most to a lot of folks is that we are restarting our lives and that of the rest of the country today. Or should we say starting a new life, as it were, a new phase of a struggle affected by this pandemic never before experienced in modern history. So what are we to expect from hereon?

Well, for starters we will still be under quarantine. Not back to what we were used to. We will be a bit freer from a complete lock down but for all intents and purposes we will be under guard. We will have to abide by certain health protocols: wearing of masks, social distancing and constant cleaning and washing of hands. We will still have a lingering stay-at-home routine except for a number of things we are allowed to do outside the house and at given periods. Yes, an unannounced curfew remains the norm although we will probably not have as many checkpoints along the way.

Today, will also mark the beginning of a train of questions and explanations about what we have done and will be doing as we break free, from the fears, apprehensions and the unknowns about this outbreak which has literally turned out lives and that of the world upside down. We know for a fact that only the discovery of a vaccine and hopefully, a cure, will calm down the waters and get us to move faster than the baby steps which will surely be the norm in the next weeks or even months from now instead of the galloping moves we had expected or planned to do before COVID-19 struck us all down.

And, together with our tentative steps towards a full restart, there will be a lot of questions. Whatever happened to the strategies, plans, protocols and, of course, funds which have been laid out on the table before and during the imposition of ECQ? What is the status of our agreed medical response to this outbreak: test, isolate, trace, isolate, protect? How far are we from achieving the desired outcome to get our fears out of the window and our mojo back on track? How much have we spent to combat this pandemic? What is now the state of our economy? How much have been lost during this lock down?

What about our workers? How many jobs have been lost and how many will remain employed? How many businesses survive and for how long? What are we to do now with the thousand and one things which we must do to get the entire country and its 107-million strong population (that includes the OFWs and other Filipinos overseas) intact and raring to go and rebuild the country and their lives? What lies ahead and what should be the new contract which we the people have with the state(government) and with each other?

Indeed, this day, June 1, should be the start of a national effort to define and make something of that societal norm called the New Normal. What is it really and how are we expected to adopt and act under this new arrangement: as individuals, as a family, as a community and as a country and a member of the family of nations. While we maintain that each and every individual must assume and has a responsibility for his or her own upkeep and future it behooves our leaders - political, social, economic, spiritual - to provide the overarching guide and direction if we expect to heal and move as one.

What lessons have we learned from this lockdown? What innovations should we put in place? What new activities, new modes of doing things, what new growth models have we come to appreciate which were just shrugged off or set aside previously as we rushed doing things in the old ways? What new industries and businesses should we champion? What old habits do we have to discard? What new trends and innovations in other countries should we try? We have the chance to now break new grounds and blaze new trails.

We have been through a number of struggles before. We expect our people to rise up to the challenge and, of course, the opportunities which this new stage in our life as a country will provide. We can do no less.

## Hope and trepidation

*posted* June 01, 2020 at 12:30 am

"The unseen enemy has not yet been defeated. We just cannot afford a longer lockdown."

Metro Manila and other areas shift today to general community quarantine, not because it is already safe for us to venture out, but because the effects of the lockdown have been so crushing for the economy, for industries and businesses, and for people's livelihood that we have to take the calculated risk of opening up – or suffer a beating, not from a virus, but from economic collapse. We thus greet this new phase in the fight against COVID-19 with hope on one hand, and trepidation on the other.

We are hopeful because after two and a half months of only bare essentials, up to 50 percent of economic activity will be resumed. This means that for those who have been forced to stay at home without the ability to earn while under quarantine, a semblance of dignity and productivity will return. They will no longer have to rely on assistance from the government which, while it came in cash or kind, did not really assuage their fears that there would be enough to go on in the coming days.

We are hopeful because after two and a half months of reading grim news about the coronavirus, we have presumably built good habits like washing our hands, practicing social distancing, avoiding crowds, and evaluating every action – like stepping out of the house – as essential or risky. Unfortunately, we have more reasons to be anxious about today.

Foremost, we do not have a clear picture of the extent of infections. Just last week, the Department of Health revised its reporting format, confounding the public even more as it drew distinctions on cases confirmed on a single day and those from more than several days before. We are told that the current number of coronavirus infections – more than 17,000 – is understated as there are thousands still not included in the official tally. Last week, too, we saw single-highest surge in the number of new cases, even as there are subsequent explanations about why this is so.

But the Health Department insists that we are already controlling the outbreak because of the slower doubling time and lower mortality rate. The number of "fresh" cases reported per day is supposedly low, and there is a "low critical care utilization rate."

We are swimming – no, drowning – in vague terms, and on really bad days our officials tend to change definitions. It is anything but comforting.

And because the evidence is unreliable, we quake over the decisions being made from this data. We are also worried about how the millions expected to go back to work today could bring themselves from Point A to Point B. Those who own vehicles will have no problem except perhaps heavy traffic. Those who rely on public transportation should allot even longer hours for their commute.

The actions of some of our leaders who play God with the lives of people and selectively apply safety protocols and the rule of law hardly inspire confidence. Those who milk this tragedy for their own political gain make us retch.

Finally, with all these, we are deathly afraid of a scenario where more Filipinos will contract the dreaded disease, and our health care system will not be able to respond to this.

Then again, there is no stopping our opening up today because the alternative – remaining on lockdown indefinitely – appears more destructive. As we venture out today or in succeeding days, may we remember that it is not yet safe out there, and that this unseen enemy has not yet been defeated.

Source: <https://manilastandard.net/mobile/article/324955>



## “Survivor Metro Manila: Matira, Matibay!” – WAG KANG PIKON! ni Jake J. Maderazo

By Jake J. Maderazo May 31, 2020 - 11:38 PM

Bahala na si Batman at kanya-kanya na ang laban. Ito ang sumisiklab na diskusyon sa social media matapos ipatupad ang General Community Quarantine (GCQ) ngayon dito sa Metro Manila. Paano tayo makakatiyak na ang makakasabay natin sa commute, sa trabaho, sa kinakainan at pabalik ng bahay ay hindi mga “carrier” ng COVID-19?

Nitong huling tatlong araw, nagrehistro tayo ng biggest one day increase na 539 sinundan ng pinakamalaking 1,046 at at malaki ring 590 confirmed cases ng COVID-19 at sa kabuuan, pumapalo na tayo sa 17,224. Paanong hindi ka naman nenerbyusin? Karamihan sa nagpositibo ay tagarito sa Metro Manila at sa nakaraang apat na araw, umaabot sa 1,356 ang naitala dito.

Kaya naman, marami ang nangangamba kung bakit nagkaluwagan at ibinaba tayo sa GCQ pagkatapos ay napakarami pang mga “infected” sa ating paligid. Parang walang katiyakan ang sitwasyon at bahala na si Batman at hindi ka sana tamaan.

Pero, sinadya ba ito ng pamahalaan? Bakit tumaas ang mga kaso pagkatapos ay luluwagan ang ating patakaran?

Kung Department of health ang tatanungin, ang pagtaas ng bilang ng mga COVID 19 patients ay artipisyal lamang at ito’y dahil sa nililinis nilang “backlog” ng mga naunang mga kinunan ng PCR-RT tests.

Ayon kay USEC Maria Rosario Vergeire, noong Biyernes ng gabi Mayo 29, kung saan merong 1,046 na confirmed cases, 1,000 doon ay “backlog cases” at 46 lamang ang “fresh” o bago. Ibig sabihin, mas bumababa ang mga bagong kaso mula 109 cases, noong Huwebes, ito’y bumaba pa sa 46. Naitala kasi ang 539 confirmed cases noong Huwebes, Mayo 28 at dito ang fresh cases ay 109 at ang backlog cases ay 430.

Noong Sabado, Mayo 30, sinundan tayo ng 590 cases, at ang paliwanag ng DOH, ang mga bagong kaso ay 252 lamang at ang mga backlog cases ay 338. Ayon pa kay Vergeire, kahit lumampas na tayo sa 17,000 cases, hindi raw ito nangangahulugan na lumalala ang sitwasyon bagkus, nagiging agresibo ngayon ang “automated system” ng DOH.

Iidinagdag pa ng DOH na karamihan o 90 percent ng active cases ng COVID-19 ay “mild” lamang at 18 kaso ang kritikal at 56 ang “severe cases”.

Kung susuriin, ang pahayag ng DOH ay indikasyon na talagnag bumababa na ang mga kaso ng COVID-19 sa ating bansa. Isipin niyo kahit na ang mga senior citizens na sina DEPED sec. Leonor Briones at si DILG Sec. Eduardo Ano na tinamaan ay naka-recover. Pero, madaling sabihin ito, at mahirap kung tayo na ang matsambahan at mahawaan. Talagang ibayo pa rin ang talaga ang pag-iingat.

Pero, kung hindi tayo naniniwala sa sinasabi ng gobyerno, posible na talaga dapat wakasan ang MECQ dahil lumalala na ang ating sitwasyong pang-ekonomya. Napakarami nang walang trabaho at kabuhayan.. Maraming negosyante ang nawalan ng hanapbuhay. Public transportation, Pabrikang, Turismo, entertainment, mga eskwelahan, sports, sabong, karera, casino, advertising, personal services, shopping malls, mga restaurant businesses at pati “underground economy” ay talagang lumagapak ng husto. Lalo na ang mga nag-uwian nating higit 300,000 mga OFWS mula sa abroad.

Kaya naman, kailangan na nating bumalik sa kalakaran ng lipunan, maging ito’y “new normal” o dating gawi para sa ating kanya-kanyang kabuhayan.

Pero sabi nga, kailangan nating mabuhay kahit nandyan ang COVID-19 dahil baka mamatay naman kami sa gutom.

Bahala na ka na, Lord! Tulungan Mo kaming lahat na makaraos dito sa ating pandemya at bagsak na ekonomya.

Source: <https://radyo.inquirer.net/246532/survivor-metro-manila-matira-matibay-wag-kang-pikon-ni-jake-j-maderazo>



## EDITORIAL - People must learn not to rely on the government all the time

(The Freeman ) - June 1, 2020 - 12:00am

Today is the day when things go back to normal or at least the new normal. And not for all of us, only those of us who are allowed to return to our jobs or businesses.

For the past two months most of us have been cooped up in our homes due to quarantine restrictions because of the global pandemic. If there is anything that these past two months should have taught us, it is that we should be prepared to look after our own needs and not depend on the government to take care of everything all the time.

Yes, the government has some responsibility in taking care of those who were suddenly left jobless, those who were totally caught unprepared when COVID-19 suddenly appeared. There were those who needed money, food, and other supplies quickly because the COVID-19 threat suddenly came on so fast.

However, the government cannot be expected to take care of the needs of everyone and all the time. Its money and resources are finite, and it has other vital functions to perform aside from feeding and supplying people.

Those who want to avoid a repeat of the misery they went through, like the waiting for rice and enduring the long lines to get cash aid, or those who want to survive whatever life throws their way, are advised to make sure they never have to turn to the government for their needs.

We realize this is easier said than done, but the consequences of being unprepared to take care of ourselves and always relying on the government for everything are worse.

There is still no telling how our fight against COVID-19 will go. There may yet be a second wave or even a third, so if that happens and the government has to enforce quarantine measures in some areas of the country anew, millions will again demand to be fed and supplied.

We can't say for certain that the government still has enough money and resources for this.

The very survival of not just our families but also our country is why we should make sure we are able to feed and supply ourselves during difficult times.

Source: <https://www.philstar.com/the-freeman/opinion/2020/06/01/2017872/editorial-people-must-learn-not-rely-government-all-time>

# On-line news here and abroad

## Editorial

Published May 31, 2020, 11:00 PM

On-line communications and social media were very much in the news last week. With restrictions on people's movements in countries around the globe, many people took to their laptops and computers to connect with their offices and reach out to other people.



In the United States, President Donald Trump was, as usual, tweeting opinions and attacks on various issues, including his claim that China didn't inform the world early enough about the COVID-19 epidemic. He also tweeted the US would take action against China for its move to impose national security laws on Hong Kong. But it was his tweeting against mailed-in balloting that led the Tweeter company to add a link to a Trump tweet, saying: "Get the facts about mail-in ballots." Readers were directed to a page that stated: "Fact-checkers say there is no evidence that mail-in ballots are linked to voter fraud."

Trump lashed out at the company and, in a tweet, accused it of stifling free speech and of interfering in the 2020 election. He then signed an executive order directing federal agencies to see whether they can place new regulations on tech giants like Twitter, Facebook, and Google which owns YouTube.

We have not had any such controversy over tweets and other online matters in the Philippines. On-line and social media have assumed a bigger role in communications under the "new normal" resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic in the country. In view of the continuing requirement of social distancing, many classes in private schools will be relying heavily on on-line and distance-learning programs this coming school year.

For the nation's public schools, the Department of Education is considering various options, including using printed modules to be delivered to the students' homes and delivering educational materials through technology, including Internet, radio, and television. Parents will decide whether to keep their children out of school while the COVID-19 danger is on, or accept the options that the DepEd will be offering, Secretary Leonor Briones said.

There have been many change in the way we and other nations have carried on our daily lives these past few months. Some have deplored that "social distancing" has made people more aloof from one another, when they should work closer together in the face of the pandemic.

There is indeed less physical contact today between people – no shaking of hands or high-fives, no "beso-beso," no luncheon meetings, no big weddings, no enthusiastic rooting for school teams, not even praying in church together.

But we have tried to make up for the loss of physical contact by a greater use of the Internet, via online and social media, and the airwaves via radio and television. We may have to continue in this "new normal" for some time to come, as no one today is sure when the COVID-19 pandemic will end.

# Swimming now allowed on Boracay Island

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:17 AM June 01, 2020



ISLANDERS FIRST Boracay residents will have their beaches to themselves with tourists still banned on the island. —INQUIRER FILE PHOTO

ILOILO CITY, Iloilo, Philippines — Swimming will be finally allowed on Boracay Island even if it remains closed to tourists.

Acting Mayor Frolibar Bautista of Malay town said the swimming ban will be lifted as Boracay Island, which is part of Aklan province, and the rest of Western Visayas shifted to modified general community quarantine (MGCQ) starting on Monday.

Swimming, however, will still be regulated to ensure physical distancing and other health measures.

“We may designate swimming areas along the 4.5-kilometer beach and regulate the number of those going there at a time. It will depend on a trial run in the next few days,” Bautista told the Inquirer on Sunday.

Under the guidelines issued by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF), indoor and outdoor noncontact sports including swimming are allowed under MGCQ provided that minimum public health standards are followed.

Bautista said no tourists will still be allowed on Boracay Island. But a number of tourists remain stranded on the island.

Local chief executives of Panay Island’s provinces of Iloilo, Antique, Aklan and Capiz and of the island-province of Guimaras have also agreed to lift border restrictions. But Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas said they agreed that ports and airports in Western Visayas would stay closed and would only accommodate returning overseas Filipino workers and stranded residents.

In Cebu City, Mayor Edgardo Labella asked residents to be vigilant as the city shifted to general community quarantine (GCQ) on Monday.

“We can never be complacent as long as there is no vaccine. We have to live with the virus,” he added.

Under GCQ, several nonessential industries will be allowed to reopen. Public transport will also be allowed to resume operations at a reduced capacity to ensure proper social distancing. Religious gatherings are permitted but there should not be more than 10 attendees.

Last May 27, Cebu City was classified as the lone local government unit in the country that would be on modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ) starting June 1. This prompted Labella to send a letter to the Department of the Interior and Local Government Central Visayas Director Leocadio Trovela, who is also the regional IATF chair, appealing to place Cebu City under GCQ instead.

In the evening of May 28, President Duterte appeared on national television and said only the National Capital Region, Davao City, and some provinces in Luzon would be on GCQ while the “rest of the country” would transition to MGCQ, the lowest form of lockdown enforced by the government. The President did not specifically mention that Cebu City will be on MGCQ, contrary to an earlier Inquirer report.

It was on May 30 when the IATF announced that it approved the request of Labella to put Cebu City under GCQ until June 15. But it also placed the rest of Central Visayas under the same category instead of the expected MGCQ.

—*NESTOR BURGOS JR. AND ADOR VINCENT MAYOL*

# Customs condemns 8.7 tons of unregistered, hazardous goods

Published May 31, 2020, 9:56 PM

By Minka Klaudia Tiangco

The Bureau of Customs-Ninoy Aquino International Airport (BOC-NAIA) on Friday condemned around 8.7 tons of illegally imported medicine, cosmetics, cigarettes, and electronic goods in Trece Martires, Cavite.



**CONDEMNED ITEMS** – The Bureau of Customs condemns around 8.7 tons of illegally imported medicine, cosmetics, cigarettes, and electronic goods in Trece Martires, Cavite using the Thermal Decomposer (Pyrolysis) Facility of the Integrated Waste management, Inc. (IWMI). (BOC photo via Minka Tiangco / MANILA BULLETIN)

In a report, the BOC said the goods did not have proper permits and clearances, meaning they cannot be sold through public auction and may be unsafe for consumption. Customs did not specify the goods' point of origin, but said it arrived through different warehouses. The bureau also did not give any details on the purpose of the seized medicine. The goods were condemned using the thermal decomposer (pyrolysis) facility of Integrated Waste Management, Inc. (IWMI). The BOC said this was to make sure that the items will not be sold or made available on the market.

LOOK

# Fireflies light up Masungi Georeserve in Rizal

Published May 30, 2020 12:22pm

Fireflies formed illuminating trails all over the the Masungi Georeserve in Rizal on Friday night.

The Masungi Georeserve shared the enchanting sight spotted on the popular conservation area, saying that the fireflies are an indicator of how healthy the ecosystem is.

This is because bioindicator species are "sensitive to pollution or other habitat changes, making them good signs of a thriving ecosystem."

"We are thankful to see these tonight as it reaffirms our work in protecting the Masungi landscape and restoring its amazing biodiversity," it added.



FB: Masungi Georeserve



FB: Masungi Georeserve



FB: Masungi Georeserve

The Masungi Georeserve covers over 3,000 hectares of land located in the southern Sierra Madre range in Baras, Rizal. It has been practicing conservation efforts for over 15 years.

It is also a popular activity spot for locals, who like to enjoy nature as they go through the caves, stone trails, rope courses, and a hanging bridge.

—Kaela Malig/JCB, GMA News

Source: [https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/lifestyle/content/740450/fireflies-light-up-masungi-georeserve-in-rizal/story/?utm\\_source=GMANews&utm\\_medium=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR390gTmAWIIWabEzREk3Iw\\_5eHsZBTK2k1IfIVYRpgdg90YHqp5ZtCOLzU](https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/lifestyle/content/740450/fireflies-light-up-masungi-georeserve-in-rizal/story/?utm_source=GMANews&utm_medium=Facebook&fbclid=IwAR390gTmAWIIWabEzREk3Iw_5eHsZBTK2k1IfIVYRpgdg90YHqp5ZtCOLzU)





Swimming with the beasts and the beautiful Puyat in Oslob, Cebu.

Swimming with the beasts Whale shark attractions such as this in Oslob, Cebu and other tourism attractions around the country are hoped to revive provincial economies, which have been long dependent on tourism, after the peak summer months' long lockdowns.

**Ebdane vows Zambales economy revival**

He also referred to the conduct of dredging programs that will provide solutions for the province's potential flooding while also providing income and stimulating the local economy.

**Swimming with the beasts** Whale shark attractions such as this in Oslob, Cebu and other tourism attractions around the country are hoped to revive provincial economies, which have been long dependent on tourism, after the peak summer months' long lockdowns.

The Department of Tourism (DoT) on Saturday announced the gradual re-opening of tourism opera-

tions in all areas across the country placed under modified general community quarantine (MGCQ).

Tourism Secretary Bernadette Romulo-Puyat said they are hoping that the resumption of tourism operations will pave the eventual recovery of the Philippines' tourism industry.

"It's important for the tourism sector to open as soon as possible, albeit slowly, gradually and cautiously, so that those who lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 pandemic will be able to work and earn again," said Romulo-Puyat.

The tourism chief noted that only travels for tourism purposes may be allowed only between areas



under MGCQ and is subject to travel restrictions imposed by local government units (LGU).

She added that only essential non-leisure travel between general community quarantine (GCQ) to MGCQ areas or vice-versa is allowed.

However, tourist destinations that will re-open dur-

ing the MGCQ are still subject to the approval of their LGU officials and must adhere to the health and safety guidelines issued by the Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases.

Only tourism establishments that are accredited and issued a Certificate of Authority to Operate by the DoT are allowed to open during MGCQ.

Meanwhile, Mayors Jun Tumalak of Oslob, Paz Rozgoni of Moalboal and Verna Magallon of Alegria in the Cebu province pushed for revival of their tourism at-

tractions as their respective municipalities have suffered from extreme tourism losses after the quarantines.

Gov. Gwendolyn Garcia, who met with the mayors at

the Cebu Capitol on Saturday, revealed that Oslob town lost more than P100 million in revenues from the stoppage of whaleshark or butanding-watching.

“We have to find ways to

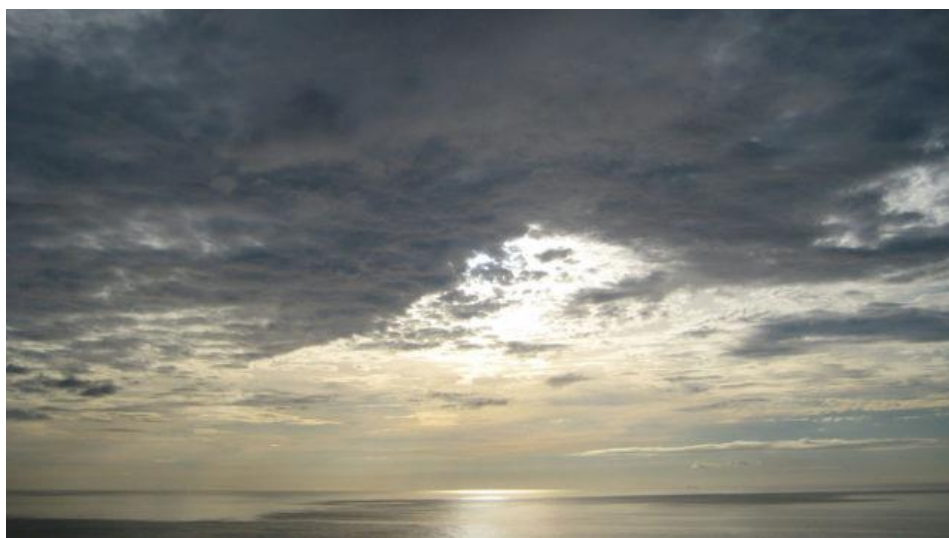
revive this economy as the town depends much on this and we are to meet tourism and health officials regarding the new normal protocols,” Garcia said.

Moalboal’s tourist attractions include diving and island hopping, while canyoneering is a favorite activity in the Alegria and Badian towns.

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## Easterlies, magpapaulan sa bansa ngayong Linggo, Mayo 31

May 31, 2020 @ 8:15 AM 21 hours ago

Manila, Philippines – Makararanas ng bahagyang maulap hanggang sa maulap na kalangitan na may hiwalay na pag-ulan o pagkidlat ang Metro Manila at nalalabing bahagi ng bansa dahil sa easterlies o localized thunderstorms ngayong Linggo, Mayo 31, ayon sa PAGASA.

Makakaapekto ang easterlies o hangin mula sa silangan sa halos buong bahagi ng bansa, habang umaabot naman hanggang Hilaga at Gitnang Luzon ang ridge ng isang high pressure area. **RNT/MM**

# Mabalacat, Pampanga niyanig ng magnitude 3.4 na lindol

By Dona Dominguez-Cargullo June 01, 2020 - 04:56 AM



Niyanig ng magnitude 3.4 na lindol ang bayan ng Mabalacat sa lalawigan ng Pampanga.

Naitala ng Phivolcs ang pagyanig alas 2:47 ng madaling araw ng Lunes, June 1 sa layong 5 kilometers northeast ng Mabalacat.

Tectonic ang origin ng lindol at 7 kilometers ang lalim.

Wala namang naitalang intensities at hindi ito inaasahang magdudulot ng pinsala at aftershocks.

# Mga ipo-ipo namuo sa Laguna de Bay

ABS-CBN News

Posted at May 31 2020 07:00 PM



Namataan noong Sabado ang 3 hanggang 4 na malalaking ipo-ipo sa Laguna de Bay.

Sa video na ipinadala ng netizen na si Leody Lucena, kita ang sunod-sunod na pagsulpot ng malalaking ipo-ipo sa Laguna de Bay.

Napasigaw pa ang mga residenteng nanonood ng ipo-ipo nang biglang kumulog, base sa kuha ng video.

Nakuhanan din ng netizen na si Erwin Sison ang ipo-ipo mula sa kaniyang bahay sa Binangonan, Rizal.

Ayon kay Sison, nagsimula ang ipo-ipo bandang alas-6 ng gabi at nawala rin matapos ang 20 minuto.

Ayon sa state weather bureau na PAGASA, posibleng mabuo ang water spout o ipo-ipo sa tamang kondisyon kung may ulan o paparating na ulan sa mga anyong tubig gaya ng lawa.

"Yong water spout nabubuo siya kapag may intense or severe na thunderstorm," ani PAGASA weather forecaster Ariel Rojas.

Tumatagal ng 10 hanggang 30 minuto ang ipo-ipo bago ito malusaw. Mas mahaba umano ang buhay nito kung matatag o stable ang vortex.

Pero hindi lang daw dapat pagmasdan ang ipo-ipo dahil maaari itong makapinsala sa mga mangingisda o naglalayag kung mapalapit masyado sa ipo-ipo.

Kailangan din umanong bantayan kung lumaki pa ito at tumawid sa lupa.

"Pag tumawid 'yan sa lupa galing sa anyong tubig, puwede siyang makasira ng mga bahay, makabuwal ng mga puno pero wala namang report na tumawid sa lupa 'yong ipo-ipo," ani Rojas.

Wala mang bagyo, maaaring mangyari ang ipo-ipo kahit saan sa bansa basta't malapit sa anyong tubig.

-- Ulat ni Kevin Manalo, ABS-CBN News

# Here's why waterspouts formed over Laguna de Bay

Published May 31, 2020, 11:50 AM

By *Ellalyn de Vera-Ruiz*

Residents south of Metro Manila were stunned by a "rare" sighting of four tornadic waterspouts (ipopo) simultaneously forming over the Laguna de Bay early Saturday evening.



Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) (MANILA BULLETIN)

Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) weather specialist Ariel Rojas said waterspouts usually form over tropical waters in areas near the equator, such as the Philippines, but is a rare occurrence in the country.

Tornadic waterspouts originate from thunderstorms, Rojas said, while thunderstorms form from warm air with moisture.

"Warm air rises into the sky and when it continues to bring moisture to the sky, clouds will be formed. When the warm air continues to climb, the clouds become larger to form thunderstorm clouds. As the warm air carrying moisture enter into the thunderstorm cloud, a sudden change in the direction and speed of wind occurs in rotating motion forming a vortex," he explained.

The warm air rising above the sky cools down. When the cold air, which is heavier than the warm it enters the vortex, it pushes the warm air or part of the cloud down and becomes a waterspout. It is called a waterspout or 'ipupo' if it hits the water or tornado or 'buhawi' if it hits the ground, he added.

## WEATHER IN THE NEXT FEW DAYS

Rojas said that two warm weather-associated weather systems may continue to prevail across the country.

The ridge of high pressure area extending across Luzon, and easterly winds affecting the rest of the country, will likely bring warm and humid mornings with a possibility of short-lived sudden rains or thunderstorms in the afternoon or evening.

He advised the public to take extra precautions in the event of severe thunderstorms as flashfloods over low-lying areas or landslides in mountainous communities are likely.

PAGASA earlier pointed out that the occurrence of short-lived heavy rains late in the day, is normal this time of the year as the country is about to transition to the southwest monsoon period or "habagat," associated with the rainy season.

"Habagat" usually commences between the second half of May and first half of June. In 2019, the onset of "habagat" season was officially declared on June 14.

For the rainy season to be officially declared, two criteria have to be met—a total rainfall amount of 25 millimeters (mm) or more with three consecutive days having at least 1 mm of rainfall per day in at least seven out of 14 stations monitored by PAGASA; and the prevailing winds should have westerly components over the western Philippines relative to the rain-associated weather patterns.

Source: <https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/05/31/heres-why-waterspouts-formed-over-laguna-de-bay/>

# Dagupan City sizzles at 49 degrees Celsius heat index

By: [Neil Arwin Mercado](#) - Reporter / [@NAMercadoINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 09:36 PM May 31, 2020

MANILA, Philippines — Dagupan City in Pangasinan sizzled at a scorching 49 degrees Celsius on Sunday, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said.

According to the state weather bureau, this was the hottest heat index recorded on Sunday followed by the Science City of Muñoz in Nueva Ecija, Legazpi City in Albay, and Sangley Point in Cavite which all reported a heat index of 46 degrees Celsius.

The heat index, said Pagasa, is the “apparent temperature or what humans perceive or feel as the temperature affecting the body.”

A heat index of 41°C or higher is considered dangerous and poses health risks.

Residents of affected areas may experience cramps and heat exhaustion, while heat stroke is probable for individuals engaged in continuous activities.

/MUF

# Conserving nature will prevent pandemics

By [Jonathan L. Mayuga](#)

May 31, 2020



*The Mu Ko Ang Thong National Park is a protected area in Surat Thani province in Thailand. The 102 square kilometres archipelago is a protected area composed of diverse ecosystems, such as coral reefs, seagrass, mangroves and karst ecosystems.*

WITH almost 5.7 million cases and more than 350,000 deaths globally as of May 27, the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) is indeed causing a global threat.

In the Philippines, there were almost 14,700 Covid-19 cases and almost 900 deaths during the same period as the country was preparing to downgrade the strict quarantine status, especially in Metropolitan Manila, that was imposed since March 15.

Recognizing the linkages of biodiversity and health, and the regional efforts to integrate biodiversity conservation into its Covid-19 response, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (Asean) is calling for nature's conservation to prevent future pandemics.

## Biodiversity and pandemics

The call was made during a webinar organized by the Asean Secretariat (ASEC) and the Asean Centre for Biodiversity (ACB), dubbed "Biodiversity and Preventing Future Pandemics," on May 20. A panel of experts engaged the audience from the Asean member-states about nature's role in preventing future pandemics.

The activity was part of the efforts of ASEC and ACB to increase their communication activities and mainstream biodiversity across various sectors and disciplines before the International Day for Biological Diversity (IDBD) last May 22.

With the theme, "Our solutions are in nature," the observance of the IDBD highlights the global call to citizens to re-examine their relationship with nature.

## Nature-based solution

Since it is widely believed that the problem—severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2), which causes the Covid-19—came from wild animals, experts consider that the solution to the disease, as well as other future pandemics, should also come from nature.



Asean Deputy Secretary-General Kung Phoak, for Socio-Cultural Community, in his remarks, underscored the importance of nature-based solutions to prevent future pandemics through cross-sectoral collaboration and multi-stakeholder engagement.

The Asean leaders have recently expressed risk concerns about the spread of the new disease and its effects on the wellbeing of the people and global socioeconomic development through the declaration of a special summit on Covid-19 response, he said.

Moreover, Kung said the Asean leaders have also emphasized the importance of a coherent, multisectoral, multi-stakeholder and whole-of-Asean community approach in ensuring Asean timely and effective response to the pandemic and future public health emergencies.

He encouraged individuals and communities to become “bio-literate” to adopt behaviors that addresses the root cause of future pandemic and zoonosis.

## Covid-19 in Asean

Acep Somatri, director of the Bureau of International Cooperation of Indonesia’s Ministry of Health who spoke on behalf of Drg. Oscar Primadi, chairman of the Senior Officials’ Meeting on Health Development and Secretary-General of the Ministry of Health of Indonesia, said Asean has a total of 69,842 cases and 2,220 deaths as of the date of the webinar.

The latest report, he said, indicated an increasing rate of infection, in the region, with Singapore topping the list, followed by Indonesia and the Philippines.

The Asean mechanism and actions for coordinated Covid-19 response was put in place by the region’s leaders, who provided the policy and guidelines as reflected in several statements and declarations.

## Health sector mechanism

Likewise, Somatri said Asean health sector mechanisms and platforms were mobilized as part of their response to the global pandemic.

Asean health ministers also lined up priorities in Covid-19 pandemic response—such as enhanced sharing of timely data and information, coordination for cross-border contact-tracing and outbreak investigations, enhanced cooperation in real-time capacity-building, sharing technical, material and financial resources, and enhanced collaboration in research.

When the coronavirus is defeated, the health ministers also agreed that they would be together in strengthening and institutionalizing regional mechanisms, and intensify cooperation in Covid-19 response.

## Greater cooperation

ACB Executive Director Theresa Mundita S. Lim, a wildlife management expert, meanwhile, stressed the need for greater cooperation within the region and with other regional bodies and governments of the world to prevent future pandemics.

Providing a background on Asean biodiversity and zoonoses—or diseases which can be transmitted to humans from animals—Lim said two-thirds of known human infectious diseases are zoonotic, and 75 percent of new and emerging diseases are likewise identified with zoonoses.

Other studies, she added, even suggested that around 90 percent of diseases are linked to animal wildlife.

However, she said earlier that although studies to confirm the possible animal source of Covid-19 are still ongoing, some animals like bats, pangolins—the most traded wildlife on the planet—and even civet cats are being linked to the dreaded coronavirus.

Citing recent data that there may be around 1.7 million unidentified viruses believed to still exist in mammals and water birds that can infect people, she expressed fears that Covid-19 may not be the last.

## Biodiversity and Asean

Lim said biodiversity and health, including zoonotic diseases, are interlinked.

She said biodiversity loss often result in health problems.

“The decline of species can trigger the 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,” Lim said.

She explained that biodiversity encompasses not only plant and animal wildlife species, but the entire ecosystems—both terrestrial and marine ecosystems, including freshwater ecosystems.

While relatively small compared to other regions, Asean is one of the richest in terms of biodiversity, Lim said.

Asean represents only about 3 percent of the Earth’s surface area, but 18 percent of known plants and animals can be found in it.

It also boasts of rich marine and coastal species and ecosystems, having around 173,000-kilometer shorelines.

## Link to wildlife species

Wildlife as a source of human disease is often indirect.

While wildlife is often suggested as the origin of a disease, it usually passes through domestic animals that act as “mixing vessels” or “disease bridges” for otherwise latent or dormant pathogens in wildlife reservoirs, Lim explained.

“Clearly, there’s a link to wildlife species and we are at risk because of this certain threats,” she said.

Lim added that wildlife trade is also an opportunity for contact between humans and wildlife.

Because of illegal wildlife trade, virus and diseases jump directly from wildlife to humans, without passing through domestic animals.

Hence, she said, increasing interaction between humans and wildlife also increases the opportunities for direct infection.

Besides trading, poaching and hunting, by keeping animals as pets or consuming them, are ways for virus and diseases to transfer.

## Pressure on ecosystems, birds, bats

Lim said the pressure on ecosystems—by destructive development projects, land-use conversion, human encroachment of wildlife habitats or ecosystems—add to the problem.

The same pressure is being experienced in marine areas by pollution and destruction of ecosystems, which increase the interaction between humans and animals, such as in the case of water birds.

Asean is gifted with diverse species of birds, a reason why the risk of coronavirus passing on to humans is possible.

There are 2,779 avian species in Southeast Asia, 56 are already critically endangered, 85 are endangered, and 184 are vulnerable.

For duck species, two are already critically endangered, two are endangered and five are vulnerable.

Mass death of birds, she said, may be linked to pathogenic diseases, which need to be investigated to prevent a possible outbreak that may lead to a pandemic .

Like birds, bats have been implicated to diseases, citing the case of Covid-19.

In Southeast Asia, Lim said there are 356 bat species, of which 30 percent are mainly fruit bats and nectar feeders, and around 20 percent are insect bats.

The rest, she said, feed on rodents and large insects. Almost 20 percent of all bat species are threatened.

## Biodiversity means cure

Biodiversity loss, eventually, result in the loss of sources of medicines necessary for the treatment of diseases, not only at present, but also in the future.

Among ACB's initiatives, Lim said, is mainstreaming biodiversity, and working with Asean member-countries to protect and conserve the wilderness through the Asean Heritage Park (AHP) Program.

AHPs support the protection of the remaining important ecosystems in the region, which are also valuable habitats that act as refuge for wildlife.

Along with the AHP Program, Lim said ACB is focused on helping cause a transformational change in all levels of society through mainstreaming of biodiversity.

It is working with various sectors and is transitioning to a new, and hopefully a “better normal” situation through a change in the mindset and behavior, a new development paradigm and care for the environment in everyday decisions, she said.

During the webinar, Unnikrishnan Payyappalimana of the International Institute for Global Health of the United Nations University shared the highlights of the scoping study on the interlinkages of health and biodiversity of the ACB, in cooperation with UNU-IIGH, Kuala Lumpur and supported by Asean-EU Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas in Asean.

Meanwhile, Tan Sri Zakri bin Abdul Hamid, a Malaysian resource economics and environmental valuation expert, said nature must not be forgotten while governments are saving human lives and rebooting the economy in their post-Covid 19 response.

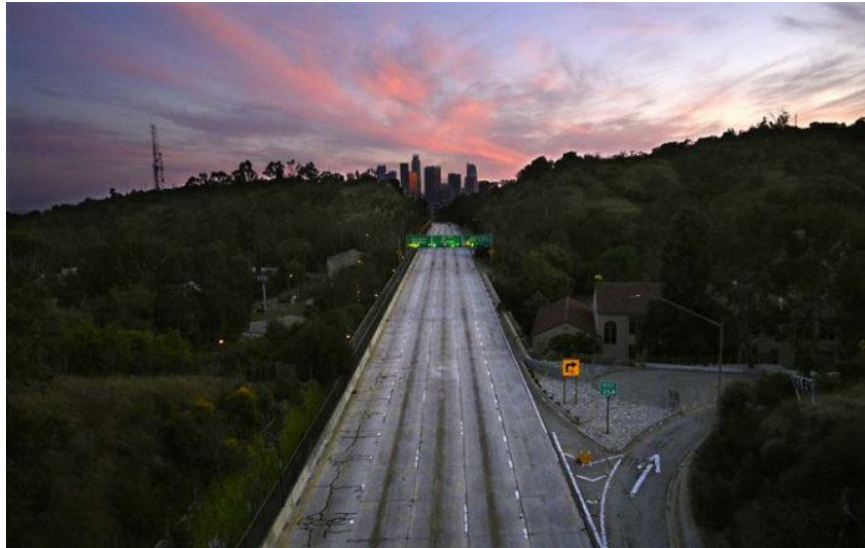
“After all, the root cause of zoonotic diseases, such as Covid-19, is the destruction of wildlife habitats, a fact endorsed by most scientific community,” Zakri said.

Image Credits: [Asean Centre for Biodiversity](#)

# World carbon pollution falls 17% during pandemic peak

By [BusinessMirror](#)

May 31, 2020



*Empty lanes of the 110 Arroyo Seco Parkway that leads to downtown Los Angeles is seen during the coronavirus outbreak in Los Angeles, California, on April 26.*

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

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

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

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

For a week in April, the United States cut its carbon-dioxide levels by about one-third.

China, the world’s biggest emitter of heat-trapping gases, sliced its carbon pollution by nearly a quarter in February, according to a study this past week in the journal *Nature Climate Change*.

India and Europe cut emissions by 26 percent and 27 percent, respectively.

The biggest global drop was from April 4 through 9 when the world was spewing 18.7 million tons (17 million metric tons) of carbon pollution a day less than it was doing on New Year’s Day.

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

World carbon pollution falls 17% during pandemic

June 1, 2020

TITLE: peak

PAGE 1/ 2/2

DATE

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

By April 30, the world carbon pollution levels had grown by 3.3 million tons (3 million metric tons) a day from its low point earlier in the month. Carbon dioxide stays in the air for about a century.

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

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

If the world could keep up annual emission cuts like this without a pandemic for a couple decades, there’s a decent chance Earth can avoid another 1.8 degrees (1 degree Celsius) of warming from now, study authors said.

But getting the type of yearly cuts to reach that international goal is unlikely, they said.

If next year returns to 2019 pollution levels, it means the world has only bought about a year’s delay in hitting the extra 1.8 degrees (1 degree Celsius) of warming that leaders are trying to avoid, Le Quere said.

That level could still occur anywhere from 2050 to 2070, the authors said.

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

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

Nearly half the emission reductions came from less transportation pollution, mostly involving cars and trucks, the authors said.

By contrast, the study found that drastic reductions in air travel only accounted for 10 percent of the overall pollution drop.

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

# Mysterious Green Glacier Mice Move Across the Ice in Formation

May 31, 2020

[People's Tonight](#)

**Paul Seaburn May 27, 2020**

It seems that no matter where one travels on Earth (Remember traveling? It will be back soon, just keep wearing masks), you can't escape mice – the rodent kind, of course. That list now includes on frozen glaciers in Alaska, where researchers looking for microbes – long assumed to be the only things that can survive in the harsh environment – have been finding the ice mysteriously covered with small, green mice moving around in formation on the surface ... so many of them that the scientists received funding to study them.

Did he say green mice moving in formation? Is this Earth or Mars? Are they planning an invasion?

“What the heck is this!”

That was the initial scientific assessment of University of Idaho glaciologist Tim Bartholomaus, co-author of the new study published recently in *Polar Biology*. He was referring to the day in 2006 when he arrived at the Root Glacier near the former mining town of Kennicott-McCarthy, Alaska. What Bartholomaus encountered were hundreds of mouse-sized furry green egg shapes covering the ice. (Photos here.) He bravely touched one and found it was a soft, moss-covered ball of dirt. (Sorry — not like the feature photo.) Upon finding a lack of information on what these might be, Bartholomaus called them “glacier mice” and decided to study them. The first thing he discovered is that the glacier mice are covered with different types of moss. However, the second thing is what prompted the six-year study.

It's not easy being not green either.

“They really do look like little mammals, little mice or chipmunks or rats or something running around on the glacier, although they run in obviously very slow motion.”

Study co-author and wildlife biologist Sophie Gilbert told NPR that they noticed the balls were in slightly different spots every day. Assuming the cause to be something like the wind that pushes tumbleweeds, they got down and dirty with the fuzzy dirt balls – attaching a thin loop of wire strung with identifying beads around 30 of them. That was in 2009. They measured the movements for 54 days, then left and returned in 2010, 2011 and 2012 and measured them again. The researchers found that the glacier mice were pretty indestructible. And they were surprisingly well-organized.

“We show that glacier moss balls move an average of 2.5 cm per day in herd-like fashion, initially to the south and later towards the southwest, and their movements are positively correlated with glacier ablation. Surprisingly, the dominant moss ball movement direction does not align with the prevailing wind or downslope directions, nor with the dominant direction of solar radiation. After attaining a mature size, glacier moss balls persist for many years, likely in excess of 6 years.”

Bartholomaus told NPR the movement was similar to a school of fish or a flock of birds and defied conventional explanation. They even changed directions and speeds over time. The one thing for certain was that the glacier mice needed to move an inch a day so that the moss on their bellies would get sunlight. Perhaps the movement and moss growth is required to feed their gut microbes. Yes, cutting open a glacier moss exposed water bears (tardigrades) and tiny worms. This fits in with prevailing theories that the microbial ecosystem on the glaciers depends on moss – something that could suffer with climate change.

Mysterious Green Glacier Mice Move Across the Ice  
in Formation

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Tardigrades are also sometimes called moss piglets.

I'm inside a moss ball? No way!

The team completed the study without going back since 2012 to see the original flock of glacier mice at Root Glacier. Batholomaus is hoping to return soon and see how many of the original group are still 'alive' and rolling.

They're slow and they're boring, but at least glacier mice don't leave green mouse droppings everywhere.

Mysterious Universe



**WORLD**

# For end of pandemic poverty

We are one humanity.

Published 6 hours ago  
on June 1, 2020 03:00 AM  
By [Agence France-Presse](#)



THE Pope's message. This photo taken on 26 March 2020 by the Vatican Media shows Pope Francis delivering his homily while celebrating a private morning mass at the Santa Marta chapel in The Vatican. / HANDOUT/VATICAN MEDIA/AFP

VATICAN CITY, Italy (AFP) – Pope Francis called on Saturday, 30 May, for a “more just and equitable society” in the post-coronavirus world, and for people to act to “end the pandemic of poverty.”

“Once we emerge from this pandemic, we will not be able to keep doing what we were doing, and as we were doing it. No, everything will be different,” he said, speaking in Spanish in a video message to mark the feast of Pentecost.

“From the great trials of humanity – among them this pandemic – one emerges better or worse. You don’t emerge the same. I ask this of you: how do you want to come out of it? Better or worse?” he added.

People needed to open their minds and hearts to learn the central lesson from this crisis: “We are one humanity,” said the pope.

“We know it, we knew it, but this pandemic that we are living through has made us experience it in a much more dramatic way,” he added.

Now there was a duty to build a new reality particularly for the poorest, who had been discarded, the pope said.

“All the suffering will be of no use if we do not build together a more just, more equitable, more Christian society, not in name but in reality,” he added.

He called for action to “end the pandemic of poverty in the world.”