



PHOTO: DENR Compassion Project



PHOTOGRAPH COURTESY OF DENR

Compassion Project Environment and Natural Resources Undersecretary Benny D. Antiporda peels off the protective cover of a sample face mask in turnover ceremonies highlighting the donation of 25,000 such masks and 500 more face shields to Office of Civil Defense and Administrator Ricardo Jalad, right, and Director Rafaelito Alejandro IV, center, at the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council in Camp Aguinaldo, Quezon City.



June 2, 2020 6:00PAM

<https://www.facebook.com/1591599464459612/posts/2793023930983820/>



Masungi Georeserve

15 hrs · 🌐



We'll see more fireflies if we leave nature alone.

Around 3 months ago, Secretary Cimatu of the **Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR)** personally removed barbed wires installed by a quarry company at Masungi's reforestation site, and ordered the quarry to be closed down.

Bold moves for nature are necessary to prevent future pandemics, combat climate change and preserve our native biodiversity. Barbed wires like this can be found all over our protected and conserved areas, constricting access of rangers and harming wildlife. They signify the continuous large-scale and systematic intents to destroy nature when we need it the most.

As the economy recovers, let us not forgot how this all started in the first place. That is, through the shameless assault on our natural ecosystems. Let us work together towards a **#greenrecovery**. 🌳
#naturebasedsolutions #SaveMasungi

**United Nations Environment Programme
Mines and Geosciences Bureau**



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June 2, 2020 11:00PM

<https://www.facebook.com/1591599464459612/posts/2793213014298245/>



Masungi Georeserve

2 hrs · 🌐



Did you know that despite being a sanctuary for wildlife like #fireflies, Masungi continues to be under threat from different greedy interests?

For example, a quarry company attempted to block us off the reforestation site just three months ago. 🙄

If you loved our firefly photos, you can continue protecting Masungi and its wildlife from present and future threats by signing the petition and joining the movement (bit.ly/savemasungi). 🇵🇭

Save Masungi Movement



Move.PH ✓

March 5 · 🌐

It's a win for the environment and wildlife. 🌱

The Masungi Georeserve is finally free from the clutches of a quarry company after the DENR removed barbed wire blocking a reforestation site in the area on World Wildlife Day, March 3.

READ: <https://www.rappler.com/move-ph/253404-denr-removes-barbed-wire-blocking-reforestation-site-masungi-georeserve>

👍❤️🙄 563

3 Comments 49 Shares



Firefly trails spotted in Masungi Georeserve

Updated June 2, 2020, 12:10 PM

By Gabriela Baron

<https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/06/02/firefly-trails-spotted-in-masungi-georeserve/>



Trails of fireflies were spotted in a conservation area in Baras, Rizal. (Masungi Georeserve)

“Fireflies are an important bioindicator or a species that can help gauge how healthy an ecosystem is,” Masungi Georeserve wrote on Instagram.

Fireflies are bioindicator species sensitive to pollution or other habitat changes. A sighting of fireflies could mean a good indicator of having a thriving ecosystem.

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

The geopark is situated in the Southern Sierra Madre range in Baras, Rizal. It centers on the geological formations of Masungi Rock.

Masungi Georeserve has been restoring and rehabilitating degrading land since 2000.

In 2019, United Nations’ World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) recognized Masungi Georeserve as one of the world’s most sustainable and innovative tourism projects. In 2018, they received a special commendation at the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (UN-CBD).



MM water allocation stays at maximum

ByJed Macapagal

-June 3, 2020

https://malaya.com.ph/index/index.php/news_business/mm-water-allocation-stays-at-maximum/

The Metropolitan Waterworks and Sewerage System (MWSS) said the water allocation would be maintained at 48 cubic meters per second (CMS) until the end of June, as it requested with the National Water Resources Board (NWRB).

Emmanuel Salamat, MWSS administrator, said this is to ensure water supply is available in protecting human health against the coronavirus disease and to sustain the current water system demands.

At 48 CMS water allocation, Salamat said almost 100 percent of Manila Water customers will enjoy 24/7 supply, while 80 to 90 percent of Maynilad customers will have 24-hour supply.

Also, daily rotational water service interruptions are isolated only during off-peak hours in high demand and elevated areas, he added.

The MWSS also said the request was granted by the NWRB because of the assurance that Angat Dam remains sustainable, based on the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration's probabilistic rainfall projection from June to November indicating that the watershed will receive above-normal rainfall.

The NWRB also projected that at 48 CMS allocation maintained in June, the dam will still be at a comfortable level of 188 meters, or more than 8 meters above the critical level, apart from the MWSS' projected inflows of 55 CMS from Umiray-Angat-Ipo tributaries, which will offset the drawdowns from the Angat dam.

"The MWSS assures the public that we are doing our best efforts to meet the water needs and perform its mandate in providing clean and sufficient supply for Metro Manila and other service areas within MWSS jurisdiction," Salamat said.

As of 8 a.m. yesterday, Angat Dam's elevation is at 189.91 meters, which is 12.5 percent higher compared to 168.66 meters recorded in June 2, 2019.



June 3, 2020 6:00AM

<https://www.facebook.com/1591599464459612/posts/2793213014298245/>



Palawan Council for Sustainable Development

10 hrs · 🌐



A BALINTONG, GIVEN TO PCSDS CARE

JUNY 2, 2020-A Pangolin or Balintong (Manis Culionensis) was provided in the care of Palawan Council for Sustainable Development Staff (PCSDS) after voluntarily surrendered by a concerned citizen at 2:00 PM at Palawan Maritime office Police based in Bgy. Sta. Lourdes, Puerto Princesa City.

According to the report of PCSDS-Wildlife Traffic Monitoring Unit (WTMU) who responded to life-some were around 4:30 AM, May 31th when Julito Miraveles, Barangay Guard saw this of the said barangay, while chasing this is the dog.

Adult Pangolin has a total length of 89 cms. (with tail) and body width of 43 cms.

After rescheduled PCSDS-WTMU immediately rushed it to the veterinarian to check and ensure it is in good condition of life-some.

Palawan Pangolin is in danger of being lost in our forests and needs extreme protection against illegal wildlife poachers.

⚙️ · [See original](#) · [Rate this translation](#)



👍❤️👏 60

1 Comment 11 Shares



House approves two COVID-19 bills

on June 3, 2020 02:23 AM

By Keith A. Calayag

<https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/06/03/house-approves-two-covid-19-bills/>

The House of Representatives has approved on third and final reading two bills that seek to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic to various sectors in the country during its session on Tuesday.

With 202 affirmative votes and six negative votes, the chamber approved House Bill 6816 or the proposed Financial Institutions Strategic Transfer (FIST) Act.

The bill aims to help financial institutions in their bad debt resolution and management of their nonperforming assets in order to cushion the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on their financial operations.

With 204 affirmative votes, and zero negative vote, the chamber has also approved on third and final reading House Bill 6817 which prohibits discrimination against frontliners and persons who are declared, confirmed, suspect, probable, and recovered cases of COVID-19.

If passed into law, those found guilty of committing discriminatory practices against frontliners and COVID-19 patients such as failure to give assistance, harassment, stigmatization and unlawful refusal to honor valid contracts, will suffer imprisonment of not less than six months but not more than five years and pay a fine of not less than P50,000 to not more than P500,000 or both at the discretion of the court.

During the plenary session, the chamber has also approved on second reading through voice voting House Bill 6920 or the proposed P1.5 trillion economic stimulus which aims to help the economy recover from the impact of COVID-19 pandemic through construction of infrastructure projects in the rural areas.

Among the infrastructure projects that could be funded by the proposed COVID-19 Unemployment Economic Stimulus (CURES) Act are barangay health centers, district hospitals, testing centers, washing and sanitation areas in schools and farm-to-market roads, aside from others.



House approves bill prohibiting COVID-related discrimination

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

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 09:56 PM June 02, 2020

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1285235/house-approves-bill-prohibiting-covid-related-discrimination>

MANILA, Philippines — A bill seeking to ban discrimination on persons, including health workers and repatriated overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), who are either confirmed, suspected, or deemed probable cases of the coronavirus disease 2019, was approved on final reading by the House of Representatives on Tuesday.

With 204 affirmative votes, no negative votes, and one abstention, the lower chamber approved House Bill No. 6817 or the “COVID-19-Related Anti-Discrimination Act” that penalizes various acts deemed discriminatory in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Among the punishable offenses under the bill includes stigmatization, which entails the public disclosure— with the intent of exclusion, harm, and discrimination — that a person is declared confirmed, suspected, or probable case of COVID-19 or has recovered from COVID-19. The bill also covers public disclosure made online.

The bill also outlaws verbally, physically, or psychologically harassing, threatening or assaulting confirmed, suspected, and probable COVID-19 patients as well as those who have recovered from this disease, including repatriated OFWs and health workers.

The proposed measure likewise forbids a public officer from refusing or neglecting to provide assistance to confirmed, suspected, and probable COVID-19 cases or any person suspected of having been exposed to and has recovered from COVID-19.

Moreover, no person can “unreasonably refuse” to honor valid and existing contracts based on COVID-19, the bill added.

Based on the proposal, a person who commits harassment or assault shall, upon conviction, be penalized by imprisonment of not less than one year but not more than 10 years or a fine of not less than P200,000 but to more than P1,000,000.

Additionally, violation of the measure on the grounds of stigmatization, failure to assist, and unlawful refusal to honor valid contracts, will be penalized by a fine of not less than P50,000 but not more than P500,000 and/or imprisonment of not less than six months but not more than five years.



Bill to make gov't procurement 'green' approved by House committee

June 2, 2020 | 7:46 pm

<https://www.bworldonline.com/bill-to-make-govt-procurement-green-approved-by-house-committee/>

THE House Committee on Sustainable Development Goals approved Tuesday a substitute bill to House Bill 6526 which seeks to establish a sustainable public procurement program for all agencies.

The proposed Green Public Procurement Act requires all government offices to procure based partly on the lowest life-cycle cost of products and services and to categorize procured items to facilitate waste recycling and reuse.

Life-cycle cost considers all costs to be incurred during the lifetime of a product or service, plus "externalities," which are unreckoned at the time of purchase, such as the cleanup costs for land used by a power plant. Current government procurement rules are typically based on least cost at the time of purchase.

The measure also seeks to include sustainability criteria in public tenders; to establish the specifications and requirements for products or services to be considered sustainably advantageous; and to develop programs for suppliers of sustainable products and services.

"As both public and private organizations become increasingly aware of the need to reduce the impact of products, goods, as well as services to the environment, government procurement carries the potential of stimulating the market for the production of ecologically friendlier products by setting an example as responsible consumer," House Deputy Speaker and Camarines Sur Representative Luis Raymund F. Villafuerte said in his explanatory note.

The bill also directs the Government Procurement Policy Board to appoint a third-party verifier of claims of sustainability of products and services while establishing capacity-building programs for all government agencies.

Before the substitute bill was approved, Lanao del Norte Rep. Mohamad Khalid Q. Dimaporo proposed that local government units' capacity-building activities under the sustainable procurement program should be fully funded by the national government.

"When we do capacity building, it requires a budget. That is where it is still a little bit in the grey area as far as the substitute bill is concerned. I want to make sure that in the IRR (implementing rules and regulations) they do not charge capacity building to the local government units. If there is a capacity building for the purpose of Green Procurement, the budget should emanate from the national government," he said during the virtual hearing.

Committee chairwoman and ALONA Party-List Rep. Anna Marie Villaraza-Suarez said that the measure will be taken up at the plenary sometime in August.

The bill will have to go through second and third readings before hurdling the lower chamber. Its counterpart measure, Senate Bill 1371 which is filed by Senator Pia S. Cayetano, is still pending at the committee level. — Genshen L. Espedido



Government debt hits record P8.6 trillion

[Mary Grace Padin](#)

June 3, 2020 - 12:00am

<https://www.philstar.com/business/2020/06/03/2018249/government-debt-hits-record-p86-trillion>



According to the latest data from the BTr, the government's debt pile rose by 1.5 percent or P122.89 billion to P8.6 trillion as of end-April from P8.48 trillion a month ago.

STAR/ File

MANILA, Philippines — The government's debt stock rose to a new record high of P8.6 trillion as of end-April following the net issuance of government securities and the availment of foreign loans to fund coronavirus disease 2019 or COVID-19 response, the Bureau of the Treasury (BTr) reported yesterday.

According to the latest data from the BTr, the government's debt pile rose by 1.5 percent or P122.89 billion to P8.6 trillion as of end-April from P8.48 trillion a month ago.

The Treasury said the outstanding debt also went up by 11.2 percent from the P7.73 trillion recorded as of end-2019 and by 10.4 percent from P7.79 trillion in April 2019.

The government borrows from both domestic and external lenders to plug the expected deficit in its budget, which is now expected to widen to P1.56 trillion or 8.1 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) due to the pandemic.

Treasury data showed that the bulk or 67 percent of the debt stock came from domestic lenders, while the remaining 33 percent was sourced externally.

Domestic debt reached P5.86 trillion as of end-April, slightly up from the end-March level of P5.81 trillion.

The Treasury explained that the end-March domestic debt was revised to reflect the P300 billion short-term borrowing from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) under a repurchase agreement.



Government debt hits record P8.6 trillion

As for April, the Treasury said the increase was driven by the net issuance of domestic government securities amounting to P50.82 billion, offsetting the impact of peso appreciation which diminished the value of onshore dollar bonds by P170 million.

To date, the BTr said domestic debt increased by P735.92 billion or 14.4 percent from the end-2019 figure of P5.13 trillion as a result of net debt issuance and the short-term borrowing from the BSP.

External debt, likewise, grew by 2.7 percent to P2.74 trillion from P2.66 trillion in the previous month due to the net availment of external loans amounting to P87.34 billion for COVID-19 response.

The government secured in April a \$1.5 trillion loan from the Asian Development Bank for the COVID-19 Active Response and Expenditure Program, plus another \$200 million loan for the Social Protection Support Project.

The World Bank also extended a \$500 million loan for the Third Disaster Risk Management Development Policy Loan and another \$100 million financing assistance for the COVID-19 Emergency Response Project of the Department of Health.

These offset the impact of currency adjustments, which trimmed foreign borrowings by P15.1 billion.



‘Covid-19 to swell jobless numbers to 4.5 million in 2020’

By [Jovee Marie de la Cruz](#)

June 3, 2020

<https://businessmirror.com.ph/2020/06/03/covid-19-to-swell-jobless-numbers-to-4-5-million-in-2020/>



Around 30 jeepney drivers from Caloocan City out of work since the lockdowns in March hold a rally to ask City Hall to let them ply their routes. They say they have yet to receive cash aid from the government, and that they should also be allowed to return as bus and taxi drivers were already earning a living. Transport advocates have asked the government to implement service contracting to protect transport workers and ensure adequate public transportation in areas under the general community quarantine.

THE coronavirus 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic will swell the number of Filipinos losing their jobs this year to 4.5 million, according to the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda).

In a hearing of the House Committee on Sustainable Development on Tuesday, Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Karl Kendrick T. Chua said an addition of 2.2 million Filipinos will become unemployed directly as a result of the pandemic. This will be on top of the 2.3 million who were already jobless at the start of 2020,

The total number of jobless Filipinos due to the pandemic is equivalent to a third of the 12 million night population of Metro Manila.

“We have in January of this year one of the lowest unemployment rates of 5.3 percent and because of the ECQ [enhanced community quarantine] we expect that actually to worsen significantly in April. The government—Neda and DOF [Department of Finance]—conducted a survey, [and] we basically found out that 2.2 million workers have also been affected or have been laid off,” he said. Chua said government agencies had also reported in early May that more workers were affected by the pandemic.

“Based on the Neda and DOF survey of the additional 2.2 million unemployed, that would mean that we are adding to the 5.3 unemployment rate another 4.9 percent, and that would mean we would hit double-digit unemployment in the second quarter [of the year],” he said.



'Covid-19 to swell jobless numbers to 4.5 million in 2020'

Programs for workers

"Since the survey is conducted around April, we expect probably the unemployment to be around that level and it will be, I think, double-digit based on the assessment of other agencies. That is why immediately after the Bayanihan law was passed, we had pushed for the implementation of two very important programs worth around P205 billion for emergency subsidy that cover 18 million families and also P51 billion as small business wage subsidy," he added.

According to Chua, the government will address some of these unemployment concerns "in what we think is the most balanced way of supporting these workers.

"We know that ECQ is going to affect workers significantly [but] we are of course waiting now for the results of the Labor Force Survey," he said. The survey is expected to be released by end-June.

Solution

Meanwhile, Chua said the government will use its arsenal of tools to address the increasing unemployment rate.

"Aside from the government providing the emergency and wage subsidy, part of our thinking is the number of cash-for-work programs, including [those] for 136,000 contact tracers," he said.

Chua said the government will also review its labor policy on wage reduction, skills retooling, unemployment insurance and pension portability system to complement the emergency, cash for work and wage subsidies.

"There is already a DOLE policy on voluntary reduction in wages so that both the employees and the employers can benefit and we support that," he said. However, Marikina Rep. Stella Luz Quimbo said the government should consider several ways to support wages because wage reduction has a big impact on the country's poverty rate.

Moreover, Chua said over the medium term, "what we would like to push is a policy to protect the employment, not necessarily the jobs, because jobs can come and go. The crisis will affect the labor market but it will ensure that workers can be employable immediately, such as through skills retooling and other support that actually help the labor market." Chua said the government is also looking at an unemployment insurance for Filipinos.

"We have no unemployment insurance or unemployment saving account and that [is] something we are keen on doing," he said.

"[We also want] to look at a pension portability system because many of the workers in the government and private have not been in [a] pension system or have been OFWs," he said. Chua said the resumption of infrastructure projects of the government is seen as a jobs generator for displaced workers.



Ikalawang lockdown, wawasak sa Pilipinas – Concepcion

June 2, 2020 @ 7:18 PM \

<https://remate.ph/ikalawang-lockdown-wawasak-sa-pilipinas-concepcion/>

Manila, Philippines – Hinikayat ni Presidential Adviser for Entrepreneurship Joey Concepcion ang public at private sectors na magtulungan sa pagsugpo sa pagtaas ng COVID-19 infections sa bansa.

Inamin ni Concepcion na hindi na kakayanin pa ng bansa ang pagkabigo at panghihinayang sa panibagong round ng strict lockdown measures.

“The private sector and the government has to definitely prevent a resurgence that will bring back a second lockdown. A second lockdown will destroy this country, I’m already saying that,” ayon kay Concepcion.

Sinabi ni Concepcion na ang panibagong strict community quarantine na lilikha ng frustration sa mga mamamayan ay magbabasura lamang sa pagsisikap at programa ng pamahalaan sa pagtugon sa crisis-hit sectors, kabilang na ang panukalang ₱1.3-trillion economic stimulus package.

“Having another lockdown will create frustration, we will also waste the stimulus program that Congress is trying to pass, and all the other supportive programs. So there will be a sense of frustration, and people may lose hope,” dagdag na pahayag ni Concepcion.

Si Concepcion ang isa sa mga economical manager ni Pangulong Rodrigo Duterte na nagpayong paluwagan na ang quarantine rules sa Metro Manila para gumulong na ang ekonomiya sa bansa.

“It’s how it should be done...You open the economy and locked down communities with infections...We have to take a bit of risk, we have been quite conservative,” ayon kay Concepcion.

Dalawang araw bago ang sine die adjournment ng Kongreso ay inaprubahan sa ikalawang pag-basa sa Kamara ang House Bill 6815 o “Accelerated Recovery and Investment Stimulus for the Economy” o ARISE Bill.

Ayon kay House Ways and Means Committee Chair at Albay Representative Joey Salceda ang naturang stimulus package ay mapo-protektahan ang empleyo at matutulungan ang nasa 15.7 million na manggagawa, makalikha ng tatlong milyong short-term jobs at 1.5 milyong infrastructure jobs sa loob ng tatlong taon at matutulungan rin ang nasa 5.57 million formal at non-formal micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs).



Ikalawang lockdown, wawasak sa Pilipinas – Concepcion

Bukod dito, mai-aangat din ng ARISE ng 0.2% ang Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth target ng bansa sa kasalukuyang taon mula sa inaasahang -2.8% decline.

Para naman mapondohan ang P1.3-trillion economic stimulus package ay isinusulong ang pagpapalawig ng 2019 at 2020 General Appropriations Act hanggang 2022 gayundin ang paggamit ng unprogrammed appropriations sa ilalim ng sobrang non-tax revenues, mga bagong buwis, at loans para sa foreign assisted package.

Samantala, inaprubahan na rin ng Kamara sa 2nd reading ang House Bill 6895 o panukala na magbibigay kapangyarihan sa Pangulo na ilipat ang petsa ng pagbubukas ng pasukan sa gitna ng State of Emergency o State of Calamity tulad ng COVID-19 crisis.

Sa kabilang dako, kinilala naman ni Concepcion na ang banta ng resurgence ng COVID-19 cases ay palagi namang nandyan lang.

“The urgency, really, in creating visibility and being more vigilant and practicing social distancing and all of that has to really be implemented now,” diing pahayag ni Concepcion. *Kris Jose*



EDITORIAL - Commuting Nightmare

June 3, 2020 - 12:00am

<https://www.philstar.com/opinion/2020/06/03/2018308/editorial-commuting-nightmare>



Several lawmakers pointed it out: the government had 11 weeks to prepare for the easing of community quarantine restrictions. So why did commuters in Metro Manila go through hell as they returned to work on the first day of the general community quarantine on Monday?

Pre-pandemic, the daily commute in the National Capital Region had been horrid for a long time. Inefficient, uncoordinated deployment of public transport assets, ineffectual traffic enforcement, and a system of paying public utility drivers based on the number of passengers they picked up aggravated the inadequate road infrastructure amid a continually growing number of vehicles. Before the coronavirus pandemic, a morning rush hour commute of up to three hours was not unusual for those working or studying in the National Capital Region.

On Monday, the first day of the NCR's shift to general community quarantine, that commute stretched up to four hours one way. Some workers weren't even able to commute and were forced to return home. In several areas, physical distancing flew out the window as commuters desperate for a ride competed for the few public transport vehicles that came their way.

Yesterday, senators and labor groups blamed the Department of Transportation for the mess. DOTr officials, for their part, appealed to employers to provide shuttles for their workers. Other officials described the commuters' ordeal as birth pains, as more buses were fielded yesterday and the commuting experience improved.

Those birth pains should leave indelible lessons on the need to take into consideration the situation of the country's workforce, the majority of whom depend on public transportation. The government has stressed the need to gradually restart the economy. This cannot happen if employees are unable to reach their workplaces.



Cities, towns offer transport amid GCQ

posted June 02, 2020 at 11:20 pm by Rio N. Araja

<https://manilastandard.net/news/national/325112/cities-towns-offer-transport-amid-gcq.html>

Several cities and towns are gearing up efforts as they offers transportation assistance or “Libreng Sakay” program to assist commuters facing difficulty reaching their workplaces due to lack of public transportation during the general community quarantine.

The local government of Quezon City itself announced on Tuesday it would offer two new routes, serviced by 14 buses to its Libreng Sakay program to assist commuters.

Pasig City Mayor Vico Sotto also launched an app that would help commuters in Pasig City find the location of “Libreng Sakay” bus.

Valenzuela City has also deployed trucks to provide free public rides on June 1 despite the relaxed quarantine protocols.

Rodriguez Rizal Mayor Dennis Hernandez also announced they would offer the “Libreng Sakay” program in their town where it has four defined routes, San Isidro to Litex, San Rafael to Litex Jollibee, Burgos to Litex Market, and Montalban to Marikina, each with designated drop-off and pick-up points and schedules for the passengers.

Rodriguez said the general public and local residents could avail themselves of the Libreng Sakay rides every Monday to Saturday starting from 5:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. along different routes in the city.

Hernandez reminded the passengers to always abide with the guidelines such as wearing face mask and observing social distancing to prevent the further spread of COVID-19.

The GCQ in effect in Metro Manila has limited the volume of public utility vehicles that may ply routes. This has severely affected the mobility of workers.

Under the GCQ, passenger buses and jeepneys were not allowed to operate.

Only trains and bus augmentation, taxis, transport network vehicle services, shuttle services, point-to-point buses and bicycles have been allowed from 1 to 21 June.

In the second phase of the GCQ from 22 to 30 June, the government is set to allow public utility buses, modern public utility vehicles or jeepneys and UV Express vehicles.



Cyclists want protection, space in ‘better normal’

[Marc Jayson Cayabyab](#)

June 3, 2020 - 12:00am

<https://www.philstar.com/headlines/2020/06/03/2018376/cyclists-want-protection-space-better-normal>



Despite pronouncements from the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) that it does not support pop-up bike lanes, cyclist group Bikers United Marshall, for one, have set up their own lanes bounded by makeshift cones out of orange bottles along Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City since Monday.

Michael Varcas, file

MANILA, Philippines — A cyclists’ group set up bicycle lanes along a busy highway in Quezon City yesterday, hoping to prove to transport officials that bikers deserve a space – even one bounded by cones – during the new normal.

Despite pronouncements from the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority (MMDA) that it does not support pop-up bike lanes, cyclist group Bikers United Marshall, for one, have set up their own lanes bounded by makeshift cones out of orange bottles along Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City since Monday.

For World Bicycle Day today, the group will set up the bike lanes again and give out reflector vests to cyclists going to work without protective gear.

Rodne Galicha, a volunteer for the group, said they face the risk of being ticketed for traffic violations when they set up the makeshift bike lanes.

For him, though, the group was not violating any traffic rule; in fact, they are only setting out to do the government’s job to give bikers’ protection.

“We will not stop until authorities realize that this is actually their job – to assure bikers that they are safe on the streets. We are actually just doing their jobs,” said Galicha, who was among 2018’s Ten Outstanding Young Men for his work on the environment.

MMDA spokesperson Celine Pialago yesterday said the group was not authorized to put up improvised bike lanes without proper coordination.



Cyclists want protection, space in ‘better normal’

“Plastic bottles for bike lanes? That is prohibited and unsafe,” Pialago said.

Responding to the spokesperson, Galicha dared the MMDA official to join them in biking along Commonwealth Avenue with and without pop-up bike lanes so she could get a feel of the situation on the ground.

He maintained that without protected and elevated bike lanes being constructed during the quarantine, bikers should at least be given the makeshift space to feel safe on the road.

The group was willing to face possible charges for putting up the bike lanes, according to Galicha.

“We know sometimes that this is necessary to show them what is morally right and to remind them of their job,” he said.

Geane, another volunteer who opted to identify herself through her first name only, said the group counted 1,000 to 2,000 cyclists who have been using the makeshift bike lane along Commonwealth Avenue since Monday.

Meanwhile, San Juan City will open today pop-up bike lanes along select streets that pass through major landmarks in the city to encourage biking as mass transport modes remain scarce under GCQ restrictions.

Under the first phase of the bike lane, cyclists may begin using the 4.21-kilometer lane from N. Domingo Street to Ortigas Avenue, which will pass through facilities and institutions in the city, like the San Juan Medical Center, San Juan City Hall, Greenhills Shopping Center and near Cardinal Santos Medical Center. **Neil Jayson Servallos**



From 55 km, QC LGU eyes stretching city's bike lane to 161 km

By: [Katrina Hallare](#) - Reporter / [@KHallareINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 09:52 PM June 02, 2020

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1285231/from-55-km-qc-lgu-eyes-stretching-citys-bike-lane-to-161-km>



BIKERS' CITY Cyclists make their way through Commonwealth Avenue in Quezon City on the first day of Metro Manila's transition to general community quarantine. San Juan plans to make bike lanes a permanent fixture in the city to make it easier for residents to get to their destinations in the absence of public transport. —GRIG C. MONTEGRANDE

MANILA, Philippines — The Quezon City local government on Tuesday announced that it was planning to further stretch the bike lanes throughout the city to 161-kilometers from the previous 55-kilometers.

In a statement, city Mayor Joy Belmonte said that aside from the expansion of the bike lanes, the city government was also planning to upgrade the routes by placing barriers, signages, markers and other necessary infrastructures, ensuring the safety of those using bicycles.

Belmonte added that the QC LGU will be working with Move As One Coalition to plot the possible bicycle routes.

“This was a priority for us even before COVID-19 happened as part of our global commitment to reducing air pollution by 2030, but due to the pressing need for transport during the pandemic, and the bike culture that emerged as a result of this, we are fast-tracking its implementation,” Belmonte said.

The construction of the bike lanes will be done by the Parks Development and Administration Department (PDAD) and the Task Force on Transportation and Traffic Management (TFTTM) in the next few weeks, the mayor added.

The bicycle is one of the modes of transportation approved by the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases as Metro Manila was placed under general community quarantine (GCQ).

Interior Secretary Eduardo Año likewise encouraged the public to use bicycles as the primary mode of transportation, and for LGUs to put up bicycle lanes in their respective areas.

During the first day of GCQ imposed in Metro Manila on Monday, it was reported that several commuters had a hard time going to work due to limited public transportation.



Mga senador nadismaya sa alay-lakad ng mga commuter

Last updated Jun 2, 2020

<https://tonite.abante.com.ph/mga-senador-nadismaya-sa-alay-lakad-ng-mga-commuter/>

Pinuna ng ilang senador ang kawalan diumano ng sapat na kahandaan ng Department of Transportation (DOTr) dahil sa nararanasang kalbaryo ng mga commuter na nagbalik trabaho sa mga lugar na sinailalim sa general community quarantine (GCQ) katulad sa Metro Manila.

Hinamon ni Senador Nancy Binay si DOTr Secretary Arthur Tugade at iba pang opisyal ng gobyerno na mag-commute para maranasan nila kung gaano kahirap ito ngayong pinapatupad na ang GCQ sa halos lahat ng lugar sa bansa.

“Ano ba talaga ang plano ng DOTr sa commuters? Three months under ECQ and still they have no clear plan in place. What happened to foresight? Mabuti sila’t aircon ang mga sasakyan,” sabi ni Binay.

“They knew that 30% of those in NCR will start going to work by June 1—tapos ang idi-deploy eh truck ng libreng sakay which compromise and breach all health protocols particularly physical distancing,” dagdag pa nito.

Ganito rin halos ang pananaw ni Senate Minority Leader Franklin Drilon na sinabing kulang sa pagpapalano ang gobyerno.

Mas pinuri pa ni Drilon ang militar at kapulisan dahil sa ginawang pagtulong para maihatid sa kanilang patutunguhan ang mga stranded na mga pasahero.

Dismayado rin si Senador Joel Villanueva dahil hindi pinaghandaan ng mga government transport official ang kakulangan ng masasakyan ng mga libo-libong mga empleyado sa unang araw ng GCQ.

“Our economy has been the prime consideration in the decision to relax our quarantine restriction, but sadly, it appears we forgot about the mobility of our workers in our desire to jumpstart the recovery,” sabi ni Villanueva. (Dindo Matining)



Organic Agriculture Bill na inakda ni Sen. Villar, pasado na sa Senado

June 2, 2020 @ 11:49 AM

<https://remate.ph/organic-agriculture-bill-na-inakda-ni-sen-villar-pasado-na-sa-senado/>

Manila, Philippines – Positibo si Senador Cynthia A. Villar, Chairperson ng Senate Committee on Agriculture and Food na kung maisasabatas ang pag-amyenda sa Republic Act 10068 o The Organic Agriculture Act of 2010, ito ay magbibigay ng kinakailangang pagganyak upang masuportahan ang pagunlad ng organic agriculture sa bansa. Ang nasabing amyenda sa panukalang batas na nakapasa na sa Third Reading ng Senado, Lunes, Hunyo 1, 2020, ay magtataguyod ng mas abot-kaya at madaling paraan ng pagsertipika ng mga organic product, na tinatawag na Participatory Guarantee System o PGS.

“We have huge potential in organic agriculture but our local organic farmers are disadvantaged because they cannot have their produce or products labelled as organic due to the prohibitive cost of certification. PGS is the solution to that, it will make them more competitive,” pahayag ni Villar.

Ayon sa senador, ang mga magsasaka ay humihingi ng tulong sa anila ay mataas na bayad para sa third-party certification. Sa ilalim nito ay umaabot sa Php 42,000 hanggang Php 150,000 ang gastos kada produkto kumpara sa PGS na tinatayang aabot lamang sa Php 600 hanggang Php 2,000.

Ang PGS ay sinusunod na at tinatangap ng mga international organic movement, gaya ng International Federation of Organic Agriculture Movement (IFOAM). Ito rin ay kinikilala ng Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) bilang isang pro-farmer na alternatibo sa third party certification.

Ang amyenda sa organic law ay inaasahang mapakikinabangan ng 165,958 na mga nagsasagawa ng organic farming sa Pilipinas, mayorya sa mga ito ay mga smallholder farmer. Ipinahayag ni Villar na importante na maging abot-kaya sa mga malilit na magsasaka ang organic certification dahil sila aniya ang major force ng sektor ng agrikultura sa bansa. “PGS will help small organic farmers attain the organic certification they badly need to compete in local and global markets. It is a system developed and practiced by people who are actually engaged in organic agriculture. The practitioners themselves are involved in the process of certification”.



Organic Agriculture Bill na inakda ni Sen. Villar, pasado na sa Senado

Ang Senate Bill 1318 ay naglalayon rin na mapataas ang partisipasyon ng pribadong sektor at ng mga katutubo o indigenous people sa National Organic Agricultural Board (NOAB). Mula sa kasalukuyang mga myembro ng NOAB na mga kawani ng pamahalaan, tatlong kinatawan ang pipiliin na pawang mga small farmer; isa ang magmumula sa mga NGO ng organic agriculture, mga agricultural college o university; isa mula sa pribadong sector na kabilang sa organic value chain o ang national PGS; at isang kuwalipikadong representate ng mga indigenous farmer.

Tinukoy ni Villar na ang amyenda sa R.A. 10068 ay magbibigay ng pagganyak o pagtulak upang mapataas at mapatuloy pa ang pagunlad ng organic agriculture sa bansa. Aniya, sa mga nakaraang taon hanggang sa kasalukuyan ay mataas ang demand para sa mga organic product. “We should sustain and keep it going. Especially during this time and age when sustainable farming is a must since it incorporates environment protection. Organic farming is the best example of sustainable agriculture. How can we go organic if farmers cannot even afford to have their produce certified as organic?”.

Dagdag pa ni Villar malaki ang maitutulong ng organic agriculture sa kapaligiran, dahil ang mga pamamaraan na ginagamit rito ay eco-friendly, gaya ng paggamit ng mga organic fertilizer. Sinabi nito na ang labis na paggamit ng mga chemical fertilizer at mga insecticide ay nagdudulot ng pagkasira sa mga pananamin, mababang produksyon at pagkatigang ng mga lupain.

“Organic farming is good in keeping the soil healthy. We must remember that 95 percent of our food comes from the soil. And soil degradation in the country has reached an alarming 38 percent already. The simplest way of reversing that is to put the nutrients back to the soil through composting and the use of organic fertilizer,” paliwanag ng senador. Ernie Reyes



Pag-aalaga ng indoor plants nagiging patok na libangan habang lockdown

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Jun 02 2020 04:37 PM | Updated as of Jun 02 2020 09:30 PM

https://news.abs-cbn.com/life/06/02/20/pag-aalaga-ng-indoor-plants-nagiging-patok-na-libangan-habang-lockdown?fbclid=IwAR2nvoAIVfPERmY-vh4wfsCBRXBmaLe3UJPb0zH8u-QixneWO_KO3RMSbK0

MAYNILA - Naging "plant parent" o nag-aalaga ng halaman ang telecommunications professional na si Derick.

Malaking tulong ang kaniyang mga halaman para makapag-adjust sa pagkakakulong niya sa bahay simula noong nagkaroon ng pandemya sa coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

"It reduces yung anxiety and stress level and at the same time improves your creativity and productivity kasi minsan pag titingnan mo lang or kakausapin mo ang plants some sort of nagbibigyan ng tranquility di ba," ani Adil.

Sa online seller sa Instagram bumili at saka nagpa-deliver si Adil ng kaniyang mga halaman.

Ang ilan, sa White Plains sa Quezon City namili ng mga halaman.

"Nakakatanggal ng stress eh its a stress reliever especially pag tinitingnan mo lang in the morning, nagdidilig ka and again in the afternoon parang nakaka-relax," ayon sa negosyanteng si Marlon Santos.

Naglalaro sa P50 hanggang P1,000 ang presyo ng mga mabentang halaman.

In demand kung maituturing ang mga indoor plant, ayon kay Hello Tolentino, na nagsabing punuan sila kapag weekend.

Ayon sa isang therapist, mabuting may pinagkakaabalahan ang mga naka-lockdown para hindi sila mabagot.

"Definitely maganda yan kasi itong paghahalaman ay life-giving, magbibigay sa atin ng pag-asa, it is an expression of meaning and search of hope para sa maramaing tao and kasama na yan sa self development," ani Lisa Reyes, isang resiliency therapist.

Para kay Adil, kahit metikulo ang mga halaman niya, malaking tulong sila sa pang-araw-araw na buhay ngayong may banta ng coronavirus.

— Ulat ni Adrian Ayalin, ABS-CBN News



Quezon Memorial Circle, 2 others to be converted into mega community quarantine centers -Duterte

Published June 2, 2020 11:24am

By VIRGIL LOPEZ, GMA News

<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/740784/quezon-memorial-circle-2-others-to-be-converted-into-mega-community-quarantine-centers-duterte/story/>

The Quezon Memorial Circle, Ynares Sports Arena and the Cuneta Astrodome will be converted into mega community quarantine centers in Metro Manila, President Rodrigo Duterte told Congress.

In his report to Congress submitted on Monday, Duterte said the Department of Public Works and Highways and the Bases Conversion and Development Authority have been preparing the three areas for conversion into large-scale quarantine sites for COVID-19-related patients.

At present, the country already has 11 mega community quarantine centers scattered in Metro Manila and key cities such as Davao City. These were put up through the help of the private sector and local government units.

Day-to-day operations of the mega community quarantine centers are being administered by several agencies including medical teams from police, military, Philippine Coast Guard and the Bureau of Fire Protection.

As of Monday, the Philippines had 18,638 COVID-19 cases with 960 deaths and 3,979 recoveries. --KBK, GMA News



Property developers welcome Balik Probinsya

on June 3, 2020 04:02 AM

By [TDI](#)

<https://tribune.net.ph/index.php/2020/06/03/property-developers-welcome-balik-probinsya/>

Two real estate firms expressed support for the Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa (BP2) program of the government seeing the brainchild of Senator Christopher “Bong” Go as an opportunity to build sustainable cities and communities.

“Filipinos have their chance to design their new cities in the provinces to make them a model of sustainable architecture in Southeast Asia and the world,” said Italtinas Development Corporation CEO Romolo Nati.

In a separate statement, DoubleDragon Chair Edgar “Injap” Sia II said, “We are one with the belief that the second and third tier provincial areas of Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao need to be further incentivized to become more vibrant significantly in terms of their economy.”

Meanwhile, Michael McCullough, managing director of real estate services company KMC Savills, said the BP2 supports work-from-home arrangement employed by companies and encourage property developers to build projects that are more convenient for employees.

“We are seeing a lot of clients scramble for decentralized locations. Many of our call center clients have contacted us saying, ‘We need locations closer to our agents,’” Savills said.

In a position paper submitted to the House of Representatives last May, Philippine Chamber of Commerce and Industry (PCCI) President Benedicto Yujuico stated that the BP2 is aligned with PCCI’s stance to focus growth priority to farming and fishery, which in turn should develop rural economies.

“Kapag nasa probinsya, pwede naman mag-invest rin kung ‘yung mga local government very interested sa mga investment (para) magkaroon ng trabaho doon... talagang maganda ‘yun kung babalik sa probinsya,” PCCI Chair Sergio Ortiz-Luis said in a separate interview last April.

In early May, President Rodrigo Duterte signed Executive Order 114, institutionalizing the BP2 program and creating an inter-agency council to oversee its implementation. The program has 77,446 applications, as of 1 June 2020.



Alternative work arrangements for gov't workers still in effect

By Marita Moaje June 2, 2020, 4:23 pm
<https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1104663>



Civil Service Commission (CSC) Commissioner Aileen Lizada

MANILA – Civil Service Commission (CSC) Commissioner Aileen Lizada clarified Tuesday that the implementation of alternative work arrangements for government employees remains in effect despite the country adopting more relaxed quarantine restrictions.

Lizada's comment comes in the wake of reports the agency received from its regional offices that some government agencies and local government units (LGU) are requiring all their employees to report for work.

"We're still applying Memorandum Circular Number 10, alternative work arrangements pa rin natin yung five na work from home, skeleton workforce, four-day workweek, staggered working hours, and other alternative work arrangements. Ito po yung binibigay natin during this time of ECQ to MECQ, GCQ, to MGCQ, ito pa rin yung in place (this is what we recommend during this time of ECQ to MECQ, GCQ to MGCQ, this is still in place)," Lizada said.

She said the CSC does not require 100-percent presence of staff in the government offices, especially workers belonging to the vulnerable sector.

"Ang kinakailangan lamang full operational yung ating mga opisina (we only need our offices to be fully operational) but do not let all the employees report for work especially yung mga nasa (those in the) vulnerable sectors natin yung (like) pregnant women, senior citizens or those with comorbidities or other health risks, yun yung dapat hindi natin pinapa report for work (we should not ask them to report for work)," she said.

The CSC, she said, through its regional offices, has so far received around 28 complaints from five regions.



Alternative work arrangements for gov't workers still in effect

According to Lizada, the most common complaint is the lack of transportation and the difficulty in moving from one province to another, as different border checkpoints ask for different requirements like travel pass and medical certificates.

She said they also received a complaint wherein an employee doing maintenance work was asked for an accomplishment report.

Having failed to submit because they did not report for work during the implementation of the enhanced community quarantine, she said the duration of the employee's homestay was charged to his leave credits.

Another complaint came from an employee who was late for a virtual meeting because of weak internet signal but was deducted half-day of her salary.

"Hindi kasalanan ng maintenance na pina-stop yung trabaho nila sa opsina (it is not the fault of the maintenance staff that they were asked to stop work). You do not fault them for something that they were not liable for," she said.

Lizada said salary should be continuous and leave credits should not be charged.

"So ito yung mga kinakailangan natin i-clarify kasi this is something new sa atin sa gobyerno. Hindi tayo sanay sa ganitong new normal (we need to clarify this as we are not used to this new normal). Please, (do) not be too strict, and let us be lenient and understanding. Siguro you can give better guidance, hanap ng better signal sa house but do not kaagad impose na half day na tinanggalan mo ng sweldo yung tao kasi na late sya sa virtual meeting niya, hindi naman siguro proper (maybe what we can do is give them proper guidance, look for a better signal, and not immediately deduct half day of her salary, that is not proper)," she said.

Covid-19 tests

Meanwhile, she said LGUs requiring their workers for a rapid test should be the ones shouldering the expenses and not the employee.

She also encouraged those who experience flu-like symptoms not to report for work, undergo a medical checkup, and get a medical certificate stating that they are fit to return to work.

"Pag kayo ay PUM or PUI, you do not worry kasi baka akala nyo yung 14 days quarantine ay tatanggalin sa inyong sick leave hindi po (if you are a person under monitoring or a person under investigation, do not worry that the 14-day quarantine will be deducted from your sick leave), we will consider this as an excused leave," she said.



Alternative work arrangements for gov't workers still in effect

Lizada said the CSC has also released Memorandum Circular No. 8 providing revised interim guidelines on the use of leave credits for absences due to quarantine and/or treatment relative to the coronavirus disease.

The CSC will now be calling the attention of concerned government agencies to correct them and give proper guidance.

“Ngayon kung di sila gagawa despite the instruction, reminder or guidance, iba na yun (if they continue not to follow the guideline despite the reminders) then we will consult our regional offices and see what can be done within legal parameters,” said Lizada

Government workers who want to file a complaint may contact the CSC through their social media platforms.

Lizada reminded heads of government agencies to consult the CSC if they have questions on the guidelines.

"In case of doubt magtanong ho tayo, rather than make a decision na yung hirap na nga ang tao ngayon, tapos takot pa because of the threat of the Covid-19 (In case of doubt, ask, rather than make a decision especially at this time when everyone is having a difficult time and fear of Covid-19). If you have questions you can ask the CSC through all the social media platforms available. And the regional offices will promptly answer each and every concern of the employee," she said.

CSC examination

Meanwhile, Lizada said the CSC will be restructuring the pen and paper test for the Career Service Examinations.

She said the CSC Examination, Recruitment and Placement Office (ERPO) is now studying how to conduct the pen and paper test and strengthen the computerized examinations which are regularly held monthly.

Normally, Lizada said, around 250,000 examinees nationwide are taking their tests which are regularly scheduled.

“Inaayos na yung guidelines (we are now preparing the guidelines) and we will be coming out soon what will now happen to the pen and paper test para yung mga naka schedule nung March 15 and the one scheduled on August 9 will be suspended as well. So we are restructuring the pen and paper test. Ayusin natin kung dati 25 in one classroom baka 15 na lang. Matutuloy yan we’re doing our best to come up with the guideline since its not feasible at the moment,” Lizada said. (PNA)



More health workers to resign if gov't fails to address their concerns – group

By: [Gabriel Pabico Lalu](#) - Reporter / [@GabrielLaluINQ](#)

[INQUIRER.net](#) / 09:59 PM June 02, 2020

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1285214/more-health-workers-to-resign-if-govt-fails-to-address-their-concerns-group>

MANILA, Philippines — More nurses and doctors might resign out of fear of acquiring the novel coronavirus disease if the government would continue to ignore health workers' concerns, a group warned Tuesday.

The Alliance of Healthcare Workers (AHW) said reports that nurses in the Southern Philippines Medical Center (SPMC) have resigned out of fear from the COVID-19 pandemic might be replicated because health authorities allegedly fail to address the still-rising number of COVID-19-infected healthcare workers.

The latest numbers from the Department of Health (DOH) showed that there are 2,669 health workers found positive for SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes the potentially deadly respiratory ailment COVID-19. Of the count, 32 have already died so far while 1,438 have recovered.

“We fear that more fellow health workers will be resigning, not only from SPMC but to various hospitals across the country since they do not yet feel concrete and comprehensive measures of containment from the deadly virus in the country which will jeopardize their health and lives,” AHW president Robert Mendoza said in a statement.

“Aside from those resigning, many from our fellow health workers felt frustrated and demoralized. We have witnessed the incompetence and neglect of DOH and Duterte administration in dealing with the pandemic which has worsened the already deplorable health care workers' conditions and public health care situation,” he added.

AHW also noted that they cannot be satisfied by the pronouncements of Inter-Agency Task Force on Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF) Chief Implementer Secretary Carlito Galvez Jr., who said in May that death toll among health workers have stopped as the government ramped up distribution of personal protective equipment (PPEs) to hospitals.

According to Mendoza, the government also has to resolve the surging number of infected health workers since they directly interact with COVID-19 patients. Previously, AHW has warned that neglect of their demands may lead to the [collapse of the country's entire health system](#).

INQUIRER.net has contacted DOH officials to get their reaction on AHW's claims, but none have replied as of posting time.



More health workers to resign if gov't fails to address their concerns – group

“Why (is) Secretary Galvez concerned only with the number of deaths and not see the complete picture of all cases, including the increasing number of infected health workers?” Mendoza asked.

“The health workers’ conditions are neglected. There is no implementation of free mandatory testing to all health workers at least every two weeks, inadequate PPE, public hospitals are understaffed and health workers still working 12 hours a day, low wages, and difficult transportation are among other problems,” he added.

While infection rates among health workers in the Philippines have slowed down – 2,669 out of the country’s 18,997 cases or 14 percent compared to April and May’s 18 percent – the Philippine still has one of the highest rates in the Western Pacific region.

The [World Health Organization last April sounded the alarm on this issue](#), especially as the rest of the countries in the region – including China, where the disease originated – only registered a two percent infection rate among health workers.



Public urged to preserve coastal, marine resources to ensure sustainability of goods, services

By Jerome Carlo R. Paunan Published on June 2, 2020

<https://pia.gov.ph/news/articles/1043585>

CALOOCAN CITY, June 2 (PIA) -- The Climate Change Commission (CCC) over the weekend underscored the importance of preserving the coastal and marine resources to ensure the sustainable sources of goods and services during the online forum dubbed, "The Great Web: COVID-19, Climate Change, and The Ocean", a knowledge-for-action webinar on COVID-19, climate emergency and ocean conservation.

Climate Change Commissioner Noel Antonio V. Gaerlan said that the public should give preferential attention in reinforcing, observing, and developing coastal and marine activities to facilitate the conservation, rehabilitation, and sustainable management of the Philippine coastal and marine resources. The Month of the Ocean is being observed in the Philippines in May.

Gaerlan also highlighted the value of the coastal and marine resources in the field of medicine and in providing services for the health sector.

Among the resource speakers during the online forum were Department of Science and Technology (DOST) Balik Scientist and Director of Center for Chemical Biology and Biotechnology of the University of San Agustin Dr. Doralyn S. Dalisay; Department of Agriculture – National Fisheries Research and Development Institute Dr. Mudjekeewis D. Santos; and Associate Vice President and Research and Global Relations Director of the Center for Natural Drug Discovery and Development (CND3) of the University of San Agustin, Dr. Jonel P. Saludes.

Doctors Dalisay and Saludes, both of the University of San Agustin, discussed the "Cures from Beneath Ebb and Swell of the Ocean" which highlighted the contribution of marine ecosystem in public health and the discovery of antibiotics from beneficial bacteria that could possibly treat secondary bacterial infections.

Dalisay also shared that the marine environment is a very dynamic and fascinating ecosystem of diverse organisms that are continuously interacting with themselves and with their environment. These organisms are said to develop strategies to live, thrive and survive in the competitive environment.

"Why is the marine ecosystem important to our discovery? As we all know, oceans occupy 71% of the Earth's surface, and hold 97% of the Earth's water and nearly 87% of life which is essentially unexplored and untouched life forms, and is a great source of undiscovered organisms, including microorganisms," Dalisay said.

During the open forum, Saludes emphasized the importance of raising awareness and educating the public in effectively implementing environmental policies.



Public urged to preserve coastal, marine resources to ensure sustainability of goods, services

“The country does not lack laws; we have a stockpile of laws to protect our biodiversity, whether that’s on wildlife, marine resources, plants, natural products, and many more to protect biopiracy. In my opinion, what we lack is awareness among ourselves. What do we do to protect and implement those laws? I believe, educating our fellow Filipinos is the key to this, if not the lack of laws,” Saludes said.

For his part, Santos, an ocean and marine conservation advocate, discussed the importance of fisheries in the Philippine economy and how climate change affects the livelihood of local fisherfolks.

“The Philippines is always ranked top 10 in terms of vulnerability to the impacts of climate change simply because we have exposure to natural hazards, typhoons, flooding, and many more. Our systems are very sensitive right now, meaning there's a lot of pollution, degradation in our reef system, and our adaptive capacities are very low. Seventy percent of the communities in coastal areas, a lot of them are fisherfolks, are considered the poorest of the poor in our country,” he emphasized.

Mobilizing protection and conservation efforts are necessary in order to maintain a healthy marine biodiversity that is resilient to climate change. He also noted that while the country needs to address the Covid-19 pandemic, the public should not forget the big picture with the larger issues that the country needs to think about, related to climate change, Santos added.

On the other hand, lawyer Gamboa, who served as the moderator of the online forum, stated that the ocean plays a great role in the web of life, especially in putting balance to the environment, climate and health of human beings.

“This is actually part of the celebration of the Month of the Ocean, and we would like to highlight the many uses and services of the coastal and marine ecosystem that does not only provide us with leisure and food, but also plays a great role when we talk about public health. Especially now that we are all in the midst of a public health emergency,” Gamboa said.

This online forum is a partnership between the CCC and RARE Philippines, with support from the Center for Chemical Biology and Biotechnology and CND3 of the University of San Agustin, and the Department of Agriculture – National Fisheries Research and Development Institute. (PIA NCR)



Climate Change Commission: PH needs to preserve coastal, marine resources now more than ever

Published June 2, 2020, 1:15 PM

By Ellalyn de Vera Ruiz

<https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/06/02/climate-change-commission-ph-needs-to-preserve-coastal-marine-resources-now-more-than-ever/>

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) said on Tuesday that the Philippines needs to preserve now more than ever its coastal and marine resources to protect its valuable contribution in the field of medicine and providing services for the health sector.

“The public should give preferential attention in reinforcing, observing, and developing coastal and marine activities to facilitate the conservation, rehabilitation, and sustainable management of the Philippine coastal and marine resources,” CCC Commissioner Noel Gaerlan said.

According to Dr. Doralyn Dalisay, a Balik Scientist and Director of Center for Chemical Biology and Biotechnology of the University of San Agustin, marine environment is a very dynamic and fascinating ecosystem of diverse organisms that are continuously interacting with themselves and with their environment.

These organisms are said to develop strategies to live, thrive, and survive in the competitive environment.

“Why is the marine ecosystem important to our discovery? As we all know, oceans occupy 71 percent of the Earth’s surface, and hold 97 percent of the Earth’s water and nearly 87 percent of life which is essentially unexplored and untouched life forms, and is a great source of undiscovered organisms, including microorganisms,” Dalisay said.

Dr. Jonel Saludes, associate Vice President and Research and Global Relations Director of the Center for Natural Drug Discovery and Development of the University of San Agustin, emphasized the importance of raising awareness and educating the public in effectively implementing environmental policies.

“The country does not lack laws. We have a stockpile of laws to protect our biodiversity, whether that’s on wildlife, marine resources, plants, natural products, and many more to protect biopiracy. In my opinion, what we lack is awareness among ourselves. What do we do to protect and implement those laws? I believe, educating our fellow Filipinos is the key to this, if not the lack of laws,” he said.

Dr. Mudjekeewis Santos of the National Fisheries Research and Development Institute said fisheries is an important sector that has been beset by the impacts of climate change.

“The Philippines is always ranked top 10 in terms of vulnerability to the impacts of climate change simply because we have exposure to natural hazards, typhoons, flooding, and many more. Our systems are very sensitive right now, meaning there’s a lot of pollution, degradation in our reef system, and our adaptive capacities are very low. Seventy percent of the communities in coastal areas, a lot of them are fisherfolks, are considered the poorest of the poor in our country,” he said.

He noted that mobilizing protection and conservation efforts is necessary in order to maintain a healthy marine biodiversity that is resilient to climate change.

Santos added that while the country needs to address the COVID-19 pandemic, the public should not forget the big picture with the larger issues that the country needs to think about related to climate change.



Otters find new playground on island in Tawi-Tawi

By: [Julie Alipala](#) - Reporter / [@alipalajulieINQ](#)

[Philippine Daily Inquirer](#) / 04:17 AM June 03, 2020

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1285215/otters-find-new-playground-on-island-in-tawi-tawi>



VISITORS FROM THE SEA Residents of Taganak Island in Tawi-Tawi and conservationists vow to protect the smooth-coated otters visiting their community. —CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

ZAMBOANGA CITY, Zamboanga del Sur, Philippines—They are known as “anjing laut,” the Malay word for “sea dogs,” in neighboring Sandakan, Sabah, according to Tawi-Tawi residents who occasionally visit that part of Malaysia.

But on Tawi-Tawi’s Taganak Island, where the sea creatures have been seen for the first time toward the end of Ramadan last month, the smooth-coated otters (*Lutrogale perspicillata*) appeared skittish and would quickly rush back to the sea whenever dogs approached.

ADVERTISEMENT

The island’s dogs, however, seemed afraid of these visitors from the sea.

New record

Conservationists said the otters seen romping on a beach in Taganak—one of several islands that make up Turtle Islands in Tawi-Tawi—might have come from nearby Borneo Island. “These are a different species of otters from what we have in Palawan ... There is also no doubt that these individuals came from Sabah,” Kester Yu, a conservationist of Balete Conservancy and president of the Turtle Conservation Society of the Philippines, said in a recent Facebook Messenger interview.

Located less than 15 nautical miles (27.78 kilometers) away from Sandakan in Sabah, Turtle Islands are the country’s closest cluster of islands along the boundaries with Borneo, where four different species of otters have been known to thrive, Yu said.



Otters find new playground on island in Tawi-Tawi

Otters recently sighted on Taganak Island make up the second species of otters recorded in the Philippines after the Asian small-clawed otters (*Aonyx cinereus*) previously seen in Palawan, he said. At least two romps (group of otters) were first seen on the island on May 25, when Muslims celebrated Eid al-Fitr, the end of the fasting month of Ramadan.

“Each romp consisted of two adults and a pup; or at least six individual otters that we know of,” said Yu, who observed that the two romps did not seem to interact with one another.

“This is a new record of the species in the country,” he added.

Daily sight

It was the Taganak police who first found the otters, said Police Maj. Alpaser Haber, acting police chief of Turtle Islands.

Haber said it meant something for locals to see the otters on the day they observed the end of Ramadan. “It greatly helped that the local people believed all the blessings to have come from Allah, including the natural resources and the different animals. It somehow lessened the threat (that the otters were facing),” he said.

After the Eid al-Fitr celebration, the otters became a new daily sight in Taganak. They were often seen playing near the town’s police station.

“They are very much welcome here,” Haber said. “But we also have to ensure that measures are in place so that they will not decimate the harvest of some fisherfolk or accidentally be trapped in the fish cages.” Police are mapping out the sightings and closely monitoring how the sea creatures may interact with fishing communities on the island.

Lyca Sandra Gonzales Castro of the International Union for Conservation of Nature Otter Specialist Group, confirmed that what the locals saw on the island were otters.

Other than Taganak, there are no reports, so far, of otters seen in any area within the Turtle Islands.

Migration

Yu said otters might have gotten there accidentally.

“But it’s definitely a natural occurrence. Other than torrential rains the night before, we still do not know the complete circumstances how or why they traveled to Turtle Islands. The closest river is approximately 15 nautical miles away,” he said.

“Perhaps because of the recent reduction of sea traffic, it may have been more favorable for them to travel long distances,” he added.



Otters find new playground on island in Tawi-Tawi

Yu said further studies were still needed to be made to understand the migration of otters from neighboring countries. “There is still so much that we do not know. They seem to be comfortable [in Taganak]. They are technically nonnative, but most likely, they got there through natural causes.” He said waters around Turtle Islands, a protected area, were also considerably cleaner and more pristine than those surrounding the neighboring towns of Sandakan.

‘Great news’

Yu said conservationists would start monitoring the otters’ population in Taganak. He said the smooth-coated otters mainly prey on fish, unlike the Asian small-clawed otters known for eating crabs and crustaceans.

“So far, there also have not been any reports on predation toward turtle hatchlings. Fortunately, marine turtles on Taganak Island do not nest on the parts of the beach where the otters are found,” Yu said.

He described the otters’ presence as a “welcome sign” and “great news” at this time of the pandemic. “They are not covered by travel restrictions brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic,” Yu said in jest. INQ



Man rescues pangolin being chased by dog in Palawan

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

[Inquirer Southern Luzon](#) / 01:48 AM June 03, 2020

<https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1285248/man-rescues-pangolin-being-chased-by-dog-in-palawan>



The adult pangolin rescued in Puerto Princesa City. Photos from Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD)

PUERTO PRINCESA CITY, Palawan, Philippines — An adult pangolin (*Manis culionensis*) was surrendered to the local environmental authorities by a concerned citizen here.

In a statement on Tuesday evening, the Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD), said that a certain Julito Miraveles, a resident of Barangay Santa Lourdes in this city, surrendered the pangolin with the help of Palawan Maritime Police.

Locally known as balintong, it was rescued by Miraveles on May 31 after being chased by a dog.

The pangolin, dubbed as the world's most trafficked mammal, measured 89 centimeters from snout to tail and 43 centimeters wide. Its health was checked by a veterinarian from PCSDS-Wildlife Traffic Monitoring Unit (WTMU).



The adult pangolin rescued in Puerto Princesa City. Photos from Palawan Council for Sustainable Development (PCSD)

The “shy mammal” was classified as “critically endangered” by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) and listed in the Appendix I of the Convention on International Trade of Endangered Species (CITES) .

Commercial trading of pangolins is banned.

This is the fifth pangolin rescued in Palawan since the onset of the lockdown.



QC moves to reduce air pollution in 10 years

Published June 2, 2020, 11:39 AM

By Chito Chavez

<https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/06/02/qc-moves-to-reduce-air-pollution-in-10-years/>

Pledging to provide clean air in the locality, the Quezon City government said on Tuesday that it has fulfilled its promise by joining the BreatheLife campaign, a program that targets to reduce air pollution by 2030.

“This move is part of our earlier pledge to provide healthy air to our residents,” said Mayor Joy Belmonte, referring to the Clean Air Cities Declaration that she signed during last year’s C40 World Mayors Summit in Copenhagen, Denmark.

Belmonte noted the program further enhances the city’s goal to “reduce air pollution that would help lead to a healthier citizenry”.

The QC chief executive was the only mayor from the Philippines to join the summit.

With Quezon City having nearly three million population, Belmonte acknowledged the daunting task ahead but remained confident of meeting the required targets.

Aside from Belmonte, 30 leaders from various cities around the world signed the declaration which considers clean air as a human right.

The signatories promised to work together to meet the WHO World Health Organization (WHO) Air Quality Guidelines by 2030 by using all powers at their disposal to address air pollution.

They also vowed to call on those responsible behind the sources of air pollution to join their cause for a healthier environment.

The declaration also requires signatories to establish baseline levels and set ambitious reduction targets for air pollutants that meet or exceed national commitments within two years.

Through its participation and membership to the C40 Cities Climate Leadership Group as the only Philippine City member, Quezon City was able to implement various proactive actions to improve its overall climate resilience.

The city’s partnership with the TAME-BC project and the Air Quality Technical Assistance Programme from C40 Cities will help establish the roadmap for its air quality monitoring network and develop its Air Quality Management Plan.

Belmonte noted that the city government will also undertake other actions such as promoting clean energy use and energy efficient strategies through the solarization of its city-owned and operated facilities.

She added that there are plans to engage stakeholders in crafting the Air Quality Management Plan as part of its commitment to the BreatheLife Campaign. (Chito A. Chavez)#



Daluyan ng tubig sa Calamba, positibo sa poliovirus

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Jun 03 2020 03:41 AM

<https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/06/03/20/daluyan-ng-tubig-sa-calamba-positibo-sa-poliovirus>

Positibo sa poliovirus ang daluyan ng tubig na pumapagitna sa Barangay Bucal at Barangay Halang, Calamba City, Laguna batay sa resulta ng isinagawang pagsusuri ng mga awtoridad na inilabas nitong Martes ng gabi.

Ayon sa Facebook post ng Sangguniang Barangay ng Bucal, ang ilat o ligasong sa pumapagitna sa dalawang barangay, o ang tubig mula sa Pamana Homes papuntang Laguna de Bay, ay nagpositibo sa poliovirus matapos ang isinagawang pag-aaral ng Community Environment and Natural Resources Office (CENRO).

"Kami po ay humihingi sa inyo ng lubos na pakikiisa na huwag munang bumaba (lumusong) o pumunta sa nasabing lugar para makaiwas sa anumang ikasasama sa kalusugan," anila.

"Siguraduhin po natin na hindi kontaminado ang ating iniinom na tubig at iwasan po na tayo ay makainom galing sa NAWASA na hindi napapakuluan lalo't higit sa mga bahayan na malapit sa nasabing lugar," dagdag pa ng mga awtoridad.

Nauna nang inulat ng mga awtoridad ang pagbabalik ng polio sa Pilipinas noong Setyembre, 19 taon matapos ideklara ng World Health Organization na ligtas sa naturang sakit ang bansa.



Mga plastic wrapper, ipinagpapalit sa food packs sa Ilocos Norte

Grace Alba, ABS-CBN News

Posted at Jun 03 2020 01:37 AM

<https://news.abs-cbn.com/life/06/03/20/mga-plastic-wrapper-ipinagpapalit-sa-food-packs-sa-ilocos-norte>



Larawan mula sa Municipal Government ng San Nicolas, Ilocos Norte

Pinakikinabangan ng mga residente ng San Nicolas, Ilocos Norte ang mga plastic wrapper para sa food packs sa pamamagitan ng "Palit Basura Program" ng lokal na pamahalaan.

Si Nanay Asuncion Tumamao at ilang kabataan sa bayan ay hindi pinapalampas pulutin ang mga nakikitang mga plastik sa kanilang paligid.

Ang nakolektang 50 plastic wrappers ay may kapalit na dalawang canned goods, dalawang instant noodles, at twin pack coffee.

Matatagpuan ang palit-basura booth sa munisipyo.

"We collect plastic food wrappers, powdered, chichiria, and coffee wrappers. Ito ay donations from the private sector, so magandang palit sa aming basura, so iipunin nila ulit ito, ang mga wrappers na ito para pwede namin na palitan para hindi maipon ang basura dito sa San Nicolas," ani Alfredo Valdez Jr., alkalde ng San Nicolas.

Bukod sa layuning makatulong sa mga residente ngayong may krisis, paraan ito ng lokal na pamahalaan upang maturuan ang mga residente ng tamang pangagasiwa ng mga basura sa bayan.

"Pagdating nitong COVID pandemic ay may mga ayudang ibinigay sa mga tao and all these things. So, I called the attention of our municipal environment officer na mukhang dadami ang mga basura natin dito dahil dito," dagdag pa niya.

Ikinatuwa naman ng mga residente ang naturang programa.

"Malaking tulong ito sa amin dahil kahit papaano ay natustusan ang aming pangangailangan," ani Asuncion Tumamao, residente sa lugar.

Mahigpit pa ring sinusunod ng lokal na pamahalaan ang health protocols. May ginawang ding schedule para sa bawat barangay para makontrol ang pupuntang mga residente sa plastic basura booth.

Gagawing unan, bags, bayong, at ibang kapaki-pakinabang na bagay ang mga nakolektang plastik.



PNR service delay caused by garbage dumped on rails —official

Published June 2, 2020 5:31pm

By TED CORDERO, GMA News

<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/news/nation/740848/pnr-service-delay-caused-by-garbage-dumped-on-rails-official/story/>

The Philippine National Railways (PNR) explained Tuesday that the hours of delay experienced by passengers on Monday was due to garbage dumped on rails.

“Kahapon ang biyahe nagkaroon ng konting delay dahil sa mga basura na tinatapon sa gitna ng riles,” PNR officer-in-charge Celesta Lautá said in an interview on Dóbol B sa News TV.

According to Darlene Cay’s report on “24 Oras,” some [PNR passengers waited for three to five hours in line](#) before they were finally able to board the train.

The long lines outside Tutuban stretched all the way to the quadrangle outside the station, according to the report.

Lautá explained that PNR teams have to clear the garbage dumped between the rails before they allowed trains to run and service passengers.

To avoid similar incidents from happening, the PNR official said regular clearing of railways will be conducted.

The Philippines’ oldest railway line resumed operations on June 1. It operates from 3 a.m. until 8 p.m.

To ensure physical distancing, only eight to 30 passengers per station are allowed to board a train.—AOL, GMA News



PCG braces for Boracay's reopening

[Robertzon Ramirez](#)

June 3, 2020 - 12:00am

<https://www.philstar.com/nation/2020/06/03/2018361/pcg-braces-boracays-reopening>

MANILA, Philippines — The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) is ready for the reopening of Boracay after more than two months that it was closed to tourists as a precautionary measure against the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

The PCG said its station in Aklan would help in the inspection of ports in Malay by conducting foot and seaborne patrol.

“(We want) to ensure maritime safety and security as well as the strict implementation of health protocols against the threat of COVID-19 in the province,” the PCG said.

Identified swimming areas are open only from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Visitors will be undergo body temperature check upon entry.

Registration for contract tracing purposes will also be required.

The PCG said wearing of face masks and physical distancing measures should be observed at all times.



Fighting forces 900 IP families to flee Maguindanao upland town

By Edwin Fernandez June 2, 2020, 5:40 pm
<https://www.pna.gov.ph/articles/1104672>



ON SAFER GROUND. Some of the 900 Teduray families from the villages of Kuya, Pilar, and Pandan in South Upi town, Maguindanao, are now staying at eight temporary shelters in the vicinity of Barangay Kuya. The evacuees received assistance from the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao government on June 1, 2020. *(Photo courtesy of READI-BARMM)*

COTABATO CITY – Some 900 families of indigenous peoples (IPs) in the upland town of South Upi, Maguindanao have been displaced by hostilities involving gunmen fighting for control over vast tracts of lands.

Involved in the conflict were members of at least three Teduray factions whose armed members are reportedly trying to defend their ancestral domain against a group of gunmen trying to claim ownership of the land.

Intermittent firefights since last week forced civilians to flee to safer grounds in Barangay Kuya afraid they might be caught in between warring groups.

The clashes were monitored in the peripheries of Barangays Kuya, Pandan, and Pilar, according to local authorities.

Alvin Minted, a Teduray leader, said the gunmen allegedly belong to Moro Islamic Liberation Front (MILF) who have been firing their guns toward civilian communities to force them to relocate.

“The gunmen are using the conflict to establish a claim over the vast tracts of arable lands, we can no longer return because they are there, heavily armed and have set up encampments and detachments,” Minted said in the vernacular.

Major Gen. Diosdado Carreon, commander of the military’s 6th Infantry Division, said he has directed military commanders in the area to help the local government settle the issue peacefully.

Minted also urged the regional Bangsamoro government to look into the issue affecting IPs in their ancestral domain and prevent the killing of civilians who belong to IP communities.

Personnel from the Rapid Emergency Action on Disaster Incidence-Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao were sent to the upland community to attend to the immediate needs of the displaced families while its leaders are trying to contain the sporadic armed engagements. (PNA)



The world lost a football pitch-sized area of tropical forest every six seconds in 2019

By Jack Guy and Maija Ehlinger, CNN

Published Jun 3, 2020 2:07:55 AM

<https://cnnphilippines.com/world/2020/6/3/The-world-lost-a-football-pitch-sized-area-of-tropical-forest-every-six-seconds-in-2019.html>

(CNN) - The world lost 3.8 million hectares of tropical primary forest in 2019 -- equivalent to a football pitch every six seconds -- according to a new report published Tuesday.

The loss of tropical primary forest makes up about a third of the 11.9 million hectares of tree cover that was lost last year, reveals a report from Global Forest Watch (GFW).

Primary forests are described as "some of the densest, wildest and most ecologically significant forests" in the world and are particularly important for carbon storage and biodiversity.

The hardest hit areas were in South America, Africa and Southeast Asia, the report says.

The report, which uses data gathered by the University of Maryland, shows primary forest loss was 2.8% higher in 2019 than the previous year.

Experts are also concerned the coronavirus pandemic could increase deforestation rates.

GFW tracks land use, climate and biodiversity changes around the globe through its open-source data monitoring and mapping tool.

Analysis focused on primary forests, which "once they are lost... can take decades or even millennia to grow back," according to a post on GFW's website by World Research Institute's Mikaela Weisse and Elizabeth Goldman.

The rate of primary forest loss has remained "stubbornly high for the last two decades despite efforts to halt deforestation," says the report.

Primary forest loss was lower last year than its peak in 2016 and 2017, but the total loss in hectares is the third-highest since 2000.

This amount of primary forest loss is associated with the same annual carbon dioxide emissions as 400 million cars, according to the report.

The worst-hit countries

Brazil accounted for the largest loss of primary forest, with more than 1.3 million hectares lost in 2019.

Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro has faced global criticism and condemnation for the deforestation occurring under his watch. He has also been accused of incentivizing the activity of illegal ranchers, miners and loggers.



The world lost a football pitch-sized area of tropical forest every six seconds in 2019

Data from Brazil's National Institute for Space Research (INPE) shows the first trimester of 2020 saw a more than 50% increase in deforestation compared to last year.

Meanwhile, in terms of total tree cover loss, Bolivia had its worst year in 2019 with more than 80% more trees lost than any other year on record, the report says. This follows several regulatory changes in recent years designed to encourage agriculture, the report adds.

Widespread fires in Brazil, Bolivia, Indonesia and Australia impacted the rate of tree cover loss in 2019, though the analysis found that fires were both a "cause and a symptom" of tree loss.

According to fire data collected by the University of Maryland, 30% of fires in Brazil last year were in areas that had previously burned.

The report also hones in on Australia, which is not in the tropics but saw a record-breaking year for tree cover loss due to bushfires which captured the world's attention in late 2019 and into 2020.

There was a six-fold increase in tree cover loss from 2018 to 2019, and the real extent of the damage is not yet known as some fires continued burning into 2020, according to the report.

'Some promising downward trends'

West Africa showed some "promising downward trends" in 2019, according to GFW.

Both Ghana and Cote d'Ivoire reduced primary forest loss by more than 50% in 2019 compared to the previous year.

Although Indonesia is one of the areas with the highest amount of primary forest loss in 2019, it recorded its third year in a row of decline, the report says.

Colombia managed to cut such loss year-on-year after two years of significant increases. However, the report warns that a spate of deforestation alerts in the first part of 2020 may mean this progress is curtailed.

Some of the reasons for downward trends could be government actions and environmental policies, the report says.

The report comes a few months after it was revealed that the Amazon rainforest had lost the equivalent of 8.4 million soccer fields between 2010 and 2019 due to deforestation.



Football pitch of rainforest destroyed every six seconds: study

Published June 2, 2020, 12:40 PM

By Agence France-Presse

<https://news.mb.com.ph/2020/06/02/football-pitch-of-rainforest-destroyed-every-six-seconds-study/>

Vast tracts of pristine rainforest on three continents went up in smoke last year, with an area roughly the size of Switzerland cut down or burned to make way for cattle and commercial crops, researchers said Tuesday.



Rainforests harbour the richest diversity of wildlife on Earth (AFP / CARL DE SOUZA / MANILA BULLETIN)

Brazil accounted for more than a third of the loss, with the Democratic Republic of Congo and Indonesia a distant second and third, Global Forest Watch said in its annual report, based on satellite data.

The 38,000 square kilometres (14,500 square miles) destroyed in 2019 — equivalent to a football pitch of old-growth trees every six seconds — made it the third most devastating year for primary forests since the scientists began tracking their decline two decades ago.

“We are concerned that the rate of loss is so high despite all the efforts of different countries and companies to reduce deforestation,” lead researcher Mikaela Weisse, Global Forest Watch project manager at the World Resources Institute (WRI), told AFP.

The total area of tropical forest levelled by fire and bulldozers worldwide last year was in fact three times higher — but virgin rainforests, as they were once known, are especially precious.

Undisturbed by modern development, they harbour the richest diversity of wildlife on Earth, and keep huge stores of carbon locked in their woody mass.

When set ablaze, that carbon escapes into the atmosphere as planet-warming CO₂.

“It will take decades or even centuries for these forests to get back to their original state” — assuming, of course, that the land they once covered is left undisturbed, Weisse said.

The forest fires that engulfed parts of Brazil last year made front-page news as the climate crisis loomed large in the public eye.

But they were not the main cause of Brazil’s loss of primary forest, the data showed.

Satellite images revealed many new “hot spots” of forest destruction. In the state of Para, for example, these fire-ravaged zones corresponded to reports of illegal land-grabs inside the Trincheira/Bacaja indigenous reserve.



The world lost a football pitch-sized area of tropical forest every six seconds in 2019

Coronavirus could pose further threat to forests

The pandemic will likely have an impact on deforestation, according to Weisse.

"While it's too soon to quantify the impact of the pandemic on forests, we have been hearing anecdotally about illegal actors taking advantage of the situation to ramp up environmental crime, and also about the challenges that law enforcement agencies are facing during this time," Weisse told CNN.

She added that researchers were concerned that governments might loosen environmental protections in the name of economic recovery.

Frances Seymour, who works with Weisse at the World Resources Institute, predicts that forests could be exploited further as people lose other sources of income.

"Temporary cash transfers and forest-friendly job creation are ways to reduce the need to rely on forests as a social safety net," Seymour said. She also suggested making any corporate bailouts conditional on shifting to deforestation-free supply chains.



Scientists say they have found the cleanest air on earth

By Amy Woodyatt, CNN

Published Jun 3, 2020 2:00:32 AM

<https://cnnphilippines.com/world/2020/6/3/Scientists-say-they-have-found-the-cleanest-air-on-earth.html>

(CNN) - Scientists believe they have identified the world's cleanest air, free from particles caused by human activity, located over the Southern Ocean, which surrounds Antarctica.

In a first-of-its-kind study of the bioaerosol composition of the Southern Ocean, researchers from Colorado State University identified an atmospheric region which remains unchanged by human activity.

Weather and climate are closely linked, connecting each part of the world with other regions. As the climate changes rapidly because of human activity, scientists and researchers struggle to find a corner of the Earth unaffected by people.

However, Professor Sonia Kreidenweis and her team suspected that the air over the Southern Ocean would be least affected by humans and dust from the world's continents.

Researchers found that the boundary layer air, which feeds the lower clouds over the Southern Ocean, was free from aerosol particles produced by human activity -- including burning fossil fuels, planting certain crops, fertilizer production, and wastewater disposal -- or transported from other countries around the world.

Air pollution is caused by aerosols, which are solid and liquid particles and gases that are suspended in the air.

Researchers decided to study what was in the air, and where it came from, using bacteria in the air as a diagnostic tool to infer the properties of the lower atmosphere.

Research scientist and co-author of the study Thomas Hill explained that "the aerosols controlling the properties of SO (Southern Ocean) clouds are strongly linked to ocean biological processes, and that Antarctica appears to be isolated from southward dispersal of microorganisms and nutrient deposition from southern continents," he said in a statement.

"Overall, it suggests that the SO is one of very few places on Earth that has been minimally affected by anthropogenic activities," he added.



Scientists say they have found the cleanest air on earth

Scientists sampled the air in the marine boundary level -- the part of the atmosphere that has direct contact with the ocean -- while aboard a research boat traveling south to the Antarctic ice edge from Tasmania, Australia. Scientists then examined the composition of airborne microbes, which are found in the atmosphere and often dispersed thousands of kilometers by the wind.

Using DNA sequencing, source tracking and wind back trajectories scientist and first author Jun Uetake found that the microbes' origins were from the ocean.

From the bacterial composition of the microbes, researchers concluded that aerosols from distant land masses and human activities, such as pollution or soil emissions caused by land use change, were not traveling south and into the air.

Scientists say that the results show a stark difference to all other studies from oceans both in the northern hemisphere and subtropics, which found that most microbes came from upwind continents.

In the study, published Monday in the Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences journal, scientists described the area as "truly pristine."

Air pollution is already a global public health crisis, and kills seven million people each year, according to the World Health Organization (WHO).

Studies have shown that air pollution increases the risk of heart disease, stroke and lung cancer.

More than 80% of people living in urban areas that monitor air pollution are exposed to air quality levels that exceed WHO guideline limits, the health organization said, and low- and middle-income countries suffer from the highest exposures.

However, as studies have shown, air pollution can cross geographical boundaries, and affect people hundreds of miles away from where it originated.



The sixth mass extinction is happening faster than expected. Scientists say it's our fault

By Ivana Kottasová, CNN

Published Jun 2, 2020 2:11:22 PM

<https://cnnphilippines.com/lifestyle/2020/6/2/sixth-mass-extinction.html>

(CNN) — The sixth mass extinction is not a worry for the future. It's [happening now, much faster](#) than previously expected, and it's [entirely our fault](#), according to a study published Monday.

Humans have already wiped out hundreds of species and pushed many more to the brink of extinction through wildlife trade, pollution, habitat loss and the use of toxic substances. But the findings published in the scientific journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences (PNAS) show that the rate at which species are dying out has accelerated in recent decades.

Gerardo Ceballos González, a professor of ecology at the National Autonomous University of Mexico and one of the authors of the study, said approximately 173 species went extinct between 2001 and 2014.

"173 species is 25 times more extinct species than you would expect under the normal, background, extinction rate," he told CNN in an email. He and his team found that in the past 100 years, more than 400 vertebrate species went extinct. In the normal course of evolution, such extinctions would have taken up to 10,000 years, they said.

Mass extinctions are just as severe as their name suggests. There have been five mass extinction events in the Earth's history, each wiping out between 70% and 95% of the species of plants, animals and microorganisms. The most recent, 66 million years ago, [saw dinosaurs disappear](#).

The past events were caused by catastrophic alterations of the environment, including massive volcanic eruptions or collision with an asteroid. The sixth mass extinction — the one happening now — is different: Scientists say it's caused by humans.

"It is entirely our fault," Ceballos González said.

Extinction breeds extinctions

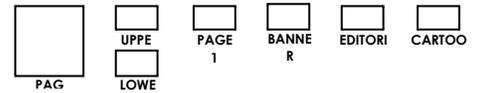
While life on Earth has bounced back after each of these events, it took millions of years to restore the number of species.

"Even though only an estimated 2% of all of the species that ever lived are alive today, the absolute number of species is greater now than ever before," the scientists said. "It was into such a biologically diverse world that we humans evolved, and such a world that we are destroying."

Ceballos González and his colleagues said many of the species that are on the brink of extinction are concentrated in the same regions being decimated by human impacts.



Strategic Communication
and Initiatives Service



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The sixth mass extinction is happening faster than expected. Scientists say it's our fault

When one species in the ecosystem disappears, it erodes the entire ecosystem and pushes other species toward annihilation. The researchers use amphibians as an example of this phenomena. Hundreds of species of frogs and toads are suffering population declines and extinctions because of the chytrid fungus disease, which is sometimes spread into new areas by humans. [Climate change](#) is likely making the issue worse.

This interdependency of different species is bad news for humans, too.

"When humanity exterminates populations and species of other creatures, it is sawing off the limb on which it is sitting, destroying working parts of our own life-support system," said Paul Ehrlich, a well known Stanford professor who wrote the controversial 1968 book "The Population Bomb" and is a co-author of the new study.

The researchers also said the current coronavirus crisis shows how the recklessness with which people treat the natural world can backfire badly. Many of the species that are endangered or at the brink of extinction are being decimated by wildlife trade.

"We believe that the recent coronavirus outbreak is linked to wildlife trade and consumption in China," they said. "The ban on wildlife trade imposed by the Chinese government could be a major conservation measure for many species on the brink, if imposed properly."

The researchers said this data highlights the urgency with which the world [needs to act](#).

Later this year, the UN Convention on Biological Diversity is expected to set new global goals to combat the ongoing biodiversity crisis in the coming decades.

At a 2010 summit in Japan, the United Nations set similar targets. But the world [failed to meet most of those 2020 goals](#) and now faces unprecedented extinction rates, threatened ecosystems and severe consequences for human survival.



Pandemic antibiotics surge will cause more deaths—WHO

Agence France-Presse June 02, 2020 - 06:47 PM

<https://cebudailynews.inquirer.net/315166/pandemic-antibiotics-surge-will-cause-more-deaths-who>

Increased antibiotics use in combating the COVID-19 pandemic will strengthen bacterial resistance and ultimately lead to more deaths during the crisis and beyond, the World Health Organization said Monday.

WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said a “worrying number” of bacterial infections were becoming increasingly resistant to the medicines traditionally used to treat them.

The UN health agency said it was concerned that the inappropriate use of antibiotics during the coronavirus crisis would further fuel the trend.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has led to increased use of antibiotics, which ultimately will lead to higher bacterial resistance rates that will impact the burden of disease and deaths during the pandemic and beyond,” Tedros told a virtual press conference from the WHO’s Geneva headquarters.

The WHO said only a small proportion of COVID-19 patients needed antibiotics to treat subsequent bacterial infections.

The organization has issued guidance to medics not to provide antibiotic therapy or prophylaxis to patients with mild COVID-19, or to patients with moderate illness without clinical suspicion of bacterial infection.

Tedros said the guidelines said should help tackle antimicrobial resistance while saving lives.

He called the threat of antimicrobial resistance “one of the most urgent challenges of our time”.

“It’s clear that the world is losing its ability to use critically important antimicrobial medicines,” he said.

[Highlighting inappropriate usage](#), he said there was an “overuse” of antibiotics in some countries, while in low-income states, such life-saving medicines were unavailable, “leading to needless suffering and death”.

Disease treatment disrupted

Meanwhile, the WHO said the prevention and treatment of non-communicable diseases (NCDs) had been severely disrupted since the COVID-19 pandemic began in December, following a survey of 155 countries.

“This situation is of significant concern because people living with NCDs are at higher risk of severe COVID-19-related illness and death,” it said.

The survey, during a three-week period in May, found that low-income countries were most affected.



Pandemic antibiotics surge will cause more deaths—WHO

Some 53 percent of countries reported partially or completely disrupted services for hypertension treatment.

The figure was 49 percent for diabetes treatment and related complications; 42 percent for cancer treatment, and 31 percent for cardiovascular emergencies.

The most common reasons for discontinuing or reducing services were cancellations of planned treatments, a decrease in available public transport and a lack of staff because health workers had been reassigned to COVID-19 treatment.

Mass gatherings risk

The WHO warned about the dangers of mass gatherings, as protests rage in the United States and elsewhere over the killing of unarmed black man George Floyd, and as sports events begin a tentative resumption.

“Mass gatherings have the potential to act as super-spreading events,” warned Tedros, highlighting WHO guidance designed to help organizers determine how such events can be held safely.

The WHO was asked about the street protests in the United States and the fear that they could increase the spread of the virus.

“With increasing social mixing and people coming together, particularly in areas if the virus is not under control, that close contact between people can pose a risk,” answered the organization’s COVID-19 technical lead Maria Van Kerkhove — stressing that she was speaking about mass gatherings in general.

People planning mass events should undertake a “very serious, rigorous risk assessment”, she said.

“Physical distancing remains a very important aspect to control and suppression of transmission of COVID-19. This is not over yet,” the expert said.

S.America yet to peak

The novel coronavirus has infected at least 6.2 million people and killed more than 373,000 since the outbreak first emerged in China last December, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP.

WHO emergencies director Michael Ryan said that infection rates in South America were “far from stable” following a rapid increase in cases.

Brazil, Peru, Chile and Mexico were among the 10 reporting the highest new number of cases in the past 24 hours.

“Central and South America in particular have very much become the intense zones for transmission of this virus,” Ryan said.

“I don’t believe we have reached the peak in that transmission and, at this point, I cannot predict when we will.”



Scientists hunt pandemic hotspots in race to test vaccines

Published June 2, 2020 5:44am

By KATE KELLAND, JULIE STEENHUYSEN, Reuters

<https://www.gmanetwork.com/news/scitech/science/740753/scientists-hunt-pandemic-hotspots-in-race-to-test-vaccines/story/>

LONDON/CHICAGO - The first wave of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic may be waning. For vaccine developers, that could be a problem.

Scientists in Europe and the United States say the relative success of draconian lockdown and social distancing policies in some areas and countries means virus transmission rates may be at such low levels that there is not enough disease circulating to truly test potential vaccines.

They may need to look further afield, to pandemic hotspots in Africa and Latin America, to get convincing results.

“Ironically, if we’re really successful using public health measures to stamp out the hot spots of viral infection, it will be harder to test the vaccine,” said Francis Collins, director of the National Institutes of Health in the United States.

A vaccine is seen as essential to ending a pandemic that has killed nearly 370,000 people and infected more than 6 million so far, with world leaders looking at inoculation as the only real way to restart their stalled economies.

But running large-scale clinical trials of potential vaccines against a completely new disease at speed is complex, scientists say. Showing efficacy in those trials during a fluctuating pandemic adds extra difficulty - and doing so when outbreaks are waning makes it harder still.

“For this to work, people need to have a risk of infection in the community. If the virus has been temporarily cleared out, then the exercise is futile,” said Ayfer Ali, an expert in drug repurposing at Britain’s Warwick Business School.

“The solution is to move to areas where the infection is being spread widely in the community – that would be countries like Brazil and Mexico at the moment.”

Vaccine trials work by randomly dividing people into a treatment group and a control group, with the treatment group getting the experimental trial vaccine and the control group getting a placebo.

All participants go back into the community where the disease is circulating, and subsequent rates of infection are compared. The hope is that infections within the control group will be higher, showing the trial vaccine is protecting the other group



Scientists hunt pandemic hotspots in race to test vaccines

With COVID-19 epidemics in Britain, mainland Europe and the United States coming down from their peak and transmission rates of the coronavirus dropping, a key task for scientists is to chase fluctuating outbreaks and seek volunteers in sections of populations or in countries where the disease is still rife.

A similar problem emerged when scientists were seeking to test potential new vaccines against Ebola during the vast 2014 outbreak in West Africa. Then, drugmakers were forced to drastically scale back plans for large trials because their vaccines were only test-ready late in the epidemic when case numbers were dwindling.

LOOKING ABROAD

Among the first COVID-19 vaccines to move into Phase II, or mid-stage, trials is one from the US biotech company Moderna Inc (MRNA.O). Another is being developed by scientists at Oxford University supported by AstraZeneca Plc (AZN.L). The United States in July is planning to launch vast efficacy trials of 20,000 to 30,000 volunteers per vaccine.

Collins said US health officials will tap government and industry clinical trial networks in the United States first and use mapping to detect where the virus is most active. They will also consider looking abroad if domestic disease rates fall too far, he said.

The US government has experience in Africa of testing vaccines against HIV, malaria and tuberculosis.

“Africa is now beginning to experience lots of cases of COVID-19. We might very well want to run part of the trial there, where we know we can collect the data effectively,” said Collins.

Adrian Hill, director of the Jenner Institute at Britain’s Oxford University which has teamed up with AstraZeneca, started mid-stage trials last month which he said would aim to recruit around 10,000 people in Britain.

He told Reuters that with COVID-19 disease transmission rates dropping in the UK there is a possibility that the trial would have to be halted if they didn’t have enough infections to yield a result.

“That would be disappointing, and at the moment it’s unlikely, but it’s certainly a possibility,” Hill said.



Scientists hunt pandemic hotspots in race to test vaccines

CHALLENGE TRIALS

Underscoring the level of concern in the industry, AstraZeneca's chief executive Pascal Soriot said his researchers were even contemplating running so-called "challenge" trials - where participants would be given the experimental vaccine and then deliberately infected with COVID-19 to see if it worked. Such trials are rare, high risk and hard to get ethical approval for.

As a more practical and swifter option, Soriot and others are looking to Brazil and other countries in South America, as well as parts of Africa where COVID-19 outbreaks are still growing and peaking, as ripe drug and vaccine testing grounds.

Brazil's Health Ministry said it is in talks with various vaccine developers, including Moderna and the University of Oxford, about participating in clinical trials. The ministry said its goal was to provide access to a vaccine for Brazilians "in the shortest possible time."

Difficulty recruiting candidates for mid-stage vaccine trials in countries where the COVID-19 pandemic is on the wane may be foreshadowed by the experience of doctors seeking infected cases for the World Health Organization's multi-country Solidarity trial of potential treatments for the disease - including the generic drug hydroxychloroquine and Gilead's (GILD.O) remdesivir.

In the Swiss portion of that trial, for instance, it took three weeks to get all of the ethical and regulatory approvals from authorities, and another week to get all the drugs, said Oriol Manuel, an infectious disease expert and national coordinator of the Solidarity study in Switzerland.

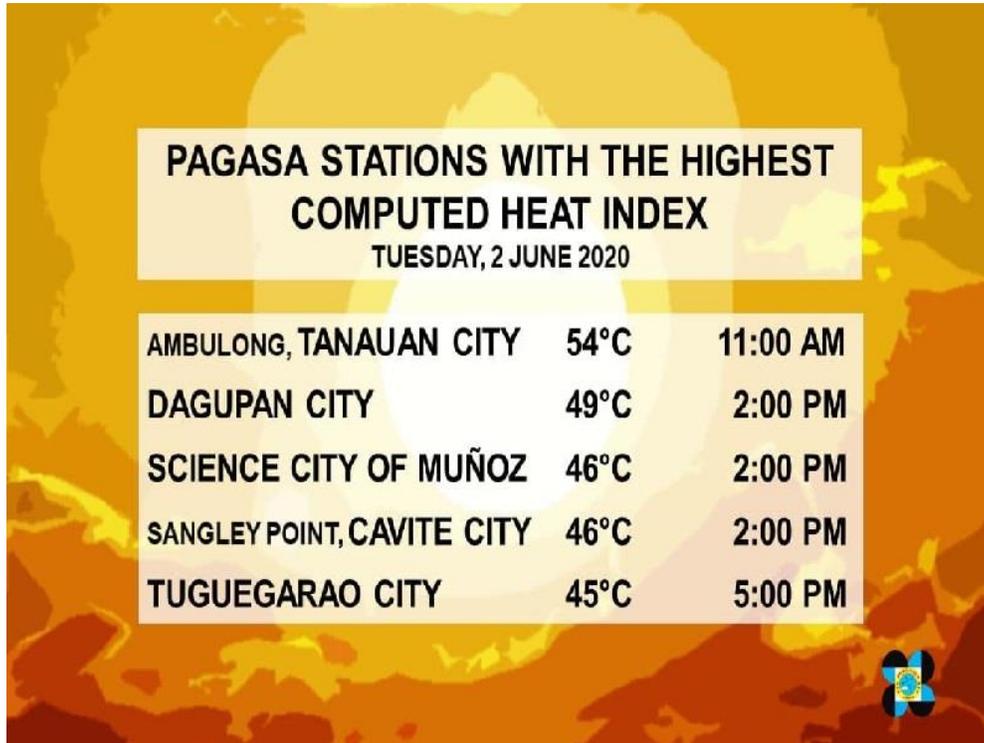
"We were able to enroll some patients in (one trial centre in) Lausanne," Manuel said. "But when all centres were ready, the cases were fortunately disappearing." -- Reuters



Heat index sa Ambulong, Tanauan City pumalo sa 54 degrees Celsius, June 2

By Angellic Jordan June 02, 2020 - 09:14 PM SHARE(S):

<https://radyo.inquirer.net/246941/heat-index-sa-ambulong-tanauan-city-pumalo-sa-54-degrees-celsius-june-2>



Matinding init at alinsangang panahon ang naramdaman sa malaking bahagi ng bansa. Ayon sa PAGASA, limang synoptic stations nila ang nakapagtala ng pinakamaalinsangang panahon sa araw ng Martes (June 2).

Pumalo sa 54 degrees Celsius ang heat index sa Ambulong, Tanauan City bandang 11:00 ng umaga.

Narito naman ang heat index sa iba pang lugar:

- Dagupan City – 49 degrees Celsius bandang 2:00 ng hapon
- Science City of Muñoz – 46 degrees Celsius bandang 2:00 ng hapon
- Sangley Point, Cavite City – 46 degrees Celsius bandang 2:00 ng hapon
- Tuguegarao City – 45 degrees Celsius bandang 5:00 ng hapon

Ayon sa PAGASA, mapanganib ang posibleng idulot kapag umabot sa 41 hanggang 54 degrees ang heat index sa isang lugar.

Maaari anilang maging sanhi ito ng heat cramps at heat exhaustion na posibleng mauwi sa heat stroke.

Dahil dito, payo ng PAGASA, dalasan ang pag-inom ng tubig at iwasan ang physical activity tuwing tanghali at hapon.



Magnitude-4.0 quake hits waters off Davao Occidental

ABS-CBN News

Posted at Jun 02 2020 05:37 PM

https://news.abs-cbn.com/news/06/02/20/magnitude-40-quake-hits-waters-off-davao-occidental?fbclid=IwAR0oM3Uaj9_Dgt3Q4lg5prMtABjw1Ce5UuRYo7fDJHSA1Q3HEr5URh3j0VY



Courtesy of the Phivolcs website

MANILA — A 4.0-magnitude earthquake hit the waters off Davao Occidental on Tuesday afternoon, according to the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology.

The tremor struck at 3:12 p.m., approximately 431 kilometers southeast of Jose Abad Santos town, with a depth of 44 km.

The temblor was tectonic in origin.

The Phivolcs said aftershocks and damage to structure are not expected.