

Economic losses from COVID-19 onslaught hit P700 billion

MANILA, Philippines — Economic damage from the coronavirus outbreak and lockdowns enforced to control the contagion have reached P700 billion, Acting Socioeconomic Planning Secretary Karl Kendrick Chua said on Thursday.

The assessment is based on around 244,000 answers to two surveys of consumers and enterprises collated by the National Economic and Development Authority (NEDA) last month. The goal was to gauge how the pandemic, and government efforts to contain it, have affected households and businesses.

“We are not projecting, in general, a positive economic



growth for 2020,” Chua told an online forum organized by the Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines on Thursday.

“We would rather be conservative and flatten the curve so when we open up the economy, we won’t have regrets,” he added.

In a text message, Budget Undersecretary Laura

Pascua said economic managers are set to release next week a new set of macroeconomic targets, which have undergone several tinkering as a result of evolving distractions from the coronavirus disease-2019 (COVID-19).

Apart from taking into ac

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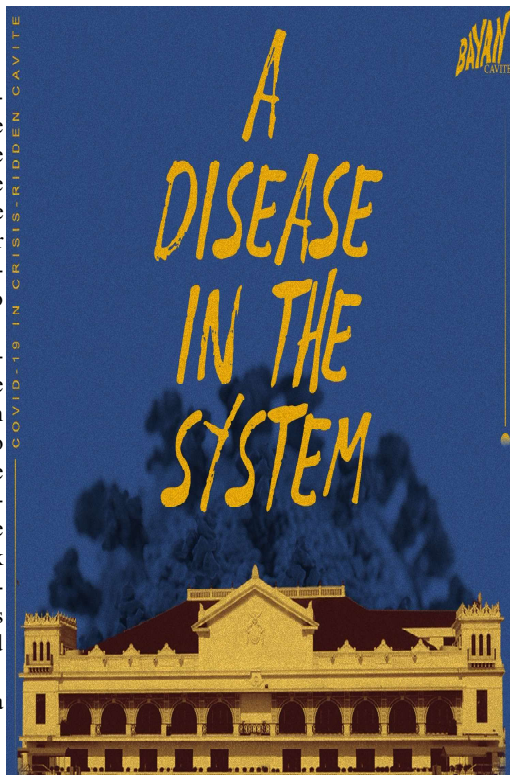
COVID-19 IN CRISIS-RIDDEN CAVITE

A month into the imposition of enhanced community quarantine in Luzon due to the covid19 national health emergency, the suffering of Caviteños have gone from worse to worst. Even the provincial chief executive has expressed concern for the lack of aid for the general populace. With the enforced quarantine being extended for yet another two weeks, ‘worst’ is going to be even harsher.

When the covid19 outbreak in the Philippines began, Cavite was still suffering the impact of the Taal volcano eruption. Although it has incurred less damages as compared to the province of Batangas, the epicenter of the Taal eruption disaster, many farms and businesses were severely affected, and there have been cases of temporary closures and work suspensions. These phenomena severely limited the income of Caviteños from all walks of life, particularly those from the upland towns.

However, “there is no such thing as a natural disaster,” say earth scientists. In the

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PH airlines ask Congress to enact financial support



Local airlines asked Congress for financial support as the industry is running out of cash amid the coronavirus disease 2019 outbreak.

“The leaders of Congress and the chair of economic affairs and transportation committee initiated a stimuli bill for the economy. We have written in the past few weeks both the executive and legislative branch to request for financial support

to the transport sector like the airline industry,” Air Carriers Association of the Philippines vice president and executive director Robert Lim said in a text message.

“We are just one sector that is presenting its needs to a congressional initiative,” Lim said.

The House of Representatives earlier proposed a P370-billion economic stimulus package to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19

pandemic on the economy.

Lim said the average monthly fixed cost of ACAP carriers reached P7 billion, and “without revenue means, that is the monthly losses.”

“On top of that, the running total of claims for ticket refund is around P5 billion. This is a major problem because airlines have no cash,” he said.

ACAP members include Philippines Airlines Inc., Air Philippines Corp., Cebu Air Inc. and Philippines AirAsia Inc.

ACAP earlier requested the government to provide a credit guarantee scheme, not cash that guar

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Shippers urged to decongest ports during ECQ period

MANILA – The Joint Task Force Corona Virus Shield (JTF CV Shield) on Sunday urged shippers and consignees to take advantage of the traffic-free and almost car-less major thoroughfares across Luzon by releasing their container vans to decongest all the ports especially in Metro Manila.

JFT JV Shield commander, Lt. Gen. Guillermo Eleazar said the 30-day enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) imposed to contain the coronavirus disease (Covid-19) is the most ideal



time for shippers and consignees to bring their containers back to the warehouses.

“We have designated special lanes and we are also giving special consideration to cargo vehicles in order to

ensure unnecessary and redundant inspections,” Eleazar said in a statement. “This is the right time for the shippers and consignees to move out their shipments from the ports and eventu

See Page 2...

CAVITE LOCKDOWN EXTENDED UNTIL MAY 15, 2020

Shippers.... *from page 1....*

ally lead to the decongestion of our ports.”

PNP chief, Gen. Archie Gamboa earlier approved the deployment of the PNP-Highway Patrol Group (HPG) personnel to secure cargo vehicles along major thoroughfares.

Under Gamboa's directive, Eleazar said HPG personnel will set up Dedicated Control Points (DCPs) along major thoroughfares where cargo vehicles will be inspected in the remaining ECQ implementation.

“With the present traffic situation especially in Metro Manila, we in the JTF CV Shield believe that this should serve as an encouragement for the haulers, owners and consignees to transport the shipments out of the ports,” Eleazar said.

In coordination with the Department of Transportation and Philippine Ports Authority, Eleazar assured unhampered movement of cargo trucks coming out of the ports, citing the existing

protocol crafted by the Inter Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) in handling cargo vehicles.

“The inspection of these cargo vehicles will only be done at the Dedicated Control Points, and if only necessary,” said Eleazar.

Eleazar said the ports decongestion would bring back the normal operations particularly at the Manila International Container Terminal and the Manila South Harbor once the ECQ is lifted on April 12.

The JTF CV Shield is the enforcement arm of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases. It is composed of the PNP, Armed Forces of the Philippines, Philippine Coast Guard and the Bureau of Fire Protection.

In 2014, congestion in Metro Manila ports became a huge problem that resulted in the PHP2.5 billion daily loss to the economy, according to the House of Transportation Committee. (PNA)

Mag-enroll sa De La Salle Health Sciences Institute

Payo ni Doc Willie Ong

KAMAKAILAN, naimbita ako ni Dr. Charles Yu para magsalita sa graduation ng De La Salle Health Sciences. Nagulat ako sa laki ng pagsigla at pag-unlad ng De La Salle Health Sciences na nakabase sa Cavite.

Mayroon silang 800 graduates ngayong taon. Ang daming mga bagong tapos na dalubhasa. May bagong doktor, nars, physical therapist, at medical radiation technologist. Napakaganda ng preparasyon na ginawa ng De La Salle sa graduation. Sa PICC pa ito ginanap at talagang bongga ang dating.

Nag-graduate ako sa De La Salle College of Medicine noong 1992. Dati-rati ay hindi pa ganito kalaki ang ospital. Ngayon ay marami nang bagong building, bagong kagamitan at bagong kurso. Ayon din kay Dr. Romeo Ariniego, ang aking guro at idol na cardiologist, gagawa sila ng limang palapag na modernong library para sa mga estudyante.

Nasabi rin ni Dr. Ariniego na malaki ang naitulong ng De La Salle Brothers sa pagpapaganda at pagtaas ng antas ng edukasyon sa De La Salle Health Sciences. Ang mabait na President ngayon ay si Brother Augustine Boquer.

Masuwerte talaga ang mga bata na makapag-aaral sa De La Salle. Nadarama ko ang saya at pagkakuntento ng mga magulang ng graduates. Kaya kung may kamag-anak kayong balak mag-nars o mag-doktor, mag-enroll na po sa De La Salle.

Salamat sa mga tanyag na guro at doktor ng DLSU:

PH airlines.... *from page 1....*

antees the banking sector's loans and credit lines, most of which are secured with collaterals, to remove its aversion to the poor credit risk of the airline industry under the current operating environment.

The group asked a long-term facility at attractive rates or a guaranty facility to enable airlines to restructure debt to a more manageable level and give them leverage to negotiate better terms from aircraft lessors, lenders and creditors to ensure a successful recovery plan.

The International Air Transport Association estimated that the COVID-19 pandemic could cost 548,300 jobs in the country and reduce airlines' revenues by \$4.48 billion this year.

It could also affect travel demand by as many as 28.85 million passengers from an earlier projection of 21.87 million passengers, according to IATA.

COVID-19.... *from page 1....*

same way, there is no such thing as a novel pandemic, particularly in contemporary society. Many scientists have foreseen and warned about the likelihood of the spread of a coronavirus disease. The pandemic could have been averted; or at least, its impact could have been mitigated — but big interests chose to do “business as usual”.

More concretely for Caviteños, social safety nets and other reforms could have helped them weather unwanted

events like volcanic eruptions or viral pathogens. For these hazards only reveal and amplify existing vulnerabilities, they are not the root cause of the suffering of Caviteños. The spread of covid-19, and the extreme hunger and oppression that we suffer today are results of systemic and historical factors that go way beyond 2020 or 2019.

In this series, we are going to discuss the state of Cavite when covid-19 arrived, and the impact of the disease and the enhanced community quarantine

on the people. For now, let us discuss emergency response and disaster recovery.

For a hazard-prone country like the Philippines, it is only fair for citizens to expect and demand efficient and inspiring leadership from the government who by now should have been already extra-ordinarily adept in emergency situations and experts in disaster prevention.

Let it not be forgotten: We could have saved ourselves from an epidemic had the Duterte government listened to public clamor for early travel restrictions in the archipelago. Now, with the regime's ineptness and inutility, we have arrived at a situation when the lockdown has to be extended because the epidemic is yet to peak.

However, the administration still doesn't seem to feel the need to conduct mass testing, rigorous contact tracing, and isolation of confirmed and suspected cases. Instead, it pre-occupies itself with attempting to placate public outrage by insulting us with fake news.

Meanwhile, some local governments have been creative in looking for ways to humiliate arrested violators of the

quarantine guidelines. In Governor Jonvic Remulla's social media account, the list of the number of arrest per town is dubbed “Goldel Palakol Awards”.

As of April 11, Cavite has at least 103 positive, suspected, 18 recovery and 16 morbidity cases of the disease. This is the record now that mass testing has not yet been conducted; the numbers are certain to spike when mass testing begins.

When the people clamored for a travel ban, we were already aware that the Philippine healthcare system is unprepared and could easily be overwhelmed. Our fear has been confirmed many times over.

Were it not for the heroism of our healthcare workers, who risked the lack of personal protective equipment to attend to covid-19 patients and suspected cases — only God knows how even more far-reaching the problem could have been.

But let it be clear, the problem has been acute enough. For weeks, we hear news of death of doctors and nurses, quarantine of hundreds of healthworkers, and piling up of bodies of deceased covid-19

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MEMBER

ERNA M. BALAGTAS
Publisher

DIOSAN MARUAL
KCEE NACION
Marketing & Circulation Manager

DIOSDADO ARIEL F. ALTO, JR.
Editor-In-Chief

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Labor *from page 8....*

social media posts about how the quarantine affected the life of the ordinary workers and their family because their workplaces were forced to either limit or shut down the business operations," he added.

Labor Day

But workers, including those who are in unions, have had their protest actions dispersed even before the COVID-19 pandemic restricted movement and led to suspensions and changes in work schedules.

In February, ten striking workers of Cosmic Enterprises in Caloocan City were detained after their demonstrations were broken up by police and security personnel. The same happened to 23 workers of Regent Foods Corp. who were picketing in November 2019.

Labor groups slam violent dispersal, detention

of striking workers in Caloocan | Pasig Mayor Vico Sotto urges food company to drop charges vs striking workers

"No other state agency, no lower court or even a higher court can interfere labor disputes. So interference by police is against regulations," Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino told Philstar.com in February.

"That's harassment. The strike was legitimate, the demands were legitimate," they added.

This time last year, thousands of workers marched to Mendiola near the Palace to demand a wage increase, job security and an end to labor contractualization. Ending "endo", or the practice of hiring workers for short-term contracts, was among campaign promises that pro-

P700 billion..... *from page 1....*

count the damage from COVID-19, economic officials also had to amend assumptions to consider the rebasing of gross domestic product (GDP) data to 2018 prices from the old 2000 prices.

Originally, the Duterte administration targeted to grow the economy by 6.5-7.5% this year before the pandemic messed with its plans. On Thursday, Chua provided journalists a rough calculation of zero growth for the

ended President Duterte to his position. For many, Labor Day has come to mark a centuries-long struggle for the upliftment and empowerment of the working class. Labor unions, including SENTRO and Bukluran ng Manggagawang Pilipino (BMP), said they plan to hold online rallies and noise barrages in light of the enhanced community quaran-

entire year, which roughly translates to P1.1 trillion in economic costs from the coronavirus.

"The only thing we are sure of is that we're not really sure of the trajectory of the economy," Chua said.

While for the first quarter the economy may still surprise on the upside, Chua said the health crisis already dented chances of growth for the rest of the year. "In fact, it can be slightly negative," he said.

Last March 17, President Duterte placed Luzon under an enhanced community quarantine (ECQ), a move

that effectively paralyzed business and commerce in the main island that generates 70% of the country's economic output.

The quarantine had since been extended until May 15 for "high-risk" places including Metro Manila and key cities like Cebu and Davao City, while other areas like Davao de Oro will transition to a more relaxed general community quarantine (GCQ).

As some businesses in areas with GCQ status prepare to resume operations, Chua is optimistic that the economy will bounce back by June. "That I think is a very clear indication that we are getting towards some

end of the tunnel," he said.

Back at the finance department where he served as undersecretary for nearly four years, Chua helped craft the government's four-pillar economic plan, a blueprint of immediate government responses to the virus' impact.

He is now tasked to develop another program, one that will outline the Duterte government's over-all economic recovery plan once the outbreak comes into its culmination. Under the program, Chua is carefully balancing the need for the economy to restart while avoiding a potential second wave of infection.

"Some people are basically saying we can lift the ECQ

300 Filipino workers return from Kuwait

MORE than 300 Filipino workers have come home from Kuwait amid the coronavirus disease 2019 pandemic that has sickened 1.2 million and killed about 65,000 people worldwide, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said on Sunday.

"Sunday morning's flight is one of many mounted flights of Kuwait Airways commissioned to bring home hundreds of Overseas Filipino Workers from the Gulf State who have benefited from the ongoing amnesty program of the Kuwaiti government," DFA said in a statement. The program allowed OFWs there to avail themselves of flights to the Philippines without paying legal fines.

The Bureau of Quarantine enforced health measures upon disembarkation.

There were 417 confirmed cases in Kuwait and no record of death as of April 4, according to the World Health Organization.

Meanwhile, Foreign Affairs Undersecretary Brigido D. Dulay said 223 Filipino seafarers from cruise ships docked in the US arrived home on Saturday.

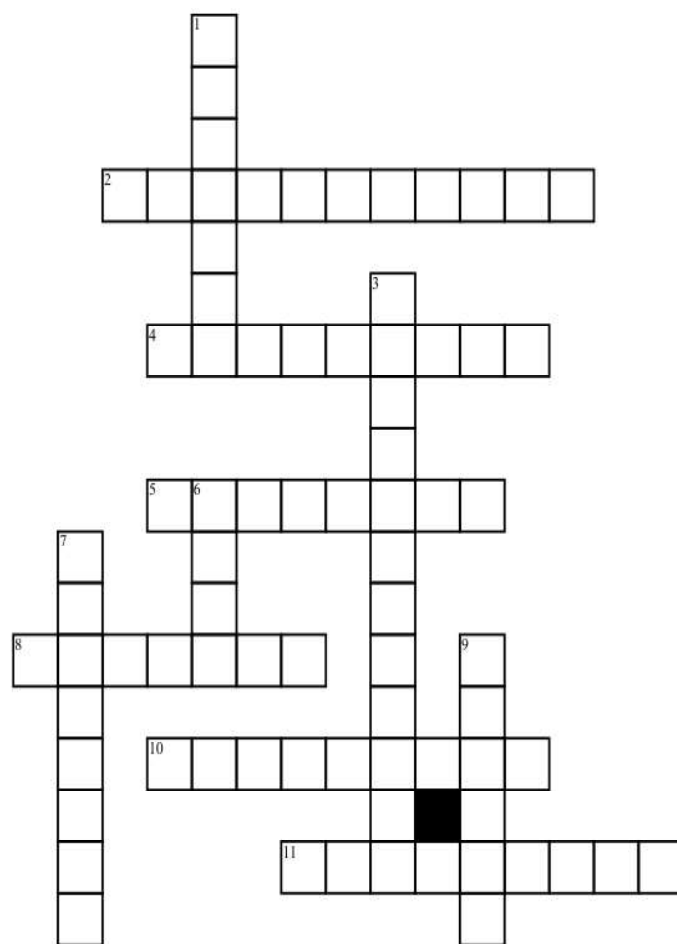
"As usual, DFA's repatriation team was on hand to assist and welcome them home, lockdown or not," he said in a social media post.

Foreign Affairs Assistant Secretary Eduardo Martin R. Meñez said 4,349 seamen from cruise ships have come home since the outbreak.

They included 881 crewmen from the US and 370 others from Italy who came home last week.

DFA is working on the return of about 4,600 Filipinos in the next two weeks, according to a presidential palace report to Congress on March 30. — Charmaine A. Tadalán

CROSSWORDS!!



Across

- 2. A solid outside structure
- 4. Flexible limbs
- 5. Mating with one male and many females
- 8. The part on an insect's head that feels humidity and the weather
- 10. Molecules moving from a very concentrated area to one less concentrated
- 11. Mating between one female and many males

Down

- 1. The end section of an insect's body
- 3. The insect's heart
- 6. Insects kind of circulatory system
- 7. Mating between one male and one female
- 9. The middle section of the insect's body

This is not the time': Labor groups warned against holding May 1 protests



MANILA, Philippines — Ranking members of the national police Thursday urged workers' groups to hold off on holding protests on Labor Day due to the threat of the novel coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19).

Police Lt. Gen. Guillermo Eleazar, who heads the enforcement arm of the country's COVID-19 task force, said in a statement issued Thursday afternoon that works should instead focus on coming up with plans to help prepare workers for the "new normal."

In a separate public address on Thursday, Police Lt. Gen. Archie Gamboa,

PNP chief, said that the national police is anticipating that demonstrations would be held and has plans in place to address them.

"We are aware of plans by militant, cause-oriented groups to stage public assembly and mass actions in several venues on May 1 in commemoration of Labor Day," Gamboa said in his public address.

"Much as we respect their right to peaceful assembly, out of the exigency of the health crisis, we beg to discourage them for their own safety and in the best interest of public health."

The chief of police also said that the national police does have counter-

measures in place, although he opted not to specify what these were.

"The government has always been respectful and tolerant of the conduct of protest actions. We hope that labor groups and our workers will realize that this is not the time to hold protest action, not under this situation," Eleazar said for his part.

Employers may defer Labor Day holiday pay

"We fully understand that it is the labor sector which was severely affected by the government's strict measures against coronavirus infection. Every day, we see news reports and

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Manila's top officials donate P4.7M worth of salaries to PGH

Manila's top officials will donate their entire salaries for the month of April to the Philippine General Hospital (PGH), one of the country's COVID-19 referral hospitals.

In a statement posted at the Facebook Page of the Manila Public Information Office, Manila Mayor Isko Moreno Domagoso said that about P4.7 million worth of their salaries combined will be turned over to the PGH.

Aside from him, those who agreed to donate their salaries were Vice Mayor Honey Lacuna-Pangan, and all of the city's councilors.

"In our own little way, sana po ay makatulong po ito sa pagpapalakas ng kakayanan ng ating mga frontliner, particularly sa health sector (In our own little way, we hope this could help in boosting the capabilities of our frontliners, par-

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JONYC REMULLA
GOVERNOR

COVID-19 CAVITE UPDATE

As of March 17 ' 2020, I can confirm that there are 2 additional positive Covid-19 Cases in Cavite, bringing the total number of confirmed cases in Cavite to four.

#3 is 25 years old, female, from Dasmariñas.

She is currently confined in a private hospital at Taguig.

#4 is 64 years old, female from Imus.

She is currently confined in a hospital at Pasig.

* a PUI from Noveleta with a history of travel to Macao, is negative.

PLEASE TAKE THE QUARANTINE PROCEDURES SERIOUSLY.
We are doing our best in order for the Covid-19 to be contained.



ticularly those in the health sector", the statement quoted Domagoso as saying.

As of latest count, the city of Manila has 156 confirmed COVID-19 cases, with 14 recoveries and 25 deaths. Persons under investigation or PUIs, meanwhile, is at 395.

(Eagle News Service)

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