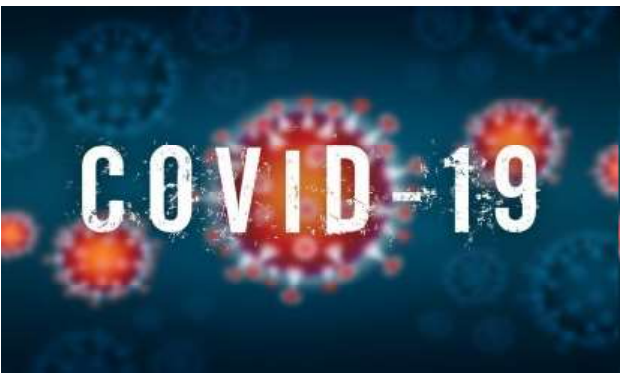


Gov't targets to reach 1M Covid-19 tests by July

MANILA – The government targets to reach one million tests for coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) by next month, National Policy Against Covid-19 Deputy Chief Implementer Vivencio Dizon said.



In a Palace briefing Thursday, Dizon said the country now has the capacity to test more persons as over one million test kits arrived last weekend.

The expanded targeted community testing will focus especially on Metro Manila, Central Luzon, Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal, Quezon), Cebu, and Davao, he said.

As of June 23, actual Covid-19 tests already reached 612,571 from just

17,414 tests last March, he said.

Dizon reiterated the country's daily testing capacity has improved since the Covid-19 outbreak in March with the increased number of testing laboratories and enough supply of test kits.

From a 2,000 test capacity in a day in March, the country has a capacity to do 51,302 tests per day as of June 19, he added.

The country already hit its 50,000 testing capac-

ity target earlier than end-June 2020.

He said the country now also has 66 testing laboratories.

Dizon said a high number of confirmed Covid-19 cases will be expected in the coming weeks as the government accelerates the testing activities.

"This is important that our public should understand that while we are increasing our testing capacity, we will find more positive cases; but the positivity rate is declining," he said in Filipino.

Dizon said the Covid-19 positivity rate in the Philippines fell from 20 percent during the period when testing was limited, to nearly 5 percent to date.

Positivity rate is the percentage of people con-

See page 2...

31 Manila City villages placed under hard lockdown

MANILA – A total of 31 barangays will be placed under a 48-hour lockdown in the city of Manila starting 12 a.m. Saturday (July 4) until 11:59 p.m. Sunday (July 5) due to the high coronavirus disease (Covid-19) cases in these areas.

Manila Mayor Francisco "Isko Moreno" Domagoso on Tuesday signed Executive Order No. 31 imposing an enhanced community quarantine on the 31 barangays "in order to contain the spread of and mitigate any adverse effects of Covid-19" and for "purposes of disease surveillance, verification or testing and rapid risk assessment."

The move came after the Manila Health Department submitted a list of 31 barangays in the city with three or more Covid-19 positive cases as of June 15-29.

"On 29 June 2020, Manila Health Department issued a certification verifying that there are a total number of 147 Covid-19 positive cases



in the said 31 barangays," the EO said.

The areas to be placed under hard lockdown are as follows: District 1- barangays 20, 41, 51, 56, 66, 96, 97, 101, 106, 116, 118, 120, 128 and 129.

Under District 2: barangays 163, 173, 180, 185, and 215.

For District 3: barangays 275, 310, 343, and 380.

For District 5: barangays 649, 724, 766, 775 and 811, and for District 6: barangays 836, 846, and 847.

Domagoso reiterated anew that the local government unit is empowered by the national

See page 7...

World Bank flags unmet goals in NCR wastewater project

THE project period for a Metro Manila wastewater collection and treatment management system is due to expire Tuesday with its main backer, the World Bank, noting that the project has yet to meet targets for the number of people reached, among others.



According to a World Bank implementation status and results report, the project is scheduled to close on June 30. It took in \$275 million worth of financing starting in October 2012, with the original project expiration set for June 30, 2017 but was extended to June 30, 2020.

The bank gave a "moderate" overall risk rating for the project and issued a "moderately satisfactory" grade for the implementing agencies in as far as the objectives that were met.

It gave a "moderately

unsatisfactory" evaluation of overall implementation progress.

As of the end of May, the bank said Maynilad Water Services, Inc., one of the implementing agencies, exceeded its objective in reducing biological oxygen demand (BOD) in collected wastewater, after covering 2,484 tons per year, or well above its target of 1,848 tons per year.

Manila Water Company, Inc. (MWCI), the other implementing agency, partially achieved the BOD target at 76% completion rate as of May 31, with around 94% completion expected by September, according to the World Bank.

In terms of the number of people benefitting, it said the entire project has reached

72% of the 2.4 million target, with MWCI exceeding its goal of 1.2 million and Maynilad reaching 473,076 out of its 1.3 million goal.

"It is projected that with the completion of Cupang STP (sewerage treatment plant) by third or fourth quarter of 2020, an additional 13% (will be added to) the project's total wastewater treatment capacity and an additional 353,846 people (will benefit) from the project," it said.

It said the two water concessionaires exceeded their targets on private capital mobilized, an indicator of counterpart-funding availability.

Both companies failed

See page 2...

Data shows high price of fertilizer prior to centralized bidding

MANILA – Prior to the centralized bidding of fertilizers, government data showed that the average price of urea in the country's 14 regions was higher than PHP1,000 per 50-kilogram (kg) bag.

Based on data released by the Fertilizer and Pesticide Authority (FPA), the national average price of urea fertilizer from January to June 2020 were as follows: PHP1,080.85 (January), PHP1,066.43 (February), PHP1,058.62 (March), PHP1,046.80 (April), PHP1,028.33 (May), and PHP1,029.98 (June).

From February to April 2020, the months immediately preceding the centralized bidding, the national average price of urea fertilizer was PHP1,051 per bag.

In a virtual press briefing last week, Agriculture Secretary William Dar said the centralized bidding of fertilizers conducted by the DA last April was above-board, transparent and yielded the best price for government at less than PHP1,000 per bag.

In fact, Dar said, the centralized bidding influenced the retail prices of urea to drop even further in recent weeks.

"The downward trend of urea prices shows that we're on the right track in centralizing the bidding process, thus providing our farmers nationwide with affordable and reasonably-priced fertilizers," he added.

Debunking claims of alleged overpricing, DA Assistant Secretary Noel Reyes said the approved budget for the contract (ABC) for the fertilizer bidding of the DA Rice Program was based on

the month-long price trends collated by the FPA and the Philippine Statistics Authority (PSA).

The same price trend was noted in retail outlets across the Philippines based on copies of actual receipts and invoices presented to the media.

After the first and second biddings, 1.8 million bags were awarded to two companies, namely: La Filipina Uy Gongco Corp. and Atlas Fertilizer, offering urea at prices ranging from PHP900 to PHP995 per 50-kg bag.

Per delivery schedule set by the DA Rice Program, the winning suppliers will distribute the fertilizers directly to municipalities covered under the Rice Resilience Project (RRP) in four lots, corresponding to four regions: Central Luzon, Calabarzon (Cavite, Laguna, Batangas, Rizal and Quezon), Western Visayas, and Central Visayas.

Last June 5, Reyes said 14 prospective suppliers attended DA's pre-bid conference for the next 26 fertilizer lots, but only four submitted bid proposals. Of the four, only three were considered. The fourth bidder was disqualified due to lack of required bid documents.

The DA-BAC (Bids and Awards Committee) expects to complete the evaluation of the three bidders and declare the winners by July



9.

The winners must deliver 50 percent of the urea fertilizers per lot not later than July 15, 2020, and the rest not later than July 31, 2020.

There are still 18 lots up for bidding.

For transparency, the DA's bidding process is live-streamed via the official DA Facebook page.

"All we want is to encourage other qualified industry players to participate and thus maintain the spirit of competitiveness -- to provide our farmers quality and reasonably-priced fertilizers that will enable them to increase their crop yields and incomes," Reyes said.

Studies show that application of proper amount of fertilizers at the right time can significantly increase average rice yield by two tons per hectare, from 4-5 metric tons (MT) per hectare to 6-7 MT/hectare for certified inbred seeds; and from 5-6 MT/hectare to 7-9 MT/hectare or even up to 10MT, for hybrid rice farmers. The current national average yield is 4 MT/hectare. (PNA)

Gov't targets to... From page 1

firmed being infected with Covid-19 out of the total number of tested persons.

"According to the WHO (World Health Organization), a 5-percent positivity rate and lower is a sign that a country is improving in its management on Covid-19 cases. We are near at that

point. We are nearly below 5 percent," Dizon said.

He added the turnaround time of Covid-19 tests also improved from more than two weeks in

March to only 48 to 72 hours this month.

This was also improved through automated testing that fast-track the results. (PNA)

FamilyMart

World Bank flags... From page 1

to meet their targets for construction works as of May 31, due to the lockdown imposed in mid-March.

MWCI hit its target to increase the wastewater treatment capacity by 165,000 cubic meters according to the bank, while Maynilad raised capacity by 61,750 cubic meters at the end of May, underperforming the target of 187,500 cubic meters.

"An additional 46,000 cubic meters of wastewater treatment capacity is expected with the possible completion of Cupang STP by September 2020. This will possibly bring MWCI's total treatment capacity to 107.75 cubic meters (57% of target)," it said.

The World Bank has disbursed 97% or \$265.64 million of the \$275-million loan facility.

The project aims to improve wastewater collection and treatment systems in selected sub-catchments in Metro Manila by backing MWCI and Maynilad's enhancement projects through the Land Bank of the Philippines. — Beatrice M. Laforga

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Palace expects PH growth back to 6% in 2021

MANILA – Malacañang is optimistic that the Philippine economy would expand at a faster pace and return to 6 percent growth trajectory in 2021 despite the crisis brought about by the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic in the country this year.

In a virtual presser aired on state-run PTV-4 on Thursday, Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque acknowledged that the Philippines suffered its first economic recession since 1998 due to the Covid-19 health crisis.

Roque, nevertheless, remained confident that the country would experience a faster economic recovery.

“The economic troubles will continue pero inaasahan po natin dito sa Pilipinas ang masiglang pagbalik sa normal (but we expect that everything will be back to normal in the Philippines). At inaasahan po natin na matapos itong taon na ito ay babalik po tayo sa six percent growth na naman (We expect that after this year, we will enjoy six percent growth anew),” he said.

In May, the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas admitted that the Philippines suffered its first economic contraction in 22 years due to unexpected shocks, including the



Covid-19 outbreak.

The Philippine Statistics Authority has reported that the country’s gross domestic product (GDP) declined 0.2 percent from January to March this year.

The International Monetary Fund (IMF), in its World Economic Outlook June 2020 Update released on Wednesday, has further downgraded its economic outlook for the Philippines.

The IMF projected a 3.6-percent contraction in the country’s GDP this year, a sharp reversal from its baseline 6.3-percent growth forecast given last year and the 0.6 percent growth outlook in April.

It, nevertheless, expected that the Philippine

economy will revert to 6.8 percent growth in 2021.

Roque said the re-opening of more industries in the country following the relaxation of quarantine restrictions would help reboot the economy.

“Alam naman po natin na ang karanasan ay hindi lang po dito sa Pilipinas (The experience of [economic shutdown is also happening in other countries], not only in the Philippines),” he said. “Nagbu-bukas naman na po tayo ng ekonomiya dito (We are nevertheless reopening

our economy).”

From 2012 to 2016, the Philippines’ average economic growth is 6.6 percent. The country posted 6 percent growth in 2019.

President Rodrigo Duterte first placed the entire Luzon under enhanced community quarantine (ECQ), the most stringent community quarantine, in March this year to stop the Covid-19 pandemic in the country.

Duterte eventually eased the quarantine restrictions and placed only Cebu City under ECQ until June 30.

Roque noted that the Philippines has so far borrowed around USD5.758 billion from multilateral foreign lenders to boost the country’s war chest against Covid-19. (PNA)



31 Manila City villages... From page 1

government to impose, lift, or extend ECQ in barangays.

“Under section 455 (b)(I)(cii) of the Local Government Code (LGC), the City Mayor is empowered to carry out such emergency measures as may be necessary during and in the aftermath of man-made and natural disasters and calamities,” the EO read.

Domagoso said residents of these barangays shall be strictly confined to their residences and will be prohibited from going outside their homes.

Persons exempted from the order are health workers, military personnel, service workers (pharmacies, drug stores, and funeral homes), utility workers (energy, cable, internet, telecommunication companies, water, sanitation, and critical transport facilities including port operation), essential workers (goods delivery, food delivery, banking, and money services), barangay officials, and media practitioners accredited by the Presidential Communications Operations Office and the IATF.

The order also states that “all other commercial, industrial, retail, institutional and other activities not mentioned in above exemptions in the said district shall be suspended within the specified period of ECQ”.

Meanwhile, “station commanders of police stations in the said barangays are hereby directed to employ and deploy officers and personnel in strategic locations and ar-

eas necessary for the effective implementation of the ECQ”.

Response efforts lauded

The city government of Manila, meanwhile, was praised by the Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) for its response measures against Covid-19. In a Facebook post of the Manila Public Information Office on Tuesday, it stated that DILG director Rolyne Javier, in a meeting with Domagoso, lauded the city’s efforts in containing Covid-19.

“Kahanga-hanga ang naging aksyon ng Pamahalaang Lungsod ng Maynila upang sugpuin ang coronavirus disease sa lungsod at tulongan ang mga Manileño habang ipinatutupad ang community quarantine (The actions made by the city government of Manila to mitigate the effect of the coronavirus in the city and the support given to its residents are impressive),” she said.

Javier said the local government made sure that help was given to every family in the city during the time that many are unable to work.

She also noted that Manila recorded a high number of recoveries from Covid-19.

Javier also commended Domagoso for applying different measures to fight the spread of Covid-19, including the establishment of the Manila Infectious Disease Control Center (MIDCC) and the Digital Health Survey to promptly respond to the health needs of Manilenyos. (PNA)

GUHIT NG KAPALARAN

LEO (Jul.23 - Aug.22) Kung ang paglalakbay ay tungkol sa negosyo o pagkakakitaan, ito ay inaayunan ng panahon subalit kung ang pakay ay paglilibang, dapat itong ipagpa-liban. Harapin ang paghahanapbuhay at iwaglit pansamantala ang paglilibang. Lucky numbers at color of the day ang 12, 14, 28, 39 at lemon green.

VIRGO (Aug.23 - Sept.23) Iwasan ang usaping pera upang hindi humantong sa hindi pagkakaunawaan. Huwag hayaan kumatok ang selos. Lucky numbers at color of the day ang 6, 10, 30, 42 at sky blue.

LIBRA (Sept.24 - Oct.23) Ang tampuhan sa nakaraan ay magkakaroon ng solusyon kung ito ay haharapin nga-yon. Lucky numbers at color of the day ang 2, 17, 37, 40 at peral white.

SCORPIO (Oct.24 - Nov.22) Bigyang prayoridad ang tungkulin bago ang sa-rili at ang iba. Inaayunan ang pagpapahinga at paglilibang. Lucky numbers at color of the day ang 9, 26, 40, 41 at cherry red.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov.23 - Dec.21) Magkakaroon ng mahalagang pagdedesisyunan, mag-ingat para walang pagsisihan. Lucky numbers at color of the day ang 3, 12, 26, 36 at shocking pink.

CAPRICORN (Dec.22 - Jan.19) Pikon ka ngayon kaya habaan ang lubid ng pasensya dahil gulo lamang ang kahahantungan. Lucky numbers at color of the day ang 3, 16, 40, 42 at apple green.

AQUARIUS (Jan.20 - Feb.18) Depende sa situwasyon ang galaw ng pag-iisip. Subalit kung may pagdududa, huwag ituloy. Lucky numbers at color of the day ang 5, 13, 34, 41 at lavender.

PISCES (Feb.19 - Mar.20) Walang mangyayari kung magmumukmok sa isang tabi. Gamitin ang isip para makita ang solusyon. Lucky numbers at color of the day ang 2, 18, 29, 39 at canary yellow.

ARIES (Mar.21 - Apr.19) Ang pagtulong sa kapwa sa pinansyal o materyal ay hindi masama ngunit tiyakin na hindi ka kakapusin. Lucky numbers at color of the day ang 3, 6, 17, 25 at pink.

TAURUS (Apr.20 - May 20) Magiging mapusok at maapoy ang iyong damdamin sa pag-ibig, kailangan ang self control. Lucky numbers at color of the day ang 6, 20, 30, 36 at copper red.

GEMINI (May 21 - Jun.21) Panahon ng pagbabago kaya baguhin ang ugaling tsismosa, daldalera, matapobre at mapagmataas. Lucky numbers at color of the day ang 2, 15, 32, 39 at yellow.

CANCER (Jun.22 - Jul.22) Aminin at tanggapin ang pagkakamali. Hanapan ito ng wastong paraan para maitama. Lucky numbers at color of the day ang 6, 25, 32, 40 at orange.



DOH hails organ donors as modern day heroes

MANILA – To celebrate the spirit of working together, the Department of Health (DOH) on Monday commemorated the National Organ and Blood Awareness Week by recognizing organ donors as modern day heroes.

In a Beat COVID-19 Virtual Presser, Health OIC-Undersecretary Maria Rosario Singh-Vergeire discussed the importance of organ donation and how Filipinos can contribute to the project headed by Dr. Francisco Escudeta-Sarmiento, the program manager of the Philippine Organ Donation and Transplantation Program (PODTP).

“Maaring dumating ang panahon na hindi na magpa-function ng maayos ang ilang parte ng ating katawan, at kakailanganing palitan ito ng mas malusog na organ (Time might come some parts of our body will not function anymore, and need to be replaced by health organ),” Vergeire said. “Ngunit kahit gustuhin man natin at may kakayahan, hindi parating may available na organ at madalas ay limitado ang ating options. (But even if we want and have resources, organs are not always available and most of the time we have limited options).

Organ donation is

managed by the PODTP and the Philippine Network for Organ Sharing (PhilNOS), a completely free and voluntary process.

According to Sarmiento, a single donor can save up to eight lives, while human tissue, such as skin and bone marrow, can save and improve lives of up to 50 people.

Sarmiento encouraged the public to be open minded with organ and tissue donation.

“Kahit po tayo ay pumanaw na, mas magiging makabuluhan ang ating buhay dahil maililipat po natin ang bahagi ng ating katawan sa iba pang naghihintay at nangangailangan ng ating tulong (If we die, we will have meaningful life because parts of our body will be transferred to those who need them),” Sarmiento said.

Interested donors may reach out to the DOH and PhilNOS to sign up for a Life Linecard, which adds volunteers to the national



registry of organ donors. By building a nationwide network of people who promote organ donation, patients who require surgery have a better chance of receiving the organs they need.

“Katulad ng (Like) blood donation, ang organ at tissue donation ay (are) selfless acts,” said Vergeire. “Sa pamamagitan ng pag-volunteer ng ating dugo, organ o anumang tissue, makakatulong tayo sa mga taong nasa kritikal na kundisyon at sa ating sarili upang manatiling malusog sa laban sa Covid-19 (Through voluntary giving of blood, organ or any tissue, we can help patients in critical condition while we can stay health against coronavirus disease).” (DOH PR)

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FMIC, UA&P forecast PH economic recovery in Q3

MANILA – Recovery of the Philippine economy is projected to start in the third quarter of 2020 with easing of movement restrictions which provided a leeway for more economic activities.



In the June 2020 issue of The Market Call jointly done by the First Metro Investment Corporation (FMIC) and the University of Asia and the Pacific (UA&P), the report attributed rosier forecast for the economy to easing of the community quarantine particularly in Metro Manila, Region 3, and Region 4-A, along with the drop in the number of deaths.

Mainland Luzon was placed under an enhanced community quarantine (ECQ) from March 17 until May 15. This quarantine level was extended for Metro Manila until the end of May as cases remained high.

To date, Metro Manila, among other areas, is under a general community quarantine (GCQ) status.

The report said Metro Manila, along with the areas of Cavite, Laguna, Batangas,

Rizal and Quezon (Calabarzon), as well as Central Luzon account for about 62 percent of the country's gross domestic product (GDP).

“We see mid-August as a key to determining the speed of economic rebound as GDP numbers for Q2 (second quarter) come out, a new PHP1.3-trillion stimulus package gets approved, and Covid-19 deaths drop to minimal levels. We expect positive GDP growth starting Q3,” it said.

Growth, as measured by GDP, posted a 0.2-percent contraction in the first quarter this year, the first negative output since the last quarter of 1998.

The report said as quarantines are eased, more workers were allowed to go back to work although this supposed positive development is hampered by the limited operations of the public

transportation system.

“Improving restoration of supply chains and freight transport services should keep food prices at bay and largely offset the recent spike in crude oil prices,” it said.

Meanwhile, the report expects inflows from overseas Filipino workers (OFWs) to decline due in part to the fact that some OFWs lost their jobs.

“We believe (the) inflow of remittances will remain bleak in the coming months, with bigger declines that could be seen at the height of the lockdowns from April to May,” it said.

Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas (BSP) data show that cash remittances in the first quarter this year grew by 1.4 percent year-on-year to USD7.4 billion.

This growth is lower than the 4.6-percent growth as of February and the 6.6 percent last January.

For March alone, cash remittances contracted by 4.7 percent from a 2.5 percent last February and 6.6 percent last January.

Philippine monetary officials forecast remittances to contract by 5 percent this year. (PNA)

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PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

DEPOSITS	LOANS			
Savings Account Current Account Business Savings Time Deposit	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 33%;"> Agricultural Commercial Industrial Microfinance </td> <td style="width: 33%;"> Consumption Salary Maximizer Sasakyan Loan Car Loan </td> <td style="width: 33%;"> Real Estate Developmental Home Loan </td> </tr> </table>	Agricultural Commercial Industrial Microfinance	Consumption Salary Maximizer Sasakyan Loan Car Loan	Real Estate Developmental Home Loan
Agricultural Commercial Industrial Microfinance	Consumption Salary Maximizer Sasakyan Loan Car Loan	Real Estate Developmental Home Loan		

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