

# CAVITE NEWS

A COMMUNITY NEWSPAPER THAT'S NATIONAL IN SCOPE

VOL. XXI NO. 12

JULY 9-15, 2020

P10.00

ISSN: 2651-7450

Entered as Second Class Mail at the Imus Post Office under Permit No. 2003-11 dated August 29, 2003

## 2020 is 'Year of Filipino Health Workers'

MANILA – President Rodrigo Duterte, through Proclamation 976, has declared 2020 as the "Year of Filipino Health Workers" to recognize the heroism and self-compassion of medical workers in the country amid the coronavirus

disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic. Duterte signed Proclamation 976 on July 6, as he noted that the Covid-19 crisis has posed a daunting challenge to the country's health sector. "There is a need to commemorate the

immeasurable acts of heroism and selfless compassion of nurses, midwives, and all health workers, and give due honor to those who sacrificed their lives in the line of service, especially during this (Turn to p. 2)

# Motorcycle back-riding for couples allowed starting July 10

MANILA – Back-riding in motorcycles will be allowed only for couples beginning Friday, Interior Secretary Eduardo Año said on Thursday.

In a radio interview, Año said the measure was approved by the National Task Force for Covid-19.

"Yes, simula bukas ay papayagan na natin yung back-riding para sa mga couple (Yes,

starting tomorrow (Friday), we will allow the back-riding for couples), At the same time, kailangan mag-wear pa rin ng mask at saka ng crash helmet 'yung ating passenger at rider (The passenger and rider should still wear masks and crash helmets)," Año said.

Año described a couple as those "living in the same household, whether they are

married or they are common-law husband and wife or boyfriend and girlfriend."

To show proof of being a couple, they should present IDs "with the same surnames."

If they don't have the same last name, Año explained they should have the same address in their IDs.

"So, there are so many ways para

mapatunayan na (to prove that) they are living in the same house," he said.

Año said the prototype model to be used for motorcycle back-riding was one submitted by Bohol Governor Arthur Yap.

In Yap's model, a barrier is placed between the rider and the passenger while a handle is placed on the side of the barrier. The



*DILG Interior Secretary Eduardo Año*

barrier would reach beyond the head of the passengers to assure

their health and safety. Año encouraged (Turn to p. 2)

## TESDA welcomes ASEAN adoption of Ph-led TVET council

TAGUIG CITY, -- The establishment of a multi-sectoral body for further development of technical vocational education and training (TVET) in the ASEAN region has been approved during the 36th ASEAN Summit held on June 26.

The ASEAN TVET Council (ATC)

recognizes the prime importance of TVET as a key sector to ensuring human resource development in the region.

The ATC, which seeks to provide a platform for coordination, research and development on innovations and monitoring of

programs for TVET advancement in the region, was proposed by the Philippines through the Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA) in 2017.

"In order to improve the competitiveness of our workers and industries, we must have faster

progress on human capital development. In this regard, we welcome the establishment of the ASEAN TVET Council," said President Rodrigo Duterte during the 36th ASEAN Summit.

With the advent of the Industry 4.0, TESDA resonated the need for the ASEAN TVET Council that aims to harmonize and streamline the various

regional initiatives on technical vocational training being undertaken primarily to respond to the effects and implications of technological transformation and digitalization to economies, industries, and employment.

"We welcome this development and TESDA would like to thank our neighbors in the region. This would mean our future

graduates and workers will be more competitive with market-responsive skills, have greater employment opportunities here and overseas, and will be more productive in the digital economy," said TESDA Director General, Secretary Isidro Lapeña.

Through the ATC, TESDA sees better future coordination (Turn to p. 2)

**MOTORCYCLE . . . FR. P.1**

others who have their own designs to keep submitting their proposals as it would undergo vetting by the Technical Working Group (TWG).

The government has imposed a “no back-ride” policy in motorcycles since the start of community quarantine measures in

mid-March due to health and safety reasons.

President Rodrigo Duterte earlier said he could not allow motorcycle back-riding because strict physical distancing cannot be observed. (By Christopher Lloyd Caliwan/PNA)

**2020 IS ‘YEAR OF FILIPINO . . FR. P.1**

extraordinary time,” he said in the proclamation.

Under the presidential proclamation, the Department of Health (DOH) is tasked to lead, coordinate, and supervise the nationwide observance of the Year of Filipino Health Workers.

All other government agencies and instrumentalities, including government-owned or -controlled corporations and state universities and colleges, are directed to assist DOH in implementing Proclamation 976.

All local government units, business communities, relevant civil society groups, and professional organizations are likewise enjoined to participate and support the DOH to ensure the effective implementation of the proclamation.

Proclamation 976 also encourages all national and local publications, television networks, and radio stations to promote awareness and generate

public support for the programs and activities relative to the celebration of the Year of Filipino Health Workers.

“The State recognizes the invaluable contributions of nurses, midwives, and all other health workers, as the backbone of the country's health system, whether in promoting health consciousness, performing essential medical and health services, or responding to health crises in various situations,” the order read.

“Thousands of Filipino health workers, who comprise a major component of the nation's labor force, selflessly and tirelessly provide essential, quality, and critical care to individuals, families, and groups, even in the face of great peril, fear, uncertainty, and vulnerability,” it added.

As of Thursday, the Philippines has recorded 51,754 Covid-19 infections, with 12,813 recoveries and 1,314 deaths.

2nd week of July as ‘Nat’l Infection

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among member states in advancing TVET, particularly in the following areas: labor market information system, skills competitions, and skills need anticipation; TVET researches; improving the image of TVET; capacity-building for trainers and assessment of their quality; TVET quality assurance in ASEAN member states; and TVET implementation

Prevention and Control Week’

Meanwhile, Duterte also signed Proclamation 971 on June 23, declaring the second week of July every year as “National Infection Prevention and Control Week”.

Proclamation 971 also declares the second Saturday of July of every year as “Surgical Infection Prevention Awareness Day”.

Under the proclamation, Duterte acknowledged the need to emphasize prevention and health promotion as tools to address the threats posed by infection and attain a “safer, more effective, and higher quality of health service delivery.”

The State recognizes infection as a major health problem, which has a significant impact on mortality, morbidity, and quality of life, and acknowledges that the threats posed by infection resulting in

and financing.

The ATC is targeted to be launched in September 2020 in Viet Nam, together with the ASEAN Human Resources Development (HRD) Conference and the launch of the ASEAN HRD Roadmap.

The Philippines, through TESDA, is also looking forward to assume the inaugural Chairmanship and host the 1st Meeting of the ATC in 2021. (TESDA)

epidemics, pandemics, and antimicrobial resistance have become more evident,” it said.

Proclamation 971 directs the DOH, in coordination with relevant non-government organizations and professional associations, to promote the observance of “National Infection Prevention and Control Week” and “Surgical Infection Prevention Awareness Day”.

All public and private hospitals, including teaching and training hospitals, local government-owned hospitals, clinics, and health facilities, are encouraged to participate and assist in the conduct of relevant programs, projects, and activities for the successful implementation of the proclamation.

Malacañang released the copies of Proclamations 971 and 976 on Friday. (By Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos/PNA)

**More churches in provinces reopen under MGCQ**

MANILA – More churches in provinces are reopening after these areas have been declared under the modified general community quarantine (MGCQ).

The dioceses of Balanga and Tagbilaran have announced that church activities such as the holding of Eucharistic celebrations are now allowed in the churches under them.

“Opening now our Church with its 50 percent of total capacity is a welcome relief, much-needed comfort to our people who are very much thirsting and hungry for Jesus,” said Balanga Bishop Ruperto Santos in a pastoral directive on Thursday.

He, however, said the faithful must not be complacent amid the easing of quarantine rules.

“There is no rejoicing, no valedictory speech nor victory walk. Covid-19 is still there. And so, we should not let our guard down. We have still to be vigilant. We have to still take the necessary precautions and observe preventive measures,” he said.

He assured that safety precautions are in place in

all churches to ensure the safety of the churchgoers.

“As we open our Church, let us not forget what they always told us ‘physical, social distancing and wearing face masks,” Santos added.

Meanwhile, Tagbilaran Bishop Alberto Uy said churches in the diocese are now allowed to hold weddings and baptisms at a limited capacity.

“With our MGCQ status, religious gatherings, weddings, baptisms are now allowed at 50 percent capacity of the venue,” he said in a statement.

He also reminded the faithful to continue to be cautious.

“Let us continue to observe safety protocols so as to protect one another. We are not yet victorious over Covid-19. Now is not the time to be complacent. Padayon sa Pag-amping ug sa Pag-ampo (Continue to be careful and to pray). God bless you all,” he said.

Earlier, the Diocese of Tarlac announced that churches under it have resumed public masses starting July 1.

The province is also now under MGCQ. (By Ferdinand Patinio/PNA)

**CAVITE NEWS**

WEEKLY NEWSPAPER

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THIS NEWSPAPER IS EDITED, PUBLISHED AND CIRCULATED IN THE PROVINCE OF CAVITE AT BLK. 3 LOT 75 ISTANA MALAGASANG 1F IMUS CAVITE

*Commercial Advertising Rate: P200.00/col.cm*  
*Legal Rate P160.00/col.cm.*

## China, UK clash over fate of Hong Kongers

China promised Thursday to take countermeasures against Britain if it presses ahead with plans to extend citizenship rights to Hong Kongers after Beijing imposed a sweeping security law on the restless financial hub.

Beijing has faced a groundswell of criticism from primarily Western nations over its decision to impose a new law outlawing acts of subversion, secession, terrorism and colluding with foreign forces.

Adding to concerns, Hong Kong's influential Bar Association published a new legal analysis warning that the wording of the law—which was kept secret until Tuesday—undermines the city's independent judiciary and stifles freedoms.

Britain has said the law breaches China's pre-handover "One Country, Two Systems" promise to grant residents key liberties—as well as judicial and legislative autonomy—until 2047.

It has responded by announcing plans to allow millions of Hong Kongers with British National Overseas status to relocate with their families and eventually apply for citizenship.

"We will live up to our promises to them," foreign secretary Dominic Raab told parliament.

That move has infuriated Beijing, which says Britain promised not to grant full citizenship rights to Hong Kongers ahead of the 1997 handover.

"If the British side makes unilateral changes to the relevant practice, it will breach its own position and pledges as well as international law and



**Riot police detain a man as they clear protesters taking part in a rally against a new national security law in Hong Kong on July 1, 2020, the 23rd anniversary of the city's handover from Britain to China. AFP**

basic norms governing international relations," China's embassy in London said Thursday. "We firmly oppose this and reserve the right to take corresponding measures," it added.

Britain is not alone in announcing plans to offer Hong Kongers sanctuary or increased immigration rights as fears multiply over the semi-autonomous city's future under the new law.

On Thursday, Australian leader Scott Morrison said he was "very actively" considering offering Hong Kongers safe haven.

Taiwan has opened an office to help Hong Kongers wanting to flee, while a proposed bill in the United States offering sanctuary to city residents has received widespread bipartisan support.

Beijing says the law is needed to quell seething pro-democracy protests in Hong Kong and restore order after a year of political unrest.

But critics fear it will usher in a new era of political repression given similar laws are routinely used to crush dissent on the Chinese mainland.

The law has sent fear coursing through the city

and rattled the legal community in a business hub that has built its reputation on the independence and reliability of its courts.

The Bar Association – which represents the city's barristers – issued a scathing critique of the law, saying it dismantles the legal firewall that has existed between Hong Kong's judiciary and China's Communist Party-controlled courts.

Thousands of residents defied a protest ban on Wednesday – the anniversary of Hong Kong's return to China – to block roads and voice opposition to the bill in some of the worst unrest in months.

Police responded with water cannon, pepper spray and tear gas, arresting nearly 400 people.

Seven officers were injured, including one who was stabbed in the shoulder and three others hit by a protester on a motorbike.

Ten people were arrested under the new law, illustrating how holding certain political views had become illegal overnight.

Most of those arrested were carrying flags or leaflets advocating for Hong Kong independence.

## 2K more chairs sent for NAIA Terminals 2, 3

MANILA -- Passengers can expect more seats at the Ninoy Aquino International Airport (NAIA), as 2,000 chairs were delivered on Thursday for distribution at Terminals 2 and 3.

Consuelo Bungag, Manila International Airport Authority (MIAA) Public Affairs Department's officer-in-charge, told the Philippine News Agency that MIAA purchased these chairs on Wednesday, and would be distributed inside and outside the two terminals.

"The terminal (managers) would determine (where these would be placed) based on the need to deploy them. Because with the limited flights that we

have (now), we have enough seats so far," she said.

In his public address on Tuesday night, President Rodrigo Duterte pointed out the lack of seats at the country's main gateway. He ordered to put more seats, as well as the possible removal of some restaurants so that its areas could be used by the passengers.

On Wednesday, Transportation chief Arthur Tugade made rounds at the NAIA. Seeing the plights of stranded passengers, he ordered that those with confirmed bookings for the day but their flights were suddenly canceled be allowed to stay inside

the airport.

Tugade said the stranded passengers must be taken care of. "We would feed them as long as we can," he said, adding that he would prioritize the passengers' welfare, rather than discussing with the airlines who is responsible for feeding them.

He asked MIAA to put seats in concessions that are not being used.

"We would not remove concessions. If these are not (currently) being used, we would ask these to be opened, not to operate but for the passengers to have a place to go to while they are here," he said. (By Ma. Cristina Arayata/PNA)

## MRT-3 to limit ops after 127 workers found Covid-19 positive

MANILA – The Metro Rail Transit Line 3 (MRT-3) will have fewer trains running beginning Monday (July 6) after 127 of its workers tested positive for the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19).

In a virtual presser on Thursday, Timothy Batan, Undersecretary for Railways of the Department of Transportation (DOTr), said that 36 new cases were recorded the past two days among MRT-3 personnel at the EDSA-North Avenue Terminal Depot, resulting in the total 127 Covid-19 cases.

"From 91 on Tuesday, nitong umaga, meron na po tayong 127 cases po dito po sa ating depot (this morning, we now have 127 at the MRT-3 depot)," Batan said.

So far, he said, workers who tested positive were all posted at the MRT-3 depot, with no positive cases among MRT-3 personnel working with customers.

"Mga empleyado po

natin sa MRT-3 na nasa mga istasyon. Iyong mga humaharap po sa pasahero, yun pong mga front-liners sa MRT-3, ay hanggang ngayon po ay wala pa tayong positive sa Covid-19 (MRT-3 employees in stations (only). Those interacting with commuters -- the MRT-3 front-liners — are, so far, not positive with Covid-19)," Batan said.

Of the total, he said 124 are employees of Sumitomo-Mitsubishi Heavy Industries (Sumitomo), the MRT-3's maintenance provider, while the remaining three are employees of the MRT-3.

With about 1,700 workers in its depot, he said the MRT-3 will continue running normally on Friday while operations will be shut down at the weekend due to rail replacement works, and will resume at reduced capacity on Monday.

"Pagdating po sa Lunes, diyan po tayo posible at most likely po

na magre-reduce ng operations at malalaman po natin yung bilang ng tren na mababawas nitong parating na weekend (By Monday the MRT-3 will most likely operate at less capacity and we'll know the number of trains this weekend)," Batan said.

According to a press release from the MRT-3, the continuation of its operation at a reduced capacity was based on the guidance of the Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Disease (IATF-EID), Sumitomo, and the DOTr.

Additional measures and precautions will also be taken by MRT-3 personnel which includes wearing full PPE for stations and depot personnel, limiting movement of depot personnel to their immediate areas of responsibility, increased disinfection activities, and heightened monitoring and screening of symptoms among all personnel. (By Raymond Carl Dela Cruz/PNA)

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## 2 dead, 13 missing in heavy Japan rains

Tokyo—At least two people were feared dead and 13 others went missing in western Japan Saturday as record heavy rain triggered massive floods and landslides, forcing authorities to issue evacuation orders for more than 76,000 residents.

The nation's weather agency downgraded rain warnings by one notch from the highest emergency level in Kumamoto and Kagoshima on Kyushu island, but Prime Minister Shinzo Abe urged local people to be "on maximum alert". Abe ordered 10,000 troops on stand-by for immediate deployment to join rescue and recovery operations, pledging the central government would "do its best to take emergency measures, prioritising people's lives."

Two people were found "in cardio-respiratory arrest" and another was missing in landslides in Kumamoto, said Naosaka Miyahara, a disaster management official for the prefecture, using a term often used in Japan before a doctor certifies death.

"At one point in the morning, 13 people were unaccounted for but the figures are changing as we are still struggling to sort out the situation," Miyahara told AFP.

Public broadcaster NHK said about 100 people had been stranded as roads were cut off by floods and landslides.

Television footage showed vehicles swamped at car parks near a flooding river, while several bridges were washed away.

"I can't evacuate as a road turned into a river. It's so scary," a female resident told NHK.

Aerial footage showed a resident being lifted with a rope from a roof to a military helicopter as an entire town was awash with muddy water.

A massive landslide destroyed several houses with rescuers searching for missing people through half-buried windows.

"We have issued evacuation orders after record heavy rain," said Toshiaki Mizukami, another official for Kumamoto prefecture.

"We strongly urge people to take action to protect their lives as it's still raining quite heavily," he told AFP.

Kyodo News said 76,600 residents in Kumamoto and Kagoshima were ordered to evacuate their homes. Some train services have been suspended in the region, while more than 8,000 households lost power.

Japan is currently in its rainy season, which often causes floods and landslides and prompts local authorities to issue evacuation orders.



*Stay at home, work and study using computer sets and devices from OCTAGON.*

## DSWD provides assistive devices to persons with disability

QUEZON CITY, - Remaining true to its mandate of providing programs and services to vulnerable sectors of society, such as persons with disability, the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) has allocated P100,000 for assistive devices for each DSWD Field Office every year, starting this year.

The person with disability sector is among the most affected by the declaration of community quarantine brought about by the spread of COVID-19 in the country. To help them regain and develop their self and social enhancement, the DSWD, through its Field Offices will provide augmentation support for the assistive devices of blind and low vision, deaf/hearing impaired, and orthopedically and physically challenged individuals.

These devices may include talking laptops and tablets, talking canes/smart canes, and Braille system for the blind and visually impaired; hearing aids with beamforming technology, customized headphones, and Cochlear implant for deaf and hearing impaired; motorized wheelchair, customized wheelchair, tri-wheelchair bike, talking watch, customized artificial eyes, and neuro-prosthesis for the orthopedically and physically challenged.

Persons with disability may request for the augmentation support of their



**DSWD has allocated P100,000 for assistive devices for each DSWD Field Office every year, starting this year. According to DSWD. These devices may include talking laptops and tablets, talking canes/smart canes, and Braille system for the blind and visually impaired, among others. (File Photo from DSWD)**

assistive devices through the Focal Person on Persons with Disability Welfare Program and Assistance for Individuals in Crisis Situation (AICS) at the Crisis Intervention Units (CIUs) of the DSWD Field Offices.

The Field Offices accept representatives to apply and claim for assistance. Moreover, Social Welfare Action Development (SWAD) teams in the provinces are also mobilized to accept applications and send these to the Field Offices for processing. After processing all the documents, the devices are sent to the SWAD offices for claiming.

Persons with disability who want to

avail of the assistive devices should prepare documents such as medical certificate indicating the disability with date issued, full name and signed by attending physician which will be valid for 3 months, request for assistive devices and quotation showing the amount of the assistive device, Barangay Indigency Certificate of the person with disability or client, and one valid ID.

The Department hopes that through these assistive devices, the persons with disability will continue to be productive and contributing members of society, despite their disability, in these critical times. (DSWD)

**EXTRAJUDICIAL SETTLEMENT OF ESTATE OF THE LATE LIBERATO V. FILIO**

**NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN THAT THE ESTATE OF THE LATE LIBERATO V. FILIO WHO DIED ON MAY 22, 2015 WAS EXTRAJUDICIALLY SETTLEMENT AS PER DOC.# 369; PAGE # 75; BOOK # 86-D SERIES OF 2020 BEFORE NOTARY PUBLIC JOSE FLORO P. CRISOLOGO.**

**PUBLISHED AT: CAVITE NEWS DATES: JULY 2, 9, & 16, 2020**

## Religious gatherings up to 10% capacity allowed in GCQ zones

MANILA – The Inter-Agency Task Force for the Management of Emerging Infectious Diseases (IATF-EID) has allowed mass gatherings for religious purposes to partially resume in areas placed under general community quarantine, Malacañang said on Friday.

Members of the IATF-EID, in a meeting held Thursday, agreed to allow the resumption of religious activities in GCQ zones but only at 10 percent seating capacity, Presidential Spokesperson Harry Roque said during the Laging Handa program aired on state-run PTV-4.

Roque said the latest order, which will take effect on July 10, was contained in Resolution 51 approved by the IATF-EID on Thursday.

“Para naman po sa talagang gusto nang magsimba, pinayagan din po ang religious gatherings pero hanggang 10 percent lang po. At ito po ay epektibo sa July 10, 2020 sa areas na GCQ (For those who really want to attend mass, religious gatherings are now allowed but only at 10 percent capacity. This is effective on July 10, 2020, for areas under GCQ),” he said.

The IATF-EID initially issued guidelines in May, which permit the conduct of religious gatherings in areas under MGCQ and GCQ, provided that the number of participants is limited to only five and 10, respectively.

In June, the IATF-EID approved Resolution 43, which authorizes religious services at “50 percent of the seating capacity”



**Baclaran Church (File photo)**

in places under MGCQ.

Roque said mass gatherings for religious purposes in areas put under MGCQ remain allowed, so long as participants are limited to 50 percent of the venue capacity.

He reminded the public anew to observe strict social distancing and use a face mask when they go to church.

“Importante po na sundin natin ang mga minimum public health standards tulad ng social distancing, pagsusuot ng face mask, at iba pa (It’s important to follow minimum public health standards, such as social distancing and use of face mask, among others),” Roque said.

The IATF-EID relaxed its quarantine rules in June when it allowed more industries to reopen to enable the country to recover from the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) crisis.

Only Cebu City was placed under enhanced community quarantine, the most stringent community quarantine, until July 15 due to the continuing increase in the number of Covid-19 infections in the area.

The GCQ was implemented in Metro Manila, Benguet, Cavite, Rizal, Lapu-

Lapu City, Mandaue City, Ormoc, Leyte, Southern Leyte, and Cebu’s Talisay City, Minglanilla, and Consolacion.

The MGCQ with “strict local action” was imposed in Abra, Baguio City, Ifugao, Kalinga, Ilocos Norte, La Union, Pangasinan, Cagayan, Isabela, Bataan, Bulacan, Nueva Ecija, Pampanga, Angeles City, Batangas, Laguna, Quezon, Lucena City, Palawan, Puerto Princesa City, Albay, Camarines Norte, Camarines Sur, and Naga City.

Capiz, Iloilo City, Negros Occidental, Bacolod City, Cebu province, Bohol, Negros Oriental, Tacloban City, Western Samar, Zamboanga City, Zamboanga del Sur, Bukidnon, Misamis Occidental, Misamis Oriental, and Cagayan de Oro were also placed under stricter MGCQ.

MGCQ with “strict local action” was likewise implemented in Davao del Norte, Davao del Sur, Davao City, Davao de Oro, Cotabato, South Cotabato, Agusan del Norte, Butuan City, Lanao del Sur, and Maguindanao.

The rest of the country is under a more relaxed MGCQ. (By Ruth Abbey Gita-Carlos/PNA)

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P 10.00

## Pag-IBIG offers 'promo rates' for housing loans till December

MANILA – Housing Program, Filipinos can now avail of housing loans with the "lowest interest rates" until December.

Department of Human Settlements and Urban Development (DHSUD) Secretary Eduardo del Rosario on Friday announced the approval of the Home Development Mutual Fund (Pag-IBIG Fund) promotional rates for its members who would apply for housing loans under the End-User Financing Program from July until December 29.

"By offering these special rates to our members, we are spurring economic activity in the housing industry, which has a ripple effect on the national economy," del Rosario, also chairman of the Pag-IBIG Fund Board, said in a statement.

Pag-IBIG is offering a special low-interest rate of 4.985 percent, from 5.375 percent per annum under a one-year repricing period and a 5.375 percent interest, from 6.375 percent per annum under a three-year repricing period.

The subsidized home loan interest rate for the Affordable

Housing Program, which is available for low and minimum wage earners remains at 3 percent per annum.

Pag-IBIG declared the pricing as the lowest rates under its Regular Housing Loan program, which would only be available until the end of the year.

"This is a win-win situation because our members get to take advantage of these home loan rates, while the purchase of their homes will help generate more jobs to get our economy back on track. This then, is our contribution to our nation's journey to recovery, as led by President (Rodrigo) Duterte," del Rosario said. "This is another proof that Pag-IBIG Fund is pro-active in looking after the welfare of its member-borrowers. This promotional scheme will be huge for those who are planning to own their dream homes."

Meanwhile, Pag-IBIG Fund Chief Executive Officer Acmad Rizaldy Moti said the new interest rate for the three-year repricing period would only apply if the borrower's existing

account has been active during the first and second anniversary for the promotional rate, which will be extended for another year.

Moti said the non-performing (inactive) loans during the first or second anniversary would revert to the risk-based pricing.

Pag-IBIG also projected a takeout value of about PHP50 billion for July to December 2020, he said, estimating a PHP1.376-billion interest income-loss over three years.

"We review our rates regularly and have never repriced it upward under the Duterte administration. Our ever-improving quality of the portfolio has allowed us to keep the rates low under our Risk-Based Pricing Model. But this time, we are offering something special," Moti said, noting that the promotional rate is part of the housing department's commitment to ease public burden amid the pandemic in the country.

Considering the impact of the pandemic on the livelihood of Pag-IBIG members, he said they reduced the

## DFA, UNDP facilitate 500K masks donation to DOH

MANILA – The Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) witnessed the handover of 500,000 surgical masks donated by the Soong Ching Ling Foundation (SCLF) of Beijing, China, through the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) last July 8.

The surgical masks, valued at 1.2 million Chinese renminbi, were turned over by UNDP Country Representative Titon Mitra to Department of Health (DOH) Undersecretary Mario Villaverde, representing Health Secretary Francisco Duque III, in a simple ceremony at the DOH San Lazaro compound in Manila.

Witnessing the donation was Emma Sarne, director of the socio-cultural division of the Office of the United Nations and International Organizations (UNIO).

According to a news release issued on Friday, Mitra extended his appreciation to the Soong Ching Ling Foundation, an NGO based in Beijing that has been helping countries in the region source much-needed medical supplies.

He mentioned that the donated surgical masks are in recognition and acknowledgment of the invaluable work done by the DOH frontliners in the fight against the coronavirus

home loan rates by as much as 100 basis points for the next six months because they want to help members who are thinking of buying a home to take advantage of the "lower-than-lowest rates."

"Even amid the pandemic, now is the



**FACE MASK DONATION.** Health Undersecretary Mario Villaverde (center) receives a donation of face masks from UNDP Resident Representative Titon Mitra (right) in a turnover ceremony at the health department's main office in Manila on July 8, 2020. Witnessing the turnover is DFA-UNIO Director Emma Sarne. (Photo by UNDP)

disease 2019 (Covid-19).

Reading Duque's message, Villaverde lauded the department's 40-year partnership with UNDP-Philippines, which has been instrumental in developing the country's, particularly the DOH's, capacity in governance, sustainable resource management, disaster risk reduction, and peace-building.

He said recent engagements with UNDP include support and capacity building for data warehouse establishment and crisis and procurement management.

In formally accepting the donation and expressing the DOH's appreciation, Villaverde noted that the surgical masks would be committed to protecting the most vulnerable.

He also expressed

best time to buy a home with a Pag-IBIG housing loan," Moti said.

Pag-IBIG has earlier imposed a three-month moratorium on the payment of housing loans and other loan programs during the health crisis. (By Lade Jean Kabagani/PNA)

optimism that "we will rise above the current crisis and heal as one."

The DFA, through the Philippine Embassy in Beijing, UNDP-Philippines, and UNDP-Philippines, which has facilitated the transport and clearance of the donation for the DOH, which came at an auspicious time as the country is seeing a spike in Covid-19 cases and medical supplies, including surgical masks and personal protective equipment (PPE) sets, and other equipment are much needed.

The UNDP-Philippines has been working with the DOH, particularly in the field of data management and the development of an electronic dashboard to track hospital capacities and medical stocks.

It is in the process of rolling out in the country an innovative vaccine management system that is currently being used in India and, more recently, in Indonesia.

The electronic and web-based system is a way of "getting ahead of the curve" as this would facilitate the monitoring and distribution of Covid-19 vaccines, should this be developed, in remote and other areas where they are most needed. (PR)