

CAVITE NEWS

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6K patients get PCSO medical aid in first week of May

MANILA – The Philippine Charity Sweepstakes Office (PCSO) has released over PHP63 million in medical assistance to more than 6,000 eligible indigent beneficiaries nationwide in the first week of May.

In a statement Wednesday, PCSO General Manager Royina Garma said the agency has approved PHP63,513,546 worth of medical assistance for 6,211 indigent Filipinos across the country from May 4 to 8. The Medical Access Program (MAP), formerly known as the Individual Medical Assistance Program or (IMAP), is designed to augment the medical needs of indigent Filipinos, particularly hospital

(Turn to p. 2)

Manila may still impose hard lockdowns under MECQ

MANILA – Manila Mayor Francisco "Isko" Moreno Domagoso on Thursday said he may still implement hard lockdowns in specific areas of Manila under the modified enhanced community quarantine (MECQ).

Domagoso said under the new status, local government units (LGU) will be given

authorities to identify high-risk areas.

"(The imposition) is a high possibility especially if, kung sino hindi magtino (that is a high possibility especially if they do not behave)," he said in an interview.

Domagoso explained that based on the city database, they were able to identify specific barangays or

zones with high number of quarantine violators.

"Kung masama ang resulta nun medyo positive then magkakaroon sila ng kaluwagan. Pero kung masama, negative, hindi pa rin nagbago ng gawain, galawin (If the result is positive then they will be more relaxed. But if the result is negative, and people do not change their

ways), yes, we will, we will not hesitate especially under MECQ wherein the local government unit is now given full authority and discretion to identify specific barangay, zone, community or district. That's possible," he said.

He also clarified that under MECQ, observance of social and physical distancing, as well as wearing of face mask, will still



QUARANTINE FACILITY. Manila Mayor Francisco "Isko" Moreno Domagoso inspects the Araullo Quarantine Facility on Thursday (May 14, 2020). Quarantine protocols are still strictly imposed over the city amid the impending imposition of the modified enhanced community quarantine. (Photo from Manila PIO)

continue.

"There are two key

ordinances na nag-e-

(Turn to p. 2)

Skyway Extension project construction resumes May 15

MANILA – San Miguel Corporation (SMC) will resume construction of the Skyway Extension project, halted for two months of community quarantine, on May 15 following the issuance of guidelines by the government's Inter-Agency Task Force on the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19).

SMC, through its San Miguel Infrastructure, is the concession holder of the Metro Manila Skyway.

With its contractor returning to the job site, SMC said the development will partially mitigate delay in the delivery of the project, originally scheduled for December 2020.

The company, however, said it is unable to determine yet a new completion date given that only a limited number of workers can be deployed by contractor EEI Corporation as part of the quarantine measures identified.

The project is seen as key to reducing traffic in southern Metro Manila, particularly the South Luzon Expressway (SLEX) and the Alabang area while allowing motorists from the south direct access to the elevated Skyway and beyond.

"We have been given the go-signal by (the) government to resume work on the Skyway extension, and while we cannot yet go full blast, we will do whatever we can to



Skyway Extension project

deliver this project as close as we can to the original deadline. We have to work smart, be efficient, and most of all, keep the workers

safe," SMC president and chief operating officer Ramon Ang said in a statement Thursday.

For a one-month

period, Skyway management said it will close about 700 meters of Lane 3 of the Skyway At-Grade section

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'Balik Probinsya' program to spur real estate growth outside NCR

MANILA – The property sector finds a "silver lining" amid the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic, seeing development opportunities outside Metro Manila with the government's 'Balik Probinsya' program.

In a virtual briefing Tuesday, KMC Savills Managing Director Michael McCullough said the current work-from-home arrangement adopted by many companies to curb Covid-19 outbreak will attract property developers to build their projects near their employees.

Senator Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go proposed the 'Balik Probinsya' program to decongest the National Capital Region (NCR) as post-Covid-19 response of the government.



Robinsons Place Tacloban (Photo by Robinsons Land Corp.)

McCullough added the program will also help in slowing down urbanization in Metro Manila and create more livable cities in the provinces.

"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'," he said.

With the Covid-19 pandemic, McCullough added leasing activity is expected to slow down while vacancy rate in

office space is projected to increase in NCR.

He said developers in Metro Manila only delivered new office space supply of 36,500 square meters during this quarter due to construction delays.

For this year, new office supply in Metro Manila central business districts is forecasted to reach nearly 300,000 square meters, a slump from over 700,000 square meters new supply in office spaces in 2019. (PNA)

*It is the blessing of Jehovah
that makes one rich, And He
adds no pain with it.*

Proverbs 10:22

PH sports academy ratification 'welcome development': PSC

MANILA – The Philippine Sports Commission (PSC) expressed excitement after Congress ratified the establishment of the National Academy for Sports (NAS).

"The board is unanimous in saying that this is a welcome development," PSC chairman William "Butch" Ramirez said in a statement on Tuesday, a day after the Senate and the House of Representatives ratified the bicameral conference committee report on the proposed establishment of NAS.

Ramirez said anything that supports sports development "a great boost to the country's efforts to build a deeper grassroots sports program, which feeds our elite sports programs."

"Congratulations and thank you to both houses for... recognizing the important role of sports in national development thereby working towards providing opportunities for our talented and sports-inclined youth to hone their talents further earlier in their life," Ramirez said.

PSC commissioner Mon Fernandez likened the ratification of NSA to "hitting two birds with one stone."

"Affording our youth quality education and world-class sports training is indeed a very commendable move, to say the least," said Fernandez, a Philippine Basketball Association hall of famer.

"I would like to



Newly-built 20,000-seater Athletics Stadium inside the New Clark City Sports Complex (File photo)

thank our young sports-minded legislators for finally making this program a reality. This will definitely propel, prepare and encourage our athletes to compete credibly in the world stage," he added.

Meanwhile, Commissioner Celia Kiram sees the NAS as an avenue for the Philippines to produce world-class Filipino athletes.

Commissioner Charles Maxey said the NAS will give Philippine sports the needed boost and clear direction for student-athletes "not only in their quest for sporting excellence but also in the academic field."

"With this high school, student-athletes will be properly guided in their chosen disciplines aside from enjoying the luxury of training in a world-class facility. There is no doubt we can produce more Manny Pacquiao, Paeng Nepomuceno or Lydia de Vegas, and many more future stars who will bring honor to our country," Maxey said.

The establishment of NAS gives everyone in the sporting community "something positive to look forward to," Commissioner Arnold Agustin said.

"This move will greatly help our youth to bravely proceed to pursue their athletic dreams along with their academics," he added.

Pending in the Senate for a decade already, the NAS will give secondary education to Filipinos who look to excel in sports, giving them full scholarship and proper training in the sports that they choose to play.

The measure, which is a consolidation of Senate Bill No. 1086 and House Bill No. 6312, eyes the establishment of the academy's main campus at the existing New Clark City Sports Complex in Capas, Tarlac.

The NAS will be attached to the Department of Education (DepEd), in close coordination with the PSC.

Students of the academy shall be given priority access to facilities at the New Clark City Sports Complex.

The proposal also mandates the setting up of nationally-funded regional high schools for sports.

President Rodrigo Duterte mentioned the establishment of NAS in his 2019 State of the Nation Address. (PNA)

6K PATIENTS... Fr. p 1

confinement, chemotherapy, dialysis, and post-transplant medicines. The program is funded by revenues from PCSO games nationwide.

Nearly PHP36 million was released for the dialysis treatment of 4,415 patients while an additional PHP22.1 million worth of assistance was availed of by 1,487 patients confined in different hospitals nationwide.

For chemotherapy, the PCSO allocated PHP4.4 million for 227 patients while 92 patients received PHP1,082,652 for post-transplant medicines.

Garma said amid the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) crisis, the agency is taking the necessary steps to continue providing medical assistance to the increasing number of indigents seeking help from PCSO.

"Rest assured that the agency will find ways to meet the medical and health-related needs of all Filipinos, especially the marginalized," Garma said.

Meanwhile,

SKYWAY... Fr. p 1

northbound from the old Alabang Entry Plaza.

This is to enable workers to install scaffoldings to build the columns for Pier 34-49.

Skyway assured that safety, sanitation, and other health measures are already in place at the construction site even prior to the resumption of construction.

Workers will follow

patients from NCR may file their requests online by accessing the PCSO official website www.pcsso.gov.ph. Applicants must go to E-Services and click the NCR Online Application to process their medical assistance.

She added that PCSO will continue to find ways and means to reach out to people and assist the national government in its fight against Covid-19.

"The agency, adhering and complying to the Bayanihan to Heal as One Act, emphasizes and strengthens this auxiliary role especially in providing healthcare to Filipinos, bearing a part of the weight and augmenting government efforts in these strained and challenging times," she said.

For queries contact the hotline numbers for Globe: 0917-880-7150/ 0927-313-9380; for Smart: 0919-068-3699/0949-031-0843 from Monday to Friday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. (PNA)

the basic rules of social distancing and put on face masks and gloves. There will also be adequate hand sanitation and disinfecting facilities including the availability of soap, water, and alcohol.

Workers will also be housed in on-site facilities provided by the company. (PR)

MANILA... FR. P. 1

exist, first the social distancing and the second one, you have to wear a mask while in public places if you don't, you will be arrested," he said.

The city of Manila launched on Thursday its second quarantine facility in Araullo High School along Taft Avenue, built and donated by a private organization, as part of the city's post-ECQ lifting plan, while other quarantine facilities are being built with the

goal of having a 500-bed capacity.

Domagoso said placing those who will be found positive with the coronavirus in a controlled environment inside an open space like schools that are gated are safer for those inside as well as those outside the facility.

He said the possibility of an increased number of those who will be infected with the coronavirus disease

will be likely when businesses open and people return to their jobs and that he doesn't want to be caught offhanded when this happens.

"Mababalitaan nyo in the coming days tataas ang Covid-positive sa Manila. First because of behavior and two, we will have more tests (You will hear in the coming days that Covid-positive cases in Manila will increase). The city government will double its effort in doing test, test, test then

after, isolate, isolate, isolate"

Domagoso gave the assurance that the city government of Manila will not cease its effort in fighting Covid-19 as he urged the public to take care of themselves for their loved ones.

"Nakakatakot totoo naman (it's true that it is scary) but I want the city of Manila to be ahead of Covid. I would rather have them in this facility than roaming around," he said. (PNA)

PNP units in typhoon's path on alert, brace for 'Ambo'

MANILA — Philippine National Police (PNP) chief Gen. Archie Gamboa on Thursday directed all unit commanders to work with the local disaster risk reduction management councils (DRRMCs) of areas that might be affected by Typhoon Ambo.

This to ensure the public's safety amid the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic.

"Amid challenges faced by the PNP, it will remain resolute and ready for disaster preparedness and response operations to protect lives and properties from Typhoon Ambo as it continues to defend our citizens from Covid-19," PNP spokesperson, Brig. Gen. Bernard Banac said in a statement.

He said the PNP will continue enforcing strict quarantine guidelines in affected areas as it coordinates with the local government units and

other law enforcement agencies for a unified course of action to protect the public from both Ambo and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Banac said all PNP response operations for Ambo shall observe the minimum health standards such as wearing of face masks, face shields, gloves, social distancing, regular washing of hands, use of alcohol and sanitizers and other measures as it prepares for the first typhoon in the country since the outbreak.

Meanwhile, the Armed Forces of the Philippines (AFP) has already alerted its disaster response units.

"(We are) on alert. It's part of the SOP (standard operating procedure) that whenever there is an incoming severe weather disturbance all AFP units in and adjacent to the areas of concern are alerted and their respective disaster response units placed on stand by in



collaboration with the includes personnel, DRRMCs. This (Turn to p. 5)

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Covid-19 to shrink global economy by 3.2% in 2020: UN **JG Summit revises capex to P58-B amid pandemic**

ANKARA – The global economy is projected to contract by 3.2 percent this year, against the backdrop of the devastating coronavirus pandemic, according to a UN report released Wednesday.

World trade is forecast to shrink by nearly 15 percent in 2020 amid sharply reduced global demand and disruptions in global supply chains, according to the United Nations World Economic Situation and Prospects (WESP) mid-2020 report.

The pandemic is expected to slash global economic output by USD8.5 trillion over next two years, wiping out nearly all gains of the previous four years.

Marking the sharpest contraction since the great depression in 1930's, the forecast came on top of anemic economic forecasts of 2.1 percent at the beginning of this year.

The report estimated that the growth in developed economies will plunge to 5.0 percent this year before picking up



next year.

"A modest, 3.4 percent growth — barely enough to make up for the lost output — is expected in 2021," it said.

The output of developing countries will shrink by 0.7 percent, the report said.

P a n d e m i c exacerbating poverty, inequality

Some 34.3 million people are estimated to fall below the extreme poverty line in 2020 due to coronavirus, the report said, adding more than half of this is occurring in African countries.

An additional 130 million people may join the ranks of people living in extreme poverty by 2030, dealing a huge blow to global efforts for eradicating extreme poverty and hunger.

The pandemic, which is disproportionately hurting low-skilled, low-wage jobs, while leaving higher-skilled jobs less affected — will further widen income inequality within and between countries.

Elliott Harris, UN assistant secretary-general for economic

development, highlighted that the ability of countries to protect jobs and incomes will be effective on the pace and strength of the recovery from the crisis beside the efficacy of public health measures.

Stating that the virus will accelerate digitalization and automation, the report warned that a rapid surge in economic activities online will likely eliminate many existing jobs, while creating new jobs in the digital economy. (Anadolu)

MANILA – JG Summit Holdings, Inc. (JGSHI) has revised its capital expenditure (capex) for this year downward amid the challenging business climate due to the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic.

During the conglomerate's virtual annual stockholders' meeting Thursday, JGSHI president and chief executive officer Lance Gokongwei announced that the company is spending PHP58 billion this year.

This is lower by 30 percent from its initial capex set for this year at PHP82 billion, and 20 percent lower from 2019's actual spending of PHP72.1 billion, Gokongwei said.

The Gokongwei-led conglomerate recorded a 19-percent decline in core net profit in the first quarter of 2020 amounting to PHP4.3 billion.

"He said the company needs to manage capex cash flows into its liquidity given the Covid-19 situation by deferring some projects and payments.

"Much of the deferment came from the Cebu Pacific as we are re-negotiating payments, delivery schedules related to new aircraft orders and trying to postpone capitalized aircraft overhaul," he added.

"For Robinsons Land, Gokongwei said it will continue ongoing projects which construction was suspended due to the enhanced community quarantine (ECQ), while those projects that have not yet started will be delayed or will be

assessed after the lifting of the ECQ.

"He added the expansion project of JG Summit Petrochemical Corp. is a top priority of the group.

"Capex for its petrochemicals manufacturing unit this year was only slashed by 9 percent or PHP2 billion, said Gokongwei.

"While the lockdown has resulted to the halting project construction during the ECQ period, JG Summit

Petrochemicals is stepping up work towards effective resumption of construction work once ECQ is lifted in order to accelerate the availability of new downstream, higher value-added higher margin products," he said.

He said JGSHI expects a delay of about three months in the construction of projects of its petrochemical business, with the bulk of expansion to be completed this year.

The last to be completed project is the polyethylene expansion which is expected to be delivered by the third quarter of 2021, Gokongwei said.

With the expansion of the petrochemical plant for downstream units, he added higher value-added margin products go online, and this will bring new growth opportunities for its manufacturing unit which experienced a slump in revenues last year due to trade tensions and lower petrochemical demand.

Gokongwei said JGSHI decided to also defer some non-critical capex in Universal Robina Corp. and the rest of the group. (PNA)

Covid-related activities, 'Balik Probinsya' proposed in 2020 IPP

MANILA – Economic activities that would help the government in its fight against the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic and the 'Balik Probinsya' program are included in the proposed 2020 Investment Priorities Plan (IPP) of the Board of Investments (BOI), Trade Secretary Ramon Lopez said Thursday.

The document was already signed by Lopez, who is also the BOI chairman.

The Trade chief said his office already submitted the proposed 2020 IPP to the Office of the President for President Rodrigo Duterte's signature.

In a webinar of the Nordic Chamber of

Commerce of the Philippines, Lopez cited "all qualified activities relating to the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic" as priority areas in the 2020 IPP.

These include the manufacturing of essential products such as medicines, medical equipment and devices, personal protective equipment, medical supplies, and consumables such as alcohol and sanitizers, including production of raw materials, semi-finished or intermediate goods and machinery and equipment.

Repurposing of manufacturing activities to produce these products are also entitled to tax perks in the proposed IPP.

The document also



Trade Secretary Ramon Lopez

listed the provision of services such as, but not limited to, crematoriums, health waste treatment and disposal, laboratories, test facilities, hospitals, and quarantine facilities.

Lopez added that investment activities that support the creation of new opportunities in provinces outside urban

areas are included in the proposed investment priority list for this year.

Last month, Senator Christopher Lawrence "Bong" Go proposed to Duterte the 'Balik Probinsya' program that aims to bring back individuals living and working in Metro Manila to their provinces by creating more economic

activities outside the National Capital Region.

Lopez expressed support in the proposal as activities related to the 'Balik Probinsya' program are recommended in the new IPP.

He said investments

in line with this program may be provided with an income tax holiday for up to six years.

The IPP is the government's blueprint of priority economic activities that qualify for fiscal incentives. (PNA)

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Fast contact tracing can prevent new wave of Covid-19 cases: DOH

MANILA – Fast contact tracing, a crucial part of a multi-pronged approach in the fight against the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) pandemic, can prevent a new wave of cases, Health Secretary Francisco Duque III said on Wednesday.

Duque said for a faster conduct of mass tracing, there should be enough manpower to do the job of identifying cases and tracing their contacts so that they can be put into isolation before they show symptoms.

"Mabilis ang mass tracing na may sapat na contact tracers ang kailangan para hindi makalusot ang Covid at agaran ma-isolate. Ano ba ang sapat? Isang contact tracer per 800 katao. Kung ang siyudad ay may populasyon na 40,000, kelangan ng 500 contact tracers na mabilis (Fast mass tracing with enough number of contact tracers and immediate isolation to prevent the spread of Covid-19. What would be enough? There must be one contact tracer per 800 persons. If a city has a population of 40,000 people, 500 contact tracers must be mobilized)," Duque said in a virtual press briefing in Malacañang.

In the same briefing, Interior Secretary Eduardo Año said there is a need to trace, test, isolate, and treat Filipinos infected with Covid-19 even



SWAB TESTING. Returning overseas Filipino workers line up to get tested at a swabbing facility last week. Health Secretary Francisco Duque III said for a faster conduct of mass tracing, there should be enough manpower to do the job of identifying cases and tracing their contacts so that they can be put into isolation before they show symptoms. (PNA photo by Arito Dalan)

until 2021.

"So, kailangan ang pinaka workforce natin talaga ngayon ay ang ating mga contact tracers. So, sa LGU [local government unit] levels magha-hire tayo, dito rin sa ating national agencies, meron din tayong iha-hire diyan kasi integrated ang effort natin (We need to have a workforce of contact tracers. So, we'll hire in the LGU level, also at the national, we'll hire because our efforts are integrated), national, regional, provincial, down to the municipalities but of course, these are all led by our local chief executives," Año said, adding that the government has enough budget to hire contact tracers on a permanent or temporary basis.

Several regions, including the National Capital Region, remain under enhanced community quarantine, which expires on May 15.

On May 12, authorities announced the gradual lifting and

easing of restrictions, from ECQ, to modified ECQ, to general community quarantine of provinces and cities nationwide.

As some areas shift to modified ECQ or GCQ, Duque said local government units (LGUs), residents, and establishments should be guided by minimum public health standards and minimum health capacity standards amid the continued threat posed by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Minimum public health standards, such as proper hand washing, wearing of masks when going out, and physical distancing, are expected to be observed by families and public and private establishments.

"Samantalang ang ating mga establisimiyento at awtoridad dapat nagagawa ang palaging pag-di-disinfect, limitasyon sa pagtitipon, temperature screening, symptom screening, o hindi na

PH Covid-19 cases now 11,618; recoveries rise to 2,251

MANILA – The total number of confirmed cases of the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) in the country has reached 11,618, with 268 more persons contracting the disease.

In its case bulletin Wednesday, the Department of Health (DOH) also reported 145 new recoveries and 21 new deaths.

The total number of recovered cases nationwide is now 2,251 while the death toll has climbed to 772.

Out of the 268 new cases, the DOH said 165 cases or 61 percent came from the National Capital Region; 58 cases or 22 percent from Region 7 (Central Visayas), and

the remaining 45 cases or 17 percent from other regions.

As of May 12, the DOH has 13,553 total bed capacity dedicated to patients with Covid-19.

About 36.1 percent of the 2,750 ward beds are occupied; 40.20 percent of 9,523 isolation beds are occupied, and 38.90 percent of 1,280 intensive care unit beds are occupied.

The DOH also has 1,897 total ventilators for Covid-19 patients and about 22.50 percent of them are in use.

In Local Isolation

and General Treatment Areas for Covid-19 cases (Ligtas Covid) facilities, there are 43,644 beds dedicated to Covid-19 patients.

Meanwhile, there are 1,348 beds dedicated to Covid-19 patients in mega Ligtas Covid facilities.

Ligtas Covid facilities are community-managed centers for the quarantine and isolation of suspected Covid-19 cases while the mega Ligtas Covid facilities are managed by the national government for the same purpose. (PNA)

For I, Jehovah your God, am grasping your right hand, The One saying to you. 'Do not be afraid. I will help you.'

Isaiah 41:13

pinapapasok ang empleyadong may s i n t o m a s (Establishments and authorities must be able to perform regular disinfection, mass gathering limitation, temperature screening, symptom screening, or sending home employees with Covid-19 symptoms)," he said.

Meanwhile, Duque said LGUs should coordinate with the national government in observing minimum health capacity standards, which include national, regional, and provincial targets as stated under Administrative Order 2020-0016.

The national targets for Covid-19

preparedness and response strategies include performance of 30,000 reverse transcription - polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) tests per day, provision of 5 million to 6 million sets of personal protective equipment per month, and availability of 6,000 Intensive Care Units (ICUs) and 6,000 mechanical ventilators.

The regional targets include at least one biosafety laboratory 2 with RT-PCR testing capacity; at least one dedicated referral hospital facility, floor or wing for severe or critical cases; and at least one for every 25,000 population.

Provincial targets for human resources include at least one epidemiology and surveillance officer for every 100,000 population; at least one contact tracing personnel for every 800 population; at least one Barangay Health Emergency Response Team for every 1,000 population, and at least 10 trained testing staff.

For the provincial infrastructure targets, there must be at least one isolation bed for every 2,500 population; at least one ambulance or medical transport; at least one dedicated transport for specimen; and at least one designated funeral home or crematorium. (PNA)

DILG to summon 43 mayors over poor SAP payout accomplishment

MANILA – The Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) will give show cause orders to 43 mayors over their poor performance in the distribution of the emergency cash subsidy under the Social Amelioration Program (SAP) to low-income families in their localities.

DILG Secretary Eduardo Año said these 43 local chief executives (LCEs) must explain why they had poor performance despite the two extensions of the deadline given to local government units (LGUs) with the latest deadline ending midnight of May 10.

"While the vast majority of the LGUs were able to distribute their SAP before the deadline leading to a national pay-out rate of 97 percent yesterday, may ilan pa rin na naiwan (there are those who were still left out), thus, the DILG and the public deserves to know why they failed to complete their distribution," he said.

"Maglalabas na tayo ng (We will issue) show cause order sa mga naiwang (to the remaining) 43 mayors nationwide dahil sa bagal ng pagbibigay ng ayuda sa kani-kanilang mga (because of their slow progress in giving aid to their) constituents. Kasi nga meron pa tayong (It is because we still have) 3 percent na mga family beneficiaries ang hindi pa rin nakakatanggap (of family beneficiaries who have not received aid) as of Wednesday," he said.

He said that the 43



(PNA file photo by Avito Dalan)

LGUs had a 79-percent and below accomplishment rate as of the final deadline set on May 10 midnight.

Eleven of these mayors are in Western Visayas, eight are in Mimaropa, five in Central Visayas, four in Davao Region, and four in the National Capital Region.

LGUs that had poor distribution rate and did not meet the May 10 deadline also include two each in Ilocos Region, Cagayan Valley, Calabarzon, Eastern Visayas, Northern Mindanao, and one in Central Luzon.

PNP handles SAP graft, corruption cases. D I L G Undersecretary and spokesperson Jonathan Malaya, meanwhile, clarified that graft and corruption cases related to the handling of the SAP fund will now be investigated by the Philippine National Police (PNP)-Criminal Investigation and Detection Group (CIDG) and no longer by the DILG field offices.

He said Año has decided to transfer the probe of corrupt practices of barangay officials of SAP from the DILG field offices to the PNP CIDG field offices for the immediate filing of cases since the CIDG has more investigators

than the DILG field offices.

"Iyong mga tara, kaltas, splitting at pareparehas ang pangalan ng nakatanggap ng SAP ay CIDG na ang mag-iimbestiga niyan. Ngunit kung mga violations of social distancing, tinolerate ni kapitan iyong tupada, nagkaroon ng parade o naging pabaya si kapitan sa mass gathering, 'yan po ang may show cause kasi administrative case 'yan (The cases of tara, deductions, splitting and those similar names who have received SAP will be investigated by the CIDG. However, violations of social distancing, tolerance of illegal cockfighting by barangay chairpersons, conduct of parades or negligence in mass gatherings, those will be issued show cause orders because those are administrative cases)," he said.

He added that Año will not tolerate a single instance of graft and corruption.

"Pag may (If there is) 'tara' (corruption system), may kaltas, merong splitting, pulis na po ang pupunta sa inyo at kung sakaling caught in the act kayo, aresto na po kayo kaagad (there is deduction, splitting, the police will come to you and if you are caught in the act, you will be arrested immediately),"

PNP... Fr. p 2

materiel, and related capabilities for disaster response and assistance. DRRMCs are the lead and AFP units will provide support." AFP public affairs office chief, Navy Capt. Jonathan Zata said in a message.

Navy flag-officer-in-command, Vice Adm. Giovanni Carlo Bacordo, said they will also be an active partner of the government in disaster response and relief operations amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

He already issued an order directing all the

naval operating forces from northern to southern Luzon to implement their respective disaster mitigation plans and ensure proactive measures on the possible onslaught of the typhoon.

"All PN units are alert in monitoring the situation for possible deployment and search and rescue operations. Disaster response and rescue teams (DRRT) are on standby and ready for deployment to ensure the timely response and assistance to the victims of typhoon. Safety of

personnel, aircraft and vessel is paramount at all times," Bacordo said in a statement.

On Thursday noon, Ambo made landfall over the town of San Policarpo in Eastern Samar.

Ambo packs maximum sustained winds of up to 155 kilometers per hour (kph) near the center and gusts of up to 190 kph.

Moving west at 15 kph, the typhoon is moving closer towards the Bicol Region. (with reports from Priam F. Nepomuceno/PNA)

Gov't to finish test backlogs in 2 weeks: Dizon

MANILA – National Policy Against Covid-19 Deputy Chief Implementer Vivencio Dizon said the government targets to finish the coronavirus disease 2019 (Covid-19) testing backlogs within two weeks.

In a Palace briefing on Thursday, Dizon said the government is addressing the issue of Covid-19 test backlogs

he added.

Malaya said that the public may participate in validating the list of beneficiaries of SAP in their communities by checking the list posted in barangay halls, which is also a requirement for LGUs to get the second tranche of SAP to be downloaded by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

"Iyong compliance ng mga barangay sa pagpaskil ay mataas, 97 percent ng lahat ng barangay pinaskil ang mga listahan ng

by partnering with the private sector.

"The private laboratories have agreed to accept the backlogs or those that have not yet (been) tested by different laboratories, like government laboratories, and they will test it in the next days. They actually started it today," he said

kanilang mga benepisyaryo. Kaya nakikita ng mga kababayan natin kung sino ang tiwali dahil makikita mo sa listahan kung mayroong anomalya (The compliance of barangays in terms of posting lists is high. Around 97 percent of all barangay posted the list of their beneficiaries. So the people now see who is corrupt because you can see in the list if there are anomalies)," he said. (PR)

in Filipino.

The government is also pushing for automation in testing to fast-track the results, Dizon said, adding that automation would increase capacity by 80 percent.

"Many of our laboratories in Metro Manila are experiencing backlogs because of mechanical defects and lack of supply. That's why there are delays in testing," he said, noting that the results of about 7,000 Covid-19 tests have not yet been released.

Dizon, who is also the Presidential Adviser for Flagship Programs, and Bases Conversion and Development Authority president and chief executive officer, said the country has 30 testing laboratories.

The testing capacity also increased to 14,500 tests as of May 10, with actual daily testing of 8,700. (PNA)