

PRESIDENTIAL COMMUNICATIONS OPERATIONS OFFICE
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PUBLIC BRIEFING #LagingHandaPH
HOSTED BY PCOO SECRETARY MARTIN ANDANAR
AND PCOO UNDERSECRETARY ROCKY IGNACIO
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SEC. ANDANAR: Magandang umaga po sa ating lahat mga kababayang araw-araw na nakatutok sa ating programa para makibalita sa mga pinakahuling hakbang ng ating pamahalaan kontra sa COVID-19. Ako po ang inyong lingkod, Secretary Martin Andanar mula sa PCOO. Good morning, Rocky.

USEC. IGNACIO: Good morning, Secretary. Mula pa rin sa PCOO, ako naman po si Undersecretary Rocky Ignacio, kasama ninyong aalam sa totoo at tamang impormasyon tungkol sa pandemyang kinakaharap ng ating bansa.

SEC. ANDANAR: Basta laging handa at sama-sama, kaya natin ito. Kaya naman, bayan, halina at samahan ninyo kami dito sa Public Briefing #LagingHandaPH.

Maya-maya lamang ay makakasama rin nating magbabalita sina John Mogol mula as Philippine Broadcasting Service, si Alah Sungduan mula sa PTV-Cordillera, at si Jay Lagang ng PTV-Davao.

Para sa ibang balita, ang maging vigilant at patuloy na sumunod sa mga health protocol sa kadahilanang hindi pa natatapos ang COVID-19 pandemic sa bansa. Ito ang naging paalala ni Senador Bong Go sa publiko matapos magdeklara si Pangulong Duterte ng implementasyon ng General Community Quarantine sa Metro Manila at sa mga piling lugar gaya ng Pangasinan, Baguio City, Region II, Region III at Region IV-A base na rin sa rekomendasyon ng Inter-Agency Task Force or IATF.

Samantala, nananatiling nasa ilalim ng Modified Enhanced Community Quarantine ang Cebu City sa Kabisayaan.

Sa ilalim ng GCQ ay mas marami nang Negosyo ang magbubukas at magkakaroon ng limitadong transportasyon, ngunit hindi raw ibig sabihin na kapag GCQ ay maaari na tayong magliwaliw at mamasyal. Ang pakikiisa at pagkakaroon umano ng disiplina ng bawat isa sa atin ay malaking tulong upang tuluyan nating malampasan ang COVID-19 pandemic, at umusad na tayo sa tinatawag na new normal.

USEC. IGNACIO: Samantala, para naman mas mapalakas pa ang health care system sa bansa partikular na ang kapasidad ng mga pampublikong ospital at serbisyong medikal sa mga probinsiya kontra COVID-19 ay kasalukuyang isinusulong sa Senado ang House Bill 6036 at House Bill 6144 para sa dagdag na bed capacity at pagpapalakas ng kapasidad ng mga local

hospital sa Las Piñas at Tuguegarao City. Ito umano ay makakatulong din para maging matagumpay ang 'Balik Probinsiya, Bagong Pag-asa Program' ng pamahalaan.

Samantala, silipin na muna natin ang pinakahuling bilang ng COVID-19 cases sa Pilipinas. As of 4 P.M. kahapon, naitala ang 18,997 COVID-19 positive sa bansa; 359 ang mga bagong kaso, kung saan 176 sa mga ito ang fresh cases, habang 183 naman ang late cases. Walumpu't apat naman ang nadagdag sa recoveries ng bansa, sa kabuuang bilang na 4,063 habang umabot naman sa 966 sa kabuuang bilang ng mga nasawi matapos itong madagdagan ng anim kahapon.

Samantala, ang buong rehiyon naman ng Southeast Asia ay nakapagtala ng 94,211 confirmed COVID-19; 45,351 recoveries at 2,834 ang total deaths. Nananatiling walang casualty sa mga bansang Vietnam, Cambodia, Timor Leste at Laos.

Ayon naman sa Johns Hopkins University, as of 5:30 A.M., nasa 6,339,005 na ang kabuuang bilang ng mga nagpositibo sa sakit sa buong mundo kung saan nangunguna pa rin Estados Unidos na sinusundan ng Brazil, Russia, United Kingdom at Espanya. Samantala, nasa ikatatlumpu't siyam na puwesto pa rin ang Pilipinas sa may pinakamataas na kaso sa buong mundo.

SEC. ANDANAR: Para po sa inyong katanungan at concerns tungkol sa COVID-19, maaari ninyo pong i-dial ang 02-894-COVID o kaya 02-894-26843. At para naman sa mga PLDT, Smart, SUN at TNT subscribers, i-dial po ang 1555. Maaari ninyo ring tawagan ang hotline numbers ng iba't-ibang ahensiya ng ating pamahalaan na makikita ninyo sa inyong TV screens.

Patuloy po kayong makibalita sa mga pinagkakatiwalaang sources ng impormasyon tungkol sa COVID-19, maaari ninyong bisitahin ang covid19.gov.ph.

Makakapanayam po natin ngayong umaga sina DOST Secretary Fortunato dela Peña, Landbank President and CEO Cecilia Borromeo at si Philippine Ambassador to India Ramon Bagatsing, Jr.

USEC. IGNACIO: Sa ating mga manunood, kung may nais po kayong itanong sa ating mga resource person ay i-comment lang po sa ating live feed at sisikapin po natin itong bigyan ng kasagutan.

SEC. ANDANAR: Simulan na natin ang ating Public Briefing kasama si DOST Secretary Boy dela Peña. Magandang umaga po sa inyo, Secretary Boy.

SEC. DELA PEÑA: Magandang, Sec. Martin and Usec. Ignacio.

SEC. ANDANAR: Napakahalaga po ng science and technology sa mga panahong ito, ganoon din po ang research and development para mahanap ang solusyon o gamot sa COVID-19.

How is the local R and D (research and development) faring in the country as of now, as spearheaded by the Department of Science and Technology?

SEC. DELA PEÑA: Well, we are still in the stage wherein we are trying some natural products that can be therapeutics or can speed up the recovery of our COVID-19 patients. I think I have mentioned this before, we've been trying VCO. And in two locations, we have started already the formulations that will be tested initially in vitro for our Tawa-Tawa and Lagundi which have been known cures for other viral related diseases.

And we are, of course, now doing our negotiations for the collaboration in vaccine trials with at least four institutions, two coming from China and two coming from Chinese Taipei; it can increase to five. And of course, we have already started the studies related to virology not necessarily or not exclusively for COVID-19 alone but for other viruses because this is already part of our preparations for the setting up of a virology science institute of the Philippines which we proposed will be created by legislation.

SEC. ANDANAR: Ang Philippine Textile Research Institute started its mass production of a reusable, washable or re-wearable masks para sa ating mga frontliners. How far are we in the production, at ito ba ay nagagamit ng mga frontlines natin?

SEC. DELA PEÑA: Opo. Actually, the main beneficiary of the mass production of our re-wearable, reusable and re-washable masks is really the frontliners – the health workers and those of the checkpoints and other kinds/categories of frontliners. So, I reported last week that we are still in the 10,000 per week production because we are still looking for more collaborators which will be doing the sewing. But we expect that the volume will go to about 50,000 per week by the end of June.

Our target production initially is 500,000. We have already earmarked half of it for the frontliners in cooperation with the task force that is taking charge of logistics. And of course, the rest that they will produce will be part of the stockpiling of inventory of masks by the Philippine government.

So, the benefit from these masks is that, as I mentioned, reusable, re-wearable and we have made sure that it passes the requirements. First of all, it requires water repellency of the textile material and this is being done by applying a certain compound. And of course, we are preparing the use of natural textile material like cotton. So, most of the materials that we are using now are donations from companies in the Philippines, and in fact, even the materials that we have used for the compounds were also donated.

So, we are looking now for more collaborators who will be doing the sewing. Most of our production now is coming from the sewers of Taytay and also from Cavite. And we expect to have more collaborators for this.

USEC. IGNACIO: Isa po sa priority project ngayon ng DOST ay ang amplified coronavirus 2019 RT-PCR test kits distributed by the group of Dr. Raul Destura. Ano na po ang update dito at ilan po iyong daily production, saan-saang ospital nakakarating ang test kits na ito at gaano daw po ito ka-accurate?

SEC. DELA PEÑA: Lilinawin ko lamang po na nagkaroon po tayo ng problema dahil iyong una pong imported na raw material ay nagkaroon ng contamination, so iyan po ay hindi ginamit at pinalitan naman po ng ating supplier, actually hindi lang naman ang Pilipinas ang naapektuhan, ang daming sinuplayan.

So when the new materials came in, ni-require naman ulit ang bagong validation through RITM and eventually FDA. So, while in Manila (unclear) the promised 6,000 test it is waiting for a clearance again from FDA, another round of clearance because of the new shipment of materials that we have. But the production itself is hitting 8,000 per day.

USEC. IGNACIO: DOST has also been collaborating with other agencies, Secretary, gaya po ng Presidential Assistant for OFW Affairs para po bigyan ng assistance package ang ating mga Overseas Filipino workers at kanilang pamilya para po doon sa tinatawag technology-based enterprises. Please tell us more about this po.

SEC. DELA PEÑA: Oo. Well, we are of course looking after the welfare of our OFWs and therefore, we packaged a project that is specifically intended for them and this is really for starting new enterprises which are technology-based.

When I say technology-based it can take a wide range, it can be for example in food processing, it can be in metal working or fabrication, it can be in electronics, it can be in furniture and other housewares, it can even be in the field of agriculture and of course they can also do services, because many of our OFWs have gained certain technical and professional expertise abroad.

We have some examples already of those that we have held in the past. But now, we are putting up a program specifically for this. So for example there were those who formerly were working as seafarers and now they are into food processing, into furniture making and others have formed their own engineering design services companies. So, these are engineers who worked abroad and when they came back, they set up their own professional services company. I have known a good example who learned the very, very good automation skills when he was still there and he put up a start up here. Now they employ more than 200 people in the engineering company.

So, our assistance will be in two phases. One is really prepare them, give them some kind of test for entrepreneurial competency and then give them some training on entrepreneurship and then help them in identifying which enterprise they want to enter into and in this particular aspect we will give them access to our laboratories, to our pilot branch at DOST

and also with our network organizations and companies and then we have a pool of advisers that will help them until they come up with a good business plan.

From there, we can go into the second phase, where financing will already be involved. But, when we talk of financing, it's not only for the purchase of equipment, but it will be including those that are involved for example in the product development phase, in the laboratory testing place, in getting for example whatever technology licenses are needed to be taken in.

So, initially we are testing it at the NCR region, at the National Capital Region. But we will soon move out to the provinces. So, this is both a support for our OFWs and also some kind of a support to our Balik Probinsya, because many OFWs that are going home to their respective home provinces.

SEC. ANDANAR: Bukod po dito ay may assistance ding ginagawa ang DOST para sa mga MSME sa pamamagitan ng inyong set up program. What exactly is this program at anong klaseng assistance ang ibinibigay ng DOST sa mga MSME?

SEC. DELA PEÑA: Well, it is a long running program, it has been in existence since 2003 and it has been one of the most popular programs that we have.

SETUP means, Small Enterprises Technology Upgrading program and here again it is a package of assistance to existing terms. It should be at least a three-year-old firm that has been in existence and again it can cover a wide range of technology-based businesses as I mentioned earlier. But the focus of our assistance really is to help them identify how they can improve their productivity, their quality and their capacity.

So, most of the interventions here are really going into the acquisition of equipment for better technology, for expansion and also for good quality. And so, the assistance that we give is that we enable them to procure the needed hardware and also the software that accompanies them so that they can use this in their firms. And we give them—

Actually, we call this an advance, because the equipment that are purchased still belong to DOST until they have repaid without interest the amount that we advanced for this. So, it's not a loan, it's some kind of a lease purchase arrangement, but with no interest. We give them a one-year grace period before they start their payments and do this in a monthly basis, giving them an allowance of three years. It can be a little more than three years if the amount involved is much bigger. But we have a very, very high collection rate in this case. Of course, during the COVID-19 we have to give them a farther grace period, actually a moratorium on payments, a total of five months moratorium.

SEC. ANDANAR: Isa sa focus projects ng pamahalaan bilang long term solution para tugunan ang high population density sa Metro Manila ang Balik Probinsya, Bagong Pag-asa Program. At ang DOST, NEDA at UP Foundation ay mayroon pong plano patungkol dito, itong new

growth center development model. What exactly is this at paano po ito makakatulong sa ating mga kababayan?

SEC. DELA PEÑA: Well, it started two years ago, I have been attending meetings at NEDA particularly in support of the passage of the Land Use Act and they always talked about comprehensive land use planning and I thought that DOST can contribute. I did not announce this to them but at DOST we commissioned research, actually a model development that was done by the PLANADES Foundation which is affiliated to the UP School of Urban and Regional Planning.

So, they have been working on this and they were about to finish and to submit the model to us, it's just the training component that has been lacking and a few data that they need to give us maybe to the tune of remaining 10%. So, we thought that this can be used in the Balik Probinsiya Program.

And true enough, the model that they have focuses on identifying the so-called drivers of growth in our provinces. So, starting with 18 independent variables, they did the correlation and found out that there were 9 drivers of growth in the provinces: It can be the IRA, it can be the nearness to airports and seaports, it can be the closeness to economic zones and etcetera. And so, testing the model, they used this to identify 20 new growth centers.

When we talk of new growth centers, it's really a mix of agro-industrial development and these top 20 provinces that we have been identified and then they also have a portion in the model where they can project the increase in population in this newly growing centers. And so they projected the growth in population in those 20 provinces that they have identified through the model and tested or validated the actual increase in population versus the predicted and so, these now is the basis for forecasting the number of households that will be going or the increase in the number of households that will require new housing and therefore this will be a good instrument particularly for our housing agencies to plan for... and of course for the LGUs to plan for the housing requirement in their newly urbanizing areas.

But on top of this, the model also can help in simulating the direction or the growth in the other aspects like in terms of the transportation requirements, in terms of the industrial zone locations or the industrial growth locations and other areas.

So, they came up with the testing of this model in the number one province, in the top twenty that was the result of the model testing and it was actually the province of Cebu. So, they tried it and we now have outputs for the province of Cebu.

When I presented this to NEDA acting Sec. Karl Chua, he was hoping that we can produce all the results for all the twenty provinces but I said that the contract between us and the PLANADES Group was only to come up with the model to test it in one particular province

and also to conduct the training for LGUs who want to avail of this model and also to come up with the manuals or the guidelines that will be needed.

So, we will be scheduling some kind of a webinar, a launching so that the LGUs who would like to use the model, this is the newly growing urban development model, can be given training on the use of it and DOST will be on the assist particularly through our offices.

USEC. IGNACIO: Secretary, mainit na usapin din po sa education sector ang learning delivery system sa oras po na magsimula na ang academic year 2020-2021. Ano po iyong adjustment na gagawin naman ng Philippine Science High School to comply to the IATF guidelines po?

SEC. DELA PEÑA: Well, we of course, assume the two scenarios depending on the decision of IATF: One is they will not yet allow face to face classes and therefore this will all be done to the use of distance learning materials both electronic and printed because there are also student who may be living in remote areas and therefore we are not assured if there is connectivity in their areas.

The problem of using the equipment, the computer, the laptop can be solved. We can provide those who do not have yet but this is actually a relatively small percentage at this point but those where the connectivity is difficult, then we will be forced to produce or to use printed materials and we will make sure that these will be delivered to their specific locations.

Now, if there will be a decision to allow face to face interaction already or face to face classes at some point in time, then we will go to blended learning and this is a combination of the face to face learning in the classrooms and the distance learning mode.

Iyong face to face will be the usual learning in the classroom mode but the distance learning as I have described, and since we are required to do physical distancing in the classrooms also, then the capacity that the classrooms that we have, for example, it is good for thirty, we can only allow fifteen students to come and therefore they will be alternating in cycles.

So, if it is a two-week cycle, so two weeks, the students, half of the students or 50% will go to school and half will be doing distance learning. If circumstances or the situations dictate that the environment will, shall we say, it will be better for us to do a one-month cycle then we will do that.

So, the monitoring and testing of the students will also be done online (monitoring) and of course the performance testing. So, we are prepared for it, the teachers are now preparing their materials. The parents are being consulted because the cycle will somehow... it also depends on the suggestions coming from our parents.

So, we are prepared for both decisions: One, where there will be no face to face classes yet; and second, if they will allow and we just have to comply with the physical distancing as they

come to class. For the main campus, we cannot even risk 50%, it can only be 1/3 or 33% who will be coming at one time.

USEC. IGNACIO: Secretary, makikibalita na rin po kami doon sa virgin coconut oil clinical trial na sinasabing makakatulong daw po na makapagpapabilis sa pagpapagaling sa mga COVID-19 patients. Kumusta na po ito at ano na po ang update natin dito?

SEC. DELA PEÑA: Well, dalawa po iyong location natin. Ang good news, iyon pong sa PGH which is for moderate and severe cases ay inaprubahan na finally ng Ethics Board ng UP Manila, so I am just waiting for the report that they have already started.

Wala pong problema sa number of patients sa PGH kaya hinintay lang natin iyong go signal from the Ethics Board and the period for giving the VCO in PGH is only 14 days to test whether it has a good effect on the patient.

So, as I have indicated earlier, we are planning—or they are planning for 100 patients; half will be on VCO and half will be not given VCO, so for comparison purposes.

Now, the one that we are contacting in Sta. Rosa, while it has started already almost a month ago, the arrival of patients is relatively slow, and so we cannot still meet the 90 recommended number of patients to be enrolled and what we did was to include two other... shall we say hospitals or centers who have patients and fortunately Medical City has set up just two weeks ago a facility in Sta. Rosa and they agreed that they will participate and then also the quarantine center of Sta. Rosa will also be a source of additional patients.

This is for the case na hindi sila masyadong severe, ito iyong mga mild pa lang at saka iyong tinatawag nating (signal lost).

SEC. ANDANAR: All right... naputol. Maraming salamat po sa inyong pagpapaunlak, Sec. Boy Dela Peña ng DOST. Mabuhay po kayo!

Samantala, sa pinakahuling ulat ay umabot nasa ika-pitong puwesto ang bansang India sa may pinakamaraming kaso ng COVID-19 sa buong mundo. Gaya na lang ng ating bansa, maraming buhay at kabuhayan ang naapektuhan dito kabilang na ang Filipino community. Kumustahin natin ang kalagayan ng ating mga kababayang OFW sa India. Kasama po natin sa linya si Ambassador to India, Ambassador Ramon Bagatsing Jr. Magandang araw po sa inyo sir, mula dito sa Pilipinas!

AMB. BAGATSING: Magandang umaga, Sec. Andanar, magandang umaga, Undersecretary Ignacio. At magandang pagkakataon po na maipaliwanag sa ating mga kababayan ngayon ang sitwasyon dito sa India.

Ngunit masuwerte tayo in the sense na hindi naman ganoon karami ang mga OFW. As a matter of fact, India is number one in the Middle East in terms of labor providers, ka-kompetensiya natin ang India sa bagay na iyan.

At dito naman, ang mga na-stranded dito ay iyong mga seafarers and they're mostly in Mumbai and mostly working in the cruise ships. So, we are very fortunate in the sense na compared to the Middle East and some Southeast Asian countries, that we don't have that much OFWs here.

And the few that are here in the construction, high-tech companies and they're doing very well. So, it's not really a concern for us, most of them are secure and safe. They are getting in touch with us, they have been communicating with us, they have been telling us that they are okay and that none of them or very few of them are really interested of going home right now.

But we're also very lucky that—I think about two weeks ago, we were able to ferry at least 70 seafarers who worked for the different cruise lines from Mumbai and nandiyan na sila sa atin sa Pilipinas ngayon. At suwerte rin tayo sa kasalukuyan dahil nakapag-uwi na tayo ng mga mahigit isandaan at animnapu na mga kababayan natin at mayroon pa sigurong mga isandaan na stranded dito... and just a few seafarers.

Kaya I really understand the situation of those who are from the Middle East and Southeast Asia but sa India malaking bagay na tumutulong ang Filipino Community, most of them are married to Indian men and they're secured, they're very stable here and that they have been helping a lot taking care of those that have been stranded.

Ang issue natin dito, Secretary, are the stranded and the students, and some missionaries that are here na dahil nga kokonti ang mga flights papuntang Pilipinas ay hindi basta-basta na nakakauwi sila. Kaya inaasahan namin na sana magtuloy ang programa ng Philippine Airlines na magkaroon ng ferry flights next week. And then of course iyong Air India ang ginamit natin na mag-ferry ng mga Filipino passengers 'no for 1st and 2nd week of May [garbled] magkakaroon sila, so mga bandang June 23 sa tulong ng Panginoon magkakaroon tayo ng ferry flights.

[Garbled] napakiusapan natin si Secretary Lorenzana na... dahil mayroon tayong isang barko na nasa Oman, napakiusapan natin na pag-uwi sa Pilipinas dumaan dito sa India at dito kumuha mga ilang pasahero na mga stranded. At may isa na Filipino-American na nag-donate ng 200,000 na face masks at naisakay natin diyan sa Philippine Navy ship, iyong Davao del Sur at saka iyong isa pang kanilang barko na Ramon Alcaraz.

So, we were able to send through those navy ships 200,000 face masks mula sa tulong ni Mr. [garbled] ng Philippine Embassy dito at nakasakay tayo ng ilang mga pasahero, about 19, and then they are going to Sri Lanka to pick up more stranded Filipinos there. And I presume by the middle of next week, they will be there in Manila already.

So we are very fortunate in the sense na maraming tumutulong and we hope that by the end of the month at least mabawasan na ito, na mga stranded dito sa atin and then we can focus also dahil hawak din natin Secretary ang Nepal; I would like to make mention those that are in Nepal, there were about a dozen of them, we are taking care of that also but because lockdown din sa Nepal, wala ring international flights so they cannot move. And even here in India, they don't have international flights unless it is a chartered flight. Ngayon lang sila nag-umpisa ng mga domestic flights going from one major city to another. So, if we have to go to Delhi travel by land or at least now, may domestic flights na.

So far, so good at nagpapasalamat kami sa lahat ng tumulong sa amin na napauwi natin ang ibang mga kababayan natin, Martin.

SEC. ANDANAR: Ambassador, isa po ang India sa hard-hit ng COVID-19 with almost 200,000 COVID-19 positive cases. Ano po ang current situation ngayon diyan po sa India base po sa inyong nakikita?

AMBASSADOR BAGATSING: Well, as you said eh 200,000, now positive cases are only about 5,600 tests 'no and they are now under what we call lockdown phase 4. Kasi every 2 weeks ay nagla-lockdown 1 sila, then if the situation improves, they ease some of the lockdown measures. So now at this stage, dati essential services lang, ospital lang. Ngayon they have opened up some stores na stand-alone stores. They are now allowing mobility of people, may mga tricycle nila na puwede sa kalsada. They eased up the curfews, dati ala siyete ng gabi curfew na, eh ngayon ginawa nilang alas nuwebe hanggang ala singko.

And then pinapayagan nila [garbled] kasi ang problema dito maraming mga migrants na mga nagtatrabaho sa big cities pero nakatira sa mga probinsya. Ito iyong nakikita mo sa TV ngayon na mga stranded dahil walang paraan makauwi sa probinsya. So ngayon [garbled] nila ng maraming sasakyan, mga bus, mga trains para makasakay itong mga trabahador na ito, makauwi sila [garbled].

And this is the reason probably why there is now a spike 'no, tumataas na naman in some states, there at least 28 states dito. So may mga ibang state na kontrolado nila ang COVID, pero may mga ibang states—kasi for example Uttar Pradesh, ang citizens niyan [garbled] dalawandaang milyon, mas malaki pa sa Pilipinas, isang probinsya lang. So sa dami ng tao, tumataas talaga ang incidence ng COVID. Sa Maharashtra, ang population ng Maharashtra ay parang population ng Pilipinas, about a 100 plus million people. So ang Mumbai nandiyan, high density iyang lugar na iyan so tumataas [garbled].

For example, in Maharashtra alone, ang COVID incidence diyan is 70,000 na kumpara sa atin ay iilan lang tayo. So, just imagine 'no. So because of that, we have to be really extra careful, although nag-i-ease na nga dito, sumusunod naman ang mga tao, may disiplina naman ang mga tao dito, but just because of the sheer volume and the sheer density, hindi maiiwasan na there are some states na tumataas.

So ang mga Pilipino naman dito ay hindi naman talaga lumalabas, hindi pala-ikot, hindi... sumusunod sa mga patakaran na inuutos ng pamahalaan. So we don't have any, no Filipino here ay nagkaroon ng COVID-19, so suwerte tayo diyan at nag-iingat sila. But right now, as I said, hopefully if the lockdown will be eased, there will be international flights, there will be more movements, there will be facilities that will be opened. Kasi ang mga malls dito sarado pa, if ever bubuksan nila iyan, iyong mga nasa labas lang o kaya alternate, bukas ka ngayon, sarado ka bukas; tapos ang mga sasakyan na mga limited buses din 'no.

So basically, the same things as what is happening there in the Philippines. But—well the restrictions will be lifted there quite soon also.

USEC. ROCKY: Opo. Ambassador, currently po nagluwag nga ng restriction sa India except po doon sa labingtatlong cities na itinuturing pong bilang containment zone dahil dito daw nagmumula iyong karamihan sa nagpositibong kaso sa India sa COVID-19. May reports po ba tayo mula dito sa mga lungsod na 'to, iyong kalagayan po ng ating mga Filipino community doon?

AMBASSADOR BAGATSING: You know, we're very lucky Secretary 'no, as I said we only have about 3,000 Filipinos and 80% of them are housewives or married to Indians or what we call the [unclear]. So far we have no reports of any Filipino or Filipina having been afflicted with this virus. And on the other hand, they have been the ones helping us a lot, dahil kung may mga Pilipino na stranded halimbawa sa Mumbai, sa Bangalore or sa Calcutta, sa Chennai and some other places, sa Kochi, ang mga Filipino community ang tumutulong.

Sila ang nag-aalalay, sila ang nagbabahay, sila ang nagbibigay ng tulong na pagkain, lahat, sa mga stranded na Filipino community; of course, with the guidance and assistance of the Embassy, of the staff here in the Embassy. So in that sense, we're very, very fortunate and they have been very, very supportive of the Embassy and of the Filipinos that are stranded here in India.

SEC. ANDANAR: Opo. Ambassador, bagama't tumutulong nga iyong ating Filipino community diyan, pero may mga sinasabi ba silang problema o kadalasang nagiging problema ng ating Filipino community sa India na kinakailangan naman pong tugunan ng ating embahada?

AMBASSADOR BAGATSING: Most of the—hindi naman mabibigat ang mga problema diyan. Kadalasan diyan is basically passport renewals, passport extensions. And then once in a while we will have some domestic issues, iyong mga mag-asawa hindi na magkasundo, nag-aaway, pupunta dito iyong Pilipina na iyon, hindi niya kasundo iyong asawa niya, so iyon ang mga kinakailangan asikasuhin namin. And then sometimes repatriation na gusto nang umuwi, 'ayun, tinutulungan din namin iyon.

And then magandang balita din dito sa atin ngayon, iyong mga liver transplant patients. Maraming mga bata diyan sa atin na kinakailangan ng liver transplant 'no. There are more than 50 cases now na pumupunta dito sa India para magpagamot dahil mas eksperiyensado ang mga doktor dito. Hindi naman sa hindi magagaling ang mga doktor natin, magagaling din ang mga Pilipinong doktor but they have more experience and more facilities here. So these liver transplant patients, the children coming here for that operation and we're taking care of them. And so far at least maganda, 75 to 80 percent ang success story.
/she

But in so far as the local Filipino community here, no major problem at all and as a matter of fact, as I said, they have been helping the embassy in so many ways and in so many things. I am very fortunate with that compared to other post, hindi ganoon kabigat, walang problema dito ang Filipino community sa India.

SEC. ANDANAR: Nabanggit po ninyo kanina na nakabalik na sa kani-kanilang mga trabaho ang karamihan ng mga manggagawa doon. How about the few Filipino workers in India, hindi po ba sila nagkakaproblema sa kanilang hanapbuhay?

AMBASSADOR BAGATSING: Most of the Filipinos stranded here, Secretary, are stranded tourist, students and Yoga enthusiast. So, they are not here as workers. Bibihira dito ang worker ano. Iyong mga OFWs dito are under contract, and they are in the provinces. And they are all taken care of; they are all being handled well; their contracts are okay. So, we don't have any problems with them.

Iyong mga seafarers, halimbawa, they work in cruise lines or they worked in several ships, na-stranded iyong barko nila sa Mumbai, iyan ang ating inaasikaso ngayon. And so far, we have been able to bring home mga 70. So there's just a few, siguro mga 10 or 15 na na-stranded sa Mumbai ngayon at we had been communicating with them and we hope that if PAL will have the flight by, you know, in the next ten days, these Filipinos should be on board. Other than that, walang—siguro mabibilang mo ang mga Filipino na nagtatrabaho dito, not more than 40. Well, one of the, iyong food companies nagtayo ng kumpanya dito, pero they are doing very well and then, there is another construction company, a Filipino company – H and I(?) with a contract, they are doing very well. So, thank God we don't have issues with OFWs here in India.

SEC. ANDANAR: Maraming salamat po sa inyong panahon, Ambassador Ramon Bagatsing Jr., mula sa New Delhi, India. Mabuhay po kayo, Ambassador.

AMBASSADOR BAGATSING: Maraming salamat, Secretary Andanar and Undersecretary Ignacio. Maraming salamat sa pagkakataon na ito.

USEC. IGNACIO: Samantala, Secretary, sa gitna ng mga alituntunin na mahigpit na ipinatutupad ng ating pamahalaan ay isa sa mainit na usapin ang pagsisimula ng academic

year at dahil nga sa pagbabagong inaasahang magaganap, inaasahan din ang posibleng pagbaba naman ng bilang ng mga enrollees para sa taong ito.

SEC. ANDANAR: Kaya naman ang utos ng Pangulong Duterte tulungan ang mga estudyanteng nangangailangan ng tulong sa pagbabayad ng matrikula sa pamamagitan ng loan assistance mula sa Landbank. Pag-uusapan natin iyan kasama si Landbank President and CEO, Miss Cecilia Borromeo - magandang araw po sa inyo, Ma'am.

LANDBANK PRES AND CEO BORROMEIO: Magandang araw, Secretary Andanar at Usec. Ignacio. Magandang araw sa lahat ng nakikinig at nanunuod sa Laging Handa Pilipinas at maraming salamat po sa pagkakataong ito para mapag-usapan ang programa ng Landbank na access to academic development to empower the masses towards endless opportunities or Academe Lending Program.

SEC. ANDANAR: So, can we talk about this more, itong naging pahayag po ni Presidente Duterte na ipinag-utos niya po ang inyong bangko na tulungan ang mga estudyanteng hiram na po sa pagbabayad ng tuition fee, ano po ang reaction ng Landbank dito?

LANDBANK PRES AND CEO BORROMEIO: Katunayan, Secretary Andanar, inilunsad po namin ang ACADEME lending program ng Landbank noong first week of May kasi alam namin na may mga kababayan tayo na mahihirapan para tustusan iyong tuition fee ng kanilang mga anak. So, ang ginawa po ng Landbank, nakipag-ugnayan kami sa mga private schools kasama na iyong mga private junior and senior high schools na may permit to operate galing sa DepEd; iyong ating mga private technical and vocational and educational training institutions regulated naman po ng TESDA; at pati na iyong mga higher education institutions na authorized by CHED. Binansagan po namin ang features ng ACADEME as 333.

Ang unang 3 po ay para sa tatlong bilyon na inilaan ng Landbank bilang pondo para sa programang ACADEME. Ang pangalawang 3 ay tukoy naman sa 3% fixed interest rate per annum sa mga schools na manghihiram under this program at ang isa pang 3 ay nagrepresenta ng term ng loan under this program na maximum of three years po ang term noong loan under the 'Academe'.

Ibibigay po namin itong pautang na ito sa mga schools para makapag-offer sila ng study now pay later sa kanilang mga estudyante.

USEC. IGNACIO: Ma'am, sinu-sino po iyong mga eligible po na mag-a-apply sa loan program na ito at paano po iyong proseso?

MS. BORROMEIO: Ang magiging borrower po o manghihiram mula sa Landbank ay ang mga pribadong paaralan o educational institutions. Ang mga magulang po o guardian ng ating mga estudyante o mag-aaral ay maaari pong manghiram sa mga private schools na ito para iyong mga schools naman na iyan ay pupunta sa LandBank at ipa-rediscount nila iyong mga

promissory notes ng kanilang mga mag-aaral; at puwede ho namin bigyan sila ng pautang equivalent to 70% of the total promissory notes of their students.

SEC. ANDANAR: [OFF MIC] Puwedeng magsimula na mag-avail ang mga paaralan ng lending program na ito?

MS. BORROMEIO: Mayroon na hong mga paaralan na lumapit sa LandBank. Katunayan ho, mayroon na kaming in-approve na 250 million sa isang malaking school para makapagpautang sila under Study Now, Pay Later scheme sa kanilang mga estudyante at zero percent interest po sa students. At ang tenor naman ho ng loan nung estudyante doon sa school ay base na ho sa mapag-uusapan nila with the private school, Secretary.

USEC. IGNACIO: Maraming salamat po sa inyong panahon. At ang nakasama po natin ay si Ms. Cecile Borromeo, ang Presidente at CEO ng LandBank of the Philippines. Mag-ingat po kayo. Stay safe, ma'am.

MS. BORROMEIO: Thank you, Usec. Stay safe, too. Thank you, Secretary.

SEC. ANDANAR: Samantala, alamin naman po natin ang mga balitang nakalap ng Philippine Broadcasting Service mula sa ating mga lalawigan. Please go ahead, John Mogol.

[NEWS REPORTING BY JOHN MOGOL]

SEC. ANDANAR: Maraming Salamat, John Mogol ng PBS.

USEC. IGNACIO: Samantala, puntahan naman natin ang balitang nakalap ng PTV Davao kasama si Jay Lagang. Jay?

[NEWS REPORTING BY JAY LAGANG]

USEC. IGNACIO: Maraming salamat Jay Lagang ng PTV Davao.

SEC. ANDANAR: Mula sa Davao, silipin natin ang pinakahuling balita sa Cordillera Region kasama si Alah Sungduan. Go ahead, Alah.

[NEWS REPORTING BY ALAH SUNGDUAN]

SEC. ANDANAR: Maraming salamat sa'yo, Alah Sungduan ng PTV Cordillera.

USEC. IGNACIO: Maraming salamat sa ating mga naging panauhin ngayong araw, at sa ating partner agencies sa kanilang patuloy na suporta at walang sawang paghahatid ng balita at impormasyon. Maraming salamat din po sa Filipino Sign Language Access Team for COVID-19 sa inyong araw-araw na pakikiisa sa ating programa. Mabuhay po kayo.

SEC. ANDANAR: At diyan po nagtatapos ang ating programa para sa araw na ito. Ako pong muli ang inyong lingkod, Secretary Martin Andanar mula sa Presidential Communications Operations Office.

USEC. IGNACIO: At mula pa rin po sa Presidential Communications Operations Office, ako naman po si Usec. Rocky Ignacio.

SEC. ANDANAR: Hanggang bukas pong muli dito sa Public Briefing #LagingHandaPH.

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