Bali's miracle: turning wine into hand sanitiser

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Pharmacists on the Indonesian holiday island of Bali are tackling a shortage of anti-coronavirus hand sanitiser by making their own unique, tropical version—from thousands of litres of fermented palm wine.

The idea was the brainchild of Bali police chief Petrus Reinhard Golose, who says he was alarmed that supplies of alcohol-based disinfectant were in short supply while prices soared for what was left on the market.

He rustled up some 4,000 litres of the popular, potent beverage—known as arak—by asking local manufacturers to donate from their stocks, with the force also dipping into its own funds to buy up extra supplies.

Staff at Bali's Udayana University were then tasked with turning the wine into a handwash that could protect against the coronavirus.

Within a week, they had managed to produce a disinfectant with a 96 percent alcohol content to meet WHO standards, according to the university.

Some clove and mint oil were added to the mixture to reduce hand irritation.

"So far we've produced 10,600 bottles of hand sanitiser using arak and Bali police have given them out to people in need," Dewa Ayu Swastini, head of the university's pharmaceutical faculty, told AFP on Wednesday.

Bali has reported 49 confirmed cases of the coronavirus and 2 deaths.

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