



## NEWS ROUNDUP

22 JANUARY 2025 [09:00 am]

---

- Bill wants environmentally-critical projects insured first
- New Memorandum of Understanding paves the way for more collaborative research in the Philippines
- Trump says to unleash American fossil fuels, halt climate cooperation
- 5 million may lose jobs in 2025 due to AI, climate change – FFW
- [Editorial] Drill, baby, drill
- [Comment] Coral Reefs Are Vanishing Fast. We Must Act Now To Protect These Vital Ecosystems

### INQUIRER

#### [Bill wants environmentally-critical projects insured first](#)

By: Gabriel Pabicu Lalu

MANILA, Philippines — Bicol Saro party-list Rep. Brian Raymund Yamsuan has called on his colleagues at the House of Representatives to approve a bill that would require owners and operators of environmentally-critical projects to obtain insurance to avoid adverse impact to surrounding communities.

### BGS NEWS

#### [New Memorandum of Understanding paves the way for more collaborative research in the Philippines](#)

BGS has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) to strengthen collaboration in research and innovation and to share knowledge on geological hazards.

### RAPPLER

#### [Trump says to unleash American fossil fuels, halt climate cooperation](#)

WASHINGTON, USA — President [Donald Trump](#) on Monday, January 20, laid out a sweeping plan to maximize oil and gas production, including by declaring a national energy emergency to speed permitting, rolling back environmental protections, and withdrawing the US from an international pact to fight climate change.

### PANAY NEWS

## [5 million may lose jobs in 2025 due to AI, climate change – FFW](#)

According to FFW, this is based on the projection of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that 14 percent of the total workforce in the Philippines is at risk of being replaced by AI as well as job losses of 2.3 million due to the effects of typhoons in 2024.

**ONE NEWS PH**

## [Coral Reefs Are Vanishing Fast. We Must Act Now To Protect These Vital Ecosystems](#)

By Peter Thomson

The world's coral reefs are in the midst of an ecological crisis. These vital ecosystems, home to a quarter of all marine species and a lifeline for more than a billion people, are under unprecedented threat. The fourth mass bleaching event, currently under way, is the most extensive ever recorded, affecting nearly 80 percent of coral reefs. Without swift action, these critical ecosystems could effectively vanish within decades.

**RAPPLER**

## [Drill, baby, drill](#)

TDT

Minutes after being sworn in as the 47th President of the United States, Donald Trump sent shock waves throughout the world, particularly in the economic field.

Making his position clear about protecting the American economy, Trump issued game-changing executive orders at his rally at the Capital One Arena, including withdrawing from the Paris climate treaty and his preference for fossil fuels that will cause a gridlock in renewable energy efforts.

---

**INQUIRER**

## [Bill wants environmentally-critical projects insured first](#)

By: Gabriel Pabicu Lalu

MANILA, Philippines — Bicol Saro party-list Rep. Brian Raymund Yamsuan has called on his colleagues at the House of Representatives to approve a bill that would require owners and operators of environmentally-critical projects to obtain insurance to avoid adverse impact to surrounding communities.

Yamsuan in a statement on Tuesday said House Bill No. 1937 or the proposed Mandatory Environmental Insurance Coverage Act must be passed to ensure that there would be safeguards for communities where possibly dangerous operations are conducted.

Article continues after this advertisement

Among the environmentally-critical projects that will be considered are quarrying, logging, reclamation, mining, major infrastructure projects, and those in calamity-prone areas like floods, typhoons and volcanic activity.

“Our country is the most disaster-prone in Southeast Asia. But we cannot ignore the fact that the calamities we are experiencing now are also due to man-made activities that damage the environment,” Yamsuan said.

Article continues after this advertisement

“Despite these realities, there is still no action or policy to ensure adequate compensation for losses resulting from these activities that lead to environmental degradation and cause harm to lives and property. This bill aims to fill this gap,” he added.

According to Yamsuan, companies operating environmentally-critical projects must be responsible to prevent man-made disasters and other environmental risks.

The said bill was filed last July 14, 2022, and has been pending with the House committee on ecology.

“Our ultimate goal is accountability for institutions and corporations that embark on environmentally critical projects. We want to make sure that they operate as responsible owners to help prevent man-made disasters,” he said.

“If environmental damages do occur, then the MEIC will ensure that communities are properly compensated and rehabilitation programs are immediately implemented,” he added.

Under the bill, a Mandatory Environmental Insurance Coverage (MEIC) will be established, with it coming in the form of an environmental guarantee cash fund or an environmental insurance policy (EIP) obtained from bonding or insurance companies.

The EIP meanwhile may either be an environment performance bond or an environment pollution, impairment, and cleanup liability insurance, which the bill said will be “required for all existing and future activities or projects” that have been issued an Environmental Compliance Certificate.

If enacted, affected communities, stakeholders, and the local government units who have jurisdiction of the projects will be the beneficiaries of the insurance.

An Inter-Agency Technical Committee chaired by the Environment secretary will be created to implement the provisions, if it is signed into law.

The Philippines remains to be one of the countries most vulnerable to calamities, as it faces several tropical cyclones yearly, and is seated at the Pacific ring of fire, making volcanic activity and earthquakes common.

Last September 2024, the World Risk Report ranked the Philippines as the most at-risk country to extreme natural events and negative impacts of climate change, out of 193 United Nations member-states.

The index showed that the Philippines was followed by Indonesia, India, Colombia, and then Mexico.

Then in 2023, according to the Gross Domestic Climate Risk ranking by the Sydney-based climate-change research firm The Cross Dependency Initiative, five Luzon provinces were considered the most at-risk areas because of climate-induced disasters.

President Marcos has spoken several times, in local events and foreign meets, about climate change. During the 43rd Association of Southeast Asian Nations in Jakarta last September, the Chief Executive called on world leaders to speedily enact the Loss and Damage Fund (LDF), as countries bearing the brunt of climate change need urgent financial assistance.

## **BGS NEWS**

### **[New Memorandum of Understanding paves the way for more collaborative research in the Philippines](#)**

BGS has signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (PHIVOLCS) to strengthen collaboration in research and innovation and to share knowledge on geological hazards.

The Philippines was identified in the World Bank 2024 World Risk Report as the country most at risk from natural hazards, facing the combined risks of volcanoes, earthquakes, rising sea levels, temperatures, and an increased frequency of extreme weather events. The Philippines is also one of the countries most at risk from the effects of climate change.

“We’re delighted to have signed this MoU with our Philippine partners, which strengthens our already positive and longstanding relationship. Together, we will continue our important work to reduce the impact of natural hazards within the country, helping to build resilience and supporting PHIVOLCS in their efforts to reduce the impacts on communities due to natural hazards,” said Annie Winson, BGS Senior Multihazard Scientist.

The signing took place on 15 November 2024, whilst BGS staff were in the Philippines to undertake a joint workshop on emerging technologies in multi-hazard risk assessment. The MoU builds on a strong existing partnership between BGS and PHIVOLCS, which has been working over the last five years to develop methods for integrating 3D visualisation and virtual reality into hazard mapping and preparedness. This relationship is part of a wider partnership between the Philippines and BGS, which has already produced projects such as PROMT and outputs such as the Philippine National Hydrological Model.

“I would like to thank the British Geological Survey for forging this partnership with us. For a country that experiences multiple disasters each year, it is essential that we seek out all available expertise to continuously improve our efforts in disaster preparedness and mitigation. Meanwhile, we at PHIVOLCS commit to sharing our expertise, particularly in the disciplines of earthquake and volcano hazards and risk research. All these have the goal of creating more resilient communities in our respective countries.”

Teresito C Bacolcol, director, DOST-PHIVOLCS

## **RAPPLER**

### **[Trump says to unleash American fossil fuels, halt climate cooperation](#)**

WASHINGTON, USA — President [Donald Trump](#) on Monday, January 20, laid out a sweeping plan to maximize oil and gas production, including by declaring a national energy emergency to speed permitting, rolling back environmental protections, and withdrawing the US from an international pact to fight climate change.

WASHINGTON, USA — President Donald Trump on Monday, January 20, laid out a sweeping plan to maximize oil and gas production, including by declaring a national energy emergency to speed permitting, rolling back environmental protections, and withdrawing the US from an international pact to fight climate change.

The moves signal a dramatic U-turn in Washington's energy policy after former president Joe Biden sought for four years to encourage a transition away from fossil fuels in the world's largest economy. But it remains to be seen if Trump's measures will have any impact on US production, already at record levels as drillers chase high prices in the wake of sanctions on Russia after its 2022 invasion of Ukraine.

"America will be a manufacturing nation once again, and we have something that no other manufacturing nation will ever have: the largest amount of oil and gas of any country on Earth," Trump said during his inauguration speech.

"And we are going to use it."

Trump later signed executive orders declaring a national energy emergency and withdrawing the United States from the 2015 Paris climate deal, the international pact to fight global warming. He also signed orders aimed at promoting oil and gas development in Alaska, reversing Biden's efforts to protect Arctic lands and US coastal waters from drilling, revoking Biden's target for EV adoption, suspending offshore wind lease sales, and lifting a freeze on LNG export permitting.

Trump curtails protections around diversity, LGBTQ rights  
US President Donald Trump's executive order limits gender recognition to male and female, and repeals diversity, equity and inclusion policies amidst civil rights backlash

Trump promises 'brand new day,' harsh immigration limits at pre-inauguration rally  
The rally resembles the free-wheeling campaign speeches that have been a Trump staple since 2016, with the former and future president delivering a mix of boasts, false claims and sweeping promises to the delight of the crowd

Trump said he expects the orders to help reduce consumer energy prices and improve US national security, by expanding domestic supplies and also bolstering allies.

"We will bring prices down, fill our strategic reserves up again right to the top, and export American energy all over the world," he said.

Environmental groups have said they intend to challenge the executive orders in court.

The Biden administration had seen electric vehicle and wind energy technologies as crucial to efforts to decarbonize the transportation and power sectors, which together make up around half of US carbon dioxide emissions.

Biden's administration sought to encourage electric vehicle use by offering a consumer subsidy for new EV purchases, and by imposing tougher tailpipe emissions standards on automakers. It also sought to encourage clean energy technologies like wind and solar through tax credits that have drawn billions of dollars in new manufacturing and project investments.

The Democratic National Committee called Trump's day one agenda a "disaster for working families".

"Killing manufacturing jobs and giving a free pass to polluters that make people sick is hardly putting 'America first,'" said Alex Floyd, DNC spokesperson.

#### Power industry overhaul

Trump had said repeatedly during his campaign he intends to declare a national energy emergency, arguing the US should produce more fossil fuels and also ramp up power generation to meet rising demand.

US data center power use, a major driver of growing electricity demand, could nearly triple in the next three years, and consume as much as 12% of the country's power to fuel artificial intelligence and other technologies, according to the Department of Energy.

Trump's declaration seeks to ease environmental restrictions on power plants to meet that demand, speed up construction of new plants, and ease permitting for transmission and pipeline projects.

"It allows you to do whatever you've got to do to get ahead of that problem," Trump told reporters while signing the order. "And we do have that kind of an emergency."

Sam Sankar, senior vice president for programs at Earthjustice, a non-profit group which is gearing up to fight Trump policies in the courts, said the declaration of an energy emergency in a non-war period is rare and untested, creating a potential legal vulnerability.

The first Trump administration had considered using emergency powers under the Federal Power Act to attempt to carry out a pledge to rescue the declining coal industry, but never followed through.

Trump's promise to refill strategic reserves, meanwhile, has the potential to lift oil prices by boosting demand for US crude oil.

After the invasion of Ukraine, Biden had sold more than 180 million barrels of crude oil from the US Strategic Petroleum Reserve, a record amount.

The sales helped keep gasoline prices in check, but sank the reserve — designed to buffer the United States from a potential supply shock — to the lowest level in 40 years.

## **PANAY NEWS**

### **[5 million may lose jobs in 2025 due to AI, climate change – FFW](#)**

According to FFW, this is based on the projection of the International Monetary Fund (IMF) that 14 percent of the total workforce in the Philippines is at risk of being replaced by AI as well as job losses of 2.3 million due to the effects of typhoons in 2024.

“We assume that the job losses from AI would not happen in one go,” the FFW said.

The IMF report, dated December 2024, found that an estimated 36 percent of the jobs in the country are “highly exposed” to AI. It said more than half are “highly complementary,” where AI can support rather than replace the tasks performed by the worker.

However, it said that for “low-complementarity jobs,” 14 percent of the total workforce is at risk of being replaced by AI.

“AI exposure varies by gender, with approximately half of all jobs held by women highly exposed, compared to a quarter by men,” the report stated.

Meanwhile, Julius Cainglet, FFW Vice President For Research, Advocacy, and Partnerships, said that individuals who were affected by the typhoons may become affected again.

*“Talagang nangangailangan po ng maraming paghahanda kasi ‘yun pong nawalan ng trabaho sa agrikultura, dala pa lang po ‘yan ng mga super typhoon,”* Cainglet said in a press conference.



He added: “*Pagdating po natin ng* end of February and March, expect *po natin ulit ‘yung* heat stress *na na-experience natin* last year,” he added.

To prepare, he said they must intensify efforts and engage employers through social dialogue. (*GMA Integrated News*)

## **ONE NEWS PH**

**Coral Reefs Are Vanishing Fast. We Must Act Now To Protect These Vital Ecosystems**  
By Peter Thomson

The world’s coral reefs are in the midst of an ecological crisis. These vital ecosystems, home to a quarter of all marine species and a lifeline for more than a billion people, are under unprecedented threat. The fourth mass bleaching event, currently under way, is the most extensive ever recorded, affecting nearly 80 percent of coral reefs. Without swift action, these critical ecosystems could effectively vanish within decades.

Coral reefs are more than natural wonders: they are an essential Earth system, supporting marine life, food security, livelihoods, development of medicines and coastal defense. Yet public and private leaders are failing to respond to the crisis, largely ignoring alarm bells that are ringing out from the scientific community.

Between 2009 and 2018, the world lost 14 percent of its coral reefs, and 90 percent of those that remain are at risk from climate change, pollution, overfishing and anthropogenic threats.

The 2024 UN Biodiversity and Climate Conferences (COP16 and COP29) offered coral reef platforms to ignite a wave of progress, but ultimately failed to deliver the financial commitments needed. The Third United Nations Ocean Conference, opens new tab, in June, and the UN Climate Conference in November represent our last, best chance to turn the tide.

The Global Fund for Coral Reefs, opens new tab (GFRC) is a UN backed coalition that was set up in 2020 by governments, the private sector, philanthropies and global conservation champions to accelerate innovative solutions to protect coral reefs and support the communities that rely on them in more than 20 countries.

GFCR has a bold goal of catalyzing up to \$3 billion by 2030, targeting in particular coral refugia – reefs that are resilient to climate stress but vulnerable to local threats.

Thus far, it has supported initiatives to protect approximately five percent of these critical ecosystems globally. In the Philippines, for example, GFCR has supported community-based aquaculture and sustainable fisheries in 75 reef-rich marine protected areas (MPAs), spanning nearly one million hectares.

The Philippines initiative, led by implementer Blue Alliance Marine Protected Areas, generated its first revenues in 2024, and full financial sustainability of supported MPAs is expected by 2026. It has already attracted impact investors such as UBS Optimus Foundation and BNP Paribas. This scalable model holds promise for underfunded MPAs around the world.

In Indonesia, a groundbreaking debt-for-nature swap supported by the GFCR is redirecting \$35 million in debt payments toward coral preservation. Wider GFCR country initiatives also include mooring systems to prevent anchor damage and generate MPA funding, as well as wider sustainable tourism plans for Raja Ampat, one of the most pristine reef areas in the ocean.

These efforts highlight how innovative solutions can protect ecosystems and at the same time benefit local communities. GFCR's network of supported conservation leaders deliver holistic solutions that create livelihood opportunities and generate profits for sustainable local economies, ensuring a virtuous cycle of self-sufficiency.

By leveraging public funds, the innovation of the private sector, and the flexibility of philanthropic organizations, these partnerships can tackle the interconnected challenges of climate change, sustainable livelihoods and biodiversity loss.

But the GFCR faces a critical funding gap. To achieve its goal of protecting 12 percent of the world's coral reefs, an additional \$150 million is needed by the time of the UN Ocean Conference in Nice in June 9 to 13 this year. Without this investment, we risk losing momentum at a crucial moment.

Coral reefs have shown resilience in the past, but they cannot survive the current pace of bleaching without our help. Without coral reefs, we cannot have a healthy ocean as we know it; and without a healthy ocean, we cannot have a healthy planet.

Given the crucial role coral reefs have in sustaining both human and marine life, the cost of failing to replenish the GFCR could have tragic consequences for us all.

Ambassador Peter Thomson is the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for the Ocean. He has extensive UN experience, including serving as Fiji's permanent representative and president of the 71st UN General Assembly. Mr. Thomson has also served as president of the International Seabed Authority's Assembly and Council, chaired the Group of 77 and China, and presided over the Executive Board of United Nations Development Programme or UNDP/UN Population Fund or UNFPA/UN for Project Services or UNOPS. As a civil servant in Fiji, he dedicated many years to rural development and foreign affairs.

## **RAPPLER**

### **[Drill, baby, drill](#)**

TDT

Minutes after being sworn in as the 47th President of the United States, Donald Trump sent shock waves throughout the world, particularly in the economic field.

Making his position clear about protecting the American economy, Trump issued game-changing executive orders at his rally at the Capital One Arena, including withdrawing from the Paris climate treaty and his preference for fossil fuels that will cause a gridlock in renewable energy efforts.

Since the United States remains the dominant economy in the world, Trump's policies will dictate the global business arc at least for the next four years.

Trump's first actions as Chief Executive are a preview of his pragmatic second administration where he is expected to refine the controversial policies of his first term.

Among the series of directives he issued was one mandating that federal workers return to their offices five days a week to end the work-from-home regime since the Covid-19 pandemic.

Last month, at a news conference at his Mar-a-Lago club in Florida, Trump said he planned to dismiss federal employees who didn't return to their offices.

Under Trump, the US has withdrawn a second time from the Paris climate agreement, an international treaty to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Trump also vowed to “drill, baby, drill” for oil, and scrap the rules aimed at persuading motorists to buy electric vehicles.

He served notice that he would defy global efforts to combat planetary warming despite catastrophic weather events intensifying worldwide.

The Paris agreement seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions which is being pinpointed by experts as the cause of the ever unpredictable weather.

Trump has declared a “national energy emergency” to expand drilling in the US, the world’s top oil and gas producer, and said he would scrap vehicle emission standards that amounted to an “electric vehicle mandate.”

Sweeping energy-related federal orders aimed at restoring the primacy of conventional energy sources are expected to follow. Revoking the electric vehicle mandate aims to “save our auto industry,” according to Trump.

His domestic actions were hailed by energy industry leaders, who view his administration’s policies as a return to the era of “American energy dominance.”

The President had earlier expressed his view about warnings on climate change being mostly a hoax.

In an interview on Fox, he had said, “In my opinion, you have a thing called weather, and you go up and you go down,” he said. “If you look at the 1920s, they were talking about a global freezing, okay? In other words, the globe was going to freeze.”

The withdrawal of the US from its commitments in the Paris agreement would likely reignite a global preference for more fossil fuels that environmentalists believe would set back the gains in the battle against global warming.

Financiers of energy projects, for instance, are expected to review their policies which are mostly geared towards bankrolling renewable energy deals.

The Philippines has a policy of not allowing new coal projects but those in operation have been granted authority to expand.

With the US turnaround, a reassessment may likely happen since coal and oil as fuel are similarly situated.

The depletion of the coal supply, for instance, was believed affected by the global tendency away from the cheapest source of energy. Technology is being developed, however, to reduce gas emissions from coal plants.

The bias against coal is detrimental to developing nations such as the Philippines since it needs the cheap source of energy to feed the rising demand of a swiftly expanding economy.

Going back to the basics as Trump would have it will have a profound effect on the choices for development. The Philippines, for instance, has made substantial strides in generating energy from nature.

The country is among the most affected in the world by the changing weather patterns, yet development requirements necessitate a review of the energy horizon as Trump sees it.

**=END=**

**Information and Knowledge Management Division**