NEWS ROUNDUP
04 FEBRUARY 2026 | 08:00 am

- Tropical depression Basyang enters Philippine area
- SM group completes GeoRiskPH training to strengthen climate risk assessment
- Climate change could lead to 500,000 ‘additional’ malaria deaths in Africa by 2050\
- Trump’s National Defense Strategy Tries to Imagine Climate Change Away
- Filipino Voices on Peace and Sustainability
- DSWD releases ₱723M aid for disaster resilience to W. Visayas

ABS CBN

Tropical depression Basyang enters Philippine area
By: Ariel Rojas

A tropical depression entered the Philippine area of responsibility on Tuesday afternoon and was named Basyang, PAGASA said.

BUSINESS WORLD

SM group completes GeoRiskPH training to strengthen climate risk assessment
By: Alexandria Grace C. Magno

SM INVESTMENTS CORP. (SMIC), parent company of the SM group, said it completed a two-day training program conducted by the Department of Science and Technology-Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (DoST-PHIVOLCS) on the GeoRiskPH platform.

ECO BUSINESS

Climate change could lead to 500,000 ‘additional’ malaria deaths in Africa by 2050
By: Ayesha Tandon

The study, published in Nature, finds that extreme weather, rising temperatures and shifting rainfall patterns could result in an additional 123 million cases of malaria across Africa – even if current climate pledges are met.

FOREIGN POLICY

Trump's National Defense Strategy Tries to Imagine Climate Change Away
By: Josh Busby and Greg Pollock

Last Friday, the U.S. Defense Department unceremoniously released a new National Defense Strategy (NDS). After a week of extraordinary tumult in U.S. foreign policy, the document received little attention—but it's worth a second look, if only as a window into the vapidity and shortsightedness of the Trump administration's approach to national security.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Filipino Voices on Peace and Sustainability

In a time when conflict, climate anxiety, and economic uncertainty dominate headlines, it is easy to assume that meaningful change belongs only to governments, billion-dollar institutions, or global summits. But real change often begins in classrooms, communities, and, even in books.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

DSWD releases ₱723M aid for disaster resilience to W. Visayas
By: Franz Remar Garion

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Western Visayas has strengthened its disaster response and climate resilience efforts, disbursing a total of P723.1 million in assistance to families affected by various calamities in the region.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

Tropical depression Basyang enters Philippine area
By: Ariel Rojas

A tropical depression entered the Philippine area of responsibility on Tuesday afternoon and was named Basyang, PAGASA said.

The state weather bureau will issue tropical cyclone bulletins beginning 11 p.m.

As of 4:00 p.m., the weather disturbance was packing winds of 55 kilometers per hour with up to 70 kph gusts. The disturbance was moving northwestward slowly.

The tropical cyclone will intensify up to tropical storm strength while moving westward over the Philippine Sea east of Mindanao.

It may make its landfall over Caraga on Thursday afternoon or evening and cross Visayas and Palawan from Friday, February 6 to Sunday February 8.

The tropical depression is less likely to directly affect weather conditions in the country in the next 24 hours.

Wind signals however may be raised over some parts of Eastern Visayas and Caraga beginning Wednesday, February 4.

Up to heavy rains are expected over many parts in Visayas and Mindanao from Wednesday afternoon through the weekend.

Widespread and serious flooding and landslides are likely in many areas.

The public is advised to monitor updates and take actions to protect life and property.

BUSINESS WORLD

SM group completes GeoRiskPH training to strengthen climate risk assessment

By: Alexandria Grace C. Magno

SM INVESTMENTS CORP. (SMIC), parent company of the SM group, said it completed a two-day training program conducted by the Department of Science and Technology-Philippine Institute of Volcanology and Seismology (DoST-PHIVOLCS) on the GeoRiskPH platform.

The platform provides online tools to assess location-specific risks from earthquakes, volcanoes, floods, storms, and climate change, SMIC said in a statement on Tuesday.

Nearly 60 executives and representatives from SM companies participated in the training, including teams from SM Prime Holdings, SM Retail, SM Markets, BDO Unibank, China Banking Corp., 2GO Group, and Philippine Geothermal Production Company.

The workshops provided hands-on guidance on using GeoRiskPH to identify hazards, determine which areas are at risk, and view hazard exposure in terms of population and infrastructure, SMIC said.

SMIC said SM Group Sustainability Office Head Koleen Davila Palaganas noted that “given the SM Group’s presence across the regions, the effective use of GeoRiskPH can also contribute to the safety of our employees and communities, as well as enable faster and more informed disaster response and relief operations.”

GeoRiskPH is a multi-agency project led by PHIVOLCS since 2018 and funded by DoST in coordination with the Philippine Council for Industry, Energy, and Emerging Technology Research and Development (PCIEERD). It serves as a central source of information on environmental hazards and allows the public and private sectors to conduct free hazard assessments.

SMIC said the platform now includes several tools: HazardHunterPH, which provides multi-hazard assessments; GeoMapperPH, which allows data collection and development of a national exposure database; GeoAnalyticsPH, which presents maps and analyses for risk-informed planning; and PlanSmart, which supports digital disaster rehabilitation, recovery planning, and land-use planning.

ECO BUSINESS

Climate change could lead to 500,000 ‘additional’ malaria deaths in Africa by 2050

By: Ayesha Tandon

The study, published in Nature, finds that extreme weather, rising temperatures and shifting rainfall patterns could result in an additional 123 million cases of malaria across Africa – even if current climate pledges are met.

The authors explain that as the climate warms, “disruptive” weather extremes, such as flooding, will worsen across much of Africa, causing widespread interruptions to malaria treatment programmes and damage to housing.

These disruptions will account for 79 per cent of the increased malaria transmission risk and 93 per cent of additional deaths from the disease, according to the study.

The rest of the rise in malaria cases over the next 25 years is due to rising temperatures and shifting rainfall patterns, which will change the habitable range for the mosquitoes that carry the disease, the paper says.

The majority of new cases will occur in areas already suitable for malaria, rather than in new regions, according to the paper.

The study authors tell Carbon Brief that current literature on climate change and malaria “often overlooks how heavily malaria risk in Africa is today shaped by climate-fragile prevention and treatment systems”.

The research shows the importance of ensuring that malaria control and primary healthcare is “resilient” to the extreme weather, they say.

Malaria in a warming world

Malaria kills hundreds of thousands of people every year. The World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 610,000 people died due to the disease in 2024.

In 2024, Africa was home to 95 per cent of malaria cases and deaths. Children under the age of five made up three-quarters of all African malaria deaths.

The disease is transmitted to humans by bites from mosquitoes infected with the malaria parasite. The insects thrive in high temperatures of around 29°C and need stagnant or slow-moving water in which to lay their eggs. As such, the areas where malaria can be transmitted are heavily dependent on the climate.

There is a wide body of research exploring the links between climate change and malaria transmission. Studies routinely find that as temperatures rise and rainfall patterns shift, the area of suitable land for malaria transmission is expanding across much of the world.

Study authors Prof Peter Gething and Prof Tasmin Symons are researchers at the Curtin University's school of population health and the Malaria Atlas Project from the The Kids Research Institute, Australia.

They tell Carbon Brief that this approach does not capture the full picture, arguing that current literature on climate change and malaria "often overlooks how heavily malaria risk in Africa is today shaped by climate-fragile prevention and treatment systems".

The paper notes that extreme weather events are regularly linked to surges in malaria cases across Africa and Asia. This is, in-part, because storms, heavy rainfall and floods leave pools of standing water where mosquitoes can breed. For example, nearly 15,000 cases of malaria were reported in the aftermath of Cyclone Idai hitting Mozambique in 2019.

However, the study authors also note that weather extremes often cause widespread disruption, which can limit access to healthcare, damage housing or disrupt preventative measures such as mosquito nets. These factors can all increase vulnerability to malaria, driving the spread of the disease.

In their study, the authors assess both the "ecological" effects of climate change – the impacts of temperature and rainfall changes on mosquito populations – and the "disruptive" effects of extreme weather.

Mosquito habitat

To assess the ecological impacts of climate change, the authors first identify how temperature, rainfall and humidity affect mosquito lifecycles and habitats.

The authors combine observational data on temperature, humidity and rainfall, collected over 2000-22, with a range of datasets, including mosquito abundance and breeding habitat.

The authors then use malaria infection prevalence data, collected by the Malaria Atlas Project, which describes the levels of infection in children aged between two and 10 years old.

Symons and Gething explain that they can then use "sophisticated mathematical models" to convert infection prevalence data into estimates of malaria cases.

Comparing these datasets gives the authors a baseline, showing how changes in climate have affected the range of mosquitoes and malaria rates across Africa in the early 21st century.

The authors then use global climate models to model future changes over 2024-49 under the SSP2-4.5 emissions pathway – which the authors describe as "broadly consistent with current international pledges on reduced greenhouse gas emissions".

The authors also ran a "counterfactual" scenario, in which global temperatures do not increase over the next 25 years. By comparing malaria prevalence in their scenarios with and without climate change, the authors could identify how many malaria cases were due to climate change alone.

Overall, the ecological impacts of climate change will result in only a 0.12 per cent increase in malaria cases by the year 2050, relative to present-day levels, according to the paper.

However, the authors say that this "minimal overall change" in Africa's malaria rates "masks extensive geographical variation", with some areas seeing a significant increase in malaria rates and others seeing a decrease.

Disruptive extremes

In contrast, the study estimates that 79 per cent of the future increase in malaria transmission will be due to the "disruptive" impacts of more frequent and severe weather extremes.

The authors explain that extreme weather events, such as flooding and cyclones, can cause extensive damage to housing, leaving people without crucial protective equipment such as mosquito nets.

It can also destroy other key infrastructure, such as roads or hospitals, preventing people from accessing healthcare. This means that in the aftermath of an extreme weather event, people face a greater risk of being infected with malaria.

The climate models run by the study authors project an increase in "disruptive" extreme weather events over the next 25 years.

For example, the authors find that by the middle of the century, cyclones forming in the Indian Ocean will become more intense, with fewer category 1 to category 4 events, but more frequent category 5 events. They also find that climate change will drive an increase in flooding across Africa.

The study finds that without mitigation measures, these disruptive events will drive up the risk of malaria – especially in "main river systems" and the "cyclone-prone coastal regions of south-east Africa".

Between 2024 and 2050, 67 per cent of people in Africa will see their risk of catching malaria increase as a result of climate change, the study estimates.

The map below shows the percentage change in malaria transmission rate in the 2040s due to the disruptive impacts of climate change alone (left) and a combination of the disruptive and ecological impacts (right), compared to a scenario in which there is no change in the climate. Red and yellow indicate an increase in malaria risk, while blue indicates a reduction.

Colours in lighter shading indicate lower model confidence, while stronger colours indicate higher model confidence.

The maps show that the “disruptive” effects of climate change have a more uniform effect, driving up malaria risk across the entire continent.

However, there is greater regional variation when these effects are combined with “ecological” drivers.

The authors find that warming will increase malaria risk in regions where the temperature is currently too low for mosquitoes to survive. This includes the belt of lower latitude southern Africa, including Angola, southern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Zambia, as well as highland areas in Burundi, eastern DRC, Ethiopia, Kenya and Rwanda.

Meanwhile, they find that warming will drive down malaria transmission in the Sahel, as temperatures rise above the optimal range for mosquitoes.

Rising risk

The combined “disruptive” and “ecological” impacts of climate change will drive an additional 123m “clinical cases” of malaria across Africa, even if the current climate pledges are met, the study finds.

This will result in 532,000 additional deaths from malaria over the next 25 years, if the disease’s mortality rate remains the same, the authors warn.

The graph below shows the increase in clinical cases of malaria projected across Africa over the next 25 years, broken down into the different ecological (yellow) and disruptive (purple) drivers of malaria risk.

However, the authors stress that there are many other mechanisms through which climate change could affect malaria transmission – for example, through food insecurity, conflict, economic disruption and climate-driven migration.

“Eradicating malaria in the first half of this century would be one of the greatest accomplishments in human history,” the authors say.

They argue that accomplishing this will require “climate-resilient control strategies”, such as investing in “climate-resilient health and supply-chain infrastructure” and enhancing emergency early warning systems for storms and other extreme weather.

Dr Adugna Woyessa is a senior researcher at the Ethiopian Public Health Institute and was not involved in the study. He tells Carbon Brief that the new paper could help inform national malaria programmes across Africa.

He also suggests that the findings could be used to guide more “local studies that address evidence gaps on the estimates of climate change-attributed malaria”.

Study authors Symons and Gething tell Carbon Brief that during their study, they interviewed “many policymakers and implementers across Africa who are already grappling with what climate-resilient malaria intervention actually looks like in practice”.

These interventions include integrating malaria control into national disaster risk planning, with emergency responses after floods and cyclones, they say. They also stress the need to ensure that community health workers are “well-stocked in advance of severe weather”.

The research shows the importance of ensuring that malaria control and primary healthcare is “resilient” to the extreme weather, they say.

FOREIGN POLICY

Trump's National Defense Strategy Tries to Imagine Climate Change Away
By: Josh Busby and Greg Pollock

Last Friday, the U.S. Defense Department unceremoniously released a new National Defense Strategy (NDS). After a week of extraordinary tumult in U.S. foreign policy, the document received little attention—but it's worth a second look, if only as a window into the vapidity and shortsightedness of the Trump administration's approach to national security.

As might be expected, the document is peppered with Trumpian catchphrases, e.g., "America First," "making America great again," and restoring "warrior ethos." The accidental comedy is compounded by its use of inscrutable phrases such as "flexible realism" as well as its recurrent sycophancy toward President Donald Trump's "visionary and realistic approach to diplomacy."

More worrisomely, this NDS proceeds from an outright false set of assertions, as when it suggests that the world was on the "precipice of a world war just a year ago" or claims that "U.S. access to key terrain like the Panama Canal and Greenland was increasingly in doubt." Beyond the straightforwardly untrue, it also makes suspect, heavily politicized claims, as when it elevates illegal immigration to the level of a strategic military threat. Less tendentious is its emphasis on deterring China in the Indo-Pacific and increasing burden-sharing by allies and partners, particularly in Europe.

But put aside the dishonesty and cartoonish rhetoric for a moment. Our primary concern about this new NDS is its narrow definition of the challenges facing the Pentagon. Unlike the 2022 NDS, the new document wholly ignores one of the primary stressors in the global security environment: climate change. It also has nothing to say about energy logistics, which are a critical obstacle to the Joint Force's capacity to project power around the world, especially in the vast Indo-Pacific region.

Both of us previously served in the Defense Department, including in the recently disbanded Arctic and Global Resilience Office, which was responsible for addressing the impacts of climate change and the global energy transition on the department. One of us was the lead for developing the language on climate and energy for the 2022 NDS, which recognized that one of the core threats facing the U.S. homeland, both in terms of the safety of the civilian population and continuity of operations at key military installations, was climate change.

The Pentagon's long-standing, bipartisan concern with climate- and energy-related matters was grounded in clear-eyed thinking about strategic risks, which is of course the purpose of guidance documents like the NDS. The inclusion of climate and energy in the 2022 NDS was intentional, and it represented the collective work of a team of officers and analysts drawn from across the department who understood that these issues could no longer be minimized if we wanted to sustain the Joint Force's capabilities and understand the growing threats to stability around the world.

We recognized that destructive hurricanes caused tens of billions of dollars in damage to Tyndall Air Force Base, Camp Lejeune, and Offutt Air Force Base in 2018-19 and that year-round wildfires had increased demands on the National Guard to support civilian authorities by nearly 1,200 percent between 2016 and 2021. In 2025 alone, the U.S. military deployed domestically 50 times to address climate-related hazards, including activating more than 1,800 service members to fight California's wildfires.

With the Trump administration dismantling the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the demands on the military for "defense support of civil authorities" will continue to grow. You wouldn't know that from reading this NDS, which fails to mention the issue at all.

Climate change is also one of the core drivers of the surge in migration about which the Trump administration purports to be so concerned. As one of us found in our research, drier and hotter than normal conditions in Central America in the 2010s were a key cause of migration to the United States. Of course, acknowledging that point would require the document to move beyond soothing platitudes about "leading our nation into a new golden age" and recognizing that not every threat can be bombed away.

The neglect of climate change bleeds into other areas of the strategy as well. The 2026 NDS takes a more timid line on China than its antecedents, no longer defining the country as a core strategic threat, although it still rightly prioritizes deterring China from dominating the Indo-Pacific. However, the document fails to mention that one of the key threats in the region—indeed the threat the United States' would-be partners are most concerned with—is climate change.

Many U.S. military facilities are located on low-lying and vulnerable islands, so climate change threatens military posture throughout the Indo-Pacific. U.S. military installations on Guam and the Kwajalein Atoll incurred billions of dollars in damages from typhoons and extreme waves in 2023 and 2024. The effects of climate change also pose existential risks to several Pacific island nations. For countries such as the Marshall Islands, which hosts key U.S. assets for testing missile defense and satellite surveillance pursuant to its Compact of Free Association with the United States, sea level rise is a far more pressing threat than China.

When we served in the department, we advocated that the United States needed to do more to support its allies and partners in building capacity to withstand climate-related threats, on the theory that this would make them more willing and able to work with the United States on the issues it cared about, namely countering Chinese efforts to transform the region into its own sphere of influence. However, one of Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth's first acts was to eliminate a small congressionally mandated initiative we oversaw, the Defense Operational Resilience International Cooperation program, which was intended to ramp up U.S. support for the resilience of allies and partners over time.

Even more curious than the omission of climate-related threats is the absence of any mention of energy in the 2026 NDS. The document does emphasize rebuilding the defense industrial base, but there was no mention of the challenges associated with enhancing energy resilience, accessing and processing critical minerals required for modern defense platforms, or investing in energy storage solutions that would reduce supply line vulnerability in a Pacific war fight. Unlike in Afghanistan and Iraq, where fuel could be hauled in over land—albeit at a profound fiscal and human cost—a military confrontation in the Pacific would require more efficient operational energy use, including through the deployment of drones and hybrid vehicles at scale.

While the Trump administration is making investments in domestic mineral production, and even taking equity stakes in U.S. mining companies, its overall approach to securing battery supply chains is incoherent. The Defense Department previously sought to align its battery requirements with the civilian manufacturing sector, where more than 99 percent of battery demand originates , but the administration is destroying domestic battery demand because of its hostility to electric vehicles, which has cost the U.S. auto sector more than $25 billion.

These moves have undermined a core driver of U.S. industrial resilience and undercut the potential for developing a domestic source for the battery components the military requires. This approach leaves the United States, yet again, beholden to Beijing, which won't be afraid to exercise this leverage in case of growing tensions.

The failure to acknowledge the security implications of climate change is particularly surreal when it comes to the Arctic. The Trump administration has antagonized long-standing allies by threatening to annex Greenland and Canada, nominally over concerns around Arctic security. What goes unmentioned in the NDS is that Greenland's growing strategic importance is a result of climate change, which is melting sea ice in the Arctic and turning the region into a zone of growing competition, with Russia and China increasingly jockeying for access to newly accessible sea lanes and resources.

The new NDS exhorts the United States' European allies and partners to chip in for their own defense even as the Trump administration is pressuring them to abandon the climate and clean energy commitments that would enhance their security and self-reliance. As we have argued elsewhere, with Europe now dependent on U.S. liquefied natural gas, the continent has effectively traded vulnerability to energy coercion by Russia for vulnerability to coercion from the United States, as last week's proceedings at the World Economic Forum painfully demonstrated.

The administration's thinking, exemplified by Trump aide Stephen Miller's crass statements about American power, is that U.S. allies have no options but to bend to Washington's will and accept whatever it demands of them. The NDS reinforces this message. Historically, allies and partners have stood with the United States willingly because of shared threat perceptions and interests. This NDS offers little in terms of a shared vision for collective defense and may drive many of them closer to China as a result.

This new NDS purports to be all about “hardnosed realism.” But if ideology drives you to ignore key threats to your objectives, then your strategy devolves into wishful thinking. As one hears so often when working with the military, hope is not a strategy.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Filipino Voices on Peace and Sustainability

In a time when conflict, climate anxiety, and economic uncertainty dominate headlines, it is easy to assume that meaningful change belongs only to governments, billion-dollar institutions, or global summits. But real change often begins in classrooms, communities, and, even in books.

As a Filipino educator and an independent publisher, I have learned that publishing is more than printing pages or selling titles. At its best, publishing is a public service, a way of gathering experiences, best practices, and hard-earned lessons—and placing them into the hands of teachers, students, community leaders, social entrepreneurs, and readers who want to contribute to something larger than themselves.

The world does not suffer from a lack of information, but from a lack of shared understanding. We have enough content but not context, opinions but not listening, and noise but not trustworthy stories that build empathy and inspire action. This is where mission-driven publishing matters—especially when anchored in themes like peace, leadership, and sustainable development.

Books do not replace policies, but they can influence the people who shape them. They do not stop disasters, but can spread preparedness and responsibility. They do not instantly end poverty, but they can teach pathways to opportunity.

Publishing imposes discipline—fact-checking, structure, accountability—which is essential in an era of misinformation. Education and publishing are natural allies, both building the capacity to think critically and act wisely.

Peace and sustainable development are daily decisions—in how we teach, lead, and serve. Publishing may not solve everything, but it helps people choose wisely, by equipping them with knowledge, perspective, and hope.

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

DSWD releases ₱723M aid for disaster resilience to W. Visayas
By: Franz Remar Garion

The Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD) Western Visayas has strengthened its disaster response and climate resilience efforts, disbursing a total of P723.1 million in assistance to families affected by various calamities in the region.

During the recent Kapihan sa PIA Western Visayas episode, DSWD Western Visayas Officer-in-Charge Regional Director Joselito G. Estember reported that the agency's Disaster Response Division responded to 403 incidents, assisting 959,969 affected families.

Estember highlighted that the agency provided 479,442 Family Food Packs (FFPs), 5,069 non-food items (NFIs), and over P351 million in cash assistance to ensure immediate relief for disaster-stricken communities.

In his report, Estember emphasized that these figures reflect the agency's performance in meeting its disaster response targets.

"Ini nga accomplishment naka-contribute sa 102.33% nga Organizational Outcome No. 3 sang ahensya. Ini ang pagsiguro sang immediate relief and early recovery sang mga disaster victims ukon survivors," Estember said.

(This accomplishment contributed to the 102.33% Organizational Outcome Number 3 of the agency. This ensures the immediate relief and early recovery of disaster victims or survivors.)

To facilitate early recovery, DSWD 6 implemented the Emergency Cash Transfer (ECT) program for victims of Typhoons Ramil, Tino, and Uwan last year.

The agency released P351 million in ECT assistance to help families bounce back from the devastation caused by these weather disturbances.

Beyond immediate relief, the department also focused on sustainable adaptation through Project LAWA (Local Adaptation to Water Access) at BINHI (Breaking Insufficiency through Nutritious Harvest for the Impoverished).

Estember noted that the project served 7,747 beneficiaries across the region.

Project LAWA at BINHI aims to address the multidimensional effects of climate change, hunger, and poverty by engaging communities in Cash for Training and Cash for Work activities.

The DSWD 6, which also serves as the vice chair of the Regional Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council for Disaster Response and Early Recovery, continues to fortify its disaster response mechanisms to ensure that no Western Visayan is left behind during times of crisis.

=END=