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THE PHILIPPINE STAR

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Information and Knowledge Management Division

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Renewables dominate list of 'significant' energy projects

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Renewable energy projects topped the list of projects classified by the Department of Energy (DoE) as energy projects of national significance (EPNS), granting them expedited permit processing privileges.

Between May and December, the DoE issued EPNS certificates to 91 renewable energy projects with a total capacity of 19 gigawatts (GW) and four conventional power plants generating 1.5 GW, it said in a statement on Monday.

The DoE has also granted EPNS status to 29 transmission projects, 24 microgrid system projects, and one exploration project.

Overall, the government is expecting total investment from the certified projects to total P2.4 trillion. Most of these projects are set to be completed in the next two to five years.

Among the large-scale certified projects is the Terra Solar Project developed by Terra Solar Philippines, Inc., an arm of power distributor Manila Electric Co. The project involves a pioneering 3,500-megawatt (MW) solar farm and a 4,500-megawatt-hour battery energy storage system.

Another project on the list is the 1,400-MW Pakil Pumped-Storage Hydroelectric Power Project of Ahunan Power, Inc., a wholly owned unit of Prime Infrastructure Capital, Inc.

The DoE also endorsed the San Miguel Bay Offshore Wind Power Project, which is 100% owned by Danish energy company CI NMF Philippines Corp. It is expected to contribute 1,000 MW of additional power generation capacity.

“The timely development of critical energy infrastructure is essential to securing our nation’s energy future,” Energy Secretary Raphael P.M. Lotilla said.

“By facilitating investment in power generation and transmission in an efficient and timely manner, we are not only strengthening our energy security but also accelerating our transition to a cleaner, more resilient energy system,” he added.

The certification is authorized by Executive Order No. 30 issued in 2017, expediting the issuance of regulatory and documentary requirements from local and national government agencies.

In December 2020, the Energy department halted certifications to “give way to a thorough evaluation of its effectiveness with respect to securing regulatory permits and licenses, endorsements and other requirements relevant to the timely development and completion of energy projects.”

The DoE resumed issuing EPNS certificates in October 2023.

According to revised EPNS guidelines issued in April 2024, major energy projects eligible for certification are those identified in the Philippine Energy Plan, including power generation, transmission, distribution, and ancillary services essential for grid stability and load growth.

Projects which involve a significant capital investment of at least P3.5 billion can also be certified.

The revised framework grants automatic EPNS status to renewable energy projects eligible for the Feed-in Tariff System, those selected through the Green Energy Auction Program, and “projects that support the country’s energy transition goals in line with DoE policies promoting clean energy.”

Certifications remain valid until the project’s commercial operation date.

Citing monitoring reports from project proponents, the DoE said 52 out of 133 commercial-stage projects have obtained all required permits, while four out of 16 pre-development projects have completed their permitting requirements.

The remaining projects are in various stages of permit processing, with 40 yet to obtain any permits.

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[Two new studies suggest Paris climate goal is dead. One scientist is going even further](#)

By: Laura Paddison

Swaths of the US may be grappling with frigid weather, but for the planet as a whole, heat records are being obliterated — and it spells very bad news. Two new studies conclude it's a signal the planet is likely on track to breach the Paris climate agreement goal of restricting global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius.

The studies, both published Monday in the journal *Nature Climate Change*, are the latest evidence the world is failing to tackle the climate crisis, and they come just weeks after an even starker warning from renowned climate scientist James Hansen, who said the planet was on course to shoot past 2 degrees of global warming over the next two decades.

While many scientists have said these levels of warming can be avoided with immediate, rapid emission cuts, the chances of this seem increasingly slim as international climate action falters. One of President Donald Trump's first actions was to pull the US out of the Paris climate agreement and now others, including Argentina and Indonesia, are reportedly mulling withdrawal.

The Paris agreement is hugely symbolic. In 2015, almost every country in the world agreed to keep global warming to well below 2 degrees above the period before humans began burning large amounts of fossil fuels, with the ambition of limiting warming to 1.5 degrees.

Above 1.5 degrees, scientists say increasingly extreme heat, drought, floods and fires will become hard for humans and ecosystems to adapt to. At 2 degrees, millions of more lives would be at risk and the danger rises significantly of triggering tipping points such as ice sheet melting and the death of the world's coral reefs.

Since 2015, 1.5 has become synonymous with staving off more catastrophic climate change. Yet global temperatures have kept rising. Last year was the first calendar year to breach 1.5 degrees.

As Paris goals refer to averages over around two decades, rather than single months or years, this means breaching the agreement can only be confidently confirmed in hindsight, once it's too late.

So scientists behind these two new papers attempted to determine whether the world is already in its first long-term period of 1.5 degree warming. The news is not good.

The study by Alex Cannon, a research scientist at Environment and Climate Change Canada, found there was a 60% to 80% chance the Paris threshold has already been crossed given 12 consecutive months have already been at least 1.5 degrees.

If the world experiences 18 consecutive months at or above the 1.5 degree limit, it will be “virtually certain” the Paris agreement has been breached, the report found.

The other paper, led by Emanuele Bevacqua, a climate scientist at the Helmholtz Centre in Germany, used real-world climate data and climate modeling. Looking at historical warming trends, it found the first single year to breach a temperature threshold also fell within the first 20-year period in which average temperatures reached the same threshold.

If these trends continue, it is almost certain 2024 will fall within the first 20-year period of 1.5-degree warming, the report concluded.

Both papers stress that rapid and strong climate action can still reduce the likelihood of breaching the Paris agreement goals over the next years and decades.

“To all intents and purposes, breaching the 1.5 degree threshold is a given,” said Richard Allen, a climate science professor at the University of Reading, who was not involved in the studies. “We need to double down efforts to avoid the even more dangerous 2-degree Celsius threshold by rapidly and massively cutting greenhouse gas emissions.”

For others, however, that ship has already sailed. The climate scientist James Hansen, who was among the first to publicly warn the world about climate change, said last year the 1.5 goal was “deader than a doornail.”

This month he co-authored a paper which concluded global warming is accelerating faster than expected, due in large part to regulations to reduce shipping pollution. While this pollution is a human health hazard, it also has the effect of reflecting sunlight away from the Earth.

As a result, he said, global heating is likely to exceed 2 degrees in the next few decades with devastating consequences, including ice sheet melt and sea level rise.

The new papers are undoubtedly bad news, said Daniela Schmidt, professor of Earth sciences at the University of Bristol, but she warned against fixating on 1.5 degrees. It “has the real risk of reducing actions, demotivating all of us,” if it’s surpassed, she said.

A lack of ambition will keep the world on its current warming trajectory of around 3 degrees, she added. “Such warming has immense, and in parts irreversible, consequences for nature and people.”

DAILY TRIBUNE

Mayor Abby visits disaster-stricken sister cities, extends financial aid

Makati Mayor and senatorial aspirant Abby Binay visited five sister cities and municipalities in Ilocos Sur and Ilocos Norte, emphasizing the need for stronger local government units (LGUs) to improve education, healthcare, and disaster preparedness.

Binay was welcomed by local officials and residents during her visit to Vigan, Caoayan, and Cabugao in Ilocos Sur, as well as Batac and Bacarra in Ilocos Norte.

“I am so happy to visit the sister-localities of Makati here in the Ilocos Region. It gave me the chance to see how they are doing and listen to the plans and challenges faced by their leaders,” Mayor Binay said.

She stressed the importance of LGU collaboration, urging local governments to share best practices and technical expertise to enhance their capacity in delivering essential services.

“Local government units should close ranks and share best practices and technical expertise to become stronger and more capable of implementing better programs for education, health, and disaster preparedness,” Binay added.

Makati has provided financial aid to disaster-affected areas, including Vigan, Caoayan, and Batac, as part of its commitment to supporting sister cities in times of need.

MANILA STANDARD

[Australia, PH vow to fight climate woes, reinforce disaster resilience](#)

Australia and the Philippines agreed to strengthen efforts to mobilize funds, speed up climate change actions and reduce disaster risks.

“Australia is working hand-in-hand with Philippine national and local governments to develop strategies and drive actions that build lasting resilience—critical to reducing the impacts of disasters and climate change,” said Australian Embassy Deputy Head of Mission Dr. Moya Collett.

More than 200 leaders and experts from the Australian and Philippine governments, civil society, local communities and development institutions gathered to discuss the practical ways to minimize the impacts of climate change and disasters.

At the 2nd Annual Stakeholders Forum, hosted by the Australia and the United Nations Development Program (UNDP), national and local leaders and partners committed to develop the Philippines Resilience Index, which will measure disaster resilience, inform local decision-making and guide policy implementation.

They reached a consensus to streamline the operations of the People’s Survival Fund to ensure funding for local climate change adaptation projects.

The stakeholders also vowed to enhance the capacity of local governments to design and implement risk-informed investments as well establish accessible and localized climate and disaster-related data systems.

The efforts are being implemented through the Strengthening Institutions and Empowering Localities Against Disasters and Climate Change in the Philippines (SHIELD) program, supported by the Australian government and implemented by UNDP. The program covers 10 provinces and two regions in the Philippines, among the most vulnerable to climate change.

“UNDP places climate action and disaster risk resilience at the heart of the Country Programme Document 2024–2028 for the Philippines. Together with the Australian and Philippine Governments, we are delivering concrete, on-the-ground actions through the SHIELD program,” said UNDP Philippines Resident Representative Dr. Selva Ramachandran.

Department of Science and Technology Secretary Renato Solidum Jr. stressed the critical role of Science, Technology and Innovation (STI).

“Amid a vast sea of research information, a pivotal element to building disaster and climate resilience lies not in just building the science, but in widespread and general purpose access and use of the products and services of science — are we truly

leveraging this potential? STI must narrow the gap between urban and rural resilience divide and purposely leave no one behind,” Solidum said.

Department of the Interior and Local Government (DILG) Undersecretary Marlo Iringan noted the importance of local resilience actions.

“The DILG envisions locally-driven resilience. It is within the very communities we serve that the most impacts are felt, and so it is where we should focus our recovery and transformation resilience efforts must begin. I encourage more local champions and concrete actions of our local governments,” Iringan said.

Australia and the Philippines are taking bold steps to address the pressing challenges of climate change, with a shared commitment to empowering communities and creating a more resilient future.

The hidden costs of green energy: A Philippine perspective

By: Noel M. Baga

As the Philippines pursues energy transformation, we must prioritize what matters most: ensuring a reliable and secure power supply for our nation.

While the country has committed to ambitious renewable energy targets—35% by 2030 and 50% by 2040—these goals must be pursued within a framework that places energy security at its core. The transition to renewable energy carries substantial hidden costs that must be carefully weighed against our development priorities.

As we at the Center for Energy Research and Policy (CERP) consistently emphasize, a nation's development and resilience depend first and foremost on its ability to maintain a stable and dependable power supply.

The first major hidden cost stems from the inherent variability of our primary renewable options. Solar and wind power, despite their promise, cannot yet guarantee the consistent power supply our economy demands. When clouds gather or winds fall still, power generation fluctuates, potentially compromising the baseload power essential for our industries, hospitals, and daily lives. This intermittency requires substantial backup power investments, adding significant system costs that ultimately affect consumer prices. While battery storage systems offer a potential solution, their implementation costs run into billions of pesos, requiring substantial investment and technological expertise that must be weighed against immediate energy security needs.

Our grid infrastructure demands equally costly upgrades. The National Grid Corporation of the Philippines must undertake extensive modernization to accommodate renewable energy sources without compromising system stability. These essential upgrades are estimated to cost hundreds of billions of pesos over the next decade. Without these crucial upgrades, the integration of variable renewable energy sources could lead to increased power outages—a direct threat to energy security. More concerning still, some of our most promising renewable energy sites lack basic transmission infrastructure, requiring additional billions in investment to connect these resources to the grid.

The territorial aspects of renewable energy projects introduce significant compensation and social costs. These installations require vast tracts of land, often leading to conflicts with local communities and indigenous peoples. Such conflicts can delay or derail energy projects, potentially impacting our ability to maintain a secure power supply and adding substantial risk premiums to project financing. As we pursue environmental sustainability, we must ensure that our energy security isn't compromised by protracted land-use disputes.

The environmental and social costs of renewable technology production translate into real financial burden. The mining operations required for solar panels and wind turbines raise important questions about resource security and environmental impact. The

projected demand for silver alone—estimated to exceed 50% of global reserves by 2050—will drive up equipment costs significantly. Additionally, end-of-life disposal and recycling of renewable energy equipment represents a future cost that is often overlooked in current planning.

This doesn't mean we should abandon our renewable energy aspirations. Rather, we must pursue them within a hierarchy of energy priorities: security first, followed by affordability and sustainability. A balanced strategy must invest in grid modernization and energy storage solutions while ensuring robust protections for indigenous rights and local communities. This approach should encompass responsible mining practices and create an energy framework that prioritizes security while advancing sustainability goals.

As CERP advocates, the path to a resilient energy future requires careful consideration of all these factors. The true cost of renewable energy transition extends far beyond the headline equipment prices, encompassing grid upgrades, land acquisition, community support, and system reliability investments. Our renewable energy goals are achievable, but their pursuit must not compromise the fundamental requirement of energy security. Only through methodical planning, inclusive dialogue, and responsible implementation—with energy security as our guiding principle—can we create an energy landscape that truly serves all Filipinos.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Legarda stands firm vs. mining in Antique, pushes sustainable growth](#)

By: Wilnard Bacelonia

Senator Loren Legarda reaffirmed on Monday her opposition to proposed mining activities in Antique, as the Mines and Geosciences Bureau in Western Visayas (MGB-6) considers classifying the upland towns of Patnongon, San Remigio, Valderrama, and Sibalom as mineral reservations.

In a news release, Legarda warned that such projects pose significant risks to the province's cultural heritage, livelihoods, and environmental sustainability.

"Antique's true wealth lies in its people, culture, and environment. Mining activities will disrupt livelihoods, destroy natural habitats, and risk the cultural legacy that Antiqueños have preserved for generations," she said.

Citing the consequences of soil erosion and landslides linked to over-quarrying, Legarda stressed that further mining development would accelerate deforestation and soil degradation, increasing the risk of environmental disasters for local communities.

Antique is home to two critical protected areas under the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System (ENIPAS) Act of 2018 — the Northwest Panay Peninsula Natural Park and the Sibalom Natural Park.

Legarda said these areas play a crucial role in maintaining biodiversity, supporting agriculture, and sustaining eco-tourism.

"Our economy thrives on agriculture, fisheries, and eco-tourism — industries that are sustainable and rooted in our culture and identity as Antiqueños. We do not need mining to fuel growth. Instead, we should invest in enhancing these industries to create jobs and improve lives without compromising our environment," Legarda emphasized.

Instead, Legarda called for investments in green technology, sustainable agriculture, and community-based eco-tourism as viable alternatives to mining.

"Mining does not represent progress. It represents a short-sighted gamble that sacrifices the future of our communities for temporary gains. We must choose sustainable development that uplifts livelihoods, protects our heritage, and ensures a thriving future for Antiqueños," she added.

PHYS ORG

[Solutions journalism can spur climate action, study finds](#)

By: Leila Okahata

News stories that highlight potential solutions alongside the harsh realities of climate change can spur people to action—as long as the stories empower readers to see their own role in the solution, a new study by University of Oregon researchers has found.

Solutions journalism is an approach to reporting that not only explains a problem but also emphasizes ways to solve it, while still adhering to core journalism values. For example, a solutions story on the harm from climate change might also highlight a new kind of electric vehicle or the work of a climate activism group as possible ways to mitigate some of the damage.

Solutions journalism is an approach to reporting that not only explains a problem but also emphasizes ways to solve it, while still adhering to core journalism values. For example, a solutions story on the harm from climate change might also highlight a new kind of electric vehicle or the work of a climate activism group as possible ways to mitigate some of the damage.

But whether solutions journalism works, and how it encourages people to change their behavior, has been understudied, Maduneme said, especially in the context of the climate crisis. Working with Alex Segrè Cohen, an assistant professor of science and risk communications in the School of Journalism and Communication, Maduneme conducted a survey experiment to investigate the effectiveness of solutions-focused messaging compared to problem-oriented journalism.

The two researchers had more than 400 American adults read a short news article on how flooding exacerbated by climate change is affecting a community in Connecticut. Half of the study participants read a version of the story that also highlighted the success of a new flood control system; the other half read a story with the possible solution stripped out.

Participants then answered a series of questions asking how the story made them feel, their confidence in collective efforts on climate change, and whether they intended to participate in pro-environmental behaviors like donating to an environmental organization.

Maduneme and Segrè Cohen found that those who read the solutions-oriented story tended to feel more positive than those who read the traditional news version. Those positive emotions also gave them a greater sense of collective effectiveness, resulting in more participants willing to take action.

In other words, emphasizing solutions helped people feel positive and empowered, driving them to join the effort to fix a problem. That's the power of the call to action, Segrè Cohen said.

"A lot of these doom-and-gloom stories end almost on a cliffhanger," she said. "I don't know about you, but every time I read a book or watch a movie and there's a cliffhanger, I'm not feeling happy about it. So, by providing the resolution, there's this sense of something that can be done and applied to your life."

That doesn't mean solutions-framed narratives alone get people to engage in pro-environmental practices, however. In certain cases, the researchers found solutions journalism led to inaction. That might be because reading a story about someone fixing something can lead people to conclude the problem has been handled, called a complacency effect.

They said reporters can increase the chance that a solutions-oriented climate story will lead to action rather than complacency by making it more relevant to an audience, both personally and locally.

"Good solutions journalism always leaves room for more action," Maduneme said.

The researchers warned that not every story needs to be solutions-focused, nor is solutions journalism synonymous with positive news. There's a place for feel-good

stories, Maduneme said, but solutions journalism takes more of a "glass half empty" approach by accurately reporting both the severity and possible fix for a threat.

"There's no solution without a problem, so if you've not done a good job explaining the problem, you can't talk about the solutions," he said.

Because the participants in the study were from the United States, Maduneme is interested in expanding the work to other countries and comparing the results between individualistic and collectivist cultures.

In today's digital age, people are not just consuming news, they're living in it, Maduneme said. Humans are naturally attuned to threats, he explained, but that also means we're looking for opportunities for resolution. He said solutions journalism is one tool in a communicator's kit to tell accurate, comprehensive and hopeful stories on pressing issues like climate change.

"The biggest finding of this work is that emotions are powerful," Maduneme said. "People feel emotions when engaging with the news, so why not harness them for good?"

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Almost all nations miss UN deadline for new climate targets](#)

By: Nick Perry

Nearly all nations missed a UN deadline Monday to submit new targets for slashing carbon emissions, including major economies under pressure to show leadership following the US retreat on climate change.

Just 10 of nearly 200 countries required under the Paris Agreement to deliver fresh climate plans by February 10 did so on time, according to a UN database tracking the submissions.

Under the climate accord, each country is supposed to provide a steeper headline figure for cutting heat-trapping emissions by 2035, and a detailed blueprint for how to achieve this.

Global emissions have been rising but need to almost halve by the end of the decade to limit global warming to levels agreed under the Paris deal.

UN climate chief Simon Stiell has called this latest round of national pledges "the most important policy documents of this century".

Yet just a handful of major polluters handed in upgraded targets on time, with China, India and the European Union the biggest names on a lengthy absentee list.

Most G20 economies were missing in action with the United States, Britain and Brazil -- which is hosting this year's UN climate summit -- the only exceptions.

The US pledge is largely symbolic, made before President Donald Trump ordered Washington out of the Paris deal.

Accountability measure

There is no penalty for submitting late targets, formally titled nationally determined contributions (NDCs).

They are not legally binding but act as an accountability measure to ensure governments are taking the threat of climate change seriously.

Last week, Stiell said submissions would be needed by September so they could be properly assessed before the UN COP30 climate conference in November.

A spokeswoman for the EU said the 27-nation bloc intended to submit its revised targets "well ahead" of the summit in Belem.

Analysts say China, the world's biggest polluter and also its largest investor in renewable energy, is also expected to unveil its much-anticipated climate plan in the second half of the year.

The United Arab Emirates, Ecuador, Saint Lucia, New Zealand, Andorra, Switzerland and Uruguay rounded out the list of countries that made Monday's cut-off.

The sluggish response will not ease fears of a possible backslide on climate action as leaders juggle Trump's return and other competing priorities from budget and security crises to electoral pressure.

Ebony Holland from the London-based International Institute for Environment and Development said the US retreat was "clearly a setback" but there were many reasons for the tepid turnout.

"It's clear there are some broad geopolitical shifts underway that are proving to be a challenge when it comes to international cooperation, especially on big issues like climate change," she said.

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