



## NEWS ROUNDUP

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By: Deutsche Welle

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### AL JAZEERA

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## **BBC**

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## **MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT**

### **[‘Beyond Green’ art exhibit launched in SM Malls Cebu, Ormoc](#)**

SM City Cebu, SM City Consolacion, and SM Center Ormoc recently launched Beyond Green: Where Art Meets Sustainability exhibit, to inspire the youth about nature preservation. The malls featured a number of local artists who converted discarded everyday materials into beautiful masterpieces.

## **PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER**

### **[A Lenten appeal for spiritual commitment: Fast for Mother Earth](#)**

As Christian nations observe the Holy Week, my husband, the late senator and former environment secretary, Heherson T. Alvarez always called for environmental penitence—a FAST FOR MOTHER EARTH.

### **[Makati schools go solar](#)**

By: Jake J. Maderazo

Makati Mayor Abby Binay deserves all the accolade she’s getting—the most recent of which is her inclusion in the prestigious list of the Philippine Daily Inquirer’s Women in Power. On that feature of Women Who Run the World, the mayor was feted for her brand of leadership and her outstanding climate advocacies.

## **PHYS ORG**

### **[Preventing urban flooding in the face of climate change](#)**

By: Michael Miller

Planners have come up with many innovative ways to prevent flooding caused by heavy downpours—from planting rain gardens to installing green roofs.

## **REUTERS**

### **[Philippines sets June auction for new 11,600 MW renewables capacity](#)**

MANILA, April 4 (Reuters) - The Philippines will in June auction rights to build up to 11,600 megawatts of new power capacity from renewable sources in the next three years, the Department of Energy said, as it seeks to gradually reduce its reliance on coal.

## **SUNSTAR**

### **[IRRI: A hindrance in the achievement of genuine food security](#)**

On its 63rd year since the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) establishment in the Philippines, there's an urgent need to #ShutdownIRRI and to once and for all let the farmers lead our way to genuine food security and food sovereignty.

## **THE MANILA TIMES**

### **[MGB holds geohazard management lecture](#)**

By: Leander C. Domingo

THE town of Baggao in Cagayan province is vulnerable to typhoons, landslides and other natural disasters. To address this issue, the municipal government hosted a regional Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) geohazard and disaster management orientation among the town's environment and local government officials.

### **[Public told to keep alay-lakad litter-free](#)**

By: Francis Earl Cueto

THE city government of Antipolo and the EcoWaste Coalition appealed to the general public, especially the youth who will join the penitential alay-lakad to the "Pilgrimage Capital of the Philippines" to avoid littering at all times.

## **THE PHILIPPINE STAR**

### **[ADB sees Philippine growth easing this year](#)**

By: Louella Desiderio

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) expects Philippine economic growth to moderate this year amid global headwinds and high inflation.

## [Gov't urged to review oil spill contingency plan, shipping routes](#)

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

The government should review the country's oil spill contingency plan and the current routes of vessels carrying hazardous materials to prevent a repeat of Oriental Mindoro spill, an environmental group said.

### **CCC IN THE NEWS:**

#### **BUSINESS MIRROR**

## [Delegation backs IPCC Synthesis Report for urgent climate action](#)

By: Jonathan Mayuga

The Philippine delegation to the 58th Session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has lauded the approval of the Synthesis Report (SYR) that will serve as a resource for policymakers in reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and adapt to human-caused climate change.

**Information and Knowledge Management Division**

## **ABS CBN**

### **Deep-sea mining vital to climate action, deadly to oceans**

By: Deutsche Welle

In the mid-19th century, science fiction author Jules Verne wrote of precious metals lying thousands of meters underwater.

"In the depths of the ocean, there are mines of zinc, iron, silver and gold that would be quite easy to exploit," stated Captain Nemo in Verne's classic adventure tale, "20,000 Leagues Under the Sea."

The author was right about the potential raw materials. He was wrong, however, to assume that the minerals could be easily exploited.

Currently, there is no internationally agreed code for mining under the ocean. After two weeks of negotiations ending on March 31, however, the International Seabed Authority has now decided that companies can apply from July to mine the ocean floor. But campaigners and even corporations are pushing back due to fears of the massive environmental impact.

"The deep sea is a trove of biodiversity, rich in living resources used in medicines and critical in regulating the climate and providing spawning and feeding grounds for fish," said Diva Amon, a Caribbean marine biologist and an adviser to the Benioff Ocean Initiative at the University of California. "The planet would not be the same without it."

### **DEMAND RISING FAST FOR METALS POWERING ENERGY TRANSITION**

Whether copper or nickel for batteries, cobalt for electric cars or manganese for steel production: rare earth minerals and metals are fundamental to the renewable energy technologies driving the world's energy transition.

But while demand is rising fast, the resources are also becoming scarcer globally.

According to estimates, in just three years the world will need twice as much lithium and 70% more cobalt.

And this is despite the slow progress of the energy transition. According to the International Energy Agency, if climate goals were properly pursued through the massive expansion of renewable energy, about five times as much lithium and four times as much cobalt would be needed by 2030.

The projected production volumes for these raw materials fall far short of demand. To close this gap, some countries and companies now want to mine the resources in the deep sea.

## SEABED HOLDS VALUABLE MANGANESE NODULES

So-called polymetallic nodules, also known as manganese nodules, are driving the rush to mine seabeds. These potato-sized lumps contain high proportions of nickel, copper, manganese, rare earth, and other valuable metals.

The best-studied area is currently the seabed at between 3,500 and 5,500 meters [between 11,500 feet and 18,000 feet] in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone in the eastern Pacific Ocean near the US state of Hawaii. Spanning thousands of kilometers, the area contains more nickel, manganese, and cobalt than any known area on land.

The basin in the central Indian Ocean and the seabed off the Cook Islands, Kiribati atolls, and French Polynesia in the South Pacific are also of interest for potential extraction.

"The nodules' composition happens to be remarkably well-aligned with the needs of electric vehicle makers," said Gerard Barron, CEO of The Metals Company. "Carmakers will need a great deal more of these metals in order to make battery cathodes and electrical connectors for an electric vehicle fleet of around a billion cars and trucks by mid-century."

The Canada-based company specializes in the medium and long-term exploitation of mineral resources in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone.

Although manganese nodules are not yet being mined anywhere in the world, that could soon change as they practically lie directly on the seabed and can be easily extracted without breaking up rock layers or eroding the seabed.

## AUTOMATED MINING ENDANGERS MARINE LIFE

Seabed mining is made easy when a huge vacuum can simply travel over the ocean floor to suck up the nodules — which are then brought to the surface with a hose.

But the living part of the seabed is destroyed along with the nodules, said Matthias Haeckel, a scientist at the Helmholtz Center for Ocean Research in Kiel, Germany.

"That means all organisms, bacteria, and higher organisms that live in and on the sediment and on the nodules are completely sucked in," he said.

These organisms also require manganese nodules to survive, meaning they "won't come back for millions of years," said Sabine Gollner, senior scientist at the Royal Netherlands Institute for Sea Research.

Rapid regeneration is impossible because it can take a million years for a nodule to grow a few millimeters.

Scientists and opponents of deep-sea mining also fear that the clouds of sediment from the suction could cause enormous damage to ecosystems within a radius of several hundred kilometers.

Potential victims would include plants, creatures in the middle water depths, and microorganisms whose respiratory tracts could be blocked by the sediment.

#### TRIKING A BETTER ENVIRONMENTAL BALANCE

The Metals Company aims to mine the nodules in the Clarion-Clipperton Zone and makes no secret of the possible damage to marine biodiversity.

However, the company has argued that deep-sea mining could be less damaging to the environment than extraction on land, pointing out that it would emit 80% less greenhouse gas emissions.

The company claims deep-sea mining would barely impact carbon reservoirs such as forests and soils, would not displace people, would use less fresh water, and release fewer toxins.

The Metals Company has also claimed that deep-sea mining would be largely automated, avoiding the exploitation of cobalt miners, including children, in Congo, where most of the world's cobalt is mined today.

#### COULD UNDERWATER MINING BEGIN IN JULY?

Possible exploitation of deep-sea deposits is regulated by the International Seabed Authority, which was established under the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea. It has awarded 31 exploration contracts so far worldwide, but none for commercial mining activities.

These permits allow companies to explore the resources and potential for future extraction but also require them to collect data for environmental analysis.

The Jamaica-based authority has been working on rules on whether, how, and where deep-sea mining could be possible. At the recent two-week conference, the 167 member states of the International Seabed Authority continued 10 years of negotiations for a global mining code. The hope is to adopt the code by July so deep-sea mining applications can be adjudicated around robust rules that protect the environment.

The Pacific island state of Nauru has been collaborating with The Metals Company to force through a code by 2023 so applications can be decided. But other island nations have called for a moratorium on deep-sea mining.

"Deep-sea mining would go beyond harming the seabed and have a wider impact on fish populations, marine mammals and the essential function of the deep-sea ecosystems in regulating the climate," Vanuatu's representative, Sylvain Kalsakau, said during the negotiations.

For marine biologist Gollner, there is still a lack of sufficient data to support environmentally friendly underwater mining. "Based on the current data situation, deep-sea mining cannot be managed in a way that would not be harmful to the environment," she said.

She has called for a moratorium based on the data, saying "now would be too early."

Corporations including BMW, Volkswagen, Google, Philips and Samsung SDI have joined a call for a moratorium launched by the wildlife conservation organization WWF, pledging not to use raw materials from the deep seabed or finance deep-sea mining for the time being.



## AL JAZEERA

### Sudan's Nile fishermen worry as climate change means fewer fish

Al-Nimeiry Musa Mohammad has spent 25 years fishing on the Nile River and he has never been so worried about the future. Catches are dwindling and more fishermen are seeking other sources of income.

"I know many people who left the profession because of a lack of fish. Some of them travelled elsewhere to find work," the 45-year-old said, standing by the banks of the Nile just north of a fish market in Omdurman, the twin city of the capital Khartoum, where the Blue Nile and White Nile join.

"Nowadays I catch around a quarter of what I used to catch. The last time I went out onto the river, I caught about 60kg [132lb] of fish, but sometimes it can be as low as 10kg [22lb]," Mohammad said at al-Mawrada, Omdurman's biggest fish market.

The Nile's fish stocks are plummeting, studies have shown, with rising temperatures fuelled by climate change, overfishing, and a lack of state regulation cited as factors by researchers.

While United Nations studies say Sudan's fisheries make up relatively little of the East African nation's gross domestic product (GDP) – a precise breakdown is unavailable – the industry provides jobs and is a key source of food and nutrition for a population of about 46 million.

Sudanese fishermen like Mohammad, as well as academics, fear that not only are fish numbers decreasing but some species are disappearing entirely from the Nile.

That is a worry as climate change and increasingly extreme weather threaten food security from farming and fishing worldwide.

Falling fish production in Sudan has been linked to the secession of South Sudan in 2011, after which Sudan lost access to many fishing locations and substantial inland water bodies.

But what about climate change?

But research by Khartoum University's Institute of Environmental Studies in 2020 found that rising annual temperatures over the past 20 years have contributed to a decline in fish catches and the number of fish species observed in the Nile ecosystem.

While fish catches peaked at 87,000 tonnes in 2012, numbers dropped sharply between 2014 and 2020, never exceeding 42,000 tonnes each year, according to statistics compiled by Sudan's Ministry of Animal Resources and Fisheries.

Elagba Haj Ali Mohamed, a professor at Khartoum University specialising in Nile fish, said the loss of key fish species and overall falling catches "indicate the effect of climate change".

That presents a threat not only to food security in Sudan but also jobs and the national economy, she added, emphasising the vast productive potential of the Nile and its tributaries.

The food security threat is particularly worrying in a country already struggling with complex humanitarian crises linked to worsening droughts, rising food prices, renewed tribal conflicts and outbreaks of diseases such as dengue and malaria.

Sudan's fishing industry relies mainly on traditional equipment, including spears, traps, cast nets and long-line hooks, with fishermen at work largely on the Nile, its tributaries, seasonal floodplains and a few man-made lakes.

Among the usual haul brought in near the al-Mawrada market are fish including Nile perch, tilapia and silver catfish.

At least 13,600 people in Sudan worked in inland fishing as of 2017, according to the latest available data by the UN Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), though this number does not include associated jobs from market sellers to boat builders.

Mohammad Gism al-Sayyed, a 64-year-old fisherman in Omdurman, said fish like the African carp and the Tark fish had vanished since he began working in the industry in the 1980s. Even "the size of the fish has also changed", he added.

Higher water levels have also added to the difficulties fishermen have faced over the last three years, al-Sayyed said.

The flood-prone Blue Nile saw record water levels in 2020, several metres above average flood levels, which researchers attribute to heavy rainfall and rapid urban expansion around the river, which can create more runoff.

Violations and lacking enforcement

Several Sudanese fishermen also questioned what they said was a lack of government enforcement of laws to stop unauthorised fishing.

They highlighted breaches of fishing regulations they had observed, such as unlicensed individuals using thin nets that trap young fish before they can mature, hurting fish populations.

Mohammad Ibrahim, director of the Technical Office for Fisheries in Khartoum, said the government has plans to better protect the industry and tackle unauthorised fishing.

Those include efforts to make fishing more productive and sustainable, providing training and technical support and reviewing fishing laws, he said.

Essam Yassin Mohammed, director general of the research organisation WorldFish, said one of the main challenges facing African nations is that data on how mostly informal fishing contributes to the labour force and economy is lacking.

That can mean policymakers fail to adequately invest in improvements, he said.

“Preparing the management of fisheries for the effects of climate change will require significant investment and policy reforms, which cannot happen without a good understanding of the sector,” he said.

In addition to long-term temperature rises globally, marine heatwaves are estimated to have increased by more than 50 percent over the past 30 years, according to a 2019 article in the journal Nature.

Projections suggest that such warming events will occur more frequently, more intensely and for longer, the article said, posing a huge threat to biodiversity and ecosystems, with knock-on effects for fish catches.

In Sudan, many fishermen fear for their future.

“We used to catch a much larger amount ... until our boats were almost sinking from the weight of the fish,” said Abbas Mohammad Idris, a 55-year-old fisherman in Omdurman who has worked on the Nile for 30 years.

Now, he said, such catches are history.

**BBC**

**[Climate change: Catalonia in grip of worst drought in decades](#)**

By: Guy Hedgecoe

In the Sau reservoir, teams in small boats are hard at work hauling out fish with nets. The idea is to remove them before they die and rot in the water, making it unusable for human consumption.

The water level has dropped so low here - to below 10% of the reservoir's capacity - that there is already a risk the water will be contaminated by silt. Therefore, while the fish are removed, Sau's remaining water is being emptied downstream to another reservoir.

"We are trying to transfer the water as quickly as we can, because the quality right now in the winter was good [but] in the spring it will become really, really bad, and we're trying to extract all the fish we can find there," said Samuel Reyes, director of the Catalan Water Agency (ACA).

The Sau reservoir, 100km (about 62 miles) inland from Barcelona, has been supplying water to the city and other towns in the north-eastern region of Catalonia for half a century. But in recent months it has become the most visible symbol of the worst drought this area has seen in living memory.

That is because of the now-notorious sight of the 11th Century church of Sant Romà de Sau, which was submerged when the reservoir was created in 1962.

In times of abundant rain, the building - situated in the reservoir - sat below the water level, but it now stands several metres above the waterline, surrounded by parched earth.

This part of Catalonia has not seen sustained rain in two-and-a-half years. In early March, the reservoir's water level had dropped to 8% of its capacity, down from 55% a year earlier.

"I've never seen it so empty," said Agustín Torrent, a 70-year-old man who has lived nearby his whole life and who came to look at the church. "It's sad when you've seen [the reservoir] full before. But that's the way it is. It's climate change and anyone who says it doesn't exist, I don't know what you can say to them."

Although Catalonia's situation is particularly worrying much of the country is facing similar challenges, particularly in southern and eastern areas. In mid-March, reservoirs in the Guadalquivir basin of Andalusia averaged 26% of their capacity, one point below the Catalan interior, and in the south-eastern Segura basin they were at 36%. That compared with 83% capacity in parts of the northwest.

In March, Spain's meteorological agency AEMET declared that the country as a whole "continues in a situation of meteorological drought which began over a year ago".

Not all droughts are caused by climate change, but increased heat in the atmosphere takes more moisture out of the earth, making dry spells worse. The world has warmed by about 1.1C since the beginning of the industrial era and temperatures are expected to keep increasing unless there are drastic cuts to emissions.

In Europe, regions like Catalonia - which is situated on the Mediterranean Sea - are particularly exposed, according to Miguel Manzanares, a Barcelona-based meteorologist who studies extreme weather events on the continent.

"The Mediterranean area is one of the most vulnerable areas when it comes to climate change," he said, identifying countries such as France, Italy, Greece and those in the Balkans as being at high risk. "The Mediterranean Sea is a closed sea, creating its own atmospheric environment."

However, there are other factors which can make droughts worse. In the case of Catalonia, Manzanares said, they include the population of Barcelona and its neighbouring cities, which has risen to more than 5.5 million inhabitants. New restrictions introduced by the Catalan regional government have put strict limits on water use in these areas for washing cars and watering gardens and industrial water usage limits have been cut by 15%.

Spain's extensive use of water for agriculture - accounting for 80% of all water use - is another exacerbating factor. The local government has reduced water use for farming by 40%.

This new limit is an extra problem for farmers in the Barcelona area like Agustín García Segovia, president of the El Prat agricultural co-operative, who have already been struggling with the lack of rain and unseasonably high temperatures.

"If we can't plant as many crops, there will be less product and there will be shortages," he said, standing in a field of artichokes that he is cultivating.

"There will be shortages of products both in Spain and abroad," he added. "And this will also be made felt in price rises."

The Catalan authorities are insisting that no further restrictions are due to be introduced in the short term. However, as the summer approaches, with high temperatures expected and the extra pressure on water resources that the season's tourism brings, they have acknowledged that they are preparing for the worst.

"This is a very critical situation," said Samuel Reyes of the Catalan Water Agency. "This drought in Catalonia is a marathon. The worry is that we are on alert not just for two years or so, but for three or four years."

## **MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT**

### **'Beyond Green' art exhibit launched in SM Malls Cebu, Ormoc**

SM City Cebu, SM City Consolacion, and SM Center Ormoc recently launched Beyond Green: Where Art Meets Sustainability exhibit, to inspire the youth about nature preservation. The malls featured a number of local artists who converted discarded everyday materials into beautiful masterpieces.

In SM City Cebu, the exhibit featured the works of landscape architect and well-known gardener and plant collector Jaime Chua, and driftwood sculptor James Doran-Webb. The display featured birds, swans, eagles, roosters, owls, the Philippines' very own Fruit bat, Kalaw, and the Philippine cockatoo in masterfully crafted wooden sculptures that depict nature's beauty.

SM City Consolacion which partnered with SEED4Com, a local organization pioneering sustainability, featured art from its Eco Artist and National Clean Up Ambassador, Pedro Angco Jr., and its community partner, Caohagan Women. Pedro Angco Jr. showcased art made out of discarded rubber slippers collected during his ocean cleanups.

The Caohagan Women Quilts displayed hand-stitched quilts that featured small and large-scale hand-sewn quilts made by residents of Caohagan Island – one of the seven islands that compose the Olango Island Group in Mactan.

At the SM Center Ormoc, students from New Ormoc City National High School Special Program in the Arts, incorporated the trash we see everyday into mixed-media artwork, the first time for students according to Ms. Ma. Theresa M. Ablen, Grade 10 teacher of SPA.

SM has consistently implemented programs and activities to inspire Filipinos and educate them on the importance of sustainability and the need to help protect the environment. SM also has projects that directly engage mall-goers, focusing on solid waste management, like the monthly Trash to Cash recycling market and the collection of used lead-acid batteries, the Electronic Waste Collection Program, and the Plastic Waste Collection Program held in partnership with the Plastic Credit Exchange.

## PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

### [A Lenten appeal for spiritual commitment: Fast for Mother Earth](#)

As Christian nations observe the Holy Week, my husband, the late senator and former environment secretary, Heherson T. Alvarez always called for environmental penitence—a FAST FOR MOTHER EARTH.

It is a call for personal sacrifices by cutting individual carbon footprints to minimize the impacts of climate change, caused by deforestation and the excessive pollution of our water bodies that now manifest in our Philippine river bodies.

Our oceans are polluted by oil spills and plastic gyre. Climate change, which upsets the balance and sustainability of the global climate, is primarily caused by the warming of the earth due to excessive carbon dioxide emissions with the abundant burning of fossil fuels, such as coal and oil, and derivatives—diesel and gasoline.

In 1995, I joined my husband who was then Senate chair of the committee on environment when he presented the Manila Declaration in Bonn, Germany, the first Conference of the Parties for the protection of small island states. He stressed: “We must minimize the use of our vehicles to cut back on fuel, cut back on food consumption, conserve water, take care of our forests and all other dwindling resources as our selfless penitence for the meaningful celebration not only of Lent but of three other significant environmental events preceding Earth month—International Day of Forests (March 21), World Water Day (March 22), Earth Hour (March 25).”

I must reecho his call “to fast not only with food and drinks but with consumables like perfume and cosmetics, clothes, shoes to cut our fossil energy that process and produce them. A gradual withdrawal from our wasteful consumption habits, even in our food consumption, will provide some relief to our beleaguered environment.

It builds the message that each individual is made aware of the extreme consequences of climate change—that a diminished carbon in the global atmosphere could be our spiritual share to diminish death, devastation, disease, and deepening poverty, and generating health pandemics. Rising greenhouse gas emissions will exacerbate water-related risks over archipelagic Philippines.” Our country is ranked third among 67 countries in the world as most vulnerable to climate change in a recent survey done by global corporate giant Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corp.

Fast for Mother Earth is an annual program for Holy Week observance during Earth Day Month, initiated by the Earthsavers Movement more than three decades ago. Sadly, a



penitence that highlights the need to protect personally the environment seems not to have grown in spiritual dimension as the ruinous impact of climate change is upon us.

No continent is spared. I am compelled to keep alive his legacy and pursue his advocacies, such as relentlessly and tirelessly making this appeal every year to remind the public of the grave moral responsibility to protect Mother Earth and help mitigate carbon emissions to stop the destruction of our only common home, Planet Earth, our womb of life. Just think if all the money corrupted were invested to defuse the ecological time bomb of global warming, it would have been possible to prevent climate catastrophes through relevant dynamic application of science, technology, and effective cultural communications.

We urgently need the discipline and political will to implement the existing laws to combat climate change that will guarantee a safe, clean, and healthy world. Hope springs eternal. All of us, regardless of color, creed, and social status, must act in concert as global citizens to affirm life. It is heroic to save our ailing Mother Earth.

## Makati schools go solar

By: Jake J. Maderazo

Makati Mayor Abby Binay deserves all the accolade she's getting—the most recent of which is her inclusion in the prestigious list of the Philippine Daily Inquirer's Women in Power. On that feature of Women Who Run the World, the mayor was feted for her brand of leadership and her outstanding climate advocacies.

A visionary, Mayor Abby's recent project involves the installation of solar panels in Makati City's public schools. In an interview at the recent project launch, she bared plans to install solar panels in 15 Makati public schools this year, and 24 next year. As an advocate of climate action, the lawyer-mayor is showing how local governments can lead in reducing carbon footprint, how being a good example inspires.

Mayor Abby notes that the Philippines, being a tropical country, has only two seasons—hot and hotter. Already, as the punishing hot weather descends upon us, Mayor Abby shows the way by hitting two birds with one stone, so to speak.

For one, the solar panels will reduce the electricity expense of public schools which are expected to reach astronomical heights these summer months. The solar panels at San Antonio National High School, the first school to get them, will shoulder 88 percent of its power requirements with the rest coming from the Meralco grid. Imagine immediately slashing the electricity bill of schools by almost 90 percent?

A second benefit is the reduction of carbon emissions. A simple Google search shows that “a typical solar panel saves over 900 kilos of carbon dioxide per year.” That's just one solar panel. Imagine multiplying that by the number of solar panels per school. The result would be quite substantial. The third benefit is the immeasurable exemplary factor. A leader leads. A leader shows good example. A leader takes charge. This initiative by Mayor Abby is bound to be copied by the most astute businessmen in not just the country's premier business district, but all throughout the country.

Mayor Abby also mentions an ROI (return on investment) of three years. That's not bad at all. As more people use solar panels, or as demand for solar panels increase, the cost is also expected to go down. So, expect perhaps, a shorter ROI because of this. Again, this drop in cost will encourage households to follow suit.

Of course, this is not the only green initiative of Mayor Abby. Even before she declared a climate emergency in August 2022 to help bring focus on the issue, she has built on

the city's well-established integrated, inclusive governance system to help create a green economy.

Under its overall Comprehensive City Development Plan, Makati's Comprehensive Land Use Plan incentivizes environment-focused planning and action in the development process—in land use and urban planning, infrastructure, housing, and solid waste management, among others. I see that more will join the green economy if the process is more democratized. And I can see that Mayor Abby is trying to get the other stakeholders more active in greening Makati. She has reached out to the business sector, civil society, academia, national government, and city authorities.

And her reach goes far beyond Makati or the Philippines. She was elected to the Global Covenant of Mayors for Climate and Energy (GCoM) representing Southeast Asia on the Mayoral Board. The success of her initiatives in Makati City will echo in the region and the world, as GCoM is a global coalition of over 10,500 cities and local governments and 100+ supporting partners.

That's why I think that like the climate, Mayor Abby has gone from hot to hotter.

## PHYS ORG

### [Preventing urban flooding in the face of climate change](#)

By: Michael Miller

Planners have come up with many innovative ways to prevent flooding caused by heavy downpours—from planting rain gardens to installing green roofs.

But in many cases, nothing works quite as well as a simple hole in the ground—a detention basin.

That's the finding of an analysis by University of Cincinnati geography students in a research collaboration with the Hamilton County Conservation District.

Lead author and UC College of Arts and Sciences doctoral student Man Qi said cities are developing new ways to trap rainwater and direct it where it's most wanted, especially during droughts. They call these low-impact development practices, which include innovations such as permeable pavement that allows rainwater to seep into the ground instead of diverting it elsewhere.

Another innovation is a bioretention cell composed of ornamental or landscaping plants atop soil specially designed to drain quickly spread over a thick bed of gravel that does likewise. This soaks up large volumes of rain without creating standing pools of open water.

New commercial or housing developments typically must prevent rainwater from spilling out to other neighboring properties or roads. Hard surfaces like buildings and parking lots can't absorb heavy rains so planners must collect or divert the water to prevent property damage.

"A detention pond is a common practice," Qi said. "It temporarily stores the water and releases it into the air or the groundwater or nearby streams at a low rate to reduce the risk of flooding. It also provides some ecological benefits."

Qi worked with the Hamilton County conservation district to measure the effectiveness of flood-prevention techniques such as detention basins and bioretention cells under five scenarios.

Qi presented their results at the annual American Association of Geographers' conference in Denver.

"In residential areas where the impervious area is less than 40%, low-impact development practices are better. But if 70% or more of the ground surface is impervious, it's best to put in detention basins," Qi said. "The flood risk can be greatly reduced."

Climate change is expected to increase both the frequency and severity of rainstorms, which means making deliberate plans for drainage will become even more important in cities, said Professor Lin Liu, a study co-author and co-director of UC's Joint Center of GIS and Spatial Analysis.

With their hard reflective surfaces, cities tend to trap heat, raising the ambient temperature by as much as 7 degrees during the day. This urban heat island effect can provide more energy for damaging storms, Liu said.

"Global warming and urban sprawl have contributed to extreme weather," he said. "Coupled with the urban heat island effect many metropolitan cities have experienced more extreme precipitation events. As a result, urban flooding has become an increasing threat to the loss of human life and property damage in many cities around the globe."

"You can see the extreme rainfalls happen more frequently," Qi added. "Intense, heavy rains could inundate networks designed to prevent flooding and the capacity of drainage networks could fail because they simply can't hold that much stormwater."

The issue of urban flooding became real for Qi in 2021 when her sister's home was inundated by floodwaters in China's Zhengzhou City. More than 10 million people were affected by the disaster, which was one of the most severe floods in the city's history. As much rain fell in a single day as the city sometimes sees in an entire year.

"My sister's family was badly affected by the flooding. The water flooded their garage. Their cars were underwater," she said. "It was very scary."

The flood killed nearly 400 people and caused \$10 billion in property damage.

Qi said flooding disproportionately affects lower-income residents who don't have the resources to recover as quickly from a disaster.

Flood insurers create maps around these once-in-a-century disasters. But because of climate change, they are happening more frequently, Qi said.

"Floods affect roads and infrastructure and interrupt society," Qi said. "Schools are closed. Businesses are closed. The impacts are widespread."

## REUTERS

### [Philippines sets June auction for new 11,600 MW renewables capacity](#)

MANILA, April 4 (Reuters) - The Philippines will in June auction rights to build up to 11,600 megawatts of new power capacity from renewable sources in the next three years, the Department of Energy said, as it seeks to gradually reduce its reliance on coal.

The additional capacity will come from solar, onshore wind, biomass and waste-to-energy resources.

The ministry has invited bidders for 3,600 MW of new capacity to be installed in 2024, 3,600 MW in 2025, and 4,400 MW in 2026, under the second round of its Green Energy Auction programme.

The targeted additional capacity is more than five times the 2,000 MW offered at the first auction last year, when a total of 19 contracts were awarded to various developers, including solar energy provider SP New Energy (SPNEC.PS).

The ministry did not provide investment figures for the auctions.

The Southeast Asian country aims to increase the share of renewable energy sources in its energy mix to 35% by 2030 and to 50% by 2040, from 22% currently

It has exempted investments in renewable energy from a rule that limits foreign ownership in any energy project to 40%, while seeking to phase out coal-fired power plants and transition to low-carbon fuels.

Since 2020, the government has stopped accepting new proposals for coal-based power projects to encourage investment in renewables and natural gas.

## SUNSTAR

### [IRRI: A hindrance in the achievement of genuine food security](#)

On its 63rd year since the International Rice Research Institute (IRRI) establishment in the Philippines, there's an urgent need to #ShutdownIRRI and to once and for all let the farmers lead our way to genuine food security and food sovereignty.

For six decades, IRRI has been in criminal collaborations with big agrochemical corporations, as well as Marcos Sr. in the past, in a bid to solve hunger and poverty in Asia. Contrary to its mandate, what IRRI did is to serve as the research arm of these big agrochemical corporations in turning the food and environmental crisis into their businesses.

Established on April 4, 1960, the Filipino masses, especially the Filipino farmers will never forget the crimes committed by IRRI when it proliferated their "miracle rice," among other technologies, during the Green and Gene Revolutions that contributed significantly to a myriad of problems including hunger and poverty in the country. Moreover, their unholy alliance which started with the Marcos dictatorship at that time through Masagana 99, strengthened their operation in the country in exchange for the Filipino people's welfare.

When IRRI's miracle rice IR8 was introduced and proliferated in the Philippines by 1968, it didn't take long for the environment to punish everyone due to IR8's highly unsustainable and chemical intensive cultivation. By 1971, the country had witnessed one of the massive crop failures in history brought by a wave of Tungro virus enabled by IRRI's frequent and heavier applications of pesticides resulting in pest resistance and infestations. Soil and bodies of water were also contaminated because of it while farmers suffer from pesticide poisoning.

From 1970 to 1981, real farm income went down from P672 per hectare to only P324, leaving farmers deeper in poverty than ever. On the other hand, Marcos' government extension agents were reported to have collected and burned stocks of traditional rice seeds of peasant communities, forcing farmers to use IRRI's IR8 miracle rice. By 1981, 98 percent of rice crops in the country consisted solely of IRRI's IR8 miracle rice -- the once more than 4,000 traditional rice varieties of the Philippines were systematically replaced by the so-called "miracle rice" of IRRI by the Marcos administration.

IRRI's power has become so pervasive and perverse that it can easily quash any suggestion for alternative and genuine pro-Filipino rice technologies since its establishment. IRRI even managed to sleep in the same bed with the Marcos



dictatorship that Marcos gave IRRI immunity to Philippine law through Presidential Decree (PD) 1620. Thus, farmers and even IRRI employees who have found themselves afflicted with dreadful diseases contracted while working in IRRI and the families of those who died from such diseases and the workers who wanted to file complaints of unfair labor practices find themselves barred at the onset of PD 1620.

IRRI appears to be a public institution—hence its projects as an unquestioned public interest institution, but it is not. While IRRI is not a for profit organization, their research donors include government foundations and business corporations. It has tremendous power to influence the direction of agricultural research but it lacks public accountability.

With the purpose of furthering the green revolution agenda to countries already suffering in multiple crises facilitated by it, one of the funding mechanisms of IRRI designates the donors, who are mostly agrochemical corporations, to individual research centers for specific purposes called commissioned research. This means that funds provided by these agrochemical corporations are predetermined with specific commercializable activities and result in detrimental effects to the farmers and the environment.

Today, only four agrochemical corporations, namely Syngenta-Chemchina, Bayer-Monsanto, BASF and Corteva, dominate the global agriculture market. Spearheading the dominant yet failing industrialized food and agriculture that we know today, these four agrochemical corporations would not be able to forward their corporate agenda without the aid of IRRI. For 63 years, IRRI has been criminally legitimizing and masking these agrochemical corporations as the messiahs for food insecurity by being their research and development arms.

With IRRI currently pushing the so-called “silver bullet” to malnutrition that is GM Golden Rice in the Philippines and Bangladesh with Syngenta as its patent holder, and its “climate-smart” rice varieties with Bayer, unnecessary and corporate-led farm digitalization among others, IRRI has once again proven its role as one of the harbinger of famine and farmers’ demise in the world, more so the guarantors of profit for the wealthiest agrochemical corporations.

## THE MANILA TIMES

### MGB holds geohazard management lecture

By: Leander C. Domingo

THE town of Baggao in Cagayan province is vulnerable to typhoons, landslides and other natural disasters. To address this issue, the municipal government hosted a regional Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB) geohazard and disaster management orientation among the town's environment and local government officials.

The event was attended by 120 participants from the 48 barangay (villages) composed of local officials, Sangguniang Kabataan members and residents, according to MGB Region 2 (Cagayan Valley) Director Mario Ancheta.

He said Baggao town is a climate-vulnerable area directly hit during previous typhoons.

"We collaborated with local government officials to empower individuals, families and organizations living in the community to raise awareness and [disaster] preparedness," Ancheta said.

With the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) in Region 2, Ancheta said the MGB in the region also did a community outreach program in Barangay San Jose here.

He noted that with the DENR-Gender and Development Focal Point System, their outreach program aims to build disaster-resilient communities that also promote gender equality and empower women.

Ancheta said the event also included lectures and presentations on mining and environment-related programs.

MGB Region 2 geosciences chief Felicitas Piligan, geologist Aina Claravall and science research specialist Rea Mae Leslie Mejares talked about geohazard mapping and the role of women in disaster management, landslide mass movement, and flooding and karst subsidence.

DENR Region 2 Youth Desk officer Ralfee Concepcion also discussed the DENR's Pinas Basura Buster (PBB) campaign and introduced the PBB mascot as the image of DENR in its solid waste management advocacy campaign. The aim is also to raise awareness and have a behavioral change on proper waste management and disposal.

## Public told to keep alay-lakad litter-free

By: Francis Earl Cueto

THE city government of Antipolo and the EcoWaste Coalition appealed to the general public, especially the youth who will join the penitential alay-lakad to the "Pilgrimage Capital of the Philippines" to avoid littering at all times.

Through a joint statement, the city government and the zero-waste advocacy group expressed optimism that pilgrims will cooperate in making this year's alay-lakad litter-free in keeping with the proverb "cleanliness is next to godliness."

"After a three-year hiatus due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the Antipolo City government is ready to welcome alay-lakad pilgrims from near and far," Mayor Casimiro Ynares 3rd said.

This year's pilgrimage is made even more special with the declaration of the Antipolo Cathedral as the international shrine of Our Lady of Peace and Good Voyage by the Holy See.

"We invite all pilgrims to join hands in keeping the roads leading to the country's first international shrine free from all forms of garbage as we, Antipolenyos, abide in the city's 4M campaign which promotes Mapayapa (peaceful), Mataimtim (solemn), Maingat (vigilant), and among all these, Malinis (clean) observance of the Semana Santa," the mayor said.

"We will deploy an adequate number of street sweepers for sure, but please be responsible enough not to throw or leave trash on the streets and sidewalks."

For his part, Jove Benosa, an EcoWaste Coalition's Zero Waste campaigner, reminded the pilgrims to perform their penitential walk in a manner that will not sully the surroundings with common litter such as cigarette butts, food and beverage containers, snack wrappers, food leftovers, plastic bags, soiled papers and used face masks.

"As 'cleanliness is next to godliness,' we urge the faithful not to leave any trail of trash as they walk to Antipolo City to atone for past shortcomings, to say a prayer of petition or to thank the Almighty for an answered prayer," he said.

He reminded that Republic Act 9003, or the "Ecological Solid Waste Management Act," strictly forbids littering in public places. This environmental offense is likewise prohibited under Antipolo City Ordinance 2008-287, or the Basura Code.

"An eco-friendly conduct of the alay-lakad will prevent the creation of waste and their indiscriminate disposal, and help a great deal in maintaining the integrity and beauty of the Antipolo Cathedral, and its environs," Benosa added.

Toward an eco-friendly alay-lakad, the EcoWaste Coalition encouraged pilgrims to "walk with water in a reusable container to avoid the consumption of water and sweetened drinks in disposable plastic bags and bottles, opt to take your meals in eateries that serve food and water in reusable containers, bring a reusable carry bag for the suman and other native delicacies that you can bring home from Antipolo, dispose of your discards in proper bins and refrain from smoking or vaping.

## THE PHILIPPINE STAR

### [ADB sees Philippine growth easing this year](#)

By: Louella Desiderio

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) expects Philippine economic growth to moderate this year amid global headwinds and high inflation.

In its Asian Development Outlook April 2023 report released yesterday, the ADB said it is forecasting Philippine gross domestic product (GDP) growth at six percent.

This forecast is the same as the GDP growth that the ADB projected for the country this year in the Asian Development Outlook Supplement report released in December 2022.

ADB's GDP forecast for this year is lower than the 7.6 percent economic growth posted by the country in 2022.

It is also at the low end of the government's six to seven percent growth target for this year.

In Southeast Asia, the ADB expects the Philippines to post the second fastest GDP growth this year, as Vietnam takes the lead and is projected to grow by 6.5 percent.

For next year, the ADB expects the Philippines to grow by a faster 6.2 percent.

ADB's GDP forecast for the Philippines next year is below the government's 6.5 to eight percent growth goal for 2024.

ADB Philippines country director Kelly Bird said the country's economic growth would be supported by domestic demand, accelerated public infrastructure investment, employment recovery and steady remittances from overseas Filipinos.

He said tourism, retail trade as well as the expansion of the manufacturing sector would also serve as growth drivers.

"The Philippines will grow at its potential this year and next, and is on track toward its goal to become an upper middle-income country," he said.

Bird said there are downside risks to the country's growth, however, such as a sharper than expected global growth slowdown and elevated inflation.

“Inflation has been sticky in the Philippines. We’ve seen in a lot of countries it has peaked and is starting to show signs of declining.

But the Philippines is lagging other countries and again, I think it is due to supply constraints in the domestic market, which has been intensified by restrictions on the ease of imports of several agricultural commodities,” he said.

ADB expects inflation in the country to average 6.2 percent this year, and ease to four percent next year.

The multilateral lender sees inflation decelerating in the second half of this year through 2024 as monetary tightening takes effect and global commodity prices moderate.

Inflation eased slightly to 8.6 percent in February from the 14-year high of 8.7 percent in January.

The Philippine Statistics Authority is set to release March inflation data today. The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas expects the inflation rate to have slowed and settled within the range of 7.4 to 8.2 percent.

Bird said infrastructure investment is going to be crucial to the country’s economic growth this year and subsequent years.

He also said the Philippines would need to address issues on food security, which is expected to become a long-term problem because of the impact of climate change on agricultural production.

“Like most other economies, the Philippines will be increasingly challenged by the impacts of climate change and the effects of emerging technologies on the labor market,” he said.

## Gov't urged to review oil spill contingency plan, shipping routes

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

The government should review the country's oil spill contingency plan and the current routes of vessels carrying hazardous materials to prevent a repeat of Oriental Mindoro spill, an environmental group said.

The World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF)-Philippines urged authorities to assess the current implementation of the Oil Spill Contingency Plan — which provides guidance on the national response to oil spill — and consider imposing more stringent regulations and accountability on vessels loaded with hazardous materials.

The group also called for better management of shipping routes and marine protected areas so they do not overlap.

Tanker MT Princess Empress, which was loaded with 800,000 liters of oil, is still leaking over a month after it sank off Oriental Mindoro waters. The spill is affecting fisherfolk and tourism workers, and is threatening the Verde Island Passage (VIP), dubbed as the “Amazon of the Seas” because of its rich marine life.

RDC Reield Marine Services owns the oil tanker. A Rappler report identified SL Harbor Bulk Terminal Corporation, a subsidiary of San Miguel Shipping and Lighterage Corporation, as the charterer.

“Thousands of Filipinos have their small-scale livelihoods anchored on the natural resources provided by healthy seas and this should be a crucial factor considered by all corporations especially those in the logistics and oil industries,” WWF-Philippines said.

The organization recommended the conduct of baseline assessments of ecosystems over a wide area of the VIP, and regular monitoring of water quality, indicator organisms and critical habitats such as mangroves and coral reefs.

**Prioritize stoppage of leak**

WWF-Philippines also called on the government to stop the leak and siphon the oil inside the sunken vessel immediately.

The Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) said responders have begun “bagging” operations to seal off leaks from MT Princess Empress. The government is also working with international organizations and agencies such as the United States Navy to contain the spill.

The government should also fast-track the phaseout of fossil fuels, and transition to clean and renewable energy, WWF-Philippines added.

“This oil spill is just one of the many lethal risks that fossil fuels pose to the environment. Our country is already struggling with adaptation and mitigation measures against the climate crisis and oil spills seriously compound the crisis,” it said.



## CCC IN THE NEWS:

### BUSINESS MIRROR

#### [Delegation backs IPCC Synthesis Report for urgent climate action](#)

By: Jonathan Mayuga

The Philippine delegation to the 58th Session of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has lauded the approval of the Synthesis Report (SYR) that will serve as a resource for policymakers in reducing greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, and adapt to human-caused climate change.

Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Undersecretary Analiza Rebuelta-Teh, led the Philippine delegation, together with Manila Observatory Head of the Regional Climate Systems Laboratory Dr. Faye Abigail T. Cruz, and Climate Change Commission Commissioner Rachel Anne S. Herrera.

In a statement, the DENR noted that the report, approved by government representatives during a week-long session from March 13 to 19 in Interlaken, Switzerland, is an integrated and up-to-date analysis on climate change that includes an overview of the state of knowledge on the science of climate change based on the three Working Groups of the IPCC, and three Special Reports on the impacts of 1.5-degree Celsius global warming, and on climate change impacts to oceans, cryosphere, and land.

“The SYR serves as the fundamental basis for evidence-informed decisions and actions, and provides a clear and substantive analysis on climate science that would accelerate the pace of co-creating policies and designing and implementing programs for science-based actions,” Teh said.

During the sessions, the Philippine delegation provided inputs on several sections of the SYR, highlighting the urgent need to pursue evidence-based adaptation planning especially among developing and most vulnerable countries.

This includes combining green-blue infrastructure, which refers to infrastructure that use nature-based solutions to interconnect a network of natural areas, with gray infrastructure or human-engineered traditional approaches to address the risk of clouding in cities.

The delegation also underscored the value of emissions avoidance as recognition of risk-based and outcomes-based approaches to curb GHG emissions with the use of best available non-GHG emitting technologies.

The Philippines also emphasized the need to address loss and damage that are expected to worsen due to the increasing global warming where financing will be crucial.

“The SYR, along with the Summary for Policymakers document, will provide the impetus for urgent climate action in the Philippine context. As knowledge gaps remain, these IPCC reports serve as critical reference points for our policymakers to heed the science on the gravity of climate change as a planetary health concern necessitating solutions in policy and programs at the global and domestic level,” Herrera added.

In closing, IPCC chair Hoesung Lee said the report offers hope, as well as a warning that rapid and sustained emission reductions, and acceleration of adaptation actions are required in this decade to address climate change.

The IPCC, established in 1988, provides governments at all levels with scientific information they can use to develop climate policies. It is composed of climate scientists and experts from 195 member countries.

**=END=**