



## NEWS ROUNDUP

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- 100 towns targeted for climate-resiliency project
- Trump issues order to block state climate change policies
- Filipino surfing locale revives mangroves through ecotourism
- Uttarakhand faces mounting losses as extreme weather intensifies
- What Donald Trump's dramatic US trade war means for global climate action
- World Bank to OK \$700-million Philippine loan to boost community resilience in July

### ABS CBN

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By: Sharona Nicole Semilla

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### BUSINESS WORLD

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By: Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza

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U. S. President Donald Trump issued an executive order on Tuesday that aims to block the enforcement of state laws passed to reduce the use of fossil fuels and combat climate change.

## **ECO BUSINESS**

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### **[Uttarakhand faces mounting losses as extreme weather intensifies](#)**

By: Swati Thapa

Rita grew up in a small village in Uttarakhand with mountains forming the backbone of her childhood.

## **INTERAKSYON**

### **[What Donald Trump's dramatic US trade war means for global climate action](#)**

By: Rakesh Gupta

US President Donald Trump's new trade war will not only send shockwaves through the global economy — it also upsets efforts to tackle the urgent issue of climate change.

## **MANILA BULLETIN**

### **[World Bank to OK \\$700-million Philippine loan to boost community resilience in July](#)**

By: Ben Arnold De Vera

The World Bank would greenlight a \$700-million (over ₱40-billion) loan for the Philippines in July, aimed at making local communities more resilient to natural disasters.

**Information and Knowledge Management Division**

## **ABS CBN**

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By: Sharona Nicole Semilla

Filipinos contributed some 1.3 million hours dedicated to activities that are "positive for planet Earth", such as switching off electricity during Earth Hour 2025, the World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF)-Philippines said.

According to data from EarthHour.org, Filipinos self-reported a total of 1,377,368 hours devoted for the environment last March 22, 2025, WWF-Philippines said in a statement late last month.

World Wildlife Fund organizes Earth Hour, a global movement aimed at raising awareness about climate change and environmental issues.

This year's Earth Hour allowed participants to choose activities from interests on the interactive "Hour Bank" like fitness and wellness, nature, food, sustainability, arts and creativity, and entertainment.

The activities included switching off power, conserving water, picking up plastic waste, as well as running, cycling, paddling and diving, among others.

Angela Consuelo Ibay, Earth Hour Philippines national director, said in the release that the "remarkable feat" was a "clear sign that leaders and officials should do more for the environment and our planet," pointing out that the nation has consistently landed among the top countries at risk for disasters.

WWF-Philippines noted that the 1.3 million hours logged in the Philippines for Earth Hour 2025 was a more than 1,000-percent increase from 2024 when Filipinos reported only 116,273 hours.

The Philippines' Department of Energy, according to the WWF-Philippines, noted "a significant increase in the amount of energy saved" during the one-hour lights-off last March 22.

"An electricity supply grid load drop of 161.98 megawatts (MW) was recorded from 8:30 pm - 9:30 pm. In 2024, DOE reported a 132.11 MW load drop," the non-governmental group said.

Around 28 partners from national government agencies and corporations worldwide participated in the Earth Hour 2025, the WWF-Philippines said.

The Earth Hour "Hour Bank" recorded a total of 2.925 million hours from self-reporting individuals from 118 countries and territories across the globe.

## **BUSINESS WORLD**

### **100 towns targeted for climate-resiliency project**

By: Kyle Aristophere T. Atienza

The Department of Agriculture (DA) said it will focus a climate resiliency project on farmers in 100 municipalities across five regions.

The Adapting Philippine Agriculture to Climate Change (APA) Project, a seven-year initiative supported by \$26 million from the Green Climate Fund and an additional \$13 million co-financed by the DA and the weather service PAGASA, is expected to indirectly benefit around about 5 million farmers through climate advisories. It is also projected to directly support 1.25 million persons in vulnerable farming households through the development of agri-enterprises.

The target municipalities are in the Cordillera, Cagayan Valley, Bicol, Northern Mindanao, and Soccsksargen regions, the DA said in a statement.

“At least 45,000 farmers are expected to engage in agri enterprise development, applying various climate-resilient agriculture options to priority crops,” it said.

In an April 7 meeting, the project’s national technical working group discussed the enhancement of the Climate Information Service (CIS) platform hosted by the DA’s Agro-Climatic Advisory Portal to deliver more localized and tailored climate and weather advisories.

“The APA Project envisions an inclusive and accessible CIS, particularly for women, youth, Indigenous Peoples and Indigenous Cultural Communities,” DA said.

## Trump issues order to block state climate change policies

U.S. President Donald Trump issued an executive order on Tuesday that aims to block the enforcement of state laws passed to reduce the use of fossil fuels and combat climate change.

The move is the latest in a string of efforts by Trump's administration to pump up domestic energy output and push back against largely Democratic-led policies to curb carbon emissions. It came just hours after Mr. Trump, a Republican, issued orders to increase coal production.

The order directed the U.S. attorney general to identify state laws that address climate change, ESG initiatives, environmental justice and carbon emissions, and to take action to block them.

"Many States have enacted, or are in the process of enacting, burdensome and ideologically motivated 'climate change' or energy policies that threaten American energy dominance and our economic and national security," the order said.

Mr. Trump specifically cited laws in New York and Vermont that fine fossil fuel companies for their contribution to climate change, California's cap-and-trade policy, and lawsuits by states that have sought to hold energy companies accountable for their role in global warming.

The two Democratic governors who co-chair the U.S. Climate Alliance – Kathy Hochul of New York and Michelle Lujan Grisham of New Mexico – said states could not be stripped of their authority and would not be deterred by the executive order.

"We will keep advancing solutions to the climate crisis that safeguard Americans' fundamental right to clean air and water, create good-paying jobs, grow the clean energy economy, and make our future healthier and safer," they said in a joint statement.

The Alliance is a group of 24 governors dedicated to climate action.

The American Petroleum Institute, an oil and gas trade group, praised the order.

"We welcome President Trump's action to hold states like New York and California accountable for pursuing unconstitutional efforts that illegally penalize U.S. oil and

natural gas producers for delivering the energy American consumers rely on every day,” API Senior Vice President Ryan Meyers said in a statement.

## ECO BUSINESS

### Filipino surfing locale revives mangroves through ecotourism

Since he was 15, Junrey Longos has lived among lush mangrove forests and turquoise waters in Del Carmen, his hometown in the Philippines' surfing capital on Siargao Island.

Once an illegal fisher who would cut the woody tropical trees to be sold as fuel, he now protects them as part of a civilian fisheries patrol force.

"Because life was difficult, we were forced to cut and sell mangroves back then. We couldn't find other jobs," Longos, 44, told Context.

But with efforts by the local government to offer job training and nurture an ecotourism business, workers like Longos became part of the solution, not the problem.

"I started planting new mangroves when I stopped doing illegal activities in 2011," he said, proudly pointing out a baby mangrove he helped plant along the water.

For decades, the area's mangrove cover was reduced by destructive fishing methods like the use of dynamite and illegal deforestation for wood to bake bread or make charcoal.

Through replanting efforts, the Del Carmen Mangrove Reserve grew from 4,200 hectares of mangroves in 2012 to now more than 4,800 hectares, according to the local government.

The reserve was designated in August 2024 as a wetland of international importance under the Ramsar Convention on Wetlands, an international treaty named after the city in Iran where it was signed in 1971, that guides the conservation of wetlands around the world.

Nowadays, Longos climbs the reserve's viewing deck to patrol against illegal fishers and cutters, for which he is paid an honorarium of 9,000 (US\$158) pesos monthly. In his free time, he uses his fishing boat for paid tours around the mangrove reserve.

Del Carmen Mayor Alfred Coro said the stories of town fishers like Longos show that even small communities lacking resources can help stop environmental destruction.



He said this requires gaining people's support through education and ecotourism training and opportunities instead of policing.

"For the longest time, past leaders in Del Carmen were told that it was impossible to convince people to stop illegal mangrove cutting and illegal fishing," said Coro.

He said it took them a decade to convince people to abandon illegal practices and appreciate mangroves.

Strapped of financial resources, he said the effort was done largely through house-to-house dialogues with fishers and community-based information campaigns about mangrove protection.

The tours were started by the local government, which now runs them with fishers' groups. Fishers earn a portion of the tour fee, or about 400 pesos (US\$6.99) per trip.

With the Ramsar recognition as of last year, however, the town is bracing for tourism growth and development.

More than half a million tourists visited Siargao in 2023 - the highest on record, surpassing pre-pandemic levels, drawn to its impressive waves and surfing spots since the sport started catching on in the 1980s.

#### Sustainable tourism

Some researchers fear more visitors could strain Siargao's natural resources and present waste problems, such as marine debris and plastic pollution.

Research by the Asian Development Bank noted that the increase in Siargao's waste "is attributable to the surge of tourist arrivals".

The study suggested sustainable tourism, such as implementing a sound waste management system, could protect marine life as well as support the incomes of locals who remain dependent on the sea.

The municipality of Del Carmen has encouraged residents to earn money from ecotours and to care for mangroves so that tourism can support the community over the long term.

Fishers like Longos were taught the science behind mangroves and encouraged to join replanting and campaigns for mangrove protection.

“When we started, ... they had doubts,” said Coro.

Hundreds of former illegal fishers and mangrove cutters became tourism operators since the effort began in 2014, and the town now offers some 100 ecotrips per day, according to a local tourism officer.

Such tours employ guides, boat pilots and assistants.

“You can see how their lives improved,” said Coro.

The mayor said developing an alternative income source has had ripple effects to the local economy.

From being a fifth-class municipality - a type of town with the lowest income in the Philippines - Del Carmen became a third-class municipality this year.

The average family income in Del Carmen grew from 2,000 pesos (US\$34.95) a month in 2010 to 17,000 pesos (US\$297.05) in 2024, while poverty incidence dropped from 69 per cent in 2010 to 21 per cent last year, local government data showed.

The town’s income from tours grew from 1.2 million pesos (US\$21,000) in 2020 to 9.2 million pesos (US\$160,381) in 2024.

By fishing legally and conducting ecotours, Longos said he was able to send his four children to school.

Gina Barquilla, environmental officer of Del Carmen, said ecotours also prevent overfishing that may destroy mangrove habitats because income from tours encouraged people to spend less time catching fish.

A task for the community

In Siargao, a tear-drop shaped island, mangroves helped protect the region from a strong typhoon in 2021, lessening the impact of the powerful waves and rising sea level on coastal fishing villages, said Barquilla.

For more than a decade, she has made home visits to educate illegal fishers and mangrove cutters and chased dynamite fishers at sea despite threats of legal and physical harassment.

There have been rare instances, like one in February, when fishers were arrested for using dynamite to kill schools of fish.

“The most effective strategy was going to the communities and making them understand the science behind mangroves and conservation,” she said.

Generations of families have lived off money from mangrove cutting, so educating young people is key, she and other ecotourism advocates said.

Protecting mangroves “is all part of the life cycle that we have, what mangroves can do for us and what our lives can do for the mangroves,” Coro said.

## Uttarakhand faces mounting losses as extreme weather intensifies

By: Swati Thapa

Rita grew up in a small village in Uttarakhand with mountains forming the backbone of her childhood.

In a recent call with her sister, she laughed, repeating a little rhyme they used to recite as school-going children: January mein jarjar, February mein farfar aur March mein paper (January is spent shivering, February flies away briskly and in March we have exams.) This lighthearted banter, however, is immediately followed by a concern of changing weather patterns.

“It used to be so cold in January and February. Now we don’t have the same winters anymore,” Rita said, taking off her cardigan as she felt hot on a January afternoon.

Rita is my mother, and her comments underscore the growing issues that Uttarakhand residents face as the climate changes. While my mother now lives in the suburbs, the majority of Uttarakhand’s population lives in the rural areas of the state.

Traditionally, in Uttarakhand, at any time of the day, you would witness people tending to their daily duties, which are highly dependent on nature. Women walk to fetch water from aquifers, farmers till their lands or children tend to cattle-grazing duties. However, this balance of living with nature has been shaken due to recurrent weather extremes such as cloudbursts, erratic rainfall and forest fires.

While 2024 was difficult because of extreme weather, the beginning of 2025 has the people of Uttarakhand on edge. India has witnessed another dry winter season (January- February) this year, with 89 per cent of districts suffering from deficient or no rainfall, making it the fifth-driest winter since 1901, according to data from the India Meteorological Department (IMD).

“In June [2024], initially it didn’t rain, and then it rained heavily, destroying most of the yield. Snowfall has become a distant dream; we didn’t have enough winter rain, either, this time,” said Arjun Ram, a farmer from Matena village in Uttarakhand’s Almora district with four fields under his name; he has already lost one field, about 93 square meters (1,000 square feet), as the heavy rain washed away an entire field, taking lemon and orange trees with it.

Due to this continual cycle of harsh weather events, Ram was not able to grow anything in his field. He and his family cultivate for their own sustenance, and the harsh weather conditions make it harder to grow anything that will fill their own plates.

“This is the first time in years that our fields are barren. We could only keep a kitchen garden for our entire family,” Ram said.

A cycle of extreme weather events like this is often called “weather whiplash,” a pattern in which extreme weather conditions are recorded in quick succession of one another — increased maximum temperatures followed by lower temperatures, heavy rainfalls and floods transitioned into dry spells and vice versa.

This phenomenon has also become a major contributor to India’s climate risks. The Climate Risk Index 2025 ranks India among the countries most affected in the long term by recurring extreme events.

#### Impact on farming

Extreme weather events are costing India US\$9-10 billion annually, according to a 2020 study, which noted that due to climate change, the productivity decrease of major crops could rise to as much as 10-40 per cent by 2100. Farmers across the state can notice the causes and factors that contribute to the impacts of climate change in agriculture, like the occurrence of insect pests and shifting flowering patterns of different crops.

Maan Devi Kashyap, a landless farmer, rents an acre of land for 50,000 rupees (US\$584) a year in Haldwani, which is considered the plains, in the foothills of the Nainital hill area. In a corner of that land lives her family of 15 people, including her children and grandchildren and three cows. Kashyap has lost two cycles of seasonal vegetables like peas and potatoes since 2024.

“We have lost so much produce to diseases, pests and weeds. The weather has been harsh. We didn’t even get the winter rain this year, resulting in such a huge loss,” Kashyap said.

Haldwani, which has more favorable terrain than other hilly regions, is facing a quandary of issues when it comes to agriculture.

“Climate change is inducing changes in the crop pattern, quantity, quality and cost of production, changes in market responses at global and local levels, and thus, this

changes the behavior of the farmer,” said Ruchita Tiwari, senior research associate in agriculture for Tata Trusts.

Tiwari mentioned that Uttarakhand has witnessed a rise of 0.46° Celsius (0.83° Fahrenheit) in mean annual temperatures between 1911 and 2011, and it continues to rise at an amplified rate of warming at higher elevations. These extreme temperatures lead to increased evaporation and evapotranspiration losses, which can cause water stress that would impact crop growth and yields, increase the susceptibility of crops to pests and diseases and increase irrigation requirements.

The increase in disruption in crop cycles has also affected other facets of life. Ram is also troubled by the thought of upcoming summers. Not just as a farmer, but as someone who only relies on natural aquifers for basic water needs.

“Because it did not snow this year or the last two years, the springs have not had the chance to recharge the water tables. The snow [usually] percolates within the ground, giving us water in summer; that hope is gone,” Ram said.

#### Shifting of traditional calendars

Erratic rainfall and extreme heat waves have also impacted the sowing time of the next harvest cycles. And this also affects long-standing cultural traditions.

Uttarakhand preserves its relationship with nature through festivals like Harela and Phool Dei, which mark the calendars of every household as a change in the season. In January, Uttarakhand celebrated Basant Panchami, which marks the onset of the spring season and the end of the cold winter. Many farmers also worship Mother Earth for a bountiful harvest and a successful year ahead. However, the significance of the festivals has changed with the changing weather.

With tears in her eyes, which Kashyap is quick to wipe in front of her grandchildren, she said now the importance of such festivals has become symbolic. “What is the point of celebration? Now all we do is cower in front of Mother and ask her to shower us with her blessings.”

Most of her crop is failing to even bring in the money Kashyap had invested in it. She has to spray a lot more pesticides and other chemicals to keep the weeds from growing, which has not been the most efficient strategy as of yet.

“Even the wheat that we grow now is basically mandusi weed (*Phalaris minor*). The field would look like it’s growing wheat, but half of it is just unusable,” Kashyap said.

This has become a prevalent issue. In 2024, Bhuvan Purohit, a farmer, from Dudholi village in Almora, came across the same issue during the festival of Harela, the “day of green,” which mostly falls in the month of July and marks the onset of monsoon season.

“On Harela, we till our lands, which helps us to get rid of the weed, but with heavy rains, the weed has taken over more aggressively, and it got harder for us to till our lands. And because of that, our crops also get damaged,” Purohit said.

During Harela, people typically plant fruit-bearing or evergreen trees like oak and rhododendron. The rhododendron is an essential tree bearing beautiful red flowers used to make different products like drinks, jams and chutneys. The Phool Dei festival, which usually falls in the early days of March, celebrates the flowering season, with trees of apricot, peach and rhododendron blooming in all their glory. However, the locals have started to see a shift in the flowering season as well, as blossoms arrive earlier than usual.

This early flowering also means exposing the new flower buds to potential hailstorms, which damage the flower, impacting the harvest.

“This year [2024], we also saw a lot more hailstorms, which bruised the fruits. This gets us a lower market price. We grow peaches, and all of them get damaged, which does not fetch the right rate in the market,” Bhuvan said.

The early flowering also impacts the pollination of these flowers. S.T.S Lepcha, chairperson of Sustainable Development Forum Uttaranchal, highlighted that due to the early flowering, the absence of migratory birds for pollination hinders the natural cycle, further exacerbating ecological disruptions.

### Loss of life

These severe weather events are not only devastating to farms and biodiversity but are also causing loss of life.

In July, several forest workers were reported killed and injured while extinguishing a fire at the Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary in Almora district. Among them was a youth, Arun Kumar, 17, whom locals say suffered serious burn injuries and died on the spot. In all,

six workers lost their lives in the incident. However, locals allege that one of the leading reasons for Kumar's death was insufficient safety equipment and training.

"That was Dadd da's [elder brother's] first time helping the Forest Department," said Dipanshu Kumar, Arun's younger brother. "He was asked to submit our father's Aadhaar card [identity card] earlier on. The ranger called him to join the team; we had never seen a forest fire like that."

Dipanshu told Mongabay that no training or safety equipment had been provided to any of the victims. The chief minister of Uttarakhand announced a sum of 1 million rupees (US\$11,676) to the victims' families, which, he said, they have yet to receive. Mongabay tried contacting the authorities and is yet to receive any comments.

Manoj Sanwal, a Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary ranger, called it an unfortunate accident, rather than callousness on the part of the Forest Department. "All the injured were in the car; it was similar to what happened in Los Angeles. A sort of chimney was made due to the turn they were parked in; the wind burned the area in a flash," Sanwal said.

On the note of safety equipment, Sanwal also mentioned how the terrain does not allow anyone to carry any heavy equipment. "Even the officers from disaster management had a hard time as compared to the locals or the officers working in such situations for a long time. We even have to take off our shoes sometimes because we can't maintain our grip due to the slippery pine needles as well as the slopes of the hills," Sanwal said.

In regard to payment, Sanwal said the fire watchers have been paid, however the amount announced by the chief minister is not the purview of the Forest Department.

Anand Ram, father of Arun Kumar, confirmed that he had received his pay as an employee for the months he worked with the department, but he had not received the sum announced by the chief minister.

"The member of the legislative assembly representing the ruling government, BJP, Rekha Arya, did visit us; we asked them to give a family member a post in the forest department, but nothing came of it," Dipanshu said. "My father did work for the Forest Department for four months after the tragedy but had to quit due to bad health."

Dipanshu had to quit his education because the demise of his brother and his exams collided at the same time.



Suresh Ram, another person from the same village who worked as a fire watcher on a contract basis with the Forest Department, said he refused to work with the department again. "It is very dangerous work; it is not worth it," he said.

Many from the village say they do not want to help the Forest Department; there are hard feelings, since the village sits next to the Binsar Wildlife Sanctuary and villagers are prohibited from taking any wood, including fallen branches for their stoves and personal use, Suresh said. "This leaves a bitter taste in the mouth of the residents."

### Domino effect

Although extreme weather and climate change pose significant dangers to agriculture and human life, most every industry and livelihood in the hills also suffers. Uttarakhand is and has been a tourist industry hub with a huge push from the government to increase employment by opening homestays in rural areas. However, many homestay owners also feel frustrated by many factors.

Andrea Mamgain, whose father is from Dehradun, capital of Uttarakhand, and whose mother is from the state of Manipur in the northeast, runs a homestay and eatery in Maat village, Almora, by the name Mat Homestead, which she runs with her business partner, Pradyumn Rautela. The homestay serves delicacies of Manipur.

"I always had the plan to open a Northeast cafe, food that I was born with, and now it's nowhere to be found," Mamgain said. I wanted to own a small farm where I can grow my local herbs."

She said Almora's terrain, which is quite similar to Manipur, helped her to grow local and seasonal vegetables for almost two years since 2023. But she is suffering the impacts of extreme heat and erratic rainfall.

"The heat last year was harsh, which I did not anticipate. And although there are no fans in my homestay or, matter of fact, at any house in this village, this year everyone felt the requirement for a fan," she said.

This change in weather also affects the tourists coming to these places as guests. And while Maat village grows the most vegetables in the region, everyone there has had a distressing time. While Mamgain was able to sustain her farm, she attributed her success to her roots and the gardening skills passed down by her mother, highlighting the value of knowledge in adapting to climate change.

It's knowledge that many women of Uttarakhand share, gained through years of experience. And likewise, these women also share deep concerns about the changing weather.

These sentiments are shared among women across the region, from Maan Devi Kashyap, whose family entirely depends on the land and the weather, and she has nothing but hope to hold on to for a bountiful harvest; to my mother, Rita, who worries about her garden every day, preparing herself and her little plot of land for the upcoming heat wave — yet again.

## INTERAKSYON

### [What Donald Trump's dramatic US trade war means for global climate action](#)

By: Rakesh Gupta

US President Donald Trump's new trade war will not only send shockwaves through the global economy — it also upsets efforts to tackle the urgent issue of climate change.

Trump has announced a minimum 10% tariff to be slapped on all exports to the United States. A 34% duty applies to imports from China and a 20% rate to products from the European Union. Australia has been hit with the minimum 10% tariff.

The move has prompted fears of a global economic slowdown. This might seem like a positive for the climate, because greenhouse gas emissions are closely tied to economic growth.

However, in the long term, the trade war is bad news for global efforts to cut emissions. It is likely to lead to more energy-intensive goods produced in the US, and dampen international investment in renewable energy projects.

How does global trade affect emissions?

Traditionally, growth in the global economy leads to greater emissions from sources such as energy use in both manufacturing and transport. Conversely, emissions tend to fall in periods of economic decline.

Trade tensions damage the global economy. This was borne out in the tariff war between the US and China, the world's two largest economies, in 2018 and 2019.

Trump, in his first presidential term, imposed tariffs on billions of dollars worth of imports from China. In response, China introduced or increased tariffs on thousands of items from the US.

As a result, the International Monetary Fund estimated global gross domestic product (GDP) would fall by 0.8% in 2020. The extent of its true impact on GDP is difficult to determine due to the onset of COVID in the same year.

However, Trump's tariff war is far broader this time around, and we can expect broadscale damage to global GDP.

In the short-term, any decline is likely to have a positive impact on emissions reduction. We saw this effect during the COVID-19 pandemic, when global production and trade fell.

But unfortunately, this effect won't last forever.

Domestic production isn't always a good thing

Every country consumes goods. And according to Trump's trade plan, which aims to revive the US manufacturing base, the goods his nation requires will be produced domestically rather than being imported.

Unfortunately, this US production is likely to be inefficient in many cases. A central tenet of global trade is that nations focus on making goods where they have a competitive advantage — in other words, where they can manufacture the item more cheaply than other nations can. That includes making them using less energy, or creating fewer carbon emissions.

If the US insists on manufacturing everything it needs domestically, we can expect many of those goods to be more emissions-intensive than if they were imported.

Renewable energy slowdown?

Globally, investment in renewable energy has been growing. The US trade war jeopardizes this growth.

Renewable energy spending is, in many cases, a long-term investment which may not produce an immediate economic reward. The logic is obvious: if we don't invest in reducing emissions now, the economic costs in the future will be far worse.

However, the US tariffs create a new political imperative. Already, there are fears it may trigger a global economic recession and increase living costs around the world.

National governments are likely to become focused on protecting their own populace from these financial pressures. Business and industry will also become nervous about global economic conditions.

And the result? Both governments and the private sector may shy away from investments in renewable energy and other clean technologies, in favor of more immediate financial concerns.

The COVID experience provides a cautionary tale. The unstable economic outlook and higher interest rates meant banks were more cautious about financing some renewable energy projects.

And according to the International Energy Agency, small to medium-sized businesses became more reluctant to invest in renewable energy applications such as heat pumps and solar panels.

What's more, the slowing in global trade during the pandemic meant the supply of components and materials vital to the energy transition was disrupted.

There are fears this disruption may be repeated following the US tariff move. For example, the duty on solar products from China to the US is expected to rise to 60%, just as demand for solar energy increases from US data centers and artificial intelligence use.

Few nations can afford to impose retaliatory tariffs on US imports.

Prime Minister Anthony Albanese, for example, said Australia would not follow suit, adding the move would be “a race to the bottom that leads to higher prices and slower growth”.

China, however, can be expected to return fire. Already it has halted imports of liquefied natural gas (LNG) from the US for 40 days — a move attributed to trade tensions.

This may seem like good news for emissions reduction. However, China, like all other nations, needs energy. With less gas from the US, it may resort to burning more coal — which generates more CO<sub>2</sub> when burnt than gas.

## MANILA BULLETIN

### [World Bank to OK \\$700-million Philippine loan to boost community resilience in July](#)

By: Ben Arnold De Vera

The World Bank would greenlight a \$700-million (over ₱40-billion) loan for the Philippines in July, aimed at making local communities more resilient to natural disasters.

According to a World Bank appraisal project information document dated April 8, the objective of the upcoming Philippines community resilience project, or "Pagkilos," is to "strengthen community capacities for participatory resilience planning and deliver resilience investments in vulnerable areas."

This project will be implemented by the Department of Social Welfare and Development (DSWD).

On behalf of the Philippine government, the Department of Finance (DOF) will borrow from the World Bank the bulk of investment project financing (IPF). The project has a total cost of \$874.35 million, or more than ₱50 billion.

The remainder of the project cost, amounting to \$174.35 million, or almost ₱10 billion, will be shouldered by the national government. This counterpart Philippine financing will be sourced from the national budget.

The World Bank board is scheduled to approve this project loan on July 28.

The five-year Pagkilos "will help strengthen the resilience of vulnerable communities in rural areas by preparing them to manage a variety of future risks and shocks, including in particular those associated with climate change and natural hazards, which are exacerbated by poverty and a lack of basic services," the World Bank said.

The project will also "contribute to strengthened inclusive resilience planning and community capacity for managing climate and disaster risks and deliver resilience investments," the Washington-based multilateral lender added.

"Resilient and resilience infrastructure is essential for maintaining service delivery, economic stability, and social inclusion," it noted.

Besides this forthcoming financing for Pagkilos, the World Bank is set to approve four other loans for the Philippines for the remainder of 2025: the \$4-million roads to development project for the Bangsamoro Autonomous Region in Muslim Mindanao (BARMM) on April 30; the record \$1-billion Philippines sustainable agricultural transformation program on June 24; \$240.6-million accelerated water and sanitation project in selected areas on June 27; and \$600-million project for learning upgrade support and decentralization on Sept. 26.

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