



NEWS ROUNDUP

10 APRIL 2026 | 08:00 am

- Behind the Scenes: How Climate Change Is Reshaping Forests
- Climate change means a 2004-level flood would likely be worse today
- EPA chief praises group for opposing government action on climate change
- Emperor penguins listed as endangered species by worldwide tracking organization
- Gov't ramps up H1 2026 spending to weather energy shock
- LPA spotted outside PAR; fair weather to persist — PAGASA
- Potential super typhoon 'Caloy' may enter PAR next week; low chance of landfall — PAGASA
- Super El Niño? Forecasters announce major climate shift

CCC IN THE NEWS:

- CCC calls for sustained climate action beyond Earth Hour
- Nepal and the Philippines exchange climate finance and carbon solutions

CBS NEWS

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INSIDE CLIMATE NEWS

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By: Kiley Price

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MANILA BULLETIN

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By: Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz

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CCC IN THE NEWS:

SUNSTAR

[CCC calls for sustained climate action beyond Earth Hour](#)

PASIG CITY — The Climate Change Commission (CCC) joined the global observance of Earth Hour 2026 on March 28, from 8:30 PM to 9:30 PM, calling on Filipinos to go beyond the symbolic switching off of lights and embrace long-term, sustainable habits to combat the climate crisis.

UNDP

[Nepal and the Philippines exchange climate finance and carbon solutions](#)

As the race to meet global climate goals intensifies, two of Asia's most climate-vulnerable nations are partnering to accelerate climate action. A high-level delegation from Nepal visited Manila for a peer-to-peer exchange with the Philippine government. This direct, country-to-country cooperation allowed government experts to share the specific tools and policies they have built to manage climate funding and carbon markets.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

CBS NEWS

[Emperor penguins listed as endangered species by worldwide tracking organization](#)

The emperor penguin has been declared an endangered species as climate change pushes the icon of Antarctica a step closer to extinction, the global authority on threatened wildlife announced Thursday.

Its change of status from "near threatened" by the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) underscores the existential threat to ice-dependent species as global warming profoundly reshapes the frozen continent.

Emperor penguins rely on sea ice to live, hunt and breed. The early break-up and loss of these platforms of frozen ocean water has caused their numbers to plummet.

The IUCN — a global network of scientists, governments and conservation groups — said changes in sea ice caused by climate change were expected to halve the emperor penguin population by the 2080s.

They "concluded that human-induced climate change poses the most significant threat to emperor penguins," Philip Trathan, part of the IUCN expert group who worked on the Red List assessment, said in a statement.

The Red List of Threatened Species is maintained by the IUCN and is the world's most comprehensive information source on the extinction status of plants, animals and fungi.

There are six classifications, from "least concern" to "extinct." Those ranked as "endangered" are two steps below "extinction in the wild," which denotes a species surviving only in captivity and not in nature.

The Antarctic fur seal — once hunted to near extinction by humans seeking their pelts — was also moved to the endangered category, their numbers having plunged more than 50% since 1999.

How climate change is endangering emperor penguins

"The ongoing decline is due to climate change, as rising ocean temperatures and shrinking sea ice are pushing krill to greater ocean depths in search of colder water, reducing the availability of food for seals," the IUCN said.

The largest and heaviest of their species, boasting a brilliant golden-orange streak on the neck and chest, emperor penguins have become symbolic of the quest to thrive and survive in Antarctica's harsh climes.

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How climate change is endangering emperor penguins

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They breed on the sea ice in the dead of winter, the males relying on the flat surface to keep their eggs warm beneath their feet. The sea ice also provides a habitat for chicks and during the moulting season before they are waterproof.

But climate change is making sea ice less stable, causing its retreat or early-break up in spring.

Sea ice has been at record low levels since 2016 and the impact on emperor penguins has been well documented. Satellite imagery indicates around 20,000 adults — some 10% of the population — disappeared between 2009 and 2018 alone.

"This species is closely associated with sea ice and ice packs," Christophe Barbraud, a scientist at French research institute CNRS, told AFP.

"However, since 2016-2017, there has been a significant decrease in the extent of sea ice around Antarctica, and therefore without sea ice, it will have great difficulty surviving."

Trathan said emperor penguins were "a sentinel species that tell us about our changing world and how well we are controlling greenhouse gas emissions that lead to climate change."

The IUCN also moved the southern elephant seal from "least concern" to "vulnerable" following population declines caused by a deadly contagious pathogen.

INSIDE CLIMATE NEWS

[Behind the Scenes: How Climate Change Is Reshaping Forests](#)

By: Kiley Price

The world's forests are simultaneously climate powerhouses and victims, sucking carbon from the air while facing myriad global warming impacts—from wildfires to pest outbreaks.

Recent research found that climate change is already driving widespread disturbances in European forests and, by the end of the century, will likely transform the landscapes that communities depend on.

My colleague Bob Berwyn has been covering climate science and forests for decades, and recently wrote a story about this unsettling forest forecast. I asked Bob to tell me more about how he first got started reporting on forests—which are much more diverse than people may realize—and explain what this research could mean for the future of these critical ecosystems.

When did you first become interested in forests?

I've been interested in forests since I was very young and wanted to know where they came from and why they grew in some places and not others, so I started learning about the geological history of Earth, and how forests grew after big glaciers and ice sheets retreated from North America and Europe.

And for me, growing up in a part-European culture, forests were also places that held mysterious and powerful life forces, manifesting in stories about fairies and druids.

Have there been any moments that really struck you while reporting on climate change's impact on forests?

In the early 2000s, my 11-year-old son asked why all the huge pine forests around our Colorado neighborhood were turning brown and red. I was reporting on a destructive epidemic of pine beetles that was causing the die-off, but it was still hard to describe to Dylan how climate change had tipped the balance against trees that had stood for a century or more, and were part of his outdoor playground growing up.

The overwhelming outbreak killed about 90 percent of mature lodgepole pines growing across millions of acres in less than a decade. All the scientists studying the event pointed at a warming climate and more severe droughts as the trigger, stressing trees and promoting beetle reproduction, a double whammy.

A few days after my son's question, I took him along to an interview with a U.S. Forest Service scientist in an area where the bugs were spreading, along Swan Mountain Road, near a favorite patch of edible mushrooms scattered through thin tufts of grass and pine needles on the forest

floor. About half the trees were already marked as dead by their rust-colored needles, and the rest were doomed.

It was hot and windless. At one point, the scientist asked us to stop talking and listen. After a few seconds, we heard and felt a faint, pulsing vibration—the sound, she said, of millions of beetles chewing through the nutrient-carrying phloem layer just beneath the bark.

The damage was mostly invisible, but it was happening everywhere at once. The researcher explained that spring had come so early and summer lasted so long that the insects were breeding an entire second generation within the seasonal cycle, something that had never been recorded before the 1980s. That all but guaranteed that the remaining trees would be overwhelmed, and soon after, the mushroom patch would disappear.

Our sadness mirrored the collective shock of communities around the West mourning the loss of forests and landscapes that had seemed timeless, with a huge death toll of billions of long-revered trees—piñon pines, ponderosa, high elevation spruce and fir trees and even adaptable aspens all succumbing to climate-related disturbances.

How do changes in forests affect the broader landscape?

One good example is a beetle-caused die-off of piñon pines in the Southwest, also in the early 2000s. The pine nuts of the piñon were an important food source for Native American tribes in the region for thousands of years, and are still culturally important and have spiritual value. But so many of the mature seed-carrying trees died that it became nearly impossible for some people to find them.

Major changes in forests also affect the land and how water moves across it. When trees die or burn, rain falls on bare soil instead of leaves and needles, running off more quickly and carrying sediment downhill. Slopes once held together by roots can loosen. In mountain headwaters, those changes can ripple into rivers that supply farms, towns and hydropower plants far from forests.

Can you tell me about the recent study you covered on European forests?

Forest disturbance across Europe could more than double by the end of the century with continued global warming, according to the research, which published in March. The study showed how different types of climate impacts intensify each other. It focused on European forests, but there are similar processes happening everywhere around the world.

It's a warning sign, along with a lot of other recent research, that forests and trees, in general, are struggling in a climate that's already 2.5 degrees Fahrenheit warmer than the average climate in which these forests first started growing.

The study was interesting because it used artificial intelligence to analyze forest landscapes at a very detailed scale, down to plots the size of a couple of football fields. That level of detail helped researchers show in a spatially realistic way how the disturbances can spread.

And the conclusions are that, if warming keeps up at the current rate, there will be widespread changes, with more patchy forests, more stands of younger trees, some areas where trees will be lost for the foreseeable future, or where new types of trees move in.

Is there any way to prevent this?

If we stop burning fossil fuels and heating the planet, we can perhaps avoid some of the worst-case endings of massive, permanent forest loss, or the loss of iconic species like redwoods and giant sequoias or Joshua trees. And also, we should stop cutting down older, naturally growing forests and try to protect the forests that are left.

The good news is that forests have existed on Earth for much, much longer than humans, which means they've survived some pretty extreme climate cycles of warm and cold. That means they will most likely persist through the human-caused warming era. But exactly what kind of trees will grow where, and for how long, is uncertain.

For this week's "Postcards From," Bob shared a photo with his son from one of their forest adventures in Colorado.

"Trees that my son climbed in the early 2000s have since succumbed to beetles, drought and extreme heat, like this centuries-old Douglas fir. In the background are stands of lodgepole pines turning brownish-orange after being killed by mountain pine beetles," Bob said.

"This is part of a group of Douglas firs that have had core samples taken to show climate records going back a few centuries."

MANILA BULLETIN

[Gov't ramps up H1 2026 spending to weather energy shock](#)

By: Derco Rosal

Amid a national energy emergency, government response to the oil crisis is expected to accelerate spending in the first half of the year, reversing a slump in infrastructure expenditures last year in the aftermath of the flood-control corruption scandal.

According to the Department of Budget and Management (DBM), measures designed to tackle fiscal concerns tied to the “adverse impact of the Middle East conflict” are expected to fuel the Marcos Jr. administration’s spending recovery in 2026 from the contraction seen in the second half of 2025.

Such programs include the departments of Transportation (DOTr) and Agriculture’s (DA) fuel subsidies. These are expected to “provide direct relief to public transportation drivers, operators, farmers, and fisherfolk.”

Other measures include emergency livelihood and repatriation programs, as well as the ₱20 billion released to the Department of Energy (DOE) for fuel procurement to supplement the country’s supply.

However, “spending growth for the first semester of 2026 is expected to be tempered,” the DBM said in its report on the national government’s (NG) disbursements for full-year 2025, published on April 7.

This expectation cites the higher baseline in 2025, when government agencies frontloaded their budgets early last year to ensure funds were used prior to the five-month-long national and local election ban.

That same period involved sizable capital outlays for the settlement of outstanding accounts payable and progress billings.

Meanwhile, this year’s spending is expected to focus on human capital and agriculture, especially in education, health, and social services, which received larger shares from the ₱6.793-trillion 2026 national budget.

Last year, infrastructure and other capital outlays to government corporations fell 17.3 percent to ₱1.1 trillion from ₱1.3 trillion in 2024. This also fell significantly short of the ₱1.4-trillion program for the year.

Infrastructure spending declined notably during the second half of 2025, largely due to the government’s move to constrict public spending after the flood-control corruption involving the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) erupted.

Despite the expected spur in spending, the Department of Finance (DOF) said the improving fiscal condition—as reflected in the narrower deficit for the first two months of the year—would allow the local economy to weather the energy shocks arising from the ongoing Middle East conflict.

The latest data from the Bureau of the Treasury (BTr) showed the government’s fiscal deficit narrowed to just ₱5.8 billion as of end-February, despite there remains no publicly available quarterly fiscal program that the government has outlined for fiscal year (FY) 2026.

Go said the robust fiscal performance as of end-February acts as the country’s “safety net, giving us the resources to support the economy, especially during this time of uncertainty.” This addresses concerns surrounding the need to extend support to vulnerable sectors, with proposed measures posing high risks to the country’s revenue collection.

“With tax and non-tax revenues growing and expenditures kept targeted, we have successfully reduced our fiscal deficit. This fiscal buffer allows us space to provide timely, targeted, and managed subsidies to help those most affected in our country by the Middle East event,” Go said.

This early display of robust fiscal performance by the DOF and its attached agencies—the bureaus of Internal Revenue (BIR), Customs (BOC), and the Treasury (BTr)—enables the Marcos Jr. administration “to maintain fiscal discipline and ensure a sustainable path in managing the current crisis.”

During the two-month period, tax authorities increased their collections by more than three percent to ₱692.6 billion from ₱671.9 billion in the same period in 2025. Higher spending of ₱836 billion. This gap significantly narrowed from a deficit of ₱103.1 billion in the same period in 2025.

“Our strong fiscal performance in February sets us up for a stable first quarter of this year,” Finance Secretary Frederick D. Go said in an April 7 statement. Recall that the government posted a deficit of ₱446 billion in the first quarter of 2025.

LPA spotted outside PAR: fair weather to persist — PAGASA

By: Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz

Fair weather is expected to prevail across the country in the next 24 hours, even as a low-pressure area (LPA) is being monitored outside the Philippine Area of Responsibility (PAR), the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said on Wednesday, April 8.

In its 8 a.m. bulletin, PAGASA said the weather disturbance, identified as LPA 04a, has a high chance of developing into a tropical depression within the next 24 hours.

It was located 3,100 kilometers east of northeastern Mindanao.

Based on the agency's two-week threat potential forecast, the LPA may move northward and could pass through the northeastern portion of the PAR between April 13 and April 19.

Meanwhile, generally clear to partly cloudy skies will continue to prevail due to the ridge of a high-pressure area affecting the country.

PAGASA weather specialist Aldczar Aurelio said only isolated or short-lived rains are expected in some areas.

"Maaliwalas ang panahon sa buong bansa at may ilang isolated o panandaliang ulan lamang sa Zamboanga Peninsula at Soccsksargen (The weather will generally be fair across the country, with only isolated or short-lived rains expected over the Zamboanga Peninsula and Soccsksargen)," he said.

The ridge of a high-pressure area is an anti-cyclonic system, which is the opposite of a low-pressure area and is typically associated with fair weather conditions.

Potential super typhoon 'Caloy' may enter PAR next week; low chance of landfall — PAGASA

By: Ellalyn De Vera-Ruiz

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Once inside the PAR, the weather disturbance will be named "Caloy."

As of 8 a.m., Thursday, April 9, the tropical depression was located about 2,845 kilometers east of northeastern Mindanao and is moving west-southwestward at 10 kilometers per hour (kph).

PAGASA weather specialist Chenel Dominguez said the tropical depression may still shift northward in the coming days, resulting in a low landfall scenario for the Philippines.

However, she said this outlook may still change as the cyclone remains far from the country. The tropical depression has maximum sustained winds of 55 kph near the center and gustiness of up to 70 kph.

Dominguez said it may further intensify into a typhoon, adding that super typhoon strength cannot yet be ruled out.

As of Thursday, a ridge of high-pressure area (HPA) extending across Northern and Central Luzon, together with the easterlies, continues to dominate weather conditions.

These systems are expected to bring hot and humid conditions, with partly cloudy to cloudy skies and isolated rain showers or thunderstorms across the country.

The ridge of HPA is an anti-cyclonic system associated with fair weather, while easterlies refer to warm winds from the Pacific that bring humid conditions and localized rain.

On April 9, PAGASA said Metro Manila may experience heat index levels of 37 to 38 degrees Celsius.

RNZ

[Climate change means a 2004-level flood would likely be worse today](#)

By: Rebecca Hogan

If floods equivalent to the devastating 2004 event hit Manawatū today, it is predicted the outcome would be more extreme "as a result of climate change".

To see if the council had invested enough to prevent the level of destruction seen in 2004, Local Democracy Reporting sat down with Horizons Regional Council chief executive and Horizons group manager of catchment operations.

New Zealand has always been prone to flooding, but extremes such as Cyclone Gabrielle in 2023 and various weather events across the motū, including this week's incoming tropical cyclone, were just "a little taster" of climate change, one of Aotearoa's leading climate scientists Sam Dean said.

February was the first time all of Horizons region had been placed into a state of emergency since 2004's indelible flood event, which hit much of the lower North Island.

Dean said a region's vulnerability to flooding was an "interplay" between what mitigation methods the councils chose to invest in, the amount of money spent, and the increasing risk of extreme weather.

Large investments have been made into strengthening vulnerable areas, but Horizons council staff were concerned the scale of future weather events could be bigger than 2004 and the risk of events happening more frequently was now much higher.

Had flood prevention work not been done by council in the last 20 years, council chief executive Michael McCartney said the weather event two months ago would have been a "damn sight worse and the mountain would be that much higher to climb now".

Acting as controller during the 2004 floods and having "water pouring through his home", McCartney understood how scary these events could be and how they could leave communities feeling powerless.

2004's flood was a catalyst for significant investment in flood protection methods, infrastructure such as stop banks, erosion work, and civil defence responses across the Central District.

Effective and proactive flood investment from council "would pay for itself in a single day" when a big weather event occurred, Horizons group manager of catchment operations Jon Roygard said.

Much of Horizons' work on flood protection had environmental return and was planned with the next generation in mind - those who would have to continue modifying infrastructure to adapt to Aotearoa's changing environment.

McCartney said councils across Aotearoa had to "accept the fact that you can't fight nature forever".

"All the interventions you put in place, all your best endeavours, can be taken away again in five minutes by another event."

Dean said the area controlled by Horizons was in a stronger position than regions which had not experienced a one-in-100 year flood, as "things tend to change after an event" and councils and communities were forced to respond.

The 2004 flood was understood to be one of those one-in-one-hundred-year events, but Dean said it was likely that within decades these events would become more frequent because of climate change.

"The easy rule of thumb is that you might see a halving. A one-in-100-year flood would be more like a one-in-50-year flood."

That was yet to occur, but with the trajectory the world was on due to rising temperatures and subsequent rising sea levels, people stood "to lose quite a lot of what we value".

Climate change was just one issue and despite being able to adapt in the short term, Dean was concerned such extreme weather could go on so long that other issues "become irrelevant".

Climate change predictions and figures were included in Horizons recent flood vulnerability mapping to ensure at-risk townships were prioritised for mitigation methods and coastal townships at risk of sea level rise were properly managed.

THE WASHINGTON POST

[EPA chief praises group for opposing government action on climate change](#)

By: Jake Spring

Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Lee Zeldin delivered the keynote speech at a Wednesday meeting of the Heartland Institute, a group that challenges the overwhelming scientific consensus on climate change's harmful impacts and the need to curb greenhouse gas emissions that cause it.

Zeldin — who is also seen as a candidate to be President Donald Trump's next attorney general — praised the conservative group for its work in the 2000s to question the predicted impacts of climate change and oppose government action on climate change.

"It's controversial that we won't sign up for the script that the world is imminently about to end," Zeldin said at the group's 16th International Conference on Climate Change in Washington. "Today, all of you gathered here in D.C. is a moment to celebrate. It is a day to celebrate vindication."

Zeldin told the gathering at the Hotel Washington that the agency was doing its part to implement Trump's agenda, highlighting the February repeal of the EPA's most critical policy for combating climate change, known as the "endangerment finding." That repeal simultaneously eliminated any EPA curbs on greenhouse gas emissions from cars.

Joanna Slaney, vice president of political and government affairs at the Environmental Defense Fund, an advocacy group, criticized Zeldin and the group for denying the reality of climate change when its toll is so apparent.

"Lee Zeldin is executing on the playbook of denial written by the Heartland Institute," Slaney said. "The costs of climate change are piling up like the debris after a disaster. Energy prices and insurance premiums are soaring. People's health and safety are suffering."

"Denial isn't making weather less extreme. It's not bringing the costs of health care, electricity and insurance down. It's not making anyone safer," she added.

The advocacy group's affiliate, EDF Action, put up posters outside the event to protest the speech, with images of smokestacks and forest fires.

The Heartland Institute has long campaigned for rescinding the endangerment finding, with some conservatives affiliated with the group criticizing the first Trump administration for not seeking to roll it back.

"Unlike the first term, President Trump now has people like Administrator Zeldin who are actually energetic promoters of the President's program," said Myron Ebell, who led Trump's

EPA transition team going into the first term and is a frequent speaker at the Heartland Institute's annual conference.

"I give Zeldin a lot of credit for the energy and the ambition he's brought to the job. But ultimately, it all comes from the president," Ebell said. "He is really pushing the deregulatory agenda because he understands what it can do to rebuild the American economy and spur growth."

Trump has privately discussed possibly nominating Zeldin to replace former attorney general Pam Bondi, a person familiar with the matter told The Washington Post last week.

That would put Zeldin in a position of overseeing the Justice Department lawyers defending repeal of dozens of environmental regulations he oversaw at EPA, including those on power plant greenhouse gas and mercury emissions and other deadly air pollution. At EPA, he has pursued an aggressive strategy to quickly repeal the rules with an aim of receiving final rulings from the Supreme Court before the end of the Trump term.

Zeldin agreed to speak at Heartland weeks before Bondi was ousted last week.

Historically, EPA chiefs have not had a future in elected political office, but Zeldin as a young and ambitious former congressman could be angling to change that, Ebell said.

"He needs to move up in the Cabinet, and he really is thinking about positioning himself to run for national office or to be picked for vice president," Ebell said.

USA TODAY

[Super El Niño? Forecasters announce major climate shift](#)

By: Doyle Rice

Federal scientists from the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration announced a long-anticipated shift in a powerful global climate pattern on Thursday, April 9, as worry grows about global heat patterns.

NOAA says the La Niña climate pattern has officially come to an end, and that an El Niño is expected to develop later this year. This has major implications for weather worldwide, and could impact the hurricane season in both the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

Some computer models that scientists use to forecast climate patterns said that the oncoming El Niño could be unusually strong, and have dubbed it a potential "Super El Niño," though federal scientists don't use that term.

El Niño, a natural warming of Pacific Ocean water that affects weather around the world, often leads to some of the hottest years on record, such as the record-breaking worldwide average temperature in 2024. The prospect of a strong El Niño has rattled forecasters, who fear an unprecedented wave of global heat into 2027.

In the meantime, the planet is in an intermediate stage of the cycle, known as "ENSO-neutral."

La Niña comes to an end

According to NOAA, the just-ended La Niña started in December 2024, when Pacific Ocean water temperatures reached the La Niña threshold.

This La Niña shifted rainfall patterns, which included increasing dryness in the southern U.S. It also slightly cooled global temperatures, when compared with El Niño years, without affecting long-term global warming. La Niña also favored a more active Atlantic hurricane pattern and colder winters across portions of the northern U.S.

What is El Niño?

El Niño is a natural climate pattern in which surface sea water temperatures in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean are warmer than average.

Its name means the Little Boy, or Christ Child in Spanish. El Niño was originally recognized by fishermen off the coast of South America in the 1600s with the appearance of unusually warm water in the Pacific Ocean around Christmas.

The entire natural climate cycle is officially known as El Niño – Southern Oscillation, called ENSO by scientists. The cycle swings between warmer and cooler seawater in a region along

the equator in the tropical Pacific. La Niña is marked by cooler-than-average ocean water in the region.

'Super' El Niño?

Although there's no formal NOAA El Niño category called "Super," the term is often used when sea-surface temperatures in the tropical Pacific Ocean are up to 2 degrees (Celsius) above average for several months — similar to what happened during the El Niños of 1997–98 or 2015–16.

"Right now, there's about a 15% chance of a Super El Niño by the end of this hurricane season [Nov. 30], which we've only seen once since the year 2000," said AccuWeather meteorologist Alex DaSilva, in an email to USA TODAY.

Although a "Super El Niño" is possible, federal scientists from the Climate Prediction Center are more cautious:

"The possible outcomes range from ENSO-neutral to a very strong El Niño during the upcoming Northern Hemisphere winter," NOAA scientists said in a report released Thursday, April 9. "The possibility of a very strong El Niño largely depends on the continuation of westerly wind anomalies across the equatorial Pacific throughout the Northern Hemisphere summer months, which is not assured."

In the report, NOAA scientists said that by May-July 2026, El Niño is likely to emerge (61% chance) and persist through at least the end of 2026.

Spring predictability barrier

A known weakness in climate forecasting, the so-called "spring predictability barrier" occurs when El Niño and La Niña forecasts made in spring (roughly March–May) are significantly less reliable than forecasts made during other times of year, according to NOAA.

"During this time of year, forecast models can be untrustworthy when predicting timing and strength," said AccuWeather meteorologist Paul Pastelok in an email to USA TODAY. "So we still need to be cautious. But it looks more and more that an El Niño is coming."

How does El Niño influence hurricanes?

El Niño can have a huge impact on the severity of the hurricane season in both the Atlantic and the Pacific: It tends to reduce activity in the Atlantic and boost activity in the Pacific.

"Typically, El Niño leads to more rising air over the tropical Pacific, which then leads to stronger upper-level wind shear and sinking air across the tropical Atlantic," said associate scientist Andy Hazelton of the University of Miami in an email to USA TODAY. "This usually reduces the number of hurricanes in the Atlantic, especially in the Caribbean and Gulf."

Conversely, "El Niño years are typically associated with more activity in the eastern Pacific," said NOAA's lead hurricane seasonal forecaster Matthew Rosencrans.

Winter impacts of El Niño

During an El Niño winter, the southern third of the United States typically experiences wetter-than-average conditions, while the northern third sees enhanced chances of below-normal precipitation, according to the Climate Prediction Center.

Additionally, Pastelok said that a strong to super El Niño can bring big storms to the West Coast, and a strong southern storm track, rich with moisture from the Gulf and Atlantic, to produce powerful East Coast storms.

Why do we care about El Niño?

The ENSO cycle is the primary factor government scientists consider when announcing their winter weather forecast because it mainly influences our weather in the colder months. Except for its impact on hurricanes, El Niño doesn't have a strong summer climate impact for most of the country, NOAA said.

And as the World Meteorological Organization says, "seasonal forecasts for El Niño and La Niña help us avert millions of dollars in economic losses and are essential planning tools for climate-sensitive sectors like agriculture, health, energy and water management."

"They are also a key part of the climate intelligence provided by WMO to support humanitarian operations and disaster risk management, and thus save lives," said WMO Secretary-General Celeste Saulo, in a statement.

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SUNSTAR

[CCC calls for sustained climate action beyond Earth Hour](#)

PASIG CITY — The Climate Change Commission (CCC) joined the global observance of Earth Hour 2026 on March 28, from 8:30 PM to 9:30 PM, calling on Filipinos to go beyond the symbolic switching off of lights and embrace long-term, sustainable habits to combat the climate crisis.

Now in its 20th year, the annual Earth Hour movement serves as a platform to raise awareness on climate change and biodiversity conservation, mobilizing millions of people across the globe to take collective action. This year's theme, "Give an Hour for Earth," aimed to create the "Biggest Hour for Earth" by encouraging people to spend 60 minutes doing something positive for the planet.

The event was supported by President Ferdinand R. Marcos Jr., where he urged the public to adopt energy-saving habits and promote environmental responsibility amid global challenges, including the ongoing energy crisis.

"This year's event provides a timely and relevant opportunity for us to reflect not only on the issue of climate change and environmental preservation, but also on the need to conserve energy and to limit fuel consumption amid the current global crisis."

"Earth Hour reminds us that how we use energy affects us all and shows not just our ways but also the kind of future that we choose to build for our nation and our planet," President Marcos added.

CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert E.A. Borje stressed that while the one-hour lights-off initiative demonstrates unity and environmental awareness, meaningful climate action must extend beyond the hour and translate into everyday practices.

"Climate action is not just about one hour of darkness. It is about what we do after the lights come back on. This is not just about turning off the lights. This is about giving life to our hopes and dreams for our country," Borje said.

Anchored on this year's themed focus, "Switch On Habits for Earth," the CCC underscored the importance of integrating climate-conscious practices into daily life, such as conserving energy, reducing waste, avoiding single-use plastics, and planting and taking care of trees.

The Commission further highlighted that climate change is not only a lifestyle concern but a systems issue, requiring coordinated action from individuals, communities, government, and the private sector.

“This is why climate action today, particularly through the youth, should no longer be just an advocacy. It really should be a life that we are going to live,” Borje added.

The CCC reaffirmed its commitment to advancing policies and programs that promote climate action and sustainable development, in line with national priorities and global climate targets.

As the country observed Earth Hour, the Commission called on every Filipino to take part in building a climate-resilient and low-carbon future by making climate action a daily responsibility.

UNDP

[Nepal and the Philippines exchange climate finance and carbon solutions](#)

As the race to meet global climate goals intensifies, two of Asia's most climate-vulnerable nations are partnering to accelerate climate action. A high-level delegation from Nepal visited Manila for a peer-to-peer exchange with the Philippine government. This direct, country-to-country cooperation allowed government experts to share the specific tools and policies they have built to manage climate funding and carbon markets.

While separated by thousands of miles and vastly different geographies, Nepal and the Philippines face similar climate risks. By sharing their experiences and progress with one another, both delegations identified ways to skip years of trial and error by adopting systems that are already working in a similar regional context.

The exchange was centered on exchanging national innovations:

National climate finance strategies and tracking systems: The Philippine Department of Finance shared the development of the country's Climate Finance Strategy, which is anchored in transparency, accountability, and innovation. A key focus of this strategy is tracking finance flows from both the public and private sectors to ensure policy decisions are backed by data. Complementing this, the Philippine Climate Change Commission demonstrated its national system for tagging climate-related spending within the budget. This process allows the government to show exactly how public funds meet climate goals, fostering international trust. As a long-time pioneer in climate budget tagging (CBT), the Nepal Ministry of Finance engaged in a technical exchange to compare these systems. The two delegations discussed how to align budget tagging with National Adaptation Plans (NAP) and NDC Implementation Plans, ensuring these tools remain central to Nepal's overarching Climate Change Financing Framework.

"This exchange exemplifies the strength of South–South cooperation in advancing public financial management for climate action. As Nepal continues to institutionalize climate budget tagging and integrate climate considerations within the Chart of Accounts, our focus is on moving from fragmented tracking toward a more coherent, transparent, and results-oriented system. Learning from the experience of the Department of Finance of the Philippines provides valuable insights to strengthen our frameworks—enabling us to better align public expenditures with national climate priorities while enhancing accountability and impact." Ms Kamala Kharel, Under Secretary, Ministry of Finance, Nepal.

"Climate budget tagging is not just about tracking expenditures, but about ensuring that public resources are aligned with climate priorities." Ms. Aimee Evangelista, Climate Change Commission.

Carbon-market readiness and nature-based solutions: The Nepal delegation, represented by the Ministry of Forests and Environment, shared the recent launch of their National Carbon

Registry. This digital infrastructure positions Nepal as a regional leader in Article 6 readiness, providing the accurate tracking and transparency required to participate in international carbon markets. In turn, the Philippine Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) presented its own progress on forest and blue carbon initiatives, alongside new project development guidelines and a strategic roadmap for the country's forest carbon market. By sharing these national innovations, both delegations were able to align their climate ambitions and explore practical ways to turn high-level plans into measurable results.

“This exchange reflects the true spirit of South–South cooperation. As Nepal advances its digital carbon registry under Article 6, our focus is on moving from readiness to implementation—ensuring transparency, environmental integrity, and real impact on the ground. Through such partnerships, we are strengthening our systems to confidently participate in global carbon markets while delivering tangible benefits to our communities.” — Mr. Sandip Kumar Dev, Joint Secretary, Ministry of Energy, Water Resources and Irrigation.

“With this South-South cooperation, we want to move beyond readiness and toward implementation—ensuring that our financial mechanisms directly support the resilient communities we serve.” Atty. Analiza Rebuelta-Teh, Undersecretary, Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

Accelerating low-carbon energy transition: The Philippine Department of Energy (DOE) showcased its strategy for mobilizing investment through non-fiscal incentives. These include the Green Energy Option Program (GEOP), the Feed-in-Tariff (FIT) scheme, and the Green Energy Auction Program (GEAP), which has already awarded over 10 gigawatts of capacity. In turn, the Nepal Alternative Energy Promotion Center (AEPCC) presented its unique governance model, which integrates both public and private actors. Central to this is Nepal's Sustainable Energy Challenge Fund (SECF), managed through the Central Renewable Energy Fund (CREF). Supported by the Nepal Renewable Energy Programme (NREP), this mechanism provides viability gap funding to attract private investment into solar PV, mini-grids, and electric mobility.

The exchange concluded with a visit to the Pililla Wind Farm in Rizal. This visit allowed the delegation to observe how fiscal and non-fiscal incentives successfully roll out renewable energy systems. The site visit offered practical lessons for expanding energy access in isolated regions—specifically for the remote mountain communities of Nepal and the off-grid island areas of the Philippines.

“For countries such as the Philippines and Nepal, investing in sustainable and renewable energy is not only a climate imperative—it is also a strategic pathway toward resilience and independence. By learning from each other's successes and challenges, we can accelerate progress toward our shared climate goals.” Undersecretary Mylene Capongcol, Department of Energy.

“For countries like Nepal, scaling up renewable energy deployment is not only a climate imperative—it is a strategic opportunity to unlock carbon finance and mobilize private capital at scale. By leveraging robust MRV systems, high-integrity carbon markets, and blended finance instruments, we can enhance project bankability while delivering measurable emission reductions. Strengthening regional collaboration and aligning standards will be critical to accelerating investment flows and achieving our shared net-zero and sustainable development objectives.” Executive Director Nawaraj Dhakal, Alternative Energy Promotion Center.

The role of the Climate Finance Network

This exchange is an initiative of the flagship UNDP Climate Finance Network (CFN), supported by the UK’s FCDO Climate Action for Resilient Asia (CARA) programme and Sweden through Sida. The CFN acts as a platform connecting 18 countries in the region, recognizing that the \$1.5 trillion annual climate funding gap in Asia-Pacific cannot be closed by money alone.

By promoting regional knowledge exchange, the CFN supports governments to build the capacity to access and manage climate funds. This peer-to-peer model ensures that technical expertise is shared within the region, transforming national successes into regional standards. It moves South-South cooperation from an abstract concept into a practical tool for implementing Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs).

Looking ahead

The conclusion of the mission in Manila marks a transition from dialogue to formal technical cooperation. Through the development of a Joint Cooperation Roadmap, both countries are establishing a framework for continued alignment of carbon pricing, registry interoperability, and renewable energy initiatives. This partnership underscores the key role of regional cooperation as a core pillar of the CFN’s work. By prioritizing peer-to-peer learning, the network fosters a self-sustaining ecosystem where countries on the frontlines of climate change can collectively build the institutional capacity required to meet their national commitments. This model demonstrates that regional cooperation is not just a strategic choice, but a practical mechanism for turning shared climate ambitions into a reality for the entire Asia-Pacific

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