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ABS CBN

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By: Jervis Manahan

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ASIA NEWS NETWORK

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BUSINESS WORLD

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The Philippines, the world's second-biggest rice buyer behind China, aims to be fully self-sufficient in production of the staple crop by 2027, the Agriculture department said on Tuesday.

[The World Bank in a New World](#)

By: Wempi Saputra, Erivaldo Alfredo Gomes, and Abdoul Salam Bello

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LATESTLY

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MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

26 Puerto Galera areas affected by oil spill

By: Gerard Naval and Jocelyn Montemayor

The Department of Health (DOH) yesterday discouraged the public from engaging in water-related activities in 26 areas in Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro that were found to have "oil and grease" contaminants.

MANILA BULLETIN

Germany to boost climate partnership with PH

By: Joseph Pedrajas

Germany is seeking to intensify its cooperation with the Philippines in terms of climate action as it warned on Tuesday that the world is now "living in an absolutely crucial time."

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Easterlies to bring rain; no storms expected

By: Dempsey Reyes

Cloudy skies with thunderstorms are expected in the next few days due to the easterlies or winds blowing from the east, particularly from the Pacific Ocean, which are affecting Metro Manila and several parts of the country, the weather bureau said on Tuesday.

Pagasa: Probability of El Niño now at least 80%

By: Daphne Galvez

The occurrence of an El Niño phenomenon this year has become more likely, with now a probability of at least 80 percent, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said on Tuesday.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Germany wants to scale up partnership with PH vs. climate crisis

By: Joyce Ann L. Rocamora

Germany is looking to scale up its partnership with the Philippines and help strengthen its climate resilience as one of countries most vulnerable to climate change.

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By: Kris Crismundo

Cement maker Holcim Philippines has urged local contractors to use environment-friendly construction materials both for public and private projects.

REUTERS

[Explainer: What is direct air capture and how can it fight climate change?](#)

By: Susanna Twidale

As the need for climate action intensifies, governments and industries are exploring how to remove carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere.

THE MANILA TIMES

[Financing climate action vital to economic growth](#)

By: Niña Myka Pauline Arceo

Economies need to integrate climate financing into their development initiatives, Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno said, noting that this is vital for economic growth and development.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Philippine banks continue to bankroll coal and fossil fuel projects](#)

By: Ramon Royandoyan

Philippine banks are still financing coal and fossil fuel investments in the country at such an accelerated pace that could derail hopes of averting climate disaster, a new report found.

[Philippines eyes full rice self-sufficiency by 2027](#)

By: Danessa Rivera

The Philippines is seeking full rice self-sufficiency in four years even as the country faces a looming crisis on its staple commodity.

ZAWYA

[COP28 President-designate concludes visit to China](#)

By: Esraa Esmail & Muhammad Aamir

Dr. Sultan bin Ahmed Al Jaber, Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology and COP28 President-Designate, has concluded a two-day trip to China, where he held a series of bilateral meetings, including with Ding Xuexiang, First Vice Premier of China; Zhao Chenxin, Vice Chairman of the NDRC; Huang Runqiu, Minister of Ecology and Environment; Xie Zhenhua, Special Envoy for Climate Change; and Dr. Zhang Jianhua, Director of the National Energy Administration.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PAGEONE

[GMA And Nestlé PH Launch “Kalikasanovela” Series Promoting 3Rs](#)

The plastic waste crisis has been a longstanding environmental problem in the country largely due to the gaps in solid waste management (SWM) systems, including recovery, segregation, and recycling.

POLITIKO

[CCC backs Marcos’ call to ramp up e-vehicle, renewable energy projects](#)

By: Prince Golez

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) supported President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.’s push for renewable energy initiatives and the creation of a multimodal transportation system that will benefit both the riding public and ecosystem.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

Binay opposes BuCor project in Masungi Georeserve

By: Jervis Manahan

Sen. Nancy Binay did an ocular at the Masungi Georeserve as part of her Senate resolution to investigate the Bureau of Corrections (BuCor)-Masungi issue.

Together with her staff, Binay went around the georeserve, including the famed Discovery Trail.

"Eye-opener sa akin ito, hindi ko inexpect na may ganitong mapapasyalan na malapit sa Metro Manila," the lawmaker said.

She said that she will invite more government officials to see the area, which is home to endemic flora and fauna.

"We should bring more government officials to see the place. Siguro dapat may isa pang ocular na isasama ang taga DENR (Department of Environment and Natural Resources, LGU (local government unit), at BuCor," she added.

Asked about her thoughts on BuCor's plans to build a facility, Binay said the terrain is not conducive for the construction of any building.

"Paano magtatayo dito, puro bangin. Alangan naman putulin 'yung bundok para tayuan ng kulungan. Hindi ideal, hindi angkop sa terrain ng lupa," Binay said.

"Parang mas bagay, 'yung Department of Tourism, baka pwede palawakin scope ng parks ang development," she added.

She said as a lawmaker, she'll oppose any moves that will destroy the biodiversity in the area.

"Hindi tayo papayag na ma-convert 'yung area. This is meant to be an eco-tourism area. Tutol [ako] lalo na nakita ko na ganito pala siya kaganda. Bakit kailangan sirain, kailangan ito protektahan," she ended.

Masungi trustee Ann Dumaliang thanked Binay for her move.

"Nagpapasalamat ako kay Senator Nancy at ibang senador na sumuporta sa resolusyon. Matagal na tinatrabaho ang reforestation dito. I look forward with working with our senators," she said.

ASIA NEWS NETWORK

[ADB to give \\$230 million for Bangladesh flood victims' rehabilitation](#)

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) will give Bangladesh \$230 million in loans to help the rehabilitation and reconstruction efforts in the country's north-eastern part affected by devastating floods in May and June last year.

The assistance under the Flood Reconstruction Emergency Assistance Project will help in the reconstruction, improvement of resilience, and economic recovery of northeastern districts of Brahmanbaria, Habiganj, Kishoreganj, Moulvibazar, Mymensingh, Netrokona, Sherpur, Sunamganj and Sylhet.

Record rainfall in northeastern Bangladesh in May and June of 2022 caused massive flooding, especially in the low-lying Haor region, affecting 7.2 million people.

The project will address the climate change impacts by developing innovative climate-resilient infrastructure

Sharifa Khan, secretary of the Economic Relations Division, and Edimon Ginting, ADB country director for Bangladesh, signed agreements yesterday in this regard.

"The project will address the climate change impacts by developing innovative climate-resilient infrastructure under the build-back-better principles in line with the government's national adaptation plan," the ADB country director said.

"The project will also help improve living conditions, livelihoods, and climate resilience in the flood-affected northeast region of Bangladesh by reducing flood risks in 79,233 hectares of land; improving climate-resilient irrigation infrastructure and water delivery services in at least 10,000 hectares of land."

The project will also help in reconstructing and rehabilitating 757 kilometres of rural roads, 34 kms of rail track, 80 kms of river embankment and 11,900 tube wells and planting 100,000 trees, Ginting said.

In partnership with reputable national and international research institutes, the project will support climate-smart agriculture technologies and livelihood support to the flood-affected people in the socioeconomically underdeveloped Haor region.

The improvement in agriculture value chains (crops and fisheries) will enhance food security, nutrition, employment, poverty reduction, and rural livelihoods.

The project will incorporate safety features in infrastructure designs, particularly for the elderly, women, children, and people with disability. In line with the build-back-better approach, the infrastructure design will consider historical and projected climate scenarios including maximum flood depth and velocity, and temperature and rainfall.

The project will also support water management through alternative wetting and drying technology, direct seeded rice, and the use of solar irrigation for climate adaptation and mitigation.

An additional \$1 million technical assistance grant from ADB's Technical Assistance Special Fund will support implementing agencies in building their capacities in climate adaptation and disaster risk management, improving project implementation and monitoring, and strengthening flood risk management and early warning system.

ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty.

Established in 1966, it is owned by 68 members.

BUSINESS WORLD

Philippines targets rice self-sufficiency by 2027

The Philippines, the world's second-biggest rice buyer behind China, aims to be fully self-sufficient in production of the staple crop by 2027, the Agriculture department said on Tuesday.

The pledge comes after previous administrations have failed to achieve the target due to policy missteps and the impact of more destructive weather dampening local productivity.

The Philippines currently imports more than 3 million tons of rice annually, mainly from Vietnam, to supplement local supply and keep prices stable.

Under a revamped five-year program, President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr.'s administration has identified "key strategies" to enhance production, including climate change adaptation and using digital technology.

The Department of Agriculture (DA) said in a statement it was seeking full rice self-sufficiency by 2027, or a year before the end of the President's six-year term. Mr. Marcos is also the agriculture secretary.

The domestic rice supply is expected to stabilize at 24.99 to 26.86 million tons under the program.

The plan also aims for annual rice price increases to be limited to less than 1%, a 54% increase in the income of farmers and the maintenance of sufficient buffer stocks.

The DA said domestic rice supply currently remains sufficient and sought to allay concerns about a looming El Niño weather event, which can cause a severe dry spell.

With inflation remaining high, driven mainly by food costs, the government is looking to ensure that rice availability in particular is not hampered.

The National Food Authority, which maintains the grain stockpile, has proposed importing 330,000 tons of rice to cover an expected deficit in its buffer stock. Mr. Marcos has yet to approve the proposal.

[The World Bank in a New World](#)

By: Wempi Saputra, Erivaldo Alfredo Gomes, and Abdoul Salam Bello

The Spring Meetings of the World Bank Group (WBG) and the International Monetary Fund, which kicked off on April 10 in Washington, provide an opportunity to reflect on the Bank's ongoing evolution. As development confronts both longstanding and emerging challenges, the Bank needs to reform itself in ways that enable it to provide more ambitious solutions.

Over the past half-century, the WBG has worked with developing countries to help hundreds of millions of people rise out of poverty. But global progress ground to a halt in 2020, after five years of slowing gains, as the COVID-19 pandemic pushed 70 million people into extreme poverty. If left unchecked, climate change could do the same to 132 million more by 2030. According to WBG estimates, the number of people living in extreme poverty (on less than \$2.15 per day) will increase to 600 million by 2030, and more than three billion people will live on less than \$6.85 per day.

The WBG is uniquely equipped to mobilize the financing needed to address these global challenges. But the Bank must ensure that its ambitions, strategies, and financing mechanisms align with developing countries' needs and realities. While we are pleased with the Bank's progress on internal reforms, at least four areas require more work before its annual meetings in October.

First, the WBG must reaffirm its commitment to promoting sustainable, inclusive, and resilient economic growth. Boosting growth remains the best way to create quality jobs and opportunities and achieve the Bank's twin goals of ending extreme poverty and fostering shared prosperity. But, as the Bank's own research finds, "nearly all the economic forces that powered progress and prosperity over the last three decades are fading." With global growth slowing, the WBG now estimates that the international community is unlikely to meet the goal of ending extreme poverty by 2030.

Addressing the root causes of poverty and economic slowdown would require adopting new instruments and ways of working, increasing staff capacity, and setting targets that would enable the Bank to play a greater role in fostering a healthy business environment and unleashing private investment. This would require a less risk-averse approach and improved coordination with the WBG's private-sector arms. It also means listening carefully to Global South members' needs and concerns when defining and selecting criteria for the "global challenges" the Bank will focus on over the next decade.

Second, the WBG must ensure that low-income countries can exercise more agency in shaping the development agenda. A key principle underlying the WBG's operating

model is country-driven engagement: the borrowing government leads in coordinating and monitoring its own portfolio. This client-centered model has helped ensure that the Bank's strategies for borrowing countries align with national priorities and have the political support they need to sustain investments over time.

One proposal currently being considered is to create stronger incentives for countries to invest in global public goods, such as reducing greenhouse-gas emissions. While this is a positive step, the Bank must refrain from compromising countries' "ownership" of policies by imposing excessive or burdensome conditions on them. Moreover, the Bank must ensure that concessional loans or grants aimed at encouraging such investment do not lead to higher borrowing costs or trade-offs between middle-income countries and low-income countries. Nor should they come at the expense of official development assistance (ODA). If the goal is to promote investments that benefit the international community, then the international community — particularly advanced economies — should bear the costs.

Third, to achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, WBG shareholders must do more to increase the Bank's financial capacity. To that end, shareholding governments and other partners must meet their existing commitments, such as developed countries' pledge to provide \$100 billion per year for climate-mitigation and -adaptation efforts, private-sector commitments to mobilize \$1 trillion for climate action, and the G7's commitment to raising \$600 billion for global infrastructure investments.

But more is needed. For example, early estimates suggest that adjusting the WBG's capital-adequacy framework could make available \$50-200 billion over the next decade. While some financial innovations have shown promise, it is important to consider their full effects. For example, raising hybrid capital could increase the Bank's borrowing costs at a time when clients are facing historically high interest rates and unsustainable debt burdens.

A capital increase could be one way to leverage available resources and the clearest sign of strong shareholder support. But this must be accompanied by an overhaul of the Bank's cost pass-through model to enable it to make greater use of low-interest, long-term debt instruments, thereby ensuring that countries can tackle development challenges without incurring unsustainable debt. The need for more ambitious ODA replenishments over the coming years must be met.

Lastly, reducing poverty would be a daunting (perhaps even impossible) task without access to clean, affordable, and reliable energy sources, as well as emissions-

generating investments in manufacturing and transportation. Letting the climate effort overshadow the World Bank's broader objectives would be a grave injustice — and might not be the most efficient strategy. If, say, Sub-Saharan Africa (excluding South Africa) were to triple its electricity consumption overnight by relying on natural gas to power the increased demand, it would add only 0.6% to global carbon emissions.

Attempting to tackle poverty and climate change simultaneously could lead some governments to make costly and counterproductive decisions. Instead, it would be more efficient — and fairer — for WBG shareholders to find the right balance between focusing on reducing emissions in upper-middle and high-income countries and focusing on adaptation in order to help vulnerable communities and countries build climate resilience.

The Global North and South have a historic opportunity to reinvigorate the multilateral development-bank system. Building on the World Bank's legacy of innovation and progress is the best way to advance the goal of a more sustainable, resilient, and inclusive world.

LATESTLY

[Solar Storm Could Strike Earth, Warns NASA; Know Dates, Effects on Our Planet](#)

The last solar storm to affect Earth happened almost a week ago. Furthermore, it was a rather modest storm that had little impact on us. The worst was over the Indian Ocean area, when a brief radio black out was noticed. But a swift decline in the situation is set to occur.

A massive solar storm that could hit Earth has been warned about by NASA. Glancing blows are anticipated for the first strike tomorrow, April 19, and a significant direct hit is anticipated for April 20. The impact might be much more hazardous if this solar storm does make contact with Earth. G4 Class Geomagnetic Storm Hits Earth Catching Forecasters by Surprise.

The information was provided by Tamitha Skov, also known as Space Weather Woman, a physicist who studies space weather. She tweeted, "Ready for #aurora? A #solarstorm direct hit is coming. NASA predicts impact 20 April. Additional glancing storms launched earlier mean activity could pick up late on April 19. Expect extended aurora at high latitudes with good chance of views down to mid- latitudes by the 20th ..

Possible Impacts of the Upcoming Solar Storm

A significant coronal mass ejection (CME) cloud that is moving towards Earth is the cause of this solar storm. Glancing blows are anticipated prior to direct hits because of the cloud's crescent-shaped motion. However, this limited strike may have unsettling repercussions. It has the power to weaken the Earth's magnetic fields to the point where cracks appear in the planet's surface, allowing CME to escape into the upper atmosphere and trigger a storm with a much higher intensity.

In addition, Skov has stated that there is a 10% possibility for an X-class solar flare explosion on Sun in her weekly forecast. The primary cause of GPS malfunction and shortwave radio blackouts is such eruptions. The overall damage could worsen if such an eruption occurs at the same time as the solar storm. Is Doomsday Arriving? Solar Storm Could Strike Earth As NASA Detects Ring-Shaped Sunspot on Sun.

Such a solar storm can be extremely dangerous today. It can interfere with GPS, hinder mobile and internet networks, and even bring about a severe power outage by tampering with power systems. Even Earth's electronic equipment is susceptible to breakdown.

MALAYA BUSINESS INSIGHT

26 Puerto Galera areas affected by oil spill

By: Gerard Naval and Jocelyn Montemayor

The Department of Health (DOH) yesterday discouraged the public from engaging in water-related activities in 26 areas in Puerto Galera, Oriental Mindoro that were found to have “oil and grease” contaminants.

In a joint statement with the Department of Environmental and Natural Resources (DENR), the DOH said only nine out of 35 areas tested for contaminants “have met the criteria for water quality guidelines set by the DENR.”

The nine areas where water-related activities can be safely held are Small Lalaguna Shoreline, Big Lalaguna Shoreline, Balete, Central Sabang Shoreline, Coco Beach, Batangas Channel, Paniquian, Balatero, and West San Isidro Bay.

The DOH did not identify the 26 areas that failed the DENR test. The test was held to determine which areas have been affected by the oil spill caused by the sinking of the oil tanker MT Princess Empress off Oriental Mindoro last February 28.

“In the interest of public health and safety, the DOH advises the public to exercise caution and refrain from consuming water from affected areas and conducting water-related occupational (like fishing, seaweed farming) and recreational activities,” the agency said.

Tourism Secretary Cristina Frasco welcomed the results of the tests that were presented by Environment Secretary Antonia Yulo in Malacanang, saying the nine safe areas are within the major tourism and dive spots in Puerto Galera that will remain open.

Frasco said Puerto Galera stands to lose around P5.3 million daily if it is shut down while more than 11,000 tourism industry workers would be displaced.

She said Puerto Galera is the top destination in Oriental Mindoro and contributes 85 percent to the tourism economy in the province. In 2022, it generated P500 million in tourism receipts.

Yulo said six of the nine sampling areas that passed are actually located in the heart of Puerto Galera, which has its own Water Quality Management Board.

She said it is up to the DOH and local government units concerned to determine or declare if engaging in water activities in areas that did not pass the tests should be allowed or banned temporarily.

“If there is oil and grease, of course there is a concern in terms of ingestion, and so I will leave that to the DOH because it’s public health and public safety, they will announce what is allowed or not. For DENR, it is testing for the presence and the threshold if it exceeded, that’s what we report,” she added.

“With regard to the other areas that were not seen to have complied with the threshold set in the water quality test results under DENR guidelines, we are pleased to receive the Department of Health’s position that the public is advised to proceed with caution but that no swimming ban has been indicated, only that concerns have been expressed in the ingestion of water. Therefore, our perception of this joint statement is that Puerto Galera tourism continues to be open, as well as that there has been no direct attribution in terms of the direct source of the findings considering the presence of other human and economic activities in Puerto Galera,” she said.

The DOH said potable water and shellfish and seafood consumption with detectable levels of contaminants pose potential health hazards such as causing gastrointestinal irritations like abdominal pain, nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea.

The health department also said that exposure to such contaminants may also cause various skin diseases, such as rashes and blisters.

OIL SPILL VICTIMS

Vergeire also said the agency is no longer receiving reports of persons getting sick due to the oil spill, unlike before when cases of asthma attacks, nausea, gastrointestinal illnesses were reported.

She said this is likely due to the preventive measures put in place by the national and local governments in the aftermath of the tragedy.

“We have seen improvement on the health behavior of the residents through the efforts of the government because we deployed preventive measures,” said Vergeire.

The Department of Social Welfare and Development – Disaster Response Operations Monitoring and Information Center (DSWD-DROMIC) said that 37,871 persons

(178,306 persons) from 187 barangays in Regions IV-A (Calabarzon), IV-B (Mimaropa) and VI (Western Visayas) have been affected by the oil spill.

A total of P100.49 million worth of assistance has been provided to those affected by the oil.

PCG CLEAN-UP

A Philippine Coast Guard (PCG) official yesterday said the clean-up being conducted in coastlines affected by the oil spill is nearly 80 percent complete.

“We’re 77.91 percent (complete) in phase 1, in our clean-up,” said Commodore Geronimo Tuvilla, commander of the PCG Incident Management Team in Oriental Mindoro.

Tuvilla said the PCG has stepped up monitoring to ensure no more oil will reach coastlines.

“We’re into pressure washing, we’re removing the stains on stones, we are at that stage.

We are removing them (stains) through pressure washing. Then we will polish the stones,” he said.

“It’s (coastal cleanup) continuing and actually we’ve made great progress,” Tuvilla said.

The PCG also reported that remotely operated vehicle (ROV) and bagging operations at the sunken vessel have been completed.

MANILA BULLETIN

[Germany to boost climate partnership with PH](#)

By: Joseph Pedrajas

Germany is seeking to intensify its cooperation with the Philippines in terms of climate action as it warned on Tuesday that the world is now "living in an absolutely crucial time."

German State Secretary and Special Envoy for International Climate Action Jennifer Lee Morgan on Tuesday pushed for an intense partnership with the Philippines, one of the countries vulnerable to climate crisis, after visiting Tacloban, Leyte—an area that bore the brunt of Typhoon Yolanda that left thousands dead.

"We know that what happened in Tacloban is not a single event. This is something that is just one terrific example of what is happening in many places around the world," Morgan said at a climate talk held in Manila.

Therefore, Germany is moving towards accelerating its climate agenda with the Philippines by conducting the two countries' first ever high-level consultation.

Morgan would meet on Tuesday afternoon with Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) Secretary Antonia Loyzaga to come up with a "blueprint" on how the two countries can start activating a "hotline" between their respective environment authorities to accelerate implementation of some of the priority environmental programs of the Philippines, including its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).

The NDC binds the Philippines to attain an emission or avoidance in its greenhouse gas by 75 percent, as part of the country's commitment to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change.

Expected to be discussed is the prospect for expanding access to Germany's International Climate Initiative (IKI) as the Philippines is a focus country of IKI, being one of the countries in the world most vulnerable to the impacts of climate change and one of the world's 17 megadiverse countries.

Agenda items also include critical environmental issues of immediate global and national concern, such as the Philippines' environmental priority programs on water security, decarbonization of the Philippine economy, and the strengthening of the country's climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction and management capacities.

"I'm so pleased to be able to be here and thinking with the Philippine government how we can be accelerating our work together, how we can learn from you, you can learn from us and our lessons and mistakes across the year," Morgan said.

"And I'm also optimistic because when I talk to people around the world, I believe that there are not people who understand what's going on. They understand this and understand the opportunity that we have in front of us to transform and to really save millions and millions of lives moving forward and they are acting," she added.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

Easterlies to bring rain; no storms expected

By: Dempsey Reyes

Cloudy skies with thunderstorms are expected in the next few days due to the easterlies or winds blowing from the east, particularly from the Pacific Ocean, which are affecting Metro Manila and several parts of the country, the weather bureau said on Tuesday.

While the entire country will experience a “generally fair weather condition,” the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) noted that there would still be chances of isolated rain showers and thunderstorms caused by localized thunderstorms.

Pagasa weather specialist Grace Castañeda on Tuesday said easterlies would prevail especially in the eastern section of the country.

She also said that there would be no tropical cyclones or storms in the next few days that may affect the country.

The easterlies and localized thunderstorms may bring partly cloudy to cloudy skies with isolated rain showers or thunderstorms in Metro Manila and the rest of the country.

Pagasa: Probability of El Niño now at least 80%

By: Daphne Galvez

The occurrence of an El Niño phenomenon this year has become more likely, with now a probability of at least 80 percent, the Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical, and Astronomical Services Administration (Pagasa) said on Tuesday.

Pagasa deputy administrator Esperanza Cayanan said the probability of an El Niño occurrence has increased from 55 percent to 80 percent in June, July, August, and September.

Meanwhile, the probability of an El Niño occurrence in November, December, and January is 87 percent.

With this, the Pagasa is poised to issue an El Niño Alert next month.

“From El Niño Watch, by next month May, we will be issuing the second level, which is El Niño Alert, kung saan mayroon na tayong 76 percent probability of El Niño occurrence for the next two months,” Cayanan said.

Pagasa issued an El Niño Watch in March, the first level of the agency’s El Niño warning system.

The weather bureau, however, clarified that before the looming onset of an El Niño, the Philippines would first experience a rainy season.

Cayanan warned that heavy rainfalls might occur before the onset of the phenomenon.

“From previous experience natin, pwede tayong makaexperience ng extreme rainfall event like Ondoy noong 2009 wherein nagkaroon ng El Niño noong 2009 to 2010. Bago maramdaman ‘yung kakulangan sa tubig, nakaexperience tayo ng extreme rainfall events,” she said.

(From our previous experience, we may have extreme rainfall events like Ondoy in 2009, where we experienced an El Niño from 2009 to 2010. Before we experienced the water shortage, we experienced extreme rainfall events.)

According to Pagasa, El Niño is characterized by unusually warmer than average sea surface temperatures (SSTs) in the central and eastern equatorial Pacific.

As an effect, below-normal rains are expected, which can cause dry spells and droughts in several areas of the country.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

[Germany wants to scale up partnership with PH vs. climate crisis](#)

By: Joyce Ann L. Rocamora

Germany is looking to scale up its partnership with the Philippines and help strengthen its climate resilience as one of countries most vulnerable to climate change.

In discussing climate mitigation, Germany's State Secretary and Special Envoy for International Climate Action Jennifer Lee Morgan underscored the need to promote renewable energy sources and decarbonization.

"If you're looking at how you're getting your energy sources, you need to be thinking it's resilient but you also have to be taking biodiversity into account as you move forward," she said in an interview Tuesday.

"We're looking to scale that up and that's what we'll be discussing at our consultation (with Philippine authorities)," she added.

Manila and Berlin continue to work closely through Germany's International Climate Initiative (IKI), which finances over EUR63 million worth of projects on mitigation of greenhouse gas emissions, adaptation to the impacts of climate change, conservation of natural carbon sinks with focus on reducing emissions from deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+), and biodiversity conservation.

Through this partnership, Morgan said Germany also hopes to bring forward a project that integrates climate biodiversity and resilience.

Morgan is in Manila to lead the first Philippine-German Consultation on Climate together with Environment Secretary Antonia Loyzaga.

Ahead of the meeting, she visited Tacloban City on Monday where she met with the victims of the deadly Typhoon Yolanda that struck the country in 2013.

Morgan said Berlin would also collaborate with Manila and international partners to develop the loss and damage fund hopefully by the end of the year.

"I was in Tacloban yesterday and meeting the survivors brought home to me even more so how urgent it is that we move quickly in getting this loss and damage funds up and running. That's a key priority," she told reporters.

Both Germany and the Philippines are on the United Nations loss and damage fund transitional committee, which is developing the said funding to assist developing countries.

Loss and damage refer to climate change's negative impact that cannot be avoided by mitigation and adaptation, such as extreme weather events, sea level rise and glacial retreat, among others.

Use of eco-friendly construction materials pushed

By: Kris Crismundo

Cement maker Holcim Philippines has urged local contractors to use environment-friendly construction materials both for public and private projects.

At the press conference of the relaunching of Holcim's flagship brand Excel ECOPlanet in Pasay City Tuesday, Holcim Philippines president and chief executive officer Horia Adrian said utilizing low-carbon products in the construction industry will help the country in meeting its commitments to climate action.

"Construction industry is one of the industries that are, let's say, contributing to this CO2 (carbon dioxide) emissions," he said.

Adrian said the company continues to engage with national and local authorities to discuss the benefits of using eco-friendly cements and other construction materials, especially as the government boosts its infrastructure program.

"We are here to be partners and we are here to provide what is needed to reduce the CO2 emission for construction industry and to decarbonize the construction industry in the country," he told reporters.

Adrian said the appetite in the Philippines for eco-friendly products has increased amid the impacts of climate change.

Excel ECOPlanet, which has components of recycled waste materials from steel, power plants and limestone, among others, has 30 percent less carbon emission compared to ordinary Portland cement.

Adrian said Holcim Philippines' manufacturing facilities were able to use a million tons of recycled waste blended to its cement products.

He said the company is also interested in recycling waste materials from constructions and demolitions.

"We are making a serious pledge here in embedding recycling into the new way of building," he added. "We should preserve the natural resources. We should make sure that we build more with old materials."

REUTERS

[Explainer: What is direct air capture and how can it fight climate change?](#)

By: Susanna Twidale

As the need for climate action intensifies, governments and industries are exploring how to remove carbon dioxide (CO₂) from the atmosphere.

The U.S. government has offered \$3.5 billion in grants to companies that will capture and permanently store the gas using a process known as Direct Air Capture (DAC).

Here's how the cutting-edge technology works, along with its potential and limitations.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

DAC technology uses chemical reactions to remove carbon dioxide from the air, which can then be stored in underground caverns or used in products or applications such as making concrete or aviation fuel.

The world's largest operating DAC plant, Climeworks' Orca plant in Iceland, can remove 4,000 tonnes of CO₂ a year, which is then stored deep underground.

The U.S. programme is seeking to fund large-scale plants capable of removing a million tonnes a year.

WHAT ABOUT TREES?

Natural methods of carbon removal such as planting trees and forest management are expected to play a huge role in helping combat climate change. Doing so is relatively inexpensive, at less than \$50 per ton, according to the World Resources Institute, compared to technology such as DAC, which currently costs in the high triple digits per ton.

Many scientists, however, believe technical solutions will be needed, partly due to the amount of land that would have to be taken up if all the required removals were made through using trees.

ARE THERE OTHER TYPES OF CARBON REMOVALS?

Other techniques include bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS). Through this method, electricity is produced by burning biomass like wood pellets and capturing and storing the emissions generated during the process.

Biochar is a form of charcoal produced when organic matter such as leaves, wood or straw is heated at high temperatures without oxygen, leaving a carbon rich substance that can be used as fertilizer, thereby storing the carbon in soil.

Techniques are also being developed to remove CO₂ from seawater.

WHAT ABOUT CCS?

Carbon capture and storage (CCS) technology is traditionally deployed at industrial smokestacks such as fossil fuel power plants, filtering out the CO₂ and storing it before it reaches the atmosphere.

Unless the CCS technology is capturing more CO₂ than the industrial process is emitting at the site it would not usually be deemed a removal.

The main selling point of removals compared to CCS is that it can pull historical emissions out of the sky and store them in soils, rocks, trees, oceans, and products, moving beyond emissions reductions to permanent removal.

WHAT DO GREEN GROUPS THINK?

While most environmental activists acknowledge some carbon removals will be needed for global climate targets to be met, they are concerned companies could use carbon removal development as an excuse not to reduce their emissions by as much as possible in the first place.

Many green groups also question the use of biomass for electricity and are sceptical over technological solutions such as DAC.

Some groups are focused on the environmental justice implications of DAC, concerned that the technology gives fossil fuel companies cover to keep up production, especially in minority and low-income areas near heavy emitting facilities.

THE MANILA TIMES

Financing climate action vital to economic growth

By: Niña Myka Pauline Arceo

Economies need to integrate climate financing into their development initiatives, Finance Secretary Benjamin Diokno said, noting that this is vital for economic growth and development.

"We must strike a balance between achieving sustainable and resilient economic development, and addressing the intensifying climate crisis, which has compounded the complexities of managing public debt and market policies," Diokno said in his video message delivered during the 2023 Spring Meetings of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank Group.

"Financing climate action should not be seen as a competing priority. Rather, it should be treated as an indispensable part of economic growth and development," he added.

The Finance chief addressed the Vulnerable Twenty (V20) Group Ministerial Meeting X dubbed as "From Accra to Marrakech: Advancing Fit-for-Climate Financial Architecture and Development-Positive Climate Action" last April 16.

The Climate Vulnerable Forum's V20 Group of Finance Ministers was established in 2015 as a cooperative of economies that are structurally sensitive to climate change.

The group was formed in order to improve economic and financial responses to climate change while aspiring to share best practices, create improved climate finance techniques, and support the mobilization of public and private climate funding.

Diokno said that developing and climate-vulnerable countries like the Philippines are being impacted by the increasing severity of climate risks and disasters.

"Climate change adaptation is an urgent priority for the Philippines. For this, we rally to pursue concrete actions in addressing, minimizing, and averting loss and damage, specifically loss and damages experienced due to climate change," he said.

According to the World Bank's Philippines Country Climate and Development Report, climate inaction would result in significant economic and human losses, lowering the country's gross domestic product by 13.6 percent by 2040, with the poor bearing the brunt of the impact.

The Finance secretary stressed that the amount of climate funding allocated for mitigation and adaptation efforts should be proportionate to the requirements of developing and climate-vulnerable nations, "taking into account the economic and noneconomic losses, and damages from climate change."

"Governments and regulators should continue to have an increasing role in providing a conducive environment for the private sector and the general public to collaborate and expand climate initiatives," Diokno said.

"This collaboration will bolster our climate agenda and advance a financial architecture that is truly fit-for-climate and development-positive," he added.

Diokno also underlined the importance of a whole-of-society approach to addressing the climate crisis and the importance of promoting environmental, social and governance, or ESG, investing.

"Together, we must raise our collective ambitions and respond to the climate crisis with urgency, speed and scale. The Philippines eagerly awaits the concrete collective actions borne out of these discussions," Diokno said.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

[Philippine banks continue to bankroll coal and fossil fuel projects](#)

By: Ramon Royandoyan

Philippine banks are still financing coal and fossil fuel investments in the country at such an accelerated pace that could derail hopes of averting climate disaster, a new report found.

The domestic banking system, as the findings of the Center for Energy, Ecology, and Development assert, financed \$867.08 million worth of projects in coal from April 2022 to March this year. These banks likewise bankrolled \$930 million for the expansion and construction of new fossil gas projects.

The report put out a scorecard, which computed for coal and fossil gas financing, divestment policy, and sustainability policies.

Likewise, the report spotlighted that the majority of financing came from bonds, with most of these banks underwriting an estimated \$594 million with the rest of the total comprising loans.

“The report make its clear that the domestic banks have poured millions of dollar into the fossil fuel industry despite pronouncements and pledges. The remarkable shift from loans to bonds is what facilitates continued fossil fuel investments,” said Avril De Torres, deputy executive director of CEED.

CEED pointed out these banks’ exposure to investing and financing certain projects that have done, and continue to do, considerable harm to the environment. The findings spotlight concerted struggles undertaken by civil society groups in the Philippines, to shed light on the impact of financing on curbing efforts to attain climate goals.

The findings found that the Ayala-led Bank of the Philippine Islands was deemed the “dirtiest bank” for the fourth consecutive year. The bank still had a considerable exposure to fossil gas and pitched in financing for the expansion of coal in the country.

On the other hand, the Philippines' largest lender, BDO Unibank Inc., emerged second and is now considered the top financier of fossil gas projects and investments in the country, according to the report. A BDO subsidiary bankrolled San Miguel Global Power’s bond offering in July 2022, wherein some proceeds coursed through a coal-fired power plant in Bataan.

As it is, the state has not been remiss in putting out legislation and policy to mitigate the impact of the climate crisis. The Philippines, after all, is at the receiving end of emissions as a warming world exacerbates rising sea levels and natural disasters, among others.

The previous Duterte government issued a moratorium to halt the construction of new coal-fired power plants in 2020, which the Marcos Jr. administration kept in the meantime. Likewise, the state is targeting more renewables generation to pitch into its current energy mix. The national government set a target of 35% by 2030.

Rounding out the list are Metropolitan Bank & Trust Company, Security Bank, Philippine National Bank, China Banking Corp., Rizal Commercial Banking Corp., Land Bank of the Philippines, Development Bank of the Philippines, Asia United Bank, Robinsons Bank, Bank of Commerce Philippine Bank of Communication, East West Banking Corp., and Union Bank of the Philippines.

CEED spotlighted that a majority of them, such as AUB, BOC, China Bank, East West Bank, Metrobank, PBCOM, PNB, Unionbank, and Robinsons Bank, have not made any effort to divest itself from coal financing and investments, which signals inaction on their part on ending fossil fuel expansion.

Despite this, the findings are non-binding but are expected to spur these financial institutions into action. The report was released in the thick of the annual stockholders' meeting season, as yearly financial statements have been filed in bunches weeks back.

There were bright spots, however. State-run LBP came out with an exclusion list that spelled out that the bank will no longer invest in the coal value chain.

"Banks must realize that every time they underwrite or facilitate a toxic bond, they have a direct hand in the worsening impacts of the climate crisis," De Torres added.

Philippines eyes full rice self-sufficiency by 2027

By: Danessa Rivera

The Philippines is seeking full rice self-sufficiency in four years even as the country faces a looming crisis on its staple commodity.

In a statement yesterday, the Department of Agriculture (DA) said it is seeking 100-percent rice self-sufficiency by 2027 through its Masagana Rice Program 2023-2028.

Under the five-year program, the DA aims to stabilize the country's rice supply from 24.99 million metric tons to 26.86 million MT.

It also eyes to lower rice inflation to less than one percent annually, increase farmers' income by 54 percent and ensure sufficient rice buffer stock through the National Food Authority (NFA).

The DA identified four key strategies to shore up production: climate change adaptation, farm clustering and consolidation to promote convergence of interventions, value chain approach and digital transformation of the Philippine rice industry.

An iteration of the Masagana 99 program of the late former president Ferdinand Marcos Sr. from 1973 to 1984, the DA launched Masagana 150 and 200 last October to increase rice production by providing farmers high-yielding rice varieties.

Masagana 150 seeks to achieve the 7.5 tons of inbred rice per hectare yield, equivalent to 150 cavans at P8.38 production cost per kilo, while Masagana 200 aims for a yield of 10 tons of hybrid rice per hectare, or 200 cavans at a production cost of P7.82 per kilo.

In a statement, Bantay Bigas spokesperson Cathy Estavillo said rice self-sufficiency could only be achieved if the government would not rely on importation.

"Due to Republic Act (RA) 11203, or the Rice Liberalization Law, rice self-sufficiency is impossible if rice is still imported. The government should not rely on importers to stabilize supply and prices," Estad.

If the government is serious in achieving self-sufficiency, Bantay Bigas said it should repeal the Rice Liberalization Law, which removed government controls over rice imports and fully liberalized the rice trade.

“Bring back the regulatory power of the NFA not only in buffer stocking, but also in allocating a larger budget to buy rice from farmers and provide aid and subsidies,” Estavillo said.

For the Federation of Free Farmers (FFF), rice self-sufficiency will not be achieved if production costs remain high, coupled with excessive importation.

“Assuming we attain self-sufficiency, if our cost of production remains high, cheaper imports will still come in, resulting in a glut that will depress local prices and discourage farmers. Eventually, self-sufficiency will not be sustained. But if we become competitive and productive, it will be very possible to achieve self-sufficiency and even export,” FFF national manager Raul Montemayor said in a text message.

Last year, palay production decreased to 19.76 million MT from the record high of 19.96 million MT in 2021.

To address the supply gap, the country imported a record high of 3.8 million MT of rice last year, a majority of which were sourced from Vietnam. This was 38 percent higher than the 2.7 million MT of rice imported in 2021.

The United States Department of Agriculture has raised its forecast on the country’s rice importation to 3.8 million MT this year to address the projected production shortfall owed to typhoons and lower fertilizer use.

ZAWYA

COP28 President-designate concludes visit to China

By: Esraa Esmail & Muhammad Aamir

Dr. Sultan bin Ahmed Al Jaber, Minister of Industry and Advanced Technology and COP28 President-Designate, has concluded a two-day trip to China, where he held a series of bilateral meetings, including with Ding Xuexiang, First Vice Premier of China; Zhao Chenxin, Vice Chairman of the NDRC; Huang Runqiu, Minister of Ecology and Environment; Xie Zhenhua, Special Envoy for Climate Change; and Dr. Zhang Jianhua, Director of the National Energy Administration.

Dr. Al Jaber also met and addressed students at the prestigious Tsinghua University Institute for Carbon Neutrality, where he highlighted China's leadership in renewable energy development and highlighted its unique capacity to enhance South-South cooperation on climate action.

Building on the strength of the UAE China strategic partnership, discussions focused on partnerships around practical, concrete efforts in the run up to COP28 for a step change to help achieve transformational climate progress. Given the size of China's economy, and its leadership position in advancing clean technologies, the country's potential to promote sustainable low carbon economic growth is immense.

"Given the size of China's economy and the scale of its development of renewable energy and decarbonization technology, China provides a good model for sustainable economic growth and the global energy transition. Over the past five years alone, China has been responsible for adding more than 40% of the world's new solar and wind power capacity and has set a very ambitious target of deploying 1,200 gigawatts of renewable capacity by the end of this decade."

Dr. Al Jaber highlighted that both the UAE and China were committed to diversifying their energy mix and pursuing pragmatic solutions to the climate crisis.

He added, "The partnership between the UAE and China will be a key asset to the COP28 Presidency as we seek innovative solutions to boost industrial decarbonization, expand access to clean technologies, and ensure a just energy transition."

Dr. Al Jaber met with clean tech entrepreneurs in a private sector roundtable and also addressed an audience at the Tsinghua University Institute for Carbon Neutrality, which covers energy, sustainability and climate-related disciplines.

With the world needing to reduce global emissions by 43 percent by 2030 to meet the Paris Agreement target of limiting the temperature rise to 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels, countries will need a range of technology solutions to meet their decarbonization goals, the COP28 President-Designate stated.

“We cannot accomplish our climate objectives without significant adoption and development of technology for decarbonization. We need to explore every available option. It is not renewables or hydrogen or nuclear or carbon capture or only using the least carbon intensive oil and gas. It is all of the above, plus new technologies yet to be invented, commercialised and deployed,” he stated.

“As a global leader and valued partner to emerging market economies, China is already making significant contributions to enhance South-South climate action. China’s support will be critical for us to deliver pragmatic, practical action on the road to COP28 and beyond.”

In his meeting with Chinese business and industrial leaders, Dr. Al Jaber continued to advocate for investment in industrial decarbonization. He said, “Steel, cement, and aluminium, like energy or manufacturing, are the industries that run the world. We simply cannot stop using them. But we do have to find a way to make them more sustainable. We must reduce emissions, not progress. We have to work with industry leaders to bring them on board as partners, and to source the solutions together.”

Dr. Al Jaber also hailed the strength of the partnership between the UAE and China as a model of cooperation toward sustainable, low carbon growth and prosperity. “Partnerships will be key to making COP28 a COP of Action, and a COP of solidarity, unity and impact. We need China, as we need all countries and Parties, at the table to meet the Paris goal of keeping global temperatures from rising 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels. We need a major course correction and a massive effort to reignite progress. And I look forward to working with China to deliver a successful COP28,” he stated.

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PAGEONE

[GMA And Nestlé PH Launch “Kalikasanovela” Series Promoting 3Rs](#)

The plastic waste crisis has been a longstanding environmental problem in the country largely due to the gaps in solid waste management (SWM) systems, including recovery, segregation, and recycling.

According to the World Bank, 2.7 million tons of plastic waste is generated in the Philippines each year. We also have one of the highest rates of mismanaged plastic waste globally, resulting in plastics ending up as litter and in landfills, and eventually leaking into bodies of water.

As a way to help address this, GMA Network and Nestlé Philippines forged a partnership for the planet with the aim to promote proper SWM and engage more Filipinos in building a movement for environmental sustainability through educational content. One of its highlights is the launch of the Kalikasanovela series starring SPARKLE artists.

Through four 30-second videos, GMA and Nestlé PH tapped on the Filipinos’ love of entertainment and storytelling to communicate the importance of the 3Rs—reducing, reusing and recycling plastic waste—and inspire consumers to embrace their role as stewards for the planet.

“Today marks a milestone as we launch Kalikasanovela, a fusion of our love for storytelling with our love for the environment. It is our belief in GMA that we need a concerted and cooperative effort to save our Earth and keep it livable.

This is why our partnership with Nestle is very significant for us. With our complementary strengths and the same vision, we hope to encourage as many Filipinos to be more responsible in their everyday living and be kinder to our environment,” said Angel Javier Cruz, Vice President and Head of Corporate Affairs and Communications of GMA Network.

Each Kalikasanovela episode makes use of a well-loved Filipino movie and TV series genre to tell a short story about plastic waste.

It also shows Nestlé PH's initiatives and milestones in addressing the plastic waste crisis, including upcycling sachets into school chairs, reducing plastic in their product packaging, collecting and diverting over 60 million kilos of plastic waste from the environment, and educating its employees to reduce, reuse, and recycle plastics in their homes.

In celebration of Earth Day, GMA Network and Nestlé Philippines launched the Kalikasanovela last April 17, 2023, wherein— together with Sparkle artists Bianca Umali, Ruru Madrid, and Sofia Pablo who starred in Kalikasanovela episodes Katok, Ibaon, and Sirena, respectively talked about their experiences and learnings from participating in the project.

“As artists, it’s our responsibility to use our platforms influence for good, especially when it comes to matters concerning the environment. Being part of the Kalikasanovela series is my way of doing this—by helping spread awareness about the plastic waste problem in the Philippines,” said Bianca Umali.

For Ruru Madrid, it’s not enough to just talk about these advocacies, you also have to practice what you preach. “Understanding that if all of us will do small acts to reduce, reuse, and recycle can have a big positive impact on the environment. I know we can do it. We just have to start now.”

“Instead of using single-use plastics when I eat out or shop, I bring reusable items to reduce my consumption,” Sofia Pablo shared. “There are many alternatives to single-use plastics that are readily available in the market from water bottles and utensils to shopping bags. It’s up to us to make that choice to help our planet in our own little ways.”

Other SPARKLE artists who starred in the series include Sanya Lopez for Paalam, and Allen Ansay for Sirena. You can watch all Kalikasanovela episodes on GMA 7 and the digital platforms of GMA and Nestlé Philippines.

“We thank GMA Network for sharing our vision of a waste-free future. Our goal for the Kalikasanovela series and this partnership as a whole is to inspire more Filipinos to be part of the solution in addressing the plastic waste problem even in ways as simple as reusing, reducing and recycling plastic waste. We have to remember, tayo ang bida sa ating kwentong pangkalikasan. Together, we have what it takes to create a better world and shape a waste-free future for our children and for generations to come,” said Jose Uy III, SVP & Head of Corporate Affairs of Nestlé Philippines.

Last year, 400 GMA employees, including SPARKLE artists, joined sustainability workshops, and volunteered in coastal cleanup and tree growing activities together with Nestlé PH employees and other partners such as the Climate Change Commission (CCC) and the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR).

POLITIKO

[CCC backs Marcos' call to ramp up e-vehicle, renewable energy projects](#)

By: Prince Golez

The Climate Change Commission (CCC) supported President Ferdinand Marcos Jr.'s push for renewable energy initiatives and the creation of a multimodal transportation system that will benefit both the riding public and ecosystem.

“Reducing dependence on fossil fuels through increased electric vehicle production will be instrumental to our goal of a 75 percent decrease in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 2030 as part of our commitment to the Paris Agreement on climate change,” said CCC Vice Chairperson and Executive Director Robert Borje.

Borje said this will also have a positive impact by lowering the risk of disruptions in energy supply from exporting countries or economic losses owing to price volatility.

As of 2015, the transport sector GHG emissions have increased by 29.68 percent compared to 2010 and is the third-largest emitter sector in the country.

These emissions are caused by land transportation (87.88 percent), water-borne navigation (9.17 percent), and domestic aviation (2.95 percent).

The shift to renewable energy sources will improve energy security, particularly in a country like the Philippines where resources are abundant but not being used sustainably, according to the CCC official.

“Although the Philippines’ carbon footprint is almost negligible compared to bigger developed countries, it is our duty to the future generations to be able to experience the resources we have in view of inter-generational responsibility,” he added.

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