

12 September 2022, Monday



**DENR**

# **NEWS ALERTS**

# **NEWS CLIPPINGS**

**STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION AND INITIATIVES SERVICE**





## Nueva Vizcaya town unveils P20-M landfill

**KASIBU, Nueva Vizcaya:** A sanitary landfill (SLF) worth P20 million has been completed in this upland town to improve the management of waste disposal in 30 *barangay* (villages) here.

According to Forester Esthie Olli, this newly inaugurated SLF is a modern engineering landfill where waste is allowed to decompose into biologically and chemically inert materials in a setting isolated from the environment.

"The SLF located at Barangay Lupa in this town and inaugurated by the local government unit (LGU) here on Sept. 8, 2022, is now ready to cater to the 30 villages of this upland town," Olli said.

It was in 2016 during the term of former mayor Alberto Bumolo Jr. when the municipality of Kasibu, under the leadership of Mayor Romeo Tayaban, entered into a memorandum of agreement (MoA) with OceanaGold (Philippines) Inc. (OGPI) to start the construction of the SLF.

In 2013, a Community MoA was executed between OGPI and Barangay Didipio whereby the company committed to providing funds for other community social development or corporate social responsibility projects in addition to community projects funded under the Social Development and Management Program.

Lawyer Joan Adaci-Cattiling, OGPI president, said the Didipio Mine committed P20 million for the SLF whose construction in January 2019 commenced with a completion date of October 2019.

But Adaci-Cattiling said funding was put on hold when the project was 70-percent completed in September 2019 to the extent of more than P14.3 million already implemented as OGPI's operations were suspended because of delay in renewal of its financial or technical assistance agreement (FTAA).

An FTAA is a permit issued to a multinational company sharing technology and resources to explore and extract minerals in the Philippines.

On July 14, 2021, the national government renewed the Didipio

Mine's FTAA for an additional 25 years beginning June 19, 2019.

The initial 25-year FTAA took effect on June 20, 1994 and expired on June 20, 2019, a year after OceanaGold lodged its renewal application.

Adaci-Cattiling said the construction of the SLF resumed in 2021 with the remaining 30 percent of construction funded by the local government of Kasibu.

She noted that to complete the company's commitment under the Community MoA and the MoA in 2019, the LGU requested that the remaining project fund of more than P5.88 million be used to purchase equipment and fuel supply for the repair and completion of the Kasibu SLF project.

"The company remained committed to promoting the general welfare of the residents of Kasibu, and to complete its remaining obligation the company granted the request of a backhoe/excavator worth more than P5.48 million and fuel supply for the equipment worth more than P408,228," Adaci-Cattiling said.

During the SLF inauguration, engineer Jason Magdaong, Didipio Mine Environment manager, represented Adaci-Cattiling, also the company's general manager for corporate and legal affairs.

"OGPI and Kasibu LGU worked together to find the site for the SLF. There were challenges the company and LGU faced in the course of the project," Magdaong said.

Joining the inauguration was Environment Management Bureau chief for Region 2, Director Nelson Honrado, who commended the municipality of Kasibu and OceanaGold for their successful partnership.

The event was also witnessed by Tayaban, Bumolo, the Provincial Environmental Management Unit-Nueva Vizcaya chief Steve Visquera, representatives from the Provincial Environment and Natural Resources Office, Pastor Richard Manait who is the LGU chief executive assistant for religious affairs, village officials and other LGU representatives.

LEANDER C. DOMINGO





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## Nature fights back

All the garbage we spew out of our smokestacks and the exhaust pipes of our cars into the air we breathe are killing us. We get sick letting all that bad air into our lungs. For example, my childhood asthma is back... in my second childhood. My pulmonologist blames it on air pollution.

Worse, all that carbon dioxide and other pollutants end up messing up our weather system. Climate change happens and we suffer its consequences.

According to the Environment Defense Fund (EDF), climate change is why we are getting more killer typhoons, tornadoes and floods. Mother Nature is merely reacting to how badly we treat it.

### DEMAND AND SUPPLY



**BOO CHANCO**

Extreme weather is our future is a result of climate change. The irony of it is that countries like ours suffer the brunt of extreme weather even if our contribution to greenhouse gas emissions is rather small.

In Pakistan, a third of the country has been flooded by unusually torrential rains. It is the poor who end up suffering the consequences of actions that made many developed countries

extremely rich.

Matthew Bossons, a journalist living in Shanghai since 2014, wrote in *The New York Times* about his experience trying to have a vacation in the mountains of China's Sichuan province. Instead of that refreshing dip in a mountain pool, he saw how bad China's heat wave was.

"In the torrid summer of 2022," Bossons wrote, "half of China turned into a giant oven... The heat wave that baked China for weeks was startling in its scale, duration, and intensity."

"Through July and August, it shattered temperature records, dried up rivers, withered crops, sparked wildfires and caused deaths from heatstroke. It may have been the most severe heat wave ever recorded..."

"... rivers that are important arteries for shipping and transportation became unnavigable. Water levels in the Yangtze,

the world's third-longest river, hit record lows, dropping as much as 20 feet below recent average.

"Chickens died or struggled to lay eggs, pigs were hosed down by fire trucks to keep them cool and Sichuan's famed pandas lay on blocks of ice. People hoisted food to their apartments using buckets and ropes because the power blackouts had left elevators idled..."

What happened in China is our future, unfortunately for the world.

It isn't just China. Many locations around the world are experiencing heatwaves lately. My daughter was complaining about the worst summer temperatures they have experienced in California last week.

According to CNN, Californians are enduring what could be the worst heat wave in state history. On top of everything, there is a threat from Hurricane Kay that Californians must deal with.

And once Hurricane Kay weakens to become a tropical storm, the heat will end "abruptly and unusually," the National Weather Service in Los Angeles said. Sweltering temperatures are expected to give way to excessive rainfall, which can cause quick rises in creeks and rivers, and could lead to flash flooding in Southern California and southwest Arizona.

"It's never a good thing to get too much rain all at once, a trait all too common among slow-moving tropical storms," the prediction center wrote Wednesday morning. "Thus, the flash flood potential is also rapidly increasing."

CNN quotes Jan Null, a California meteorologist and owner of Golden Gate Weather Services: "In some ways, this is the new normal."

Californians were warned to prepare for the possibility of power blackouts if energy supply falls short as the heatwave drives up demand for power and strain California's energy grid. They were asked to avoid using major appliances and turn off all unnecessary lights between 3 p.m. and 10 p.m. Californians were asked not to charge their EVs at certain hours to avoid a power blackout.

The long and short of it is, in this era of extreme weather changes, typhoons are expected to become more intense and droughts will be more frequent and severe. All have a devastating impact on our food resources and personal safety.

The US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) notes





## NATURE FIGHTS BACK ... 2

that with climate change, warmer oceans increase the amount of water that evaporates into the air. That affects the frequency and intensity of typhoons and hurricanes.

Warmer air can hold more water vapor. For each degree of warming, the air's capacity for water vapor goes up by about seven percent. An atmosphere with more moisture can produce more intense rains.

"When more moisture-laden air moves over land or converges into a storm system, it can produce more intense precipitation—for example, heavier rain and snow storms."

In recent years, a larger percentage of precipitation has come in the form of intense single-day events. We remember Typhoon Ondoy, which caused heavy flooding in Metro Manila.

It really seems that nature is fighting back after decades of abuse. Forests have been decimated in many parts of the world, changing the ecosystem that impacts on worldwide climate.

The negative impact of climate change is real. We can now see and feel it in our lives. Unfortunately for us living in the Third World, there is little we can do except to mitigate adverse effects on our people.

This means that our government must invest in technology... in new types of crops that can survive hotter climates. We must also always be ready with enough stocks of food to make sure our people will not go hungry when crops fail due to too much rain or too little.

Perhaps, urban dwellers should start raising some of their own food. The technology is there to make urban farms thrive.

Let us make use of the scientific data gathered by Project NOAH of the UP Resilience Institute, a proactive hub to empower Philippine communities, with benchmark information vital for effective climate change. LGUs can use the resources of UP's Resilience Institute. They can also learn from Joey Salceda whose efforts to make Albay resilient to natural disasters have been internationally recognized.

The new DENR Secretary is a veteran scientist on climate change. She should lead the charge for greater resilience.

Mother Nature is fighting back. The new normal in our world today can be unpredictable and brutal. Being prepared is our only option.

Boo Chanco's email address is [bchanco@gmail.com](mailto:bchanco@gmail.com). Follow him on *Twitter* @boochanco





## Fisherfolk group recognized as champion in protecting marine biodiversity

By ELIZABETH MARCELO

Fisherfolk group Pambansang Lakas ng Kilusang Mamamalakaya ng Pilipinas (Pamalakaya), together with several other local environmental organizations, has been recognized by England-based Lewis Pugh Foundation as among the global "champions" in protecting the marine ecosystem.

The international foundation has specifically cited Pamalakaya and several environmental organizations in the Philippines under the umbrella alliance People's Network for the Integrity of Coastal Habitats and Ecosystems (People's NICHE) as "coral champions" for "working hard to protect, promote, record, celebrate, and propagate one of the world's most diverse oceans" – in reference to Manila Bay.

Established in 2012, the People's NICHE is a nationwide alliance calling for restoration, instead of reclamation, of coastal waters of Manila Bay and other areas targeted for reclamation. The alliance is composed of the Pamalakaya, Center for Environmental Concerns, Institute of Environmental Science and Meteorology – University of the Philippines-Diliman, Advocates of Science and Technology and the Kalikasan People's Network for the

Environment.

Pamalakaya national chairperson Fernando Hicap said the recognition it received from the Lewis Pugh Foundation strengthens their group's resolve to "defend the country's marine and aquatic ecosystems against all forms of destructive projects, especially reclamation."

"This environmental recognition affirms the validity of our struggle against destructive reclamation projects in defense of our fishing communities and waters," Hicap said in a press statement.

These efforts are relevant, according to Hicap, given that the Department of Environment and Natural Resources had declared that 72 percent of Manila Bay's reef area is found in Cavite, where at least five reclamation projects are in the pipeline.

These include the 420-hectare reclamation in Bacoor City, and the 2,200-hectare reclamation project of Century Peak Corp. and the Cavite provincial government.

Apart from protecting the state of the marine ecosystem, Hicap said their group is also active in the campaign against the 650-hectare reclamation project in Navotas City that threatens the livelihood of more than 1,000 fisherfolk, fish workers and operators of fishing structures.



## US Peace Corps trains LGUs on biodiversity

THE US Peace Corps trained representatives from 32 local government units (LGUs) and two state universities from across the Philippines on the monetization of marine resources for biodiversity protection and the sustainable financing of coastal resource management programs.

"A key way to preserve coastal habitats and reduce threats to biodiversity is to learn how to calculate the economic value of marine resources," US Peace Corps Director of Programming and Training Dr. Lyn Cheevers said during the training workshop held in Cebu. "This enables LGUs to collect usage fees and fines, generating revenue for coastal resource management while also deterring future damage."

"Sustainable financing is not only about how much money is needed and funded, but more importantly, it is about knowing how the money is being spent," Tourism

Assistant Secretary Kristine Chiong-Genegobis said on behalf of Tourism Secretary Christina Garcia-Frasco.

Funded by the United States Agency for International Development, the workshop targeted LGUs in provinces with high tourism potential and large coastal habitats requiring protection, such as Bohol, Cebu, and Negros Oriental. Representatives from Southern Leyte State University and Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology also joined the training.

The US Peace Corps is an American volunteer organization that has deployed more than 9,300 volunteers, including over 300 coastal resource management volunteers, to requesting host communities since 1961. Peace Corps volunteers will be returning to the Philippines in January 2023 to support LGU partners in improving coastal resource management, among other locally identified priorities.



■ Officials from the US Peace Corps and the Department of Tourism join LGU partners and academics during the workshop in Cebu.





# Groups push for total ban on mercury in cosmetics

By ELIZABETH MARCELO

The EcoWaste Coalition and other environmental health organizations have urged governments to implement a total ban on mercury in all cosmetic products as the Minamata Convention still allows use of the toxic chemical for eye cosmetics such as mascara.

The groups cited a recent laboratory research by Korea's Wonjin Institute for Occupational and Environmental Health (WIOEH) of over 50 mascara samples from various countries, includ-

ing the Philippines.

The groups said the result of the research was encouraging as most samples used safer substitute preservatives, showing that make-up manufacturers can completely ditch mercury in their products.

The data on mercury content of mascaras sold in the Philippines and other countries provide a good basis to rescind the phase-out exemption for such mercury-added products under the Minamata Convention, EcoWaste national coordinator Aileen Lucero said.

"We will urge our government to take note of our findings and seek the necessary treaty amendment," she added.

Under the Minamata treaty, only cosmetics such as skin lightening creams and soaps with mercury content above one part per million are targeted for global phase-out in 2020.

Partially exempted from the complete phase-out in 2020 are eye area cosmetics where mercury is used as a preservative and no effective and safe substitute preservatives are available.





# Mining stakeholders laud gov't for rejoining EITI

By DANESSA RIVERA

Mining stakeholders lauded the government for rejoining the global transparency initiative on mining, as this will ensure accountability as the current administration ramps up the mining sector.

Alyansa Tigil Mina (ATM) welcomed the move to rejoin Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) as this will allow the country to sustain the momentum in pushing greater transparency and accountability in the extractive sector.

The Philippines re-engaging the EITI comes two months after the previous administration decided to withdraw from the coalition.

"Rejoining EITI is in the best interest of the Philippines, as stakeholders

strive to address the issues against illegal and destructive mining. We share the aspiration that EITI can contribute to ensure that mining taxes and revenues are truthfully paid to government and redound to benefit the communities and the country," ATM national coordinator Jaybee Garganera said in a statement.

The EITI is a global coalition of companies, civil society, and governments and prescribes a standard for transparency and accountability in the mining, oil and gas industries.

As members of the coalition, extractive companies publicly disclose data on taxes, royalties and other payments they make to the government and their host communities.

Annual disclosure of contracts, financial, economic, social and envi-

ronmental data is also mandatory for extractive industries.

ATM said the EITI's procedures and mechanisms play a critical role in ensuring compliance of mining companies with their contractual and financial obligations, as well as the government's capacity to monitor the industry effectively.

"We expect that the extractive industry itself will intensify its efforts to have more mining corporations become EITI-compliant. We also expect the government, especially the Department of Finance (DOF) and Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), to perform a more pronounced role in making EITI a relevant and meaningful platform where mining-affected communities and environmental

organization can feel safe to engage," Garganera said.

Meanwhile, the Chamber of Mines of the Philippines (COMP) said its members are ready to adhere to increased transparency and reporting of ESG practices in mining as exhibited in the past.

"We support any initiative that promotes the highest standards of transparency and accountability in business, something we demonstrated as a participant in the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI)," COMP chairman Michael Toledo said in a statement to **The STAR**.

"Our members will gladly comply should the Philippines be allowed to rejoin EITI," he said.

The chamber noted that the Philippines was the first out of 51 imple-

menting EITI countries to have satisfactorily met the 2017 EITI standard for fiscal transparency in the extractives sector.

The Philippines has been implementing the EITI since 2013. In 2016, the EITI recognized the country for its impactful implementation.

To date, the PH EITI has produced seven country reports, covering data from mining, oil, gas and coal industries and reconciling over P362.5 billion in government revenues from extractive projects from 2012 to 2019.

The Marcos administration sees the mining sector has a high growth potential that will help the economy recover amid the pandemic.

The mining sector has only been contributing less than one percent to gross domestic product (GDP).



# Bishop: Mining source of living

BY DEXTER A. SEE

**B**AGUIO CITY: The Diocese of Baguio has recognized mining as a source of sustenance for the people for over a century now, especially in various parts of Benguet province.

In his pastoral letter read in all parishes in Baguio and Benguet on Sunday, Bishop Victor Bendico said big mining companies came to Benguet to dig gold, silver and copper through the years.

"We urge these corporations

to continue implementing and enhancing social responsibilities and development programs and the rehabilitation of the environment," Bendico said.

He, however, added that he also recognizes that the number

of small-scale miners increased through the years and some reportedly took over mining areas left by the big companies.

"We cannot argue that mining is [not] a source of living. However, we must also remind our small-scale miners to be responsible, especially with their unregulated mining operations, and the use of toxic chemicals such as cyanide and mercury that destroy the environment," the bishop said.

He urged the people to not destroy the source of their bread and butter.

Bendico called on both the



**PARTNERSHIP PRODUCT** The town of Kasibu in Nueva Vizcaya, jointly with the Didipio Mine, constructs a modern landfill to improve management of waste disposal in 30 villages of the municipality. CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

big-scale and small-scale mining companies to be responsible and conscientious miners to ensure the sustainable preservation and protection of the environment.

"We are not against mining as long as it is regulated. What we are against is irresponsible mining. We urge our national and local government units, the Mines and Geosciences Bureau, to continue implementing sustainable but also responsible mining," he said.

According to him, the Church wants to address more emphatically the unregulated small-scale mining activities, which have allegedly become more dangerous with the unregulated use and disposal of toxic chemicals into the rivers and waterways.

The bishop asked whether the law governing implementation of the Minahang Bayan is enforceable for the benefit of the pocket miners, who have established small-scale mining as their source of livelihood for years.

Bendico also urged the miners to save for the future and care for the welfare of their families by avoiding the one-day millionaire

mentality and selfish attitude of dependency.

He reminded them mineral deposits are limited and that they are running out and are becoming scarce.

The bishop said the Church seeks to promote the culture of charity and sharing and that it shuns away from the throwaway culture and consumerist mentality.

"Satisfy your needs, not your wants. We urge the faithful to refrain from food waste attitudes like food scraps, discarded food and excess food," he added.





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# Remote Mining Sites Seek Internet from Space

**T**he Philippines is rich in mineral resources — nickel, in particular. In fact, it's the fifth most mineralized country in the world with untapped reserves estimated at \$1 trillion. Trading around US\$19,500 per tonne, nickel is a crucial element used in stainless steel as well as in lithium-ion battery cells for most electric vehicles, making it a critical metal in the Green Energy revolution.

## Importance of connectivity in the mining industry

When it comes to operating a mining site, the internet plays a key role in making fast and accurate decisions, ensuring communication, and aiding health and safety of the workers on site. However, most mining regions have challenging terrain, making it difficult and expensive to build terrestrial networks such as cell towers and fiber lines. In remote areas where many mining sites are located, broadband internet delivered by satellite is the only logical match due to its extensive coverage and simple set up.

Claire Pascual, Technical Assistant of Finance and Operations Head of Century Peak Corporation (CPC), says that a fast, stable internet connection can be a driver of success. To ensure the daily operations of CPC, a nickel mining company in the remote Dinagat Islands, are efficient, its employees need real-time coordination with the management, clients, and colleagues. However, it used to take them a trip of several hours to reach the city of San Jose to simply send an email. "It was such a hassle, especially if there were urgent reports needed to be sent to the head office," Pascual mentioned.

## Kacific and Ka-Band Technology: Accessible solutions for mining operations connectivity

CPC reached out to Bambunet powered by Pipol Broadband, a local Internet Service Provider (ISP) of Kacific, that provides high-speed internet solutions using the Kacific1 satellite - a powerful new satellite above Asia Pacific. In just two days, Bambunet's KADs: TrueVision Enterprises and Oktatech - Technology Solutions and Services successfully installed a light, quick-deploy 1.2m satellite dish with speeds of up to 85 Mbps at the site.

Kacific1 is a next-generation geostationary satellite, which means that it can provide connectivity over a large coverage area across all 7,640 islands in the Philippines. This, in turn, makes it ideal for connecting mine sites even in the most remote areas. Kacific1 is a High Throughput Satellite (HTS) because it reuses the same spectrum (frequencies) multiple times in the 56 spot beams. By reusing frequency in the high-powered spot beams, Kacific was able to be more efficient and the cost was reduced per megabit, which can lead to much faster speeds for a lower cost than what older models of satellites are using (Ku-band or C-band technology).



**Since these mining sites are very remote, the logical match for connectivity is by using a satellite.**

Bambunet powered by Pipol Broadband offers unlimited plans starting at P5,940 in the Philippines. Terminals are offered for a one-time terminal fee of P34,000 or P52,000 depending on the size of the plan needed. A one-time installation fee of P10,000 is charged by distributors to install the terminal in a specific area.

Thanks to the Kacific1 satellite's wide coverage across the Philippines and all the islands, mining sites like CPC can now rely on a reliable connection. "Bambunet is very responsive as an ISP. When issues arise, they send technicians to the site immediately. They even showed our IT manager how to troubleshoot," Pascual said.

As long as there is a clear line of sight to the sky, there will always be a connection for multiple users or even a whole community. This can support

countless mining operations like geo-positioning services and mine site environmental monitoring. In addition, Kacific has two local teleports located in Subic Bay and Clark as its backup sites to ensure that connectivity remains available even in inclement weather.

During the next four years, there could be as many as 190 new mining projects across the Philippines, contributing to an increase of up to \$2 billion in annual export revenue. Reliable connectivity will be an integral part of improving the operations of both new and existing sites.

Do you have business in remote areas requiring affordable, reliable high-speed internet? Contact Bambunet powered by Pipol Broadband at [www.bambunet.com](http://www.bambunet.com) or call (0998) 555 3243.

For more information on Kacific's satellite technology, visit or contact [sales@kacific.com](mailto:sales@kacific.com).

Apply to be a Kacific Authorized Distributor today, visit <https://kacific.com/distributor-network> to know more.

**The mining industry is experiencing a new direction in the Philippines – it's now considered a key sector in reinvigorating the pandemic-hit economy.**





# REMOTE MINING... 2

<p><b>Gigstarter SIMPLE</b></p> <p>up to <b>03 03</b> MBPS MBPS</p> <p>PHP <b>5,940</b> MONTHLY</p> <p>Recommended up to <b>2 Users</b></p> <p>One-time Terminal Fee PHP 34,000</p>	<p><b>Gigstarter EVERYDAY</b></p> <p>up to <b>15 10</b> MBPS MBPS</p> <p>PHP <b>8,370</b> MONTHLY</p> <p>Recommended up to <b>2 Users</b></p> <p>One-time Terminal Fee PHP 34,000</p>	<p><b>BEST VALUE</b></p> <p><b>Gigstarter ULTIMATE</b></p> <p>up to <b>30 10</b> MBPS MBPS</p> <p>PHP <b>10,530</b> MONTHLY</p> <p>Recommended up to <b>4 Users</b></p> <p>One-time Terminal Fee PHP 34,000</p>	<p><b>BEST VALUE</b></p> <p><b>SMALL BUSINESS</b></p> <p>up to <b>50 10</b> MBPS MBPS</p> <p>PHP <b>23,213</b> MONTHLY</p> <p>Recommended up to <b>7 Users</b></p> <p>One-time Terminal Fee PHP 34,000</p>
<p><b>MEDIUM BUSINESS</b></p> <p>up to <b>60 20</b> MBPS MBPS</p> <p>PHP <b>36,750</b> MONTHLY</p> <p>Recommended up to <b>10 Users</b></p> <p>One-time Terminal Fee PHP 52,000</p>	<p><b>LARGE BUSINESS</b></p> <p>up to <b>70 20</b> MBPS MBPS</p> <p>PHP <b>86,250</b> MONTHLY</p> <p>Recommended up to <b>25 Users</b></p> <p>AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST</p>	<p><b>ENTERPRISE</b></p> <p>up to <b>100 20</b> MBPS MBPS</p> <p>PHP <b>170,625</b> MONTHLY</p> <p>Recommended up to <b>60 Users</b></p> <p>AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST</p>	

Bambunet powered by Pipol Broadband offers unlimited plans.



**KADs: TrueVision Enterprises and Oktatech - Technology Solutions and Services, installed a terminal with speeds of up to 80 Mbps in just 2 days.**





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## Meeting on nuke energy issues pitched by Gatchalian

**T**HE vice chairman of the Senate Committee on Energy proposed a meeting among the executive and legislative branches of the Marcos administration to carry out the necessary laws for nuclear power in the country.

Senator Sherwin Gatchalian said at last week's The Future Energy Show Philippines 2022 that it would take years before the country can put up a nuclear power plant because stringent measures must be implemented.

In his first State of the Nation Address (Sona), President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. said it was "time to re-examine" the adoption of nuclear power because "there have been new technologies developed that allow smaller scale modular nuclear plants and other derivations thereof."

"He wants to, number one, follow IAEA [International Atomic Energy Agency] guidelines. Number two, he wants to use the latest technology, which is modular. His message, based from his SONA, is he wants to be very careful and we support that because we don't have a law yet. We also don't have a regulator yet and it has to be independent. Also, there are many conventions and treaties that we have yet to sign," Gatchalian pointed out.

The senator believes that the small modular reactors (SMR), which is ideal for use on remote areas with limited access grid, would be adopted first ahead of nuclear power plants. "The modular plants will come in by 2026 or 2028. These are small so these are easy to deploy in one to two years. Within his term, modular can happen, but not those over 1,000 megawatts because those would take 10 years," he said.

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# Meeting on nuke energy issues pitched by Gatchalian

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Though the inclusion of nuclear power into the country's energy mix was approved by former President Rodrigo Duterte, Gatchalian said there is a need to convene experts, lawmakers and government officials to craft laws related to the utilization of nuclear power.

"I think the first step is to have an executive-legislative coordination meeting to determine the necessary laws we need to craft.

This is very technical and the Congress and Senate can not do it alone. We need the technical experts to write it and we also need international lawyers to participate," Gatchalian explained.

On reviving the Bataan Nuclear Power Plant, the senator said it is better to put up a new nuclear facility rather than to revive the mothballed BNPP. "It's already over 40 years old. It is more difficult to revive and ret-

rofit BNPP compared to a new one that does not need retrofitting. In my opinion, let's use the newer and safer and modular technology," he said.

Taking into consideration the experience of developed economies, the Department of Energy (DOE) said nuclear power would be tapped as a viable alternative base load power source, as the Philippines seeks to retire coal plants in line with its commitment to help limit climate change. *Lenie Lectura*





## Scientists discover how air pollution causes lung cancer

**PARIS:** Scientists said they had identified the mechanism through which air pollution triggers lung cancer in non-smokers, a discovery one expert hailed as "an important step for science — and for society."

The research illustrated the health risk posed by the tiny particles produced by burning fossil fuels, sparking fresh calls for more urgent action to combat climate change.

It could also pave the way for a new field of cancer prevention, according to Charles Swanton of the UK's Francis Crick Institute.

Swanton presented the research, which has not yet been published in a peer-reviewed journal, at the European Society for Medical Oncology's annual conference in Paris.

Air pollution has long been thought to be linked to a higher risk of lung cancer in people who have never smoked.

"But we didn't really know whether pollution was directly causing lung cancer — or how," Swanton told Agence-France Presse.

Traditionally it has been thought that exposure to carcinogens, such as

those in cigarette smoke or pollution, causes DNA mutations that then become cancer.

But there was an "inconvenient truth" with this model, Swanton said: previous research has shown that the DNA mutations can be present without causing cancer — and that most environmental carcinogens do not cause the mutations.

His study proposes a different model.

### A future cancer pill?

The research team from the Francis Crick Institute and University College London analyzed the health data of more than 460,000 people in England, South Korea and Taiwan.

They found that exposure to tiny PM2.5 pollution particles — which are less than 2.5 microns across — led to an increased risk of mutations in the EGFR gene.

In laboratory studies on mice, the team showed that the particles caused changes in the EGFR gene as well as in the KRAS gene, both of which have been linked to lung cancer.

Finally, they analyzed nearly 250 samples of human lung tissue never exposed to carcinogens from smoking or heavy pollution.

Even though the lungs were healthy, they found DNA mutations in 18 percent of EGFR genes and 33 percent of KRAS genes.

"They're just sitting there," Swanton said, adding that the mutations seem to increase with age.

"On their own, they probably are insufficient to drive cancer," he said.

But when a cell is exposed to pollution it can trigger a "wound-healing response" that causes inflammation, Swanton said.

And if that cell "harbors a mutation, it will then form a cancer," he added.

"We've provided a biological mechanism behind what was previously an enigma," he said.

In another experiment on mice, the researchers showed that an antibody could block the mediator — called interleukin 1 beta — which sparks the inflammation, stopping cancer from getting started in the first place.

Swanton said he hoped the finding would "provide fruitful grounds for





## SCIENTIST DISCOVER . . . . 2

a future of what might be molecular cancer prevention, where we can offer people a pill, perhaps every day, to reduce the risk of cancer."

### 'Revolutionary'

Suzette Delalogue, who heads the cancer prevention program at France's Gustave Roussy institute, said the research was "quite revolutionary, because we had practically no prior demonstration of this alternative way of cancer forming.

"The study is quite an important step for science — and for society too, I hope," she told AFP.

"This opens a huge door, both for knowledge but also for new ways to prevent cancer from developing," said Delalogue, who was not involved in the research but discussed it at the conference on Saturday.

"This level of demonstration must force authorities to act on an international scale."

Tony Mok, an oncologist at the Chinese University of Hong Kong, called the research "exciting."

"It means that we can ask whether,

in the future, it will be possible to use lung scans to look for precancerous lesions in the lungs and try to reverse them with medicines such as interleukin 1 beta inhibitors," he said.

Swanton called air pollution a "hidden killer," pointing to research estimating it is linked to the deaths of more than eight million people a year — around the same number as tobacco.

Other research has linked PM2.5 to 250,000 deaths annually from lung cancer alone.

"You and I have a choice about whether we smoke or not, but we do not have a choice about the air we breathe," said Swanton, who is also the chief clinician at Cancer Research UK, which was the main funder of the research.

"Given that probably five times as many people are exposed to unhealthy levels of pollution than tobacco, you can see this is quite a major global problem," he added.

"We can only tackle it if we recognize the really intimate links between climate health and human health."

AFP





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# La Niña adds to inflation woes

By **Ronnel W. Domingo**  
@RonWDomingoINQ

A more-entrenched La Niña climate phenomenon that brings above-normal rainfall to the Philippines could increase the pressure on prices of basic commodities to rise further, especially if heavy rains destroy this year's main crop of rice and other produce.

This likelihood is growing especially after recent heavy rains and a magnitude 7 earthquake ravaged the summer rice crop, as well as P1 billion worth of corn and P253 million worth of irrigation facilities—mostly in Northern Luzon.

If La Niña takes an additional toll on agricultural production, the Philippines may have to depend on importation, especially with several commodities such as onions reported to be experiencing a shortage.



**Chances that the La Niña climate phenomenon will continue to prevail in the next three months rose to 91 percent from the 86 percent forecast in August**

Chances that the La Niña climate phenomenon will continue to prevail in the next three months rose to 91 percent from the 86 percent forecast in August. According to the latest bulle-

tin from the Climate Prediction Center (CPC), which is part of the United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, indicators of an active La Niña system intensified further over the previous weeks.

Cooler-than-average sea surface temperatures (SSTs) across the equatorial region of the Pacific Ocean were recorded at as much as 1.1 degree Celsius below normal.

Meanwhile, temperatures that were colder than normal below the sea surface persisted.

Further, abnormal wind behavior continued to be observed at the low and upper levels of the atmosphere above the equatorial Pacific Ocean.

"La Niña is favored to continue through [the] Northern Hemisphere winter 2022-23, with a 91-percent chance in September-November, decreasing to a 54-percent chance in Janu-

ary-March 2023," the CPC said.

The American agency also said there was still uncertainty over how long La Niña would last and when it will transition to "neutral," meaning there is neither La Niña nor El Niño.

In recent months, supply issues related to meat such as pork as well as fish had helped boost inflation. The rate of increase in prices of basic goods and services was recorded at 6.3 percent in August.

Government economists expect inflation to reach a peak later this year, although the impact of inflation on the cost of living is likely to be exacerbated by the weakness of the Philippine peso against the US dollar.

The peso sank to all-time weakest levels in five consecutive trading days earlier this month to as weak as 57.18:\$1, but has since recovered to 56.82:\$1 on Sept. 9. **INQ**





# SM Prime, WWF partner for responsible reporting on climate change solutions

SM Prime Holdings Inc., one of Southeast Asia's leading integrated property developers, and leading conservation organization World Wild Fund for Nature (WWF) Philippines have entered a collaboration in adopting a more robust reporting framework to address the climate crisis.

This is a major partnership of WWF with a Philippine company for the development of a bespoke program toward decarbonization.

With sustainability at the core of its corporate identity, SM Prime is at the forefront of spearheading sustainable practices as well as setting records in pioneering programs to consciously protect the environment and strongly focus on resilience in its developments.

## SM PRIME

Under the partnership, SM Prime will adopt the Corporates for a Better Planet Initiative (CBPI), WWF-Philippines' flagship program that provides an actionable framework for organizations to operate sustainably within the paradigm of the climate crisis.

"We are delighted to work with WWF Philippines on this sustainable journey. We need to be one with the worldwide community to achieve this and we need to work with global experts to get this right," SM Prime President Jeffrey Lim said.

With this, SM Prime will be

able to enhance and determine climate change solutions that will be reflected through responsible and transparent reporting. This partnership forms part of group-wide efforts under the SM Green Movement that aims to improve the quality of life of communities through sustainable solutions to promote a green planet, green living and a green culture.

The partnership dates back to 2007 under Hamilo Coast, SM Prime's leisure resort development in Nasugbu, Batangas.

WWF closely monitors the health



and viability of the Hamilo Coast area including three of its coves designated as Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) – the Pico de Loro, Etayo and Santelmo.

In recognition of its conservation efforts, Hamilo Coast was cited by WWF-Philippines as its longest standing Sustainability Partner in 2020.





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CRITICAL STAGE

# CLIMATE TIPPING POINTS THREATEN EARTH—STUDY

By Krixia Subingsubing  
@krixiasINQ

The earth is at risk of triggering multiple climate tipping points if global temperatures continue to rise beyond 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, according to a sobering new analysis that underscored the urgent need to decarbonize the planet to limit the risk of crossing dangerous levels.

Even at current levels of global heating, the planet already risks facing five climate tipping points—and the risks increase with each tenth of a degree of further warming, according to the study published in the journal Science last week.

A team of researchers from the University of Exeter, Stockholm Resilience Center, Future Earth, and Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research has identified at least 16 critical tipping points, of which five may already be triggered at today's temperatures.

### Abrupt thawing

These include the collapse of Greenland's ice cap and of a key current in the north Atlantic; abrupt thawing of the boreal permafrost, or the frozen land in the Arctic; the collapse of a convection in the Labrador Sea, which is between Greenland and the Labrador Peninsula, and the massive die-off of tropical coral reefs.

Even worse, five more tipping points become possible at 1.5 C, including changes to northern forests and the loss of almost all mountain glaciers, leading to unprecedented sea level rise.

"We can see signs of destabilization already in parts of the West Antarctic and Greenland ice sheets, in permafrost regions, the Amazon rainforest, and potentially the Atlantic overturning circulation as well," study lead author David Armstrong McKay said in a statement.

### 'Disastrous'

Scientists have been on the lookout for climate tipping elements, which are critical, large-scale components of the earth that remain stable at certain global temperatures, but can change once a particular threshold is breached.

Even just very small additional disturbances can tip them over, causing severe impacts on the environment and even a chain reaction on multiple systems.

This was, in part, why the Paris Agreement, a legally binding international treaty on climate change, and other efforts to limit global warming have set a cap of 1.5 C, because the risk of more tipping points escalates beyond this level.

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# CLIMATE TIPPING POINTS THREATEN EARTH—STUDY

## FROM A2

Among others, the latest study argued that the planet may have already left a "safe" climate state when global temperatures exceeded 1 C warming.

Given the current numbers, the world is actually headed toward 2-3 C of global warming, it warned.

"This sets earth on course to cross multiple dangerous tipping points that will be disastrous for people across the world. To maintain liveable conditions on earth, protect people from rising extremes, and enable stable societies,

we must do everything possible to prevent crossing tipping points," said coauthor Johan Rockström, cochair of the Earth Commission and director of the Potsdam Institute for Climate Impact Research.

To have a 50 percent chance of achieving 1.5 C and thus limiting tipping point risks, the study said, global greenhouse gas emissions must be cut by half by 2030, reaching net-zero by 2050.

### Clean energy

"To achieve that we now need to trigger positive social tipping points that accelerate the transformation to a clean energy future," said coauthor Tim Lenton, director of the

Global Systems Institute at the University of Exeter. "We may also have to adapt to cope with climate tipping points that we fail to avoid, and support those who could suffer uninsurable losses and damages."

The study, which was based on paleoclimate data, current observations, and the outputs from climate models, hoped to underscore that many tipping elements were actually interlinked, making cascading a serious concern.

"In fact, interactions can lower the critical temperature thresholds beyond which individual tipping elements begin destabilizing in the long-run," said coauthor Ricarda Winkelmann. INQ





## UN forum seeks adequate funding for climate change

THE United Nations forum on climate finance co-hosted by the Philippines concluded over the weekend with an urgent challenge to deliver climate finance based on equity and climate justice, with special emphasis on the needs of at-risk developing nations.

The Third Technical Expert Dialogue (TED3) on the New Collective Quantified Goal on Climate Finance (NCQGCF) orga-

nized by the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UN Climate Change), in partnership with the Climate Change Commission (CCC) PH, focused on addressing the needs and priorities of developing countries toward a low-greenhouse gas emissions and climate-resilient development.

"Without global transformation and adequate financial resources dedicated

to solving the climate change problem, which has reached emergency status, any agreement will be meaningless," Environment Secretary Maria Antonia Yulo-Loyzaga said.

This was echoed by Robert E.A. Borje, CCC vice chairman and executive director, who urged all stakeholders to ensure that discussions "will go beyond dollars and cents" and outline "recommendations for

actions that will affect the lives and livelihood of nations."

"Urgent delivery of needs-based climate finance on loss and damage is crucial to transformative climate actions by at-risk developing nations. Gone are the days of empty commitments — now is the time to implement, to deliver actions with results," he said.

The summit, which also served as a

lead up to the 27th Session of the Conference of Parties (COP27) in November, also focused on the Philippines expressing hope that the TEDs will be reflective of all views of the concerned parties toward an efficient delivery of climate finance for at-risk developing nations, including finance for loss and damage.

Citing President Ferdinand "Bongbong" Marcos Jr.'s commitment

to prioritize measures to address climate change, Borje reiterated the Philippines' principled support for the "creation of an enabling global environment for urgent and accessible climate finance."

"If we cannot mitigate climate change, all our plans for the economy, for our future, will be for naught," he said.

**KRISTINA MARALIT**





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## Environmental impacts of 57,000 common store-bought food products

WE'RE all capable of slowing down the effects of a warming Earth, and it could be as simple as how we stock our pantries.

An international team of scientists has evaluated the environmental impacts of more than 57,000 food products -- the stuff you typically find as you wander the aisles of your local grocery.

If this type of information is made easily available to the public, they say, it could not only enable the transition to a more sustainable food system, but chances are it could also improve people's health.

"The goal is to have a simpler, and more rigorous quantitative way to inform consumers about the tens of thousands of different items they might buy in a grocery store," said ecologist David Tilman, a professor at UC Santa Barbara's Bren School of Environmental Science & Management.

According to the researchers' assessment, beef and lamb take the greatest toll on the environment, with impacts far outpacing those of other proteins such as chicken, fish and seafood and nuts, which also are on the higher end of the environmental impact scale.

"Many people consider beef to taste good, and I understand why, but it is a very inefficient way to create food for humans," Tilman said. Meanwhile, processed drinks such as soda and energy drinks were rated at the lowest impact level of food products evaluated, sharing space with plant-based grocery foods such as rice and flatbreads.

While much research has gone into the environmental impacts of food commodities such as fruits, wheat and beef, most food products contain many different ingredients, each of which have taken their own routes to become part of that product.

This lifecycle data, which informs the total environmental impacts of producing, harvesting, transporting and processing of said ingredients, are

largely invisible to the consumer, as are the proportions of ingredients.

According to the study, this information gap exists because "the exact amount of each ingredient and their supply chain in each food product are often considered a trade secret." The sheer number of food products and their variety makes the assessment a "daunting" task for food companies and for retailers aiming to reduce their carbon emissions.

To overcome these limitations, the researchers, led by first author Michael Clark of Oxford University, used prior knowledge from ingredient lists to infer the composition of each ingredient. They then paired this information with environmental databases to gauge impacts across four indicators: greenhouse gas emissions, land use, water stress and eutrophication potential (the magnitude of excess nutrients from production that can pollute surrounding environment and waterways).

While humans around the world don't have the exact same taste preferences, people tend to have similar tastes, which results in more or less the same kind of food products in stores.

These tastes tend to gravitate to foods that contain high levels of sugar. It's a commodity that is both cheap and produced in abundance, with effects that have led to increased rates of obesity, diabetes and other conditions related to overconsumption of highly processed foods that often contain high fructose corn syrup.

"Sugar is cheap. Fats are cheap and salt is cheap. People love salty, fatty and sweet kinds of foods; that's what our taste preferences are. They made total sense during our evolutionary past, and now that these foods are so cheap and readily available, we eat them in excess," researchers said.

**Healthy Choices =  
Healthy Earth**





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## 'Global crisis, global response': UN chief urges support for flood-hit Pakistan

ISLAMABAD — U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres on Saturday visited several areas of Pakistan ravaged by floods, calling for increased global financial support at the end of a two-day trip aimed at raising awareness of the disaster.

Record monsoon rains and glacier melt in northern mountains have triggered floods that have killed more than 1,391 people, sweeping away houses, roads, railway tracks, bridges, livestock and crops.

Pakistan estimates the damage at \$30 billion, and both the gov-

ernment and Mr. Guterres have blamed the flooding on climate change.

"Today it's Pakistan, tomorrow it could be your country wherever you live. This is a global crisis ... it requires a global response," Mr. Guterres told a news conference at the end of his visit.

Huge areas of the country are still under water and hundreds of thousands of people have been forced from their homes. The government says the lives of nearly 33 million people have been disrupted.

Residents and health workers are becoming concerned about rising numbers of children suffering from gastroenteritis and other illnesses, with many forced to drink contaminated flood water.

After flying over vast swathes of inundated land, Mr. Guterres met people displaced by flooding in southern Pakistan.

"Unimaginable," he said as he surveyed the devastation from the air, seated next to Pakistani Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif, in footage shared by the country's information minister.

Speaking to reporters later in the southern city of Karachi, Mr. Guterres said the international community needed to do more to help countries hit hardest by the effects of climate change, starting with Pakistan.

"I have seen many disasters around the world but I have never seen climate carnage of this scale," he said.

### RECONSTRUCTION PLAN

Mr. Guterres said that as well as climate financing to help countries recover and adapt, G20 na-

tions should boost their national greenhouse gas emission reduction targets every year.

He also called for new mechanisms for debt relief for climate-vulnerable countries such as Pakistan and said he was advocating for debt swaps in which the debtor nation, instead of continuing to make external debt payments, would make payments to finance climate projects at home.

"It is a question of justice, Pakistan is paying the price of something that was created by others," he said.

U.N. agencies have begun work on assessing the nation's needs to create a post-disaster reconstruction plan.

"Recovery and reconstruction must be climate resilient, it must start as soon as possible," said Knut Ostby, U.N. Development Programme Resident Representative in Pakistan told Reuters in a statement.

In July and August, Pakistan got 391 mm (15.4 inches) of rain, or nearly 190% more than the 30-year average. The southern province of Sindh has seen 466% more rain than average. — Reuters