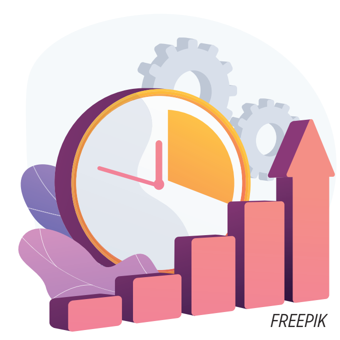
Missed sustainable dev't goals estimated at 88% in Asia-Pacific

THE Asia-Pacific is expected to miss 88% of its sustainable development goals (SDGs) by 2030, putting the region at risk for severe environmental decline, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) said.

"This report reveals a sobering reality. The very engines of growth that once lifted millions out of poverty and fueled rapid industrialization are now undermining our future. Our trajectory is unsustainable," Armida Salsiah Alisjahbana, UN undersecretary-general and ESCAP executive said in a report.

In the 2026 Asia and the Pacific SDG Progress Report, ESCAP said that of the 117 specific targets for which there is sufficient data, only 14 are on track to be achieved by 2030.

Ms. Alisjahbana said the region's trajectory is unsustainable,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with gains in health and well-being overshadowed by widening inequality and severe environmental decline, particularly in climate action, biodiversity, and the health of cities.

"With only five years left to achieve the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, our region is not on track to achieve any of the 17 SDGs," ESCAP Statistics Division Director Rachael Joanne Beaven said in a virtual forum on Wednesday.

"Across most goals, progress is either too slow or has stalled completely," she added.

Ms. Beaven also flagged persistent data gaps in gender equality and peace, justice and strong institutions.

Nevertheless, ESCAP said data availability is improving, with 55% of SDG indicators having sufficient data, up from 43% in 2020.

"On a more positive note, data availability is comparatively stronger for SDG 7 on clean energy, and SDG 17, partnership for the goals, and SDG 15, life on land. These areas we have much more solid evidence base, and that's something we can build on as we push towards achieving the 2030 agenda," Ms. Beaven said.

In the report, the Philippines was found to be moving forward on four of the 17 SDGs — no poverty (SDG 1), affordable and clean energy (SDG 7), reduced inequalities (SDG 10), and responsible consumption and production (SDG 12). In these four categories, 75% of indicators were trending positively.

Posting target improvement rates of at least 50% in the Philippines were zero hunger (SDG 2), quality education (SDG 4), clean water and sanitation (SDG 6), decent work and economic growth (SDG 8), industry, innovation and infrastructure (SDG 9), life below water (SDG 14), life on land (SDG 15), peace, justice and strong institutions (SDG 16), and partnerships for the goals (SDG 17).

Progress was more limited on gender equality (SDG 5) and sustainable cities and communities (SDG 11), where at least 25% of indicators found to be positive.

Climate action (SDG 13) targets were not assessed in the report. — **Aubrey Rose A. Inosante**

Nueva Vizcaya gold project to close this year after permit suspension

UK-OWNED FCF Minerals Corp. said its Runruno Gold Project in Quezon, Nueva Vizcaya will cease operations by the end of the year following the suspension of the Dupax exploration permit by the Mines and Geosciences Bureau (MGB).

In a statement on Wednesday, FCF said the suspension effectively prevents it from carrying out exploration activities that were intended to identify additional ore reserves to extend the mine's operational life.

FCF Mineral said the Runruno project has been operating on its remaining reserves, and the Dupax program was viewed as the only avenue to replace depleted ore.

"With Dupax exploration suspended and no ability to complete drilling to define new economic reserves, Runruno will close, having fully depleted its current ore body," FCF General Manager Lorne Harvey was quoted as saying in the statement.

The MGB suspended the mining exploration permit of Woggle Corp., an affiliate of FCF Minerals, in Dupax del Norte due to security concerns and community opposition.

Protests began in August after the permit was granted, which allowed the company to survey areas for potential mineral deposits.

FCF Minerals said the planned closure is expected to affect more than 1,500 workers, including employees, contractors, and service providers linked to the mine.

The company said that it will implement a structured mine closure program in compliance with Philippine regulations, including environmental and safety standards. — **Vonn Andrei E. Villamiel**

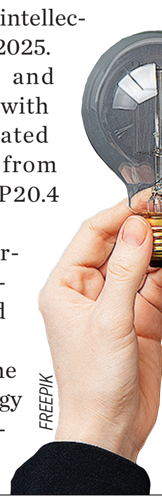
IP commercialization program records 19% increase in income

THE Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOPHL) said organizations working with its Innovation and Technology Support Offices (ITSOs) Program posted a 19% increase in income collected from intellectual property (IP) assets in 2025.

Universities, colleges and research centers involved with the ITSO Program generated P24.3 million in income from their IP assets, up from P20.4 million in 2024.

The program's commercialization pathways included licensing, spin-offs, and direct sales.

"These figures reflect the growing impact of technology transfer and IP commercialization efforts across the ITSOs," IPOPHL Acting Director General Nathaniel S. Arevalo said.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IPO filings hit a record 3,242 last year, up 43.7%.

Of the 999 patent filings by residents last year, ITSOs accounted for 506 or 50.7%.

ITSOs accounted for 47.7% or 858 of 1,800 utility model (UM) filings, and 28.8% or 454 of 1,578 industrial design (ID) applications.

Copyrights nearly doubled to 1,197 filings, accounting for 17.8% of the 6,732 resident filings.

Meanwhile, trademark applications grew 51.3%, accounting for 0.9% of total resident filings.

The growth in ITSO income from IP assets also "highlights how research and innovation not only contribute to knowledge and societal benefits, but also generates tangible economic value for the institutions and stakeholders involved," Mr. Arevalo said.

The ITSO Program is IPOPHL's flagship initiative to boost innovation. It forms part of the global network of technology and innovation support centers established by the World Intellectual Property Organization.

The program seeks to help innovators, researchers and institutions access high-quality technology information, develop IP assets, and support the commercialization of research outputs.

At present, the IPOPHL's ITSO program has 103 members. — **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**

Repair companies file for 495 accreditation renewals in Jan.

THE Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) said its Fair Trade Enforcement Bureau (FTEB) received 495 online renewal applications from service and repair enterprises (SREs) in January.

Of the total, the FTEB approved 118 renewals, 23% higher than the 94 approved last year, the DTI said in a statement on Feb. 16.

Presidential Decree No. 1572 and Republic Act No. 7394 or the Consumer Act of the Philippines require all SREs to obtain accreditation from the DTI.

"The timely renewal enables SREs to maintain compliance with regulatory requirements, keep business information up to date, and retain valid authority to operate," the DTI said.

Of new SRE registrations, the bureau approved six out of 51 applications in January.

The applications for renewal were submitted through its Integrated Registration and Information System portal.

Accreditations are valid until Dec. 31, and must be renewed by Jan. 31 each year to avoid late fees.

Businesses covered by the accreditation requirement include those engaged in the servicing and repair of motor vehicles, machinery, electronics, electrical systems, refrigeration and air conditioning systems, office machine and data processing equipment, medical and dental equipment, and heavy equipment.

Last year, the DTI inspected 408 SREs and issued 201 show-cause orders to entities operating without DTI certification. — **Beatriz Marie D. Cruz**

Remittances,
from S1/1

"What it does indicate is a gradual structural shift where growth is becoming less remittance-dependent and more driven by domestic services, investment, and trade," he added in a Viber message.

The Philippine economy posted a 4.4% growth in 2025, the weakest print recorded since the pandemic hit in 2020.

RISKS ARISE

UnionBank's Mr. Asuncion noted that the economy is now largely dependent on domestic demand, "reducing structural dependence on overseas income."

In 2025, household consumption, which eased to 4.6% year on year from 4.9%, accounted for over 70% of the country's total output.

However, such a shift exposes the Philippine economy to local and global risks, said Mr. Asuncion.

"Remittances become a less powerful stabilizer for consumption and the external accounts even as the Philippines continues to run sizable trade deficits, such as the December 2025 gap of about $3.52 billion despite record year-end inflows," he said.

Risks likewise emerge from potential gaps in local growth engines as remittances continue to grow modestly, he added, especially as the United States' new levy on remittances could derail inflows.

The US recently imposed a 1% tax on remittances made via cash payments, money orders and cashier's checks, a regulation seen to potentially push US-based senders away from traditional formal channels.

Still, analysts expect remittances to stabilize the economy this year, even as its share in the overall GDP declines.

"This trend is likely to persist if GDP growth accelerates modestly and the economy continues to broaden its base, although remittances will remain a key stabilizer, especially during periods of global or domestic uncertainty," Mr. Rivera said.

For his part, Mr. Taningco sees the remittance-to-GDP ratio ending 2026 around the mid to high single-digit mark.

"Overall, the declining ratio signals economic broadening, but it also means the Philippines must rely increasingly on domestic job creation, investment, and productivity to sustain growth as remittances become a smaller relative buffer," Mr. Asuncion said.

The BSP projects cash remittances to rise by an annual 3% to $36.6 billion by yearend.

PDP,
from S1/1

"Growth is expected to rebound, job creation is steady, inflation is manageable, and our financial system remains healthy with external buffers remaining adequate," the DEPDev said.

The government set a 5-6% GDP growth target for this year, 5.5-6.5% for 2027, and 6-7% for 2028.

According to the report, the Marcos administration also missed its targets for the National Government (NG) deficit-to-GDP ratio. In 2023, the ratio stood at 6.2% versus the target of 6.1%. The ratio fell to 5.7% in 2024, but still above the 5.1% target.

The NG deficit-to-GDP ratio averaged 5.6% in the first nine months of 2025, higher than the full-year target of 4.1%.

On the other hand, the Marcos administration achieved its NG debt-to-GDP ratio in 2023 (60.1% versus the target of 60-62%) and in 2024 (60.7% versus the target of 57-61%).

However, the NG debt-to-GDP ratio climbed to a two-decade high of 63.2% in 2025, exceeding the 56-59% target.

DEPDev said the NG debt remains manageable, "given that the portfolio is predominantly long-term and domestic, accounting for 82.5% and 68.4% of the total, respectively, as of end-2025."

The government missed the headline inflation target of 2.5-4.5% in 2023 when inflation quickened to 6%. However, inflation eased sharply to 3.2% in 2024, within the 2-4% target, and to 1.7% in 2025.

At the same time, the DEPDev noted that the government exceeded its targets in employment. The jobless rate stood at 4.6% in 2023, below the 5.3-6.4% target, and 4.3% in 2024, a tad below the 4.4-4.7% goal.

In 2025, the unemployment rate averaged 4.7% in 2025, slightly below the 4.8-5.1% target.

"The PDP headline indicators for which targets were achieved relate to tangible aspects of citizens' lived experiences, or areas that are most felt by the public: employment, quality of employment, and poverty reduction," it said. — **A.R.A. Inosante**

FULL STORY

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