NEWS ROUNDUP
15 MAY 2024 [08:00 am]

- Ancient trees reveal last summer hottest in 2,000 years
- A deadly heat wave worsened Gaza's humanitarian crisis. It was fueled by climate change, new data shows
- DENR keen on revitalizing Phl mining sector
- 1.5°C on a precipice: Do we need to rethink communications on warming limits?
- Asia's extreme April heat worsened by climate change, scientists say
- US, PH eye cooperation to use space tech for maritime safety
- Iloilo City targets to plant 100K trees this year
- UNESCO "Climate Change in News Media" training programme enhances the capacity of media organizations in Southeast Asia

CCC IN THE NEWS:

- Oriental Mindoro opens agri center, MSMEs facilities

BBC

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By: Matt McGrath and Mark Poynting

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CNN

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GMA NEWS

Asia's extreme April heat worsened by climate change, scientists say

Extreme temperatures throughout Asia last month were made worse - and more likely - as a result of human-driven climate change, a team of international scientists said on Wednesday.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

US, PH eye cooperation to use space tech for maritime safety
By: Charie Abarca

The governments of the Philippines and the United States (US) are looking at expanding their cooperation on the potential use of space technology for maritime domain awareness that would be beneficial in ensuring the safety of Filipino mariners at sea.

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Iloilo City targets to plant 100K trees this year
By: Perla Lena

The local government here is eyeing to plant around 100,000 trees this year as part of efforts to combat climate change.

UNESCO

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South-East Asia is among the regions most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, where rising sea levels and intensifying natural hazards affect millions of people in densely populated areas and coastal zones.

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By: Luis Cueto

Gov. Humerlito A. Dolor recently led the inauguration of the newly constructed Provincial Agriculture Center (PAC) located in the town of Victoria.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

BBC

Ancient trees reveal last summer hottest in 2,000 years

By: Matt McGrath and Mark Poynting

Clues hidden deep in the trunks of ancient trees have revealed that last summer was the northern hemisphere's hottest in 2,000 years.

Last year had already been confirmed as the world's warmest on record by a large margin, at least since 1850, due to climate change.

But tree rings, which record temperature information far further back than even Victorian scientific records, now show just how unprecedented last year's scorching temperatures were.

Researchers say that temperatures last June, July and August were nearly 4C warmer than the coldest summer two millennia ago.

Climate scientists have repeatedly shown that global temperatures have been rising rapidly in recent decades. According to the UN's climate body, the last time the world was consistently this warm may have been more than 100,000 years ago.

These conclusions come from records like ice cores and deep sea sediments, which can give a good indication of the Earth's geological past, but cannot pinpoint individual years or even decades far back in time.

For this, tree rings are particularly valuable. They not only show the tree's age, but also record detailed information about the state of the climate each year as they grow.

"That is the beauty of tree ring records," Ulf Büntgen, professor of environmental systems analysis at the University of Cambridge and co-author of the study, told BBC News.

Scientists looked at living specimens as well as fossils, from the European Alps to the Russian Altai mountains. They focussed on trees living at altitude, where the impact of summer growth would be most clearly felt.

In such places rings are usually wider in warmer years, when there is more growth, and thinner in colder years.

Using the nine longest temperature-sensitive tree ring chronologies, researchers had built a picture of summer temperatures dating back two millennia for the northern part of the world, outside of the tropics.

By using such a large dataset - containing many thousands of trees in different parts of the hemisphere - the researchers can be more confident that their record represents how temperatures have changed, rather than more local disturbances like disease.

The authors combined the long-term tree ring record with modern temperature data.

They found that the summer of 2023 was 2.07C warmer than the "pre-industrial" period of 1850-1900.

Compared with the coldest summer in the record, year 536, last summer was 3.93C warmer.

Like many colder years, 536 was impacted by a large volcanic eruption which put more sulphur into the atmosphere, helping to cool the planet.

Volcanic activity has also been linked to cooler periods such as the Little Antique Little Ice Age in the 6th Century and the Little Ice Age, which spanned roughly from 1350 to 1850.

The warmest summer in the tree ring reconstruction before industrial times was year 246, but the researchers say that even this does not come close to the recent warmth.

Even taking account of the large uncertainties, the authors say summer 2023 surpassed this range of natural climate variability by 0.5C at the very least.

Researchers say the tree ring information is a huge addition to what we know about our changing climate over history.

Even in the 1850-1900 period, there were only 58 weather stations recording temperatures around the world, with 45 of them in Europe.

The consequence is temperatures during this period may actually have been overestimated, because of the way in which these measurements were taken.

The new study suggests this means that the world may have actually warmed around a quarter of a degree more than typically reported.

While the researchers say that human activities are responsible for the vast majority of the 2023 summer warmth above pre-industrial levels, they also note that temperatures have been amplified by El Niño.

This naturally occurring climate pattern sees warm waters come to the surface of the Pacific and help push up air temperatures globally.

El Niño was first noted by South American fishermen in the 17th Century but tree ring data helps to show that it dates back much further in time.

The most recent El Niño episode helped make 2023 the warmest year on record, but because it has continued into the early part of 2024, it may also make 2024 a record warm 12 months.

The authors say the key conclusion from their work is the need for rapid reductions in emissions of planet-warming gases.

“The longer we wait, the more expensive it will be and the more difficult it will be to mitigate or even stop that process and reverse it,” said lead author, Prof Jan Esper from Johannes Gutenberg University, in Germany.

“That is just so obvious,” he said.

“We should do as much as possible, as soon as possible.

The new study has been published in the journal, Nature.

CNN

A deadly heat wave worsened Gaza's humanitarian crisis. It was fueled by climate change, new data shows
By: Laura Paddison

A deadly heat wave in Gaza in April, which saw punishing temperatures worsen an already dire humanitarian crisis, was made hotter and more likely by the human-caused climate crisis, according to an analysis published Tuesday.

Gaza was not alone. Several heat waves spanning a vast area of the Asian continent last month during the world's hottest April on record were made more intense and likely by the climate crisis, the analysis from the World Weather Attribution initiative (WWA) found.

The WWA report divided the heat waves into three areas: West Asia, the Philippines and a region spanning South and Southeast Asia.

In West Asia, the analysis focused on the Palestinian territories, Syria, Lebanon, Israel and Jordan, where temperatures spiked above 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) last month. It found climate change made the heat in this region around five times more likely and 1.7 degrees Celsius hotter than it would have been before humans started burning large amounts of fossil fuels.

Soaring temperatures had a particularly stark impact on the 1.7 million displaced people in Gaza, already struggling with insufficient water access and inadequate healthcare. There was little respite from the relentless heat for those crammed into makeshift tents and shelters, often covered with plastic sheets. At least three people, including two children, reportedly died from the heat, the analysis notes.

In the Philippines, the extreme heat last month — which forced hundreds of schools to close as temperatures reached more than 42 degrees Celsius — had such a strong link to human-caused global warming the report concluded it would have been impossible without it.

To calculate the influence of climate change on the extreme heat, WWA researchers used weather data and computer models to compare the world's current climate — which is around 1.2 degrees Celsius warmer than before humans started burning large amounts of fossil fuels — with the climate of the past.

“From Gaza to Delhi to Manila, people suffered and died when April temperatures soared in Asia,” Friederike Otto, senior lecturer in climate science at the Grantham Institute for Climate Change and the Environment and a report author, said in a statement. “Heat waves have always happened. But the additional heat, driven by emissions from oil, gas and coal, is resulting in death for many people.”

The scientists also examined the role of El Niño, a natural climate pattern that influences global weather.

While they found it had no influence in West Asia’s April heat, it did affect the intensity of heat in the Philippines, pushing up temperatures by 0.2 degrees Celsius. However, the impact of climate change there was greater, increasing temperatures by about 1.2 degrees.

In today’s warmer world, the kind of extreme heat waves experienced in Gaza and West Asia, as well as the Philippines, are not rare and can be expected around once every 10 years, the report found. But it warns worse could be in store.

If the planet’s average temperature rises to 2 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels, which is predicted to happen in the 2040s or 2050s if the world does not decarbonize fast enough, similar extreme heat waves could be expected once every five years in West Asia and every two to three years in the Philippines.

Heat wave made 45 times more likely

The WWA analysis also looked at parts of South and Southeast Asia, many of which also experienced unprecedented heat last month.

Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam all broke records for their hottest April day, while temperatures spiked to 46 degrees Celsius (115 Fahrenheit) in India. Bangladesh and Thailand also experienced scorching April temperatures and were included in the study.

Climate change also played a pronounced role in this region, according to the analysis, making the heat 45 times more likely and 0.85 degrees Celsius hotter.

The scientists took a simpler approach than usual for this part of Asia, looking only at weather data and not computer models, because the region overlapped with two previous analyses of extreme heat events in 2022 and 2023, which also found climate change played a strong role.

The numbers in the report are important, Otto said, “because they show us that everywhere climate change is an absolute game changer when it comes to extreme heat.” But numbers alone don’t necessarily show how bad the impacts are — these depend on people’s vulnerability and exposure.

Days of temperatures above 40 degrees Celsius (104 Fahrenheit) were “particularly difficult for people working outdoors, people living in informal housing (and) people living in refugee camps,” Otto said.

Asia is also home to some of the planet’s fastest growing cities, said Carolina Pereira Marghidan, climate risk consultant at the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre, on a call with reporters. This has led to rapid, unplanned development. “Many cities have seen extreme losses of green space,” Pereira said, increasing the impacts of extreme heat on residents.

The world must take “massive, unprecedented steps to reduce emissions,” said Mariam Zachariah, a researcher at the Grantham Institute, in a statement. If not, she added, “extreme heat will lead to even greater suffering in Asia.”

DAILY TRIBUNE

DENR keen on revitalizing Phl mining sector

By: Vivienne Angeles

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) is target-locked on revitalizing the Philippine mining industry, which the agency is pushing to be a major contributor to the country's economic growth.

DENR Secretary Antonia Yulo Loyzaga, however, assured that, in doing so, the agency would implement sustainable and socially responsible practices to protect the environment as well as the communities.

"The Department has for the first time required proximity to protected areas and historically and culturally important sites in the application for Environmental Compliance Certificates," she said at a sustainable mining conference held at Makati Diamond Residences.

"We are consulting with the National Commission on Indigenous People, the National Commission on Culture and Arts, and the National Historical Commission of the Philippines on the safeguarding of rights and our important historical and cultural sites," she added.

Renewed focus

Moreover, Loyzaga informed that the administration of President Ferdinand Marcos Jr. has pushed for a renewed focus on boosting the mining sector.

"The message is clear: the Philippines must leverage its status as one of the world's most mineral-rich nations to drive economic growth," she said.

The country generated P160 billion in copper, gold, and nickel production last year, said Loyzaga, noting that "contributions from the mining sector are bound to significantly increase in the years to come."

National Economic and Development Authority Secretary Arsenio Balisacan, for his part, expressed optimism about maximizing the potential drive of the mining sector to the country's economy, which he said contributed 0.5 percent of the gross domestic product last year, adding that employment in the sector remains low.

“We expect the promising mining industry to support our manufacturing, infrastructure, and construction sectors with spillovers to the broader economy through more and higher quality jobs for all Filipinos as we work toward meeting our climate change commitments under the Paris Agreement,” Balisacan said.

“The government looks forward to working with our partners in the private sector, both domestic and foreign, towards rapid, sustained, and inclusive economic growth, supported by a vibrant and resilient environment,” he added.

Mining opportunities

Furthermore, the diplomatic community also expressed support for the government in strengthening its mining industry.

“As the price of critical minerals, including nickel, could be volatile, a stable business environment is essential. And I would like to thank the government of the Philippines for its continuous support for maintaining such an environment,” Japanese Ambassador to the Philippines Endo Kazuya said, underscoring the importance of the import and export of critical materials between Japan and the Philippines.

“By working together to address challenges and opportunities in the mineral trade, Japan and the Philippines can further enhance our strategic partnership and contribute to the growth of our respective industries,” he added.

Meanwhile, the Australian Ambassador to the Philippines, Hae Kyong Yu, expressed her country’s interest in bolstering its critical mineral strategy through collaboration.

Yu said the Philippines’ focus on critical minerals could not have come at a better time.

“Given Australia’s expertise and the Philippines’ commitment to developing a world-class, sustainable, environmentally friendly mining sector, really, our strategic partnership is one that is made in heaven. It’s a perfect match,” she said.

“We should definitely get Australian companies to invest in the Philippine mines, and we should definitely get them to provide the latest mining equipment, technology, and services to Philippine mining companies,” the Austrialian ambassador added.

Meanwhile, Canadian Ambassador to the Philippines David Hartman said, “Canada and indeed Canadian companies stand ready to support the Philippines in harnessing the potential of these minerals through research and development collaboration, capacity

building and training, and encouraging greater uptake of value-added processing among Canadian companies already domiciled right here in the Philippines.”

ECO BUSINESS

1.5°C on a precipice: Do we need to rethink communications on warming limits?

By: Liang Lei

The climate fight is not going well, according to the numbers. Global warming has exceeded 1.5°C above pre-industrial times for 10 months and counting. A year-long breach of the temperature limit relative to the years before 1900 has already happened in January, according to the European Union's earth observatory.

Warming limits have been a core tenet of climate action for years. World leaders aimed to stay "well below 2°C" in the landmark 2015 Paris Agreement. In 2018, the rallying cry changed to 1.5°C after experts said anything warmer would be too unlivable.

Businesses have followed suit. Corporate climate action watchdog Science Based Targets Initiative (SBTi) called on firms to cut emissions fast to help keep global warming to 1.5°C, generally by avoiding fossil fuels and reaching net-zero emissions by 2050. Thousands of organisations have signed up to this goal.

Scientists say droughts, floods and storms will get more severe past the 1.5°C global warming limit. Vulnerable communities worldwide are already reeling from climate disasters, such as floods in 2022 that killed over 1,700 people in Pakistan, to record heatwaves in the 40-50°C range across Asia last year.

Generally, the 1.5°C limit refers to temperature averages that occur longer than a year, and the world still has marginal leeway according to decadal metrics. Beyond stepping harder on the emissions reduction brakes, some sustainability professionals say a broader framing of climate targets and action could be more relatable and effective in driving action.

"As scientists, we recognise that limiting the global average temperature rise to 1.5°C is probably not realistic without first overshooting the goal," said Dr Angel Hsu, environmental expert and associate professor at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Hsu said global warming should still be limited as much as possible, as small temperature rises could still result in unexpected risks to people and nature.

"How we frame the goal now, along the lines of 'every fraction of a degree matters' is important to keeping people motivated to continue pursuing climate action," she said.

Pakistan climate advocate Hafiz Jawad Sohail likewise thinks keeping to the 1.5°C target limit is unlikely.

“The consequences should be highlighted in bold for people to take it very seriously. If [we] miss 2°C, it will be the climate boiling age where [the chances of] survival will be very thin,” Sohail said.

Scientists have said that moving from the 1.5°C limit to 2°C in temperature rise will essentially wipe out coral reefs that support fish stocks. Millions more would also be exposed to extreme heatwaves at the upper limit.

Focusing on the consequences of global warming could better help drive the point across for politicians, since they are driven by “profits and interests” that are also vulnerable to temperature rise, Sohail added.

The 1.5°C target is still very much in vogue in global negotiating fora. Mukhtar Babayev, incoming COP29 president this year, has stressed he wants to keep the temperature target “within reach”, by getting countries to set more ambitious climate action targets and unlocking more climate money to support developing nations.

“The temperature target has not yet been breached. That target does not relate to single years. It refers to longer-term averages, which are currently above 1.2°C.

“But there is a narrowing window of opportunity to act,” Mukhtar, who is Azerbaijan’s ecology and natural resources minister, said last month.

Temporary breach not a failure

Experts warn against treating the ongoing year-long breach as a failure. Woo Qiyun, a Singapore climate advocate, said the difference between short and long-term 1.5°C threshold breaches should be made clear, even as people are already feeling the effects of record warming globally.

“Without the differentiation, people might get confused and feel like [the] 1.5°C [limit] has been breached, when actually we still need to do a lot more to ensure this long-term temperature change does not hit 1.5°C,” Woo explained.

It could be hard to agree on when the 1.5°C warming limit is officially breached. While the latest monthly and one-year averages have exceeded the limit, the World Meteorological Organisation stated the 10-year mean up till 2023 was 1.2°C – the figure

Babayev referenced. The United Nations' Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) uses a 20-year range, which for 2003-2022 is 1.03°C.

The 1.5°C breach is only "temporary", said Rosa Perez, a Philippines-based lead author for the 2022 IPCC report.

This happens when areas like the Philippines enter the warm phase of the El Niño-Southern Oscillation (ENSO), a recurring climate pattern involving changes in the temperature of waters in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, Perez told Eco-Business.

"But countries really need to step up their nationally determined contributions (NDCs), make rapid and drastic energy use transformations, to a combination of renewables and vastly expanded energy efficiency."

"Moving close to the 1.5 C limit is seen as the unwillingness of some countries not to heed the call of our scientists," Perez added.

While experts say temporary blips shouldn't count, there is no agreement on which figure actually matters, at least for the Paris Agreement.

"This is likely to result in distraction and delay just at the point when climate action is most urgent," said a commentary published in the peer-reviewed Nature journal last December. The article's authors recommended a 20-year metric, though based equally on a decade each of historical data and projections – bringing the 2022 figure to 1.26°C.

But as it stands, the world is headed for over 2.5°C of warming this century, as countries lag on climate targets. In recent years, communications around 1.5°C has shifted, with scientists calling for more ambitious action to pull temperatures back down after a likely overshoot.

Such efforts have largely not yet materialised. Man-made carbon dioxide levels are still creeping up, in parallel with fossil fuel use, despite realistic pathways calling for emissions to drop by over 40 per cent by 2030. Carbon dioxide sequestration – methods to suck up the gas from the atmosphere – needs to scale up by over 1,300 times by 2050, a 2023 report estimated, although many technologies remain nascent today.

The looming threshold aside, Hsu thinks there are other issues with how people relate to the 1.5°C figure today. Aligning corporate green goals to the target conceptually

allocates the entire carbon budget to existing businesses and none to sustainability innovators, who may need emitting room to develop solutions against the climate crisis. Many companies' "1.5°C-aligned" targets are also not credible, for omitting value chain emissions or using often flawed carbon offsets, she noted.

How to better frame climate action targets is "the million dollar question", Hsu said. In an op-ed for Science journal last month, Hsu and a group of scientists argued that climate progress should be measured more broadly, including in job creation, renewable energy generation and lives saved through transitioning away from fossil fuels.

"We certainly need a broader dashboard of indicators and metrics to measure these benchmarks that can indicate progress is being made [and] in a way to better motivate climate action, since 1.5°C is pretty abstract and also seems insignificant," Hsu said.

Suzy Goulding, head of sustainability for Asia Pacific and Middle East at public relations firm MSL, would agree. It was hard for most people to understand the complexities of climate change and its effects at a macro level, she said.

"I don't think talking about the temperature limit and targets was ever that helpful in motivating businesses and policymakers to make sustainable changes."

"Much more effective is to stress how these temperature changes are likely to impact businesses, communities and individuals," Goulding said.

People understood how the weather affected their daily lives, and would be motivated to act if they believed they could help to improve their communities directly, she said, adding that the focus should be on targets around innovation, investment and awareness-building.

Goulding said there should be "a constant stream of good news stories" of positive change globally to show that the climate challenges can be overcome to spur action, rather than communicating on targets which are "pretty meaningless to the vast majority".

GMA NEWS

Asia's extreme April heat worsened by climate change, scientists say

Extreme temperatures throughout Asia last month were made worse - and more likely - as a result of human-driven climate change, a team of international scientists said on Wednesday.

Billions of people across the continent were affected by record-breaking temperatures during April, with schools forced to shut down, crops damaged and hundreds of people killed by heat-related illnesses, climate experts from the World Weather Attribution group said in a report.

Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam experienced their hottest April days on record, while temperatures in India reached as high as 46 degrees Celsius (114.8 Fahrenheit), they said.

"From Gaza to Delhi to Manila, people suffered and died when April temperatures soared in Asia," said Friederike Otto, Senior Lecturer in Climate Science at the Grantham Institute of Climate Change and the Environment, one of the report's authors.

"Heatwaves have always happened. But the additional heat, driven by emissions from oil, gas and coal, is resulting in death for many people."

In the Philippines, one of the worst-hit countries, authorities issued health warnings, shut down schools and rationed electricity supplies as soaring temperatures threatened the country's power grid.

The 15-day heatwave, which started in the middle of the month, would have been "virtually impossible, even under El Nino conditions" without the impact of man-made global warming, the report said.

Parts of the Middle East saw record-breaking temperatures over April 24-26, with Tel Aviv hitting 40.7C. Extreme temperatures in western Asia were made five times more likely by climate change, the report estimated.

"The heat that we saw is really compounding an already dire crisis at the moment in Gaza," Carolina Pereira Marghidan of the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre said at a briefing on Tuesday.

Temperatures around India's Kolkata in late April reached 46C, 10C higher than the seasonal average, with climate change making extreme temperatures throughout South Asia around 45 times more likely, the report added.

Asian governments need to take action to adapt to soaring temperatures and minimize health risks, particularly in vulnerable sections of the population, said Marghidan.

"Considering that rate at which extreme heat is rising... we see a big need for heat action plans to be scaled up and current plans to be improved across Asia," she said.

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

US, PH eye cooperation to use space tech for maritime safety

By: Charie Abarca

The governments of the Philippines and the United States (US) are looking at expanding their cooperation on the potential use of space technology for maritime domain awareness that would be beneficial in ensuring the safety of Filipino mariners at sea.

In a joint statement issued Tuesday (Philippine time), the US and the Philippines said they conducted the first Bilateral Space Dialogue in Washington, D.C. early May, agreeing that Earth observation is a "priority area for bilateral cooperation."

"They discussed a range of programs that use satellites to better forecast weather patterns; support agricultural and infrastructure planning; help monitor and combat climate change and pollution; prepare for and respond to disasters; improve natural resource use; and provide vital telecommunications services," the joint statement read.

The governments likewise agreed to consider the possible hosting of a US Geological Survey Landsat ground station in the Philippines.

"The delegations recognized the potential for expanded cooperation on the use of space for maritime domain awareness, including through the U.S. Department of Transportation-led SeaVision program," it added.

The Bilateral Space Dialogue bared that such a program will be useful in monitoring and documenting vessels in the Philippines' territorial waters and exclusive economic zone, ensure the safety of mariners at sea, monitor and help protect the environment, and help combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing.

"The delegations also highlighted efforts to expand the provision of satellite-enabled broadband Internet services to remote and underserved areas of the Philippines, including a [Philippine Space Agency] initiative in cooperation with USAID Better Access and Connectivity, leveraging U.S. commercial low-earth-orbit communication satellites," the statement further read.

In line with its bid to expand its cooperation on the use of space, the US and Philippine governments likewise agreed to the following:

Review joint efforts to promote the long-term sustainability of outer space activities
Stay in close communication on expanding commercial space ties and space situational awareness.

Recognize the importance of addressing space debris

Work together to expand bilateral exchange and training programs on the use of Earth observation satellite data, development of space applications and technologies and other space science and skills, including fellowships, scholarships and internship programs.

The joint statement likewise indicated that the next US-Philippines Space Dialogue will be held in the Philippines at a “mutually agreed upon future date.”

PHILIPPINE NEWS AGENCY

Iloilo City targets to plant 100K trees this year

By: Perla Lena

The local government here is eyeing to plant around 100,000 trees this year as part of efforts to combat climate change.

Iloilo City Mayor Jerry Treñas said the local government will connect with various sectors for the tree-growing efforts.

“Climate change is intense. Before, we only talked about it, but now it has worsened. We have to do something about it,” he said in a media interview.

Currently, there are 10,000 species of native trees at the city nursery, while the city government will procure more “Dita” trees to replace the royal palm trees at the center isle of the Diversion Road.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources will provide on Friday the city government with 3,000 seedlings; 1,000 of which are “Freedom” tree species.

“We are now preparing at the Diversion Road. We are now removing the dead royal palms. We are just waiting for the weather conditions to normalize because our rainfall is way below normal. This is not just a tree planting but a tree growing to cool down the Diversion Road, which has the highest heat index,” General Services Office (GSO) head engineer Neil Ravena said in a separate interview on Tuesday.

Ravena said all relocation sites will be planted with fruit-bearing trees and native trees in private subdivisions. Other target areas are the floodway, roadsides, Esplanade, and beach forest on Barangay Boulevard.

They are also developing the three-hectare tree park in Barangay Lanit.

Of the 100,000 trees, he said, around 80,000 will be planted in the Sunset Boulevard area.

Ravena said less than 15 percent of the city’s 7,834 hectares total land area is planted with trees.

For the city to be resilient in combatting climate change, it has to have open spaces and at least 15 percent to 30 percent of its total land areas has tree covering to absorb heat.

“We will formalize these tree-growing activities this coming June once the weather condition improves,” he said.

UNESCO

UNESCO "Climate Change in News Media" training programme enhances the capacity of media organizations in Southeast Asia

South-East Asia is among the regions most vulnerable to the effects of climate change, where rising sea levels and intensifying natural hazards affect millions of people in densely populated areas and coastal zones.

With the support of the Multi-Donor Programme for Freedom of Expression and the Safety of Journalists, UNESCO has been working to equip media organizations in the region to report on and respond to the effects of climate change. As part of the "Climate Change in News Media" training programme, which ran from March to September 2023, 14 selected media organizations in Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia, and Timor Leste were trained over a six-month period on how to optimize their climate and environment reporting by strengthening the use of online sources and digital tools, such as fact-checking, data visualization, satellite imagery, cartographic regression and the like.

UNESCO selected the participating media based on their applications and to ensure a mix of mainstream media, media that are specialized in related fields, as well as start-up media. Involving decision makers in the project ensured that the media organizations could subsequently implement the new tools and strategy.

The programme began with a two-day intensive training session on environmental journalism, focusing on strategies, investigations, constructive journalism, and collaborative cross-border projects. Throughout the summer, the selected media organizations engaged in mentoring and post-training support sessions towards the production of news stories, and in August two senior representatives from each of the 14 media organizations participated in a bootcamp in Puncat, Indonesia.

Following the training, each media developed their own institutional strategy for climate change and environment coverage, produced and broadcasted or published investigative stories and constructive journalism reports, and undertook collaborative projects to cover cross-border climate stories.

Narasi Newsroom, in Indonesia, developed institutional strategies and strengthened programming with investigative and solutions-oriented stories on climate change or environment, and improved the use of digital tools and technologies in news gathering

and production. These skills are illustrated in the report titled “The Fish Thieves Who Return to Jokowi's Second Period”, which gathered over half a million views.

“Now, we use data from open source which allows us to create stories about the environmental issue. We also use artificial intelligence and the latest technologies to help make these environmental stories resonate with the young audience.”

Laban Laisila
Head of Newsroom, Narasi (Indonesia)

Also in Indonesia, Magdalene initiated a project to work together with influencers and Youtubers to reach a large audience with constructive climate journalism, while Tempo – the most respected and influential investigative media in the country - initiated training in constructive journalism for all staff.

GMA, the largest and most reputable media network in the Philippines, decided to implement a whole strategy on climate coverage, developed after the bootcamp. Meanwhile, FYT projected the platform “Lifesaver.ph” to develop and concentrate all climate content in an early warning mechanism in partnership with users, universities, and government institutions for future hazards.

“After the programme, we really incorporated elements of constructive journalism to the stories that we made. Not just to include the problem, but to also put solutions, and even critique solutions. I think it is very important.”

Lou Albano
Managing Editor, GMA Integrated news, (Philippines)

CCC IN THE NEWS:

PHILIPPINE INFORMATION AGENCY

Oriental Mindoro opens agri center, MSMEs facilities
By: Luis Cueto

Gov. Humerlito A. Dolor recently led the inauguration of the newly constructed Provincial Agriculture Center (PAC) located in the town of Victoria.

Specifically, the center as well as the facilities focuses on enhancing agricultural productivity, supporting small businesses, and fostering local economic development.

Joining the governor were the Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the Philippines Lee Sang-hwa, Vice Chairperson of the Climate Change Commission Secretary Robert E.A. Borje, KOICA Philippines Country Director Eunsub Kim and Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) Philippines Country Representative Marcel Silvius.

The 1,000 square-meter PAC serves as a one-stop incubation and innovation hub for smallholder farmers to develop high-quality processed food products to add value to their produce.

The PAC is equipped with commercial-grade food processing machines such as freeze dryers, fruit juice purifiers, and automated packaging machines, as well as a cold storage facility, warehouse, and solar roofing.

Likewise, the facility provides aggregation, consolidation and trading services to improve the distribution and trading systems of agricultural products in Oriental Mindoro, and to access institutional buyers outside of the province.

Dolor expressed his gratitude to all project partners and key stakeholders for supporting the province in fostering a climate-resilient agriculture sector and addressing problems besetting the agriculture industry by adopting a green growth paradigm, which is characterized by a balance of economic growth and environmental sustainability.

According to Dolor, four MSMEs now have new, state-of-the-art facilities, complete with modern equipment, which will enable their micro-enterprises to grow and expand, generate jobs in their communities, and ensure a brighter future for their families.

The PAC is a key result of the project ‘Climate Resilient and Inclusive Green Growth for Poor Rural Communities: Accelerating Implementation in the Agriculture Value Chain in Oriental Mindoro, Philippines’ managed by the Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI) Philippines, and funded by KOICA (Korea International Cooperation Agency).

This 4-year, P285 million project supports the agricultural value chain development of key commodities by enhancing the entrepreneurial and technical skills of smallholder farmers and micro-entrepreneurs and providing FDA-compliant agricultural facilities and agri-processing services.

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