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By: Pia Gutierrez

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GMA

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

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By: Michael Lim Ubac

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SUNSTAR

Tell it to SunStar: Heat wave and climate change
By: Khevin Yu

A new study by leading climate scientists found that the record-breaking intensity of the heat wave that struck the Philippines in April would have been impossible without climate change. The report also found that if the world warms to 2°C above pre-industrial global mean temperatures, extreme heat in the Philippines would further increase, and we can expect a similar heat wave to happen once every two years.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Climate change made April heat in Asia hotter, more likely — scientists
By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

Extreme temperatures that gripped Asia, including the Philippines, in April were made worse and more likely by human-caused climate change, according to an analysis by climate scientists.

DA forms climate change panel
By: Bella Cariaso

A climate change panel has been formed by the Department of Agriculture (DA) amid La Niña's expected damage to the agriculture sector.

Information and Knowledge Management Division

ABS CBN

DILG coordinating with local gov'ts to prepare for La Niña

By: Pia Gutierrez

The Department of Interior and Local Government said Wednesday it was coordinating with local government units to prepare for the La Niña, which is expected by the third quarter of the year.

DILG Undersecretary Marlo Iringan said LGUs were given guindance on protocols to ensure the safety of their constituents during extreme weather events such as typhoons, heavy rains, and flooding.

"Ilan lamang sa mga hakbangin ng mga LGU kung darating man ang mga malalakas na bagyo, at tag-ulan ay yung pagpulong ng kanilang Local Disaster Risk Reduction Management Council at pagsagawa ng La Niña Pre-Disaster Risk Assessment," Iringan said in a televised briefing.

"Kailangang iupdate nila yung local action plan o La Niña action plan. Kinakailangan din na magkaroon ng close coordination with PAGASA, at with the DENR, particularly ang MGB (Mines and Geosciences Bureau) para maupdate ang local hazard maps on rain induced landslides and flash floods," he added.

Local governments were also directed to assess the structural integrity and capacity of evacuation centers and disaster operation hubs, the official added.

La Nina return could reduce extreme heat risks for 2024

President Ferdinand Marcos Jr recently directed local officials to prepare for the La Niña phenomenon.

"Mga kababayan, ang buong mundo po ay nahaharap sa matinding pagsubok dulot sa tinatawag na climate change, pagbabago po ng panahon. Extreme weather ang nararanasan natin. Matinding init ngayon at sa mga susunod na buwan naman ay asahan natin ang matindi naman na pag-ulan," President Marcos said in a speech in Zamboanga City last May 9.

"Kaya naman po, nananawagan ako sa lokal na pamahalaan ng Zamboanga at sa mga karatig-bayan [nito sa] buong rehiyon: Maging handa po kayo sa lahat ng oras. Alamin natin ang pangangailangan ng ating mga nasasakupan at gumawa tayo ng mga programa na tiyak na makakatulong sa ating mga kababayan," he continued.

Sweltering heat across Asia was 45 times more likely because of climate change, study finds

Sweltering heat across Asia was 45 times more likely because of climate change, study finds.

Scorching temperatures were felt across large swaths of Asia, from Gaza in the west — where over 2 million people face clean water shortages, lack of health care and other essentials amid the Israeli bombardment — to the Philippines in the southeast, with many parts of the continent experiencing temperatures well above 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit) several days in a row.

The study was released by the World Weather Attribution group of scientists, who use established climate models to quickly determine whether human-caused climate change played a part in extreme weather events around the world.

In the Philippines, scientists found the heat was so extreme it would have been impossible without human-caused climate change. In parts of the Middle East, climate change increased the probability of the event by about a factor of five.

"People suffered and died when April temperatures soared in Asia," said Friederike Otto, study author and climate scientist at Imperial College in London. "If humans continue to burn fossil fuels, the climate will continue to warm, and vulnerable people will continue to die."

At least 28 heat-related deaths were reported in Bangladesh, as well as five in India and three in Gaza in April. Surges in heat deaths have also been reported in Thailand and the Philippines this year according to the study.

The heat also had a large impact on agriculture, causing crop damage and reduced yields, as well as on education, with school vacations having to be extended and schools closed in several countries, affecting thousands of students.

Myanmar, Laos and Vietnam broke records for their hottest April day, and the Philippines experienced its hottest night ever with a low of 29.8 degrees Celsius (85.6 degrees Fahrenheit). In India, temperatures reached as high as 46 degrees Celsius (115 degrees Fahrenheit). The month was the hottest April on record globally and the eleventh consecutive month in a row that broke the hottest month record.

Climate experts say extreme heat in South Asia during the pre-monsoon season is becoming more frequent and the study found that extreme temperatures are now about 0.85 degrees Celsius (1.5 Fahrenheit) hotter in the region because of climate change.

Internally displaced people, migrants and those in refugee camps were especially vulnerable to the searing temperatures, the study found.

"These findings in scientific terms are alarming," said Aditya Valiathan Pillai, a heat plans expert at New Delhi-based think tank Sustainable Futures Collaborative. "But for people on the ground living in precarious conditions, it could be absolutely deadly." Pillai was not part of the study.

Pillai said more awareness about heat risks, public and private investments to deal with increasing heat and more research on its impacts are all necessary to deal with future heat waves.

"I think heat is now among the foremost risks in terms of personal health for millions across the world as well as nations' economic development," he said.

BUSINESS MIRROR

GMO crops pushed to counter climate disasters

By: Adrian H. Halili

The Philippines should consider cultivating crops classified as genetically modified organisms (GMOs) to mitigate the impact of climate disasters like typhoons and El Niño.

“When you look at the scale of damage that’s been caused, then I think it’s important for the sector to look at ways in which they can combat that,” Rory O’Donnell, an agriculture and trade expert for business solutions firm Penta, told BusinessWorld.

He added that GMO crops are already being planted in parts of Europe to alleviate drought conditions.

President Ferdinand R. Marcos, Jr. has ordered the Solicitor General to seek clarification and reconsideration of the decision to ban on the use of GMOs.

Mr. Marcos said that the decision would have a “widespread” impact on agriculture and food security.

“It basically is a means of accelerating natural genetic changes in crops,” Mr. O’Donnell said.

“The idea behind that is to develop crops that are drought resistant or more resistant to pests and therefore reduce the requirement for pesticides and other artificial additions,” he added.

The Court of Appeals (CA) revoked the biosafety permits for the commercial propagation of Golden Rice and Bt Eggplant, citing the potential risk to the environment and the health of consumers.

It also stopped field testing and imports until all measures were taken to ensure they were safe.

In a Senate hearing on Tuesday, the Department of Agriculture said it is also seeking reconsideration of the CA’s decision.

“There is a general communications problem around GMOs and new genomic techniques, where it’s very easy for people who are against them to say that there is a theoretical risk that is hard to assess and therefore, we shouldn’t do anything,” Mr. O’Donnell said.

He added that the agriculture industry continues to face the impact of climate change worldwide.

“The degree of climate change and the implications that’s having across the world for agriculture — I think we have to start looking at all the tools that are available. That’s not to say you don’t have to have rigorous scientific processes in place to ensure they’re safe,” Mr. O’Donnell said.

Damage and loss caused by El Niño have hit P6.35 billion as of May 8, with rice and corn the most affected crops. The total affected area was 111,702 hectares, impacting 121,389 farmers and fisherfolk.

Additionally, the DA said that it is currently preparing for above normal rainfall brought about by La Niña in the second half of the year.

PAGASA (Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration), the government weather service, said there is a 62% chance of La Niña setting in between June and August.

DOWN TO EARTH

Climate change responsible for over 80% of temperature rise within Asia last month, the hottest April ever: WWA

By: Jayanta Basu

A global study, released early morning Indian time on May 15, has confirmed that climate change had contributed substantially to the record-shattering heat surge recorded in April across Asia, including India.

April 2024 was the hottest April on record globally, as well as within several south Asian countries. It was the eleventh consecutive month in a row that a hottest month record was broken, the report confirmed.

The study, a rapid attribution analysis by an international team of leading 13 climate scientists from the World Weather Attribution (WWA) group, shows that global warming caused by climate change and El Nino phenomenon worked in tango to push the temperature soaring to record proportions and heatwaves happening almost throughout the month in Asia, including India, during April 2024.

El Nino is a global weather condition linked to a warming of the ocean surface, or above-average sea surface temperatures, in the central and eastern tropical Pacific Ocean.

“Overall, climate change made this year’s heatwave 1°C hotter, while El Nino made the heatwave a further 0.2°C hotter ... in South Asia, similar 30-day heatwaves (as found in 2024) can be expected to occur about once every 30 years. However, they have already become about 45 times more likely ... due to climate change, according to historical weather data,” read the document, a copy of which is with this reporter. Clearly, the study suggests, climate change was the elephant in the room, being responsible for fifth-sixth of the temperature rise.

Millions suffered

“In today’s climate, with 1.2°C of warming, similar heatwaves are expected to occur about once every 10 years,” said the study, pointing out that climate change made heatwaves about five times more likely and 1.7°C hotter.

The researchers pointed out that south Asia’s trend was like the previous two years when the attributional study clearly established a link between climatic changes and rising Celsius.
“Extreme temperatures above 40°C that impacted billions of people across Asia in April were made hotter and more likely by human-caused climate change,” stated the study, highlighting how heatwaves intensified by climate change are making life much tougher for people living in poverty across Asia and the 1.7 million displaced Palestinians in the Gaza Strip.

“The heatwave exacerbated already precarious conditions faced by internally displaced people, migrants and those in refugee camps and conflict zones across West Asia. In Gaza, extreme heat worsened the living conditions of 1.7 million displaced people,” read the report. Major parts of south Asia, including India, suffered as well.

GMA

Extreme heat in PH made worse by climate change - study

By: Jiselle Anne Casucian

Climate change played a role in the hotter-than-normal days seen in various parts of Asia, including the Philippines, in April, a group of scientists said.

Guided by peer-reviewed methodologies, scientists from the World Weather Attribution examined how human-induced climate change affected the probability and severity of the extreme heat in West, South, and parts of Southeast Asia in April.

For the Philippines, the climate scientists analyzed the average daily maximum temperature for the period April 15 to 29, 2024, or 15 days.

"To estimate the influence that human-caused climate change has had on extreme heat in West Asia and the Philippines, we combine climate models with observations. Observations and models both show a strong increase in likelihood and intensity. In the Philippines, the change in likelihood is so large that the event would have been impossible without human-caused climate change. In West Asia, climate change increased the probability of the event by about a factor of 5," the World Weather Attribution study said.
"In terms of intensity, we estimate that a heatwave such as this one in West Asia is today about 1.7°C warmer than it would have been without the burning of fossil fuels. In the Philippines, the intensity increase due to human-induced climate change is about 1.2°C."

In their study, the World Weather Attribution found that the Philippines may experience extreme heat once every 10 years when the El Niño weather phenomenon exists and once every 20 years when it does not.
The study also said the current El Niño made the heatwave in the Philippines "about 0.2°C hotter."
"If the world warms to 2°C above pre-industrial global mean temperatures, in both regions the likelihood of extreme heat would increase further, by a factor of 2 in West Asia and 5 over the Philippines, while the temperatures will become another 1°C hotter in West Asia and 0.7°C hotter in the Philippines," the scientists said.

Reacting to the study, Khevin Yu of the environmental group Greenpeace Philippines said the government "must stop delaying the transition to renewable energy."

"It must scrap its plans for fossil gas expansion and demand payment from the biggest climate-polluting companies most responsible for the crisis we're suffering," he added.

"Addressing current and future extreme weather events through climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction measures, Yu said, is "not enough to ensure a safe and sustainable future for Filipinos."

PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

The politics of moving toward a green economy

By: Michael Lim Ubac

The time is ripe for the Philippines to accelerate its transition into a green economy by ramping up its solar and wind energy development. But our addiction to oil, coal, and gas is hindering this huge potential to assist the planet in combating climate change.

The international community has recognized the Philippines as a “high-performing country” in climate action. The recognition came without much fanfare last December when the country ranked sixth (up from 12th) in the climate performance ranking of the Climate Change Performance Index (CCPI) for 2024 (https://ccpi.org/country/phl/). Denmark and Estonia were the only ones ahead of the Philippines. Since no country performed “well enough in all index categories to achieve an overall very high rating,” CCPI said, “the first three overall positions therefore remain empty.”

The index cited four reasons for the Philippines’ improved ranking—a high score in reducing greenhouse gases (GHG) emissions and energy use, a medium score in renewable energy development, but a low score in climate policy.

What these scores imply is that the country is now among the top 3 frontrunners in the global climate index, which measures over 90 percent of GHG emissions coming from 63 countries and the European Union. The CCPI enables transparency in national and international climate politics by using a standardized framework to compare the performance of countries in four categories: GHG emissions, renewable energy, energy use, and climate policy.

Remember that the Paris Agreement, to which the Philippines is a signatory, has set an ambitious goal to limit global warming to 1.5 degrees Celsius above pre-industrial levels.Considered a net emitter of GHGs, the Philippines produced only 0.5 percent of global emissions in 2020 and contributed 0.41 percent of global emissions from 1990 to 2020. China, the United States, India, Russia, and Japan were the top emitters in 2020, with the Philippines placing 34th.

CCPI reports that a Filipino emits 2.27 tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO2eq) on average. By converting gases into a common metric, this measurement enables easy comparison of GHG per capita emissions across countries and populations.

GHGs are gases in our atmosphere that trap heat and are thus responsible for climate change. The burning of fossil fuels (coal, oil, and gas) has been the main cause of

human-induced climate change since the Industrial Revolution. The planet's temperature has risen by an average of 0.06 degrees Celsius since 1850, with 2023 being the warmest year on record.

Renewable energy potential. Thus, transitioning to renewable energy like solar and wind is a significant policy change that will align the Philippines with the Paris Agreement. The Philippine renewable energy potential is high (around 1,200 gigawatts), mainly from solar rooftops, open-field solar, and onshore and offshore wind energy, according to Climate Analytics.

With its goal to adopt a low-carbon future, the Philippine Energy Plan for 2023-2050 pledges to develop 40 percent of renewable energy in the country's energy mix by 2040, although this plan includes nuclear energy, says CCPI.

The Philippine Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC), the action plan to reduce GHG emissions, pledges to "peak its emissions by 2030 in the context of accelerating the just transition of its sectors into a green economy." It then commits the country "to a projected GHG emissions reduction and avoidance of 75 [percent] … representing the country's ambition for GHG mitigation for the period 2020 to 2030 for the sectors of agriculture, wastes, industry, transport, and energy."

We would need the Department of Energy (DOE) and the Climate Change Commission to translate these figures into layman's terms for everyone's appreciation. What is clear is that less than half of our energy requirements should be met by renewable sources by 2040, according to DOE's plan. But how that will look is anybody's guess.

The carbon-intensive aspect of the energy plan is obvious. The CCPI country experts have criticized the NDC "for lacking a long-term emissions reduction strategy," while also noting that the connection between the NDC and climate policy implementation remains unclear. They noted that there were "no strong fiscal measures" to phase out fossil fuel subsidies, and questioned the environmental impact of development plans in the transport sector, agriculture, land use, and forestry.

Thus, any government action to build more coal-fired power plants or adopt incineration for waste management can further weaken the NDC. The NDC is the official commitment of the Filipino nation to slow down climate change under the Paris Agreement.Through the NDC, the Philippines is letting the world know that it is in "pursuit of low carbon, sustainable, and climate and disaster-resilient development." This strategy is achievable only through robust mitigation and adaptation measures in

accordance with Sustainable Development Goals and the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

SUNSTAR

Tell it to SunStar: Heat wave and climate change
By: Khevin Yu

A new study by leading climate scientists found that the record-breaking intensity of the heat wave that struck the Philippines in April would have been impossible without climate change. The report also found that if the world warms to 2°C above pre-industrial global mean temperatures, extreme heat in the Philippines would further increase, and we can expect a similar heat wave to happen once every two years.

Another recent report confirmed that the streak of record global temperatures continued for 11 months in a row, with April 2024 as the hottest ever recorded. Furthermore, a recent poll found that hundreds of scientists from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) expect global temperatures to rise to at least 2.5°C above pre-industrial levels this century.

Climate change is already staring us in the face. We've seen the tremendous impact that record-high temperatures have had on all Filipinos, especially on our most vulnerable sectors.] The scenarios laid out in this study of extreme heat becoming more intense and frequent as the climate crisis worsens are conditions that our current systems would simply not withstand.

Aside from heat waves, other extreme weather events like super typhoons are already putting a huge strain on our country and communities. The recent heat wave aggravated by the climate crisis gives us no space to recover as La Niña is expected to come immediately, compounding the already massive damages we're still struggling to recover from.

Addressing current and future extreme weather events by implementing climate adaptation and Disaster Risk Reduction measures are not enough to ensure a safe and sustainable future for Filipinos. Our government must stop delaying the transition to renewable energy. It must scrap its plans for fossil gas expansion, and demand payment from the biggest climate-polluting companies most responsible for the crisis we're suffering.

We are calling on the Philippine government to make fossil fuel companies:

a. Acknowledge their disproportionate role in historical carbon emissions and commit to a just transition away from fossil fuels;

b. Stop all fossil fuel expansion; and

c. Pay up for the economic and non-economic losses and damages caused by climate impacts.

THE PHILIPPINE STAR

Climate change made April heat in Asia hotter, more likely — scientists

By: Gaea Katreena Cabico

Extreme temperatures that gripped Asia, including the Philippines, in April were made worse and more likely by human-caused climate change, according to an analysis by climate scientists.

Exceptionally hot weather across Asia triggered health warnings, forced thousands of schools to close down, killed hundreds of people, and damaged crops.

“From Gaza to Delhi to Manila, people suffered and died when April temperatures soared in Asia,” said Friederike Otto, senior lecturer at the Grantham Institute-Climate Change and the Environment in the Imperial College London and co-author of the study by the World Weather Attribution group.

“Heatwaves have always happened. But the additional heat, driven by emissions from oil, gas and coal, is resulting in death for many people,” Otto added.
Through published peer-reviewed methods, scientists analyzed the impact of climate change on the intensity of the three-day April heatwave in West Asia and a 15-day heatwave in the Philippines.

The scientists found that in the Philippines, similar heatwaves are expected to happen about once every 10 years during El Niño conditions and about once every 20 years in other years without the influence of El Niño.

They also said that a heatwave of this intensity would have been virtually impossible in the Philippines without human-caused climate change, even under El Niño conditions.
“Overall, climate change made this year’s heatwave 1°C hotter, while El Niño made the heatwave a further 0.2°C hotter. If global warming reaches 2°C, similar heatwaves in the Philippines will occur every two to three years and will become another 0.7°C hotter,” the study said.

In the Philippines, exceptionally hot weather prompted schools to shift classes online and threatened power grids. At least seven people have died from heat-related illnesses since the start of the year, according to the Department of Health.

Heat planning

The researchers said the increasing risk of dangerous heat, particularly in rapidly growing cities like Manila, highlights the critical need for heat planning that protects vulnerable communities.

“Heat action plans set out measures for dealing with heat, like changing work and school hours,” said Carolina Pereira Marghidan, a climate risk consultant at the Red Cross Red Crescent Climate Centre.

“Although various countries have made substantial progress on such plans, there is an urgent need to scale up and further strengthen them across Asia to deal with the rising heat,” she added.

The Department of Education is gradually reverting back to the academic calendar year, when classes begin in June and end in March.

Meanwhile, labor groups like Kilusang Mayo Uno are calling on the government and employers to establish measures to ensure the safety of workers such as extended breaks, noting that extreme heat is a “health and safety hazard.”

The World Weather Attribution study was conducted by 13 researchers, including scientists from universities and meteorological agencies in Malaysia, Sweden, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

DA forms climate change panel

By: Bella Cariaso

A climate change panel has been formed by the Department of Agriculture (DA) amid La Niña's expected damage to the agriculture sector.

The climate resilient agriculture steering committee is tasked with providing strategic direction in mobilizing DA resources to address climate change.

"In exigency of service, the mainstreaming, integrating and implementing of climate-related policies, plans, projects and activities in our department shall be operationalized as a strategic approach to strengthen our climate resilience efforts, manage the risk of climate-related disasters and contribute to the stability of food supply and prices," said Agriculture Secretary Francisco Tiu Laurel Jr.

Tiu Laurel issued Special Order No. 703 to operationalize the DA Climate Resilient Agriculture Office, appointing Agriculture Undersecretary for policy, planning and regulations Asis Perez as head of the CRAO.

The committee would harmonize climate action in all DA operating units, including the application of digital technology, Tiu Laurel noted.

"The CRAO may engage the services of science and technical experts who will form its pool of climate science experts, as may be required in the performance of the office's role and functions, including the conduct of strategic policy and planning studies," he said.

The DA is preparing for the worst-case scenario, especially in areas previously hit by La Niña, said Agriculture Assistant Secretary and spokesman Arnel de Mesa.

"Just like what we did during El Niño, we prepared for the worst. The Philippine Atmospheric, Geophysical and Astronomical Services Administration (PAGASA) said that we will have a moderate El Niño but it said that there is a chance it will become strong to severe, so we prepared for the worst," he said.

Around 120,000 hectares of plantations are expected to be affected in the worst-case scenario, he noted.

"So far, only half of our projected number of hectares were damaged. It's a good preparatory procedure that we implemented," he added.

De Mesa said based on PAGASA's projection, the country will be hit by La Niña in the last quarter of the year.

“We are already preparing because, in the past, strong typhoons were already experienced as early as August. So number one that is being readied are irrigation systems,” he said.

The DA is coordinating with the National Irrigation Administration to ensure that irrigation systems are prepared.

Efforts are also being made to address possible flooding in case dams overflow.

“Small (water) impounding projects are ongoing and a big budget was allocated this year to implement this,” De Mesa said.

Based on historical data, areas severely affected by La Niña are those on the eastern side of the country, he noted.

“For El Niño, those affected were in the western side. For La Niña, normally, it is the eastern side: Cagayan, Bicol, Eastern Visayas and Eastern Mindanao. These are the potential areas that will be severely hit by La Niña,” he said.

Typhoon damage to the agriculture sector could reach between 500,000 and 600,000 metric tons during a normal year, De Mesa said.

Despite La Niña’s threat, the DA expects total rice production of more than 20 million MT, he maintained.

“Our original projected output this year was 20.8 million MT. We reduced it to 20.4 million MT because of expected losses. We can still reach 20 million MT, which is a similar or a little over our projection,” he said.

El Niño’s agricultural damage was only 134,000 MT compared to the projected 250,000 MT of losses covering 120,000 hectares, he noted. It also reached P6.3 billion, he said.

“Hopefully, we will not reach this (projection of 250,000 MT) as El Niiño is about to end. For La Niña, our worst (projection) is between 500,000 to 600,000 MT (of losses),” De Mesa said.

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